

**A PRAGMA-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF J.P. CLARK'S 'THE CASUALTIES'
AND KOFI AWOONOR'S 'SONG OF SORROW'**

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Abstract

In this paper, the linguistic elements that are significant to the meaning of the two poems: *The Casualties* by J.P. Clark and *Song of Sorrow* by Kofi Awoonor are explicated. This is different from the approach adopted by scholars in literary circles who always base their approach on the intuition of the reader. Here, we are able to arrive at the meaning of the two poems as a result of the examination of the linguistic, social and pragmatic clues inherent in them. The foregrounded linguistic elements in forms of *deviation, dominance, syntactic parallelism and repetition* are highlighted and analysed in order to arrive at the literary meaning of the texts. In addition, we situate the two poems in the pragmatic circumstances in which they are produced in order to discuss the data that depict the theme and literary meaning of the two lamentations.

1. Introduction

The present paper makes a case for a pragma-linguistic approach as instrumental to decoding the meaning of a literary text such as a piece of poetry. This basically involves the use of the umbrella term 'foregrounding' at various levels of sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme (Scott, Bowley, Brockett, Brown, and Goddard (1973) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). Foregrounding also manifests itself in various forms such as dominance or prominence of linguistic items, and deviance of linguistic items (see Awonuga, 1988, Daramola 2006 and 2009). In addition, I realise that the linguistic-stylistic method will not be enough to decode the meaning of the two poems because the poems are not islands on their own but situated in the society where they are created and, therefore, surrounded by various pragmatic clues that can shed further light on their meanings aside the linguistic elements in them. Therefore, apart from the so-called linguistic elements are socio-pragmatic elements such as the participants i.e the writer/reader, speaker/listeners, relationship between the two, difference between power or knowledge between the participants, the context of production, factors that enable us to interpret the texts and what clues are in the surrounding texts that are significant to the meaning of the texts being studied (Oatey and Zegarac, 2002:74-91). The texts selected for this purpose are J.P. Clark's *The Casualties* and Kofi Awoonor's *Song of Sorrow*. I use the linguistic proofs of evidence provided in the two poems to corroborate the literary judgment that has been arrived at by literary critics and lastly, justify the meaning with the evidence provided by pragmatic and socio-cultural meaning surrounding the two African poems.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework employed in this paper is Systemic Functional Linguistics of Scott et al (1973) and Halliday and Mathiessen (2004) in their description of the elements in the grammatical rankscale such as *sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme*. It is the extent of foregrounding of these elements, except that of morpheme, in the systemic rankscale in the two poems that is being explored to arrive at the overall literary meaning of the poem. Foregrounding, according to Mukarovsky (1970) cited in Awonuga (1988) is an umbrella term in linguistic stylistics, which is used to denote linguistic items that are significant for textual meaning. Foregrounding can occur in a text at various linguistic levels such as *morphological, lexical, syntactic, orthographic, phonetic and phonological* levels. More importantly, at the syntactic level, it can be at the sub-levels of *sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme*. In this paper, I am interested in the lexical and syntactic foregrounding in the two poems selected as well as their socio-pragmatic implications and interpretations.

Awonuga (1988), in his application of linguistic stylistic approach to the appreciation of Jared Angira's *If*, lists three types of foregrounding: *deviation, non-deviation and dominance* of linguistic items. Deviation here refers to the deviation of linguistic items from the linguistic and literary norms. According to Mukarovsky (1970), quoted in Awonuga (1988), "deviation.....constitutes a deautomatisation of familiar linguistic and literary patterns". From this point of view, *foregrounding* is seen as the opposite of automatization: automatization schematises an event; foregrounding means the violation or deautomatisation of the scheme". Foregrounding, therefore, means doing violence to or defamiliarising linguistic items at various levels of sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. In other words, it is the use of language in unusual ways, which is characteristic of literary styles as obtained in the use of simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, alliteration and irony.

Another type of foregrounding mentioned in Awonuga (1988) is that of non-deviation of linguistic items. This, he refers to as the type of

foregrounding in which the structure acquires significance in the text as a result of the fact that it makes use of a certain aspect of language or of literary norms in such a consistent and systematic manner that it thrusts itself, as it were, on the reader (Awonuga, 1988:40).

The two types of foregrounding described above can be found in *repetition* and *syntactic parallelism* which are meant to emphasise certain issues in the text. When a writer uses repetition, he or she is emphasising an aspect of the theme of the text if not the whole theme itself. Repetition can also manifest itself at various linguistic levels of sentence, clause, group, word, and morpheme. In this paper, we have collapsed for convenience both instances of non-deviation and prominent/dominant types of foregrounding as they have similar features in common.

Another type of foregrounding of the non-deviation type is that of syntactic parallelism. This is a kind of repetition of syntactic patterns in a text. This repetition of the syntactic patterns can be significant to the meaning of a text. The non-deviation type of foregrounding also includes the writer's use of subordination and superordination in literary texts. This is the systematic foregrounding of components in a work of poetry, which consists of the gradation of interrelationships of these components, that is, in their mutual subordination and superordination (hypotaxis and parataxis) (see Awonuga, 1988). However, this last sub-type of foregrounding is not present in the texts examined in this paper.

The last type of foregrounding and likely the most important is that of dominance or prominence of linguistic items. This also can be at various levels of sentence, clause, group, word and morpheme. The decoding of the functions of such linguistic items always portrays the overall meaning of a literary text. In this paper, we are going to discuss the poem, *Song of Sorrow* and *The Casualties* by looking at various levels of foregrounding most especially, those of *prominence/dominance, deviation, repetition and syntactic parallelism* as they manifest themselves at the sub-linguistic levels of sentence, clause, group and word.

Daramola (2006:469-487), a linguistic analysis of Wole Soyinka's '*Abiku*' is carried out using Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) with particular reference to structure and reference. In the paper, an attempt was made to explain how Soyinka has constructed meaning in his own version of '*Abiku*'. The concept of semiotic was also used to establish its socio-cultural relevance. In particular, the concept of antilanguage was used to explain *Abiku*'s apparent strange behaviour. The analysis, most importantly, demonstrated *Abiku*'s means of meaning that were inherent in the choices that Soyinka made of both structural and referential modes of meaning. Also, and finally in the paper, *Abiku*'s meaning potential was far more evident in the grammar of processes than in referential relation.

Daramola reports in another article (Daramola, 2009:86-102) that in J.P. Clark's *Abiku* in contrast to Soyinka's '*Abiku*', the poet addresses '*Abiku*' and, in its first lines, the tone is commanding and defiant as in all of the lines of Wole Soyinka's '*Abiku*'. In actual fact, the '*Abiku*' child is the one talking, boasting with his/her clenched fist and beating his/her chest in Soyinka's '*Abiku*' while in Clark's '*Abiku*', somebody is addressing, pleading with the spirit child to pity his/her suffering mother and stay. Subsequently, Clark's '*Abiku*' becomes attentive, passive and patiently listens to an appeal 'to stay' in order to alleviate the suffering of its mother. The final tone is, nevertheless, mournful in order to draw '*Abiku*'s pity to its mother that it has plagued repeatedly. One does not have any evidence in the poem that '*Abiku*' listens to the poet's plea to pity his/her mother. Daramola has used the same theoretical approach: Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) to unravel the meaning of the two poems of similar title.

Similarly, I want to use linguistic proofs to arrive at the overall meaning of the two selected poems. In addition to the above, the analysis will gain insights from pragmatic and discourse analytic clues such as the writer, audience, society, message, method of transmission, effect, setting, culture and whatever social structure that is significant to the meaning of the two poems (see McCarthy, Matthiessen and Slade, 2002:55-73 and Spencer-Oatey and Zegarac, 2002: 74-91).

3. Literary Interpretation of the Poetry Texts Selected

In J.P. Clark's *The Casualties*, the poet laments the after-effect of the Nigerian civil war which occurred between 1967 and 1970. In the opinion of the poet, it is not only those who were killed, maimed or who lost people in the war that were victims or casualties of the war, but all Nigerians. The theme of the poem *Song of Sorrow* is that of lamentation over the poet-protagonist's poverty, loss of his household members and dispossession of his extended family land.

The Casualties is made up of three stanzas. In the first stanza, the poet eliminates the obvious cases of the casualties of the Nigerian civil war. These are the dead, the wounded, the prisoners of the war and the war aggravators:

The casualties are not only those who are dead;
They are well out of it
The casualties are not only those who are wounded
They await burial by installment.
The casualties are not only those who have lost
Persons or property, hard as it is
The casualties are not only those led away by night (Lines 1 -9)

In the second stanza, the poet adds to the catalogue of the casualties by including the propagandists of the war from both the Nigerian and the secessionist Biafran sides. These people were nonchalant about the devastation that befell their people and their land at home. These war aggravators stayed in the choicest hotels abroad (smoke rooms) making other countries of the world to take side with either the Biafran side or the Nigerian side.

The third and last stanza serves as the conclusion to the prosaic poem. The poem explains the reasons why all Nigerians were victims of the war in one way or another. This is because there was propaganda from sides, misunderstanding, 'heavy taxes', 'frightening rumours', 'hunger and looting'. Not only that, despite the war which was declared as 'no victor no vanquished', the imminent causes of the war that ended in 1970 are still here with us with the post election riots that emanated in some parts of Northern Region, following the election that ushered in Goodluck Jonathan as President. This post election riot claimed hundreds of lives and maimed thousands of people and destroyed a lot of properties of people from tribes other than Hausa, Fulani and the Nupes. This post-election riot has now metamorphosed into Boko Haram insurgency in the

North-Eastern part of Nigeria and other parts of Northern Nigeria. Recently too, there was a strong agitation for the recognition of the Republic of Biafra by the leaders of Movement of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB) and this led to the detention of the ring leader, Nnamdi Kanu.

In the case of Kofi Awoonor's "Song of Sorrow", the first theme is explored in the first part of the poem and the person responsible for the poverty of the poet is a deity, called Dzogbese Lisa, a god amongst the Ewe speaking people of Dahomey (Republic of Benin) and Togo land. The two names (Dzogbese and Lisa) represent the male and female components of the god. This is in congruence with the biblical Adam and Eve as seen in the Old Testament of the bible. The concept of two gods or deities rolled into one is not alien to Africa. For instance, in Kenya; there are Gikuyu and Mumbi (male and female deities) whom the Gikuyu people hold in high esteem as their primordial god and goddess. The same story is true of a lineage in Ile-Ife, a town in Osun State of Nigeria that has 'Akinfon' (Hero of the land) and 'Orolu' (Heroine and peace-maker or help-meet) as a semblance of male and female deities. Nearly every setting in Africa has one story of creation or the other that can be traced to their place, similar to that of Adam and Eve in the old testament of the bible. Such is the case with Dzogbese and Lisa or Dzogbese Lisa.

With this background evidence, one can rightly say that the poem is rooted in African belief and tradition. Amongst Africans, there is the belief that whatever becomes of a man is a product of what his/her god destines him/her to be. Among the Igbo people in Nigeria, there is the belief in self-god known as 'chi'. Everybody in Igbo land has the self-god called 'chi' which one should worship and make sacrifice to in order to appease it for protection and good luck. The same story is true of the Yoruba people who have an equivalent in 'Ori' (head), that is, destiny. According to the Yoruba belief, whatever happens to a person in the world is what his/her 'Destiny' or 'Ori' destines him/her for. In this vein, there are two kinds of 'ori' or head, the one outside, that is the one everybody is carrying on his/her neck and the one inside, that is, one's character or behaviour. Thus, the concept of destiny or luck, and the belief that there is a god or goddess that controls that destiny or luck is not alien to Africa right from Tripoli to Cape Town and the same belief and tradition are what is being explicated in "Song of Sorrow" by Kofi Awoonor.

The poem (Song of Sorrow) is a form of elegy: a poem that mourns the death of a person or a group of people. It may also be an elegy that laments the dispossession of people's properties including their ancestral land. The poem is divided into two parts of three stanzas each. While the first part thematises a lamentation over the penury of the poet-protagonist; the second part laments over the dispossession or demise of the poet's co-members of the same family and their ancestral land. No wonder, the prognosis of the poem is the demise of the poet-protagonist, Kofi Awoonor himself in the Kenyan mall bomb blast that occurred in 2013 in front of University of Nairobi, Science campus. This onerous act is an extension of the tragedy that began in the poem,

‘Song of Sorrow’, and the death of the poet is the end of the tragedy first evinced in the poem (I can only go beyond and rest).

One can rightly say that the two poems (‘The Casualties’ and ‘Song of Sorrow’) belong to the same genre and have the same theme. Both of them lament the death of a group of people and the destruction of various properties. While Awoonor blames his ancestral god (Dzogbeze Lisa), Clark blames Nigerian leadership and followership.

4. Application of Linguistic Stylistic Approach to the Texts

In this section of the paper, I intend to do a pragma-linguistic analysis of the two poems basing my discussion on the concept of foregrounding at the three levels of dominance, deviation and non-deviation of linguistic items.

4.1 Dominance and Non-deviance of Linguistic Items

There are some linguistic items that are dominant or prominent in ‘Song of Sorrow’ and their presence is significant to the meaning of the text. The first item is the first two lexical items of the poem: ‘Dzoghese Lisa’. He is the deity blamed for the bad destiny of the poet-protagonist. There is also a pronoun ‘it’ used to represent Dzoghese Lisa. Another word on Line 1 is ‘thus’. This is a *substitute* for the bad and unwholesome experience of the poet presented in the poem. All these words are foregrounded for the overall meaning of the poem as seen in the first two lines of the poem: *Thus*

Dzoghese Lisa has treated me *thus*;
It has led me among the sharps of the forest

Dzoghese Lisa is the ancestral god which destines poverty and other unwholesome experiences for the poet-protagonist. *Thus* in Line 1 is a substitute for poverty, difficulty, hard time and extreme corner. The ‘it’ (Line 2) is also a *proform* for Dzoghese Lisa, who is believed to be responsible for the unwholesome destiny and experience of the poet-protagonist. We can then explain the first part of the poem that Dzoghese Lisa in Line 1 is somebody (deity) who is responsible for the problem of the poet-protagonist (Line 2-23). This is to say that the explanation of the kind of problem undergone by the protagonist is obtained in Lines 2 to 23. These lines are in cataphoric (forward) reference to the substitute or proform (*thus*) mentioned earlier.

Another foregrounded element is *something* and its proform *things* obtained in Part II, stanza I of the poem, thus:

Something has happened to me
The *things* so great that I can not weep

These two words (something and things, italicized above) suggest the death of the poet's children, relatives, kiths and kins. These two lines are followed by a tale of woe about the protagonist: death of his people, desolation and dispossession of his ancestral land.

Non-deviant, dominant or prominent linguistic items that are fore-grounded in the poem involve those of repetition and syntactic parallelism. Repetition occurs at various linguistic levels of word, group, clause and sentence in the poem. The word 'beyond' is used twice throughout the poem (Lines 13 and 32), thus:

I can only go beyond and forget (line 13)
I shall go beyond and rest (line 32)

This portrays that the poet's death is the only solace for him. However, it is pathetic if the only solution to one's problem is to die. And, that the poet-protagonist actually did (outside the poem) in the Kenyan bomb blast of 2013 orchestrated by unknown Al-Shabab terrorists. Another repetition at the word level is that of 'wilderness' which is repeated twice in Lines 28 and 29. This is used as a substitute or synonym to 'forest' (line 2). 'Wilderness' and 'forest' are used in describing the poet-protagonist's world which is full of poverty, death, desolation, helplessness, hopelessness, dehumanisation, destruction, dispossession of properties and general failure. The stylistic effect of this repetition is to emphasise the degree of the poet's difficult life experience.

At the sentence level, we have

I am on the world's extreme corner
I am on the world's extreme corner (Lines 8 and 12)

The whole idea of the poem can be located in the second stanza of Part I of the poem thus:

I am on the world's extreme corner
I am not sitting in the row with the eminent
But those who are lucky sit in the middle and
forget
I am on the world's extreme corner.
I can only go beyond and forget (lines 8 and 12)

In the above stanza, we are able to know the true position of the poet. He belongs to the lowest social stratum. We are, in the stanza above, reminded of the theoretical divisions of the society into the upper, middle and lower classes in Sociology. The poet belongs to the lower class and there is no hope of social climbing to the middle and upper classes. His only hope is to die (go beyond and forget).

Another foregrounding of the systematic type (non-deviant type) is the use of syntactic parallelism. Syntactic parallelism, according to Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985); is another form of repetition. While in the original repetition, words are being repeated verbatim; in syntactic parallelism, however, syntactic forms or structural patterns are being repeated instead of repeating similar words or expressions. The following are the examples in ‘Song of Sorrow’:

A. *Subject+Predicator+Intensive Complement*

Returning/is/not possible

And going forward/is/a great difficulty

B. *Adjunct+Subject+Predicator+Extensive Complement*

If I turn here/ the rain / beats/ me

If I turn there / the sun/ burns /me

C. *Adjunct +Subject+Predicator+Intensive Complement/Adjunct*

Alas! The travelers/ are /back

All / covered / with debt

D. *Subject +Predicator+ Extensive Complement +Adjunct+Adjunct*

I / have / no son / to fire the gun / when I die

And / no daughter / to wail / when I close my mouth

E. *Subject+Predicator+Extensive Complement (or Adjunct)*

The rain/has beaten/me.

And the sharp stumps/cut/as keen as knives

F. *Subject+Predicator+Extensive (or Intensive) Complement*

(Alas!) A snake/has bitten/me

My right arm/is/ broken

And the tree on which I lean/is/fallen

Items A and B in the extract above suggest the theme of hopelessness for the protagonist as he cannot change his position from poverty to wealth. There is no solution to his problem as he is

going from the frying pan into fire since his problem escalates every day. In item C, the theme of hopelessness is heightened, as he becomes a total failure. Item D implies that the protagonist has lost his children, as no child is there to inherit his property or perform his funeral ceremony or rites which Africans hold in high esteem. Item E is just like A and B suggesting hopelessness and failure for the protagonist. Item F also suggests the same theme of hopelessness and helplessness as Agosu who is his last mentor and hope died only to leave the protagonist alone to suffer, as the death of Agosu is like the proverbial last straw that broke the camel's back.

In *The Casualties*, by J.P Clark, prominence is portrayed in form of repetition of a catalogue of the casualties: those who are dead, those who lost people and property, those who got lost, those who did not want the war to come to an end and of course because they benefit from the loot and all Nigerians. At the word level, the word 'casualties' is repeated nine times in the whole poem, making it prominent that the poem actually thematises tragedy. Not only that, there is the use of various alliterations, assonance and onomatopoea; suggesting war such as 'casualties', 'cell', 'burning', 'shattered shell' (line 16), 'ravage and wreck' (line 19), 'persons and property' (line 6) 'sagging' (line 41), 'kwashiorkor' (line 42), "caught in the clash of counter claims and charges" (line 28), with the last item suggesting the actual sound of a machine gun.

Aside from that, the poet-protagonist also makes use of query (question) and answer technique to portray those that are casualties. He first of all removes the obvious cases through the presentation of question and answer couplets thus:

The casualties are not those who are dead
 They are well out of it
 The casualties are not those that are wounded
 Though they await burial by installment
 The casualties are not those that lost
 Persons or property.....

Another method of prominence to portray meaning employed by the poet is syntactic parallelism which is another kind of repetition, this time around not the repetition of linguistic items verbatim but that of grammatical or syntactic patterns. Most of the lines in the prosaic poem can be analysed into subject, predicator and complement, e.g.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| S | P | C |
| The casualties /are not/ those who are dead | | |
| The casualties /are not /those who are wounded | | |

Here, there is an intensive relationship between the subject and the intensive complement. This is used to eliminate the obvious cases of casualties from the hidden cases such as how all Nigerians both the ruler and the ruled fall to one category or another of casualties and the case of war

aggravators and ‘ambassadors of rift’. All these linguistic devices are meant to thematise tragedy as portrayed in the poem.

4.2 Deviations of Linguistic Items

In the poem, *Song of Sorrow*, we come across some deviations which culminate into an unsystematic or unusual use of language. These defamiliarisations can be seen in the use of metaphors, simile, personification, symbolism, run-on-line or enjambment. This use of language has helped to shed light on the point of view of the poet. Let us consider the following from the poem in order to illustrate the above figures of speech contextually:

PART I

- A. It has led me among the sharps of the forest (line 2)
- B. I am on the world extreme corner (line 8)
- C. The firewood of this world
Is for only those who can take heart
That is why not all can gather it (lines 17-19)
- D. Alas; the travellers are back
All covered with debt

PART II

- A I have wondered on the wilderness
A great wilderness men call life (lines 28-29).
- B Alas! A snake has bitten me.
My right arm is broken.
And the tree on which I lean is fallen (lines 44-46)

In the above extract, the poet defamiliarises language in order to suggest his true position in life. He compares his life in the world to living among the sharps of the forest. He uses the word ‘wilderness’ two times in Part II in lexical collocation with expressions like “the sharps of the forest” and “firewood” in Part 1. That is to say somebody in a wilderness or forest will undoubtedly be among sharps and firewood which are the things that make a forest. But his forest or wilderness is not an ordinary one; he is directly comparing his bad experience in life to a kind of forest. Another corresponding concept is seen in item B (Part 1) above, that is, his occupation of the extreme corner. The line containing ‘extreme corner’ is repeated twice in Part I, suggesting emphatically that he is in the lower class where things are very difficult for people.

Item C is a kind of run-on-line or enjambment where the “firewood” may refer to the good things of life which cannot be got by everybody but the lucky ones. This line contrasts with the image of forest and firewood mentioned in the subsequent stanzas. It is not surprising hearing of ‘firewood’ here, since he has mentioned “wilderness” and “forest” in the previous lines symbolising a tedious life experience. All the three items mentioned are collocates which remind us of the bitter side of human life experience.

In D, we expect travellers to come with the good things of life on their arrival from their journeys. Here, the travellers are back, covered with debts instead of clothes and ornaments from the foreign land. Thus, this part of the poem ends on a note of failure and hopelessness for the protagonist. In Part 2, the word ‘wilderness’ represents the bad side of life which the poet occupies. ‘My right arm’ and ‘tree’ represent somebody who is the bread winner or mentor of the poet and who is no more. ‘Snake’ here represents something dangerous and deadly that has happened to the poet. In the poem, the death of Agosu, his mentor is compared metaphorically to a snake bite, the consequence of which can be ruinous to him since he will have nobody else to take care of his needs as Agosu was doing for him when he was alive.

Another deviation from linguistic norm in the poem is through the use of simile. The first simile is in lines 5 – 7 thus:

The affairs of this world
Are like the chameleon faeces.
Into which I have stepped
When I clean it cannot go.

This is a kind of Homeric simile which is expanded and involved. Here, the poet compares his problem in life to that of chameleon faeces that is very indelible. That is to say poverty is indelible in the poet’s household. Another simile is in lines 30 to 31.

The rain has beaten me
And the sharp stumps cut as keen as knives.

The first line of the above extract is a metaphor for the disaster that has befallen the poet. We are not surprised to hear of “stumps” in the second line because this is suggestive of what obtains in the “wilderness” mentioned before. There is that picture of the poet stepping bare-footed on sharpened stumps that cut as keen as knives. These are not ordinary stumps but the hard experience of life. Line 30 looks like a personification, somebody beating another person while Line 31 is a kind of simile comparing ‘sharp stumps’ with ‘knives’.

Another deviation from ordinary use of language in the poem is the use of symbols. Symbolic use of language always suggests and extends meaning implications, e.g.

- A. And Kpeti’s great household is no more
Only the broken fence stands
- B. And those who dared not look in his face.
Have come out as men
- C. And the trees in the fence.
Have been eaten by termites
- D. And the crow and the vulture

Hover always above our broken fences
 E And strangers walk over our portion

All these lines suggest the theme of dispossession of one's ancestral land. "Broken fence" symbolises total destruction—the remains of the dispossessed land while all the other properties therein have come to ruin. Item B implies that the land has been taken over by strangers which implies illegal and irredeemable dispossession of what rightly belongs to a lineage. Item C also suggests total ruin or total destruction of the properties of the ancestral home of the poet. Crows and vultures are birds of bad omen that congregate only where there are dead bodies of animals, including those of human beings. The last line suggests the total "taking over" of what rightly belongs to the protagonist's extended family by strangers who were formerly inferior to them. What a dehumanization and degradation of the highest order!

Another foregrounding of the deviation type is where the poet treats an inanimate object or a non-human as a human being thus,

Death has made war upon our household

In the above line, death, which is a phenomenon, is defamiliarised as a man or a group of men that can wage a war. The situation, in which people die in their hundreds of thousand in the poet's household as revealed in the poem, necessitates such defamiliarisation of language as we have here. One can take the line for a hyperbole or an exaggeration; however, the language captures the context of the poet's despicable experience. The line can also be taken for personification, an unformidable soldier fighting the whole household with weapons of war.

In *The Casualties*, a lot of linguistic items are defamiliarised to portray connotative or associative meaning in the poem. These are in forms of metaphors, similes and hyperbole in order to suggest the meaning inherent in the poem. For example, emissaries of rift are the messengers of doom referring to war ambassadors that reside abroad staying in their smoke rooms (the coziness of their hotel rooms abroad). There is the image of a ghost that haunts abroad used to refer to those emissaries of rift who are interested in the prolongation of the war so that they will continue to enjoy their allowances abroad as aggravators and propagandists of the war. This same set of people are also referred to as 'wandering minstrels' holding drums entertaining people both Europeans and Africans abroad with the ugly situation of war back in Nigeria. The line "The drum overwhelms the gun" epitomises exaggeration or hyperbole surrounding the truth about the war back home in Nigeria. This is telling us that all the ambassadors of the war from the two sides of Nigeria and Biafra are exaggerating the truth about the war in order to elongate the war and make their account fat in far away United States of America and the United Kingdom. This is because the longer the war, the more they would be employed to stay abroad doing their propaganda work and earning fat income from the

Biafran and Nigerian sides. These people are making provocative statements (drums) that will make other countries of the world to take sides in the war (the guns) that they do not know the reason for its occurrence and thereby elongating the duration of the war. The ‘funeral piles’ refers to the civil war itself while the ‘forest’ refers to the country Nigeria, which is in a state of anarchy and panic. The poet has also used irony as he refers to the prison as a haven. It is an irony because a prison is expected to be a place where one’s freedom is curtailed but during the civil war that occurred between 1967 and 1970, a prison was sometimes a haven for the victims or casualties of war because they were not actually on the battlefield and thus were safe.

