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DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE OF ÍGALA FEMALE NAMES

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Abstract

This paper examines the structural patterns of Ígálà female names. It provides insights into the patterns and meanings embedded in these names, emphasizing their role as a reflection of Ígálà identity. Igala has a rich naming tradition that reflects the community history, values and social norms. Primary and secondary data were both used in this research and the primary data were elicited through oral interviews while the secondary data were collected from existing literatures. The data were analyzed using the descriptive method. This study establishes that Ígálà like every other language has female names and these names have their distinct structures. This study reveals that some Ígálà Female names demonstrate some of the features of Noun phrase structurally, some of the names appear as sentences as well as negative statements. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the Ígálà language and culture.

Keywords: Ígálà, female names, Structure of Ígálà female names

Introduction

Names are seen as well-defined nominals that express the speaker's presumption that their audience can pick out whom the speaker is referring to. Gegg-Harrison & Tanenhaus, (2016), for instance, posit “in order to refer to someone by the use of a name, speakers must believe that their addressee knows about the link between the name and the intended referent. Personal names, apart from acting as channels of communication, can perform various functions and purposes. A personal name, in particular, can be seen as a label by which an individual human being is identified and differentiated from others. Kotilainen (2012) reveals that names help in understanding and comprehension of oneself and one's social role as a member of a society and has always performed a key role in building individual's identity.

In agreement with Kotilainen, Achenreiner and John (2003) aver that the main purpose of naming is to provide a symbolic system of identification. Analogously, Agyekum (2006) contends that “naming can be considered as a universal cultural practice; every human society in the world gives names to its newborns as tags majorly as a means of identification. Olatunji, et al, (2015) support this by stating that a name is what somebody or something is called, it is a term or phrase by which somebody or something is known and distinguished from other people or things.

Names are classified as masculine, feminine or neuter through the term gender. Ígálà names like any other Africans are classified based on the circumstances surrounding a child's birth, including spiritual beliefs, social context, parental emotions and often reflect blessings or significant events that occurred at the time of birth. According to Francoise (2015), two types of gender marking occur cross-linguistically: grammatical gender and natural gender. He further clarifies that grammatical gender determines gender agreement between words, while individual words carry natural gender information. A good example is exhibited in French. Here, the articles that co-occur with nouns must agree with respect to gender. This is not the case in English. Instead of imposing gender agreement on occurring words, English demonstrates natural gender agreement which manifests only in third-person singular pronouns and a few words like prince/princess and actor/actress. Though, gender is marked in many languages, some languages do not classify nouns or pronouns in terms of gender. Ígálà is considered an example of such a language; it classifies pronouns in terms of person and number but not on the basis of gender. Though it is true that gender is not a general property of Ígálà nouns, however gender is differentiated in traditional names given to women.

The study of names has been receiving a lot of scholarly attention from different fields of study including linguistics. Linguists have realized that linguistic study of names provides sociocultural and linguistic component (morphology, syntax, phonology and others) within the language, both for researchers and indigenous speakers of the language. Despite the wealth of literature on names in other languages and Ígálà, female names in the language are yet to receive the desired attention. Most works such as "The Socio-Cultural Import of Ígálà Names" by E. A. Journals explores how Ígálà names are assigned based on spiritual and historical-social circumstances of birth, parental emotions, and other factors, emphasizing that these names often embody the individual's destiny (Ugbem, 2014).

Ígálà language: Classification, Structure, and the Cultural Significance of Naming

The Igala language is classified under the Yoruboid branch of the Niger-Congo language family, one of the largest and most wide spread language families in West Africa. It is closely related to languages such as Yoruba, Edo, and Idoma, indicating its shared historical and cultural connections with these groups (Williamson & Blench, 2000). The Igala language is tonal, with three primary tonemes: high, mid, and low, which affect meaning. For example, words with identical spellings can have entirely different meanings depending on the tone. Ígálà has a subject-verb-object (SVO) word order. Ígálà language has a rich vowel system consisting of seven vowels and it also employs prefixes and suffixes in word formation.

Ígálà is predominantly spoken in Kogi State, Nigeria, particularly in the eastern region of the Niger-Benue confluence. Its speakers are concentrated in the nine Local Government Areas of Kogi East Senatorial District, which includes Ankpa, Dekina, Idah, Omala, Olamaboro, Ofu, Igalamela, Ajaka and Ibaji. Additionally, smaller Ígálà -speaking communities are found in

neighbouring states such as Benue, Delta, and Edo. The geographical positioning of the Ígálà people makes them an integral part of the cultural and historical trade routes between northern and southern Nigeria.

The Igala people like most other African people attach importance to names and naming system. According to Egbunu (2016), in Ígálà cultural thought pattern, names are more than mere tags or nomenclatures, articles of recognition and identification. They are very significant in a person's life. One's name is likened to a person's spiritual good or evil garment that he/she unconsciously wears (Egbunu 2016). In Ígálà traditional setting, names are given to children during traditional naming ceremonies. They do this with utmost care so as to reflect the historical import or epoch, social relevance or tie, spiritual significance or ancestral link, and even the moral motivation or boost involved in the various circumstances associated with the birth of the child in question. The birth of a child in the Igala traditional society is greeted with great joy. This is due to the importance attached to childbearing and the gift of children.

On the day of the ceremony, the members of the extended family gather from all over the villages and hamlets at the family compound. The diviner who consults the oracles is then contacted to disclose the mind of the ancestors in respect of the appropriate name to be given to the child. The diviner could be there in person or must have been contacted earlier before the disclosure of the name at this gathering. In most cases, the parents of the child usually suggest the names, bearing in mind the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child. The diviner then picks any of such names that appeals to the ancestors. In this manner, the diviner is supposed to reveal to them which among their deceased relatives or ancestors re-incarnated.

According to Okwoli (2013). The Ígálà believe in re-incarnation. ... They believe that children are ancestors reborn on earth. When a new child is born, it is through divination that people know who has been re-incarnated. Once the ancestor who was reborn is identified, that particular ancestor becomes the spiritual godfather or godmother of the new child. Names in Ígálà could be given by indices of even a wish or an emotional expression and sometimes to immortalize a loved one. In this case, through people's names, their family or clan roots could be traced (Egbunu, 2016). Names are therefore important vehicles of cultural identity. In other words, such names link them to their past or future. It is strongly believed in Ígálà culture that bad fortune or good fortune lies within names. They can make or mar a person's whole life and destiny. It is believed that names have the propensity of spelling a person's fame or framing his/her "hell" in this life and even to some extent, the hereafter. It is on this note that Egbunu (2016) states that name creates some space for the bearer, binds the fellow with not only the living members of the community but even the ancestors and the yet-to-be-born members of the community.

Research Methodology

Data used for this research include both primary and secondary data. The primary data were elicited through field research from native speakers

within the Igala speaking communities in Kogi State. Two native speakers assisted in conducting the oral interview. The secondary data were sourced from a body of literature in the field of onomastics documented by other scholars. The participants were randomly selected, covering the Igala speaking communities in Kogi State. Their names and the names of their children were collected; with further enquiry on the circumstances surrounding the preferred choice of name. The study was conducted using quantitative research approach within a descriptive linguistic framework.

Data presentation and Analysis

Structure of Ígálà Female Names

This section is divided into: Ígálà female names as nouns, as common nouns, as abstract nouns, names as verbs, names as adverbs and so on.

Ígálà Female Names as Nouns

Ígálà female names as nouns are presented as follows. However, not all the female names are presented here. Even though the names are nouns, there are names that exhibit specific features that could be easily identified as nouns owing to their structural make up or components.

Ígálà Female Names as Common Nouns

1

- i. *Íyé*– ‘mother’
Mother
- ii. *Àjànìgò*- ‘spectacle’
- iii. *Àjífà* – ‘silver’
Silver
- iv. *Òdódó* – ‘flower’
Flower

Like common nouns that refer to names of objects which can be seen and touched, Ígálà female names in this group are names of objects or things that could be seen and touched given to female children as names. The names here are given particularly for distinct qualities of such an object as hoped to be reflected in the life of the child named.

Ígálà Female Names as Abstract Nouns

2

- i. *Uyò* – ‘joy’
- ii. *Àlì* – ‘character’
- iii. *Ényò* – ‘blessing’
- iv. *Íbè*- ‘wisdom’
- v. *Éjúrà*- ‘Pleasure’

Like abstract nouns that refer to names of things we cannot see physically or touch, Ígálà female names in this group are names of things we cannot see or touch given to female children. These names are expressions of the family’s desire or wish for the child.

Ígálà Female Names as Verbs

3

- i. *Dúbí (Éné Dúbí Qjó)* “No one exists after God”
Behind (who back God)
- ii. *Jènyú (Ujènyú)* -“praise him”
Praise him (praise)
- iii. *Chúbíyó (ChúbíyóQjó)* – “lean on God”
Put back on (put back on God)
- iv. *Àtèkò – (Àtèkò Qjó)* –“Help from God”
Help (Help God)
- v. *Kédònó (Kédònójó)* “Have faith in God”
Believe (believe God)
- vi. *Chénémí (Qjóchénémí)* – “God is mine”
Be my person (God be my person)
- vii. *Urà (Urà ójó)* – “Enjoyment from God”
Enjoy (Enjoy God)

From the data (3i-vii) there are no female names as single verbs. The Data cited here are names shortened as verbs from names as verb + noun compounds. Names in this group are more pronounced in spoken form than in the written form.

