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## **DUAL LANGUAGE DISORDERS IN ESL SITUATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED CHURCH SERMON INTERPRETATIONS FROM ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO HAUSA LANGUAGE**

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### **Abstract**

The coexistence of the English language alongside the indigenous Nigerian languages in the cognition of a bilingual who lacks executive control often culminates into various language disorders. However, literature on bilingualism and multilingualism studies are mainly fraught with studies on interference and transfer paucity of studies on the effects of L2 on L1 in ESL situations. The objective of this study, therefore, was to investigate the linguistic evidences of backlash in the interpretations of selected church sermons in an ESL situation. The study adopted the case study research design, and qualitative method of data analysis. Hence, a sample of twenty purposively selected, recorded and transcribed sermons from five Seventh-day Adventist churches served as the data, the analysis also involved random selection of interpretations from the sermons. The sociolinguistic theory of translation was adopted as the theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the interpreters used borrowing, adaptation, discursive creation, amplification and common equivalence translation techniques. The total percentages of the translation techniques found are as follows: Adaptation 11.8%, Amplification 14%, Borrowing 16.3%, Discursive Creation 14.3%, Common Equivalence 13.5%, and Backlash 17.3%. The study concludes that apart from interference and transfer which have been identified as dual language

disorders, as evident in the data of this study, backlash is another fundamental dual language disorder that does not only impede meaning in the religious context but contributes to language death in ESL situations. Further research on backlash as a dual language disorder should be carried out subsequently.

**Word Count:** 245

**Key Words:** Bilingualism, Backlash, Dual language disorders, Translation.

## **Introduction**

Bilingualism and multilingualism are universal phenomena as most nations, after the confusion at the Tower of Babel are multilingual nations. Eka (2012) defines bilingualism as a situation in which two languages are used interchangeably for the purposes of communication. Accordingly, a nation or group is termed bilingual when such uses precisely two languages (dual languages) for the exchange of ideas. Similarly, an individual is termed a bilingual when the person has acquired proficiency in two languages. The proficiency of the bilingual may vary or range from the ability to speak two languages, or the ability to understand the two languages or the ability to read, write and understand the two languages involved.

Bilingualism is a common phenomenon in Nigeria, because the indigenous languages of the nation operate alongside English language, with the former playing a minor role and the latter a plus higher role. The English language is the official language in Nigeria. The language was implanted in Nigeria through colonialism and imperialism by the British colonial empire. Initially, it was formerly referred to as a foreign language (English as Foreign Language) henceforth (EFL) when it was not commonly spoken but later became a second language or (ESL) in Nigeria because a large number of Nigerians can communicate effectively with the language (Araromi, 2018).

The English language is the language of formal education and a compulsory subject to be taught in schools across the country as entrenched in the 1999 constitution and also the National policy for education (FGN, 2004). From a pedagogical stance, efforts have been put in place in order to effectively teach the English language as a second language, several approaches such as: Contrastive analysis, Error analysis and Discourse analysis have been employed.

According to Ali (2019) contrastive analysis is the branch of applied linguistics that studies two languages with the aim of finding differences that can pose difficulty to learners. This field was started in 1945 by Charles Fries and Robert Lado. The hypothesis from this study was developed by Lado in 1967 who termed it contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH) which exists in three versions: the strong, weak and moderate versions respectively. The strong version of the hypothesis maintains that where differences exist between the two languages, the learner's first language rules interfere with the learning of the second language. Most researches carried out over the years dwelled on interference and transfer. Other studies are premised on the weak version of the hypothesis which maintains that when there are differences between the target language and the learner's mother tongue, the learner will not have problems with interference, rather the first language serves as escape route when the learner faces difficulties in producing sentences in the second language.

More so, as Nigeria's lingua franca, English language performs multipurpose roles in the country including functioning as the language of communication in the church. Preachers employ the language in order to effectively communicate with the heterogeneous worshippers from different ethnic groups and culture. However, since some worshippers do not understand the

English language, some churches deem interpretation as a necessity.

However, the bilingual interpreter goes through several mental processes in order to interpret the sermons to the target audience, the worshippers because they have to choose linguistic resources from their two balloons (L1 and L2 think tanks) a process which leads to some disorders in bilinguals' language use. Disorders such as: negative transfer, interference, and backlash that is the reverse influence of L2 on L1 which Bosede (1992) sees as often displayed in the course of acquisition, learning process and usage of the two languages.

Several scholars have researched on dual language disorders. Chu and Lou,(2022), Deby, (2017), Turaeva,(2017), have carried out studies on some aspects of the strong version that entails: language transfer and interference. These studies investigated how the native Nigerian Languages or mother tongues influence the English language, a second language in Nigeria. The effect of the second language on indigenous Nigerian languages should also be investigated as Adegbite, (2011), claims that the linguistic ability of Nigerian populace is on the decline from the older generation to the younger generation. This is because of the attitude of Nigerians towards the native languages, and also the government's inability to implement the national policy on education. Hence, the need for this study on backlash, and its effects on dual language use.

Some other scholars like Ali and Elham, (2015), Rana,(2016), Sabbah (2015) have researched on dual language disorder, focusing more on transfer and interference while leaving out backlash. Also, works on dual language disorders like Bialystok, (2009), (2010), have focused on finding language disorders using children while neglecting the fact that dual language disorders are evident in adults. However, this research

will take a different dimension by collecting data from adults to show the presence of language disorders in adults, not just children, by focusing on the dual language disorders in some language interpreters' sermons.

Some aspects of the strong version of language disorder like language transfer and interference constituted the focal point of then researches of Chu and Lou (2022) and Deby, (2017). Though these studies have investigated to establish how the native Nigerian Languages or mother tongues influence the English Language, a Second Language in Nigeria. The import of the second language on the first language should also be investigated. Hence, there is a need for an in depth study on backlash and its effects on dual language use.

Overtime, when speakers gradually loose words from their lexicon of the L1, children who are born will not acquire their L1 in its purest form anymore. Subsequently, the language decays in the minds of the speakers. This study seeks to provide linguistic evidences for backlash and its import on the L1 bilinguals.

The core objective of this study is to examine dual language disorders in the interpretation of selected church sermons. Deriving from this core objective, four specific objectives will be addressed to:

1. Identify backlash in the mapping of the transcribed selected church sermons.
2. Investigate the translation techniques used for the interpretation of selected sermons.
3. Identify the causes of backlash in the translation of selected church sermons.
- 4.

## **Methodology**

This research used the case study research design. Case study research design as defined by Bostley (2019) refers to in

depth examination of people or groups of people. As such, the sermons of selected interpreters, was used to determine the disorders present in the mind of dual language users. This research aims at pointing out dual language disorders of bilinguals that have not been expanded upon. To validate this methodology, a case study is needed. Case studies mostly go hand in hand with content analysis method of research. A sample of twenty purposively selected, recorded and transcribed sermons from five Seventh- day Adventist churches served as the data, the analysis also involved random selection of interpretations from the sermons. Data were analysed using the sociolinguistic theory of translation which accounts for translation techniques. The data of this study were analysed qualitatively. The qualitative method was used in identifying the translation techniques and the conceptual metaphors employed in the sermons. Additionally, a contrastive method was used in showing the differences in the mapping of the English and Hausa version of the interpretation.

### **Data analysis and presentation of results**

According to the data collected, the sermon interpreters used basically five translation techniques, out of the 14 techniques mentioned by Patthew, (2020) namely: Borrowing (from L2 to L1) , Adaptation, Amplification, Discursive creation, and Common equivalence.

#### **Borrowing:**

**Sample 1:** ...at creation, the Garden of Eden was indeed a beautiful place, wow!

Interpretation: ...lokacin halitar duniya, gonar Adini was yi kyau da gaske, wow!

From the interpretation from English made above by the interpreter, 'wow' an expression and a word as well, was used alongside Hausa language. Going by the definition of borrowing

above, pure form of borrowing technique was used during the interpretation of that sentence.

Adaptation:

**Sample 3:** ... it happened during winter, while they went skating on the snow

Interpreter: ... a lokacin tsanyi, sa lin da sun je wasa a kankara...

In the above Hausa sentence, the word ‘snow’ could not be translated, because the element is not represented in the culture, so a near equivalent was provided as a substitute (ice), same was done also for ‘winter’, because winter season is not experienced in Nigeria.

### **Amplification**

**Sample 5:** ...in the time of the end, false teachings will emerge.

Interpreter: ... a kwanakin karshe, kwasuwoyin rudu za su taso kala kala dag a ko ina a duniyan nan.

From the Hausa interpretation, the underlined part of the sentence is a detail that is not present in the source language. The source language only mentioned that “false teachings will emerge in the time of the end”, but the interpreter added that “different false teachings will emerge from all over the world”.

### **Discursive Creation**

**Sample 8:** ...but the coming of Jesus will be different, every eye will see Him.

Interpreter: ... ama zuwan Yesu zai yi dabam, kowane ido zai gan shi, ni zan gan shi kai ma za ka gan shi.

The underlined part of the interpretation is irrelevant to the context, because the preacher said that every eye will see the coming of Jesus and leaves it at that, but the interpreter goes further to mention that he will see Jesus so also will the audience see Jesus.

## Common Equivalence

**Sample10:** ...It is like the oil that runs through the beard of Aaron.

Interpreter: ...yana nan kamar mai da ya na zuba a bisan gemun Haruna.

The underlined words of the interpretation are familiar words that common to the Hausa speech community, and as such translation used their equivalents.

## Backlash

**Sample 15:** ... when we say the number of the beast, what do we mean?

Interpreter: ... in mun ce number na bisa, mene mu ke nufi?

**Sample 16:** In times like these, we are being challenged...

Interpreter: ... A lokaci Kaman yanzu a na challenging na mu

**Sample 17:** ... life is like a flower...

Interpreter: ... rayuwa kamar flower ce...

In the above sentences, the words underlined are instances of backlash. Those words have either a word or a synonym in Hausa language Number (Lamba), Challenge (Kalubala), Flower (Fure), but the interpreters failed to provide the Hausa versions of those words, because they lack proficiency. To substitute for this, they resulted to backlash.

**Table 1.0**

**Cumulative frequency distribution table of translation techniques found and instances of backlash**

Translation technique	Cumulative frequency(CM)	Percentage (%)
Borrowing(from L2 to L1)	98	16.3
Adaptation	71	11.8
Amplification	84	14
Discursive Creation	82	14.3



Common Equivalence	81	13.5
Backlash	104	17.3

Table 1.0 above shows the percentage and cumulative frequency distribution of the 5out 14 translation techniques used and instances of backlash found in the data collected.

### Summary

The central thesis of this study was to investigate backlash as a dual language disorder of bilinguals in ESL situations. It was identified that other scholarly researches have been carried out on dual language disorders have focused more on negative transfer and interference with little emphasis on backlash. The aim of this research was to examine dual language disorders in the interpretation of selected church sermons, focusing more on the import of the L2 on L1.

Adopting the sociolinguistic theory of translation, the findings revealed that the interpreters used: Borrowing, Adaptation, Discursive creation, Amplification and common equivalence translation techniques. The total percentages of the translation techniques found are as follows: Adaptation 11.8%, Amplification 14%, Borrowing 16.3%, Discursive Creation 14.3%, Common Equivalence 13.5%, and Backlash 17.3%. The study argues that backlash takes place in the interpretations of selected church sermon interpretations because the translation techniques employed by the interpreters were mostly inappropriate, as such meaning was distorted. From the sociolinguistic point of view, backlash takes place as a result of the loss of words from the mental lexicon of the language user. If backlash prevails, language gradually decays in the minds of the speakers, and eventually, language death takes place.

## Conclusion

The core objective of this study was to examine dual language disorders in language use of selected sermon interpreters with emphasis on backlash. In line with extant studies like Sabbah, (2015) and Rana, (2016), negative transfer and interference are also dual language disorders. This study concludes that apart from interference and transfer which have been identified as dual language disorders, as evident in the data of this study, backlash is another fundamental dual language disorder that does not only impede meaning in the religious context but contributes to language death in ESL situations, in line with the position of Amir, (2020). Based on the findings of this research, the study recommends for further research on dual language disorders with emphasis on backlash which poses as an endangerment to language and eventually the cause of language death

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## LE PHENOMENE D'EMPRUNT DANS LA TRADUCTION DE *PURPLE HIBISCUS* DE CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE EN FRANÇAIS PAR MONA DE PRACONTAL

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### Résumé

Cette étude est basée sur les emprunts qu'utilise le traducteur dans la traduction de *l'Hibiscus Pourpre* de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie traduit comme *l'Hibiscus Pourpre* par Mona de Pracontal. En lisant le roman, nous avons fait face à certains termes et expressions vernaculaires dont toutes les équivalences ne se trouvent pas dans les dictionnaires français consultés. On a aussi constaté que ni l'auteur ni la traductrice n'a pas fourni un glossaire pour expliquer ces termes en anglais et en français. L'absence de l'explication de ces termes rend la compréhension du roman très difficile aux lecteurs francophones. Ces termes relèvent des langues Hausa, Yoruba et Igbo (dialectes de Njikoka, dans l'État d'Anambra, et Nsukka, dans l'État d'Enugu respectivement). Donc, nous avons donc donné des explications à ces mots et expressions afin de faciliter la compréhension aux lecteurs non nigériens.

**Mots clés :** emprunt, traduction, glossaire, expressions

### Introduction

L'emprunt est un fait pour une langue d'incorporer une unité linguistique, en particulier un mot, d'une autre langue. Les emprunts forment des relations courantes et normales ainsi que les

relations économiques ou politiques entre deux nations. Aucun peuple ne peut vivre sans les autres, isolé, seulement lui-même. L'emprunt de nouveaux mots était considéré par certains comme snobisme, au contraire la langue qui n'accepte pas de nouveaux mots est devenue victime. Il n'est pas possible d'isoler intellectuellement un peuple. L'emprunt est un moyen courant d'enrichir le lexique, d'augmenter le nombre des moyens d'expression, c'est une réponse aux besoins d'une langue. Le terme emprunt désigne à la fois un procédé, c'est-à-dire l'acte d'emprunter, et l'élément emprunté. Nous proposons les différentes définitions suivantes d'emprunt.

D'après Okiwelu (1999), l'emprunt consiste à se servir de termes et d'expressions étrangers pour introduire la couleur locale ou un effet stylistique. Le Petit Robert (2018) dit que l'emprunt est un acte par lequel une langue accueille un élément d'une autre langue, élément ainsi incorporé. L'emprunt est une des procédés le plus simple, consistant à ne pas traduire et à laisser tel quel un mot ou une expression de la langue de départ dans la langue d'arrivée. Il est particulièrement pratique lorsqu'il n'existe pas de terme équivalent dans la langue cible. Cela permet également de situer clairement un texte dans son contexte culturel par l'intermédiaire du registre de vocabulaire utilisé.