4.3 Pragmatic Clues

The pragmatic clue in Kofi Awoonor’s ‘Song of Sorrow’ is that the poem is rooted in African tradition, culture and beliefs. There is the belief that what one will do in life has been destined by the gods and goddesses of his or her people. That is why the poet-protagonist blames Dzogbese Liza, his ancestral god for being responsible for his calamities in life. Another proof of evidence of African tradition is the high esteem Africans hold children because they live after them and therefore perform funeral rites as reflected in the following lines:

I have no sons to fire the gun when I die
And no daughter to wail when I close my mouth

The two lines above refer to the African tradition associated with the activities of the deceased’s sons and daughters when one dies. If a man has no son and daughter, who will then perform all the funeral rites supposedly to be performed by one’s children? Such is the case of the poet-protagonist in ‘Song of Sorrow’. Another traditional belief that those people that have gone to the world beyond are not just there, but they are there to look after those they left behind in the world. But in the case of the poet-protagonist in ‘Song of Sorrow’, those that are dead in their household are not performing their normal duty of taking care or protecting those they left behind. As a result, the calamity of those alive has been heightened:

Agosu, if you go tell them
Tell Nyidevu, Kpeti and Kove
That they have done us evil
Tell them their house is falling
And the trees in the fence
Have been eaten by termites

The overall message in J.P. Clark’s ‘The Casualties’ resides at the tail end of the prosaic poem indicating that all Nigerians are casualties of the Nigeria/Biafra civil war in one way or the other even after the fratricidal and gun-shooting civil war. Since the end of the war, there are some uprisings or the others such as Maitatsene riot, Boko Haram insurgency, total mistrust, kidnapping with or without ransom, corruptions in high places and pipeline vandalism. Each part of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria has one militant group or the order such as Oduduwa

Peoples Congress in the South-West, Bakasi Boys the South-Eastern, Boko Haram insurgents , Maitatsene Gang and Zaria Shites in the Northern Nigeria, Niger Delta Militants the Rivers State, Eye cults, Aake cults and a host of others in our tertiary institutions and local communities in Nigeria. Proofs of evidence of these in the poem read thus:

We fall
 All casualties of the war
 Because we cannot hear each other speak
 Because eyes have ceased to see the face from the crowd
 Because whether we know or
 Do not know the extent of wrong on all sides

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have explicated the two lamentations: J.P. Clark's "The Casualties" and Kofi Awoonor's "Song of Sorrow", using linguistic-stylistic and pragmatic approaches. This is by using the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) of elements in the grammatical rankscale such as *sentence, clause, group and word* as foregrounded for literary meaning at the three levels of *deviation, non-deviation and dominance* of linguistic items. In this paper, we have used linguistic proofs of evidence inherent in the poems to unravel their literary meaning implications.

Both poems present a vivid picture of the socio-economic and political happenings in Nigeria most especially after the civil war that started in 1967 and ended in 1970. It implies that despite the gun-shooting fratricidal war, the problem plaguing Nigeria, a colonial administrative convenience, is not over. This is because there is the problem of bad leadership and corruption and some people think the political leadership at the centre should be their inalienable right. And, when a leader suddenly emerges from another tribe other than theirs, he or she receives little or no cooperation from the tribe different from theirs. Such is the case of the previous leadership of the PDP in Nigeria. People predicted that if there is a change of government from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressive Congress (APC) there is likely to be relative peace, a better approach to governance and better economy. But with the emergence of the APC government, the country is yet to experience the needed transformation.

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INTONATION PATTERNS OF THE ENGLISH OF NIGERIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract

The first formal training most Nigerian students have with English is through nursery and primary schools. The proficiency of the teachers at this level is an important factor in the development of the English language skills of the students. Therefore, this study investigated the intonation patterns of the spoken English of eighty Nigerian primary school teachers. The teachers were selected from four local governments in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The test material assigned to them was a written dialogue between two people, which they read in the form of role-play. A modified version of Pierrehumbert's (1980) Tune-Text Association theory, as adapted by Udofot (2002), was employed as the theoretical framework. The data were subjected to perceptual and acoustic analyses. The falling tune, rising tune and fall-rise tune were identified, while the rise-fall tune did not exist in their spoken English. The existence of the fall-rise tune was traced to bi-syllabic words found at the edge tones of prosodic phrases. The participants did not use intonation to express doubt, polite request and indifference; however, they employed the raised tune to indicate surprise. Therefore, the raised tune (RH/RL) was proposed to be included as a pattern of intonation in Nigerian English.

1. Introduction

Research has shown that many educated Nigerians still find it difficult approximating to the Standard British English (SBE). Eka (1985), Udofot, (1997), Akinjobi and Oladipupo (2010), and Akinjobi (2011), among others, have investigated the proximity of the English spoken by the educated elite. They claim that educated Nigerians do not approximate well to Standard British English (SBE). This is partly due to the differences in the sound systems of the Nigerian indigenous languages and English and the cultural differences between them. Many Nigerians modify English in order to be able to express their cultural peculiarities through it. As a result, a new variety of English emerged in the nation, known as Nigerian English (NE).

Bamgbose (1982), Banjo (1996), Udofot (2002), Fakoya (2006), (Jowitt, 2007), Faleye (2011), Sunday (2011), Odeyemi (2015) Akindele (2015) and Soneye and Faleye (2015) among others, have studied the varieties of written and spoken English in Nigeria. Some other scholars have also investigated the features and structures of the intonation of Nigerian English. They include Okon (2001), Adesina (2005), Udofot (2002), Melefa (2011) and Adejuwon (2016).

Banjo (1971) identifies four varieties of Nigerian English (NE). Among these varieties, variety III has been proposed as the standard Nigerian English because it would ensure a standard which is both highly socially acceptable and internationally intelligible (Banjo, 1996:83). Variety III should, therefore, be the variety of spoken NE to be taught to students, at all levels of education, after it has been standardised.

Eka (1985), Udofot, (1997), Akinjobi and Oladipupo (2010) and Akinjobi (2011) have examined the proximity of the English language spoken by educated Nigerians at the tertiary level of education to Standard British English (SBE). They found that most of them do not approximate to it. However, there is a dearth of research on the English spoken by primary school instructors, whose linguistic ability is important to the linguistic foundation of the students, being the students' first contacts in formal education. The only way of knowing whether an upgrade of the teachers' spoken English will be needed or not and the areas where it will be needed is to carry out an empirical study of the spoken English of the teachers. Hence, this research carried out an empirical study of the intonation patterns of Nigerian primary school teachers. This was with a view to identifying their intonation patterns and determining their level of proficiency with regard to intonation.

2. Nigerian English intonation

The domain of intonation is the tone-unit or tone-group, which has four components. These are the optional *pre-head*, optional *head*, obligatory *nucleus* and optional *tail*. The nucleus is usually, but not necessarily, the last stressed syllable in the tone-group and it is usually on this syllable that the pitch direction takes effect. The head is from the first stressed syllable to the last syllable before the tonic syllable (or nucleus). The pre-head is all unstressed syllables before the head, while the tail is every unstressed syllable after the tonic syllable (Cruttenden, 1986).

Cruttenden (1986) notes that intonation involves the occurrence of recurring pitch patterns, each of which is used with a set of relatively consistent meanings, either on single words or on groups of words of varying lengths. To him, intonation is concerned with syllables that are prominent, how they are prominent, to what extent they are prominent and the movement from one prominent syllable to another within an utterance. Jones (1960) also defines intonation as the variations in the pitch of the voice in connected speech; it is that variations in the pitch of the musical note arising from the vibration of the vocal cords.

Many linguists identified two 'basic' tunes for English. Tune I stands for the falling tune, while Tune II stands for the rising tune. These tunes (I and II) are not the only tunes in English but they cover a good deal of ordinary speech. For example, *wh*-questions, declarative statements, exclamations and orders are assigned the falling tune; while polar questions and requests are assigned the rising tune (cf. Akinjobi, 2011). Roach (1991) identifies three basic tunes: high, fall, and level but expands the three basic tunes to five, namely: fall, rise, fall-rise, rise-fall and level.

Since "tone and intonation are not completely mutually exclusive in languages" (Cruttenden 1986:10; cf. Pam 2013), it is better to view English as a stress language, rather than an intonation language, and Nigerian languages (which include Yoruba) as tone languages (Atoye 2004:48). Atoye (1989:11) argues that "...the only difference between tone and stress in respect of

linguistic function justifies a classification of human languages into tone and stress languages.” Nigerian English reflects the prosodic structure of the speaker’s native language; stressed syllables are associated with a high tone and unstressed syllables with a low tone (Wells 1982; Gusseenhoven and Jacobs, 2006). Nigerian speakers of English tend to stress every syllable while speaking, whereas in Standard British English, no matter how long a word may be, it is expected to have just a primary stress (Osisanwo, 2012).

Jowitt (2000) proposes the following characteristics of the NE intonation system:

- i. predominance of falling nuclei in statements, wh-questions and commands;
- ii. predominance of rising nuclei in yes-no questions and tag questions;
- iii. rare productions of complex nuclei; and
- iv. high pitch on lexical words.

Melefa (2011) investigated the rhythmic and intonational patterns of NN24’s newscasting. The analysis was perceptual, metrical and acoustic. There were prevailing patterns of strong (S) and weak (W) syllables alternation in the data. There were consistent patterns of isochronous stressed syllables. The newscasters assigned high tone to unstressed syllables, contrary to previous claims that only stressed syllables are assigned high tone in Nigerian English. NN24’s newscasting range could be monotonal or bi/multidirectional.

Intonation tune assignment by 30 Nigerian English Language postgraduate students was studied by Akinjobi (2011). The results revealed that the subjects’ performance reflected their academic competence. Their academic competence had little or no effect on the appropriate assignment of intonation tunes in polite requests, complex sentences and attitudinal functions, such as surprise, indifference and expression of doubts or uncertainty. The only appropriately used tune was the falling tune, followed by the rising tune, which had been fairly mastered for polar questions.

Akinjobi and Oladipupo (2010) examined the extent to which Nigerian speakers of English use English intonation tunes to express attitude. Twenty-two television reporters using English for their professional assignments and confirmed to have been exposed to basic training in English intonation during their academic studies and/or in the course of their professional training were made to read five utterance-items designed to test their knowledge of attitudinal function of intonation. The analysis showed that the respondents were deficient in the use of English intonation tunes to express attitude.

Udofot (2002) describes Nigerian English (NE) intonation using a modified version of Pierrehumbert’s (1980) transcription system for perceptual analysis and (Signal Analysis) Package for acoustic analysis. The 60 NE speakers sampled divided utterances into more intonation phrases. There was a high frequency of the use of the falling tune and a preference for unidirectional tunes. Furthermore, pauses between intonation groups were shorter in NE than in

BE. However, Udofot did not include in her prepared text material any text that can be used to test the subjects' rising and rise-fall tunes.

3. Teachers as models in English pronunciation

Studies on teachers as models in English pronunciation have shown that teachers are not yet competent enough to be regarded as models. This is because the teachers' influence on the students, which reflects in their spoken English performance, among other aspects of learning, is not impressive, especially in Nigerian primary and secondary schools.

Adesina (2005) investigated the use of intonation by senior secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government area of Oyo State, Nigeria by randomly selecting four schools. She found that many secondary school students could not assign stress marks appropriately despite their exposure to English right from their nursery schools. This shows that Nigerian secondary school teachers cannot be said to be good models to their students, in terms of spoken English.

Kanoksilapatham (2014) conducted a study on Thai's elementary school teachers' English pronunciation, using 147 Thai elementary school teachers. The results showed that the teachers had difficulty identifying stressed syllables in English. Among the seven variables explored, the teachers' course of study/discipline was found to be the potential factor which significantly impacted the test scores. Those who specialised in English as their course of study in the university did better than others. Kanoksilapatham consequently suggested that a good candidate for a position as an English teacher should be one whose area of specialisation is English Language.

The foregoing review reveals that adequate research attention has not been given to the intonation pattern of the English of Nigerian primary school teachers. The study on Thai does not capture the sociolinguistic realities of Nigeria. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the peculiarities of the intonation of Nigerian primary school teachers to see how proficient they are with regard to use of intonation.

4. Methodology

The study sample consisted of eighty private and public primary school teachers who were purposively selected from different schools in four local governments in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Forty each were chosen from public and private schools. Ten schools were purposively sampled in each local government, based on the availability of the teachers and their willingness to participate in the study: five private schools and five public schools. In each school, two teachers were purposively selected, starting from those who taught between classes four and six, being the classes where English is meant to be used as the medium of instruction, according to the National Policy on Education (2004). There were 28 males and 52 females. All the participants spoke their mother tongues (Igbo, Fulfude and Yoruba) as first language and English

as second language. They had at least, secondary school certificate. The test material assigned to them was a written dialogue between two people, which they read in the form of a role-play, in order to test their grammatical and attitudinal use of intonation.

Data for this study were generated from the tape-recorded renditions of the subjects. For perceptual analysis, the distribution of tones of the spoken dialogue of each subject was indicated, using a modified version of Pierrehumbert's (1980) Tune-Text Association, adapted by Udofot (2002), which adopted two tonal elements H(igh) and L(ow) to represent the speech contours. The number of distribution of tones as used by the participants was calculated and converted to percentages. This was to ascertain which tune was used for which utterance and to also reveal the variants that were most frequent in their intonation patterns. The intonation patterns of the teachers were determined by the nuclear pitch accents found at the boundary tones of intonation phrases (IPs). The utterances were segmented into three tiers on a text grid window, relying on the pitch and intensity of the data. The acoustic analysis was done with Praat.

5. Autosegmental-metrical theory

Autosegmental-metrical (AM) theory was formulated for English by Pierrehumbert (1980). The division of utterances into phrases and the assignment of relative prominence to elements within the phrase (phrasing and highlighting) represent the *metrical* aspect, which was first proposed by Liberman and Prince (1977). The association of the tones (grouped into accents – if the language has them – and boundary tones) with the metrical structure (in other words, the association of the tune with the text) represents the autosegmental aspect.

In most AM models, the nucleus does not have a special status. It is simply defined as the last fully-fledged pitch accent in a phrase, which means that there is no theoretical distinction between “pre-nuclear” and “nuclear” accents. Pitch modulation is captured as a sequence of *targets* in autosegmental-metrical models. Targets specify only specific points in the F0 contour, represented phonologically as “tones.” H(igh) tones correspond to high targets, referred to as “peaks,” L(ow) tones to low targets, referred to as “valleys” or “troughs.” These tones can be combined into composite pitch accents: LH, which represents a rise; and HL, which represents a fall. In the British School, configurations such as rise or fall are the primitives (basic units), whereas in the autosegmental-metrical approach they are derived, the basic building blocks being the levels High and Low (Grice and Baumann, 2005).

Following the autosegmental approach, Pierrehumbert (1980) proposes a description of intonation that consists of three parts: (i) the grammar of phrasal tunes, (ii) the metrical representation of the text, and (iii) the rules of assigning association lines. She also proposes a finite state grammar for generating the structure of the tunes. She assumes two distinct level tones, H (high) and L (low), which are instantiated as *pitch accents*, *phrase accents*, or *boundary tones*, as listed below:

Phonological tones (Pierrehumbert 1980):

- (i) Each phrase requires at least one *pitch accent* (for English: H*, L*, or bitonal as H*+L, H+L*, L*+H, L+H*, and H*+H).
- (ii) Each phrase receives a *phrase accent* (H⁻, L⁻) at the end of the word that is associated with the last pitch accent.
- (iii) Each phrase ends with a *boundary tone* (H%, L%).

The three types of tones have different positions and are aligned to different structural units: *Pitch accents* are realised on prominent syllables on the basis of the metrical pattern of the text. *Phrase accents* are realised after the pitch accents and after a certain amount of time. The phrase accents determine the melody between the nuclear tone and the boundary. *Boundary tones*, high (H%) or low (L%), are realised on the last syllables of an intonational phrase and determine the phrasing. The grammar generates tunes that consist of one or more pitch accents, followed by an obligatory phrase tone and an obligatory boundary tone (Grice and Baumann, 2005).

A modified version of autosegmental-metrical theory of intonation, adapted by Udofot (2002), was adopted for the perceptual analysis of the data. The focus of this study was to determine the grammatical and attitudinal use of intonation of the subjects, through the four most common English intonation patterns: fall, rise, fall-rise and the rise-fall intonation contours, represented as HL, LH, HLH and LHL, respectively. Within autosegmental-metrical theory, a combination of a pitch accent and an intonation phrase boundary tone, which marks the beginnings and/or ends of prosodic phrases, determines the intonational contour of a phrase (Gussenhoven, 1984). Thus, this study was only concerned with the edge tones of phrase accents and intonational phrases (IPs) by which the intonation patterns of Nigerian primary school teachers were determined.

6. Data analysis

6.1 Demography of the participants

Table 1: Distribution of subjects by level of education

The table below captures the sociocultural groupings of the subjects

| Level | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|
| SSCE | 1 | 1.25% |
| NCE | 33 | 41.25% |
| OND | 5 | 6.25% |
| HND | 5 | 6.25% |
| B.A/B.Ed/B.Sc | 32 | 40% |
| M.A/M.Ed/M.Sc | 4 | 5% |
| Total | 80 | 100% |

The level of education was investigated to determine the class of speakers of English to which the participants belonged. Table 1 shows that 98.25% of the teachers had a higher degree. This is

contrary to Banjo’s (1996:77) claim, that Nigerian teachers are made up of, at most, the secondary school certificate holders, for which reason he classifies them as variety II speakers (Banjo, 1996:89). Therefore, from this empirical study, it is observed that Nigerian primary school teachers are variety III speakers of Nigerian English. A total of 72 (90%) of the teachers were Yoruba; 7(8.6%) were Igbo; while only 1(1.3%) were Fulani. This is expected because the study was carried out in a Yoruba state.

6.2 Test of grammatical use of intonation by the participants

**Table 2: Distribution of tones on utterances that tested grammatical use of intonation
The falling tune (HL)**

| Utterance type & Expected Tune | HL Falling tune | | LH Rising tune | | HLH Fall-rise tune | | LHL Rise-fall tune | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|---|
| | No of cases | % | No of cases | % | No of cases | % | No of cases | % |
| Simple statements (HL) | 80 | 100% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Polar questions (LH) | 4 | 5% | 76 | 95% | - | - | - | - |
| Statements as questions (LH) | 32 | 40% | 44 | 55% | 4 | 5% | - | - |
| Commands (HL) | 79 | 98.8% | 1 | 1.3% | - | - | - | - |
| Exclamation (HL) | 80 | 100% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Wh-questions (HL) | 80 | 100% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Asking for repetition (LH) | 69 | 86.25% | 10 | 12.5% | 1 | 1.25% | - | - |
| Dependent clause (LH) | 37 | 46.25% | 37 | 46.25% | 6 | 7.5% | - | - |

In the grammatical use of intonation by the Nigerian primary school teachers examined, it was observed that, in line with Standard British English (SBE), the majority of the subjects assigned the falling tune to the boundary tones of utterances that required them, such as simple sentences, commands, wh-questions and exclamations. All the subjects assigned the falling tune to the boundary tones of simple statements, wh-questions and exclamations; while approximately 99% of them assigned the falling tune to commands. Consequently, out of the 320 falling tunes expected to be assigned to the utterances that bore them, 319 were correctly assigned the tune. This shows a mastery of the falling intonation by Nigerian primary school teachers.

The rising tune (LH)

With regard to assigning the rising tune to utterances, it was discovered that the participants were fairly proficient in it, especially in utterances with polar questions. However, their performance in other utterances which were not polar questions, but also demanded the assignment of a rising tune, was on the average. While most of them (95%) rightly assigned the rising tune to the boundary tones of polar questions; 55% and 46.25% rightly assigned it to the boundary tones of “statements as questions” and the phrase accent of dependent clauses, respectively. Only 12.5% of them correctly assigned it to statements used to ask for repetition, such as “I beg your pardon.” Consequently, out of the 320 rising tunes expected to be used on the utterances that had them, only 167 utterances were correctly assigned the tune; the remaining 153 utterances were assigned other tunes (especially the fall tune). The result showed that the rising tune had only been fairly mastered by the teachers.

There was no significant difference between the percentage of the subjects that used the fall tune for dependent clauses and those that used the rise tune for the same utterance. A total of 46.25% of the subjects used the falling tune for dependent clauses and another set of 46.25% of the subjects used the rising tune for the same utterance. This shows that either of the tunes can be used by the subjects for dependent clauses, without hindering meaning.

The same pattern was observed in the “statement as question” utterance type. While 55% of the subjects used the rise tune, 40% of the subjects used the fall tune for the same utterance despite the punctuation mark (question mark) that denotes that the utterance is a question. The question mark and the rule of using a rising intonation for questions were ignored by the speakers and they uttered the question like a statement, yet, with a question in mind. This means that, in a natural context, when using a ‘statement as question’ utterance type to ask questions, the participants used the falling tune just as they did here. The use of any of the tunes (rising or falling), therefore, does not matter to the participants and did not hinder the understanding of the listeners. Although the sentence was said with a falling tune, the speakers said it with a question in mind and the listeners did not consider it as a statement but understood it as a question. This means that the participants can use any of the tunes for “statements as questions” and still get the meaning of the utterance. It is unlike the polar-question utterance where 95% of the participants

correctly used the rising tune. Thus, “statements as questions” utterances could be a pragmatic way of asking for information in Nigerian English, while the polar question is the literal approach. It could also be that they do not obey the rule of using the rising tune for questions once the utterance is in form of a statement, regardless of the question mark before it. This is observed in their use of the falling tune for “I beg your pardon?” despite the question mark accompanying.

In summary, in terms of the grammatical use of intonation, the teachers assigned the falling tune to the boundary tones of all utterances that require them, in line with SBE, such as simple statements– 100%; wh-questions– 100%; exclamations– 100% and commands– 99% approximately. They also assigned the rising tune to utterances such as polar questions– 95%, statements as questions– 55%, dependent clauses– 46.25%, and statements used to ask for repetition– 12.5%. It can be concluded from the above analyses that the falling tune has been well mastered by the teachers but the rising tune has only been fairly mastered by them. Also, the use of both falling tune and rising tune for dependent clauses and “statements as questions” shows that either of the two tunes can be used for these utterances, without hindering meaning.

The spectrograms below capture the foregoing analysis:

Simple statement: ‘You and I are going to the museum.’

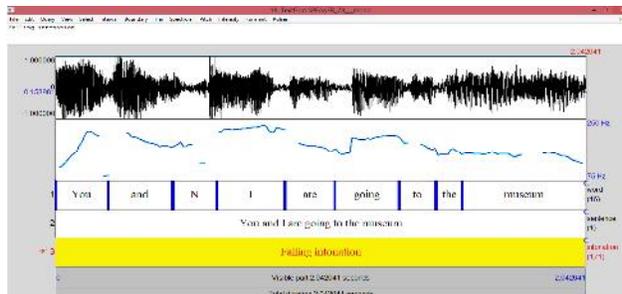


Fig. 1

This figure shows that the falling tune was used in producing ‘You and I are going to the museum.’

Wh-question: ‘What are these bones?’

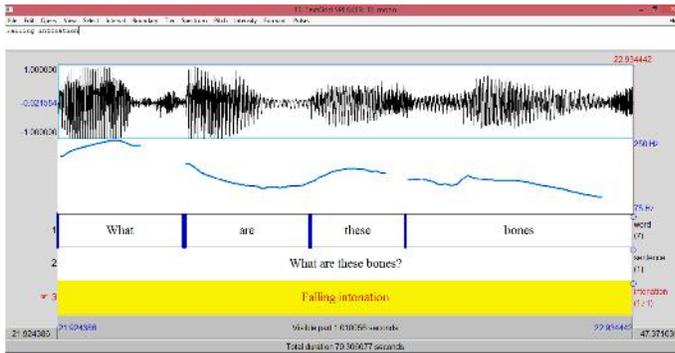


Fig. 2.

This figure indicates that ‘What are these bones?’ was produced with the falling tune.

Polar question: ‘Haven’t you seen an Elephant’s bone before?’

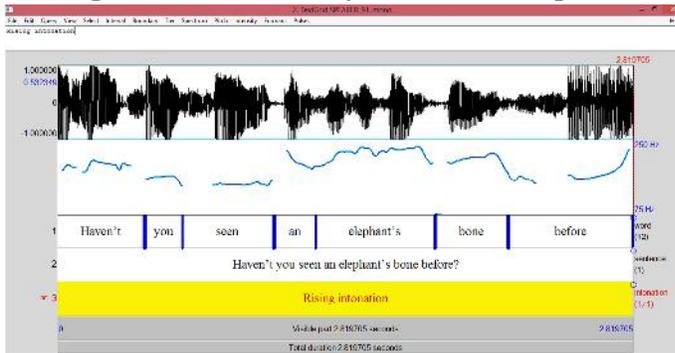


Fig. 3.

Here, the rising tune was used to produce ‘Haven’t you seen an Elephant’s bone before?’

6.3 Test of attitudinal use of intonation by the participants

Table 3: Distribution of tones on utterances that tested attitudinal use of intonation

| Utterance type & Expected Tune | HL Falling tune | | LH Rising tune | | HLH Fall-rise tune | | LHL Rise-fall tune | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------|----------------|--------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|---|
| | No of cases | % | No of cases | % | No of cases | % | No of cases | % |
| Polite requests (HLH) | 5 | 6.25% | 75 | 93.75% | - | - | - | - |
| Doubt (HLH) | 78 | 97.5% | - | - | 2 | 2.5% | - | - |
| Indifference (HLH) | 79 | 98.75% | - | - | 1 | 1.25% | - | - |
| Surprise (LHL) | 29 | 36.25% | 50 | 62.5% | 1 | 1.25% | - | - |

The fall-rise tune (HLH)

The use of the fall-rise bitonal tune was highly restricted in the data. This tune is used to express doubt, polite request and indifference in SBE (Roach, 1991). On the contrary, in this data, none of the subjects used the tune to express any of the mentioned attitudes; instead, they either used a rising tune or a falling tune. A total of 97.5% used the falling tune to express doubt, 98.75% used the falling tune to express indifference, while 93.75% used the rising tune to express polite requests. Only 2 people and one person correctly used the fall-rise tune to express doubt and indifference, respectively. Since the participants fairly mastered the rising tune for questions, the 'questioning nature' of polite requests might be the reason for their using a rising tune for it. Also, utterances with the fall-rise tune were habitually said with the falling tune.

To conclude that Nigerian primary school teachers do not use intonation to express attitude of doubt, polite request and indifference will not be an over-generalisation because the use of the falling tune and rising tune for utterances relate more to grammatical functions than attitudinal. Also, it was noticed that the subjects used paralinguistic gestures, such as wrinkling of the face to express doubt and shrugging to show indifference. Thus, besides the falling tune used to express doubt and indifference, the participants included gestures, without which their attitudinal expressions are incomplete or difficult to decode by the listener. We could then conclude that Nigerian primary school teachers use the falling tune, alongside wrinkling of the face, to express doubt; the falling tune, coupled with shrugging, to express indifference; and the rising tune to express polite requests.