Ígálà Female Names as Compound nouns (noun + noun)

4

- i. *Íyé-òmà - Íyòmà* - Reincarnation of mother / mother has reincarnated
Mother child
- ii. *Qmà - àtà - Qmàtà* - Her father’s Daughter
Child father
- iii. *Qmà- iyé- Qmàyé* – “sister”
Child mother
- iv. *Iko-ójó-Ikójó* “God’s time”
Time God
- v. *Qmà- ójó -Qmójó-* “God’s child”
Child God
- vi. *Ené- ójó- Enéjó* –“ God’s person”
Person God

From Data (4i-vi), we have instances of Ígálà female names as nominal compounds. Two nouns are combined to form the names. In the nominal compounds one of the nouns gains prominence and hence serves as the head word in the nominal compound. From the instances in view, the initial noun or terminal noun could serve as head word depending on how the names are structured. In data 4i, we have *Íyé* as head word of the nominal compound, in data 4ii *Qmà* as head words. Data 4v to vi have their head words in the Final position. Hence, *ójó* that appears at the final position serves as head word to the nominal compound.

Worthy of note in the nominal compounds is the syntagmatic relationship that holds between the nouns. To derive a name in Ígálà, the initial noun loses its terminal vowel so as to align properly with the second noun.

Therefore, nouns in this group go through vowel elision to derive a name. This is demonstrated in data 4(i to vi). In i, ‘e’, ii, ‘a’, iii, ‘a’, iv, ‘o’, v, ‘a’ and in vi, ‘e’ are all lost in the elision process in the respective names.

Female Names as Noun Phrases

The structure of the noun phrase consists minimally of a noun or noun substitute as a pronoun. It therefore refers to a group of words consisting of a noun and its modifier. Ígálà female names demonstrate some of the features of a noun phrase as observed in the data. In addition to the data presented here, examples of Ígálà female names under compound could equally suffice as examples of names as NP.

5

- i. *Oná+ègà–Onègà* “Female child born on the way to/from stream or near a stream/river”
- ii. *Ugánè + Qjó-UganQjó* – ‘God’s light’
Light God
- iii. *Qmá +iyè– Qmáye* – ‘sister’
Child mother
- iv. *Unèkwu+ Qjó- UnèkwQjó-* ‘God’s will’
Will God
- v. *Iko- Qjó- ‘God’s Time’*
Time God
- vi. *Ényò+ Qjó -EnyQjó* - ‘God’s goodness’
Good God

The data presented in examples (5ii–vi) demonstrate the existence of Ígálà female names as Noun Phrases. Ígálà female names as noun phrase do not consist of modifiers. The names in this group are nouns paired up with the initial noun losing its vowel at the terminal position to elision so as to form a name. This is experienced in all the examples used in this group. In example 5i, ‘a’ in *Qná* is lost to elision so as to form the name *Onègà*. The same process is experienced in example 5ii where *Ugánè* lost ‘e’ so as to pair up properly with *Qjó*. Haven gone through the phonological process (elision), the name *UgánQjó* is formed. In example 5iii,, the noun *lyè* lost the vowel ‘i’ to allow it pair with *Qmá*. Hence, we have *Qmáye* where ‘U’ is lost from the noun *Unèkwu* to form *UnèkwQjó* in example 5iv. In example 5v, vowel ‘o’ is lost in *Ényò* to form the name *ÉnyQjó*

Female Names as Statements

Ígálà female names in this group demonstrate the features of a sentence. Structurally, the names as sentences have subject, verb and object or complement as the case maybe. This assertion is demonstrated in Data (6 i to ix) below:

6

- i. *Qjó+-ágwonè+olá — Qjóágwonèolá* “God bathes someone”
God bathes body
- ii. *Ukwu+te+nọ– Ukwutẹnọ* - ‘death has left you’
Death left you

- iii. *A+nyájá – Anyájá* – ‘A girl born on the way to market or born on market day’
One that goes to market
- iv. *Éné +má +lí- Énémálí-* ‘The one who directs people on the right path, righteous child’
Who did not see
- v. *À+má +máh: Àmámáh* – ‘The one who knows, knows, technical person’
He know knows
- vi. *Ọjó + má - Ọjó má* – ‘God knows’
God know
- vii. *À+lè+lò – Àlèlò* – ‘the one who left returned’
Person go come
- viii. *À+chè+ènyò- Àchènyò-* ‘he/she that does good’
Person do good
Person that do good

The above Data show Ígálà female names as statements. Data 6i has SVO sentence structure. It is a sentence reduced into a name. The data in data 6ii, has the structure SVO. However, the verb built into the verbal elements the object. Here, the verb should have been to know but as a transitive verb that requires the action of the subject passed to an object, ‘ẹ’ takes the place of ‘o’ to realize the structure SVO. Data (6iii and v) all have the same structure of SVO. Data (6iv,vi and vii) have intransitive verbs. Therefore, they have SV as their structures.

Female Names as Negative Statements

A name as a negative statement indicates negation, denial or lack of consent. A negative statement contains negation words such as not, neither or nothing. This is demonstrated in 7 below.

7

- i. *Má+kédọ̀nò +n -Mákédọ̀nòn* – ‘not to be trusted’
3PL believe NEG
- ii. *Àbí+má+jẹ+n -- Àbí májẹn* ‘in the habit of giving birth but not surviving’
3SG did eat NEG

Names in this category are sentences reduced into names. To show negation, the names have the suffix ‘n’ attached to them. To show negation is not only a product the suffix ‘n’ attached to the names but is determined by the tone used on a given syllable of the names. For instance. Data 7i, *mákédọ̀nòn* shows negation with the suffix ‘n’ and the rising tone on *má*. If it were a positive situation, it would have a falling tone *mà* without the suffix ‘n’ attached to it. The same situation in Data 7i applies to example 7ii. Nevertheless, such female names are rare in Ígálà.

Female Names as Questions

There are basically two types of questions. They are polar questions or Yes/No questions and wh-questions or content questions. Polar or yes/no questions are different from WH-questions. This is because WH-questions are used to seek

for content information relating to persons, things, facts, time, place, manner and other relevant information. The data on Ígálà female names demonstrates the existence of WH-questions with the WH-operator occurring at sentence initial position. Consider the following examples:

8

- i. *Éné + má + kwu + n?* - *Énémákun* – ‘Who will not die?’
Who 3SG die NEG
- ii. *Éné + ché + Qjó?* - *ÉnéchéQjó?* – ‘who is God?’
Who 3SG do God
- iii. *Éné + má + oná?* – *Énémoná* – ‘who knows tomorrow or future?’
Who 3SG know tomorrow
- iv. *Éné + á + bá?* - *Éné + á + bá?* – ‘who can stop?’
Who 3SG stop
- v. *Éné + dábu + Qjó?* - *ÉnédábuQjó?* – ‘who is like God?’
Who 3SG like God
- vi. *Éné + dẹ + ubi + Qjó?* - *ÉnédubiQjó?* – ‘who is as great as God?’
Who 3SG is back God

Conclusion

It has been established in this study that Ígálà like other languages has female names. These names, like words have their distinct structures. Also, the study demonstrated that Ígálà female names as nouns, exhibit some characteristics of nouns. It revealed some instances of names as common nouns, proper nouns, and abstract nouns. Like common nouns, Ígálà female names in this group are names of objects or things that could be seen and touched, given to female children as names. Some of the names appear as negative statements. To show negation, the names have the suffix ‘n’ attached to them. In addition to the suffix, negation is determined by the tone used on a given syllable of the names. For instance, data 7i, *mákedonon* negation, the names have suffix ‘n’ negation, and the rising tone on *má*. If it were a positive situation, it would have a falling tone on *mà* without the suffix ‘n’ attached to it. The data on Ígálà female names also demonstrates the existence of WH-question with the WH-operator *en* occurring at sentence initial position.

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EMERGING ISSUES IN BIBLE TRANSLATION INTO NIGERIAN LANGUAGES: INSIGHTS FROM SELECTED TRANSLATION PROJECTS

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Abstract

In recent times there has been an explosion of Bible translation into Nigerian languages. This explosion has been characterized by the increased involvement of local translation worker, unlike the earlier translation works that was dominated by expatriates. Although the increase in Bible translation activities and the increased involvement of local translators are positive developments, they come with the risk of less rigorous background sociolinguistic research, and the possibility that language politics among Nigerian ethnic nationalities and the attendant sentiments may percolate into the process of selecting languages to work on. There is therefore a need for an objective scholarly appraisal of the sociolinguistic dynamics involved. To this end, this article x-rays some critical sociolinguistic considerations that should guide the process of determining which Nigerian languages to translate the Bible into at a particular point in time. The article concludes, citing a number of specific instances, that some somewhat discomfiting Bible translation decision are being taken in Nigeria on the basis of unconvincing logic and sentimental grounds, leading to redundant or superfluous works which waste scarce resources. These include the Okun Bible, and ongoing translation projects in Kami, Gupa, Ọkọ and Ọsàyẹ́n. The article recommends the adoption of a central coordinating body to vet Bible translation decisions in Nigeria using strictly professional standard.