C'est un processus d'emprunter un mot d'une autre langue sans nécessairement le traduire. En vue de l'évolution des relations internationales peu après la deuxième guerre mondiale, les gens des différents pays sont arrivés à entrer en contact avec les-uns les autres afin de régler leurs problèmes politiques, économiques et culturels. Inconsciemment, certains d'entre eux ont commencé à utiliser des mots étrangers qui n'ont jamais existé dans leurs propres langues. La traduction a employé ces mots à ce moment-là pour créer un effet de style au lieu de chercher leurs termes équivalents. Grâce au processus de naturalisation dans la langue

cible, ces mots étrangers ont commencé à avoir un effet sur la langue d'origine. À cet égard, ils ont été soumis à certaines formes de variations dans leur orthographe, la prononciation et ont été progressivement assimilés dans les normes linguistiques de la langue cible. Cependant, certains de ces mots sont restés inchangés et ont été assimilés comme ils étaient à l'origine. Des exemples de tels mots sont:

ENGLISH	FRENCH	LATIN	ENGLISH
Parking	:: Parking	Prima facie	:: Prima facie
Football	:: Football	Post mortem	:: Post mortem
Bulldozer	:: Bulldozer	Alibi	:: Alibi
<b>FRENCH</b>	=	<b>ENGLISH</b>	
Tête-à-tête	::	Tête-à-tête	
Esprit du corps	::	Esprit du corps	
Laissez faire	::	Laissez faire	

### **L'utilisation d'emprunt dans la traduction**

Qu'elle soit scientifique ou non, la traduction est avant tout un art au service du progrès de l'humanité. Au cours de la traduction, le traducteur utilise la langue et les emprunts pour remplir la fonction principale de sa discipline à savoir la communication et la diffusion des cultures. La langue et la traduction sont deux notions intimement liées. Leur enrichissement ou leur évolution est en partie liée aux contacts des

peuples, contacts ayant pour corollaire l'adoption des emprunts. Il convient de rappeler que la langue a commencé avec son aspect parlé, l'écrit ayant suivi des milliers d'années plus tard. Dans les débuts, notre planète comptait peu d'habitants et leurs contacts n'étaient pas fréquents. Pendant cette période, la traduction n'avait pas sa place dans la société, mais les contacts entre les peuples se sont accentués au fil du temps. Peu à peu, les cultures se sont rapprochées, ce qui a favorisé le rapprochement des langues.

### **Motivations de l'emprunt**

Une des motivations de l'emprunt peut être d'ordre linguistique. En effet, un emprunt peut répondre, au moins au départ, au besoin de combler un vide lexical, correspondant à l'absence, dans la langue d'arrivée, de l'objet, de la technique ou du phénomène auquel renvoie le terme. On sait que le français a beaucoup emprunté à l'anglais pour cette raison, en particulier dans le domaine du sport (dunk en basketball, funboard en sport de voile), des techniques (Goretex, du nom propre Gore et de textile), des médias, mais aussi dans celui de la pratique sociale (une after, une rave, le style grunge). L'anglais a quant à lui emprunté au français sur les plans diplomatique, politique et artistique essentiellement.

Pour Tournier (1985), les emprunts faits au français relèvent des quatre champs notionnels privilégiés que sont : les vêtements, les tissus, la mode ; les beaux-arts, la littérature et la critique ; la cuisine. Chadelat (2010) montre aussi que l'anglais a emprunté beaucoup de termes français relatifs à la distinction, aux manières, à l'esprit et au langage. Si la motivation des emprunts s'arrêtait à la nécessité, il n'y aurait pas lieu de s'y attacher dans cette étude. Cependant, que penser lorsque coexistent, au sein de la même langue, deux termes, dont l'un est un emprunt, renvoyant au même objet ou à la même pratique ? La réponse à cette question tient aux connotations, qui ne sont pas les mêmes selon la langue

à laquelle les mots appartiennent : La coexistence de deux termes – l'un relevant de l'emprunt, l'autre de la traduction par adaptation – n'est pas dénuée d'avantages. Elle seule réalise pleinement le besoin d'enrichissement de la langue puisqu'elle multiplie les connotations (exotisme, humour, préciosité...), les S.I. [situation image] (toast, pain grillé, rôti), les jeux de niveau de langue (quotidien, littéraire, technique...) ou de tonalité, sur fond d'écart et de norme, l'un pouvant à tout instant se substituer à l'autre selon le contexte. Elle n'est pas toujours dénuée d'inconvénients: à partir du moment où l'emprunt s'installe aux côtés d'un mot déjà existant et recouvrant plus ou moins le même signifié, ou d'un rival auquel il donne précisément naissance, il est à craindre que chacun des termes mis en compétition suive sa propre pente, subisse des glissements de sens, connaisse des fortunes diverses qui peuvent conduire à la suprématie incontestable de l'un d'entre eux, à la particularisation, voire à la disparition, de l'autre ou des autres. (Demanuelli et Demanuelli 1991).

Si l'on suit ce que disent Claude Demanuelli et Jean Demanuelli, on voit que divers types de connotations entrent en jeu, dont l'exotisme et la préciosité, ainsi que les divers niveaux de langue. Ainsi, le fait d'employer des termes comme spamming, smiley ou hacker, qui relèvent de la langue spécialisée de l'informatique, est un indice d'appartenance à un milieu socioprofessionnel ou tout au moins à un groupe au courant des innovations technologiques et du lexique y afférant.

Ainsi, les emprunts, comme les niveaux de langue, sont un lieu où s'observe une « corrélation entre variable linguistique et fonction sociale » (Chadelat 2000: 199), et on peut les considérer comme des marqueurs sociolinguistiques: « [...] la signification appréciative et connotative des mots français en anglais fonde une valeur tout autant sociale et subjective que linguistique et oppositive » (Chadelat 2000). Le fait pour un



locuteur anglais de parsemer son discours d'emprunts français lui permet de se démarquer, car l'altérité d'un signe étranger rejaillit sur son auteur en le distinguant des autres locuteurs. Par exemple, employer la française «coiffure», au lieu de hairstyle, peut être le signe d'une certaine recherche dans l'expression, liée à l'idée du chic et de la sophistication à la française (Chadelat 2000:112), le niveau de langue soutenu contribuant à indiquer la place occupée par le locuteur sur l'échelle sociale, tout en étant le signe de sa culture. Chadelat (2000) résume la valeur connotative des emprunts français en anglais au mot prestige le signifié implicite unique de tous les emprunts français est bien le « prestige » qu'ils connotent en prétendant le dénoter. Si cela se vérifie pour un grand nombre d'emprunts, on aura toutefois l'occasion de voir que certains emprunts semblent échapper à cette règle.

**Les équivalences de tous les emprunts employe dans *l'hibiscus pourpre***

Ayant trouvé relevés tous les emprunts dans le corpus, nous allons donner tous ces équivalences.

**LANGUE DE DEPART**

**LANGUE D'ARRIVÉE**

Abi	::	N'est-ce pas
Agidi	::	Croquettes de farine de maïs
Agboghò	::	Une fillette
Agwonatumbé	::	Le grande mascarade du village
Akamu	::	Potage épais à base de farine de maïs fermentée

Akara :: beignet frit d'haricots

Aku :: Un insecte voisin de termites volants.  
Cet insecte se voit pendant la saison de pluie.

Akwam Ozu	:: Cérémonie funéraire
Ama m	:: Je sais
Amaro m	:: Je ne sais pas
Ana m asi	:: Je disais
Añara	:: Une aubergine
Asusu anya	:: Geste des yeux
Atilogu	:: Une danse où l'on exécute des sauts périlleux
Atulu	:: Un mouton
Azu	:: Poisson
Biko	:: S'il te plaît
Chelukwa	:: Une minute
Chelu nu	:: Attendez-vous
Chi	:: La divinité personnelle
Chukwu aluka	:: Dieu a tant fait
Ebe zi na	:: Ne pleure plus
Ehye	:: Oui
Ekwero m	:: Je ne suis pas d'accord
Ekwuzi na	:: Ne parle plus
Eziokwu	:: Vraiment
Fufu	:: La pâte de l'igname
Garri	:: Granules de manioc déshydraté qu'on prépare en bouille
Gini di	:: Quoi
Gwakene m	:: Dites-moi
Icheku	:: Fruit du tamarinier noir
Ifukwa gi	:: Tu te vois
Igba krismas	:: Fêter de Noël (offrir des cadeaux)
Igwe	:: Le roi
Ikuku	:: Un souffle
Ikwu nne	:: Le village maternel
Imakwa	:: Tu sais

Imana	:: Tu sais
Ìmarozi	:: As-tu oublié
Ima mmuo	:: Initiation au monde des mascarades
I na-anu	:: Tu entends
Inugo	:: As-tu entendu
Itu-nzu	:: La déclaration d'innocence
Ka	:: Devine
Ka ọ di	:: Plus tard
Ke kwanụ	:: Comment Ça va
Koboko	:: Un Fouet
Kunie	:: Levez-vous ou réveillez-vous
Kwusia	:: Arrête-ça
Maka nnidi	:: Pourquoi
Mana	:: But
Mba	:: Non
Mechie onu	:: Tais-toi
Mgbalu	:: Visites de condoléances
Mmuo	:: Une mascarade
Moin-moin	:: Un pudding des haricots
Ndo	:: Pardon
Nekene m	:: Regardez-moi
Nekene	:: Regarde
Nekwe anya	:: Vous vous imaginez
Ngwa	:: Vas-y
Ngwo-ngwo	:: Viande cuite dans un bouillon épicé
Nna anyi	:: Notre père
Nna m	:: Mon père
Nnọ nụ	:: Soyez les bienvenus
Nodu ani	:: Assieds-toi
Nwanne m nwanyi	:: My sister
Nwanyi ọma	:: Jolie femme
Nwunye m	:: Ma femme

Nzu	:: Une craie
O bu g'odi	:: Même si
Ọ di egwu	:: C'est effrayant
Ọ di mma	:: C'est belle
Ofe nsala	:: Sauce épicée que l'on donne générale aux malades
Ogene	:: Instrument de musique métallique qu'on frappe avec des baguettes
Ọgwụ	:: Une charme
Okada	:: Une motocyclette
Okpa	:: Un pudding de niébé. C'est une nourriture locale que mangent certains gens de l'Est du Nigeria
Okporoko	:: Une morue séchée
Okwia	:: N'est-ce pas
O maka	:: C'est belle
Omelora	:: Le généreux : Un titre qu'on donne à un homme qui aide sa communauté
O nkem	:: C'est à moi
Onugbu	:: Légume à feuilles amères
Orah	:: Légume à feuilles souples
Oyinbo	:: Le blanc
O zugo	:: Ça suffit
Sha	:: N'est-ce pas
Papa-Nnukwu	:: Grand-père
Suya	:: Une brochette
Ụmu m	:: Mes enfants
Ụmunna	:: La famille élargie
Umuada	:: Groupe de femmes
Udala	:: Variété de fruit également appelé "pomme etoilée"
Yeye	:: Une espèce d'idiote

## Conclusion

En conclusion, on voit que la langue est un incontournable moyen de communication. Elle est vivante et évolue. Les progrès du monde ont engendré la création de nouveaux mots et la prolifération des emprunts dans la plupart des langues. Ces mots nouveaux ou emprunts peuvent accélérer la tâche de la traduction. Il importe de retenir que l'emprunt se fait toujours de la langue la plus forte, c'est-à-dire influente par sa richesse culturelle. L'emprunt, en éliminant l'obligation de traduire les termes liés à des nouveaux concepts, facilite la communication et enrichit la langue.

La traduction en tant qu'une activité basée sur le rapport entre les langues n'est jamais aussi facile. Nous avons tout de même essayé de montrer qu'une traduction heureuse est fonction d'une bonne recherche compte tenu des processus traductif. Par ailleurs, la traduction d'une culture des éléments spécifiques dans les traductions littéraires semble être une des tâches, les plus difficiles à effectuer par un traducteur. On peut constater qu'il est généralement assez difficile de rendre les connotations attachées aux emprunts d'une langue de départ en langue d'arrivée car le passage même à la langue de départ peut perdre à l'emprunt sa valeur de connotation autonymique, qui sous-tend les autres connotations qui viennent s'y greffer.

Nous nous sommes concentrées sur les emprunts dans la traduction de *Purple Hibiscus* en français. Nous avons essayé de les grouper dans trois catégories : (pour les valeurs culturelles nigérianes, pour exhiber les langues nigérianes et pour l'absence d'équivalence) afin de mieux comprendre pourquoi l'auteur s'est servi de ces mots. Pour avoir une bonne traduction, il faut que le traducteur ait la connaissance des structures des deux langues, la

culture des deux langues qui lui permet de faire passer le vouloir-dire de l'auteur.

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## **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THEORIES**

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### **Abstract**

Although language acquisition is innate, it is important not to overlook it. The unconscious nature of language acquisition further makes it a vital point of study. Thus overtime, scholars have emerged with various concepts concerning the acquisition of language in humans. Some have considered basic requirements for language study while others have even gone further to study hypotheses of language acquisition which afterward led to the emergence of theories. The study of language acquisition is essential in order to understand the process by which we learn meaningful ways to communicate; to speak, write or even use language. Therefore, with theories of language acquisition, such as BF Skinner's behavioral theory, Chomsky's nativist theory, MacWhinney's competition model theory and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory; there are comparisons to be done to establish what connects and distinguishes one from the other. This essay thus assesses different theories of language acquisition; brings various aspects of language acquisition theories to light; and studies theorists with their different ideologies towards language mastery in a child. Finally, the paper draws a conclusion from the similarities and differences that exist in the theories of BF Skinner, Noam Chomsky, MacWhinney and Lev Vygotsky.

**Keywords:** Language, Language acquisition, Language theories, Innatism, Behaviorism, Social interactionism

### **Introduction**

Different scholars have come up with various dimensions of meanings concerning language as well as different perspectives about language acquisition which they have backed up with theories and approaches. Language, according to Anyanwu (2008) is sharing information, giving entertainment and expressing feelings. Furthermore, he stresses that language is spoken. Thus based on his view, one can say that language is spoken in order to communicate, express ones feelings, or elicit information.

In line with this assertion, language is man's most valuable weapon as he uses it for the medium of communication (Obasi and Oku, 2002). Buttressing this idea, they explain that language is a special feature of man that makes him distinct from animals. By implication, language either verbal or non-verbal is the only tool for man's interaction with another.

In addition, man uses language in all spheres of life and without language human existence and advancement would not have been possible. Language can be learnt or acquired but the focus of this work is on language acquisition theories. The acquisition of language applies to the process of language mastery in which there is no conscious effort as the type usually experienced in the mastery of a foreign language (Anyanwu, 2002). This implies that language acquisition is an unconscious act and that language is not inherited but rather every normal human being has the capacity to master the language spoken in his immediate environment.

Meanwhile, language acquisition is a human phenomenon built on certain theories. Theories are scientific findings regarding the nature of human beings especially children, their development and capability of doing or learning things (Ibe, 2013). On this note, this study assesses different theories of language acquisition and aims to do a comparative analysis of the behavioral theory, innate theory, relational framework theory and interactionism theory.