Although the fall-rise tune was not used on all the boundary tones of the intonational phrases (IPs) that require them, they were discovered at the edge tones of some other intermediate phrases (IPs) and IPs. Out of the 13 cases of the use of the fall-rise tune on other phrase accents and IPs, it was discovered that 10 cases were used on the edge tones of two bi-syllabic words ‘dancing’ and ‘going’. ‘Dancing’ is a dependent clause utterance type found at an IP edge tone while ‘going’ is a ‘statement as question’ utterance type, found at an IP boundary tone. This means that the presence of a fall-rise in the spoken English of Nigerian primary school teachers can be traced to bi-syllabic words found at the edge tones of ips and/or boundary tones.

Syllables found at an ip or IP boundaries can also be referred to as pre-pausal syllables, meaning that they precede a non-final or final pause respectively. This finding corroborates Gut’s (2001) claim that contour tones are rarely used in Nigerian English, and when used, they are only used on pre-pausal syllables.

The rise-fall tune (LHL)

The second bitonal tune examined in this study, the rise-fall tune, did not exist in any instance in the data. This means that the rise-fall intonation does not exist as a pattern of intonation in the spoken English of Nigerian primary school teachers. Instead of expressing surprise using this tune, 62.5% of the subjects used the rising tune, 36.25% used the falling tune while 1.25% used the fall-rise tune. However, 21% of the subjects used a higher pitch to indicate surprise, in both rising and falling tune. In contrast to other rising tunes and falling tunes used in the conversation, a higher pitch in the tunes used at the boundary tones of utterances that show surprise reflects that there is more to the response of the speaker other than just asking a question or making a statement, which therefore shows that an attitude is attached to the utterances.

Since pitch is a correlate of intonation, it can be said that the use of a higher pitch by the subjects is a way of using intonation to express an attitude of surprise. This higher pitch will, henceforth, be termed ‘raised tune’; ‘RH’ to represent a raised-rising tune and ‘RL’ for a raised-falling tune. The expression of surprise with a raised tune is unlike the attitude of doubt and indifference, where the falling tune used by subjects could not account for any attitude without including gestures. Thus, while it can be said that teachers do not use the rise-fall tune to show surprise, it is not acceptable, in accordance with the findings of this study, to conclude that they do not use intonation to show surprise at all. Rather, they make use of a raised tune to indicate surprise attitude. We, thereby, propose that the raised tune be included as a pattern of intonation in Nigerian English.

6.4 Summary of the frequency of the intonation tunes examined

The total number of falling tunes expected to be used altogether was 320, that is, 33%. However, an additional number of 332 falling tunes were found in the data, which made a total of 652 falling tunes used, which is 67.9%. Out of the 320 rising tunes, 33%, expected to be used, a lesser number of 293, which made 30.5%, was used, while other tunes were assigned to the

remaining 27 utterances. Out of a total number of 240 fall-rise tunes (25%) required to be used in the text, only 15 fall-rise tunes (1.6%) were used, and only 3 of those 15 were appropriately used. Also, 80 rise-falls (8.3%) were supposed to be found but none of the subjects used this tune, whether correctly or incorrectly. The rise-fall tune was totally absent in the spoken English of Nigerian primary school teachers. A new pattern of intonation not tested in this study, but discovered in the spoken English of Nigerian primary school teachers, is what we termed raised tune (RH/RL). The raised intonation is used to show the attitude of surprise.

In summary, the falling tune is predominant in the spoken English of Nigerian primary school teachers, followed by the rising tune; afterward, a rarely used fall-rise tune and a raised tune used for surprise attitude. The rise-fall tune was absent. The above explanation is presented in the table and bar chart below:

Table 4: Summary of the frequency of the tunes examined

| Tunes Examined | Expected Occurrence of Tunes | Percentage | Frequency of Tune Occurrence | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Falling tune (HL) | 320 | 33.3% | 652 | 67.9% |
| Rising tune (LH) | 320 | 33.3% | 293 | 30.5% |
| Fall-rise tune (HLH) | 240 | 25% | 15 | 1.6% |
| Rise-fall tune (LHL) | 80 | 8.3% | 0 | 0% |
| TOTAL | 960 | 100% | 960 | 100% |

Graphic representation of the frequency of the tunes examined

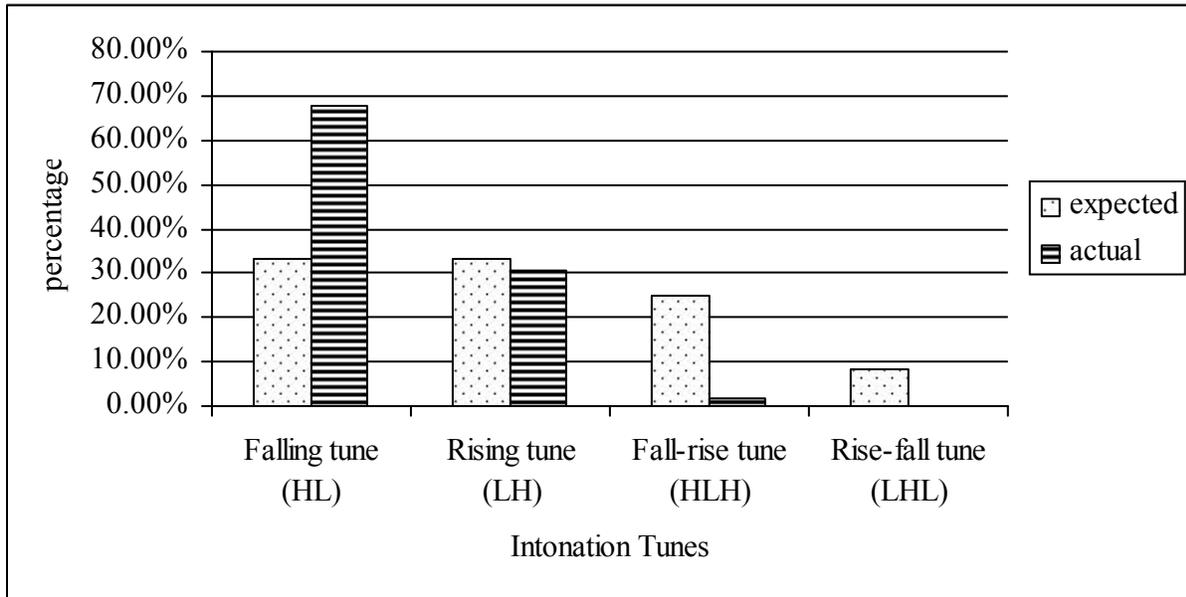


Fig. 4

This figure is the graphic representation of the frequency of the tunes examined.

The analyses so far showed that, out of the four (4) intonation patterns examined in this study, only three (3) can be identified in the spoken English of Nigerian primary school teachers; but a new pattern was discovered. This made it four patterns identified: falling tune, rising tune, fall-rise tune and raised tune. The functions attributed to these tunes do not mean they are appropriate or not, when compared with Standard British English. The focus of this study was not to search for appropriate and inappropriate tune assignment but to simply describe the intonation patterns found in the data. The figures below reveal the spectrographs of some utterances of the participants:

Expression of doubt: ‘It’s a cow’s bone.’

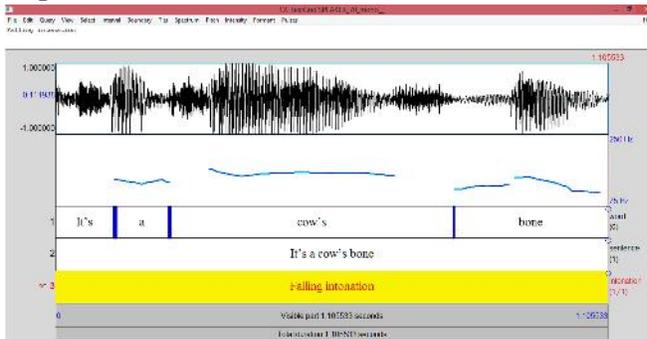


Fig. 5
This figure captures the falling tune used in producing ‘It’s a cow’s bone.’

Polite request: ‘could you shut the door.’

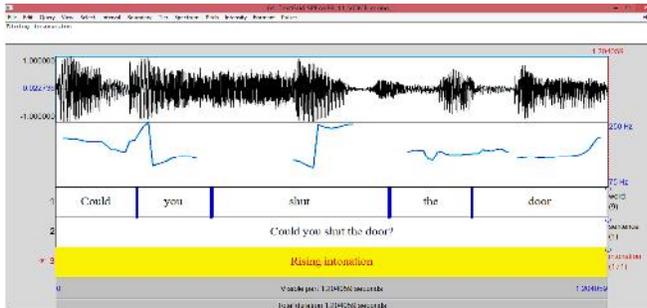


Fig. 6
This spectrogram shows that ‘could you shut the door’ was produced with the rising tune.

7. Conclusion

The analyses showed that the standard British English model of intonation analysis does not adequately capture the realities of the spoken English intonation of the primary school teachers. Hence, it is recommended that an endoglossic model of teaching the English language in Nigeria be further described. After extensive research on it, it should be codified, standardised and adopted to her educational system, right from the elementary stage of education in the country.

It is also recommended that continuous teachers' training and seminars be organised for primary school teachers in order to help them upgrade their spoken English to a standard that is socially acceptable as well as internationally intelligible. This will, in turn, reflect in the spoken English of the students. In addition, graduates of English should be employed to teach English Language in both private and public primary schools. This will enhance the linguistic performance of the students in spoken and written English.

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**INTERNATIONAL INTELLIGIBILITY IN WORLD ENGLISHES: THE
SCHWA IN GHANAIAI ENGLISH**

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Abstract

Although research findings suggest that most L2 English speakers, including Ghanaians, produce full vowels where reduced vowels might be expected, there is little knowledge about the effect this phenomenon has on intelligibility in English as an international language. This study investigates the intelligibility of Ghanaian English pronunciation, especially the (non)production of reduced vowels on other speakers of English. To achieve this, a production test with the *North Wind and Sun* passage by 10 Ghanaian university students and an intelligibility test by 25 English speakers representing the inner, outer, and expanding circles were conducted. Results revealed that the use of full (instead of reduced) vowels did not affect the way they perceived the words in the passage. Based on the findings, it is argued that while the avoidance of reduced vowels may contribute to syllable-timed rhythm, it actually enhances intelligibility than hinders it.

1. Introduction

Languages have been dichotomously grouped as either stress-timed or syllable-timed, because they have more syllable-based or more stress-based features (Low, 2006). According to Crystal (2003:245), “stressed syllables fall at regular intervals throughout an utterance” (p. 245) in stress-based languages (e.g. English, German, Dutch). However, in these languages, rhythm occurs at irregular intervals, the rows in-between unstressed syllables tend to be compressed and some syllables can even disappear. What this means is that the amount of time it takes to produce a sentence in English, for instance, depends on the number of syllables that receive the primary stress and not on the total number of syllables. In contrast to stress-based languages are syllable-based languages in which the rhythm of speech is based on the syllable, taking each syllable an equal amount of time to be pronounced. Thus, the amount of time taken to produce a given sentence depends on the number of syllables, and contractions rarely occur. There are many features that differentiate syllable-timed languages from stressed-timed languages, one of which is the absence of vowel stresslessness, meaning that while all syllables are stressed in syllable-based languages, not all syllables receive stress in stress-based languages. In a stress-based language like English, an unstressed vowel is usually characterised by a reduction in length and a change in quality. There is an abundance of research that suggests that there are many phonological features that are shared by speakers of English outside the inner circle (Kachru, 1986). These include the substitution of /ə/ and /ɔ̃/ with /t/ and /d/ and the production of full vowels where reduced vowels might be expected in native speaker contexts.

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of the (non)production of reduced vowels on the intelligibility or otherwise of Ghanaian English to speakers of English as an international language. There are three vowel sounds which can represent reduced vowels: the KIT vowel [ɪ], the FOOT vowel [ʊ], and the schwa [ə]. Although there are two studies on the production of the schwa in Ghanaian English, there is no study that investigates whether or not Ghanaians sound unintelligible when they do not reduce any vowels in their English speech during interactions with other speakers of English from other countries. In this study, the schwa is adopted as the most common representation of a reduced vowel in English so as to investigate its (non)occurrence in Ghanaian English and how it might affect what others hear. The next section discusses the differences between the production of the schwa in English and Ghanaian English. This is followed with a discussion of the procedure adopted for the present study. The fourth section presents a discussion of the results from the production and intelligibility tests. The final section presents the conclusion and possible implications for communicating in English as an international language.

2. The schwa in English

In English, the schwa is the most common representation of a reduced vowel. This suggests that any vowel which occurs in an unstressed position in a syllable can assume a schwa-like quality. On the English vowel chart, it occupies a mid-central position and is described as a “lax vowel” (Roach, 2009: 65), meaning that it is articulated without much energy and any tension in the muscles. There is no standard spelling presentation of the schwa in words, and so may be represented by any vowel so as to achieve the desired pronunciation of the affected words. Although [ɪ] and [ʊ] can also represent reduced vowels, whereas these two can also occur as full vowels, the schwa can only occur in reduced or unstressed positions. In English, the schwa can be found in both content and function words; however, the same cannot be said of any Ghanaian languages because these are syllable-based, rather than stress-based. In fact, all syllables are pronounced equally in words. Based on this observation, most researchers (e.g. Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008; Simo Bobda, 2000) argue that non-native speakers, and for that matter Ghanaians, may find it challenging producing the schwa.

English in Ghana has undergone tremendous changes, especially in its phonological features. It belongs to the outer circle and is considered a *nativized* variety (Lowenberg, 1986). As a second language (ESL) variety, there are certain features that are markedly different compared with the native speaker varieties. The first real attempt at analyzing the vowels of Ghanaian English was initiated by Adjaye (1987). From the analysis of the data collected, she concluded that Ghanaians have the tendency to replace /ə/ with /a/ or /ɛ/. Simo Bobda (2000) also contrasted the English spoken in Ghana with varieties in other West African countries and observed that Ghanaians tend to replace /ə/ with /a/, /ɛ/ or /o/ depending on the spelling. In Koranteng’s (2006) study on

central vowels, she found that out of the 110 words that contained /ə/, there were 32 words in which the vowel was reduced while the other words were produced with full vowels /a/, /ɛ/, /ɜ/ and /o/. Based on her results, she concluded that while the use or not of /ə/ in unstressed syllables appears to be at the discretion of the speaker, its use by Ghanaians is not common, and that there is a lot of fronting in their production. These findings were duplicated in Lomotey (2010). The difference here is that acoustic analysis of words containing the schwa read by 66 university students revealed that there was no production of the schwa. The results rather suggested that the speakers had the tendency to substitute it with full vowels based on the spellings of the words. Thus, while Ghanaians would produce full vowels rather than reduced vowels, they do so because of “spelling pronunciation” (Ngula, 2011:24). In this phenomenon, the pronunciation of a word is derived from or is influenced by its spelling (e.g. Asante, 1996; Matthews, 1997).

It is interesting to note that it is not only in Ghanaian English that speakers produce full vowels in place of reduced vowels. In fact, there is documentary evidence to show that it occurs in most nativized Englishes. Notable among these are the Englishes in the outer circle (e.g. Deterding, 2005, 2011; Deterding & Kirkpatrick, 2006; Kachru, 2005; Kadenge, 2009; Simo Bobda, 2000) and in some countries within the expanding circle (e.g. Deterding, 2006a; Fragozo, 2011). For example, Kadenge (2009) critically examined the vocalic characteristics of Zimbabwean English with wordlist read by 50 Shona speakers. Through auditory impression and transcription, he found among other things that in addition to Zimbabweans reducing diphthongs to [i, e, a, o, u], they also produce reduced vowels as full vowels. In another study, Deterding (2005) investigated the distinctive patterns in Singaporean English (SgE) pronunciation using the vowels in word pairs like ‘won and one’, ‘poor and pure’, ‘absorb and abroad’ read by 38 trainee teachers. The acoustic analysis from the recorded data showed that SgE speakers produce a reduced vowel in the first syllable of ‘abroad’, but a full vowel in some other words. Similar to Koranteng’s (2006) study, Deterding’s shows a lot of variability in the production of reduced vowels; in which case he suggested that the variability may be due to the syllable structure of the words involved.

3. Intelligibility and World Englishes

According to Munro & Derwing (1995), intelligibility is the “extent to which a speaker’s message is actually understood by a listener” (p. 76). In this sense a speaker is deemed to *actually understand* a speaker’s message if s/he correctly perceives the words exactly as the speaker produces. This perception simply refers to how the speaker’s pronunciation is received by the hearer, regardless of the variation involved in the actual pronunciation. For instance, if your listener listens to the words or speech signal accurately as you intend them regardless of the acoustic quality in an utterance or sentence, then you sound intelligible to that person. It can thus be argued that for a listener to find a stream of speech intelligible then s/he is able to recognize all the words in the utterance correctly and in the correct order. Typically, the listeners in

intelligibility tests determine the number of linguistic units that they think the speakers produced correctly. These can be speech sounds or words, and there is no intention to measure whether listeners understand the meaning of the utterance. In the latter instance, the researcher would be conducting a comprehensibility test, and not an intelligibility test. The current study only focuses on intelligibility, and comprehensibility is outside the scope of this study.

Most of the studies conducted on intelligibility in English involved native speakers judging non-native speakers to find out different parameters. Some of these focused on issues such as listener attitude, accent, and familiarity. There is abundance of research to inform us of the ease with which native speakers score such variables. However, while such studies would enable us rank the opinions of listeners on these variables, they would fail to inform us on the ability of these listeners on the number of correctly identified sounds or words in an utterance. Consequently, there is the need for functional tests, that is, tests that require the listener to recognize words in order to determine the degree of intelligibility. To the best of my knowledge, there seems to be no comprehensive study on whether full vowels in place of reduced vowels have any effect on intelligibility in English as an international language. At best, Deterding (2006b) only speculates that, “it does seem likely that use of full vowels instead of reduced vowels may enhance rather than hinder international intelligibility” (p. 76). It is important to note here that Deterding’s (2006b) study focused only on English in South East Asia, specifically in Singapore, China, Brunei, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines, Myanmar and Indonesia. The present study goes beyond Deterding’s, whose participants were only outer and expanding circle speakers from the same continent, to include all speakers of English from inner, outer and expanding circles from different continents in order to obtain information on the intelligibility or otherwise, of Ghanaian English.

Most of the studies on intelligibility in English tend to focus on one group at a time (cf. Date, 2005; Gupta, 2005; Kirkpatrick & Saunders, 2005; Setter, 2005). The current study thus fills the gap in that it makes use of 25 speakers of English from across the different varieties from the different circles in Kachru’s (1986) categorization. Although there are only 25 people, this is the first at least in Africa, to investigate such phenomenon. The current study contributes to our understanding of how both native and non-native English speakers perceive Ghanaian English. The intelligibility test also informs other speakers of English about what they might expect when interacting with Ghanaians. In addition, the results help in determining the contribution that the production of full vowels in place of reduced vowels makes to the overall understanding of English utterances from Ghanaians. Finally, the study bridges the gap between theory and practice in the field of second language acquisition as well as English language teaching in Ghana. In order to achieve its objectives, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do speakers of Ghanaian English produce reduced vowels?
2. How does the production of reduced vowels in this variety affect its intelligibility among speakers of Englishes other than Ghanaian English?

4. Methodology

4.1 Procedure

This section explains the procedure adopted for this study. It provides information about the selection of participants, the research instruments, data collection and data analysis.

4.2 Participants

Participants recruited for the study constitute two groups. Group A is made up of 10 students for the production test and groups B is made up of 25 participants for the intelligibility test. The 10 students were drawn from a public university in Ghana. They comprised 5 males and 5 females. All of them were in their third year, and were all studying Ghanaian languages as their major. Their ages range between 28 and 45 and when asked to indicate their English proficiency levels, they rated themselves as between high and intermediate. Speakers and some characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. A list of Ghanaian English speakers

| Speaker | Language | Age | English proficiency level |
|---------|----------|-----|---------------------------|
| F1 | Akan | 28 | High |
| F2 | GaDangme | 31 | Intermediate |
| F3 | Nzema | 28 | Intermediate |
| F4 | Gonja | 35 | Intermediate |
| F5 | Dagaare | 42 | Intermediate |
| M1 | Ewe | 41 | Intermediate |
| M2 | Kasem | 41 | Intermediate |
| M3 | Gurene | 36 | Intermediate |
| M4 | Akan | 38 | Intermediate |
| M5 | Dagbani | 45 | Intermediate |

The 25 participants for the intelligibility test were speakers of English from selected across the globe. These were 3 people from North America (all from the USA); 7 from Asia (2 Japanese, 3 Chinese, 2 Indians); 4 from South America (2 Mexicans, 2 Brazilians); 4 from Europe (2 Italians, 2 Spaniards); 1 from Austrasia (Australia) and 6 from Africa (2 Nigerians, 1 Ivorian, 1 South African, 1 Tunisian, 1 Kenya). According to Kachru's categorization, these speakers can be further grouped as inner circle (USA, Australia), outer circle (Nigeria, South Africa, India, Kenya) and expanding circle (Brazil, Italy, Japan, Tunisia, Mexico, China, Spain, Cote d'Ivoire). They indicated that their English proficiency levels range between high and intermediate. In all, there were 15 males and 10 females. Table 2 presents the characteristics of the listeners.

Table 2. A list of listeners for the intelligibility test

| Listener | Country | Age | English proficiency level |
|----------|---------------|-----|---------------------------|
| F1 | USA | 34 | High |
| M1 | USA | 31 | High |
| M2 | USA | 38 | High |
| F2 | Japan | 43 | High |
| M3 | Japan | 29 | Intermediate |
| F3 | China | 28 | High |
| F4 | China | 30 | Intermediate |
| M4 | China | 32 | Intermediate |
| F5 | India | 35 | Intermediate |
| M5 | India | 31 | Intermediate |
| F6 | Brazil | 28 | High |
| M6 | Brazil | 29 | Intermediate |
| F7 | Mexico | 34 | Intermediate |
| M7 | Mexico | 29 | Intermediate |
| F8 | Italian | 32 | Intermediate |
| M8 | Italian | 33 | Intermediate |
| M9 | Spain | 36 | Intermediate |
| M10 | Spain | 31 | High |
| F9 | Australia | 28 | High |
| F10 | Nigeria | 34 | Intermediate |
| M11 | Nigeria | 30 | Intermediate |
| M12 | Cote d'Ivoire | 36 | Intermediate |
| M13 | South Africa | 33 | Intermediate |
| M14 | Tunisia | 37 | Intermediate |
| M15 | Kenya | 41 | Intermediate |

4.3 Production Test

After the recruitment, each of the 10 students was informed that he/she was needed to read a passage for the analysis of vowels. Once they gave their consent to take part, each one of them was presented with the passage to read. The instrument used in the production test is the *North Wind and the Sun*¹ (NWS) passage (IPA 1999). This passage was used because it has been used for many years as the standard text (IPA 1999: 39). It is also known to contain almost all of the English vowel and consonant phonemes. Most especially, it is known to contain more instances

of the schwa than any other vowel, and so is more suitable and appropriate in achieving the aim of this study. The passage was presented to the 10 students at different times and locations to read. This was to ensure that none of them knew what the other person was reading so as to avoid interference from one another. The readings were recorded with an Olympus voice recorder. Each student's passage was played back to him/her for them to decide whether they wanted to reread or keep it as it was. All of them indicated their satisfaction with what they had produced. After the recording sessions, the sound files were played back and the passages transcribed both orthographically and phonetically.

4.4 Intelligibility test

The 25 speakers of English took part in the intelligibility test. The aim of selecting the 25 participants is two-fold: One, to obtain a representation of English speakers (both native and non-native) from all continents, and Two, to expose these people to the Ghanaian variety of English so as to examine how intelligible this variety sounds to them. The purpose of the exercise was then explained to them. Specifically, they were told that the researcher wanted them to listen to some sound files and write the passages according to what they would hear. Based on this understanding, each of the 25 participants completed a consent form after which they provided information on their language background. The range of their English proficiency levels was indicated as between intermediate and high. They then listened to the sound files at different times and at different locations, depending on the choice of location of each of them. Because the recordings were not long (each is approximately 50-60 seconds), each listener listened to every file two times. After the second listening, each participant indicated his/her readiness for the writing exercise. Each passage listened to was written on a separate sheet of paper. In order not to mix the passages, each sheet for each listener was coded according to the speaker's Ghanaian Language and the listener's country of origin. None of the listeners knew one another, meaning that even though there are, for instance, three Americans in this group, every listener performed the test independently of the other. In all, each listener produced 10 passages, making a total of 250 scripts. After the scripts were collected, they were compared with the original passage and the sound files, and differences were noted.

5. Results and Discussion

The results are presented in two categories; production and intelligibility test. The first to be presented is results from the production test².

5.1 Results from production test

It is acknowledged that variations may be detected in the production of different speakers of English in all aspects of the language. These include morpho-syntactic, pragmatic, semantic, and of course, phonetic/phonological variations (e.g. Anderson, 2004; Cogo and Dewey, 2011; Deterding, 2006a), and Ghanaians are no exception to these variations. As might be expected,

there were differences in the production of vowels in phonetic transcriptions on the individual level and in comparison with the IPA version. These differences are observed in the phonetic transcription. The differences are enumerated in the following section.

5.1.1 Vowels

There were different realizations of most of the vowels found in the passage. With the exception of few words, most occurrences of both /i/ and /ɪ/ were realized as /i/, suggesting that participants may be applying the vowel harmony principle (cf. Owusu-Ansah 2000). Examples of words under this include *wind* [*wɪnd*³ for wɪnd], *disputing* [*disputɪn* for dɪspjʊtɪŋ], *in* [*ɪn* for ɪn] and *him* [*hɪm* for ɪm]. There were others that can be found in the transcriptions, but this paper focuses on the production of the schwa in words. Nine (9) out of the 10 speakers produced no reduced vowel at all while 1 produced some in certain instances. This will be discussed in later sections. For the 9 speakers, the reduced vowel was produced as a full vowel in all words in which it occurs. One notices that the non-production of the schwa showed a particular pattern. That is, the vowels were produced according to the spelling of the words. For example, in words like ‘*atempt*’ /ətɛmpt/, the /ə/ was produced as /a/. In *immediately*, the [ə] was realized as [e] as in *imidiətli* for [ɪmɪdiətli]. Also, the target schwa in ‘*kɔnsɪdɛd*’ [kənsɪdɛd] and *sɔksɪdɛd* [səksɪdɛd] was realized as /ɔ/ or /ɛ/. Apart from the differences with the IPA version, there were individual variations in the use of the schwa. For instance, 2 speakers produced /əðə/ as *ada* and another produced it as *ɔda*. Similarly, /əblaɪz/ was pronounced as *ɔbladʒd* and *ɔbladʒd* by 2 different speakers.

Turning now to the 10th speaker, she produced some reduced vowels in some word and full vowels in others. A typical example of the realization of the schwa is found in the words [ðə], [tɹævələ], and [səksɪdɛd]. The reduced vowels in the other words were produced as full vowels by this speaker. Table 3 represents all the occurrences of reduced vowels and full vowels produced in the passage.