Keywords: Bible translation, local translators , Nigerian languages Okun Bible

Introduction

One of the core objectives of modern Christian proselytisation in Africa is the translation of the Bible into different languages. The spiritual objective is hinged on the notion that making the core Christian message available in all languages is critical to achieving what Christ commissioned the church to do in the instruction to make disciples of all nations. Traill (2019), alludes to a prevailing mantra in the Bible translation world which holds that people need the Bible in the language they sin in, and in their “heart language.” In line with this thinking, producing indigenous language translations of the Bible was a major prong in early missionary activities in Nigeria, and was the ultimate goal of early orthography development in major Nigerian languages (Are, 2018).

Today, there is an avalanche of highly motivated efforts towards translating the Bible into more Nigerian languages. As at 2022, twenty-seven Nigerian languages have full Bible translations (Vanguard Newspaper, 2022). Currently, 232 translation projects are in the pre-translation, preparatory stage (Tsar and Killam, 2024), while about 10 are in the completion stages (Bible society of Nigeria, 2024).

As efforts continue toward producing more and more Bible translations in Nigeria languages, it is clear to any discerning linguist that some issues have to be continually addressed. These include the choices of languages and dialects to work on, the matter of whether a translation is needed in the first place as well as the extent to which existing translation are actively used. It is imperative to address these issues because of the complexities associated with the language ecology of Nigeria which account for why even a basic matter such establishing the number of languages in Nigeria remain problematic. Continuing academic scrutiny of linguistic issues relating to past and ongoing Bible translation works in Nigeria could help complement the inputs of existing studies which are largely premised within proselytization sentimentalities and rhetoric. This current study objectively interrogates Bible translation decisions from the lens of relevant Sociolinguistic dynamics. This paper explains some sociolinguistic considerations that must inform bible translation decisions and highlight a few instances in Nigeria where some of these considerations appear not to have been considered. This is a process focused paper which dwells precisely on the aspect of the translation process where the choice of target languages is made. No translation product elements are interrogated.

The History of Bible Translations in Nigeria

The first indigenous language Bible, the Efik language Bible was produced 1868 (Warren-Rothlin, 2012) through the efforts of foreign missionaries. In 1888, the Yoruba Bible was published with very significant contribution from Samuel Ajayi-Crowther (Adamo, 2019). Ever since, twenty seven Nigerian language Bibles have been produced principally as a result of the works of the Bible Society of Nigeria and several other organisations such as the Nigeria Bible Translation Trust (NBTT), Language Development Facilitators (LDF), The Seed Company (TSC), Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT), International Bible Society (IBS) and CAPRO. These organisations operate on the basis of individual agenda though they have been known to often engage in collaborative work (Waren-Rothlin 2012). Today, the drive to produce Bibles in more Nigerian languages is going on at a breathtaking speed. As previously stated, there are up to 250 ongoing translation projects.

Proselytisers' Perspectives on the Imperative of Translating the Bible

The idea of presenting ancient Christian scripture in languages other than the original Classical Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek is an old one. There are several ancient efforts toward this, which include the Syriac translation of the Old Testament in the 2nd Century AD, and the Coptic, Gothic, Georgian, Armenian, Caucasian and Ethiopic Bibles, all produced between the 3rd Century AD and the 6th Century AD (Gray, 2018).

In Europe, an official Latin version of the Bible called the Vulgate was produced in the 4th and 5th century, and for quite a long time in Europe, all agitations to translate the Bible into other languages were ferociously resisted, but clandestine translation activities continued until the era of reformation which eventually led to breakthroughs like the momentous translations the King James English Bible (Gray, 2018).

All along, the driving principle behind translation efforts have been that the Christian message should be demystified and made freely available for people to access in their indigenous languages as a way of enhancing the reach of the gospel. Exponents of translation opine that rather than contaminate the sacred text (as those who resisted translation feared), Bible translation “Preserves the essence of Christianity as a religion without a fixed language, culture, or location. It empowers and yet relativises all languages and cultures, thereby furthering an equality in dignity among the speakers of all the languages of the world” (Kenmogne, 2022:112). This doctrine based on the indigenising principle, which relates to the view that people should be at home within their own culture as Christians, and that language is critical towards achieving this. This is because Bible translation in diverse languages “allows the languages that capture the sociocultural experience of a people to become the receptacle and vehicle of God’s message” (Kenmogne, 2022: 113). Kenmogne (2022) further argues that the critical factor why Christianity in North Africa did not survive the Arab invasion, and why early 15th Century missionary efforts in sub Saharan Africa failed was the absence of indigenisation via translations of the Bible into indigenous languages. On the contrary, the relative success of 19th century missionary efforts in Sub Saharan Africa could be largely attributed to linguistic indigenisation of the Bible and Christian liturgy.

With the above as the driving principle, the translation of the Bible into diverse languages is currently going on at a breathtaking rate, buoyed by the expansion of the faith in Africa and South America. As previously mentioned, in Nigeria alone, there are about 250 ongoing translation projects. Several questions would, naturally, arise in the mind of any linguist observing this trend. These would range from question regarding the accuracy of the orthography and translation, the dialect choices where standardisation is required, the vitality of the languages in question, the availability or otherwise of literacy in the languages concerned and so on. Indeed, the basic question of whether some language groups require or need the Bible in their languages/dialects is a germane one in the context of multilingualism and multiculturalism, where several persons and communities are able to function seamlessly across amorphous linguistic and cultural borders.

One cannot belittle the expertise of members of different Christian organisations involved in the myriads of efforts to translate the Bible into Nigerian languages. Indeed, some of the Linguists and translators working for these organisations have historically pioneered and strengthened studies of many Nigerian languages, and have contributed immensely to the development of orthographies. This article is simply an attempt to complement their efforts with some objective insights.

Principles and Standards in Choices of Target Languages

There are a number of principles based on Sociolinguistic considerations which this researcher believes should guide Bible translation decisions. For clarity, these principles are discussed in this section.

In a densely multilingual setting like Nigeria where there are hundreds of languages, it is simply not feasible to translate the Bible into all languages no matter the evangelistic fervor and enthusiasm of the translation workers. In view of this, informed decisions about choices of languages into which the Bible should be translated at any point in time must be made. Specific sociolinguistic and personnel considerations must guide such decisions as enshrined in articles eight and nine of translation principles and standards of the Forum of Bible Agencies International (FOBAIT, 2017).

In a situation where the goal is to reach as many people as possible with the Christian message, the number of speakers of the languages must be a critical consideration. This of course accounts for the existence of translations of the Bible in the major languages of Nigeria. The existing translations are generally in the most widely spoken languages, as obtainable on the YouVersion Bible AAp list. This includes Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Efik, Igala, Tiv, Gbayi, Berom, Fulfude, Urhobo and so on.

Giving that proselytization is committed strictly to winning converts into the Christian faith and ensuring the consistency of existing converts, resources that may achieve this are never considered wasted in Christian circles regardless of how paltry the success appears to be. This is a position clearly elucidated in Barnes (2005), using Christ's parable of the lost sheep as Biblical reference. However, where resources are not unlimited, as the case often is, it seems quite prudent to give immediate consideration to languages with wider reach before languages with limited reach.

This researcher firmly believes that language vitality is another factor that must be considered. This is often weighed in terms of its number of speakers, intergenerational transmission, and the use of the concerned language in various domains of society. There is a need to prioritise languages with vibrant communities of speakers to ensure the translation's long-term impact and sustainability. Where the language is critically endangered or even tittering precariously on the edge of becoming moribund, there will be no need to produce a Bible in it.

One must however observe that sometimes, having popular materials translated in threatened or endangered languages can be a measure towards reviving such a language. Indeed, some Bible scholars such as Rabali (2021) argue, using some fairly unconvincing theological arguments, that achieving language maintenance should be an ecclesiastical goal for Bible translators. However, one must emphatically state that the idea that language maintenance should be the objective of proselytisers is a very debatable idea.

Another factor that should be considered is whether the concerned languages have active literary/literacy traditions. There are languages for which orthographies exist but the speakers of the languages do not engage with written materials in the languages significantly. This could be due to the existence of

functional and acceptable alternative languages, the absence of any roles for the language beyond home use, and so on. It is even possible in some situations that very few members of the language group concerned are literate in such languages. In a situation like this, there are chances that Bible translations into such languages may only produce Bibles for the shelf which largely serve as artifacts until the languages concerned are allotted roles that encourage more active engagements with their writings.

The factor of language attitudes is also a critical consideration. Societal attitudes toward different languages can influence the responses of people to Bible translations. Such attitudes include the perceptions, preferences, and biases associated with each language within a multilingual community, and the accompanying language politics which must be navigated sensitively. For example, in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, Hausa Bibles should naturally suffice because the language is a lingua franca in the area. Indeed, the initial decision of foreign missionaries to concentrate on the use of Hausa Bibles in this area was premised on this practical consideration (Norton, 2018). However as Are & Adamo (2019) observe, the language politics emanating from religious suspicions has created some measure of hostility to Hausa, necessitating the production of Bibles in indigenous Middle Belt languages. Christian proselytisers have to be sensitive as much as possible to such challenges as this in Bible translation decisions.