The essay further brings to light different aspects of language acquisition theorists such as Skinner, B.F Noam Chomsky, MacWhinney and Vygotsky with their ideologies towards language mastery in children.

### **Concept of Language**

Language is a symbol of communication. It is also an inevitable aspect of human existence and advancement. The only feature that distinguishes a man from an animal is the use of language, even though animals make sounds, they do not speak. Speaking is man's highest productive skill. Language is seen as the most sophisticated communication tool of life (Maduekwe, 2007). He also opines that language is that distinctive human reality which serves as the means and end of behavior ordered and achieved within any given community, society or nation at large. Therefore, the author stipulates that language is an important tool for processing personal perceptions of self in relation to one's surroundings.

The aim of language is for communication and communication according to Ezenwa (2011) is the process of transferring information, ideas, feelings or messages from a source to a receiver. Language as well, is the only tool for man's interaction with another. It reflects how human beings view and interact with their world - that is what they say, how they say it and why they think in certain ways. In line with this, Halliday as cited in Nzerem (2015) views language as an institution whereby humans communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral auditory symbols. In addition, the author asserts that language is purely a human institution. By implication, humans use language to communicate ideas, emotions and as well a system of voluntarily produced symbols. The symbols are first heard and then produced using the speech organs such as lips,

teeth etc. This assertion runs in line with Bloch and Trager as referred by Nzerem (2015) that see language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates. This means that language brings people to live and co-operate. Thus, it can be said that language is the major means of learning culture.

By implication, a child can no doubt learn some activities such as politeness to his elders by observation or through the language of his community. Invariably, the child uses language to transmit his culture, as stated in Ndimele, 2015, language is a tool for thinking within the particular culture in which it is used. The author further argues that language not only enables its users to think about the various aspects and relationships of their own culture but also restricts their thoughts to these things. Thus, apparently, language teaches cultural norms. Furthermore, according to Adegbite (2013), language serves to establish and maintain human relationships and express social roles. The author opines that language is for asking or answering questions, greeting and getting things done. Basically, the above assertion is much imbibed in culture. For instance, children learning how to relate with one another, greeting their elders and exhibiting other desirable behaviors.

### **Language Acquisition**

Acquisition is a mixture of social and biological factors. This means what the child is born with and the stimulus from his environment. Language acquisition is therefore the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language (Wikipedia).

Also, language acquisition means the ability to be aware of language, to understand it, as well as to produce and, use words and sentences to communicate. In this premise, language acquisition simply implies the process by which we learn to speak,

write, and even use sign language to communicate in meaningful ways. Therefore, language acquisition means the mastery of one's language. This runs in line with Henna (2012) who opined that language acquisition is a cognition that truly makes us human. He further stresses that other species do communicate with an innate ability to produce a limited number of meaningful vocalization which can be demonstrated with bonobos (pygmy chimpanzees) or even with partially learned systems like songs of birds. This therefore, shows that language is human species-specific and that language acquisition is specifically for humans. Thus, only humans benefit from language acquisition as they (humans) grow within human society.

Psychologists also add that humans acquire language through a stimulus response connection. For them, the child acquires his language due to the series of rewards which he receives. Based on this, Anyanwu (2002) views language acquisition as the methods and process by which a newly born child not only begins to listen, to understand and speak his language; but also exhibits an understanding of its rules and how to use them. The author further maintains that a child's mastery of the speech habits of his language merely depicts his/her hidden understanding of the rules of that language. By implication, the child already has the rules of his language which helps him to acquire the language. The child's acquisition is then programmed and expected to be achieved within a given time frame of 0-6years. A child's acquisition development are as follows: S/he begins the language development from the first day of birth to six (6) months, the child 'coos' and this is the period of vowel development. From 1 year to 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years is the babbling stage and it is for the development of consonant sounds. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to 2 years is the time the child begins to develop one word. 2years to 3years the child starts forming 2 words together. Example; (Ma - eat). 3years-3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years

is for the formation of 3 words and certain phrases. 3years - 4years, the child can make simple sentences. Example: ('Mum come', 'Dad go to'). Then 4-6years, the child improves on his/her sentence formation.

Now, between one year to 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>years all those things the child does, the child can take to the telegraphic stage and the language development corresponds with the psychomotor development. At this point, Chomsky introduced another concept called the 'universal language of the child', which every child in the whole world has, no matter the country the child is born. It is from this universal language that the child speaks other languages. This means that the child moves from the universal language to the specific one. For instance, the child would say: da da, ma ma, pa pa.

The question that arises is how the child achieves this feat. However, Anyanwu (2002) highlighted some methods of language acquisition. The author emphasizes that first language acquisition is obviously an unconscious effort. He stresses that the child is unaware of the stress of the exercise because the child is making progress without difficulties that follow the moments of learning. This is an indication that there is no conscious effort put. Since the child has seen it as right to acquire the language of his immediate environment. Hence, s/he applies it to a process of language mastery.

Another interesting aspect of language acquisition is the 'Immersion type'. Anyanwu (2002) stipulates that the child is totally immersed into the language he is trying to master. The author further opines that everything about the child except sleeping, is speaking the language. This entails that the language must be spoken in the immediate vicinity of the child and the child must be soaked in it until s/he acquires the language very well.

Other methods of language acquisition, includes the informal nature of the program or process. Although for five years, the child makes no attempt at the formality level. Occasionally, there is a self-appointed teacher that stimulates a language lesson for the child but for a brief moment of two to five minutes. On this note, there is no organized language lesson, no set frame to begin and end the learning mode and no well-defined program of learning. The author therefore concludes that a child's ability to grapple with the mass of language data is mysterious. To him, the informal method of language acquisition remains one of the wonders of the human nature.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is hinged on innatism or the nativist theory, an enterprise that stems out of a series of books and articles by Chomsky and his collaborators in the 1950s and 1960s. The terms in this theory means the factors present in an individual from birth. Chomsky's theory of innatism (1957) holds that infants and children learn language at a speed that cannot be simply explained by the laws of behaviorism. In his view, children learning language tend to put words together in new ways. Chomsky opines that the human mind is by nature creative and dynamic. To him, children create meaningful sentences they have never been heard before whether you teach them or not. Chomsky further argued that children learn rules of language and apply them in their own way. According to Chomsky, the application of the rules might be inaccurate at first because children would not have heard adults using rules of language inaccurately. The theory also posits that human beings learn by staying in an environment where the language is spoken.

Chomsky came up with another claim; he credits the child with animate endowment of language acquisition device called (LAD) which enables the child to acquire language. Chomsky

classified into three features: Creativity (earlier mentioned), Hypothesis Making Device (HMD) and Universal Grammar (UG). The UG enables the child to process all the utterances that invades his/her auditory sense and come out with a grammar of his/her language. The child's construction of grammar shows his/her possession of an unborn HMD. Chomsky argued that children will never acquire number of sentences if the language acquisition mechanism was dependent on language input alone. This becomes the major reason for the theory of Universal Grammar: an idea of innate, biological grammatical categories, such as a noun category and a verb category that facilitate the entire language development in children and overall language processing in adults. However, Chomsky has made a great effort in illustrating to some extent a child's language acquisition by providing approaches like the LAD and UG which give account of knowing how children combine a noun and a verb into a meaningful, correct phrase. For instance; a boy + to eat: a boy eats.

### **Comparative Study of Language Acquisition Theories**

#### **Behaviorist Theory**

One of the earliest scientific explanations of language acquisition was provided by Skinner (1957). As one of the pioneers of behaviorism, he accounted for language development by means of environmental influence. Skinner argued that children acquire language based on language behaviorist reinforcement principles by associating words with meanings. To him, correct utterances are positively reinforced when the child realizes the communicative value of words and phrases. For example, when the child says "milk" and the mother will smile and give her some as a result, the child will find this outcome rewarding, enhancing the child's language development (Ambridge and Leiven, 2011). Skinner presented his behavioural theory using operant conditioning approach which has already

been explained. Since operant conditioning is contingent on reinforcement by rewards, a child would learn that a specific combination of sound stands for a specific thing through repeated successful associations made between the two.

### **Innate Theory**

Skinner's theory idea was strongly attacked by Noam Chomsky, in his article in 1959; 'A theory called innate theory or inmates'. Chomsky was against Skinner's idea of language acquisition through operant conditioning, that children often ignore language corrections from adults. Instead, children typically follow a pattern of using an irregular form of a word correctly, making errors and later on, returning to the proper use of the word. For example, a child may use the word "gived", but eventually, the child will definitely go back to learn the opposite "gave".

Chomsky claimed the pattern is difficult to attribute to Skinner's idea of operant conditioning as the primary way that children acquire language. Supporting Chomsky's argument, Harley (2010) opines that if language were solely required through behavioural conditioning, children would not likely learn the proper use of word and suddenly use the word incorrectly. Thus, Skinner failed to account for the central role of syntactic knowledge in language learning competence.

Instead of Chomsky giving credit to Skinner's operant conditioning, he argued for a mathematical approach to language acquisition based on the study of syntax. Chomsky emphatically debunked the Skinner's idea of seeing a child as a tabula rasa, rather to him, there is something inborn in a child. Hence, he sees language as being creative in nature. To Chomsky, what the child requires is the environment to influence him/her for a better behavior.

### **Relational Framework Theory**

Another theory is the "Relational Framework Theory" (RFT). The proponents of this theory include; Hayes, Barnes-Holmes and Roche in 2011. The theory provides a wholly selectionist leaning account of the origin and development of language competence and complexity. Based on the principles of Skinnerian behaviourism, RFT posits that children acquire language purely through interacting with the environment.

The theorists introduced the concept of functional contextualism in language learning which emphasizes the importance of predicting and influencing psychological events like thoughts, feelings and behaviors, by focusing on the variables they can manipulate in the context. The RTF distinguishes itself from Skinner's work by identifying and defining a particular type of operant conditioning known as 'derived relational responding', a learning process that appears to occur only in humans possessing a capacity for language. An empirical study supporting the predictions of RFT suggest that children learn language via a system of inherent reinforcement. The theory therefore, challenges the view that language acquisition is based upon innate, language specific cognitive capacities.

### **Social Interactionism Theory**

In a related development, social interactionism emerged as another language acquisition theory. The collaborators of this theory include the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner (1983). The theory gives an explanation of language development and emphasizes the role of social interaction between the developing child and linguistically knowledgeable adults.

The principle of this theory is based largely on socio-cultural factors. Unlike the other approaches, it emphasizes the role of reinforcement in language acquisition. Specifically, it asserts that much of a child's linguistic growth stems from the



modeling of an interaction with parents and other adults, who frequently provide instructive corrections (Morek, 1941). The theory is similar to behaviourist though differs in that it posits the existence of a social-cognitive model and other mental structures within children. This theory also anchored on the zone of proximal development. It describes the set of linguistic tasks (proper syntax, suitable vocabulary usage) a child cannot carry out on their own at a given time, but can learn to carry out if assisted by an able adult.

### **Conclusion**

Having looked at some of the language acquisition theorists and their principles on child language acquisition, it is pertinent to say that the environment is very paramount for a child acquiring a language. The child observes and imitate what the adults around him/her say. More so, reinforcement is a relevant factor since it will make the child realize the communicative value of words. However, language acquisition should not be solely acquired through behavioural conditioning because the child as at then, might ignore language corrections from adults. Hence, they follow their own pattern of using or forming words. Basically, if a child will make a mistake in using a word and later comes back to correct him/herself without anybody teaching him, as we teach them how to brush their teeth or tie a shoe; It means that language acquisition seems to be a passive, innate process. In as much as we say that child's language acquisition is passive, innate, and in order to facilitate a child's language development, there is need for modeling of social interactions between the knowledgeable adult and the child.

Finally, the contributions of the emirate scholars are fantastic but the fact that remains; how acquisition of language happens in children is the subject of much debate in the linguistic society. The study therefore recommends that habit formation,

association and conditioning should complement the principle of innatism and each other respectively.

Secondly, language teachers should employ the theories based on the context use.

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## **THE DEARTH OF READING CULTURE IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION ON THE POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Many studies have shown that most Nigerians have not formed the habit of wide informative reading because reading culture is yet to be our culture. It is alarming! Many; read only when they are forced to read, perhaps because of passing examination and be certified. Reading which should be a day-to-day affair is today relegated to the background. The paper examines the causes of reading failure in the school system and proffers solutions to the identified problems. Every well-meaning Nigerian citizen has a role to play in order to remove the reluctant readers, the slow readers, the frustrated readers as well as the non-readers from the recurrence of age of darkness. This is because the country must be rescued so that the individual can succeed and be productive for the betterment of this great nation of ours. Our leaders in Nigeria ought to live and lead aright! Our leaders should give more priority and attention to the education of the populace so that their ford governance will correct the anomalies in the country.

**Keywords:** Dearth, Reading Culture, Polytechnic Students.

### **Introduction**

Today's complex society has many obstacles which militates against the success of an individual, even when the determination to succeed is there. Reading is an important skill of language that almost everything else must be sacrificed to it. It can be described as a passport, proof of knowledge, experience and knowledge. Survival can be synonyms with reading.

According to the National Policy on Education (2004), the primary education is the bedrock of our education system, and so it is the key to the success or failure of the whole system hence one of the primary objectives of primary education in Nigeria is the inculcation of permanent literacy. The widespread reading failure in the school system is principally attributed to the primary school teachers' inability to master the subject matter for they cannot teach what they do not know or master.

Furthermore, the widespread reading failure in the school system (primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education) is compounded by the dearth of quality reading instruction. It is no doubt that there exists a reluctant reading and learning syndrome (Bunza, 1997), as or children's reading is not all it should be (Williams, 1975). Numerous studies have also shown that prevailing poor reading culture is not only peculiar to Nigeria as a country, but Africa in general. According to Ruterana 2012, Onyango et al., 2015, Otiike, 2011, Nalusiba, 2010; Kayumi, 2017, Haliru et al., 2015; Akande and Adeniyinka, 2007, Kumburu, 2011. as cited by Innocent Otache notes that the prevalence of poor reading culture abounds in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Botswana. The situation in one country cannot be better than the other. However, one looks at it, the negative effect affects everyone and everything around progress and development.

### **Reading and its Culture**

Reading, according to Oyeyemi (2005) refers to an interaction by which meaning encoded in visual stimuli by an author makes meaning in the mind of the reader. It is a means of tapping information and knowledge from superior minds. Reading is a way of acquiring knowledge, which has to do with the recognition of printed or written symbols that serve as stimuli for recalling meaning by the reader. Reading is also the ability to

identify, decode and interpret an array of words through a cognitive process. It is another complex way of dealing with communication in written form (Ogwu, 2010). Reading is done for different reasons. While some read for pleasure, some read to acquire knowledge, some to relax, others read to pass exams. Whatever it is, reading enhances one's writing skill. Johnson (1999) notes that there are two types of reading, reading aloud and silent reading. The former involves audible vocalization of what is being read and good for young readers because it exposes errors for timely corrections, the latter allows the reader to read for only himself. This is the type of reading that is encouraged in libraries, in other not to disturb other readers. The ability to read is a skill that a person can develop or acquire which has become very necessary to enable one to compete favourably in today's job market. Therefore, for reading to become a culture, a reader must engage in it on a regular basis. Orakpor (2012) notes that reading culture is an act of reading as a usual practice or pattern of behaviour. Reading culture must be consistent and dedicated to one's lifestyle (Enamen, 2015). Poor reading culture erodes good knowledge and leads to gross misinformation; the result of these two could be dangerous. Nzeako (1982) observes that the average Nigerian was neither taught how to read well nor how to acquire the skill for reading proficiently. This means that an average Nigerian doesn't have the culture of reading. For a person to remain relevant, he needs to keep learning, unlearning and relearning, as knowledge can be outdated but can also be updated only through reading.