Table 3. Occurrence and percentages of the production of reduced and full vowels in the passage

| word | Full vowel | % | Reduced vowel (schwa) | % | word | Full vowel | % | Reduced vowel (schwa) | % |
|------------|------------|-----|--------------------------|----|-------------|------------|-----|--------------------------|---|
| the | 153 | 90 | 17 | 10 | first | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| traveler | 36 | 90 | 4 | 10 | then | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| a | 20 | 100 | 0 | 0 | is | 20 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| an | 30 | 100 | 0 | 0 | but | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| was | 30 | 100 | 0 | 0 | and | 20 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| stranger | 30 | 100 | 0 | 0 | immediately | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| succeeded | 9 | 90 | 1 | 10 | confess | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| considered | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | that | 20 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| oblige | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | of | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| confess | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | other | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| along | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | were | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| agreed | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | at | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| around | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | attempt | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| stronger | 10 | 100 | 0 | 0 | | | | | |

The table shows a heavy presence of full vowels in instances where reduced might be expected. The results obtained confirm what have been found in earlier studies on Ghanaian English (e.g. Adjaye, 2005; Koranteng, 2006; Lomotey, 2010; Simo Bobda, 2000). The results also suggest that out of the 10 participants, only one produced reduced vowels as might be expected. Even with this person one notices that there are only a few instances in which she produced the reduced vowels and produced the others as full vowels. In effect, it can be argued that Ghanaians generally produce reduced vowels as full vowels. For the 10th speaker, it is not clear why she produced some of the vowels as reduced and others as full.

5.2 Results from intelligibility test

As already indicated, the intelligibility test was taken by 25 speakers of English from different contexts; inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle. In the test, the orthographic representation of the sound files indicated that all 25 people heard the words clearly, except in a few cases where some of them did not write the words as found in the original passage. After the comparison, those participants were contacted in order to ascertain why the words were not written *correctly*. There were 5 participants who did not write 4 particular words correctly. These

words were succeeded /suksi:dɛd/, cloak /klɔk/, north /nɔf/, and attempt /atɛmt/. When the sound files were listened to, it was detected that three of the words were pronounced by two speakers while all the speakers produced the fourth word. Of the two speakers, one produced /suksi:dɛd/ (all others produced /sɔsi:dɛd/) and the other produced the words as /klɔk/ and /nɔf/. All 10 speakers produced /atɛmt/ and 20 listeners wrote it correctly as *attempt*. The five listeners who wrote the *wrong* words were a Mexican, a Spaniard, a Japanese, a Brazilian and an Italian.

On the production of the four words, one notices that there are instances where the speaker is clearly pronouncing the word according to the spelling and also deletes a sound as in the case of /susi:dɛd/, while other instances show wrong pronunciation, as in the case of /klɔk/. As regards the pronunciation of /nɔf/, there is sound replacement: /f/ in place of /θ/. Speakers' production of /atɛmt/ shows a process of consonant cluster reduction. That is, the speakers reduced the number of consonants at the coda of the syllable /tɛmpt/. The fundamental explanation for this process may be for them to pronounce the word without difficulty. It is important to note that the transcriptions from the sound files suggest that speakers are likely to reduce consonant clusters at the coda than at the onset of the syllable. For example, the number of consonants in *stronger* is maintained, while that of *attempt* has been reduced from three to two.

Focusing now on the listeners, the analysis showed that as far as the passage is concerned, listeners from inner and outer circle Englishes did not appear to have any issue with the readings, unlike some expanding circle speakers. For these speakers, the words or their meanings were not picked from the context within the passage, but rather treated as isolated entities. This made it difficult for them to try and guess what those words were or what their meanings might be. It is interesting to note that of the four words, two contain the schwa while the other two do not. For /atɛmt/ and /sɔsi:dɛd/, all nine speakers (because the 10th speaker produced it as reduced) produced full vowels instead of reduced vowels; however, the 24 listeners did not appear to have any problems with identifying them in their orthographic transcriptions. In all, in 250 occurrences of words with reduced vowels, only one word (five occurrences) seemed to pose a problem to the listeners. Simple statistics of the results of the intelligibility test is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Occurrence of words for intelligibility test

| Word | Number of words with <i>correct</i> transcription | Percentage of words with <i>correct</i> transcription | Number of words with <i>wrong</i> transcription | Percentage of words with <i>wrong</i> transcription |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| the | 4250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| traveler | 1000 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| and | 500 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| a | 500 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| an | 750 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| was | 750 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| were | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| stranger | 750 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| stronger | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| succeeded | 245 | 98 | 5 | 2 |
| considered | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| oblige | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| confess | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| agreed | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| along | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| agreed | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| first | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| then | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| is | 500 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| but | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| immediately | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| that | 500 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| of | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| other | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| were | 250 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| attempt | 245 | 98 | 5 | 2 |

Table 4 shows that more words were correctly identified by the listeners than were wrongly identified. Although there were four words not correctly transcribed, only two of them contain reduced vowels. As such, only those two are captured in Table 3. In total, only 2% each of the two words appeared to be unintelligible. Thus, it can be argued that for all words, at least 98% sounded intelligible to the listeners; an indication that other speakers of English find the Ghanaian variety of English intelligible, especially in words that contain a lot of reduced vowels, even though almost all the words were produced with full vowels rather than the expected reduced vowels.

6. Effect of reduced vowels on intelligibility

The results have shown that with the exception of few cases, all 10 speakers produced words with full vowels rather than with reduced vowels. It is also observed that two of the words that five listeners wrote differently contained a change in vowel quality as in the case of /klɔk/ (instead of /kləʊk/) and a consonant substitution as in the case of /nɔf/ (instead of /nɔθ/). In both instances, it is the sound change that appeared to have a negative effect on the meanings of the words. Particularly, the substitution of /ɔ/ for /əʊ/ in /kləʊk/ changed the meaning of the word. In the case of /nɔf/ however, it is not clear whether the substitution of /f/ for /θ/ actually caused a change in the meaning of the word as heard by the listeners. It is possible to also speculate that the listeners wrote *norf* because they thought it was a different word altogether, and this may have caused a change in meaning. Returning now to reduced vowels, the results showed that listeners did not appear to have any problems with words in which speakers produced full vowels rather than reduced vowels, an indication that the words sounded intelligible to them. It is important to emphasize here that none of the listeners knew any of the speakers. In fact, the speakers are based in Ghana while the listeners were students studying in a public university in the USA. This way, there is no way any of them may be familiar to one another. Also, there was no familiarity as far as the passage used is concerned. For the avoidance of doubt, each listener was asked after the writing whether they were aware of such a passage and all of them indicated that they had not heard of it nor knew it.

It goes without saying that if speakers and listeners were not familiar with each other, their accent, or the passage, then the listeners wrote exactly what they heard. Although full vowels were produced except in only three words, the listeners' ability to write almost every word points to the fact that there is no communication problems with the rhythm of Ghanaian English. Like most outer circle Englishes, the Ghanaian variety is considered syllable-timed, rather than stress-timed (Lomotey, 2010). Many researchers (e.g. Cruttenden, 2008; Teschner & Whitley, 2004) insist that learners, and for that matter speakers of English need to master the stress-timed nature of the language so as to speak with the desired rhythm. For instance, Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (1996) observe that because the adoption of stress-based rhythm is "the most widely experienced pronunciation challenge for speakers of other languages" (p. 26), it is important for learners to learn through jokes, poems and chants among others in order to improve fluency. It is not very clear if it is always necessary for speakers of English outside the inner circle to adopt the stress-timed nature of English. A look at Jenkins' (2000) *Lingua Franca Core (LFC)* shows that she excludes some phonological features including rhythm and reduced vowels from the LFC because they are not essential for international intelligibility. She argues that their absence does not cause problems in communication in English as an international language. She further notes that it is okay for L2 English speakers not to reduce certain vowels as one can produce full vowels where reduced vowels might be expected and still sound intelligible. This argument is supported by Seidlhofer (2003) who admits that lack of reduced vowels, as well as other non-

core sounds, are “indeed also found in some native-speaker varieties” (p. 16). Seidlhofer further intimates that “mastery of these sounds [reduced vowels] proved not to be crucial for mutual intelligibility and so various substitutions are permissible” (Seidlhofer, 2003: 16). Whereas native speakers might believe that it is necessarily important for English speakers to acquire stress-timed rhythm, it is also important to note that it is not possible to impose any kind of rhythm that speakers of English as an international language may not be familiar with. To this end, Crystal (2003) warns against imposing norms of rhythm that may not be appropriate for speakers.

The debate on the acquisition and teaching of stress-timed rhythm will remain controversial (Deterding, 2012) in the sense that many teachers and practitioners may continue to convince themselves that this is important. Results obtained from the current study suggest that the use of full vowels did not render the read passage unintelligible. These confirm what have been found in some outer circle English varieties. For instance, Deterding & Kirkpatrick (2006) found in their study of the pronunciation features of countries in East Asia that, among others, reduced vowels were produced as full vowels, but did not impact negatively on intelligibility. In another study, Deterding (2006b) compared the production of reduced vowels in Chinese, Singapore and Brunei Englishes. Based on his findings, he concluded that it is possible that using full vowels instead of reduced vowels may enhance rather than hinder international intelligibility; and that maybe native speakers need to learn to use full vowels more often if they want to be easily understood around the world. Deterding’s call is for native speakers to recognize that a lack of reduced vowels in the speech of L2 English speakers does mean a loss of intelligibility in communication among speakers of English as an international language, it has been found to rather enhance it.

7. Conclusion

The current study set out to investigate the production of reduced vowels in Ghanaian English and how it may (or may not) affect intelligibility in English as an international language. To achieve this, 10 speakers of Ghanaian English were recorded reading the North Wind and Sun passage. Results from a production test suggest that almost all speakers produced full vowels in words where reduced vowels might be expected. The intelligibility test also showed that in spite of the fact that speakers generally did not reduce vowels, listeners did not appear to have a lot of problems identifying the words in the passage. The inference that can be drawn from such results is that when Ghanaians produce full vowels in syllables whose vowels would ordinarily be reduced, their speech still sound intelligible to other speakers of English be they from inner circle, outer circle, or expanding circle. It is important to realize that the avoidance of reduced forms greatly contributes to syllable-timed rhythm, and this may actually be more intelligible than stress-timed rhythm. In light of this, Kirkpatrick, Deterding and Wong (2008: 360) conclude that “we should encourage our students whose L1 has a tendency towards syllable-timing to retain this”. They allude to the fact that the use of full vowels makes words easier to recognize,

thereby enhancing intelligibility. In this regard, it can be claimed that L2 English speakers have restructured the sound inventory of their language to suit their own sound systems. The effect of this is that it gives them some form of autonomy as their varieties are now given attention and treated in their own right. This situation ultimately enables them to communicate effectively, usually without much problem, thereby sounding intelligible to their hearers, whether natives or non-natives.

There are exceptionally articulate English speakers who speak with full vowels in words in which they might be expected to use reduced forms, and listeners do not appear to have any communication problems with them. Two of such people are Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan (Deterding, 2011, 2012). Deterding therefore calls for a tolerance of full forms by native speakers, adding that its use helps to achieve extra clarity in speech. Intelligibility is not a one-way affair, but rather, an activity between or among people. Therefore, both the speaker and the listener have the responsibility of getting involved, seeing the process of give and take and not as a one-sided affair. When speakers of English meet on an international platform, most of them are likely to use full vowels throughout, creating a syllable-timed rhythm. This ensures that interlocutors are intelligible to one another. For, as Smith (1992) notes, “. . . we just need to be intelligible only to those with whom we wish to communicate” (p. 75). In conclusion, as we meet and interact with speakers of different English varieties, we need not dwell solely on the individual words that are spoken, but rather, we need to negotiate meaning based on contextual clues in one another’s utterances. This way, speech will sound intelligible, and eventually lead us to achieve comprehensibility in English as an international language.

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Please note the following

*A sample each of the phonetically transcribed script from the production and the IPA transcription are presented in Appendix B.

*All words by the participants appear in italics.

Appendix A

Actual orthographic representation of passage

The North Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger, when a traveler came along wrapped in a warm cloak. They agreed that the one who first succeeded in making the traveler take his cloak off should be considered stronger than the other. Then the North Wind blew as hard as he could, but the more he blew the more closely did the traveler fold his cloak around him; and at last the North Wind gave the attempt. Then the Sun shone out warmly, and immediately the traveler took off his cloak. And so the North Wind was obliged to confess that the Sun was the stronger of the two.

Appendix B

Narrow IPA transcription (IPA 1999)

ðə nɔɪθ wɪnd ən ðə sʌn wəː dɪspjuːtɪŋ wɪtʃ wəz ðə strɔŋgə, wɛn ə trævələː kem ələn ɹæpt ɪn ə wɔɪm kloʊk. ðə əɡɪd ðæt ðə wʌn hu fəst səkʰsɪdəd ɪn mekiŋ ðə trævələː tek ɪz kloʊk əf ʃud bi kənsɪdəd strɔŋgə ðən ðɪ əðə. ðɛn ðə nɔɪθ wɪnd blu əz haɪd əz ɪ kʊd bət ðə moʊ hi blu ðə moʊ kloʊsli dɪd ðə trævələː fold hɪz kloʊk əraʊnd ɪm æn ət læst ðə nɔɪθ wɪnd gev ʌp ðɪ ətɛmpt. ðɛn ðə sʌn ʃaɪnd aʊt wɔɪmli, ənd ɪmɪdɪətli ðə trævələː tuk əf ɪz kloʊk. ən so ðə nɔɪθ wɪnd wəz əblarɪz tɪ kənfes ðæt ðə sʌn wəz ðə strɔŋgə əv ðə tu.

Sample phonetic transcription from data

dɛ nɔt wɪnd and dɛ sʌn wɛ dɪspuːtɪn wɪtʃ wɔs dɛ strɔŋgə, wɛn ə trɔvɔlɔ kem əlɔŋg ɹæpt ɪn ɛ wɔm kloʊk. dɛ əɡɪd dət dɛ wʌn hu fɛst sɔksɪdəd ɪn mekiŋ dɛ trɔvɔlɔ tek hɪs kloʊk ɔf ʃud bi kɔnsɪdəd strɔŋgə dən dɛ ədɔ. dɛn dɛ nɔt wɪnd blu əs haɪd əs ɪt kʊd bət dɛ mɔ hi blu dɛ mɔ kloʊsli dɪd dɛ trɔvɔlɔ fold hɪs kloʊk əraʊnd hɪm ɛnd ət lɔst dɛ nɔt wɪnd gev əp dɛ ətɛmpt. dɛn dɛ sʌn ʃaɪnd aʊt wɔmli, and ɪmɪdɪətli dɛ trɔvɔlɔ tuk ɔf hɪs kloʊk. ɛnd so dɛ nɔt wɪnd wɔs əblədʒd tu kənfes dət dɛ sʌn wɔs dɛ strɔŋgə ɔf dɛ tu.

DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN THE COMMENTS OF SELECTED STAKEHOLDERS ON THE 2013 ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU) STRIKE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the significant discursive strategies employed by selected stakeholders on the 2013 Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike in Nigeria. Data for the study comprised 25 selected news reports, featured articles and opinion columns that were published in two prominent Nigerian newspapers – *The Nation* and *The Punch* – between July and December, 2013. Fairclough's (1992) *A Social Theory of Discourse* was employed for the analysis of the data. The findings of the study reveal that the stakeholders used discourse strategies such as appeal, threat, exaggeration, comparison, name-calling, reference to past dates and the use of figures and percentages to project ideological orientations, power relations and other social practices in the conflict discourse. The study concludes that the ASUU strike is a unique form of industrial dispute discourse that reveals manipulative tendencies, power relations as well as diverse conflicting ideologies and interests.

1. Introduction

Conflict is an indisputable phenomenon in virtually all human societies. As an inevitable societal feature, conflict is evident where humans associate. In essence, the divergence of interests and opinions results in conflict. In the view of Lammers (1969), conflict can be perceived as “an overt behaviour arising out of the process in which one unit seeks the advancement of its own interest in its relationship with others.” As expounded by Ezeigwe (2010), conflicts are found in families, organisations, nations, market places and even along the streets. In this connection, it can be argued that no human society is immune to conflict within its polity.

Industrial dispute features as one of the veritable manifestations of conflict especially in relations between organised labour unions (employees) and their employers. Strike action is one of the significant materialisations of industrial conflict, owing to the potential of this action to pitch employers against employees when there is a conflict of interests between the two parties. This view is further strengthened by Isiaka (2001) when he opined that strike is an organised stopping of work by employees because of a disagreement over pay or conditions of work between employees and management of an organisation. Strike revolves around the inability of parties in labour relations to agree over issues that affect them.

In the history of conflict in Nigeria, a significant phenomenon is various forms of industrial dispute which manifest in form of strike actions, protests, non-violent demonstrations, etc. Significant instances of industrial conflict, among others, are the Imodu led general strike of

1945, Kokori led NUPENG anti-June 12 1993 Election annulment strike, Omar and Esele-led anti-fuel subsidy removal general strike of 2012 (Ojonemi *et al.* 2013). In a similar vein, there exists industrial disputes involving labour unions such as the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP), non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU) etc.

The present study focuses on the industrial dispute embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 2013. Cumulatively, the Nigerian university system has spent over 2 years observing different strike actions between 1981 and 2013 (Micaiah, 2013). Statistics from the National Universities Commission (2002) cited in Micaiah (Ibid) reveal that since 1992, ASUU has embarked on strikes for over 23 times to drive home its demands. The 2013 strike action is significant in the history of public universities strikes in Nigeria as a result of its adversarial nature and the complexities that characterise the strike. The industrial conflict emanated as a result of ASUU's reaction to the non-implementation of the agreement jointly signed by both the Federal Government and the academic union in 2009.

The main issues that feature on the agreement include a progressive increase of annual budgetary allocation of 26% to education from 2009 to 2020 to meet up with UNESCO's recommendation; the reversal of Education Tax Fund to its original concept as Higher Education Fund; payment of Earned Academic Allowances to tackle the menace of brain-drain ravaging the university sector; amendment of pension retirement age of academics at the professorial cadre; transfer of FG landed property to universities; adequate funding to revitalize the university system; setting up of research development units by companies operating in Nigeria; university autonomy and academic freedom; registration of pension management and the re-negotiation of the existing agreement (ASUU, 2009).

The ASUU strike qualifies as one of the longest in the history of public university strikes in Nigeria, having lasted for six months and paralysing all academic and allied activities in Nigeria's public universities. Despite the fact that the strike has serious implications on the academic progress of students in Nigerian universities and significant aspects of the socioeconomic life of the Nigerian nation, scant attention has been given to the dispute from a linguistic perspective.

Some studies carried out on the ASUU strike have focused on issues such as the legality of the strike, the historical and sociological accounts of the strike and the impact of the strike on workers' productivity and educational stability in Nigerian universities (Enomah, 2010; Odiagbe, 2011; Madume and Aneke, 2011). The only linguistically-oriented work on the dispute that we know of is Aragbuwa (2014) – a study that analysed the use of language by some officials of the Federal Government of Nigeria and representatives of the Academic Staff Union of Universities

(ASUU). The work was carried out to elicit the pragmatic implications of the language use by the two major stakeholders.

However, language, primarily, plays crucial roles in the enactment, production and reproduction of the conflict discourse. In view of this, there is a need for a critical study that will account for the pragmatic and discursive dimensions of the strike and how the use of language by different stakeholders reflect ideological orientations, power relations and other social practices among the discourse participants.

The discourse of the 2013 ASUU strike involves various stakeholders – government officials, ASUU’s representatives, sister labour unions, politicians, civil society organisations, parents, religious leaders, media practitioners, students, concerned members of the public etc. Owing to the seemingly all-encompassing and conflicting nature of the strike action, a large volume of discourse was generated by the aforementioned stakeholders. At the inception of the strike action in July 2013, the media beamed its light on the then ‘unfolding drama’. News about the strike action circulated on several online news websites; social media platforms like *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Nairaland*, *Whatsapp* etc. shared stories and comments that centre on the strike. Notably, the newspaper media also took centre stage as news about the strike made headlines and became a subject in news report, editorials, cartoons and opinion columns.

In the publications focusing on the industrial action, journalists made their views known through opinion columns dedicated to the ASUU strike discourse. Articles, commentaries, rejoinders written by members of the public were published on a regular basis. The significance of the news reports, articles, commentaries, rejoinders, columns that were featured in the newspapers is that they serve the purpose of informing the public about developments as regards the strike action. Also, individuals of diverse ideological and socio-political leanings contributed to the discourse in a somewhat concerted manner. Owing to the fact that there is conflict of interests clashing as a result of the strike action, opinions of the stakeholders were slanted to suit these interests. As a result, specific discursive strategies were employed by the stakeholders to achieve individual and collective goals.

In view of the foregoing, this study attempts to carry out an analytical study of the language use of the participants of the discourse as evident in the news reports, opinion columns and articles featured in *The Nation* and *The Punch* newspapers during the period of the strike. In doing this, attention will be on investigating the discursive practices as well as the ideological leanings, power relations underpinning the discourse.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Perspectives on Strike

Several interdisciplinary studies have been carried out on the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike (Enomah, 2010; Odiagbe 2011; Madume and Aneke, 2010; Aragbuwa, 2014). Due to the fact that the ASUU strike is a unique form of industrial dispute discourse, it is expedient that we situate the industrial action within a wider scholarly context on strikes and industrial relation. In view of this, we will undertake a review of studies on strikes from a relative international perspective with the aim of broadening the purview of this work.

Rosenfield (2006) studied work stoppage that occurred in America between 1984 and 2002. In the work titled “Desperate Measures: Strikes and Wages in Post-Accord America” the author investigated whether the positive relationship between strikes and worker wages that existed during the immediate postwar decades persisted throughout the final years of the 20th century. The data for the work was based on nearly every authorized strike in America since 1984. The results of the study revealed that the positive influence of strike activity on wages has disappeared. From the findings, it was established that strike no longer affect workers’ wages even in those industries with a well established union presence.

Bordogna’s (2010) study investigated the phenomenon of strikes in Europe. The work aimed at examining whether the decline in strike activities in the 1980s and 1990s continued in the 2000s or whether it has been lately reversed following the upturn in industrial unrest. The study attempted to verify whether the resurgence of strike action in Europe in the early years of the 21st century are enduring transformations or ephemeral changes on the scene of industrial conflict. Data used for the study were statistics provided by the International Labour Organisation from the Second World War to 2008. The analysis captures seven European countries plus the United States. It was revealed in the findings that despite economic expansion and recession, sociopolitical dynamics, the trend is that of a general decline of strike activities in the cases of countries considered, markedly in the first decade of the new millennium.

Joseph’s (2010) study explored the dynamics of unionization efforts and managerial response within the purview of industrial relations in a liberalised, marketized contemporary context. The work focused on a strike action embarked upon by pilots of an Indian airline company using data drawn from electronic and print media reportage of the conflict. The author expounded the concept of Strategic Militant Managerialism which is characterised by employers taking a hard positional bargaining stance in relation with employees in an industrial dispute situation. The analysis of the pilot strike shows that industrial relations need a paradigm change from “strategic militant managerialism” towards a “synergic mutual mode” based on a foundation of identifying and fulfilling mutual interests together.

Zhang *et al.* (2011) researched into contemporary strikes in China, focusing on the nature, causes and characteristics of the labour disputes. The analysis revealed that strikes in China are economic strikes held by workers to protect their economic benefit and rights. The study concluded that in order to support workers' rights, and balance the employment relationships, China should carry forward the legislation protecting the right to strike based on the development and orientation of the already changed labour-capital relations. This according to Zhang *et al.* (Ibid) is a Pareto improvement which has considerable significance in building a harmonious socialist society.

3. Methodology

The data for this study comprises news reports, articles and opinion columns published in *The Nation* and *The Punch* newspapers between July and December 2013, the period of the strike. The choice of these newspaper platforms were based on the rationale that these media outfits, more than other newspaper media in the country, dedicate particular pages and columns of their publications to the reportage of the ASUU strike. The purposive sampling method was adopted resulting in the selection of 25 publications which represent the views of the stakeholders for the analysis. These stakeholders include government officials, ASUU's representatives, sister labour unions, politicians, civil society organisations, parents, religious leaders, media practitioners, students, concerned members of the public.

Fairclough (1992) "A Social Theory of Discourse" provided the theoretical framework for the analysis of the data samples. This theoretical anchor conceptualises discourse from a three-dimensional angle – discourse as text, discursive practice and social practice. This analytical framework is considered appropriate because it provides for the relation of discourse practice to the construction of social practices such as ideology, power relations and manipulation. This is in line with the aim of the paper which is to investigate salient discursive strategies employed by the stakeholders with the aim of relating it to the social context of the strike.

The analysis centres on discursive strategies such as appeal, threat, exaggeration, comparison, name-calling, reference to past dates and the use of figures and percentages. These discursive features represent the peculiar features that were prominent in the data samples.

4. Findings

Discursive practice according to Chilwa (2010) is the expression of social practice through discourse, i.e., how discourse is involved in the construction of social practice including beliefs, knowledge, religion, norms and values. Studies on discursive strategies have been undertaken by scholars in different contexts of discourse (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2013; Ademilokun, 2015; Chilwa 2010).

The ASUU strike is a form of conflict reflecting diverse opinions, interests, ideologies, power relations and all sorts of social practices. The stakeholders of the strike, depending on the goals they want to achieve, employ specific discursive strategies to achieve diverse pragmatic purposes in the discourse. Significant examples of the discursive strategies employed by the discourse participants are appeal, threat, exaggeration, comparison, name-calling, reference to past dates, relevance of figures and percentages. We present below the analysis of the discursive strategies and their importance in the reflection of social practices such as ideologies and power.

4.1 Appeal

Appeal features as a major discursive means in the ASUU strike conflict. The effect of the strike action on the academic progress in the Universities and its wider consequences on some aspects of the socio-economic life of the Nigerian nation necessitate pleas by different stakeholders for an end to the industrial action. Below are instances of appeal in the discourse:

Extract 1

People will know more about the relationship and what Federal Government is doing on the crisis. But the good thing is that we are pleading for them to go back to classes.

The Nation, July 9 2013

The above is credited to the Minister of Education, Prof. Ruqayyatu Rufai pleading for ASUU to call-off the industrial action. In the comment, the goal of the text producer seems to pacify members of ASUU to return to work. This discursive strategy is manipulative and opposing to existing realities as it has been established that many of the children of political office holders school abroad and do not experience the hardship characteristic of Nigerian public universities.

Extract 2

...we are appealing to our people, particularly parents and children of this nation to bear with us; to show more understanding and we pray that this type of strike will not recur, because the public school system suffers a lot of damage with the perennial strikes.