Dialectological appraisals are also critical to making error proof Bible translation decisions. One of the abiding challenges of language listing in Nigeria is the difficulties involved in determining whether to list some linguistic systems as languages or as dialectal variations in a language continuum. In the context of these challenges, the correct picture of things must be accurately determined to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and consequent waste of scarce resources. Often, there is a lot of language politics involved among the concerned people, and as previously stated, the sentimentalities involved may be difficult to ignore. But the delicate balancing act between taking people's sentiments into cognisance and being practical must be deftly managed. This requires adequate community engagement with linguistic communities, language activists, and cultural stakeholders to understand their language needs, aspirations, and priorities. There must be robust collaborations and consultations to ensure that translation efforts align with community interests and values, while being practical at the same time. As a corollary to this, it must be noted that in Nigeria, communities are often in heavily multilingual environments and are often engaging code mixing, code-switching, and borrowing as well as other linguistic dynamics associated with language in contact phenomena. These issues are germane when selecting languages for translation to ensure linguistic authenticity and cultural integrity.

Finally, it is very important that as much as possible, the sentiments of the language users concerned must not be allowed to outweigh professional assessments, and must not absolutely dictate decision making. In the modern world where language rights are loudly and vociferously touted, members of some linguistic communities may be influenced by advocacies for the right to

access literature and cultural resources in one's own language, and may push this agenda in their engagements with Christian language workers on the field. But it is highly doubtful whether such right concerns should be the principal burden of persons trying to propagate their faith.

This article does not assume that Christian language workers are ignorant of the above principles and standards. Indeed, many of them are versatile, highly trained language experts who in many cases (as previously mentioned) have pioneered the study of many Nigerian languages and are sustaining fresh and continuing insights into the linguistic geography of Nigeria. In this regard, the enormous contributions of organisations like SIL, the Joshua project, Wycliffe Bible Translators and others to the study of Nigeria's Linguistic ecology cannot be over stated. Despite this, a number of observations in recent time seem to suggest that there is a need to add new voices in the fray of scholarly discourse on Bible translation decisions in Nigeria. This need is made more urgent by the increasing local involvement in these translation works. While this has accelerated progress beyond the pace that was feasible when the work was essentially foreign driven (Wycliffe Bible Translators, 2024), there is also the possibility that this development will increase the risk that local language-politics and sentimentalities would percolate into decision making. This is not a negative verdict on the competence of local language workers. It is a practical acceptance of the stark reality that people could be influenced consciously or subconsciously by prevailing sentiments that drive language-politics in their environment. Some recent specific instances of concern are discussed below.

Selected Instances of Worrisome Bible Translation Decisions in Nigeria

In 2022, the Bible Society of Nigeria announced its completion of what it referred to as the Okun Bible. The report which appeared in the Vanguard Newspaper on 2nd November, 2022 claimed that the Okun language was a language spoken in Kogi, Kwara and Èkìtì states in Nigeria. There are a number of serious problems with this development. First, those who sponsored this project must have been given the impression that there is indeed a language called Okun language. This is an absolute fallacy. The term 'Okun' is a general referent to a group of Yoruba dialects predominantly, but not exclusively found in Kogi State. The individual dialects included are Bùnù, Ìjùmú, Owé, Òwòrò and Yàgbà (Ilori and Are, 2021). The point must be made that these are individual dialectal variations within the Yoruba language continuum for which the existing version of the Yoruba Bible, written in Òyó dialect, have served without any complaint or hitch for years, since the Òyó dialect is completely intelligible in Okun communities and is taught in schools as is the case in all Nigerian communities where dialects of the Yòrùbá dialect continuum are spoken. Indeed, the Òyó dialect plays certain social roles in Okun communities. For example, it is often preferred in very formal contexts to the indigenous dialects (Metiboba, 2015). This is an indication that the Òyó dialect is quite at home in Okun communities. Indeed, as Are (2002) opines, the Okun dialects are actually in recession among the younger generation, many of whom prefer to communicate in the Òyó dialect. Another related issue worth interrogating is

the choice of the Owé dialect as the representation of the Okun dialect cluster which, as previously mentioned, comprise of five different dialects. Although these dialects are mutually intelligible (Arokoyo, 2007), there is no evidence anywhere that members of the other four dialect groups within the cluster would find Owé any more intelligible or structurally or pragmatically more accessible than the Ọ̀yọ́ variant in which a Bible translation has existed since 1884.

The question that naturally arises is obvious: what then was the pressing imperative responsible for the investment of scarce resources by the Bible Society of Nigeria into the production of the so called Okun Bible, particularly in the face of other more pressing translation needs? Some unobtrusive inquiry made by this researcher suggests that this project, which one can safely refer to as absolute travesty, may not be unconnected with influence peddling buoyed by sentimental considerations. Even if this was not the case, an inadequate understanding of the linguistic situation in the concerned parts of North East Yòrùbá land, or a decision to ignore them, must have influenced the prioritisation of this most unnecessary project.

Another curious case is the case of Kami and Gupa languages. Recently, this researcher came in contact with a group of highly enthusiastic and highly motivated Bible translators working to produce Bibles in these languages of Niger state, Nigeria. There are certain sociolinguistic information about these two language groups that raise doubt about the need to expend resources on the projects without further clarity on the linguistic dynamics in the linguistic environment in question. In the first place, these languages (Kami and Gupa), along with other languages like Dibo and Kakanda are mutually intelligible (Decker and Abraham, 2022). It is also important to note that the speakers of these languages often use Nupe extensively in their daily interactions (Decker and Abraham, 2022). One is tempted to ask whether there are any practical communication reasons why the existing Nupe Bible would not suffice for these groups of people. In addition, considering the mutual intelligibility between Kami and Gupa, one wonders whether it is expedient in the face of scarce resources to have separate Bible translations for these languages. The critical point here is that it is highly doubtful whether there is adequate sentiment free knowledge of the actual sociolinguistic dynamics of the concerned environment to warrant the ongoing translation efforts.

This researcher raised these issues with one of the partakers in the translation project. He explained that there were some deep emotional and spiritual benefits associated with reading scriptures in one's own native tongue, citing some anecdotal evidences to prove his point. The truth of the matter is that what makes a reading material in any particular language to resonate strongly with a person's cognition is not the factor of ancestry. It relates more with the language exposures of the persons concerned from childhood through puberty to adulthood. It is highly doubtful whether exact understanding of the linguistic exposures of the average Kami and Gupa person is available anywhere. The contradictions and inconsistencies in studies of these languages and their linguistic ecology is all too obvious if one considers the positions Blench (2012) and (Decker and Abraham, 2022). This researcher believes that

there is a need to look more closely into the role of Nupe as a dominant and pervasive language in this environment. Perhaps, it could be as entrenched if not more entrenched in the cognition of the concerned peoples than their native tongues, particularly among the more exposed and mobile younger generation. This possibility is a critical consideration toward determining whether the Nupe Bible can have a cross-linguistic utility in the environment in question, in which case one can raise questions about the need for new translations.

Another case in question is that case of Ọkọ and Ọsàyẹn, spoken in in Ogori and Magongo in Ogori-Magongo Local government area, Kogi State. These two language names are listed as languages belonging to the Ọkọ-Eni-Ọsàyẹn cluster in Blench (2020). One fact must be clearly stated about Ọkọ and Ọsàyẹn: they are precisely the same language, albeit having some minute and inconsequential dialectal variation. However, while the people of Ogori refer to the language as Ọkọ, the people of Magongo refer to it as Ọsàyẹn. The above is based on this researchers first-hand knowledge of the communities involves, and interviews of native speaker informants conducted for the purpose of this research.

There is a Website dedicated to the development of Ọkọ. The link to the site is www.okolanguage.com. The site often publishes regular updates on Bible translation work in Ọkọ, with indications that they are referring to the language spoken in both Ogori and Magongo. Interestingly, this researcher recently discovered that there is a parallel ongoing work by the Nigeria Bible Translation Trust which is dedicated to producing a Bible in Ọsàyẹn. These are works on the same language. But while one uses the term favoured in Ogori (Ọkọ), the other one, which is run from an office in Magongo, prefers the term Ọsàyẹn. This is a somewhat discomfoting situation, particularly when one considers the criticality of unified efforts to avoid unnecessary duplications and waste of resources, not to talk about the fact that the existence of active literacy in either Ọkọ or Ọsàyẹn is highly doubtful.

Concluding Remarks

The beauty of the goal of making the Bible available in all languages is not contended in this paper. One must reiterate the fact that the essence of the submissions herein is to lend a voice to the success of Bible translation efforts by highlighting the criticality of adequate sociolinguistic knowledge to avoid redundant or superfluous efforts that merely waste scarce resources. The opportunity cost engendered by scarce resources requires knowledge-based, sentiment-free and rigorously drawn scales of preferences. While all organisations that are committed to new Bible translations in Nigerian languages are encouraged to continue their works, it is suggested here that a central clearing house for approval and coordination should be agreed upon. Such a body would be in a position to prevent duplications and advise on the viability, relevance and acceptability of translation projects, after subjecting proposals to scrutiny, based on solid professionalism.