### **Literature Review**

Reading is essential to literacy and it is an emancipatory tool that liberates one from ignorance, disease and poverty as well as providing one with the liberty for all round development. Onuhaogo notes that for effective and efficient living and

learning, one should be able to read. He maintained that reading is the foundation of literacy. Through reading, literacy becomes more functional, durable and development oriented.

Ike (1999) as cited in Fabunmi Francis and Folorunso Olayinka maintains that successes brought about by campaigns on reading habit of Nigerians are not enough. He stressed that a book reading culture cannot be established among illetrates. Bankole (1999) as cited in Fabunmi et al believes that children need to be exposed to books and reading, to convince them that reading is an impressive habit. Johnson (1999) as cited in Fabunmi et al, also notes that, the level of readership to a large extent, is an index to a country's development. She defined readership as the number of citizens who do effective reading in relation to the population of the country. This means that the more the readership, the more the development.

### **The Polytechnic Education in Nigeria**

Tertiary education as defined by NPE (2004) is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, monotechnics, including those institutions offering correspondence courses. The goals of tertiary education include among others:

- i) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- ii) Develop and inculcate proper value for the survival of the individual and society.

Education is the most important instrument of change. In Nigeria, it is undisputable that less attention is given to the primary education for reasons best known by our leaders. Government tends to overlook the assertion. "The primary level of education is the key to the success or failure of the whole system." Since both the secondary and tertiary levels of education are built upon the primary level of education, our leaders' attention needs to be

drawn to this important fact that the primary level must be given paramount attention instead of relegating it to the background. The NPE also identifies three types of tertiary education: university education, teacher education and technology education respectively. The policy does not leave us in doubt technology education where polytechnic education takes its root. Technical education is that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge.

The role of language and communication in the quest for national development cannot be overestimated; hence development connotes positive or desirable growth or advancement. Language is a tool of modernization and development. The ability to read is necessary for success in school and even out of school. It therefore follows that any student who cannot read efficiently is bound to fail at school.

Ayodele (1984), states categorically that in higher education, inability to read efficiently constitutes a problem of the very vast and ever-expanding world of knowledge. Today, it is not only our students who cannot read, but also some of our leaders. Indeed, most of our students at different levels of education read very slowly and sometimes some get frustrated because reading does not make any sense to them. Dr. Emmanuel N. Egbe, a lecturer at the University of Jos who some years back said in his Advanced Seminar in Reading class, “That whatever level we find ourselves as teachers of English Language and discover that a good number of students cannot read, we must first of all leave out all things we intend to teach and concentrate on reading (i.e making the class be able to read) before proceeding on any other aspect of teaching”. This is because reading forms the core of the syllabus in any course or subject.

**Reading as the Core of the Syllabus**



Reading is an important language skill that teachers of English Language must master and teach it effectively. It is also a vital skill that our students must acquire in life. According to the National Open University of Nigeria (2015: 155), a syllabus is

A broad outline of the work planned to be done, in the course of a year with each class or programme in each subject or course...constructed by the school or imposed by some external examining bodies” while the secondary school in Nigeria has NECO and WAEC examination bodies, NABTEB is the one for the Nigerian Polytechnics.

There are rules governing a good syllabus. These include:

- ✓ Aim - that the work planned should have an aim and a purpose.
- ✓ Relevant - that the work planned should be relevant to the needs of the students and the society which they serve.
- ✓ Work load - that the work load should contain a manageable amount of work, not being overloaded.
- ✓ Time - that the work load should be capable of being completed within the time allotted.
- ✓ Suitability - that the work planned should be suitable for the group and the stage of development for which the syllabus is intended.
- ✓ Previous knowledge - that the syllabus should take into account students' previous knowledge or skills.
- ✓ Correlation - that it should be integrated or linked with other subjects or courses or courses in the school curriculum.

Since student are center of teaching and learning process, teachers of English Language must be able to identify the different types of learners in the school in order to help them.

According to Rasag (2003), understanding the different types of learners will be of immense value in assisting the teachers in preparing suitable materials to cater for the varying learning needs. To him, the slow learners and the gifted learners are highly problematic whereas the normal (average) learners need to be stimulated and encouraged to make maximum use of the potential and to develop their individual talents.

Reading, not listening, speaking or writing skill, is the core of the school syllabus. Bright and McGregor (1973) states reasons reading is the core of the school syllabus.

- (i) The book provides most pupils/students with the situation in which learning takes place. This means that without reading hardly will any learning take place and where there is little reading, there will be little language learning too.
- (ii) That only by reading can students acquire the speed and skills they will need for practical purposes when they leave school. In our literate society it is hard to imagine any skilled work that does not require the ability to read. Professional competence depends on reading.
- (iii) That further education depends on quality and quantity of reading. All the important study skills require quick efficient and imaginative reading.
- (iv) That general knowledge depends on reading. The more people read, the more the background knowledge they acquire of other ways of life, behavior and thought.

- (v) The reading makes a total man. According to an English Philosopher, Francis Bacon, “Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man”. The more a man knows, the more he is worth. Therefore, reading really sharpens a man.
- (vi) That it is in literature that the student is most likely to find words used memorably with force. It is there he finds words used in the widest range of contents and there he will find words passionately or deliberately covering emotions and attitudes.
- (vii) The people who hardly quotes are definitely are those who scarcely read. Reading extensively and intensively are required of a good student.
- (viii) That reading sharpens sight and insight, widens sympathies and experiences and provides occasion for the exercise of judgement about man and his condition.

From the foregoing, one could infer that unwilling readers or reluctant readers are a problem in all types of classroom, especially in this generation where the social networks are competing favourably or are pressures on the students. Reading is for them, a passive activity performed constantly in isolation and perhaps with skills they feel they do not possess.

### **Causes of Dearth of Reading Culture**

The word ‘dearth’ not ‘death’ needs to be clearly and properly explained or defined here.

According to the Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2010), dearth refers to “lack of something or the fact of there not being enough of something”. That is, there is inadequate or absence of reading in our school system.

Culture on the other hand refers to a total way of life of a given people. The culture of reading is gradually losing its pride of place in Nigeria education system. Today, most pupils/students take reading as a boring academic exercise. The attitude of students towards reading of textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and so on is highly discouraging. This poor reading culture amongst our students is really worrisome. We may pause here to ask ourselves some rhetorical questions.

1. Do our students love to read books?
2. Do Nigeria place high premium on reading culture?
3. Is the reading culture being imbibed by the young ones at an early age?
4. Are there adequate and well-equipped libraries in our schools and colleges?
5. Are there enough trained and qualified teachers of English Language in the school system?

The questions are endless. There may be only one answer to the above questions. The answer is a capital NO. This is so because there is a fast decline of the reading culture of almost all categories of learners in Nigeria education system.

Okon (2010) highlights eight reasons on the dearth of the reading culture in the country.

### **Foundation Problem**

Since independence to date attention of our learners are not channelled to sectors that yield high economic returns. Corruption and the value of the naira have contributed rapid decline in the reading of books, newspapers, magazines, journals and the likes. The Nigerian education system does not prioritize reading for acquisition of knowledge, growth, information, progress and development. Rather, it is for passing examinations.

For this singular reason, what most student do is to cram and produce verbatim what they were taught in class.

### **Economic Factor/ Poverty**

Many families are poor and their poverty has hindered them from buying recommended textbooks and other learning materials for their children. Reading entails buying many books or materials, which costs a lot of money. When parents live below poverty line, live in abject poverty, cannot afford fees or three-square meals a day, it becomes impossible to sponsor a child through quality education. Since the children could not get access to valuable learning materials at the early age, they tend to dislike or even hate reading.

### **Poor Quality of Teachers**

It is unfortunate that some teachers cannot read and even speak fluently, let alone teach effectively. It is important to ensure that quality teachers are trained because they determine the success of the next generation. Teachers of English Language should as role models, not only rate students' performance but also gauge the quality of instruction they give.

### **Lack of Libraries.**

Most secondary schools do not have school libraries. Public libraries too are lacking. Most tertiary institutions have good and well-equipped libraries, but the sad thing is that most students tend to stay away from such libraries because of the continuous decline of reading culture. Establishing school and public libraries usually encourages positive reading habits in students but the absence of this vital educational facility is really affecting our students negatively. In some cases, the libraries are stocked with outdated books and reading materials.

### **Parental factor**

Some years ago, only men worked while their wives stayed at home to take care of the children. Fortunately, or unfortunately today, both men and women work for their living and therefore, there is not much time given to the children. Nowadays, many parents cannot make out time to ensure that their children read. In a bid to strengthen the financial power of the family, both may return home late thereby the stress of their jobs may not permit them to check their children's books. Checking the children's book will motivate them to put more effort. Parent who develop the habit of reading, the children can emulate such. Parents should imbibe reading culture in their children so that they will love reading. Are you a reading parent or teacher/lecturer? You cannot give your child what you do not have.

### **Lack of Reading Competition**

Competitive platforms have overtime sprung up, though primary hinged on discovering talented individuals. Television (TV) programs and some organizations such as 'Young Brains', 'Cowbell Mathematics Competition', 'Close Up Essay Competition', etc. to produce contestants and /or make students to read or practice. This is encouraging because students are being challenged or pushed to read or practice mathematics.

### **Low Level of Research**

Research in its ideal sense makes the researcher to read extensively, but many students have developed the habit of 'mere' copying with little alternative only. Research supervisors who insist on the 'supervised student' doing the right thing, the supervisor is being painted 'wicked'. Today, some students do not even read towards tests and examination, because the interest for reading has long vanished.

### **Strong Contenders**

Sports, music, movies, etc. have taken the place of reading nowadays. In particular, footballers make huge sums of money and as such, children and even some parents prefer pushing their children where they will get the naira quickly than taking these children through the long process of education.

### **Internet Factor/Social Media**

The internet has now become the order of the day. Most Nigerian Youths use the net to seek for almost all the information they want. Many are interested in information, entertainment, Facebook, WhatsApp (for chatting and meeting new friends), etc. it is worrisome that only an insignificant number of students embark on extensive reading and research or log on to educative sites to increase their knowledge. Most youths are of the view that everything should be reduced to e-library than going through the stress of hard copies and reading them. The importance of reading in the academic life cannot be over-emphasized. Many studies have shown that Nigerians have not formed the habit of wide and informative reading. Reading is yet to be our culture, because many read only when they are forced to read – they read for tests, examination or academic purposes only. They are weak in reading for pleasure – forgetting that reading entertains the readers.

### **Effects of Reading Culture in Nigeria**

The dearth of reading culture has some educational implications on the Nigerian child. The negative effect of the dearth of reading culture (or habit) among the Nigeria students include:

- (i) Erosion of knowledge in our society which is characterized by inability of some students to read and/or write well.
- (ii) Examination malpractices in attributable to the collapse of reading culture among the school children and even the university students.

- (iii) Overemphasis on certificates instead of knowledge and skills yields poor reading habits.
- (iv) Nonchalant attitude of our government towards education in the country. ASUU has been on strike for five (5) months now, and all they concerned about is the next elections. How can reading culture be established and maintained in such a situation?

### **The way Forward/Recommendations**

The dearth of reading culture in Nigeria education system should be the concern of all Nigerians, especially well-meaning citizens of this country. Permit us to outline some way forward as ways of reducing the poor reading habits of our students.

- (i) Teachers of English Language should adopt appropriate teaching strategies in handling this very important language skill (i.e. reading) so that the problem of reading failure might be drastically minimized.
- (ii) Government should ensure that only professionally trained and qualified teachers of English Language be recruited to teach the subject. They should also make a policy that will ensure that students pass one of the indigenous languages with English language before they are admitted into higher institutions.
- (iii) Remedial reading programme should be organized for non-readers, poor readers and slow readers too.
- (iv) Reading of literature story books should be encouraged among the students.



- (v) Students should be encouraged to utilize their time meaningfully. The system should be knowledge based rather than examination based.
- (vi) Awareness should be preached to the students that academic success is dependent on the meaningful reading rather than cheating to pass examinations.
- (vii) Professional training workshops should be regularly organized for teachers of English Language
- (viii) Reading competition among the students should be organized to stress the importance of reading.
- (ix) Schools should be supervised regularly to ensure that quality control is maintained. They should make it compulsory for students to read a certain number of books per semester. They should also have functional libraries to encourage both staff and students.
- (x) Teacher-student ratio of 1:40 should be observed and maintained to enhance effective teaching – learning process.
- (xi) Parents should, apart from buying books and other learning materials, discourage their children from spending late hours in watching movies and the like.
- (xii) Parents as well as teachers should imbibe in children/students the good habit of reading.

## **Conclusion**

Reading is like medicine because it heals the soul, it enlivens and always makes you feel better (NOUN, 2015). From the foregoing discussion, all and sundry owe this country a responsibility of making our children good readers as many of them are “at risk” and therefore need to come to their rescue if not the age of darkness might occur. There is no doubt that the widespread reading failure exists in the school system and this problem is further compounded by the dearth of quality reading instruction. Our children and students are a vulnerable generation indeed, but we will not give up; the logs in the wheel of progress are, however, surmountable because of two major reasons:

- (i) Reading, as a linguistic process, can be effectively systematized, and
- (ii) There is in every child/student a facility for reading mastery.

Let us all join hands to remove reluctant, slow, frustrated readers; and at worst non-readers from the recurrence of age of darkness. As a strong reading culture is beneficial to both the individual and the society. Our society must be rescued so that the individual can succeed and be productive for the betterment of this great nation, Nigeria.

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## **FTAS AS AGGRESSION IN THE CONVERSATION OF SELECT CHARACTERS IN EL-SAADAWI'S *WOMAN AT POINT ZERO***

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the language of aggression in El-Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* with a view to analyzing how language of aggression generates and advances conflict leading to alteration of socioeconomic and cultural values of a people. The paper adopts Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness theory – Face Threatening Acts (FTA) – to study the conversations of select characters in the novel. The study observes that the interlocutors deploy some situational variables, aggressive expressions and shared knowledge to carry out blunt face threatening without any redressives activated. Moreover, there is preponderance use of interrogatives as protest markers which aim at character assassination and defamation of the in-group identity of co-conversationists. This study also observes that some of the FTA's usually results in retaliatory acts or face boosting acts which in most cases overthrow some African values and mar socio-economic structure of a family and nation hence this paper concludes that FTA's/language of aggression are anti-socio-economic development. The study recommends among others that politeness is among the functional keys to healthy interpersonal relationships which by extension results in positive economic development.