The Punch, August 1, 2013

The extract above is an appeal made by an official of the Federal Government, the Minister of Labour, Emeka Wogu to the parents and students, who are the direct victims of the strike action. The comment is an attempt to appease the public and the aforementioned stakeholders to understand that the FG too is affected by the action as reflected in the expression, "bear with us". The concern of the FG is further strengthened by an earlier comment made by the Minister in the discourse: "The Federal Government has been far more worried than you think concerning the strike in tertiary institutions."

Extract 3

Any time I attempt to return home, there is always the rumour that the strike will end. I therefore plead with ASUU members to sheathe their swords.

The Punch, November 26, 2013

The extract above is an appeal by a victim of the strike, a University student begging for an end to come to the strike. The student foregrounds her interests and as a result pleads with the academic union to call-off the industrial action. The appealing strength of the comment is embedded in the word “plead”, which shows the speaker’s disposition to a peaceful resolution of the ASUU strike.

Extract 4

I want to appeal to ASUU and in fact let me even use the words, I want to beg ASUU on behalf of the Senate, that they resume and come back to work. They have made a strong case. Their position is obvious now.

The Punch, October 24, 2013

Extract 5

I want to beg ASUU to reconsider its stand on the current impasse rocking our universities, which has kept students out of school for four months. This hard stand and protracted crisis can endanger the collective destiny of millions of the future leaders. The future of the country should not be altered on the altar of industrial dispute.

The Punch, October 20, 2013

The two extracts above proceed respectively from the President of the Senate, David Mark and the nation’s President, Goodluck Jonathan. David Mark strategically employs the word “appeal” and “beg” to make a case for ASUU to shift ground on the strike. The use of the word, “appeal” which was reiterated in the active verb, “beg” is a tactical strategy to manipulate the academic union, ASUU, to end the strike.

The manipulative value of the word “beg” is equally exploited by the President in his appeal to ASUU. Though his plea was foregrounded in the first sentence of the comment, his ‘negative-other presentation’ of ASUU’s ‘stand’ on the crisis is capable of portraying ASUU in a bad light and has the effect of making the public to shift the blame of the closure of the universities to the academic union.

One of the issues established in the foregoing analysis is that appeal plays a significant role in the manipulative enterprise of the discourse. The appeal made by the different stakeholders was only channelled at ensuring the reopening of the universities and putting an end to the strike,

leaving out the resolution of the key issue of agreement that was not implemented by the Federal Government. The significance of appeal as a discursive strategy in the ASUU strike discourse is that it serves the purpose of presenting the ideological orientations of the stakeholders as pacifists, peace-lovers, advocates that are committed to amicable resolution of the industrial action.

4.2 Threat

Several stakeholders of the ASUU strike possess a form of social power or the other that is reflected in their language use. In achieving individual or collective goals and interests, this power is used and sometimes abused. The idea of power in the discourse is relayed significantly in the issuance of threats by some stakeholders of the strike. Threats are usually featured in language use to force an individual or group of people to shift their grounds and align to one's position and standpoint on a particular issue. It is a tool particularly used by a stronger group to assert power and authority. Also, this discursive strategy is employed by a weaker group to press home its demands and resist domination or control. Below are examples of threats evident in the discourse:

Extract 6

We will mobilise ourselves and ensure that we disrupt academic activities in the private universities, because it is the children of the rich that are in these schools.

The Nation, September 6, 2013

The speaker in the above is a student leader, Comrade Steven Adara, presenting the opinions of some students on the strike under the aegis of National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS). The threat was issued to those in government and the rich in the society. Carved in the form of protest, it is deployed to express students' dissatisfaction about the way education in public universities is being handled. By maintaining that the students will mobilise and disrupt academic activities in the private universities, the protesters' aim is to force people at the helms of affairs to take decisive action that will bring an end to the strike. It can be argued that the language use of the protesters' reflects their ideology as Marxists, believing in a classless society where there is equitable distribution of wealth.

Extract 7

NEC-In-Session expresses its deep concern for the near total collapse of the education sector. It is a sad commentary that government has allowed the strike by ASUU to drag on for so long with incalculable consequences. Rather than resolve these issues, government is busy sponsoring protest group against ASUU. NEC cautions that if government persists with this line of action, it will mobilize its members to stage counter protests across the

country. It has the will and the capacity and it advises that government should not test that will.

The Punch, October 24, 2013

The above comment is credited to the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), expressing solidarity with ASUU on the academic union's stance regarding the strike action. The speaker condemns government's action in sponsoring protests against ASUU and consequently asserts its power inherent in mobilising mass action to ensure that government desist from the perceived condemnable act and also to compel government to resolve the industrial dispute. Ideologically, the NLC is presented as a non-conformist, revolutionary and radical interest group.

Extract 8

Vice-chancellors should ensure that staff who resume for work are provided with the enabling environment for academic and allied activities. Any academic employee who fails to resume on or before December 4, 2013 automatically ceases to be an employee of the institution. Vice chancellors are also directed to advertise vacancies (external and internal) in their institutions. The National Universities Commission is hereby directed to monitor the compliance of these directives by the various institutions.

The Punch, November 29, 2013

The extract above is a threatening statement issued by the Supervising Minister of Education, Nyeosom Wike in the heat of the 2013 ASUU strike. The threat was issued to force ASUU to comply with the directives of the FG to reopen the universities forcefully for academic work to resume. This strategic use of language shows the power relation that exists between the FG and ASUU: an almost abusive power play in which the government tries to use his control of the Universities' Management, the National Universities' Commission and financial resources to compel ASUU to call-off the strike when the two parties had reached a deadlock. The ideological implication of this discursive practice is that it presents the FG as an autocratic, undemocratic and dictatorial entity.

Extract 9

Sequel to the unpatriotic stance of the Federal Government and ASUU in resolving this five months long impasse, I hereby issue my own ultimatum albeit "patriotic" that if Federal Government and ASUU fail to amicably resolve this raging inferno, within one week or two, I shall take leave of Nigeria to go back to Ghana where people appreciate the value of education.

The Nation, December 12, 2013

In the text above, a university lecturer issues a threat under the label of an ultimatum to both the Federal Government and ASUU. The comment is an expression of the speaker's aversion to the way the strike had dragged on for so long. The issuer of the threat through his language use displays a form of power which is captured in his resolve to withdraw his services as a lecturer in one of the closed universities and proceed to Ghana which promises better conditions for academic work.

4.3 Exaggeration

Exaggeration is a form of overstatement used to represent situations in a manner that is almost larger than reality. It is a rhetorical device used to magnify or overblow an issue or reality out of proportion. The present study presents realisations of exaggeration purposely to heighten the effect of existing realities. Below are examples of hyperbolic expressions found in the discourse:

Extract 10

Among industrial unions in the country, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) pack a lot of weight. Whenever they call their members out on strike, the nation trembles because they have the power to paralyse socio-economic activities. **The Nation**, July 4, 2013

The text above was produced by a columnist, Lawal Ogienagbon at the inception of the ASUU strike. The author's comment in the newspaper borders on the effect of frequent ASUU strikes on the socio-economic activities of the nation. The power of the academic union is heightened and equated to a force capable of instilling fear across the nation and putting all socio-economic activities on hold. The effect of the expression is that it presents ASUU as a fearfully magnificent union that is to be revered and accorded superhero respect.

Note that although strikes are usually greatly felt in the universities, it does not totally paralyse socioeconomic activities.

Extract 11

I am totally against the strike as it has destroyed the university system in Nigeria. People no longer respect our degrees outside the country because we always go on strike. **The Nation**, July 11, 2013

The extract above is a comment by a University don, Prof. Osuntokun, presenting his opposing stance to the industrial action. By the use of the verb, "destroyed", the university system is portrayed as one where everything has collapsed by virtue of the ASUU strike. Despite the fact that there has been a lot of deterioration in the university system in Nigeria, there are still aspects of the universities that are still immune to the rot. The author further maintains that the degrees got from Nigerian universities are not respected abroad. This may not be totally true as

Nigerians, through the degree they obtained in Nigeria, still gain admission for postgraduate studies into world class institutions like the Ivy League colleges.

In proceeding with his exaggerative comment, the don strategically makes use of the word “always” to highlight the frequency of strike action. It is quite an overstatement to assert that universities embark on strike always. Though the ASUU strike occurs almost every academic year, there are times that the academic calendar is not disrupted by strikes. For instance, between 2010 and 2011 there was no ASUU strike in Nigeria’s public universities. The significance of the hyperbolic statement above is to magnify the effects of the strike and shift the blame of the decay of the university system solely on industrial actions.

Extract 12

The current face-off between the Academic Staff Union of Universities – and the Federal Government is not different from the prospective biblical Armageddon.... Armageddon is the war between good and evil at the end of the world; a terrible war that could destroy the whole world.

The Punch, August 19, 2013

The above is the viewpoint of a student, Idogun Olasunkanmi on the industrial action. The biblical reference to Armageddon reflects the hyperbolic content of the comment. Equating the ASUU strike with the battle of Armageddon elevates the industrial dispute beyond human status as this biblical battle involves supernatural beings: one which does not yield to conventional human solutions. The notion of the war which is capable of destroying the ‘whole world’ is an ‘overextended’ metaphor to foreground the graveness and devastating potential of the strike capable of affecting adversely all sectors of the economy.

4.4 Comparison

Comparison is a discursive strategy used to show the disparity and distinction between ideas, personalities and societal phenomenon. This discursive feature is employed by the stakeholders to uphold their argument when they weigh a situation and reality in relation to another. Below are examples of comparison found in the discourse:

Extract 13

A report by the World Bank in 2012 on the annual budgetary allocation of 20 countries shows that Nigeria is in the last position with the allocation of 8.4 percent of its annual budget to education, compared to Ghana, which occupies the first position with the allocation of 31 percent of its budget to education.

The Nation, July 12, 2013

The above is a quotation from a communiqué read by Babatunde Badmus, the Students' Union Government (SUG) President of the University of Ibadan during a protest to decry the falling standards in Nigerian Universities. The speaker refers to a World Bank report which highlights the gap that exists between education in Nigeria and neighbouring Ghanaian republic. Comparing the budgetary allocation of the two countries brings to the fore the fact that serious attention is given by the Government to education in Ghana more than Nigeria. This is evident in the 22.6 percent difference in the budgetary allocation to education of the two countries. This strategic discursive strategy is employed by the speaker to foreground the low value that the Nigerian government places on education and the need for the country to measure up and conform to international best practices in education.

Extract 14

The late Chief Obafemi Awolowo invested so much in education, but President Goodluck Jonathan is nonchalant about the funding of education. Instead, he takes pride in jetting out when pressing national issues that need his attention arise.

The Nation, July 12 2013

The above is a contrastive presentation of two national leaders – Obafemi Awolowo, a former Governor-General of the Western region that reigned in the late sixties and the Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan. The meritorious investment of Awolowo to education in the Western region was weighed alongside Jonathan's perceived insensitivities to public education. Despite the fact that Awolowo's contribution to education was only limited to a region of the country, his achievements was considered better than the attitude of the President whose concerns about education affects the whole nation.

The implication of the comparison of these two personalities is that it emphasises the ideological orientations of the individuals. While Awolowo is considered a patriotic, selfless and committed leader, Jonathan is portrayed as an indifferent, self-centred leader not interested in public good. The manipulative effect of the comment on the reader is in its potential to cast Jonathan in negative forms and paint him as a bad leader solely responsible for the present problems in education.

Extract 15

Were our Gross National Intelligence Quotient per capita to be measured today, you can bet it would be less than what obtained in the days we had universities that were rich and diverse in terms of students population, as we had students from far and wide across the world. Is the average Nigerian graduate today anywhere as good as those of the early days of Independence up to even the 1980s?

The Punch, August 7, 2013

The disparity in the quality of graduates produced by the universities in the past and those produced by the universities today is the focus of the above comment made by a public affairs analyst, Japheth Omojuwa. This text draws its comparative value significantly from the contrast of the time adverb, “today” and the nominal groups, “the days” and “early days” respectively. The adverb “today” signals the current realities in university education where graduates are considered lesser in terms of academic performance than their counterparts that schooled in early post-independence days. The overall import of the comment is that it foregrounds the fact that university education in Nigeria has not fared better over time.

Extract 16

If the truth must be told ma, what ASUU is asking for is pittance compared to what has been stolen either directly from the nation’s coffers, through crude oil theft or the scandalous salaries and wages members of the National Assembly are paid.

The Nation, August 28, 2013

The above is the opinion of a concerned member of the public, Bode Olufemi, on the 2013 ASUU industrial action. The comment was directed to the Minister of Education, Prof Rufa’i and was presented like a personal letter to the Minister. The author’s viewpoint notably compares the wide difference in the pay university lecturers get and the startling embezzlement culture, which has become almost a norm among public office holders. This is further corroborated by the huge salaries that legislators earn, which compared to the salaries earned by academics is sweeping and staggering.

Within the ASUU strike discourse, Bode’s comment is representative of the opinions of several stakeholders on the wide disparity in the welfare of university lecturers in comparison with their counterparts in public offices. The lexical item “pittance” rightly highlights the relatively lower financial status of ASUU members contrasting with the huge remuneration of politicians that is “stolen” and “scandalous”. Since access to finances can be regarded as a form of social power, the comment illustrates the wide financial power gap existing between these two groups and also highlights the entrenchment of inequality between the academic union and politicians in offices.

4.5 Name-Calling

Name-calling is a discursive strategy used to refer to people in degrading, abusive, demeaning and insulting terms. According to Philip and Jergensen (2002), the way that people are named in news discourse can have significant impact on the way in which they are viewed. In the context of the ASUU strike discourse, this referential strategy is employed by participants of the discourse to achieve ‘negative presentation of others’. Stakeholders that subscribe to ASUU’s

plight and desire an overhaul of the university system commonly refer to others in abusive manners. Below are instances of naming strategies in the discourse:

Extract 17

Our loquacious Minister of Information, Labaran Maku, said apart from poor funding, there are other systemic issues relating to the vision of the various universities...

The Nation, July 4, 2013

Extract 18

The issue of awards to undeserving personalities has continued to be an embarrassment to the government.

The Nation, July 9, 2013

Extract 19

I cannot see any positive thing from this government. Earlier, the government sent people to appeal to ASUU, we yielded; let them not think we will this time. Our leaders are insensitive.

The Nation, July 11, 2013

Extract 17 refers to a key personality on the government side during the ASUU strike, the Minister of Information. As a government spokesperson, he is reputed to defend the Federal Government's position vehemently on the strike and also disregard ASUU's stance on the industrial dispute. In the extract, the lexical item, "loquacious" is synonymous to the word "talkative". In Nigerian parlance, it may be equal to one who has 'diarrhoea of the mouth'. What has been communicated in the extract is that the minister only makes lot of empty remarks that do not bring solution to the lingering industrial dispute. The intention of the text producer is to present the Minister as one who is uncouth, not cautionary in speech and lacks courtesy.

In extract 18, the nominal group "undeserving personalities" in the discourse refers to affluent individuals that are awarded degrees without any academic effort. The author decries this practice which is customary in many public universities where wealthy personalities because of their social status are decorated in academic gowns and given honorary academic degrees. Extract 19 above is credited to an official of ASUU lamenting the attitude of government to the plight of university lecturers. The lexical item "insensitive" is used to describe the government's unfeeling and uncaring approach to the myriads of problems in the university system.

Extract 20

Today, we have a somnolent education minister and junior minister who ought to be an artisanal printer.

The Nation, Sept. 13, 2013

Extract 21

Government officials like Wogu and NUC Secretary, Prof Julius Okojie, who fawningly and ingratiatingly engage in bizarre displays with a view to currying favours from their boss, are liabilities to the government they serve.

The Punch, August 21, 2013

In extract 20, the underlined lexical items used in referring to the Ministers of Education carry derogatory connotations. The demeaning potential of the words resides in their contextual meaning. The adjective, “somnolent” casts the Minister of Education as passive and slothful in handling the affairs of university education. Maintaining that the junior minister (Minister of State for Education), who is a Barrister is supposed to be an artisanal printer, is derogatory and demeaning. What the naming strategy seeks to achieve is a negative presentation of the minister as unfit, incompetent and incapable to be a minister of Education.

Extract 21 is a comment by a public affairs analyst and a university lecturer to condemn the stance of two key personalities loyal to the government and opposing ASUU during the strike. The financial term, “liabilities” employed in the discourse portends that the referents cause losses rather than profits and are like parasites that needs to be removed from the corridors of power. The discursive function of the lexical item is to present the government loyalists to the public as useless, valueless and worthless.

Extract 22

That non implementation of an agreement government voluntarily signed with ASUU way back in 2009 following three years of negotiation has led to a strike action now in its fifth month only confirms the fears of most Nigerians – absence of governance and usurpation of power by smart alecs who in the opinion of our God-fearing president can do no wrong.

The Nation, Dec. 12, 2013

Extract 22 is another instance of naming strategy deployed for meaning and discursive effect. The producer of the text, Jide Oluwayitan is a public affairs analyst. The usage of the noun phrase, smart alecs is to castigate notable government officials and their activities during the ASUU strike, which is considered inimical to progress in university and by extension governance in the country. By this referential strategy, the negative dynamics that characterises the ASUU’s struggle in which key personalities play unhealthy politics with the industrial dispute is x-rayed.

4.6 Reference to Past Dates

The ASUU strike is an industrial dispute with historical links. The 2013 strike, which is the focus of this study, is hinged on the non-implementation of the 2009 agreement jointly reached by the Federal Government and ASUU. This is also inextricably linked to earlier issues and unimplemented agreements which have been a bone of contention between the two parties. In order to maintain the historical significance of the strikes, stakeholders of the ASUU strike discourse frequently allude to past dates. This discursive strategy is usually employed to link the significance of the earlier issues regarding the ASUU strike to the 2013 ASUU strike and the consistent inconsistency of the federal government in not attending to issues concerning education in the country. The extracts below are instances of this discursive strategy in the discourse:

Extract 23

Since 2009, we have been working round the clock trying to get the government to honour the agreement. Even in 2011, we went briefly but they refused to pay attention to the issues.

The Nation, July 11, 2013

The above comment is credited to Idaevbor Bello, a member of ASUU. The author refers to 2009, the year that ASUU and FG reached the controversial agreement which the Federal Government refused to implement. The year, 2009 is frequently referenced in the discourse to establish the significance of the 2009 agreement to the current 2013 strike. 2011 is also a reference to the one-month strike embarked upon by ASUU.

Extract 24

The government of Obasanjo did not implement the 2001 agreement, prompting ASUU to embark on another strike on December 29, 2002.... The strike was suspended in June 2003 on the orders of the IAP. The ding-dong between the FGN and ASUU continued until December 14, 2006, when the then Minister of Education, Mrs Obiageli Ezekwisi, on behalf of the FGN inaugurated the FGN/ASUU Re-negotiating Committee, under the leadership of Deacon Gamaliel Onosode, to re-negotiate the 2001 Agreement which had been due for re-negotiation since June 2004. The re-negotiation which started on January 23, 2007 was concluded in January 2009.

The Punch, August 21, 2013

The above extract is a chronicle of the ASUU strike by a public affairs analyst and university lecturer, Chijioke Uwasomba from 2001. It starts from the unimplemented 2001 agreement

which led to the strike in 2002 and its suspension in 2003. It proceeds with the 2009 controversial agreement which was a product of (re)-negotiations which build up from 2004 to 2007.

Extract 25

Since 1999, when Nigeria returned to civil rule, lecturers have been on strike for a total of “30 months out of 156 months, or 20 percent of the total time in the past 13 years,” according to the Scoop, an online publication. “This is an equivalent six semesters or three academic sessions,” the publication added. The worst of the strikes lasted for six months between 2003 and 2004 when lecturers demanded that professors had to retire at the age of 70.

The Punch, October 20, 2013

The above text refers to past dates to further establish the entrenchment of the strike within the historical context. Central to the comment above is the effect that the strikes have had on the academic calendar. The text producer(s) highlights that the strike has led to the loss of academic time which automatically elongates students’ stay in the universities.

As a discursive strategy, reference to past dates is a form of information power on the part of the stakeholders that employed it. Being armed with concrete chronological references gives the discourse participants grounds to contribute factually and brings a level of objectivity to the discourse. Also, the discursive strategy characterises the conflict as a cycle of negotiations, re-negotiations and unimplemented agreements, which gives birth to the incessant strikes. The manner in which the strike has evolved over the years speaks volume about the indifferent ideological orientation of the government in tackling the problem of the strike and reflects the manipulative side of the whole issue, which is reflected in the gimmicks of negotiations, renegotiations and agreements which has not led to the resolution of the industrial action.

4.7 Figures and Percentages

In the discourse of the stakeholders of the ASUU strike, figures and percentages is a significant discursive strategy that is employed for particular pragmatic purposes. The essence of this discursive means is to substantiate the claims of its users. It is important to note that it is difficult to rely on some of these quoted figures and percentages because these statistical claims are usually hard to verify in the discourse. Below are examples of the deployment of figures and percentages in the discourse:

Extract 26

In the 2013 fiscal year, Nigeria’s budget stood at 4.9 trillion out of which ~~₦~~426.53 billion was allocated to the education sector representing 8.7% with the university sub-sector getting a paltry sum of ₦55.4 billion. The World Bank in its report of global education in 2012 stated that allocation to

education sectors in some countries improved tremendously with Ghana 31%, Cote d'Ivoire, 30.0%, Uganda, 27.0% South Africa, 25.8%, Swaziland, 24.6%, Kenya, 23.0%. Our annual budget allocation relative to the education sector stood at 8.4%. It is also painful and disheartening that Nigeria could only spend 0.76% of its GDP on education, while other less endowed countries invest more of their GDP in education (Angola, 4.9%, Ghana, 4.4%, Kenya, 6.5% and South Africa, 7.9%.

The Nation, November, 1, 2013

The above extract summarily captures the financial state of the education sector in Nigeria relative to other African countries. The reference to the paltry sum of ₦55.4billion allocated to the university sub-sector out of ₦426.53 allocated to education is an indication of the low attention given to university education. This was further reinforced by reference to the 0.76% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent on education. Also, the disparity that exists between the financial commitment of government to education in Nigeria and other African countries is foregrounded by the author's copious reference to percentages in the text.

Extract 27

The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recommends that a minimum of 26 per cent of the budgetary allocation in developing countries should be devoted to education, but instead the Nigerian government allocates less than 10 percent.

The Nation, July 12, 2013

The above text was produced by Babatunde Badmus, a student leader during a protest about the 2013 ASUU strike. The reference to UNESCO's recommendation is significant as it is the benchmark for budgetary allocation to education in developing countries. The 26 percent minimum budgetary allocation is frequently referenced in the ASUU strike discourse by stakeholders. Discourse participants usually refer to it to establish the noncompliance of the Nigerian government to this international benchmark as it is shown in the text that the government allocates about less than 10 percent to education. The significance of this to the ASUU strike discourse is to indicate the wide gap that exists between government's financial attitudes to university education placed side by side with global best practices.

Extract 28

We asked them to take ₦30billion and pay their members, then come back for another money, but they said no, we must give them ₦92billion.

The Nation, September 6, 2013

In the above, a key member on the Federal Government negotiation panel on the 2013 ASUU strike, Governor Gabriel Suswam bears his mind on the deadlock it reached with the Academic Union during negotiations. The point of disagreement between the two parties centres on government's failure to pay ASUU members the Earned Academic Allowance (EAA) which was put at ₦92 billion. Instead, the government insists on paying a lesser amount of money - ₦30billion. These monetary figures recur prominently in the discourse as the Earned Academic Allowance features as one of the key demands of ASUU. It is to be noted that the EAA is a major demand by ASUU in the controversial 2009 agreement.

5. Conclusion

This study has attempted to investigate the discourse of selected stakeholders on the 2013 ASUU strike as revealed in their comments in the newspaper media. In the data samples, it was revealed that the use of language betrays manipulative tendencies on the part of the discourse participants. Also, the discursive practices employed reflect conflicting ideological orientations as well as power relations existing between the stakeholders of the discourse. The paper reveals that the discourse participants employed discourse strategies such as appeal, threat, reference to past dates, comparison, name-calling, exaggeration and the use of figures and percentages. The work concludes that the ASUU strike is a conflict of interests among the stakeholders of the discourse. As a unique form of industrial dispute discourse, social practices such as manipulation, ideological affiliations and power relations manifest significantly in the discourse.

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**EUPHEMISTIC METAPHORS IN NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER OBITUARY
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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Abstract

In discussing death, a timeless taboo in which psychological, religious and social interdictions coexist, some forms of linguistic cautions are employed during communicative situations (such as obituaries) that reflect the taboo of death, because of its bluntness, vulgarity and unpleasantness. Using data from five randomly selected Nigerian newspapers, this paper analyses obituary announcements, particularly looking at the euphemistic usages in these texts gathered, which adopt the circumlocutory way of expressing the taboo of death and then consequently explores the metaphorical usages of the announcement given its pervasiveness to refer to human mortality. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory serves as the theoretical framework for the analysis, where death is explained in terms of domains that project from source to target domains.

1. Introduction

Metaphor and euphemism are examples of the linguistic features that characterize obituary announcements. According to Boulton (1960: 118), euphemism is defined as “the language that sounds pleasant”, it is an expression intended by the speaker to be less offensive, troubling or disturbing to the listener than the word or phrase it replaces. According to Benoir and Hogan (2002), cited by Yusuf (2004: 5) metaphor is defined as “an implicit or indirect comparison”. It is a phrase used to describe something in a way that is different from its normal use.

Death is a compulsory and necessary end of humans; it is a concept that is feared in every society. To this extent, Allan and Burrige (1991: 159) have opined that “death is a fear-based taboo” in which different fears co-exist such as fear of the loss of loved ones, fear of what comes after death, fear of the evil spirits and so on. Death is seen as a taboo subject in the society, hence the refusal to speak freely about this concept, this is because of the perceived discomfort talking about it might cause.

Despite the reluctance to talk about the subject of death, there are communicative situations in which the subject matter- death cannot be avoided; such is the case of obituary. Lawal et. al, (1999:2) view obituary announcements as “communicative acts with a target audience whose sponsors intend to convey a deep sense of loss and grief which he expects the readers to understand and appreciate.” Obituary, according to Fernandez (2006: 104), is a euphemism itself, because the word originated from Latin word ‘Obitus’ which means ‘departure’, a common euphemistic substitute for death.

However, there seems to be paucity in literature on the linguistic analysis of obituary announcements. Hence, this study, as an addition to existing works on linguistic analysis of obituaries, explores the euphemistic and metaphoric use of language in obituary announcements found in Nigerian newspapers with a view to understanding how death is viewed in the Nigerian context.