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‘WAR AGAINST BAD LEADERSHIP’: ANALYSING APPRAISAL MARKERS IN #ENDBADGOVERNANCE CAMPAIGN DISCOURSE ON NAIRALAND

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Abstract

This paper analyses appraisal markers (attitude, engagement, graduation) in the #EndBadGovernance campaign discourse on Nairaland, a popular Nigerian online platform. It draws insights from Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal Theory to highlight Nigeria's online public perception of governance during the 2024 protest against ineffectual governance. The study uses qualitative content analysis to evaluate user-generated conversations purposively selected from posts on Nairaland with the hashtag #EndBadGovernance. An analysis of the study data revealed a prevalence of attitude (judgment, affect, and appreciation) and engagement markers. These markers were pivotal in sustaining the protest narrative as users reinforced public dissatisfaction, amplified public discontent, and delegitimised government actors' authority. This study underscores the power of evaluative language in shaping civic engagement and resistance narratives.

Keywords: #appraisalmarkers, #discourse, #endbadgovernance, #Nairaland, #socialmedia, #digitalactivism, #protestdiscourse, #socialmedia

Introduction

Social media is an excellent resource for the study of language. With its introduction came unprecedented forms of communication and social interaction through new technologies that have digitalised our lives. It has a community of its own and, in recent times, has aided in the expansion of democracy, giving more people the ability to have a public voice (Zappavigna, 2012). An expansion of democracy was exemplified in the 10-day #EndBadGovernance protest that erupted in Nigeria in August 2024. #EndBadGovernance refers to an online activism demanding better leadership in Nigeria. As Akano (2023) argues, individuals who believe there is an immediate need for change, whether gradual, rapid, or spontaneous, are more likely to exhibit resistance (p.13). As such, the #EndBadGovernance protests dominated public discourse in Nigeria as citizens expressed their frustrations regarding various challenges posed by ineffective leadership under the Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led government, demanding change. Social media platforms and discussion boards, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and Nairaland (a popular Nigerian online forum), were utilised to organise and mobilise protesters against poor governance and economic hardship.

Nairaland is broadly categorised as a forum-based social media platform. Launched in 2005 by Oluwaseun Osewa, it is primarily a text-based discussion board where users engage in varying topical issues in politics, entertainment, technology, business, and education. According to Akano (2024), heterogeneous virtual spaces like Nairaland present opportunities for narratives on national integration and ethnic autonomy to develop. With the rise of digital activism in Nigeria, a novel approach has emerged to how citizens can express dissent, critique leadership, and mobilise protests. Various scholarly works have examined the political impact, media representation, and organisation dynamics of such activism, particularly within the #EndBadGovernance protests. However, there is a significant gap in the interrogation of the linguistic strategies that permeate protest discourse in Nigeria. There is limited research on how appraisal markers shaped online discussions during the #EndBadGovernance movement, which is the gap this study hopes to fill.

Furthermore, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) have predominantly featured in existing research, making Nairaland a distinctive discursive space to explore in this study. Consequently, this paper examines appraisal markers conceptualised by Martin & White (2005) in discussions related to the #EndBadGovernance protest campaign discourse on Nairaland, analysing how they shaped the discourse and mobilised public sentiments against ineffective governance. The objective is to investigate the appraisal markers employed in discussions on Nairaland during the #EndBadGovernance protest campaign and how they influenced discourse and reinforced collective grievances. The guiding research question is: How do appraisal markers (attitude, judgment, and graduation) used in discussions on Nairaland during the #EndBadGovernance protest campaign impact discourse and reinforce collective grievances? By bridging linguistics and political discourse, this paper provides a fresh perspective on how language influences civic engagement during protest campaigns. It will also highlight the need for further research on evaluative language across other social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and Instagram.

Literature Review

The #EndBadGovernance protests have garnered considerable scholarly attention across various disciplines. This section reviews pertinent literature on the subject to acknowledge the groundwork laid by previous research and emphasise the necessity of the current study. Bassey (2024) employed Public Sphere Theory to analyse social media platforms (Facebook, X, WhatsApp, and Instagram) as practical tools for organising online protest campaigns. In a related study, Bassey et al. (2024) investigated social media algorithm strategies used to amplify protest narratives through the lens of Connective Action Theory. Drawing insights from Habermas' Public Sphere Theory and Castells' Network Society Theory, Odunlami et al. (2024) concentrated their study on social media to underscore the effectiveness of clicktivism (online activism) in driving political change in Nigeria. Shifting the focus from digital activism, Onwubuoya & Nwaoboli (2024) subjected their data to Henri Jajfel and John

Turner's Social Identity Theory to examine traditional media framing of the protests, highlighting the polarisation in news reporting between government-aligned and independent media. Udousoro et al. (2024) based their study on Auguste Comte's sociological theory of Social Evolution to analyse the dynamics of youth engagement in the #EndBadGovernance protest, arguing that the demonstrations signified a political shift in the awareness of Nigerian youth, as well as a transition in societal structures. In contrast, Izege (2024) examined the socio-political implications of the Igbos' indifference during the 2024 #EndBadGovernance national protest, aiming to highlight the complex nature of Nigerian politics, the challenges of national unity, and the nuances of ethnic relations in the country.

From a discourse-analytical perspective, Tomere & Ajakaye (2024) utilised aspects of Visual Grammar Theory to conduct a multimodal textual analysis of protests and counter-protests in Nigeria, labelled #EndBadGovernance and #SayNoToProtest, to ascertain their ideological and contextual significance. They revealed that these protests were polarised along the lines of solidarity, the projection of negative and/or positive governmental acts, and appeals for peace and change. Ishiguzo's (2024) study framed the #EndBadGovernance protests within the context of the amended 1999 constitution to emphasise the political language employed by the government, which used national security as a pretext to curtail civil liberties. In a subsequent study, Ugudu (2025) performed a contextual analysis of government speeches and media reports within the framework of Marxist Political Economy Theory to explore the political language employed by the government to sustain hegemonic control during the protests. The preceding review supports our earlier assertion that, despite the extensive body of scholarly work on the #EndBadGovernance protests, there exists a notable gap in the examination of the linguistic strategies that pervade protest discourse in Nigeria, particularly regarding how appraisal markers influenced online discussions during the #EndBadGovernance movement.

Theoretical Framework

Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory is a comprehensive framework for analysing emotional content and evaluation in texts. Developed as an extension of Halliday's Systemic-Functional Theory, it emphasises the "systematic analysis of evaluation and stance as they operate in entire texts" (White, 2011, p. 14). The theory comprises three primary appraisal components: attitude, engagement, and graduation. Attitude refers to how emotions, judgments, and evaluations are articulated, which can be positive or negative, explicit or implicit. It encompasses three subcategories: affect—addressing emotional responses and categorised into happiness/unhappiness (feelings of joy or sadness), security/insecurity (sense of peace or unease), and satisfaction/dissatisfaction (feelings of accomplishment or frustration); judgment—assessing human behaviour based on social norms and ethics; and appreciation, which evaluates objects and phenomena concerning aesthetics, composition, and value. Engagement pertains to how speakers and writers modify the arguability of their statements and manage various perspectives

within discourse (White, 2001, p. 1). This component investigates how individuals negotiate alignment or misalignment with differing viewpoints, how voices interact in discourse and how speakers position themselves to other perspectives. Conversely, graduation addresses "grading phenomena whereby feelings are intensified and categories blurred" (Martin and White, 2005, p. 35).

Methodology

A qualitative content analysis has been adopted as the research design for this study. This design has been selected because it allows for subjective interpretation of the content within the text data. The data for the study comprise comments generated from discursive threads of four purposively selected #EndBadGovernance-related posts on Nairaland. The first post is titled "Protests: IGP Orders Officers to Deal Decisively with Arsonists and Troublemakers." This post was published on Nairaland on 1 August 2024 and received 29 responses from participants. The second post focused on the speech "EndBadGovernance Protests," delivered by the IGP, and appeared on the forum on 2 August 2024, garnering 28 responses. The third post is titled "#EndBad Government: Sultan, CAN President Demand Immediate End of Protest," which was posted on the platform on 2 August 2024 and received 29 responses. Finally, the fourth post, "Bauchi Governor Imposes Curfew as Protesters Set Vehicles and Secretariats on Fire," garnered 28 responses. From four distinct posts that garnered one hundred and fourteen responses, twenty (five responses) were purposively sampled and selected for analysis. The choice of Nairaland stems from its high level of user engagement, boasting over 3.2 million members and guests, predominantly Nigerians, and it has generated over 8.1 million posts on various topical issues affecting Nigeria and its citizens. Each of the selected posts has at least 10,000 views. The posts from the online platform are crude and unrefined, with some presented in non-standard English spelling, abbreviations, tenses, and grammatical constructions. The data for the study were examined through the lens of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory to reveal the appraisal markers used by online activists during the #EndBadGovernance protest campaigns on Nairaland to mobilise and sustain the protest narratives.