**Key Words:** Language, Aggression, Face-Threatening Acts, Politeness

## **Introduction**

Within novels, interpersonal discourse (dialogue) goes on among characters and the overall meaning of any literary text is affected by such conversations. Through these dialogues, characters reveal their personality, feelings, emotions, behaviours / attitudes as well as the relationship between them. Bocar (2017) avers that messages (utterances) convey a person's behavior, attitude or thought verbally or non-verbally. Similarly, Trinch (2007, p.1896) opines that "language choices are never neutral or innocent but ideologically loaded and thus revealing the attitudes and worldviews that prevail in specific practices with particular cultures."

Discourses in written texts show how language, in the form of speech, interacts with non-linguistic components of communication. Hemavathy and Devi (2016) say that communication is a reciprocity process of transferring information among individuals via words and signs. Discourses in novels can be actualized through imaginative use of language which is interpreted within situation. As humans interact, through the instrumentality of both verbal and non-verbal language forms, there is a constant negotiation of meaning and various interpretations.

Dialogues in texts are part of the intended message of the author to her audience, which helps to advance the plot of such fictional work, usually centered on conflict. Conflicts move plots of literary genres. It would not be out of place to say understanding the nature and form of conflict in a genre is central to appraisal of the genre. Aggression holds an inter-penetrative relationship with conflict; in fact, aggression is a major way conflicts are generated, advanced and managed, hence a concerted effort at understanding the linguistic nuances that depict aggression/conflict.

Buss (1961, p.1) asserts that ‘aggression has been defined by the Behaviourists as a response that inflicts harm towards the receivers.’ The Socio-psychologists define aggression ‘as any behaviour that is intentionally achieved to harm another person besides the awareness of the target person to avoid harm’ (Anderson and Bushman 2002, p.28). Aggression is one communication style identified by Nielsen (2008). Aggressive communication means “taking care of one’s rights and disregarding others’ rights. It is perceived as disruptive since it generates dissatisfaction and causes disharmony” (Hemavathy and Devi, 2016, p.119). “An aggressive communicator is close-minded and cannot listen to others; he is poor to conceive others’ point of view” (Bocar, 2017, p.3). Aggression is synonymous with violence. Violence refers to extreme forms of aggression such as physical assault and murder (Singh et.al, 2014). We have verbal (via words) and non-verbal representations of aggression. Bayer and Cegala (1992) are of the view that verbal aggression causes psychological hurts whereas non-verbal aggression manifests in acts like yelling, shouting, ignoring, throwing things at others. Kadhim and Mohammed (2021) define aggression as a negative form of an anti-social behavior, which is produced because of a particular reason, desire, want, need, or due to psychological state of the aggressor. Aggression involves injury to others physically or psychologically. Aggressive behaviours in human interactions cause discomfort and disharmony among interlocutors. Singh, et.al (2014) assert that aggression is a response by an individual that delivers something unpleasant to another person. Linguistic aggression is culture and context sensitive because what constitutes aggressive verbal and non-verbal behavior in one social group may not be regarded as such in another. Literatures of aggression capture aggressive acts through language, which is

used to trace the causes, degree, nature, purpose and effects of such aggression.

According to Singh et.al (2014, p. 10), ‘aggression is often motivated by emotions like fear, frustration, anger, feelings of stress, dominance or pleasure. Sometimes, it can serve as stress relief or a subjective feeling of power.’ They go on to assert that ‘aggression can be defensive (fear-induced), resident-intruder aggression, irritable aggression, sex-related aggression, etc.’ (p.12). Some of the causes or motivations of aggressive behavior includes frustration; generated due to hostility that results from disillusionment. Aggression can also be ‘triggered by the desire to seek safety, feel a sense of belongingness, self-esteem, self-confidence, or achieving needs, and building self-actualisation’ (Lozovska and Gudaite 2013, p. 361).

Aggression can be physical or non-physical (Bushman and Anderson, 2011; Blumenfeld and Cooper, 2010). Physical aggression include murder, suicide, physical abuse, etc., while non-physical aggressive forms include all forms of verbal abuse, cyber bullying (Blumenfeld and Cooper, 2010), which are face threatening. Researches on impoliteness (FTAs) have shown that aggression is one of the sources of conflict/crisis both at home and outside (Culpeper, 1996; Culpeper et.al, 2003; Culpeper, 2005).

Face in interaction is first noted and developed by Goffman (1967). Face is a property that all human beings possess that is broadly comparable to self-esteem (Ewurum, 2015). The notion of ‘face’ relates to notions of being embarrassed, humiliated or ‘losing face’. Goffman developed and systematized the notion defining face as “the positive value a person claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a personal contact” (Goffman, 1967, p.306). Face is also extended to be an image of self-delineation in terms of approved social attributes.



Goffman (1999, p.419) further defines face as “a person’s sense of self-esteem (positive face) and desire to determine their own course of action (negative face).” He goes further to observe that any action or utterance, however mild, which might conceivably upset the delicate balance of face maintenance is a face-threatening activity (FTA).

Face threatening acts cover illocutionary acts which aim at damaging or threatening another person’s face. Sunday and Emiola (2017) observe that FTA is opted for in crisis and its adverse effect is to advance conflict or deepen existing crisis. This is informed by the fact that FTA could generate verbal abuse, or result in psychological trauma or other negative consequences which sometimes are more fatal than physical abuse. FTAs can be in the form of destructive criticism, embarrassment, insults, gossiping, rejection by family and friends, disappointment, stigmatization, peer pressure, unnecessary demand (of sex, goods, and services), unacceptable practices, annoying repetitive pattern, etc., which affect people’s feelings of peace or being secured, and safe (Kadhim and Mohammed, 2021). Others include such verbal and non-verbal behaviours as rudeness, harsh tone, keeping silent when expected to speak, interruptions (especially butting-in). Such harmful threats to face could lead to retaliating aggression. Face threatening act is any obvious disregard for the other’s feeling where politeness is expected.

Goffman coins the expression ‘to lose face’ and ‘to save face’ and further states that “to study ‘face-saving’ is to study traffic rules of social interactions” (Goffman 1967, pp.3, 5, 12). Utterances are also assessed as to what type of face is presented by the speaker (Goffman, 1955; Lim and Browers, 1991). Hence, face presentation explains the behaviours participants display towards one another in terms of degree of politeness and or distance or closeness they want to express. Current researches on

discourse analysis and pragmatics have confirmed that face threatening acts, sometimes result in negative emotions and retaliation that can give birth to aggression (Chen, 2013). Some negative social practices make people to lose face, which may trigger emotional disturbances. And in the process to save or repair face, certain retaliatory aggression may be displayed. Chen (2013) claims that people engaged in interactions continually have the responsibilities of maintaining, saving, repairing or damaging face. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that this paper adopts Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) to examine Nawal El-Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, to reveal the negative effects of FTAs (aggression) to the family, and society at large.

### **Politeness Theory and Face**

Face is one of the terms discussed in Politeness theory. In conversations and other social arts, individuals engage in face want reflecting how they will to be seen or accepted. This makes Brown and Levinson (1987) to say that face is something that is emotionally construed which can be maintained, lost or enhanced each of which must be constantly attended to at every act or interaction. This situation results in either face saving Act (FSA) or face threatening act (FTA). FTA therefore covers illocutionary acts which advertently or otherwise aims at damaging or threatening another person's face. Reviewing Babatunde and Adedimeji (2008), Sunday and Emiola (2017) observe that FTA is usually opted for in crisis situation and its adverse effect is to advance conflicts or deepen exiting crisis. This is based on the fact that FTA could generate verbal abuse or result in psychological emotional or other negative consequences which sometimes are more fatal than physical abuse.

In politeness theory, threat to face is broken into two, namely, "threat to positive face" and "desire for approval" (Chen,

2013). Threats to positive face include criticism, strategic embracement, insults, gossiping, etc.; demand for approval on the other results from rejection, stigmatization, peer pressure, unaccepted practices and so forth. These (negative) social practices usually make people to lose face which may trigger emotional disturbances. And in the process to save or repair face certain retaliatory aggression may be displayed (Brett et. al, 2007; Chen 2013). It is overtly obvious that both in communication and other behavioral acts people engage in maintaining, saving, repairing or damaging face

### **Data Presentation and Analysis Procedure**

The data presented in this study comprise conversations between Firdaus and three other major characters. The conversations are isolated based on their relevance to the theme of the paper. There are four sets of conversation isolated. FTAs are the major analytical tool. Each conversation is analysed before the other.

### **Textual Presentation**

#### **Excerpt A**

The excerpt below is a face-to-face conversation between a religious cleric and his wife. The man, Your Holiness, is Firdaus' uncle. This takes place in their living room as they retire for the night. Firdaus lost her parents at a very tender age. Her uncle takes her to the city to live with him. He manages to send her to a boarding school from where she visits him on holidays. Within the passage of time, Firdaus' uncle marries and has his own family to cater for. She graduates from secondary school and is back to stay in her uncle's house where her space is on the sofa, a small wooden couch placed in the dining room close up against the thin wall which separates it from the bedroom. Firdaus eavesdrops on their conversation.

Your Holiness: “It’s not easy to find work these days when all you have is a secondary school certificate.” A1

Wife: “What can she do then?” A2

Your Holiness: “Nothing. These secondary schools don’t teach them anything. I should have sent her to a commercial training school.” A3

Wife: “It’s no use talking of what you should have done. What are you going to do now?” A4

Your Holiness: “She can stay with us until I find her a job” A5

Wife: “That could be for years. The house is small and life is expensive. She eats twice as much as any of our children” A6

Your Holiness: “She helps you with the house and the children. A7

Wife: “We have the servant girl, and I cook. We don’t need her” A8

Your Holiness: “But she can make the work easier for you by helping with the cooking.” A9

Wife: “I don’t like her cooking. You know, your holiness, cooking is the ‘spirit you breathe’ into it. And I do not like what she ‘breathes’ into her cooking, and neither do you. Don’t you remember the okra she cooked for us? You told me it was not the okra you are accustomed to eat when I make it with my own hands.” A10

Your Holiness: “If you keep her instead of Saadia, we’ll save the girl’s wages.” A11

Wife: “She will not be able to replace Saadia. Saadia is light and quick, and puts her heart into her work. In addition, she’s not too fond of food, or of sleeping long hours. But this girl’s every movement is slow and heavy. She’s cold-blooded and couldn’t care less.” A12

Your Holiness: “So what do we do with her then?” A13

Wife: “We can be rid of her by sending her to the university. There she can live in the quarters allocated to the girl students.” A14

Your Holiness: “To the university? To a place where she will be sitting side by side with men? A respected Sheikh and man of religion like myself sending his niece off to mix in the company of men! Besides, where will the money come from for her lodging, and books, and others? You know how high the cost of living is these days. Prices seem to have gone mad, and yet the salary of us government officials only rises by a few millimes.” A15

Wife: “Your holiness, I have a wonderful idea.” A16

Your Holiness: “What is it?” A17

Wife: “My uncle, Sheikh Mahmoud, is a virtuous man. He has a big pension and no children, and he’s been on his own since his wife died last year. If he marries Firdaus she will have a good life with him, and he can find in her an obedient wife, who will serve him and relieve his loneliness. Firdaus has grown, your holiness, and must be married. It is risky for her to continue without a husband. She is a good girl but the world is full of bastards.” A18

Your Holiness: “I agree with you, but Sheikh is too old for her. A19

Wife: “Who said he is old! He only went on pension this year, and Firdaus herself is not that young. Girls of her age have already married years ago and borne children. An old but reliable man is surely better than a young man who treats her in a humiliating way, or beats her. You know how young men are these days.” A20

Your Holiness: "I agree with you. But you must not forget the very obvious deformity he has on his face." A21

Wife: "Deformity? Who says it's a deformity? Besides, your holiness, as the saying goes, 'nothing shames a man but an empty pocket'" A22

Your Holiness: "Supposing Firdaus refuses him?" A23

Wife: "Why should she refuse him? This is her best chance to get married. Do not forget what a nose she has. It's big and ugly like a tin mug. Besides, she has inherited nothing, and has no income of her own. We will never find a better husband for her than Sheikh Mahmoud." A24

Your Holiness: "Do you think Sheikh Mahmoud will welcome the idea?" A25

Wife: "If I speak to him I am sure he will agree. I intend to ask him a big dowry." A26

Your Holiness: "How much?" A27

Wife: "A hundred pounds, or perhaps even two hundred if he has the money." A28

Your Holiness: "If he pays a hundred pounds, then Allah will indeed have been generous to us, and I could not be so greedy as to ask for more." A29

Wife: "I'll start with two hundred. You know he's a man who can argue for hours over five millimes, and kill himself over a piaster." A30

Your Holiness: "Do you think he will?" A31

Wife: "And why should he refuse indeed? Through this marriage he will become related to a respected Sheikh and man of religion. Is that not in itself reason enough for him to welcome such a proposal?" A32

Your Holiness: “Maybe he’s thinking of taking a woman from a wealthy family. You know how he worships the piaster.” A33 (p.36 – 39)

A1 is an expression of concern, regret and worry over a known fact; shared background knowledge between both interactants. Firdaus’ uncle uses this declarative sentence to state the obvious. He observes the limitation of his niece; an excuse for having not fixed her up somewhere.

Instead of noticing and attending to the face wants of her husband, Firdaus’ uncle’s wife, in A2 uses interrogation that threatens his positive face; an enquiry that depicts protest and intentional disloyalty. But in A3, Firdaus’ uncle reveals his frustration (of not being able to find job for his niece) in the hope that his wife will understand him. ‘Nothing’ as used by him shows how handicapped/helpless he is. He assumes a ‘No Taking Responsibility’ stance, blames the present predicament of his niece on the government via her educational institutions that does not equip her students for the future. He brings to the fore the incapability/inability of the government in order to run down her public image; a government he is even a part of as an official. Thus, he threatens his own public self –image as well as his in-group identity. His complaint discomforts his wife and as such threatens her positive face because she does have a hand in the present situation neither is she a government agent. He literally apologizes for the wrong step he took, a negative politeness strategy since he confesses his faults.

Due to how threatened his wife feels, and due to the plan to get rid of Firdaus, she enacts an incidental face threatening act on her husband in A4. She deliberately refuses to support the husband’s face want for solidarity through the use of interrogatives in her previous utterance in A2 and currently dismisses his face want as unreasonable by speaking nonchalantly, without respect and

sympathy to him. Her plans must be executed hence she does not apply discretion strategy by ignoring those comments which might implicitly or explicitly contradict and embarrass the positive claims made by her husband thus fault/mistake more glaringly. She deliberately does not want to identify with her husband in this precarious circumstance but adversely comments on his concerns. She uses interrogative strategy as protest marker, threatening his negative face since she sounds quite imposing. She pressures her husband into responding to her query. She indirectly questions his abilities to even know what to do in the circumstance. She sounds like his supervisor/teacher, and not as a wife.