To achieve this, the study will be guided by the following research objectives, which are:

- i. to identify the euphemistic substitutes for death in obituary announcements
- ii. to examine metaphors as used in the obituary announcements
- iii. to examine the configuration of metaphors in the obituary announcements according to their domain mappings

2. Previous works

Fernandez (2006) examines the euphemism and conceptual metaphorization in Victorian obituaries. In the study, he explores the euphemistic language on obituary pages and studies the different conceptual metaphors which are aimed at substituting the notion of death and dying in the newspaper obituaries. He thus avers that the various conceptual metaphors illustrate death as a desirable event, particularly within the Christian belief.

Oriaku (2010) sees newspaper obituary publication (advertisement) as a form of biography. He argues that being dead, the deceased gets no benefits from such a presentation; rather it is the living who stands to gain from it and actually sets out to exploit the opportunity created by the particular death.

Aremu (2011) analyses obituary announcements in English from a socio-pragmatic perspective. He opines that these obituary announcements in English in Nigeria serve as a window through which the socio-cultural usage of Nigerian English is showcased. This, he noticed is as a result of the preponderance of elements that characterise Nigerian English such as hedges, idioms, code-switching, code-mixing and lexical borrowings.

3. Concept of metaphor and euphemism

3.1. Metaphor

Generally, metaphor is a kind of figurative use of language which entails the comparison of things, persons or ideas. It involves understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5). Black (2006: 102) believes that metaphor is a property of the human mind and this explains why metaphors are commonly used in everyday interactions. It is also important to note that there are certain abstract concepts which can only be appropriately understood through metaphors, this is because exact and literal paraphrase of such concepts is not possible (Deignan, 2005: 14). These abstract topics include concepts such as birth, love, death etc. Nevertheless, as common as metaphors are in human's interactions, it is so elusive, in that it sometimes requires a context to tell us whether an utterance is to be interpreted metaphorically or literally has its meaning shaped within the context of use.

Furthermore, Lakoff (1993: 5) opines that metaphor is defined as “a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system”, that is, metaphor has a conceptual connection which stems from the source domain (i.e. the realm of the physical and concrete reality) to the target domain. He states further that;

The metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason. The language is secondary. The mapping is primary, in that it sanctions the use of source domain, language and inference patterns for target domain concepts [Lakoff 1993:208]

These two forms of domains provide a metaphorical connection which stems from our reasoning about the target domain using our understanding of the source domain. For instance, time {target} is money {source}. Here our knowledge of *money* (as something you spend, invest or lose) gives us an understanding of the metaphorical connection it has with *time*, that is, the projection from source domain onto target domain helps to map our perception about *money* onto our perception about *time*.

Cooper (1986: 104) avers that one of the functions metaphors perform is the social function. That is the use of metaphor is part of everyday communication, and there are specific speech acts like proverbs, songs, or other literacy discourse whose function is understood by the audience. This kind of metaphoric function is evaluated by such criteria as imaginative power, internal balance and the capacity to evoke moods. Beyond this, metaphors, especially as they relate to obituaries, can also be said to function as a device which unlocks our unconscious emotion in a bid to conceptualise the topic (i.e. death)

3.2. Euphemism

The word euphemism is etymologically derived from Greek where the prefix ‘eu-’ means ‘good, well’; the stem ‘pheme’ means ‘speak’; the suffix ‘-ism’ means ‘action or result’. The word euphemism means ‘speaking well of...’, ‘good speech’, and ‘words of good omen’. Antrushina et. al (1985: 176) believe that, there are words in every human language that people intentionally avoid because they are considered indecent, rude, too direct or impolite, but as offensive as these words are, we must invariably find a way of describing them, hence, the use of substitutes called euphemism.

Fromkin et. al (2011: 473) define euphemism as “word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening or unpleasant subjects”. According to Leech (1985: 45), euphemism is seen as “the linguistic equivalent of disinfectant”, that is, it is a substance directed at killing the weightiness of certain concepts that many people cannot freely speak of, to make them socially acceptable. Euphemisms are powerful linguistic tool that are embedded so deeply in our language. To this extent, it can be deduced that euphemism is a kind of linguistic elevation aimed at finding socially acceptable words for those which are unacceptable.

In essence, euphemisms are mitigating linguistic substitutes for coarse, unfriendly or taboo words and whichever definition of a euphemism we take, it is perceived as a kind of polite and

roundabout mode of expression, which is used to soften or beautify the unpleasantness of reality. Some examples are: *'motion discomfort bag or air-sickness bag, for vomit bag'*, *'custodian, for janitor/ doorman'*, *'making love to, playing with or sleeping with, for having sexual intercourse with'*, *'kicked the bucket, for death'* etc.

Euphemisms are useful in sanitizing the language which the speakers use. Mayfield (2009: 57) corroborates this by noting that such sanitising function of euphemisms helps to semantically trivialise things or events that could appear unacceptable in light of professed values.

4. Theoretical framework

The main thrust of this paper is to explore the euphemistic and metaphoric language of obituary announcements in Nigerian newspapers. Warren (1992: 146) agrees that “metaphorization constitutes a potent source for euphemistic reference” and a common figurative use of language to cope with the taboo- death. With this in mind, the discussion in this paper will be predominantly based on the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor, within which the metaphors of death and dying will be perused as a euphemistic resource.

Conceptual metaphor was a theory propounded by Lakoff and Johnson in their seminal work; *'Metaphors We Live By'* (1980) in which they discussed the “centrality of metaphor to thought” with a resultant effect in the ubiquity of metaphorical forms in everyday and conventional language. Likewise, Lakoff and Turner (1989) as cited by Black (2006: 104) opine that “conceptualizing metaphor involves how the mind perceives reality”. According to Fernandez (2006: 106), this theory sees metaphor as “going beyond pointing to the similarities between concepts or subjects, rather, they stand as means of creating, organizing and understanding reality. He explains further that metaphor, within the cognitive system, is seen as a device which helps to structure the conceptual system and to provide a relationship between our understanding of the world with our experiences in a bid to make sense of it. This varies across cultures because of different shared beliefs.

Following the discussion on understanding metaphor in the light of cross-domain mapping {i.e. mapping that stems from the source domain to the target domain}, it is in this correspondence between the source and target domain that cognitive conceptualization invariably fulfils its euphemistic function. Buttressing more on this, Barcelona (2003b: 214) posits that, the cognitive conceptualization of metaphor adopts a “unidirectional approach to perceiving reality from the source to the target domain” in that, the process moves our understanding of the concept from the more abstract to the more concrete reality. Thus, our experiences can be understood in terms of structural elements such as ‘containers’, ‘room’, ‘possession’, ‘paths’ etc, which permits us to concretize abstract concepts.

Therefore, in this work, the conceptual theory of metaphor that explains metaphor in terms of cognitive/conceptual mappings will be used for analyzing the metaphoric expressions in the data (obituary announcements), which in turn helps our understanding of the euphemistic substitute of the taboo subject- death.

5. Methodology

The data for this study comprise texts of obituary announcements which are collected from five different Nigerian newspapers, namely, The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation, This Day and Nigerian Tribune. These newspapers are preferred considering their national coverage and popularity. A total of 64 obituary announcements are randomly selected in these newspapers, but for the constraint of space and time, 34 texts are extracted and searched in their entirety for metaphorical expressions related to death and dying.

The quantitative and qualitative methods are adopted for analysis in this study. The frequencies of occurrence of these metaphorical expressions related to death and their respective conceptual mappings are statistically presented using percentages. Thereafter, discussions are made based on the quantitative presentation.

6. Data presentation and analysis

The analysis in this section first identifies euphemistic metaphor as employed in the obituary announcements. The identified metaphors are classified according to the linguistic content of their source and target domains describing them in relation to the main discourse of death.

6.1 Euphemism and the metaphorical conceptualization of death

As explained earlier, metaphor serves as the primary constituent, from which their euphemistic expressions (substitute for death) are understood. Therefore, before moving on to the discussion of the metaphorical conceptualizations of death found in the obituaries, I will briefly describe the euphemistic metaphors that are used in the obituary announcements to mitigate the taboo of death. The table below illustrates the frequency of occurrence of the taboo word- death- and its substitutes in the obituary corpora.

Table 1: Frequency of the use of Euphemistic substitute and the taboo word in the obituary corpora

| | Frequency | Percentages |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Use of Euphemistic substitutes | 54 | 84.37% |
| Direct use of the taboo word | 10 | 15.63% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

Out of the 64 instances analysed, 54 euphemistic substitutes for the taboo of death were seen, whereas the taboo word 'death' scantily appeared as illustrated in the following excerpts:

*Excerpt 1: We commiserate with our friend Dr (Mrs) Nnenna Ezeigwe on the **death** of her father... (The Guardian, January 28, 2014).*

*Excerpt 2: The chief of Army Staff, on behalf of officers and soldiers of the Nigerian Army regrets to announce the **death** of Brig Gen Timothy Oluwafemi Orimogunje... (The Guardian, May 1, 2014)*

*Excerpt 3: ... who **died** on 10th February, 2014..... Until his **death**, he was the ... (The Guardian, May 1, 2014)*

These excerpts above obviously indicate that not all obituary announcements are expressed in a circumlocutory manner; some make use of the taboo word directly.

However, certain semantic resources are used for mitigating these euphemistic functions, they are mostly metaphors e.g. “*slept in the Lord- Die*” and hyperbole (which have noticeable metaphoric overtones) e.g. “*peaceful exit to the eternal glory- Die*”.

6.2 The conceptual mapping of metaphor

Metaphors, as understood from the foregoing is “by far the most powerful mechanism in the formation of euphemism for the taboo of death” (Fernandez 2006: 111). It becomes evident with this that, metaphors constitute a potent source of metaphorical reference to the taboo subject-death.

Within the framework of cognitive conceptualization of metaphor, the metaphors collected in this obituary corpus can be analyzed in terms of cognitive mapping (TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN). This helps in the categorization of the information given in the obituaries which invariably avails us the understanding of how the taboo of death was actually used. Seven of such cross domain conceptual mappings were found in the metaphors excerpted from the obituary corpus as shown in the table below:

Table 2: Metaphors in the obituary announcements

| Type of metaphor (source) | Death |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Metaphorical conceptions | i. Journey |
| | ii. Loss |
| | iii. Eternal rest |
| | iv. Transition |
| | v. Passage to joyful live |
| | vi. Reward |
| | vii. End |

The table above shows that the targets: journey, loss, eternal rest, transition, passage to joyful live, reward and end are understood by the source domain of death in obituary announcements. These mappings conceptualize the domain of death (herein is our target domain) in terms of domain with positive connotation which according to Bultnick (1998: 84), results directly from “the nature of the source domain”. It must be noted also that, the positive connotation is an effect of the Christian belief which explains death as a sort of reward in Heaven after a virtuous life on earth. An attempt is made to explain how the source domains are applied to the target domains (which carry the euphemistic taboo concept of death).

Table 3: The frequency and percentage distribution of the source domains

| Domain | Frequency | Percentages |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Journey | 15 | 23.44% |
| Loss | 9 | 14.06% |
| Eternal rest | 10 | 15.63% |
| Transition | 12 | 18.75% |
| Passage to joyful live | 6 | 9.34% |
| Reward | 8 | 12.5% |
| End | 4 | 6.25% |
| Total | 64 | 100% |

Table 3 shows the frequencies of occurrence of the metaphorical conceptualisations of death employed in the data. This distribution evidently shows that the domain mapping of death as journey ranks the highest with 15 instances (23.44%) while the domain of death as the end ranks the lowest. A reason for the high occurrence of the domain of journey can be due to the psychological simplicity attached to the expression, in that, death is simply perceived as a movement process. Other domains rank as follow: death as loss- 14.06% with 9 instances, death as eternal rest- 15.63%, death as transition- 18.75% with 12 instances, death as passage to joyful living- 9.34% with 6 instances and death as reward- 12.5% with 8 instances.

The discussion in the next section will be focused on each domain and how they are illustrated in the obituary announcement corpora.

6.2.1. Death as a journey

The conceptual metaphor here explains death in terms of a journey with a spiritual destination. It is the most frequently used of all other source domains. This conceptualization is based on the assumption that the dead person is no longer around, such person is conceived as a traveler whose destination is generally perceived to be heaven. The mapping transfers the attributes related to the source domain of the journey to help us understand the target domain of death. The process of journeying can be viewed in three ways:

- i. The act of dying presupposes that the deceased is leaving the world, which is observable in the following excerpts

Excerpt 4: passing on (The Guardian, May 1, 2014; The Punch, August 4, 2014)

Excerpt 5: passing to glory (This Day, Sept 15, 2014; The Punch, August 4, 2014; The Guardian, July 11, 2014)

Excerpt 6: Dear Coordinator General, your trip took us as a surprise... (The Punch, Nov. 29, 2015)

It is observed in excerpt 6 that the word ‘trip’ is used, suggesting that the act of dying is viewed as a process of leaving the world for another place.

- ii. The deceased is leaving for a final destination which is considered to be Heaven, a place to meet with the Creator (according to Christian belief). For example:

Excerpt 7: Our patriarch goes home... (Punch, August 4, 2014).

Excerpt 8: Travel safe until we meet to part no more (The Punch, Nov. 29, 2015)

- iii. Likewise, the journey is seen as being instigated by some external agent (God). E.g.

Excerpt 9: Call to Glory... (The Guardian, July 11, 2014)

Excerpt 10 ... we announce the call to glory of our dearly... (Tribune, March 14, 2014)

This suggests that somebody (God) has called for the (dead) person to a journey from the world to heaven.

6.2.2. Death as a loss

This conceptual mapping sees death in terms of a loss. The conceptual basis of this mapping lies in the fact that life is perceived as a valuable object and death thus seen as the loss of this possession. The metaphorical elements used in explaining this loss does not provide any sort of consolation or relief to the bereaved, rather they are left to lament and regret the loss. For example:

Excerpt 11: ‘With deep sorrow in our hearts, we announce the passing on to glory....’ (This Day, Sept 15, 2014)

Excerpt 12: It is with deep sense of colossal loss... (Nigerian Tribune, June 6, 2015)

The excerpts above show that the loss of prestigious persons caused the deceased families to express their feelings of regret and sadness even through their language use in the obituary announcement.

6.2.3. Death as an eternal rest

Rest is considered as a period of relaxing after a rigorous period of activity. The domain of death is here understood in terms of a rest to suggest that there is a peaceful rest after a period of rigorous earthly activities. The frequent term in this mapping is ‘rest’ and it gives a psychological overview that the dead person has gone to a place to rest. It is observable in the following examples:

Excerpt 13: May his lively soul rest in the bosom of the Lord’ (The Nation, November 6, 2015)

Excerpt 14: Continue to rest in the bosom of the Lord’ (Nigerian Tribune, May 9, 2015)

Excerpt 15: We however trust he is resting peacefully in the bosom of the Almighty (Nigerian Tribune, June 6, 2015)

The use of the expression ‘rest in peace’ (RIP known as *Requiescere in Pace*) likens rest to be a source of euphemistic substitute such as ‘resting place- grave’, where the dead are eternally resting.

Excerpt 16: May his soul rest in perfect peace... (Punch, August 4, 2014).

Excerpt 17 ...she will thereafter be laid to rest... (This Day, March 20, 2015)

More so, laid to rest as used in excerpt 17 can also be termed to be the performance of the burial rites of the dead who is ultimately tired of an exhausting life and laid to a place of permanent rest.

6.2.4. Death as a transition

Death is also understood as a transition, which is a change from one state of consciousness to another. The frequent term used in this mapping is ‘sleep’. The notion of ‘sleep’ here presupposes the fact that death is temporary, so the dead person is no longer dead but sunk in a comforting sleep, with the possibility of resurrecting some day in heaven.

Excerpt 18: ...who slept in the lord (This Day, Sept. 15, 2014).

Excerpt 19: ...sleep well in the bosom of the Lord (Nigerian Tribune, May, 30, 2014)

Excerpt 20: She peacefully fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday, 9th October, 2015... (The Nation, November 6, 2015)

Excerpt 21: We commiserate with Muyiwa Akinbolagbe and family over the transition into glory of their father... (The Punch, May 24, 2015)

It is generally understood that to be asleep usually involves some relief of feeling pain, and death, in these excerpts, is thus conceptualised through one of the effects of sleep, as release from pains of life.

6.2.5. Death as a passage to joyful life

Joyful life is seen from the Christian perspective as a peaceful and everlasting existence with God in Heaven. This has been used to conceptualize death following the ‘Judeo-Christian tradition’ which Fernandez (2006: 119) explain to be “the belief in an afterlife in which the deceased will joyfully expect the resurrection in Heaven flanked by God and the Celestial

Angels”. It is deduced from this that eternal life is basically seen as the primacy of joyful life, such is observable in the following announcement texts:

Excerpt 22: ...peaceful exit to eternal glory of our beloved Founder President’. (Punch, August 4, 2014).

Excerpt 23: ... the Inspector General of Police announces the passage to eternal glory of our most beloved... (The Punch, May 24, 2015)

Excerpt 24: Call to glory. (The Guardian, July 11, 2014)

Excerpt 25: Celebration of life (This Day, Sept. 15, 2014)

Given this tendency of the Christian faith to reason about death, the mapping is instantly understood.

6.2.6. Death is a Reward

The domain of death is understood in terms of a reward for those who lived a virtuous and exemplary life on earth. This domain is in total contrast to the perceived negative attitude expressed through the mapping of death as loss; this mapping focuses on the positive effect of death and dying Fernandez (2006) opines that death as a reward involves ‘a sort of liberation, thanks to which the deceased and his survivors will find some hope and consolation’. For example:

Excerpt 26: Daddy we love you but God loves you more. We shall continue to hold aloft the legacies of love, hard work and integrity you left with us ... (Nigerian Tribune, May, 30, 2014)

*Excerpt 27: We commiserate with our friend Dr (Mrs) Nnenna Ezeigwe on the death of her father...and urge her to take **solace in the fulfilled** life he led. (The Guardian, January 28, 2014).*

Likewise, for such virtuous, meeting with God in heaven constitutes the source of the reward for a life well spent on the earth. Death is seen as reward in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 28: With Gratitude to God for a fulfilled life, well spent in service of God and mankind, we announce the call to glory of... (Tribune, March 14, 2014)

Excerpt 29: Celebration of a Peaceful and Loving Life’ (Tribune, March 14, 2014)

Excerpt 30: Glorious exit. (The Guardian, January 28, 2014).

Excerpt 31: Our patriarch goes Home (Punch, August 4, 2014)

Home, in excerpt 31 is seen as a place of fortress and relaxation, which is a reward for the virtuous life of the deceased.

6.2.7. Death is the End

Life can be understood as a process with a starting and end point with a time span. Death therefore, is conceptualized as the final stage of our lifespan by means of the conceptual mapping ‘DEATH IS THE END’. This mapping implies that death is the final and compulsory royalty one must pay before leaving the earth in the process of being received at the destination- the end. For example:

*Excerpt 32: May the good Lord **receive** her soul in rest'. (The Guardian, July 11, 2014).*

*Excerpt 33: we commiserate with the family on the **exit** of their father, husband and grandfather. (The Punch, Nov. 29, 2015)*

Excerpt 34: Farewell to a colleague. (This Day, March 20, 2014)

It is interesting to note that 'farewell' as used in excerpt 34 is a metaphorical conceptualization which depicts that the professional services rendered by the dead at his organization (who sponsored the announcement) have come to an end due to his death, thus leading them to bid him goodbye at his death.

7. Findings and Conclusion

This study highlights the euphemism and metaphor that are embedded in obituary announcements in newspapers. The facts gathered made us to understand that metaphor and euphemism relate at some point, in that, mostly, euphemistic substitutes of taboo subjects such as death are derived primarily from the metaphorical uses within the expression. The conceptual mappings derived from Lakoff's (1993) conceptual theory of metaphor explains metaphor further in terms of source and target domains where the former is used to explain the latter.

The study found seven source domain mappings for the taboo word- death- based on the analysed data. These source domains are journey, loss, eternal rest, transition, passage to joyful life, reward and end. The data were also subjected to a quantitative analysis to understand the frequencies of occurrence of these source domain, and it was found that death as journey ranked the highest with 23.44%, followed by death as transition with 18.75%, death as eternal rest with 15.63%, death as loss with 14.06%, death as passage to joyful living with 9.34%, death as reward with 12.5% and death as end ranks lowest with 6.25%. This study believes that the higher occurrence of death as journey is based on the fact that the bereaved see their dead as being in a movement process from carnality to eternity.

This study however found that despite the preponderant use of euphemistic substitutes for the taboo word (death) in obituary announcements, some announcements use the coarse word (death) directly in reporting the obituary not minding its perceived effects on the readers.

This study therefore submits that death as a phenomenon is considered sacred among the Nigerian communities and in any communicative event that involves this phenomenon, people try to circumvent their linguistic choice to avoid bluntness or direct reference to the concept. This work therefore has implication for people's way of life in their perception of the concept of death and obituaries.

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**TRANSMUTATIONS IN YORUBA DRAMA FROM FOLKLORIC
DRAMATISATIONS TO VIDEO FILMS**

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Abstract

Yoruba drama has enjoyed transmutation, particularly in the medium of production and the performance space, with the emergence of the new media of radio, television, cinema and in the recent time home videos. The paper discusses the evolutionary trends of Yoruba dramatic culture from folkloric dramatisations video films. Attentions are paid to the dramatic qualities of festivals and ritual observances in the stage of pristine orality, through the alarinjo tradition to the contemporary innovations in cinearts and video film production. The paper observes that there is no inflexible and indestructible transitional gulf between Yoruba folkloric dramatisations and organised modern theatre and video films, and by extension, among the three. The paper also observes that each medium of dramatisations has its own audience because no medium is superior to another, considering the evolutionary theory of orature and folkloric performances. The paper also attempts a discourse of the epistemological and ideological issues that influence the reading and analysis of the contemporary Yoruba video films. The specific attention of the paper is on folkloric films in the forms of epic, history, legend and myth in relation to how these have been affecting the identity construction of Yoruba people. The paper argues that the total gestalt of Yoruba films have deviated from the core utilitarian functions of folkloric dramatisations. The paper, therefore, is of the opinion that mercantilism is a factor that influences how folkloric materials are interpreted, with particular reference to history and myth. The conclusion of the paper is that culture is not static: it responds to the needs and aspirations of the moment. The only caveat, therefore, is that cautions should be exercised in the use of folkloric materials in the contemporary Yoruba film industry for the sake of the present generation and posterity.

1. Introduction

What is known today as the dramatic and cinematic culture in Yoruba land has undergone different evolutionary trends. These evolutionary trends have influenced the media, aesthetics and ethical standards of the dramatic and theatrical transactions between the performers and the audience. There were some dramatic enactments, festivals and ritual observances among the Yoruba people that had the qualification of the quasi-formal theatre tradition in Aristotelian and Oriental tradition. Festivals and ritual observances have the qualification of the theatre considering the performance process involved.

Thus, the promethean view of some Western critics that Africa had no drama and theatre before the European presence is not valid. The continent has been noted for series of ritual observances and festivals in honour of some gods and goddesses such as Osiris in Egypt and Ogun among the Yoruba. African scholars and critics have related the origin of drama and theatre in Nigeria to

rituals and festival observances of anthropomorphic gods such as Sango, Ogun, etc. (Adedeji, 1969; Ibitokun 1995; Jeyifo, 1984; Soyinka, 1979). The submission of these scholars and critics is that Yoruba gods and goddesses are "theatrogenic" - "gods whose cults and worship are vitally connected with drama and theatre and their symbolic and psychological uses" (Adedeji, 1969:10; Jeyifo 1984: 26; Soyinka, 1979: 86). These scholars and critics have also argued the dramatic and theatrical qualities of ritual among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria. Ritual is believed to have emerged from the attempts of the primitive man to grapple with the problem of his environment, nature and his very existence (Ogundeji 3). The significance of this is to maintain harmony in human cosmos.

2. Yoruba Folkloric Drama: The Turning Point

There is a new direction in the academic discourse of the growth and development of drama and theatre in Yoruba nations with the incidental events during the reign of Alaafin Ogbolu (a.k.a Abipa), the last Oyo king in exile. The re-enactment of how the six ghost-mummers representing each of the members of Oyo-mesi -in council was captured by six brave hunters made this period significant in the history of Yoruba drama and theatre. With the popularity of this re-enactment on important royal and communal occasions such as the coronation of new Alaafin and the festival of some gods, its performance was put under the control of the king's Ologbo. Not long, there were other several imitators that began their series of itinerant performances. This tradition continued for some decades before 1940s before the emergence of Ogunde tradition.

Even if Ogunde is not regarded as the pioneer of professional theatre in Nigeria, any discourse on the evolution and development of modern theatre in Nigeria is not complete without reference to the role and contribution of Ogunde to change the tempo and temper of theatre practices in the country. Born in Ososa near Ijebu Ode in Ogun State in 1916, Hubert Ogunde joined the league of theatre practitioners in 1944 with his debut opera, *The Garden of Eden* and *the Throne of God* that were performed at Glover Memorial Hall, Lagos. The success of this performance relied so much on the introduction of drama and realism, something strange to the performance of Opera before his entry. So many factors accounted for the success of Ogunde theatre and among these are his experience with Alarinjo theatre tradition, his exposure and experience in the nuances of Yoruba culture and his knowledge of English dramatic tradition. With all these factors, among others, Ogunde was better equipped than other composers and performers of Opera that came before him. Ogunde may not be regarded as the pioneer of the Yoruba professional theatre but his intervention in the practice of drama and theatre in the country is significant. On the significance of Ogunde's intervention in the development of drama and theatre in Nigeria has been observed by Clark (4) that:

Although Ogunde may not have given Nigeria her first professional theatre, his theatre differed from that of the masked

players in many ways. In the Alarinjo Theatre the professional actor is masked; in the theatre of Ogunde the professional actor threw away his mask and showed his person for the first time to his audience. We can therefore say that Ogunde began the first professional theatre without masks in Yoruba. It was also Ogunde who withdrew the theatre from the traditional patronage of the court and religious organizations to rely solely on the patronage of the public. Ogunde thereby gave birth to the first Yoruba commercial theatre.

The dramaturgy of Ogunde tradition was different from what was in existence before his emergence as a theatre practitioner. He introduced dialogue alongside song, music and dance. To this end, it can be said that the dramaturgy of Hubert Ogunde is characterised with "neo-traditionalism". "Neo-traditionalism", in the context of this paper, refers to a gradual departure from the pristine traditional values and ideals owing to the factors of cultural syncretism of indigenous Yoruba culture and the assimilated European culture of the missionary and the coloniser. Ogunde theatre tradition is seen as "neo-traditional" because of some professionalism and innovation that he injected in the Alarinjo theatre tradition, as well as the operatic tradition that was in vogue before his emergence as a popular figure in Nigeria's modern theatre. The reflection of this can be seen in the off-stage and the on-the-stage activities. In his repertoire, he blends traditionalism and modernism as shown in his earlier plays such as *The Garden of Eden and the Throne of God*, *Israel in Egypt* and *Africa and God*. In practice and performance, particularly in the ethics and aesthetics of performance, Ogunde departs from the Alarinjo tradition, as well as Operatic tradition that came before him.