Data Analysis

This section presents a detailed textual analysis of the data gathered from Nairaland posts to uncover appraisal markers of attitude and engagement. Comments (1-5) are extracted from the initial post.

Comment 1:

"I knew this man was up to no good. See, as he continues to insinuate that the protestors are criminals? Where are the rights Lawyers abeg? Make them make sure police have evidence for every arrest made ooo! Na so dem go carry people go kill again like they did during the EndSars. These trigger-happy policemen need to be checked abeg! Some of them are probably serial killers walking around in uniform looking for an excuse to kill another Nigerian."

Comment 2:

“If na Nigeria, IGP go just dey talk plenty without any real action. This one wey dem call "decisive" na just empty words to calm the masses. When the protests start, na dem go come bring out their full arsenal, but when it's time to address the real issues, dem dey hide like rats.”

Comment 3:

“Yes, very correct. But the government should not bring thugs to disrupt the protest.”

Comment 4:

“Empty threats, Cowards in black uniforms.”

Comment 5:

“The original plan of the government is coming out. Promise protesters Security, sponsor their touts to infiltrate the protesters, issue a warning and then go after the original protesters.”

Ahead of the commencement of the #EndBadGovernance protests on 1 August 2024, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kayode Egbetokun issued a statement directing his officers nationwide to “deal decisively” with arsonists and troublemakers as youths staged protests against hunger and economic hardship throughout the Federation. He stated that intelligence suggested the demonstrations aimed to unleash chaos upon the government and innocent citizens; therefore, the police would not sit idly by and watch the situation deteriorate into a state of lawlessness. In comment one, the speaker's tone is critical, urgent, and accusatory. He evaluates the moral character of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) with the adverse judgment label “up to no good,” implying that he is untrustworthy. To further support this idea, the word “insinuate” is employed to portray his character as misleading or manipulative. The speaker also utilises a strongly negative judgment, “trigger-happy,” to suggest that the police are reckless and excessively violent, thereby depicting the force as dangerous, mainly as reference is made to #EndSARS (a significant Nigerian protest against police brutality) as a notable example. Emotion-inducing terms like “abeg” (a Nigerian Pidgin term for “please” or “I beg you”) and an elongation like “ooo” are used by the speaker to convey concern about human rights violations and to emphasise the intensity of the emotions expressed. The expression, “These trigger-happy policemen need to be checked abeg!” assesses the policing situation in the country during the protest, suggesting that it is dangerous and uncontrolled. The statement “Some of them are probably serial killers ... looking for an excuse to kill another Nigerian”

challenges the legitimacy of police behaviour, asserting that some officers may be murderers in disguise.

Comment two is a critical and sceptical evaluation of government actions in Nigeria, particularly concerning police brutality and government failures. The speaker expresses judgment toward law enforcement officers, as illustrated by the phrase "... talk plenty without any real action." This suggests that the IGP is an ineffective officer who does not follow through on his statements. The speaker also uses appreciation to emphasise systemic failure. This is evident in the critique of the IGP's statement, which is "empty words" intended only to pacify the public into believing that the police will protect citizens. Yet, they will instead "hide like rats" when it's time to confront real issues. The engagement markers here highlight the dismissal of official narratives and pushback against government framing. "This one wey dem call 'decisive' na just empty words to calm the masses" distances the speaker from the government's claims and questions their legitimacy. In comment three, the speaker supports the youth's protest against poor governance. His backing for the protest is evident in the appraisal resources used to evaluate the moral character of the government. Given past instances of disruptions during peaceful demonstrations in the country by either the government or its agents, the speaker is concerned about the protest's outcome and advises the government not to disrupt it by hiring hooligans to mingle with the youths and create chaos, as seen during the #EndSARS protests nationwide. The speaker's concern is conveyed by the lexical items "thugs," "bring," and "disrupt." Additionally, the word "government" indicates the speaker's referent. The expression, "Yes, very correct," reflects the speaker's response to a previous comment from another participant who also supports the protest against bad governance in the country. One can observe the speaker's expression of both positive and negative sentiments. The positive sentiment is apparent in his satisfaction derived from Nigerian youths standing up for their rights. Conversely, the negative sentiment is directed at the government, captured in the speaker's sense of unease about the protest, as he fears the government may disrupt it.

A study of comment four reveals that it is directed at the IGP, who threatened to deal decisively with the protesters. The tone of this comment is accusatory, expressing anger and displeasure towards the IGP, the head of the police force. This displeasure is evident in the phrase, "empty threats, cowards in black uniforms." The speaker uses this to make a disparaging remark about the IGP and the entire Nigerian police force. From this expression, one can sense the speaker's frustration and dissatisfaction with the IGP and the Nigerian police, often perceived as instruments the government uses to prevent youths from protesting against its excesses. Similarly, comment five employs a critical statement with negative connotations when evaluating the government. It indicates the speaker's dissatisfaction with the government, which justifies his criticism of the government's act of deception. He begins his response by stating, "The original plan of the government is coming to light." This statement suggests that what the government had concealed from the masses is now

exposed, showcasing their deception. The subsequent part of the comment also illustrates the speaker's disdain for the government, as he refers to the government's promise to provide security for protesters during the demonstrations while secretly sponsoring hooligans to infiltrate them and incite chaos, leading to their arrest by the law enforcement agents who work for the same government. Comments (6 – 10) are extracted from the second post and presented below.

Comment 6:

“Lies. The drug master has thought [sic] you how to lie. The worst IGP in the history of Nigeria, and you have succeeded in turning the force into a wing of the evil party called [sic] APC. Pains await all of you that are suffering poor Nigerians.”

Comment 7:

“Who gives a fvck what he said? People are hungry and a stooge is busy making stupid speech. Na full speech people go chop?”

Comment 8:

“Emilokan IGP 🤪. Your men are understaffed to curtail riots. Second term for Your master is not possible. Y'all started on a bad note. Nigeria no be Lagos, founder of Lagos is a total faker sold on lies and propaganda. The nation was quiet when he was declared winner, everybody was mourning. From one disaster to another under one year. Where is Remi with her one vegetable garden, she sensed danger but it was too late”.

Comment 9:

“Another certified idiot in police uniform. So, if protesters stay in one location, you will carry every police to that venue. See the type of clowns heading our security. You clowns have been opening mouth waaa talking about gathering intelligence that some hoodlums plan to hijack protest, why didn't you gather at the location where the hoodlums planned to meet? Stop blackmailing peaceful protesters. It is the duty of the police to provide security. If you only have the manpower to secure only one location, then resign. Enough of the babablu”.

Comment 10:

“The safety of Nigerians is very important now, and our leaders should also hear our cry and give us food”.

In response to reports of violent attacks that resulted in casualties, widespread looting, and the destruction of both private and government properties in certain states, the IGP addressed the nation, urging protesters to heed police warnings, remain calm, and cooperate with security agencies to uphold peace and stability. Much like the statements from the first discussion topic, this address was poorly received, as indicated in comments 6-10 above. For example, the speaker of comment six negatively evaluates the IGP's honesty and competence. The term "lies," a disparaging assessment of his character, is a direct accusation that portrays him as dishonest. The moral condemnation reinforces this accusation: "... you have succeeded in turning the force into a wing of the evil party called APC," suggesting a calculated manipulation of the force for partisan politics or political gain. The speaker's tone is also infused with anger, resentment, and a desire for retribution, as evidenced by the statement, "Pain awaits all of you that are suffering poor Nigerians." The hyperbolic phrase, "The worst IGP in the history of Nigeria...." carries both judgment and engagement appraisal markers, negatively evaluating the IGP as the most incompetent and ineffective officer to have held the position. This expression takes an absolute stance on the issue, discouraging any debate regarding the IGP's competence as if the statement were an undisputed fact.

From comment seven, it is evident that the speaker is dismissive and critical. The strong judgment marker, "Who gives a fuck what he said?" dismisses the IGP as a person and renders his speech meaningless. It also exhibits indifference and rejection toward the speech. The vulgar word "fuck" amplifies the speaker's anger and frustration while reinforcing disdain for the IGP. A genuine and urgent problem is highlighted in "People are hungry," positioning hunger as a national crisis in light of the speaker's assessment of the nation's state (affect marker). A judgment marker is present in the negative label "stooge." The rhetorical question "Na full speech people go chop" pre-emptively invalidates any defence of the speech, positioning (engagement marker) it as useless in addressing real problems. The speaker in comment eight mocks the IGP, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Remi Tinubu, and Prof Mahmood Yakubu. He begins by addressing the IGP as "Emilokan IGP". "Emilokan" is a Yoruba expression meaning "it is my turn". This nickname was given to President Tinubu during his 2023 presidential campaign when he asserted that it was his turn to be President. Since then, Nigerians have referred to him as "Emilokan" mockingly. The speaker ridicules the Inspector General of Police (IGP) due to the police's inadequate manpower and their failure to manage the riots that erupted during the protests. This is illustrated with terms such as "understaffed", "curtail", and "riots". After disparaging the IGP, he addresses President Bola Tinubu, advising him against pursuing a second term, as his bid is deemed dead in the water. He criticised the 2023 presidential election and blamed the INEC chairman for declaring an incorrect candidate as the winner. Lexical items such as "understaffed", "bad note", "lies", "propaganda", "mourning", "disaster", and "vegetable garden" serve as appraisal markers used to evaluate the current administration's performance. The choice of these words suggests that the speaker is dissatisfied with the

prevailing hardships in Nigeria, empathises with suffering Nigerians, and expresses discontent towards the APC government for leading Nigerians into starvation. Phrases such as “your men are understaffed to curtail riots”, “Y’all started on a bad note”, and “Nigeria no be Lagos” convey negative evaluations aimed at the IGP and President Bola Tinubu. Conversely, “Second term for your master is impossible” reveals a negative judgement directed at the IGP. The speaker employs the expression, “The nation was quiet when he was declared the winner; everybody was mourning”, to voice solidarity with Nigerians who feel robbed of their democratic rights. This explains why he hurls insults at the IGP and his men for their attempts to suppress the protests, the President and his first lady for failing to rescue the country from its current crisis, and the INEC chairman for denying Nigerians their mandate. The lexical choices in the comment reflect the speaker’s perspective on the matter. While he supports the protests against bad governance, he opposes the IGP and the President for their attempts to disrupt the demonstrations.