However, in A5, Firdaus' uncle uses the present modal auxiliary verb, 'can' to reveal a transfer of authority to Firdaus to decide her fate which his wife, all along, thinks absolutely lies with her. This threatens her negative face too. He indirectly opposes his wife's desire to have Firdaus leave their house. This is an off-record strategy which removes him from the potential of being imposing. She reciprocates her husband's considerate face by employing off-record strategy too in A6. She expresses her doubts and disenchantment at the indefiniteness of her husband's proposal and challenges him indirectly.

In A7, Firdaus' uncle serves his wife a reminder which threatens her negative face since it can lead to a change in her resolve to do away with Firdaus. He indirectly indicts her as an ingrate, while promoting the face of his niece. In L8, she enacts a bald on-record strategy to threaten her husband's negative face. This is a blunt face threatening act which is a direct, outright rudeness and supposes a challenge. From the utterance, 'We don't need her', 'We' though an inclusive term but it is used in this context to reveal a high level of disregard she has for her husband since she makes absolute statement and takes decision on their



behalf, thereby denigrating the status/public self- image of him and arrogating superiority/authority to herself. This is an intentional threat maliciously and spitefully done. She does not want to agree with her husband but remains uncooperative. Her outright rejection of Firdaus is to discredit her person. She maximizes/accentuates her flaws/weaknesses.

Excerpt A9 is an advice/suggestion by Firdaus' uncle to his wife which threatens her negative face. However, in A10, she uses condemnatory/declarative statement, such that is very clear and direct as to convey the exact weight/gravity of her threats to her husband's face. She condemns and criticizes everything that Firdaus represent, which threatens her husband's positive face being his relative. She remains very pessimistic. By giving unrequested explanations in a bid to diffuse or pre-empt her potentially face threatening acts/behaviours, she threatens herself. She becomes conventionally indirect; serves him a reminder to weaken him and employs sarcasm to mock and express her contempt. Paying deference or the use of deference marker, 'Your holiness', by her, is derogatory and not a mark of respect or status symbol in this context.

In A11, Firdaus' uncle offers advice/suggestion to his wife; a negative politeness strategy which threatens her negative face. But she remains adamant and continues to disagree with her husband in A12. She makes it crystal clear that she is not at par with him since she dislikes what he desires. She adopts evaluative/judgemental strategy to disbalance her husband's positive face by undermining Firdaus' self-worth. Her referring to Firdaus as 'this girl' shows distance and absence of closeness or regard for Firdaus' face and by extension, her husband's. She dwells so much on Firdaus' errors/inadequacies and accuses her of caring less to make amends.

In A14, Firdaus' sister-in-law's first utterance in this speech event, 'We can be rid of her...' is rather insulting and reveals absence of regard for Firdaus whom she feels is a nuisance. Firdaus' uncle raises alarm in A15 using interrogatives as a protest marker. Through his utterances, he indirectly reveals his ignorance and misconception about the girl-child and western education he misconstrues as unhealthy exposure due to his religious fanaticism. He indirectly threatens the public face of the government that does not provide enough motivation for staff.

Through her utterances in A18, 'Firdaus has grown...and must be married. It is risky for her to continue without a husband' and 'If he marries Firdaus she will have a good life with him, and he can find in her an obedient wife, who will serve him and relieve his loneliness', she presents the true ideology as enshrined in a male-dominated, patriarchal society; a society where women have been brain-washed and subjugated. Umoren (2002, P.3) succinctly captures the portrait of women when she states that "The general societal viewpoint is that a woman is soulless and as such has to be attached to a soul which only man possesses. If she remains single past the expected age of thirteen years, she is immoral". She claims that the African world view is restrictive with regards to women; she shows that women are subservient to men, need a man to look after her –she must not be single and must marry early, must be beaten to keep down the foolishness, she must not choose her groom, etc. (p.22-23). Thus, Firdaus' uncle's wife threatens her own negative face since she believes in these erroneous views. She brings out the evil of traditional beliefs on the girl-child and early marriage and the notion that every woman must marry to remain relevant and responsible in society. Society have made women to believe that they can only succeed (have a good life) when married.

Excerpt A19 is a partial affirmation and acceptance of the views of his wife by Firdaus' uncle. But he does not completely succumb to her wishes since the remaining part of the utterance points out an impediment of Sheikh Mahmoud, his wife's uncle, a reason why her suggestion may not be accepted.

Feeling threatened and the need to recover/restore her lost face, Firdaus' uncle's wife resorts to the use of repetitive non-optimal behavior to maximize imposition on her husband as a way to ridicule and reject his opinion in A20. She derogatorily, maliciously and spitefully comments on Firdaus' person. She uses hedging strategy, deploys sarcasm to convince her husband of the suitability of the suitor she recommends for Firdaus. The retirement age in civil service is about 65 years yet she says the Sheikh Mahmoud is not old. She claims it's not really a serious issue thereby uses diminishing strategy to make the failure/impediment less significant or insignificant.

However, in A21, he quickly serves her a reminder of the obvious deformity of Sheikh Mahmoud, an adverse comment aimed at threatening the positive face of his wife and by extension, her uncle. He uses discouraging utterance to attack her face. She employs sarcasm and arrogantly addresses him with his title, Your Holiness, as a sign of protest and disapproval.

In A23, Firdaus' uncle continues to threaten his wife's positive face using off-record strategy. He hedges his utterance and brings up an aspect of the discussion that his wife dislikes. He indirectly empowers his niece as one who should have the final say and de-robes his wife of any acclaimed influence/authority over Firdaus. This, again, threatens her positive face which she challenges in A24. She enacts retorting utterance to rubbish her husband and his niece. She serves him a reminder which dwells on the demerits of Firdaus' facial appearance and presents her in a bad light as a liability and not an asset. She threatens Firdaus' positive self-

image and dehumanizes her (in her absence). She presents her as bereft of power to reject an arranged marriage. She, by extension, ridicules her husband's family, being Firdaus' uncle.

She, from the second part of her utterance, reveals the tradition of seeing marriage contracts as money-making venture/enterprise. However, in A29, he threatens his wife's positive face, indirectly calls her a greedy fellow.

In A36, she uses a repetitive non-optimal behavior which is a face threatening act, and queries the right of her uncle to refuse marriage proposal, thereby threatens his negative face in his absence. 'Indeed' as used by her represents a mockery tone to question such audacity. She boosts her husband's positive face by calling him a man of religion.

In A37, Firdaus' uncle threatens his own face as one coming from a poor background, uses joke strategy to threaten (insult) his wife's uncle, and by extension his wife. He speaks of him in a derogatory manner when he says '...he worships the piastre'.

### **Excerpt B**

In the excerpt B below, Bayoumi, a male coffee-house owner, and Firdaus, a young newly married lady, interacts inside his bar. Firdaus has just been battered by her husband whom she runs away from into the streets without any destination in mind. This is not the first time her husband is dehumanizing her like a slave. She roams the streets till she is exhausted and needs at least a cup of water to wet her throat. This is a face-to-face interaction in the bar and subsequently in the home of Bayoumi as they stay together. The interlocutors do not know themselves before now. Bayoumi asks her name to which she responds.

Bayoumi: "What are all these bruises on your face? Has somebody hit you?" B1

“Stay here and rest for a while. I will bring you a cup of hot tea. Are you hungry?” B2

“Is your father alive?” B3

“What about your mother? Is she alive?” B4

“Haven’t you got any family? A brother, or an uncle of some sort?” B5

Firdaus: “I have a Secondary School Certificate. Maybe I can find a job with my secondary, or with my primary school certificate. But if necessary I’m prepared to do anything, even the kind of job that requires no certificates.” B6

Bayoumi: “You take the bed, and I will sleep on the floor.” B7

Firdaus: “But I cannot sleep on the bed.” B8

Bayoumi: “I will not let you sleep on the floor” B9

Firdaus: “I have a Secondary School Certificate, and I want to work.” B10

Bayoumi: “Everyday the coffee-house is crowded with youths, who are out of work, and all of them have university degrees” B11

Firdaus: “But I must work. I can’t carry on like this.” B12

Bayoumi: “What do you mean, you can’t carry on like this?” B13

Firdaus: “I can’t continue to live in your house” B14

“I’m a woman, and you’re a man, and people are talking. Besides, you promised I’d stay only until you found me a job.” B15

Bayoumi: “What can I do, get the heavens to intervene for you?” B16

Firdaus: “You’re busy all day in the coffee-house, and you haven’t even tried to find me a job. I’m going out to look for one.” B17

Bayoumi: “How dare you raise your voice when you’re speaking to me, you street walker, you low woman?”  
B18

(p.48 – 53)

Bayoumi’s enquiries in B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5 threaten Firdaus’ negative face since she may not be willing to open up to a stranger she is just meeting for the first time, except that these interrogatives are such that she is prevailed upon by the speaker to respond to them else she will be threatening Bayoumi’s negative face. In B2, Bayoumi threatens Firdaus’ negative face, and if she ventures to reject the offer it will mean a threat to Bayoumi’s positive face as a nice guy. In B6, Firdaus threatens her own positive face as she employs self-humiliating strategy. She serves a self-effacing behavior since she sees herself as weak, depressed, inferior and wards off anxiety by self-depreciation. This makes her very vulnerable and easy to be exploited by a powerful, narcissistic partner. This vulnerable state of pulling sympathy from people pushes Bayoumi to offer her an accommodation in his two-room apartment. This too threatens Firdaus negative face as she accepts the offer. But from a cultural perspective, it is not appropriate for a man to offer a single lady accommodation as it is a sexual advance/overture. Firdaus, from her speech acts in B6 too, uses an off-record strategy, an indirect request for help from a stranger she just burps into. She uses this strategy of giving hint and hedging to minimize the degree to which the negative/positive faces of her co-conversationalist are threatened.

Bayoumi, in B7, makes offer to Firdaus which continues to threaten her negative face. However, in B8, Firdaus mildly protests/objects to Bayoumi’s offer; an offer she turns down maybe out of respect since it is not proper to inconvenience her host (Bayoumi) in his own house or out of her chequered

experiences. She feels threatened by this ‘unusual/abnormal’ care and preference for her. She deliberately refuses to be understanding and cooperative thereby threatening Bayoumi’s negative face. Bayoumi, in B9, continues to threaten Firdaus’ negative face by disagreeing with her and carrying out his resolve. He takes advantage of her body by ‘using’ her as a bedmate and maid he’s got for himself without taking responsibility.

After living with Bayoumi throughout the winter and the following summer, Firdaus is insulted on her way to the market by school girls who regard her as mad. This prompts her to resume talks with her host, Bayoumi, on how to get her a meaningful job. In B10, Firdaus enacts an on-record baldly strategy; a complaint which reveals her self-determination. She makes a request which is she knows he won’t consent to. She raises a subject matter; an unsolicited/unwelcome conversation that threatens the face of her co-interactant and host, Bayoumi, without any redress. Firdaus’ straightforward declarative speech makes Bayoumi uncomfortable. She sees her full time ‘house wife’ status as insulting to her public self-image. But in B19, Firdaus’ possession of an ordinary secondary school certificate to a university degree is a weak point which he observes indirectly but hopes Firdaus understands this short-coming without directly stating same. Bayoumi threatens the public image of the government in power and gives a true picture of the state of affairs in the country as regarding the high rate of unemployment.

In B12, Firdaus services an aggressive behavior as though Bayoumi is the cause of her joblessness using on-record baldly strategy without any redress; a rude interruption/confrontation. This is like placing a high demand on one’s interlocutor which one knows they cannot agree to. In B13, Bayoumi requests for clarification of Firdaus’ previous utterance through an interrogative which is a protest marker, thereby threatening his

own positive face and Firdaus' negative face. In response to Bayoumi's request in B13, Firdaus enacts a bald on-record strategy - direct and clear speech act (declarative) to state her resolve, in B14. 'I can't continue to live in your house' threatens/questions Bayoumi's right/moral justification to keep her in his house as if she is his personal property. She sees Bayoumi as interfering with her goals/aspirations which threatens her negative face.

In B15, Firdaus questions the ability of Bayoumi and why pick a role he cannot play. She threatens his positive face for his acts of kindness; sheltering and feeding her, in the first place, and then his lack of interest in finding her a job as he promised through blame game and indictment instead of commendation. She fronts the failure of Bayoumi in keeping part of their bargain which has breached the trust between them. She portrays herself as a victim of manipulation. All these fault-finding mechanisms put in place is to disapprove of his acts. She accuses him of being less concern about her fulfillment and happiness. Firdaus as well threatens her own negative face since she accepts and believes Bayoumi's promises and offers. She seeks to maintain and restore this lost face by trying to recognize and maintain the moral values; the status quo – a woman is not supposed to live with a man who is not her legally married husband. She challenges Bayoumi's face by criticizing, complaining and pointing out his inabilities/failures to getting her a job which is her ultimate expectation. This is an intentional threat to his face since she maximizes blame, refuses to offset certain weaknesses of Bayoumi.

In B16, Bayoumi shamefaces Firdaus as her face is challenged or undermined spitefully. She needs support from Bayoumi but she is ridiculed, although incidentally because Bayoumi's threat to her face is a by-product of her actions. Bayoumi becomes defensive, reinforces his threatened positive



face by using interrogative as a protest marker, thus a bald on-record strategy. However, in B17, Firdaus does not minimize the threat to Bayoumi's face, continues to complain bitterly on how neglected she feels since her face wants have become unnoticed, apports blame and refuses to agree with him. She tries recovering her threatened negative face through her utterance 'I'm going out now to look for one'; a blunt face threatening act since she issues a threat to Bayoumi

In B17, Bayoumi retaliates, uses diminishing strategy to manage threat to his face by making his failures/inabilities less significant or insignificant. Thus, he dismisses Firdaus' allegations (which are her face wants) as unreasonable. He raises voice, issues warning and hauls abusive curses at her, using global label ( You street walker, you low woman) to insult her self-image. This is a bald on-record without redress strategy which dehumanizes a co-conversationalist. Bayoumi then resorts to domestic violence using non-verbal face threatening acts – slaps, hits her with his fist in the belly that she loses consciousness immediately. He even locks her up in the flat like a fugitive as he goes out everyday. Firdaus' freedom is taken away; her right to feel, numbed. She is assaulted; ordered to sleep on the floor instead of the bed. Bayoumi rapes her and invites his friend to take turns with him to the extent that Firdaus initially does not know the difference between them (Bayoumi and his friend). As soon as she notices, she queries the new entrant/predator who rather becomes hostile towards her. He uses interrogative as intimidation tool to cow Firdaus into silence and resorts to using global label - 'Slut, Bitch' to deface Firdaus. He inflicts physical/emotional pain/torture on Firdaus, his prey, by biting her breast and belly in the course of sexual intercourse, and goes on to insult and abuse Firdaus' mother.

### **Excerpt C**

This is face-to-face conversation between a pimp, Marzouk, and a prostitute, Firdaus. This takes place in Firdaus' apartment after she had quit her office job broken-hearted on account of Ibrahim's (a colleague) disappointment. She goes back to street life and gets reunited with Marzouk who seeks to control her life by all means. She offers him money which he refuses and insists on sharing in her earnings. One day, Firdaus decides to break away from Marzouk but he resists and gets killed by her.