The pioneering efforts of Hubert Ogunde yielded positively with the emergence of several imitators in the tradition. Many theatre troupes and groups sprang up in the corners of Yoruba nation in the 1940s after the pioneering efforts of Ogunde to demonstrate their dramatic and theatrical skills in opera, comedy and satire. The trends continued till the inauguration of television and cinema in the country's entertainment industry.

3. Folkloric Dramatisation/Performance and its Modern Stage

The history of the growth and development of drama and theatre in Yoruba nation and by extension, Nigeria began to change in the 1940s. It was around this time that operatic tradition began in Victorian Lagos with Native Air Opera. The other reason is that the University College, Ibadan was established in 1948 and this made possible the town-gown collaboration in theatre productions. The establishment of the University College, Ibadan promoted the introduction of literary drama in English expression.

In the instance of the literary drama, the roles and contributions of Professor Molly Mahood, Geoffrey Axworthy, Martin Banham, Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka and J.P. Clark cannot be ignored. Like the three axis of the Yoruba popular theatre (Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola and

Duro Ladipo), Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka and J.P. Clark can be regarded as the three axis of the literary theatre in Nigeria. These three axis of literary theatre are university-trained and always use the medium of English in their theatre production. It can thus be said that these three axis are elitist in their theatre performances and production. Prior to the emergence of Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka and J.P. Clark, literary tradition of Nigerian drama and theatre has been traced to the plays of James Henshaw by some literary and dramatic historians (Gbileeka 1997; Omobowale 2011). In his argument on the contribution of James Ene Henshaw in the development of literary drama in Nigeria, Gbileeka (19-20) is of the view that:

The first notable playwright in Nigeria to write in English is Ene Henshaw. His plays constitute the first body of literary dramatic literature which addressed itself to the question of relevance. His plays treated familiar situations which his audience found easy to understand. Situations like the clash of cultures, morality, corruption and even politics. Most of Henshaw's plays are comedies which launch direct attacks on inflexible traditional practices. Characterized by a simple plot, simple characterization, Henshaw's plays exploited the socio-political issues of his time.

Since the pioneering efforts of Henshaw in the inauguration of literary drama in English expression, Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi and J. P. Clark have gained popularity as the literary dramatists in English expression of the first generation. These literary dramatists gained their popularity through the quality and sociological relevance of their texts to the nagging socio-political problems of the country.

The university-trained literary dramatists share some qualities with the popular dramatists of Ogunde tradition: they draw some of the materials for their plays from the folklore and tradition of their people; and they are also involved in itinerant performance by moving their plays around the communities. The main difference between the literary dramatists and popular dramatists is that the former performed most of their plays in English language while the latter performed their plays in indigenous language. The practitioners of popular drama also afforded themselves the opportunities of writing with the production of photoplays. These photoplays are made by different theatre troupes presenting tragic, comic and satiric plays in diagrams, dialogues and actions. There is a need to renew research into the sociology and dramatic qualities of Yoruba photoplays that play significant role in the growth and development of Yoruba drama and theatre.

There was a change in the psychodynamics of modern Yoruba drama and theatre with the introduction of radio and television as media of entertainment, education and information. Yoruba theatre practitioners found solace in the medium of radio to practice their art. As at the time of writing this paper, the present writer did not come across any publication on the contribution of radio to the development of Yoruba popular theatre. This provokes further

researches. Some practitioners of Yoruba popular theatre immediately shifted attention to the medium of radio to practice their art. Lere Paimo (a.k.a. Eda Onile Ola) is one of those practitioners that optimized the use of radio with his historical play – *Ogbori Elemosho*. As a child, the present writer first had theatre experience through the radio version of *Ogbori Elemosho*. The present writer is not also unaware of radio drama in the contemporary Yoruba society and this is classified as “modern radio drama”. This form of radio drama performs utilitarian functions such as entertainment, education, mobilization and political socialization.

The irony of the matter is that radio cannot be effective medium of dramatic presentation or enactment. Radio drama only enjoys the audio perception of the audience while the television drama enjoys audio-visual perception of the audience. By 1959 when television was introduced, there was a shift from radio drama to television drama. Most of the renowned Alarinjo artists and other theatre practitioners embarked on mass exodus to the television when it was first introduced in Nigeria in 1959 (Sesan, 37). Different experiments and trials were made to have television drama and “after an uneasy false start, the first drama presentation on Nigerian Television was broadcast in August 1960 (Olusola 372). Yoruba theatre practitioners were able to add more glimmers and spectacles to their performance and between 1960s and 1980s (and to some extent early 1990s), there were many Yoruba television plays such as *Kootu Asipa*, *Arelu*, *Yanpon Yanrin*, *Omo Araye le*, *Koto Aye*, *Koto Orun*, *Feyikogbon*, *Efe* (a weekly comedy play shown on NTA) *Bashorun Gaa*, *Kogun Ma Jalu* and *Ekuro Oloja*, among others.

Of all these television plays, *Arelu* by Jimoh Aliu was the most popular. The play was usually televised at night and any time there was power outage, people would trek miles to watch the play where there was electricity supply through a generator. The security report of the time stated that many houses were bugled. Television plays began to experience decline when the national and multinational companies began to withdraw their sponsorship. It should be noted that at its emergence, television plays were competing with cine art (celluloid through the availability of film stock).

Opinions and views of film scholars and critics vary on the impact of television on the growth, development and survival of film production on celluloid. A section of these film scholars and critics argue that the advent of television threatened the continuity and survival of the film medium. They support their argument with the view that television provided audience with other means of family entertainment. The audience does not need to visit or patronise cinema theatre before they can be entertained. They get some entertainment from series of tele-drama that were broadcast daily and weekly.

Another section of film scholars and critics (Ayakoroma 2014; Adeoti 2014) argue that the advent of television in Nigeria in 1959 boosted the performance and productivity of indigenous film makers. According to Ayakoroma (2014:39), “the impact Nollywood has made is attributable, to a large extent, on the foundation laid by television drama”. The medium provided

theatre practitioners the needed human and material resources for film production. Theatre practitioners relied on the production and post-production materials of the existing television house. “This influence is also reflected in the approaches the industry has borrowed from television drama conventions” (Ayakoroma, 2014: 39)

Similarly, Adeoti (20-21) infers the contribution of television to the promotion of cinema and film culture in Nigeria. He is of the view that:

... in the 1970s and 1980s, there were regular television drama series featuring some of the troupes on Western Nigeria Television (WNTV), later Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Ibadan. These include: *Bode Wasinmi* (Duro Ladipo), *Awada* (Moses Olaiya Adejumo), *Awada Kerikeri* (Ojo Ladipo), *Kootu Asipa* (Oyin Adejobi). On Ogun State Television, Abeokuta, (OGTV), there were *Ere Abalaye*, featuring Omilani Theatre, and *Ogun Adubi* with Akin Ogungbe. In 1986, Jimoh Aliu's *Arelu* enjoyed wide viewership on Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS), Ibadan, while the drama series lasted. The Tele-drama series did not lack the fundamentals that appealed to their audience in live theatre. Indeed, the audio-visual medium enlarged their capacity to represent situations where characters could commute swiftly between the physical and the supernatural realm.

The positions of Ayakoroma and Adeoti are representatives of the aggregate of views and opinions on the positive influence of television on the growth and development of cinema and film culture in Nigeria. The argument here is that one artistic outlet or medium only corroborates the existing medium or outlet in artistic productivity.

Harmonising the above arguments on the relationship between live theatre and television, it is argued that live theatrical performances began to “die” with the exodus of Yoruba popular theatre artists to the medium of television and later film/video film.

Many practitioners of Yoruba popular theatre abandoned the stage for the new medium. Literary theatre practitioners also made use of the medium with some plays such as *My Father's Burden*, *The Village Headmaster*, *Koko Close*, *Masquerade*, *Hotel De Jordan* and *Case File*. Some of these plays were performed in English language, pidgin or the mixture of both (English language and pidgin). The plays became more popular among the elites. Till today, television plays in English language is popular in the country with the example of *Super Story* by Wale Adenuga Production. Though, the media of television and video film have different aesthetic qualities, Yoruba video film makers have been re-engaging the medium of television for soap opera. The popularity of cable and digital television (e.g. Startimes, DSTV and myTV) has also encouraged the popularity of Yoruba films across the boundaries of the nationality. With this popularity, the Yoruba film makers are expected to improve on their production.

With the arguments for and against the influence of television on the growth and survival of cinema and film culture in Nigeria, two theoretical viewpoints can be deduced. The first is the parasitic theoretical viewpoint. This view point is of the opinion that television medium has nothing to offer to advance the continuity of cinema and film culture in the country. This is based on the argument that television medium is a parasite on cinema and film in the country by competing with the practitioners and audience that are meant for them. Most practitioners from the Western belt (Yoruba) of theatre productions embraced the opportunity offered by the medium of television and thus did not show committed interest in producing on celluloid except few of them. The second is the symbiotic theoretical framework. This view point is of the opinion that the media of television and cinema/film have corresponding benefits for each other.

The argument here is that the medium of television assists the practitioners to improve on their production with the opportunities offered by the medium. Some practitioners used to do recordings of some actions and scenes that may not be possible on stage and later played same for the audience while on stage. Besides, the theatre practitioners have gained some finesse in the art and science of dramatic enactments before camera while moving from television screen to celluloid. In this regard, the relationship between television and cinema is corresponding and cyclical. Thus, the symbiotic theoretical viewpoint is of the opinion that one medium cannot threaten another. The old and the new media, on the other hand, appropriate the possibilities and opportunities offered by each other. In the studies of literature and the new media, it is argued that new medium of literary and dramatic expression is not a threat to the old medium but rather a new medium is an improvement on the possibilities, potential and problems of the pre-existing medium in terms of the aesthetics of production, reception and perception. This is exactly the relationship that exists between television and cinema.

After the introduction of television in 1959, cinema still enjoyed patronage of practitioners and audience till late 1980s. The catalogue of celluloid films produced in the country at this time establishes the point. Ekwuazi (15-16) gives catalogue of fifty-five (55) indigenous feature films produced in the country from 1962 till 1987.

CATALOGUE OF INDIGENOUS FEATURE FILMS

| Title | Producer | Years of Production | Language | Rating |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Bounce for Lagos | Films | 1962 | English | U |
| 2. Culture in Transition | Esso World Theatre | 1963 | „ | -- |
| 3. Mama learns lesson | North Ngn. Film Unit | „ | Hausa | U |
| 4. Kongi's Harvest | Cal penny Film | 1970 | English | „ |
| 5. Child Bride | Federal Films | 1971 | Hausa/Eng. | „ |
| 6. Bull frog in the sun | Cal penny Films | „ | English | „ |
| 7. Son of Africa | Federal. Films | „ | „ | „ |
| 8. Golden woman | „ | „ | „ | „ |
| 9. Hausa Message | RKTV | 1972 | „ | „ |
| 10. Alpha | Afrocult | 1974 | „ | „ |
| 11. Amadi | „ | 1975 | Igbo | „ |
| 12. My Good Friend | Federal. Films | 1975 | English | „ |
| 13. Dinner with the Devil | Starline Films | 1975 | „ | „ |
| 14. Ajani Ogun | Afrocult | 1976 | Yoruba | „ |
| 15. Muzik Man | „ | 1976 | English | „ |
| 16. Dr Oyenusi | Edifosa | „ | „ | „ |
| 17. Count Down at Kusini | Federal. Films | 1977 | „ | „ |
| 18. Bisi, Daughter of the River | Cineventure | „ | „ | „ |
| 19. Ija Ominira | Ogunde | „ | Yoruba | „ |
| 20. Sheihu Umar | Federal. Films | „ | Hausa | „ |
| 21. Black Goddess | Afrocult | 1978 | English | „ |
| 22. The Boy is Good | Edifosa | „ | „ | „ |
| 23. The Mask | „ | 1979 | „ | „ |
| 24. Aiye | Ogunde | „ | Yoruba | „ |
| 25. Kanta of Kebbi | Sokoto St. Govt | „ | Hausa | „ |
| 26. Oil Doom | Edifosa | 1980 | English | „ |
| 27. Jaiyesemi | Ogunde | 1980 | Yoruba | U |
| 28. Cry Freedom | Afrocult | 1981 | English | „ |
| 29. Kada/ Destiny | Ade love Theatre prod. | 1981 | Hausa/Yoruba | „ |
| 30. Efusetan Aniwura | Ishola Ogunde | 1982 | Yoruba | „ |
| 31. Orun Mooru | Alawade | „ | „ | „ |
| 32. Aropin Ntenia | Ogunde | „ | „ | „ |
| 33. Ayanmo | „ | „ | „ | „ |
| 34. Moment of Truth | Hask Films | „ | English | „ |
| 35. Money Power | Afrocult | „ | English | „ |
| 36. Bolus 80 | Edifosa | „ | „ | „ |
| 37. Taxi Driver | Ade love | 1983 | „ | „ |
| 38. Ireke Onibudo | Bayo Aderohunmi | „ | Yoruba | „ |
| 39. Anikura | Ayo Razak | „ | „ | „ |
| 40. Death of Black President | Edifosa | „ | English | „ |
| 41. Papa Ajasco | Wale Adenuga | 1984 | „ | „ |
| 42. Blues for A Prodigal | Soyinka | „ | „ | „ |
| 43. Are Agba Iye | Moses Olaiya | „ | Yoruba | „ |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------|---------|---|
| 44. Kokoro Aye | Leo Films | ” | ” | ” |
| 45. Mosebolatan | Alawada | 1984/5 | ” | U |
| 46. Ogun Ajaiye | Friendscop Films | 1984/5 | Yoruba | ” |
| 47. Kana Kana | Beaton Films | ” | ” | ” |
| 48. Lishabi | Modern Films | ” | ” | ” |
| 49. Ogun Idile | Afro-American Motion Pictures | ” | ” | ” |
| 50. Ojuoro | Omilani Films | ” | ” | ” |
| 51. Iya Ni Wura | Ade Love | ” | ” | ” |
| 52. Apalara | Edifosa Films | ” | ” | ” |
| 53. The Song Bird | Moyo Ogundipe | ” | English | ” |
| 54. Taxi Driver II | Ade Love | 1986/7 | ” | ” |
| 55. Esan | Taraki Pictures | ” | Yoruba | ” |

(Source: Ekwuazi, 1987)

The deduction from the catalogue is that the celluloid film making spanned two decades and half in the country before its demise in the early 1990s. From the above catalogue, it is, therefore, argued that there is a symbiotic relationship between television and celluloid film. The economic and sociological problems of the period were responsible for the demise of the cinematic culture in the country. There was economic recession that made the cost of production of celluloid films from pre-production stage to the post-production stage prohibitive for the film makers. Besides, there was high rate of urban crimes that made night outing unpalatable and insecure for theatre-goers and lovers of the cinema. Television medium also suffered the same fate of celluloid during the period of economic recession as there was increase in the cost of production but the medium only survived with commercials and sponsored programmes.

Another deduction from the catalogue provided by Ekwuazi is that the categories of celluloid film makers can be deduced. The view of this paper is consistent with the opinion of Shaka (12) on the categorisation of indigenous film makers in the celluloid period. The critic avers that the indigenous film makers are:

- i. Those who had their training from the Accra Film School (Halilu, Fajemisin, Otigba, and Aina, among others)
- ii. Those who had their professional Western (American and European) training in film production (Balogun, Ugnomah, Oladele, Dosunmu, Galadima, Adu, Ladebo, and Adesanya, among others);
- iii. Those who started their film production career from the television medium (Ogunmosu and Fani-Kayode, among others); and
- iv. Those who migrated from the stage medium (Ogunde, Folayan, Olaiya, and Soyinka, among others).

This paper, therefore, is of the view that Nigerian film makers have expertise and training to make films on celluloid if other factors are put in place. Among the things that need to be put in

place is the financial support from the government. With the current bailout regime, the government of Nigeria should bailout the film and entertainment industry as it was done for the banking sector and some state governors of the country. This bailout will assist the practitioners to re-brand and re-position the film industry to measure up with the best global practices in the film making.

The economic and sociological challenges that the celluloid film faced in the late 1980s till the early 1990s motivated movie production in video film format. Since the time of the economic recession that brought an end to the production of films on celluloid, the practitioners and the audience of Yoruba films have been relating with the video film medium in the chronological order of VHS, video compact disc (VCD) and Digital Video and Disc (DVD). From its inception till the recent time, video film production in Nigeria has been characterised by mercantilism. The reason for the mercantilism in the video film medium cannot be far-fetched. The whole enterprise began with a commercial interest of an Igbo marketer, Kenneth Nnebue who used his initiatives to sell some of his video tapes. Based on his success in this attempt, he began to make films on low budget in the video film format. Nnebue produced *Living in Bondage*, which was released in 1992 and *Glamour Girls*. He also produced *Aje Ni Iya Mi* for Isola Ogunsola.

The opinions of practitioners, scholars and critics however differ on the pioneer of the video film production in the Yoruba film industry. A section of these scholars refers to Muyideen Aromire (Alade) as the pioneer of the video film format in the Yoruba film industry. Another section of these scholars acknowledges that there had been production of films in the video film format before the daring efforts of Aromire. Alamu (67) submits that there were some video films that preceded Aromire's production and among these are Kola Olatunde's *Igi Da*, Oso Daramola's *Aja Dudu* and Eburn Oloyede's *Ode Osan*. Whatever the positions made by these film scholar-critics, the indisputable fact is that the video film production in Yoruba film industry had external influence at its inception in the 1990s, particularly with the ingenuity of Kenneth Nnebue, a shrewd Igbo business man.

Since the inauguration of the video film format by the initiators and propagators, there have been different entrants of independent production companies and individuals into the business. This situation has bore negatively on the quality and cultural essence of these films, thereby affecting the cultural identity of Yoruba people. Jimoh's (79-80) observation on the attitude of Yoruba film makers to the worldview will be the starting point of argument on the shortfall of Yoruba video films to project and preserve the cultural identity of Yoruba nationality. He (Jimoh) is of the view that:

- (i) The movie industry has tremendous power to influence, shape and condition people's outlook with regard to a particular perspective on the world. This contrasts sharply with the silly defence often offered by many Nollywood filmmakers that they give what society asks for.

- (ii) A lot of the Nollywood producers, directors and scriptwriters who present Yoruba tradition and world view to the world actually lack the competence and authority to accurately portray the Yoruba thought system, mainly because: (a) they are really not sufficiently schooled in that culture, but are short of humility to admit it; and (b) the vast majority of them are adherents of foreign religion and so deliberately present the Yoruba traditional world with negative and pejorative bias.
- (iii) In the light of the above, therefore, significant portions of their representation of the Yoruba tradition are very inaccurate, illogical and in many instances very wrong. These also would seem to contradict the assertion by the moviemakers that they are simply portraying what is happening in our society, a claim that rings hollow in the face of the evident logic that you cannot accurately depict or represent a culture of which you have little grasp or understanding.

Jimoh's position is valid to this discourse because no one can separate culture and tradition from the identity construction of a people. Some Yoruba film makers (un) consciously engage in the othering system that characterises postcolonial discourse. With their attitude to the indigenous culture and tradition, it can be said that they perceive Yoruba culture as demonic other as against the foreign culture that they have seen as the ideal and the exotic other.

Apart from cultural revivalism and promotion, video films are also expected to have sociological significance to the overall societal and national (re-) engineering. Considering the attitude of Yoruba film maker and by extension Nigerian film makers to the cultural and sociological significance of their films, the film makers are classified into four categories as given below:

- i. Those who make their films for nothing else but the good of their society, people and culture. This group of film-makers uses their art to teach moral, promote normative standards of behavior in the society and to make social and political statements. Nearly all the films from Mainframe Productions (e.g. *Saworoide*, *Agogo Eewo*, *Campus Queen* and *Koseegbe*) fall in this category.
- ii. Those who make their films for nothing else but themselves, families, relatives and associates. This group of film-makers only makes films to immortalize the name of their families or to comment on certain issues in the family and thus it is occasional with no intention of making profit. Films in this category have the qualities of a biography. Examples of films in this category are *Ekun Oko Oke* for Pa Abraham Adesanya (SAN) and *Ejiogbe* for Lam Adesina (the former Executive Governor of Oyo State).
- iii. Those who make their films for nothing else but to demonstrate that they are 'wise investors' who know how to make money work for them. The pioneer film-makers such as Kenneth Nnebue and Eddie Ugbomah are in this category. This is a current phenomenon in the Nigerian film industry. The film producers and marketers in Nigeria churn out films weekly or fortnightly with little or no

consideration for the moral content of such films. All their concern is rather profit maximization.

- iv. Those who make their film, for specific purposes. This is otherwise known as Film for specific purposes (FSP). In this category are films meant for evangelization, socio-political sensitization and propaganda.

The third category of film makers is common in the Yoruba film industry. Many of the Yoruba film producers and marketers have the primary motive of profit-making before embarking on the production of a video film. This phenomenon has encouraged the emergence of amateurish film makers that believe that to the movie anything can go. The films released weekly or fortnightly by these amateurish film companies lack ethical and aesthetic values for the projection and preservation of Yoruba cultural identity. The emergence of different film production companies make the availability of different genres of films inevitable and among these genres are comic, historical, thriller (crime and detective), epic, political, etc.

The film makers in the third category also searches everywhere for story in the erroneous opinion that every story is camera-compliant. This category of film makers adapt stories from history, foreign films (particularly Indian and American/English) etc. In these productions, this category of film makers usually fail to make their adaptations truly reflect Yoruba cultural identity particularly in the adaptation of Indian and American/English films as evident in the plot of the story, the language aesthetics and the projection of indigenous worldview.

The popularity of the video film as a medium of family entertainment among the Yoruba families and homes cannot be disputed. The major problem of this popularity is that the medium has not adequately projected cultural identity of Yoruba people in terms of the subject matter, aesthetics and ethics of their production. The view of this paper is consistent with the opinion of Sesan (14-16) on the identity question of Yoruba video film industry. The critic is of the view that Yoruba film industry is characterised with:

- (a) **Presentation of pornography and obscenity:** The Yoruba film industry is besieged with pornographic and obscene films that negate the ethics and morality of the nationality. It is not uncommon in the contemporary Yoruba society to have exposure to movies produced by the producers of Yoruba extraction celebrating naked sex on the screen. In Yoruba ethics and morality, sex between a man and a woman is a private thing that should not be known by the third party. It is therefore a cultural aberration to see films that emphasise pornography, obscenity and prostitution. The pristine Yoruba society frowned at adultery and fornication and any woman caught in the act automatically becomes an "outcast" of the immediate and larger society. It is however disheartening to see how Yoruba film producers celebrate adultery and fornication on screen with little or no poetic justice for the culprit(s).

- (b) **Misrepresentation of Yoruba Cosmology:** The producers of folkloric and epic films misrepresent Yoruba cosmology as evident in the content of those films. Some of the film makers do not have adequate knowledge and understanding of the Yoruba traditional thought pattern, belief system and religious practices and to this end, they muddle points and facts about Yoruba culture to an extent of confusing an alien into the culture. Some of these producers present the terrestrial power of Yoruba (*aiye*) as malevolent with no positive side. In the Yoruba cosmology, *aiye* (the terrestrial power) is both malevolent and benevolent and for this reason the *iya aiye* (mothers of the earth) or witches are categorised into three colours of black, red and white. In the Yoruba traditional thought, black and red witches are notorious for their wickedness while the white witches are appreciated for their kindness towards whoever deserves their favour. Unfortunately, some film makers (un) consciously misrepresent these values of Yoruba cosmology owing to their indoctrination in the values of modern religions (Christianity and Islam) and the Europeanisation of Yoruba society and thought pattern.
- (c) **Misrepresentation of Yoruba personality and character:** Some of the Yoruba film producers do not adequately and properly present Yoruba character and personality. The lowly placed characters such as gatekeepers and house helps are presented as never-do-well individuals that should always be at the mercy of their masters. They, at times, wear shabby dresses and in most cases lack decorum in dealing with their masters and colleagues. The highly placed individuals such as the rich and the powerful in the society are often presented as individuals that attain fame and stardom through diabolism. This misrepresentation of African personality and character negates Yoruba conception of *omoluwabi* (someone with a good character), industry and dedication aimed at worthwhile life and harmonious relationship with neighbours and larger society.
- (d) **Deficient use of indigenous language:** The use of Yoruba language in nearly all the films produced by the film producers of Yoruba extraction is deficient and not holistic. Many of the characters in the non-folkloric films and modern films use Yoruba language with avoidable lapses that are not befitting to the cultural identity of the nationality. This position is made because language is an intricate element of culture. These characters code-mix English language with Yoruba language and at the same time, they code-switch from Yoruba language to English language and vice versa. Some of the following factors may account for this situation: (i) the dominance of English language in the linguistic profile of Nigeria; (ii) the elitist nature of the contemporary Yoruba society. Many Yoruba elites pride themselves on the use of English language for communication in the private and public spheres and this ugly trend has found its way into the medium of film; (iii) similar to the second point is the language attitude of Yoruba elites and masses to the Yoruba and English languages. The attitude to Yoruba

language is negative while the attitude to English Language is positive. This attitude to Yoruba has made it assumed the status of an endangered language that needs revitalisation for survival.

The above shortcomings in the Yoruba film industry reveals that the industry has not come of age. The industry needs to put in much expertise and resources beyond the rhetoric of existence. There is a need to improve on the quality of their production in terms of ethical and aesthetic standards.

In the Yoruba film industry, there is abuse or misuse of folkloric materials of history, myth and legend. In the recent time, there have been series of films on Yoruba history, myth and legend and among these are *Bashorun Ga*, *Efunsetan Aniwura*, *Afonja*, *Ogun Adubi*, *Ogun Agbekoya*, *Fabunmi Okemesi*, *Agbongbo Akala*, *Ogbori Elemosho*, *Opa Oranmiyan*, *Okere*, etc. The plot of these video films raises some epistemological and ethical questions on their significance and essence in the identity construction. These films are made with historical distortion to the actual history in terms of the causation of the historical events and the historical personages involved. This poses pedagogical problems of using the medium to teach Yoruba history and myth to posterity. The producers of historical film texts do claim that they enjoy "filmic licence" that makes them have some artistic liberty to engage history in their films the way they want. With the use of filmic license, the end product of historical film texts is not adequate in the education and socialisation of younger generation. This position is therefore consistent with the view of Sesan (192) that:

Truly, history film educates and stimulates audience about the past, yet there is always a limitation to this in an excursion to the past. A filmmaker, using history as his/her raw material has the "filmic license" to select what appears before the audience. This "filmic license" affords the filmmaker the opportunity to consciously select his materials. Doing this makes the text of the history film incomplete and unreliable as a medium of cultural socialization and education.