An analysis of comment nine reveals the speaker’s stance and evaluation of the subject. His position is evident in his choice of appraisal markers, indicating that he is against poor governance and consequently supports the youth’s protest against maladministration in the country. However, he expresses dissatisfaction with the Nigerian Police Force for allowing hoodlums to hijack the protest and blackmail peaceful demonstrators, thereby disrupting it. For this reason, he negatively evaluates the IGP and his officers, criticising them for opposing the protesters instead of providing them with security. Phrases such as “another certified idiot in police uniform”, “clowns heading our security”, “you clowns have been opening your mouths...” and “enough of the babablu” are disparaging remarks aimed at the IGP and his officers. They serve to portray the IGP and his staff in a negative light. In comment 10, the speaker expresses concern for the safety of Nigerians during the demonstrations, implying that the protest has spiralled out of control. By voicing this concern, he demonstrates solidarity with all Nigerians, particularly the youth protesting against poor governance in the country. He urges the Nigerian government to listen to the pleas of the suffering masses. The phrase “Our leaders should also hear our cry and provide us with food” is evaluative. These are appraisal resources employed to highlight the insensitivity of the current administration to the struggles of the populace and the high levels of poverty and starvation in the country, thus casting the APC government in a negative light. Comments (11-15) are extracted from the third post. These comments are presented below:

Comment 11:

“CAN is a disgrace to Christianity.”

Comment 12:

“Which religion is not even a disgrace to Nigeria? Many churches, many mosques, and many shrines yet evil continues.”

Comment 13:

“Who are they and who do they think they are? What have they done to help the suffering masses? Make dem go die.”

Comment 14:

“Senseless leaders! Not when the damage done has not been addressed but kept on getting worst.”

Comment 15:

“End protest on empty stomach? Dey play.

Similar to the IGP’s demand for the protests to cease, the Sultan of Sokoto and the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), under the auspices of the Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC), expressed their concern regarding the loss of lives and properties following the protests. They urged for calm, asking the demonstrators to halt their protests and allow the government to address their grievances. Comments (11-15) reveal the appraisal strategies deployed by users in their responses to the news article. In comment eleven, the speaker employs dialogic contraction (engagement) to dismiss alternative viewpoints regarding CAN's role. Framing CAN as “a disgrace” implies that the body’s perspective on the protests is fundamentally unacceptable to the protesters. The statement's brevity renders it absolute and unyielding. Additionally, it negatively evaluates CAN’s actions, indicating a failure to uphold its Christian values as spiritual leaders. Comment 12 serves as a broad societal critique, questioning the role of religion in Nigeria and its impact on morality and governance. It incorporates appraisal markers of judgment, appreciation, and engagement to convey frustration, scepticism, and moral disillusionment. This is evident in the use of “disgrace,” an adverse judgment, suggesting that all religious institutions have failed and lack the moral authority to guide society positively. A negative appreciation of the role of religion or its representatives is reflected in “yet evil continues,” which expresses resignation or hopelessness. It further implies that religion in Nigeria has not alleviated societal problems despite its dominance.

Comment thirteen shows a confrontational, dismissive, and emotionally charged statement. Judgment, affect, and engagement markers evaluate the religious authority figures. For instance, the legitimacy and relevance of these authorities are questioned in the rhetorical question, “Who are they, and who do they think they are?” The speaker suggests they lack the moral grounds to demand that the protesters stop their demonstrations. Emotions are also emphasised as the speaker expresses a wish for harm by stating, “Make them go die.” This reflects deep frustration and a loss of faith in their leadership. While evaluating events, the speaker uses negative appreciation to assess the role of religious bodies before the protests. This is exemplified by the question, “What have they done to help the suffering masses?” This implies that as influential figures in the country, much is expected of these religious bodies,

yet they have done nothing to offer solutions. The speaker's stance is absolute and allows no room for alternative views. In comment fourteen, the speaker criticises the Sultan and the CAN president, calling them senseless leaders. The lexical item "senseless leaders" expresses the speaker's disappointment with Nigeria's so-called religious leaders for urging the Nigerian youths to cease the protest when the issues that prompted it remain unresolved. His word choice indicates that he is both critical and abusive, dismissing the appeal made by Nigeria's religious leaders for the youths to stop the protest. In addition to evaluative markers such as "senseless leaders," used to pass judgment, phrases like "damage done," "addressed," and "getting worse" also serve evaluative functions. In this context, the phrase "damage done" may suggest inflation, poverty, starvation, and suffering throughout the nation. Conversely, "addressed" and "getting worse" imply that the problems that prompted the protest are escalating rather than being resolved. These lexical items (senseless leaders, damage done, addressed and getting worse) function as appraisal resources that highlight the speaker's support for the continuation of the protest while chastising Nigeria's so-called religious leaders for their cowardice and insensitivity towards the plight of the masses. In support of comment fourteen, the speaker of comment fifteen criticises Nigeria's religious leaders for calling for an end to the protest, arguing that the underlying issues have not been addressed. Note that the opening statement of the comment, encapsulated in the phrase "End protest on an empty stomach?" is an interrogative statement serving as an engagement marker to invite other participants to join the discourse. In addition to functioning as an engagement marker, it also critiques the activities of the APC government, portraying them negatively. While the expression "End protest on an empty stomach" implies a prevalence of hunger in the country, "Dey play" in Nigerian Pidgin implies "You are playing". It is employed to scold Nigeria's religious leaders who are not taking Nigerians' problems seriously but wish for the Nigerian youths to halt the protest. Comments (16 – 20) are culled from the fourth post.

Comment 16:

"Tinubu has failed. If he knows what's good, he better reduce fuel prices as soon as possible. That's the only way to end this carnage if not his govt will be battling unrest in the North for the next four years. He should ask Jonathan."

Comment 17:

"The honourable thing is for the President to resign"

Comment 18:

"So Tinubu feel less concerned about all this?"

Comment 19:

"Tinubu isn't really as experienced as we rate him."

Comment 20:

“Those who make this argument should drop it. Tinubu is a colossal failure”.

Comment sixteen reveals a direct and politically critical speaker addressing President Tinubu while expressing frustration and a warning call for action, given the violence reported in Bauchi and other states during the protests. Appraisal markers like judgment, affect, appreciation, and engagement are evident in this comment. For instance, the expression “Tinubu has failed” strongly assesses Mr President’s body language towards protests. It is an adverse judgment that is absolute at its best (engagement marker) and does not entertain opposing opinions. It also suggests that his leadership has not met the citizens’ expectations and has reached a point of failure. The speaker also implies a lack of foresight or wisdom, “If he knows what’s good ...”, but presents an opportunity for further damage to be prevented, “he better reduce fuel price as soon as possible”. Affect markers express a sense of crisis and the need to handle the situation as an emergency rather than just a policy debate. The word “carnage” indicates widespread violence during the protests. As such, the President must act fast to avoid the long-term consequence of “battling unrest in the North for the next four years.” Finally, albeit negatively, the speaker exemplifies appreciation when he references former President Goodluck Jonathan as a historical precedent of a leader facing similar crises. Security, especially in Northern Nigeria, was assumed to be the former president’s biggest albatross. The statement “He should ask Jonathan” suggests that President Tinubu should learn from past mistakes to avoid repeating them by taking decisive steps to attend to the protesters' demands.

Comment seventeen conveys the speaker's disillusionment, suggesting that the escalation of violence during the protests represents a failure in governance rather than merely a crisis that can be resolved. The statement is filled with judgment, emotion, appreciation, and engagement markers to emphasize the speaker’s call for accountability and a change in leadership. The judgment, emotion, and appreciation markers are illustrated in the phrase “The honourable thing,” where “honourable” frames resignation as the ethical and acceptable action for the President. This phrase also indicates disillusionment with the President’s behavior, implying he has lost credibility and assessing his tenure as irredeemable. Based on the speaker's firm and assertive tone, it can be inferred that any opposing view favoring the President's continuation in office would be dismissed (engagement), as the speaker offers no opportunities for reforms, second chances, or policy shifts. The stance asserts that the President has lost all the citizens' trust as if it were a fact.