Marzouk: "Every prostitute has a pimp to protect her from other pimps, and from the police. That's what I'm going to do." C1

Firdaus: "But I can protect myself" CL2

Marzouk: "There isn't a woman on earth who can protect herself." C3

Firdaus: "I don't want your protection." C4

Marzouk: "You cannot do without protection, otherwise the profession exercise by husbands and pimps would die out." C5

Firdaus: "I refuse your threats." C6

Marzouk: "But I am not threatening you. I'm first giving you a little advice." C7

Firdaus: "And if I don't accept your advice?" C8

Marzouk: "Then I may be obliged to threaten." C9

Firdaus: "How do you propose to threaten me?" C10

Marzouk: "I have my own ways of doing things. Every craft has its tools." C11

Firdaus: "What do you want of me?" C12

Marzouk: "I want to protect you from other men." C13

Firdaus: "But no one else besides you is menacing me." C14

- Marzouk: "If it isn't me, it will be someone else. There are pimps running around everywhere. If you want me to marry you, I'm perfectly willing to do so." C15
- Firdaus: "I don't see the need for you to marry me as well. It's enough that you take what I earn. My body at least is mine." C16
- Marzouk: "I'm in business. My capital is women's bodies and I don't mix work and love together." C17
- Firdaus: "I can't go on like this." C18
- Marzouk: "Where are you going?" C19
- Firdaus: "I'm going to look for work. I still have my secondary school certificate" C20
- Marzouk: "And who said you are not working?" C21
- Firdaus: "I want to choose the work I'm going to do." C22
- Marzouk: "Who says anyone in this whole wide world chooses the work he wants to do?" C23
- Firdaus: "I don't want to be anybody's slave" C24
- Marzouk: "And who says there is anyone who is not someone else's slave? There are only two categories of people, Firdaus, masters and slaves." C25
- Firdaus: "In that case I want to be one of the masters and not one of the slaves." C26
- Marzouk: "How can you be one of the masters? A woman on her own cannot be a master, let alone a woman who's a prostitute. Can't you see you're asking for the impossible" C27
- Firdaus: "The word impossible does not exist for me" C28
- "I intend to leave." C29
- Marzouk: "You will never leave" C30
- (P. 100 – 104)

In C1 and C3, the pimp, Marzouk, indulges in psychological manipulation of Firdaus in an effort to make her feel inferior and thereby make her an easy prey for his control. C1 is an offer of protection; an offer that is not without a price to pay. It is not cost-friendly to Firdaus since his ulterior motive is to control her life. He threatens his own negative face by offering to do an unsolicited favour. He, however, threatens her negative face by burping into her space/territory since he forces himself on her, and positive face since he regards and calls her a prostitute just to bring low her self-esteem/ public self-image, on the one hand. On the other hand, he tarnishes his own public self-image as he regards himself as a pimp – a parasite. Although both of them know themselves too well from shared background knowledge as engaging in illicit/unrespectable profession/trade, in the real sense of it, none of them will like to be openly insulted in the manner Marzouk does. His uses circumlocutions/deceptions and evokes a feeling of empathy and exaggerated interest in her wellbeing. He conveys how much he likes her and tries identifying her face wants. C3 is an advice that re-enacts the African ideology that every woman needs the protection of a man. Thus, he asserts his relevance by using a declarative sentence. He threatens the negative face of women generally.

C2, C4, C6, C8, C10 and C16 are Firdaus' outright rejection of Marzouk's offer of protection and marriage, a challenge that threatens his negative face since, in his wildest imagination; he never thinks/conceives he will meet any kind of resistance. He believes he is a personality that must be obeyed because of his numerous connections. Firdaus uses declaratives/interrogatives that are confrontational and threatening.

In C5, Marzouk's insistence continues to threaten Firdaus' negative face through his employment of direct instructions. He contradicts himself since both husbands and

pimps do not provide any protection for women in their lives or they associate with. This obviously implies that the protection/superiority that is alluded to is not without expecting gratifications. This is so because if it is real, the recalcitrance or rejection of same by women should not affect its existence and necessity rather such women would have regrets only. Thus, Marzouk threatens the positive face of men (pimps and husbands alike), as predators that feed on their prey – women. But in C15, Marzouk offers Firdaus marriage not blessed with love which also continues to threaten her negative face. Through this proposal, he intends to bring her within his sphere of influence and manipulation. It is assumed that every woman needs love in marriage. Marzouk trails Firdaus to her apartment and forces himself in and takes out a knife, threatens her negative face since he barges in on her, encroaches into her own territory.

Firdaus uses interrogatives and declaratives as protest markers, and blunt face threatening acts to threaten both Marzouk's positive and negative faces in C12, C14, C24 and C26 respectively.

In C18, Firdaus resolves to leave behind her old life but in C19 Marzouk appears at her door uninvited. He protests her decision through employment of interrogatives, which threatens her negative face. He comments adversely on the subject matter raised in C21 and threatens her positive face since both of them know that her work is not a decent trade. However, in C22, C24 and C26, Firdaus maintains her negative face, asserts her right which should not be abused by anyone using interrogative and declarative statements. But in C27, Marzouk continues to question her acclaimed rights and freedom, uses retorting statements to make a fool of Firdaus, declarative statement to assert his position and blunt face threatening acts to cow her into agreement. He calls her a prostitute, a tag which Firdaus is not even ashamed to identify with. As she makes for the door,

Marzouk pushes her and shuts the door behind them, imprisoning her dreams/visions/aspirations. She feels caged and trapped. These non-verbal behaviours threaten Firdaus negative face. She continues to boost her negative face in C29 using declaratives in a gentle manner as she uses the verb 'intend' but Marzouk continues to threaten her negative face by using orders in C30. To assert her right to freedom of movement, she struggles with him and kills him eventually with the very knife he uses to threaten her.

### **Excerpt D**

This face-to-face conversation occurred between three participants: a prince, a prostitute and a policeman. This conversation takes place in the street, and later inside the hotel room of the Prince. Firdaus meets an Arab Prince as she hits the streets immediately after killing the pimp, Marzouk, in her apartment and abandons his body there. They negotiate and eventually agree on a price for her service. The prince pays her but she tears the notes into shreds. His interrogations land him a slap from Firdaus. She wants to repeat the slap again but he screams and the police arrives the scene. A police man queries Firdaus further to know her true identity. Then, they arrest her, put steel hand cuffs around her wrists and lead her off to prison. There she is kept in a room where the windows and doors are always shut. Eventually, they condemn her to death by hanging.

- Prince: "Come with me." D1
- Firdaus: "You cannot pay my price, it's very high." D2
- "I accept." D3
- "I am not a prostitute. But right from my early days my father, my uncle, my husband, all of them, taught me to grow up as a prostitute." D4

“He never taught me to kill. He left me to learn it alone as I went through life.” D5

Prince: “Did life teach you to kill?” D6

“And have you killed anybody yet?” D7

“I cannot believe that you are capable of killing anything, even a mosquito.” D8

Firdaus: “I might not kill a mosquito, but I can kill a man.” D9

“Now you can believe that I have slapped you. Burying a knife in your neck is just as easy and requires exactly the same movement.” D10

“Perhaps now you will believe that I am perfectly capable of killing you, for you are no better than an insect, and all you do is to spend the thousands you take from your starving people on prostitutes.” D11

Prince: “Don’t let her go. She’s a criminal, a killer.” D12

Firdaus: “I am a killer, but I’ve committed no crime. Like you, I kill only criminals.” D13

Firdaus: “For me the feats of kings and princes are no more than crimes, for I do not see things the way you do.” D14

Police man: “You are a criminal” D15

“And your mother is a criminal” D16

Firdaus: “My mother was not a criminal. No woman can be a criminal. To be a criminal one must be a man.” D17

Police man: “Now look here, what is this that you are saying?” D18

Firdaus: “I am saying that you are criminals, all of you: the fathers, the uncles, the husbands, the pimps, the

lawyers, the doctors, the journalists, and all men  
of all professions.” D19

Police man: “You are a savage and dangerous woman.” D20

Firdaus: “I am speaking the truth. And the truth is savage  
and dangerous.” D21

(P.106 – 110)

In D1, the Prince uses direct imperative to make sexual advances at Firdaus just to show the asymmetrical relation between them, thus threatens both her positive and negative faces. She overtly rejects his invitation, threatening his negative face. She indirectly underrates his ability which is quite insulting, and in D21, she uses a declarative sentence to state the obvious, that is her resolve not to be impeded on but treated with dignity and respect. Firdaus later changes her mind and accepts his sexual advances at the detriment of her negative face in D3.

After sleeping with the Prince, he pays her but Firdaus snatches the notes (a whole sheaf of bank notes) from his hands and tears them up into little pieces with a pent-up fury because he keeps asking her unnecessary questions which threaten her negative face. This non-verbal act of tearing the notes, threatens the Prince’s positive face. In D4, Firdaus refutes/denies his claims, uses a declarative statement to boost her positive face. She blames her bastardized public self-image on the men in her life, and by extension, the Prince. Thus, she assumes a ‘No Taking Responsibility’ stance. However, the Prince uses interrogatives in D6 and D8, to dig deep into the secret of her life. His consistent rejection of Firdaus’ claims is borne out of misconception of Firdaus’ identity which is informed by her previous non-verbal threat of tearing the Prince notes he uses to pay her. This behavior confuses him that he tends to reason that Firdaus is truly a Princess and not a prostitute because prostitutes go for the money. Her



carriage/demeanor as well deceives him and he does not know that the time he meets Firdaus is a wrong one because she ceases to even value the money, and life itself. In D5, Firdaus embarrasses her positive face, states emphatically that she is a murderer. And to get him to believe her, slaps him. This non-verbal act threatens his positive and negative faces. He is at the verge of receiving a second slap but he screams for help from the police who rescues him. In D11, Firdaus continues to issue threat to the Prince, calls him an insect, questions his sanity since he uses his starving people's money on prostitutes. She threatens his positive and negative faces because as a Prince, he is not supposed to descend into low life; he is supposed to be considerate and much more responsible than going awhoring. His non-verbal act of screaming gives him away as a weakling, and threatens his positive face. The Prince uses imperative/directives on the Police whom he controls. He resorts to global label, calling her a criminal and killer just to tarnish Firdaus' image.

Upon interrogation by the Police, Firdaus, in D14, admits she is a killer just like the Police. She deploys humour to present a serious issue. She threatens her negative face, and by enacting comparison strategy which she uses to comically compare her work with those of the Police, she threatens the Police positive face as well. She makes caricature of the Police force for not doing their duty. Instead of identifying the Prince as a criminal, they are busy protecting him because of his wealth and influence.

In D16, Firdaus threatens the positive face of the Prince, and by extension Kings and princes, equates their feats to crimes. But in D17, the Police man uses blunt face threatening act (a declarative) to threaten Firdaus' positive face. He continues to abuse her mother by calling her a criminal too in D18. This is to tarnish her in-group identity/public self-esteem. This calls to question the crop of police men we have in our society these days; men who

are morally bankrupt, men who lack discipline in themselves, men who are debased and insane and lack dignity.

In D19, Firdaus threatens the Police man, and by extension all men, calling them criminals. But the Police man in D20 commands her using an imperative just to threaten her negative face. Firdaus, in D21, uses blunt face threatening act committed bald on-record strategy, emphatically stated to accuse all the men: the father's, the uncles, the husbands, the pimps, the lawyers ... all men of different professions. However, the Police man retaliates in D22, resorts to using global label to deface her - 'You are a salvage and dangerous woman'. This declarative is a face threatening act spoken in clear and plain expression to convey the intended threat fully.

## **Discussion of Findings**

From the above analyses, there is a preponderance of employment of bald on-record strategy (complaints, confrontations/interruptions, 'No Taking Responsibility' stance, accusations, aggressive affronts, diminishing strategy, interrogatives as protest marker), all of which are intentionally enacted except for one where it is incidental, by the interlocutors in the dialogic sample excerpt. Both interactants use various strategies of positive (offer promise, do unsolicited favour, disclosure strategy, etc.) and negative (off-record through giving hints/hedging, mild protest/rejection of offer) politeness. Also, we observe that interlocutor threaten their own face through self-humiliating/effacing behaviours. In addition, we also recorded face threat to government of the day, an absent participant in the discourse with no representative.

**FTAs, Language of Aggression and Its Implication for African Values and Crises in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

What constitutes African culture and identity may not be well articulated because some notions about it are off-record while some have been contaminated while some other ones are borrowed from other cultures and infused in the present African culture. According to Tchindang, Bopda and Ngamgne (2008), the identity of a people is common to members of the group and is expressed in the form of rules, norms, values and language. In communication and other forms of social experiences, members of the group enact their identity (i.e. norms, values, etc). A people's identity is not separate from their being or behaviour hence this paper investigates discourse patterns of African characters in the face of crises.

Excerpt A, which presents the conversations between Firdaus and Bayoumi, seems to present a normal situation in which the male interreactant offers to help a helpless girl. But bearing in mind that the interlocutors are maintaining some level of moral order it will be seen that Bayoumi employs language of aggression which violates moral orders. Moral orders comprise evaluative beliefs which are socially grounded and linked to a set of moral evaluations (Parvaresh and Kadar, 2019). Non-observance of moral orders usually results in impoliteness or linguistic aggression. Baron and Richardson (1994) define aggression "as a behaviour that is intended to harm another individual who does not wish to be harmed." From the conversations in excerpt A, Firdaus repeatedly tell Boyoumi her ultimate goal: to find job in order to take care of her need. This is aligned to the social belief that one needs to work before one eats. But Bayoumi who is a member of the same society as Firdaus promises to help her. Bayoumi is aware that many graduates are roaming streets without job yet he promises to help Firdaus who hold secondary school certificate. To Firdaus who wants to maintain face/moral orders, Bayoumi 's fake offer is a kind of instrumental aggression which

its Intention is to receive sexual gratification. When Firdaus realises that offering sex cannot rescue her from unemployment she stepped on moral orders to reject Bayoumi's continued "take no responsibility" stance.

Similar "take no responsibility" stance and instrumental aggression is noticed in the conversations in excerpt B, that is the conversations between Firdaus' uncle (His Holiness) and his wife, in which they plan to get rid of Firdaus. Their verbal behaviour exhibits both reactive-inexpressive aggression and instrumental aggression. It is reactive aggression because the interlocutors exhibit hostility towards Firdaus. In the context of culture, His Holiness is Firdaus caregiver since Firdaus is supposedly an orphan, but he relegates this social responsibility and helps his wife to push Firdaus into matrimony. In African culture, African men are heads of the family and with strong voice and will maintain social/moral orders in the community and family. In Firdaus' case, His Holiness' voice is weak which gives his wife a complementary role of stronger voice and so husband and wife co-act in selling their dependent out in the name of marriage. Whereas Bayoumi bullies Firdaus for sexual gratification, her uncle and wife bully her for economic gain. Both Bayoumi and His Holiness blame government for their inactivity.