The reference of this paper is the plots of Akinwumi's *Efunsetan Aniwura* and Adebayo Faleti's *Bashorun Ga*. In *Efunsetan Aniwura*, there is historical misrepresentation of the character and fate of Iyalode Efunsetan of Yoruba land. This late matriarch was nice to all her slaves until the death of her daughter at child birth. Aare Latosa used the opportunity of the psychological and emotional disturbance of Efunsetan to accuse her of wickedness. In the film, Aare Latosa waged war against Efunsetan who is alleged of wickedness to her slaves but the matriarch commits suicide before her captivity. In the actual history, Aare Latosa wanted an end of Efunsetan because the former with his council of chiefs was highly indebted to Efunsetan and there was no hope of repayment. In the actual history also, Efunsetan did not commit suicide but rather the spirit of Eegun Gbajero was invoked to terminate the life of Efunsetan. The presentation of

parenthood of Alaaftin Abiodun in Adebayo Faleti's *Bashorun Ga* is also a historical distortion. In the film, it is given that Alaaftin Abiodun has only a daughter (Agbonyin) who was killed by Bashorun Ga for money ritual. In the actual history, however, Alaaftin Abiodun had many children (sons and daughters) for his longest reign on the throne as the king of Oyo.

The persistent misrepresentation of history in film texts can be traced to some economic and social factors such as mercantilism that characterises the whole film industry in Nigeria and negative attitude of a large number of Nigerians to the significance of history to re-direct and reshape the course of actions in the society.

The inadequacy of historical films to propagate history, thus, informs the position of Rosenstone (1173) that historical films can only satisfy historians as film goers. He is of the critical view that:

... no matter how serious or honest the filmmakers, and no matter how deeply committed they are to rendering the subject faithfully, the film that finally appears on the screen can never satisfy the historian as historian (although it may satisfy the historian as filmgoer). Inevitably, something happens on the way from the page to the screen that changes the meaning of the past as it is understood by those of us who work in words.

4. Yoruba Theatre Today and Hope for Future

Yoruba drama here refers to the folkloric dramatisation, dramatic presentation in the designated theatre, the celluloid and video film. Much attention, however, will be paid to the video film format because its emergence, first in the form of Video Home System (VHS before 1998), next as Video Compact Disc (VCD) and later as Digital Versatile Device (DVD) has impacted greatly on the theatre practitioners and their art.

The lack of unity of purpose and cooperation among the practitioners and their professional associations has affected the administration of video film regime in the country. The dramatists and theatre practitioners that came from the popular tradition formed Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners (ANTP) while their counterparts in the country's institutions of higher learning have various associations such as National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) and Society of Nigerian Theatre Artists (SONTA). The practitioners from the axis of ANTP and those from NANTAP/SONTA hold one another with mutual suspicion and mistrust on professional competence and capability. The practitioners from the ANTP axis do have the belief that those from the NANTAP/SONTA axis are too theoretical in their practice. Another worrisome situation is the split in Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners (ANTP). There are two factions: the old members that still hold and retain the name ANTP for their professional association and the other faction that forms a parallel association with the name Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Producers Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN). The observation here is that these two associations do not operate with uniform standard. For

better and improved production of Yoruba video films, these professional associations in the academy and the town should engage in town-gown collaboration to re-assess and harmonise different methodological, theoretical, empirical and ideological approaches to film making. The institutionalization of theatre hall within the four walls of the university makes the realisation of live dramatic performance in popular parlance difficult to realise. The theatre practitioners on Nigerian campuses performed plays written in polished and well-refined English language. Yoruba audience quickly found solace in Yoruba television plays to make up for their loss in the Yoruba popular theatre.

Another important point is that in the 80s and early 90s, theatre practitioners of Yoruba extraction used to tour primary and secondary schools with scripted or published plays. The performance was usually in the afternoon after the closing time and it usually ran for three days (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) but in some situations a day. During the school performance, some students developed interest in theatre. Dramatic/theatrical performance should not be conditioned to anniversary celebration and end of the year events. The emergence of film on celluloid and later video also leads to the abandonment of the theatre by the practitioners. The audience has much fascination for the video film format to the total abandonment of live theatre performance. Many practitioners of Yoruba traveling theatre opted for the video film format because the medium is more profitable and less stressful. The audience is only allowed to see what the camera permits unlike in the live theatre when the audience form part of the action taking place on the stage in their immediate presence. Intensive rehearsals (block, dress and technical) make live theatre more demanding than performance in the video format.

In the contemporary Yoruba society, there is emergence of “road-side cinema”. “Road-side cinema” is the viewing of movies at the roadside video rental shop and video retail outlets even without considering the dangers inherent in such practice. It is no more uncommon to see young children and adults gather at night to watch latest films and music albums anytime such is played by the owner(s) of the video retail outlets and video rental shops. *Alfa Sule* – a Yoruba dance drama gained more attention among the “road-side cinema” audience when the dance drama album hit the market. For every show, there is no “box office fee” or admittance fee as the “exhibition officers” (the owners of the retail outlets and rental shops) play these movies or musical albums to attract more customers. Based on the form, nature and practice of the "road-side cinema", further researches are expected on this phenomenon.

Thus, considering the evolutionary theory of orature and folkloric performances (Dundes, 1975; Dorson, 1972; Emenanjo, 2000), it is maintained here that the emergence of the new media of radio, television and in the recent time, video film, there is a revitalization of traditional performances for vibrancy and contemporary relevance if their opportunities and possibilities are properly appropriated in the performance of folkloric materials. The stage and the screen will

surely have their audiences no matter the odds stake against them. It can, therefore, be said that no medium of folkloric performances is superior to another and that taste and preference of the audience as well as exigency of the moment determine the choice of a medium. Theatre is theatre and film is film, and in a clearer term, one cannot replace the other.

5. Conclusion

This paper has engaged in the study of the evolution and transmutation of Yoruba folkloric dramatizations, through radio, television, cinema and home videos. The dramatic enactments in rituals and festivals that were common in Yoruba nationality were examined and discussed. The contributions of old Oyo Empire and the three axis of the theatre (Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola and DuroLadipo) towards the evolution and popularisation of Yoruba popular theatre are discussed. The place of television and the cinema in the evolution of home videos are also discussed. Among the factors that contributed to the development of home videos, as identified are economic recession and high sense of insecurity of the modern society. The paper recommends that live theatre should be revisited and that there should be town-gown collaborations to ensure sustainability of the folkloric and modern dramatizations. The paper concludes that each medium of folkloric dramatisation has its own sociological and artistic significance and hence, they all enjoy their respective status in literary production and consumption.

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**NOLLYWOOD ENGLISH FILMS AND SPOKEN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OYO STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Many secondary school students in Oyo state in particular and Nigeria in general are film-addicts, to the extent that it is already taking toll over their academic career. This study investigated some education stakeholders' awareness of using Nollywood films for spoken English proficiency in Senior Secondary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The data corpus was got from twenty English language teachers and one hundred and twenty students selected from ten secondary schools within Ibadan which is a metropolitan city in Oyo State through the use of questionnaires as research instrument. The results showed that though the teachers were aware of the potentials of Nollywood English films to develop spoken English proficiency, they did not take advantage of this in their classes. The students who, on the other hand, gave good patronage to the films did not make use of the spoken English potentials inherent in some of the films. The paper concludes that it is important for a teacher to create an enabling environment for learners of English to explore the potentials in Nollywood films to develop their spoken English proficiency by engaging in film narration, play acting and dialogues as part of the language activities in the classroom.

1. Introduction

Many secondary school students in Nigeria fall short of the expectations of the society, education stakeholders, examiners and the curriculum planners because of their poor performance especially in external examinations. The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) chief examiner's report every year attests to this fact and attributes the failure to the students' inability to express themselves correctly and coherently. This is blamed on lack of real communication practices in the English classes which involves authentic language use of their thoughts, feelings, appropriateness and adaptability which students could be exposed to through drama (Shokri & Philip, 2014 and Chauhan, 2004). English language teaching could be made more flexible, communicative, enjoyable and enriching through the introduction of more drama related language skills (Shokri & Philip, 2014). Many graduates have been certified unfit for jobs and many cannot carry out instructions. This has become worrisome to education stakeholders because of the increase in the number of unemployable graduates.

One of the factors responsible for students' inability to express themselves appropriately is poor mastery of spoken English, usually taken care of by test of orals at the secondary school level. Oral English in many secondary schools is not only theoretical, it is abstract. The students are taught the sound segments in abstract. Many of them can identify the sound symbols but cannot produce the sounds. So, in external examinations where they need to demonstrate their knowledge of the sounds before getting the correct answer, they only guess.

Drama has been seen as a veritable instrument for teaching proficiency in all aspects of the English language in ESL situations, especially the phonological aspect. The English language is taught in secondary schools to meet the needs of students, to make them excel not only in

English language but also in other subjects. This will equip them with what it takes to express themselves coherently and make them relevant in the society where the need for English language proficiency is on the increase. It is obvious that the linguistic community where today's youth operate is different from the linguistic community where the youth of previous generations operated. The world has suddenly become a global village where all kinds of communications at various levels require the mastery of both written and spoken English.

Therefore, the teaching and learning of English language should go beyond what students need within the shores of their nation. There are many international opportunities that demand different kinds of communicative skills which students have to be prepared for. The phonological skills acquired through drama and films are very good linguistic pedagogy, if properly utilized by both English language teachers and students in the ESL classroom. It will ease the stress of English language teachers because it will provide alternatives and more refreshing strategies that can attract learners' interest and facilitate their language learning process (Shokri & Philip, 2014). Drama (whether on the stage or in a film) is a creative activity and a practical means of education, it improves the function of the mind and enhances proficiency in English. Drama and movies are veritable means of acquiring communicative proficiency. This is because they help learners with every aspect of speech; learners are introduced to real life language usage (Donaghy 2014). Watching drama or film can develop communicative competence because all the aspects of language are taught –grammar and phonology most especially (though indirectly).

Drama, according to Somasundram (2011) is an alternative teaching tool because it gives a context for listening and meaningful language production, forcing the learners to memorize the use of language which evidently helps in other disciplines and, subtly, enhances language abilities. Drama and movies share the same literary semblance; they possess the same effective capacity to engrave a point in the heart of the audience indelibly and put learners at a vantage position by exposing them to real language situations. Learners are exposed to how words are produced and how stress and pitch function as each character picks his/her line in drama/movie dialogues.

Many of the scholars attest to the fact that the secondary school students are at the receiving end of Nollywood English-medium films, especially the many negative sides of it. Are there no positive things today's youths can find in Nollywood films? Are there no linguistic benefits they can derive from them? If there are, are the youths aware? If not, how can they be helped to make the best use of the linguistic opportunities in Nollywood English-films? These and many more are the questions this study sets out to answer as it brings the language potentials of English-medium Nollywood films to bare and state what both the teachers and students can do to make good use of this blessing in disguise. This study explores the linguistic exploits of the English medium Nollywood movies as a veritable instrument to develop spoken English proficiency. It will contribute to the pedagogy of English language in secondary schools in Oyo State and Nigeria in general.

2. Oral English Proficiency

Oral English proficiency is very important because it is an effective way of communication, which is pivot to an effective learning process (Shokri & Philip, 2014; Palmér 2010). Proficiency, according to the Oxford American Thesaurus of Current English, (2002) refers to a

high degree of skill, expertise, experience, accomplishment, competence, mastery, prowess, professionalism, dexterity, ability, and informal know-how. Oral English proficiency enables a learner to receive and process knowledge and read the mind of the speaker. Palmér (2010:38) submits that the student's language development is the first reason why a teacher should focus on oral communication in the class.

Oral English proficiency is a prerequisite skill for English language learners (Garcia, 2002). Developing adequate oral English proficiency will help learners to comprehend what they read. Oral English proficiency involves developing two skills –receptive skill which is the ability to process and comprehend what has been said and expressive skill which is the ability to say what is intended without confusing the interlocutor(s). Deliberate effort to develop both segmental and supra-segmental features is required in achieving oral English proficiency.

Huang-Yu (2013) observes that the media in its various forms has become a pervasive and endemic part of our lives. Verderer, Klimmet, and Ritterfeld, (2004) argue that the need to use mass media is irresistible. Wang (2006) notes that the internet has established itself apart from television and radio, as a source of education, entertainment, and general information. The synergy among social, entertainment and academic roles of the media becomes necessary if one will not be accorded prominence at the expense of others (Slater, 2002). Film provides authentic and varied language. Since films and TV shows have become an integral part of students' lives, it is not out of place to bring it into their class as audio-visual that will facilitate effective learning. It is full of varieties and able to accommodate all forms of language situation because of its flexibility.

3. Drama/Movies/Nollywood Films and Language Proficiency

Movies are drama of some sort. They are not written but acted out at the locations real to life and brought to our homes through technology. Hence, it is capable of doing what drama can do even more. Shokri & Philip (2014) observe that drama contributes to profitable English language development. This is true of movies, especially many of the Nollywood films where standard English expressions are loaded. It is believed that drama technique can be a mechanism in encouraging English language improvement in young graduates. (Shokri& Philip 2014).

The name Nollywood describes Nigerian films (Agba 2014). Nollywood has come to stay in Nigeria and the greatest number of their customers are the adolescents who are in their secondary school ages and their formative years. Ekeanyanwu (2009) notes that there are many English-medium movies; this, if properly explored for academic purpose may better the lot of many of Nigerian secondary school boys and girls who have become Nollywood movie addicts to the detriment of their studies.

Among the themes of Nollywood films are social vices such as corruption, prostitution, crime, family strife, domestic violence, money trouble, polygamous marriage and its attendant woes, historical epics, native doctors, betrayal, emotional wreckages and lots more. The subjects and themes of Nollywood films appeal to not only Nigerians but the global world at large. (Agba2014).

The attraction enjoyed by the subjects of Nollywood films around the globe requires a close analysis of its status among popular films of the world. (Agba .2014). The analysis cannot however be done without consideration of its language use which is the basis of expression of the themes and subjects as well as cultural heritages.

Quite a number of scholarly works dwell in the cliché and domain carved by Nollywood films. Several academic and research works centre on its various aspect, ranging from the aesthetic, production process, themes and subjects, cultural role, influence in the society, status among world class films to marketing and censoring policies (Schultz: 2012, Jameson: (1998), Haynes: 2005). It has enjoyed widespread popularity and cultural influence across the continent. It can be described today as the major contemporary art form (Haynes 1997: 15).

The extent of the influence Nollywood films exact on the society cannot be overemphasized, though it gets its cultural inspiration from the society (Agba2014). Nollywood films are eloquent expressions of what we do in the dark. Okome (2008) submits that the main audience for Nollywood films are the global circuit, western classrooms and collection of film aficionados in wealthy countries, Haynes (2007). This presupposes that the Nollywood films are not targeting the local audience alone; hence, the sophistication in the language use among other things. The expected audience for Nollywood films shows the rigour that would have been put into language. The syntactic and phonological features of these films (to a reasonable extent) meet global requirement but not without a touch of their regional variation to make it another variant of English. It has become a household name globally (Okome2008). Research has shown that Nollywood films are veritable instrument to reach a very large audience in Africa. It is the form of entertainment many people around the world subscribe to in recent times. (Agba 2014).

Nollywood provides a bottom-up vision of what it means to be African (Schultz: 2012). It is not out of point to argue therefore that some variety of English spoken in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular is a by- product of Nollywood films. McCall (2007) observes that Nollywood films have given us ‘the Pan-Africanism we have’.

According to Schultz (2012), in two decades, Nollywood has become one of the world’s most important creative industries. Many Nollywood films are available at every nook and cranny of Africa and beyond. With the advent of satellite broadcasting in Nigeria, DSTV, Strong, Power Sat, GoTV and others, many Nollywood films are broadcast round the clock, making them available to all and sundry even on many free to air channels. This wide coverage is to her credit. Nollywood films are widely shown and broadcast on many satellite television in Africa (McCall 2007).

McCall (2004), in an interview, captures some of the laudable achievements and the contributions of Nollywood films in Nigeria in the following words: Nigerian filmmakers have been able to touch a sort of sensibility of the people –their life, their aspirations, their family values, their worldview, their cosmology, spiritual and otherwise. Nollywood movies influence and shape, the attitude and value of the adolescent (Filani 2001). The movies stars are also role models of today’s youths (Odesola 2001). The impact of the movies on the adolescent is enormous (Udofia and Okoro (2013). Movies are part of materials through which young ones acquire new attitude (Owuamanam2005).

Nollywood movies are available to secondary school students in the nook and cranny of Nigeria. Udofia and Okoro (2013) note that even the movies censored not fit for children below eighteen

years are watched by secondary school students below eighteen years uncontrollably irrespective of age restriction. Scholars like Odesola and Utibe (2001) and Buerkel (2005), confirm that most adolescents spend quit a fortune of their time watching films.

Nollywood is a speech, a mode of discourse that has its own intricacies which deserve attention (Okome 2008). He observes further that the effect of Nollywood on our youths (secondary school students inclusive) is so potent to spoiling them and affecting their cultural view. Today's youths are so mesmerized by the Nollywood films that they pattern their fashion, their dressing and life after what they see in those films. Some of them have been hypnotized by what they see to the point of dumping their life ambition for acting as a career. There is therefore the need to stop or convert the negative effect of watching these films to a positive one.

Shokri & Philip (2014:135) advocate that

teachers could help reverse the usual boring and routine language class to a vibrant and interesting language class by incorporating drama activities that motivate and contribute to students' personal development.

Arnold (1999) observes that drama activities help students to develop their full potential by relating the drama activities effectively as they learn the language. Shokri & Philip (2014:135) explain further that, the proper implementation of drama technique in English classroom will help scaffold learners' cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective skills development. Drama/movie exposes the learner to appropriate ways of using language in a real language situation. Zafeiriadou, (2009) notes that drama/movie is a way of educating adolescents in a way that could help cultivate creative development. Drama/movie could help the learners to use the language for genuine communication and real life purposes, (Desialova, 2009 and Barbu, 2007).

Films are traditionally produced for entertainment and not to teach language, though they are veritable language teaching tools. Many English medium films contain several real life language contexts. In other words, they contain many real life language usages that can help learners to develop language proficiency. Talking about the important place drama/film occupy in the parlance of language teaching and learning in the ESL classroom, Obediat, (1997:32) states that it is a genre of literature that helps students acquire a native-like competence in English. This, however, can only happen if the actors and actresses themselves use native-like model of English in their speech coupled with free and continuous exposure to the model.

Although drama and film are different in some respect, it does not reduce the potency of film to teach all aspects of English language the way drama will do. Among notable differences is the fact that drama is performed live before an audience which allows for their feedback in terms of chorusing, clapping, and laughter. The purpose and the uses of the two are almost the same. Every linguistic exploit of a piece watched right on the stage and the replay of its documentary are not different. Film and drama are two related entertainment genres sharing common features and themes. Films present many real life situations through dialogues and commensurate actions. Films/movies are much more effective in improving the learners' ability to perceive and produce consonants and vowels correctly and perceive different stress and intonation patterns in words, phrases and sentences.

Hişmanoğlu (2005) observes that using drama in a language classroom is a good resource for language teaching. He explains further that through the use of drama learners become familiar with language use in contexts and also learn about how to use the language to express, control and inform. The use of drama has been found out to be a good instrument that raises the students' awareness towards the target language and culture (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Learners should make use of drama to promote their comprehension of life experiences, reflect on particular circumstances and make sense of their extra-linguistic world in a deeper way (Sarıçoban 2004).

4. Research Hypothesis

- a. Senior secondary school English Teachers are not aware of the phonological exploits of Nollywood English films.
- b. Senior secondary school English Teachers do not take advantage of Nollywood English films to teach pronunciation proficiency.
- c. Senior secondary school students are not aware of the phonological exploits of Nollywood English films.
- d. Senior secondary school students do not take advantage of Nollywood English films for pronunciation proficiency.

5. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to

- a. assess English teacher/student awareness of linguistic exploits of Nollywood films;
- b. examine the extent to which English teacher/student take advantage of Nollywood films to teach and learn spoken English; and
- c. determine English teacher/student awareness of stress and intonation in Nollywood films

6. Data Collection, Analysis and Discussion

The data was collected from twenty English teachers and one hundred and twenty students in selected secondary schools across Ibadan metropolis through the use of questionnaire as research instrument. The data was analysed using simple percentage.

Table 1: Teachers Responses on Linguistic Awareness

| <i>S/NO</i> | <i>ITEM</i> | <i>Agreed</i> | | <i>Disagreed</i> | |
|-------------|--|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| | | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> |
| 1. | Many of my students watch NollywoodEnglish films | 20 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. | Nollywood English films can be used to teach stress | 14 | 70 | 6 | 30 |
| 3. | Nollywood English films can be used to teach intonation | 14 | 70 | 6 | 30 |
| 4. | Nollywood English films can be used to teach consonants | 16 | 80 | 4 | 20 |
| 5. | Nollywood English films can be used to teach vowels | 13 | 65 | 7 | 35 |
| 6. | Nollywood English films can enhance pronunciation proficiency | 17 | 85 | 3 | 15 |
| 7. | Watching Nollywood English films can help students pronunciation than online pronunciation tutorials | 12 | 60 | 8 | 40 |

In testing the validity of the first hypothesis which is - *Senior Secondary School English Teachers are not aware of the phonological exploits of Nollywood English films*, seven questions were constructed and administered to elicit responses from teachers. Table 1 above shows that many secondary school English teachers are quite aware of the phonological exploits of Nollywood English films. They attest to the fact that watching it can enhance students' pronunciation; it can be used to teach every aspect of test of orals ranging from vowels, consonants and stress to intonation. All of them even agreed that all the students watch Nollywood English medium movies. 70% of the total respondents agreed that Nollywood films can be used to teach stress and intonation, while 80% and 65% agreed that it can be used to teach consonants and vowels respectively.

Table 2: Teachers' Responses on Taking Advantage of Phonological Exploits of English Nollywood Films

| <i>S/NO</i> | <i>ITEM</i> | <i>Agreed</i> | | <i>Disagreed</i> | |
|-------------|--|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| | | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> |
| 1. | I give my students assignment from Nollywood English films | 0 | 0 | 20 | 100 |
| 2. | I ask my students to re-tell a particular scene of the Nollywood English films watched | 0 | 0 | 20 | 100 |
| 3. | I group my students to act out a scene from Nollywood English films | 5 | 25 | 15 | 75 |
| 4. | I call attention of my students to appropriateness of sound rendition in Nollywood English films | 3 | 15 | 17 | 85 |

However, their responses to the four questions testing the validity of the second hypothesis which is- *Senior Secondary School English Teachers do not take advantage of Nollywood English films to teach pronunciation proficiency, as shown in table 2 above* is negative. They confirmed that they have not been taking advantage of Nollywood English medium films to teach oral English. They do not give assignment or call students' attention to appropriate sound rendition in Nollywood English films to teach pronunciation proficiency.

Table 3: Students' Responses on Linguistic Awareness

| <i>S/NO</i> | <i>ITEM</i> | <i>Agreed</i> | | <i>Disagreed</i> | |
|-------------|---|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| | | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> |
| 1. | I do watch Nollywood English medium films. | 105 | 87.5 | 15 | 12.5 |
| 2. | Nollywood English medium films can be used to teach stress. | 17 | 14.2 | 103 | 85.8 |
| 3. | Nollywood English medium films can be used to teach intonation. | 11 | 9.2 | 109 | 90.8 |
| 4. | Nollywood English medium films can be used to teach consonants. | 14 | 11.7 | 106 | 88.3 |
| 5. | Nollywood English medium films can be used to teach vowels. | 21 | 17.5 | 99 | 82.5 |
| 6. | Nollywood English medium films can facilitate pronunciation proficiency. | 24 | 20 | 96 | 80 |
| 7 | Watching Nollywood English medium films can help students' pronunciation than online pronunciation tutorials. | 7 | 5.8 | 113 | 94.2 |

Table 3 above shows that Senior Secondary School students are not aware of the phonological exploits of Nollywood English medium films. Although, 87.5% of the total respondents confirm that they watch Nollywood English medium films regularly, 85.8% and 90.8% disagreed that it could be used to teach stress and intonation respectively. Only 5.8% agreed that watching English medium films can help students' pronunciation. 88.3%, 80.2% and 80% declined that Nollywood English medium films could be used to teach consonant, vowel and enhance oral English proficiency respectively.

Table 4: Students' Responses on Taking Advantage of Phonological Exploits of Nollywood English Films

| <i>S/NO</i> | <i>ITEM</i> | <i>Agreed</i> | | <i>Disagreed</i> | |
|-------------|---|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| | | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>%</i> |
| 1. | My English teacher gives us assignment from Nollywood English films | 0 | 0 | 120 | 100 |
| 2. | My English teacher asks us to re tell a particular scene of the Nollywood English films watched | 0 | 0 | 20 | 100 |
| 3. | My English teacher group us to act out a scene from a Nollywood English film | 5 | 25 | 15 | 75 |
| 4 | I am fascinated by the pronunciation of some actors | 89 | 74.2 | 31 | 25.8 |
| 5 | I pattern my pronunciation after some actors in Nigeria English films | 37 | 30.4 | 83 | 69.2 |

Testing the second hypothesis from the students end, the results show that students do not take advantage of Nollywood English films to learn and attain pronunciation proficiency. Although they agreed that they watch Nollywood films regularly and they are fascinated by the pronunciation of many of the characters, they are neither aware of the phonological exploits nor take advantage of it. 69.2% of the total student respondents submit that they do not pattern their pronunciation after some actors in English-medium films, though they have earlier on agreed that they are fascinated by some actors' pronunciation.

7. Conclusion

The study agrees with Udofia and Okoro (2013), Odesola and Utibe (2001), Buerkel(2005) that secondary school students below eighteen years watch Nollywood English-medium films uncontrollably irrespective of age restriction and that most of them spend quite a fortune of their time watching these films. It was also noted that Nollywood English medium movies influence and shape the attitude and value of the adolescent (Filani 2001). This study however notes that, many of the students who watch these films do not watch them for academic reasons nor do they take advantage of the linguistic exploits. Teachers who are aware of the linguistic exploits of Nollywood films do not create its awareness in their students and students who are addicted to watching Nollywood English medium films do not make use of the linguistic exploits.

It therefore follows that, if the students cannot be stopped or controlled from watching these films, we need to create awareness in them to take advantage of it to better their academic performance in general and their spoken English in particular. It is a fact that abuse is inevitable where uses cannot be defined. The teachers of English are aware of the phonological exploits of Nollywood English medium films but refuse to take advantage of it. It is important to create an enabling environment for learners of English as a second language with sustained and systematic opportunities to develop oral English proficiency through English medium films in order to enhance their academic achievement. Language activities such as film narration, play acting, playlets and dialogues could be introduced in the English classroom. It is however important to note that where actors and actresses do not have native-like model or an acceptable Nigerian model of English, they may not serve as models for pronunciation. Although, oral English

proficiency is a complex phenomenon, using English medium films deliberately for academic purpose simplifies it.

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