In excerpt C, Marzouk, the pimp stepped on moral orders to devalue Firdaus and to impose his trade on her. In African culture and context, it is generally believed that women need to be protected by men. It is based on this that Marzouk takes it upon himself to protect Firdaus even when Firdaus says she does not need his protection. Marzouk says women and their bodies are his capital which implies that the protection he offers is business. In African value system sex work is seen as a debased profession. Marzouk hedged his verbal abuse on Firdaus because he knows that her profession lacks social, political and religious security.

When Firdaus decides to look for meaningful job in order to avoid Marzouk's verbal and economic abuse, Marzouk objected, telling her that she cannot leave. This results in physical abuse; Firdaus stabs Marzouk to death.

In excerpt D, Firdaus assigns herself the role of aggressor of both physical and verbal aggression. She threatens the prince's face when she objects to sleeping with him. To boost his face, the prince accepts to pay three thousand. The destruction of the money she received from the prince is a threat to men's ego. When Firdaus says she can kill somebody and the prince doubts him, she slaps him.

In African culture and others cultures of the world women symbolise love, meekness and peace. But in recent times, there seems to be a paradigm shift. Women have now become perpetrators of evil. From the novel, we see how Firdaus' Psychology is being conditioned from childhood to adulthood. Her uncle who later becomes 'His Holiness' abused her sexually, Bayoumi and Marzouk abused her both physically and verbally. These cumulatively and decisively planned abuse make Firdaus to adopt a defensive mechanism which result is her adopting the role of the perpetrator of aggression.

## **Conclusion**

Using FTAs and language of aggression to examine *Woman at Point Zero*, this paper has established that people employ face threatening acts not only when they want to emotionally harm the 'other' but also when they want to benefit themselves. From Firdaus' experience, the study concludes that FTAs/language of aggression is part of everyday conversations and some of them are capable of causing psychological trauma and retaliatory acts that could result in cultural shifts. Also, from the data analysis, this paper has also established that every conversation experience is culture based and every interactant is

expected to show loyalty to their cultural identity and moral orders otherwise conflict would be generated. From Firdaus' experience, this paper also concludes that disregard to moral orders is one of the sources of conflict generation in social interactions. The effect of an aggressive behavior is that personal and social identity as well as people's relationships can be damaged. The study therefore recommends that government and some social agencies should organize value re-orientation programmes to sensitize citizens of their cultural identity. The study also recommends the use of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to appreciate *Woman at Point Zero*. It is believed that this will expose the psychological condition of women who are sexually and verbally abused.

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## **REPOSITIONING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE QUEST FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

Language serves as the most convenient and effective means of expressing one's feelings, thoughts and needs. Given the vital role that language plays in the society, this paper examines the relevance of indigenous languages in the realization of national development in Africa (Nigeria). The paper further, x-rays language policy and national development in Nigeria while emphasizing the need for repositioning indigenous languages policy for effective national development and fostering unity in the country. Among other recommendations, there is need for mental decolonization of Nigerians vis a vis our indigenous languages by releasing our minds of any feeling of inferiority in terms of language and culture.

**Keywords:** language, policy, development, indigenous.

**Keywords:** Language, Development and National Development

### **Introduction**

Language is a vital instrument of communication and an invaluable medium through which people and nations of the world interact. It is a social phenomenon concerning social and cultural notions of the people. Language however, is regarded as one of the most important aspects of the culture of any society past and present. The focus of this paper therefore, is to discuss issues relating to repositioning of indigenous language policy and the quest for national development. This will be done by explicitly explaining what language entails, development, national

development, language policy in Nigeria, repositioning process of indigenous languages for national development. Language has been the tool of change and a medium that facilitate the changes need outstanding policy backing. The non-utilization of indigenous language in reaching people has hampered development drastically in Nigeria. Policies and programme implementation in Nigeria have been affected because of the non-utilization of indigenous languages. This however, means that all programmes and policies can be successful only when the proper and effective communication medium is used. It is against this background that this paper x-rays indigenous language policy and the quest for national development in Nigeria.

### **Language**

Language is a principal source of group identity and the transmission of that identity to other groups of people. The word “language” connotes different things to different people. Language is so complex that its definition cannot be fully accounted for by any one wholly consistent and comprehensive theory. To Sapir (1921) cited in Jindal (2015) “ language is a purely human and non-instinctive methods of communicating ideas, emotions, desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols’. Language as Sapir rightly point out is human. Only humans possess language and all normal humans uniformly possess it. Animals do have a communication system but it is not a developed system. That is why language is said to be specie-specific and species-uniform.

Adejumobi (2009) is of the opinion that “language is human vocal sound, or it is the graphic representation of signs and symbols, gesticulation and signals for the purpose of communication. It is obvious that, Adejumobi’s definition centers on language as a means of expressing one’s thought. Hence, it has a great influence on human thinking as well as human interaction.

Similarly, Brumfit (1985) definition cited in Adeniyi (2011) is in line with Sapir's, view on language, and according to him, language could be said to mean the relationship between words and experience and it could be produced and received in form of the verbalization of experiences or experiences of verbalization. Verbalization of experiences occurs when we produce language by talking and writing, that is putting our reaction to experience within and around us into words. On the other hand, experiences of verbalization occur when we receive language by listening and reading, making sense out of the words of others and understanding them in their context of use.

### **Development**

Development is seen as a process which has to do with a gradual unfolding or growth of something. It is seen as progressive growth which eventually brings out the dominant capabilities of something that was already in existence into a well grown state. To Adediji (1992) development is a “constant and appreciable amelioration in economic, social, technological, political and cultural aspect of life of a people”. My interest in adopting the above concepts is not only because they are in line with the objectives of this paper but because they are also in line with Lado, (1964) claims that; “language is intimately tied to man's feelings and activity, it is bound up with nationality, religion, and the feelings of self. It is used for work, worship and play by everyone” The concept of development as conceived by this paper covers all areas such as human, economics, socio-political, scientific and technological progress.

### **National Development**

National development is seen by Awolokun (1995) as a minimum socio and political development as well as economic development in the building of a national identity. The ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people by providing

social amenities like quality education, water, good roads, access to health facilities etc accounts for the development of any nation. Education is basic to any form of development. Since we cannot talk of education without the language through which the concepts are expressed, English as the language of education in Nigeria contributes in no small way to the rapid development experienced in Nigeria. There is no doubt that Nigeria, as a country has benefited tremendously through the use of the English language to advance the development of the country. Several scholars have attested to the international value of English language.

### **Language Policy in Nigeria**

The Federal Government of Nigeria, conscious of the importance of the indigenous languages and the role these languages can play in the proper education of the Nigerian child for national cohesion; gives prominence to the issues of local languages in the National Policy on Education. According to Brann (2006), “Nigeria has what may be described as 70 dominant languages; i.e those spoken in each case by at least 100,000 of the country’s 589 LGAs about 362 (23%) are dominated by one of the three major languages: Hausa 156 (23%); Yoruba 120 (20%) and Igbo 85 (15%), about 104 (18%) are dominated by 13 of the dominant state languages, and about 113 (20%) by one of the 54 ‘local’ languages’. It is the position of this paper, that all the groups and individuals that constituted the population above, by right needs to have their language rights defined.

In an attempt to meet such right, the need for the position of indigenous languages have been diffusely expresses in various policy statements in Nigeria but have not been given absolute consideration. For instance, among the fundamental right of Chapter 4 of the 1999 constitution, is the right to use a language that will be understood by a majority who is not able to express his/herself on the official language-English; the right to education

in a familiar language which the NPE, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (2004) stipulates that the initial medium of instruction must be either the “mother tongue” or the language of the learner’s immediate environment.

The 1989 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria paragraph 38 clearly revealed the right to information in the various languages of Nigeria. It states that “every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference”. In a similar vein, Brann (2006) states “... the 19 state broadcasting services of the Second Republic followed a coordinated policy on this issue, by using:

- i. English as a link language and by choosing;
- ii. Several ‘state languages’ for newscasts as well as;
- iii. a large number of features for cultural programmes in all together over 100 Nigerian languages.

In addition, issues relating to procedures for summoning and resolving House of Assembly issues; the constitution of the FRN Chapter 4, Part V Section 97 states that:

The business of the House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English, conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the state as the House may be resolution approve.

The above extract, by implication means that language policy in Nigeria contains clearly and lucidly decorative statements. It is quite obvious that the language policy has not been adequately applied right from independence to date. This is an indication that the policies stated above lack implementation. Hence, any society where indigenous languages are not developed due to ineffective planning and nonchalant attitude of those in control of the affairs will certainly be a failure in all initiatives designed for the people

and the country, no matter how important it may be to the people and their country (Hisham, 2010).

The National Language Policy as contained in the National Policy on Education (1981 revised) provides for Nigerians the opportunity to be able to read and write in three or more ethnic languages thus, enabling them to share experiences with other communities thereby enhancing national unity. The document provides among others as follows:

- (a) the full integration of the individual into the community. Section I Para. 9 (j) every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment.

Section II Para 14 (c) “Government shall ensure that the medium of instructions is principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community”.

From the above provision, it is crystal that the government has made good provision for the development of the local languages. This is in the belief that each language group should be allowed or even encouraged to develop to its full capacity so as to be able to contribute its own quota to the development of the Nigerian state.

### **Indigenous Languages and the Quest for National Development**

According to Elugbe (1990) one of the ways through which a country is said to be developed is when it is united. It is quite agreed that indigenous languages are rich and effective in reaching its people. It is a raw material that brings about effective changes in the perception of individual. If a nation like Nigeria wants her citizens to imbibe/inculcate patriotism to the ideals of the country and at the same time, reorient their attitude and making them believe in themselves, it should use indigenous languages

because the indigenous languages have the criteria and qualifications of doing the jobs. Language been the key to people's heart and psychology can only be successful through appropriate and effective application. Adesanya (2009) points out that, '... for local government needs a new reorientation, a new philosophy, a new mindset in our dressing, manner of approach, relationship with government and neighbours... (to) produce the best citizens in Nigeria". From Adesanya's view, it can be deduced that development entails "cultural reorientation". Hence, to achieve national development is to use language that contains cultural values of the people, which is in turn implicit and explicit on their indigenous languages. In the same vein, Oluwole (2009) in Ojola (2010) maintains that "... parents should inculcate the habit of ...teaching their wards...their mother tongue so that culture will not be lost in the process".

Indigenous languages may be a catalyst for national consciousness and development. This can be done by using its communicative potentials to nurture and sustain the collective aspirations of a group. Similarly, the child learns best in his/her MT because it is a medium through which he acquires language and cultural skills. It is also a powerful means of building emotional and cognitive functioning of the child (Agomo, 2000). For this same reason, indigenous languages are powerful instruments for social mobilization and participation in national issues.

National development is a multidimensional process that involves economic, social and political systems. As a matter of fact, language and national development are partners in progress. Hence, the Federal Government of Nigeria acknowledges language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion (NPE: 9). this informs the inclusion of Nigerian languages in the nation's educational curriculum.



The development and growth of the society cannot be separated from languages which link the people together. With regards to indigenous languages and national development, Owolabi (2006) remarks as follows:

- i. That the use of Nigeria's native language, particularly in specialized domain is a *sine qua non* for national development.
- ii. That the rapid and genuine technological, political, social and economic empowerment of the vast majority of Nigerians so as to enable them to utilize scientific and technological knowledge in creating wealth, and to contribute meaningfully to national development, can only be possible through the media of their own native languages.

Relatively, Tarugarira (2009) maintains that language like seeds needs to be planted, watered and weeded before it matures and bears fruits. According to him:

For as long as the medium of instruction in Africa schools remains dominantly foreign language, there can be no remarkable self-propelled development... There is no country in the world which has attained advanced technology by depending on a foreign language while looking down upon its own indigenous languages. No education can be adequate in a situation where the mother tongue is false, shallow or trivial.

The above claim, reveals that the relevance of and importance of indigenous languages in the various aspects of the national development such as education, socio-economic, political, cultural and technological development cannot be ever-emphasized. Countries like Malaysia and Singapore have dictionaries and other reference literature for medicine, science

and commerce and at least two of their indigenous languages are equally recognized as English (Tarugarira, 2009:194).

The use, study and development of the indigenous languages has tremendously improved via the information and communication technology (ICT) especially the major ones (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) as well as their relevance in education, social interaction, preservation of culture and in the overall national development. Example, information relating to any Nigerian language can easily be stored, sourced or disseminated through the appropriate website in the internet. This has in turn boosted the efforts of linguistic scholars who have been relentless in their efforts to ensure proper development of the indigenous languages. Similarly, Tarugarira (op.cit) maintains that:

Unless we develop our own languages, we will continue to be only consumers of technologies made by other countries which use their own indigenous languages. Language is central in self identity, self actualization which are important intangibles in building a confident and innovative people who can be agents of national development.

Language is conceptual thinking. Linguistic system plays an important role in the development of conceptual thinking. Research findings in psycholinguistics tend to suggest that children generally have greater control over their indigenous language through which they have their first contact with their homes, families, villages, peers and friends, and which they also have the opportunity to learn from and improve upon through these same source. They interact, sleep and dream in these languages. Hence, indigenous language constitutes a major medium of socialization in Nigeria. The various ethnic

nationalities must be integrated into the collective consciousness of the society for effective social mobilization or reorientation.

### **Recommendations**

From the discussion above, it is crystal to proffer the following recommendations as a way forward to repositioning the Nigeria indigenous languages in order to enhance their roles in national development. Hence, the following are the recommendations for the study:

- i. Nigerians should develop a positive attitude towards the use and study of our indigenous languages. This is because language is a cultural heritage which is indispensable in social interaction and national integration.
- ii. Government should ensure that adequate and relevant books and other learning materials for the indigenous languages are provided in the schools so as to enhance their study.
- iii. Indigenous languages should be used to ensure effective participation of people in politics, religious functions and otherwise considering the multilingual nature of our society.
- iv. Relatively, both the teachers and students of Nigerian indigenous languages should be adequately motivated so as to boost their morale in the teaching and learning of the languages.
- v. More importantly, the teaching and learning of Nigerian languages should be made compulsory in Nigeria schools including the nursery and primary schools. This will enhance the status of the language.
- vi. Parents should encourage their children to speak their local languages as it is said ‘charity begins at home’.

## Conclusion

The relevance of indigenous languages to national development cannot be overemphasized. The stand of this paper therefore, is that Nigerian should embrace their indigenous languages at the expense of their official language. The much talk about development in Nigeria will ever remain a mirage if our indigenous languages are relegated to the backdrop. Indigenous language is a powerful factor for unity and development that promotes the felling of oneness, progress and national consciousness. The teaching and learning of the indigenous languages as subjects as well as the medium of instruction will place the languages above all other languages. There is need for mental decolonization of Nigerians vis a vis our indigenous languages by releasing our minds of any feeling of inferiority in terms of language and culture. Finally, the paper does not in any way intend to suggest that the English languages is inferior or incapable of performing economic, social and political functions like the indigenous languages.

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