In the wake of the crisis that characterised the protests against poor governance, the speaker of comment eighteen believed that President Tinubu would heed the calls of Nigerians by addressing their demands. Unfortunately, the opposite occurred in this instance, justifying the speaker’s expression of anticipation and astonishment, which resulted in his pessimistic tone in this comment. Consequently, his statement is laden with emotion and evaluative

markers intended to render judgment, as illustrated by the phrase, “So Tinubu feels less concerned.” While the words “feel less concerned” suggest Tinubu’s insensitivity to the plight of the masses despite their protests against his ineffective leadership, they also serve as an evaluative indicator that portrays his government negatively. Commentaries nineteen and twenty criticise President Tinubu. In both cases, the assessments of the president are negative. Both speakers exhibit a critical attitude and an informative tone, highlighting the seriousness of the discussed subject. While speaker nineteen views the president as someone Nigerians may have overrated, which accounts for his failure to deliver, speaker twenty concludes that he is a colossal failure. Lexical items such as “rate” in nineteen and “colossal failure” in twenty serve evaluative functions, as both speakers use them to assess the performance of the president's government.

Discussion of Findings

Appraisal Theory is a valuable framework for evaluating the emotions and stances prevalent in Nairaland discussions about the #EndBadGovernance protests. The analysed data showed a predominance of judgment, affect, appreciation, and engagement markers utilised by speakers to express their frustrations and shape collective grievances and dissatisfaction regarding perceived government failures. The study submits that the appraisal markers used by participants in the online protest discourse were mainly negative evaluations that ultimately framed the protests, delegitimised established authorities, and undermined official narratives rather than fostering dialogue and reasoning.

Conclusion

This paper emphasizes how appraisal markers shaped protest discourse on Nairaland during the #EndBadGovernance movement. It investigated the topic from a discourse-analytical perspective, highlighting how appraisal markers—attitude (judgment, affect, and appreciation) and engagement—were employed to construct legitimacy, resistance, and collective discontent that sustained the narrative among online activists, specifically on Nairaland. The study adds to existing research on #EndBadGovernance by shifting the focus beyond technological, legal, and socio-political aspects of activism to the linguistic strategies that were utilized to support the protest movements, offering a unique perspective on how the discourse influenced the broader socio-political narrative of governance and resistance. The research suggests that future studies could evaluate the protest language of movements on other social media platforms or even conduct a comparative study involving Nairaland, to explore the general characteristics of digital discourse during protests and how they facilitate and motivate collective actions.

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RAPE CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ENABLERS IN SELECT NIGERIAN POP MUSIC

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Abstract

Existing studies have examined rape culture using critical discourse theory, feminist theory and new media theory perspectives. However, a pragmatic approach in deconstructing the language used in some Nigerian pop music and how they act as enablers of rape is sparse in the literatures. Hence, this paper builds on existing literature by exploring the subject from a pragmatic perspective, using Mey's 2001 Pragmeme – a theory which emphasizes contextualization of linguistic choices in given settings and insights from Conceptual Metaphor theory. This paper therefore examines how language used in selected Nigerian Pop songs propagate rape culture and other acts of sexual violence. Two songs were purposively selected from two Nigerian pop artistes – Olamide and Lil Kesh to interrogate how the songs enable rape culture from a pragmatic perspective. Findings revealed that the reference strategies deployed in the songs index rape culture, use of dysphemistic metaphors to refer to sex and other body parts, propagation of erroneous beliefs about sex and other related phenomena. The language used in the songs trivializes sex and sometimes normalises rape culture. Nigerian Pop music is a site for exhibiting counter hegemonic designs which provides us with the belief systems and ideologies of the ever-adventurous youths.

Keywords: rape culture, language enablers, ideologies, Nigerian pop music, metaphors

Introduction

Sex music sells. Sex themed songs pervade the Nigerian pop songs' space. However, when these songs act as enablers of rape culture, it becomes imperative to investigate the multifaceted ways that this is done implicitly or explicitly. Bearing in mind the influence of music on a people's world view, attitude and behaviours, one cannot but consider this genre of music as it is a manifestation of a popular culture in the Nigerian public space. According to Kayla (2019), "studies have been performed to determine how exposure to rap music with misogynistic lyrics can cause a person to become sexually aggressive and violent to their significant other (Kistler and Lee, 2010). This is why lyrics laden with sexual discourses need to be interrogated to determine what they are projecting. Pop music being a music that is generally accepted by majority of the people, especially young people, have a lot of influences on the acts and attitudes of its listeners. Most of the themes inherent in the music that are popular surround everyday trends, acts, and belief system (implicit or explicit) that are perpetuated by the fans of the genre of music. Hence, in this

paper, I examine the manifestations of rape culture in the select pop music based on their acceptance amongst Nigerian youths.

Rape culture and language enablers

Rape culture is used to name a society or environment where rape is pervasive and normalised due to societal attitudes about sexual assault, sexual abuse and gender objectification. Steibert (2018) defines rape culture as a culture where rape and other expressions of sexualized violence occur with some frequency, and where societal attitudes about gender and sexuality are normalised or trivialized. When artistes with sexualized lyrics are celebrated and popular due to societal acceptance of such, then acts propagated are trivialized. This is the case with pop music in Nigeria. Other forms of normalizing rape include victim blaming, propagating culture of silence, under-reporting of rape cases, biased reporting of rape cases, use of language that trivializes sex and other related phenomena.

Language (verbal and nonverbal) serves as a vehicle for the transmission of feelings, thoughts and beliefs. Language use reveals a lot of implicit assumptions about a speaker. Hence, expressions used in any rape culture index a lot of set beliefs. According to Halliday, one of the functions that language performs is that of ideational — there is no facet of human experience which cannot be transformed into meaning. In other words, language provides a tool for the expression of human experiences, and certain resources of the lexicogrammar of every language are dedicated to that function. We call it the ideational metafunction. When language is used in such a way that it makes light the incidences of rape, oversexualization of women's sexuality through vivid description of sexual parts to the delight of listeners, and propagation of sex as conquest, language becomes a powerful tool in the continued propagation of rape culture

The word enabler according to the Oxford dictionary means person or thing that makes something possible. In this context, we use it to mean language use that encourages another person to continue in self-destructive behaviours. Such language expressions normalise different forms of deviant behaviours in subtle ways to the detriment of the cause being pursued. The way language is used to incite, encourage and propagate deviant sexual behaviours in music makes it function as an enabler. This validates the fact that language is not used in a vacuum. It can be used to perform different things – positive and negative. In this paper, our focus is on the use of language to encourage negative acts in sexual discourses in selected Nigerian pop songs.

Nigerian Pop music

Here, 'popular' refers to a cultural form which is 'intended for ordinary people', whether in terms of accessibility, of mode of address, or of the facts of reception. 'The popular' can also be understood as that which is prevalent among, or accepted by, the people. The popular' is that which is well liked by several individuals, or that which is accessible to the lay man. Popular music (henceforth pop music) in Nigeria has undergone significant changes over the years, reflecting the country's cultural, social, and economic development (Oyewole, 2015). One of the key factors contributing to the growth of Nigerian

pop music is the influence of globalization and technological advancements (Okoro, 2018). The widespread use of social media platforms, online music streaming services, and mobile phones has enabled Nigerian artists to reach a global audience and gain international recognition (Oyewole, 2015).

Some Nigerian pop music artists have gained popularity over time due to the acceptance of their music globally. Artists like Wizkid, Davido, and Tiwa Savage have recorded international success and have collaborated with global artists (Okoro, 2018). In a quest for popularity, several Nigerian pop artists promote excessive materialism, sexism, and violence (Moore, 2016). No doubt, Nigerian pop music is a force to reckon with in the Nigerian demographic space as well as internationally. Its role in shaping the country's cultural identity and promoting social commentary cannot be overemphasized. Hence, interrogating the lyrical contents for scholarship is imperative as we have done in this paper.

Brief biographies of Olamide and Lil Kesh

Olamide Gbenga Adediji (Olamide) is a popular hip-hop artist in Nigeria. He was born on the 15th of March 1989. He started his music career in 2000. His first music production was “Eni Duro” under Id Cabasa’s Coded Tunes Record label. This gave him fame in Nigeria and within a short time he was among the famous artists across the country. Olamide established YBNL Nation as his own record label and produced for different artistes such as Adekunle Gold now AG baby, Olufemi Bosede aka Fireboy DML, Lil Kesh, Chinko Ekun, DJ Enimoney, Picazo and Temmie Ovwasa (YBNL Princess). He has received many awards such as Best Rap Album, Album of the Year in “The Headies 2014”. With a career spanning over two decades, Olamide is an influencer in the Nigerian hip hop music.

Keshinro Ololade (Lil Kesh) was born on March 14, 1995, in Bariga, Lagos State, Nigeria. He attended the University of Lagos, where he studied Linguistics before leaving to pursue a career in music. According to Kate(2019), Lil Kesh's music career began in 2012 with the release of his single *Lyricality*, which became a hit at universities in Nigeria. His subsequent release, *Shoki*, in 2014, was a major hit and led to two remixes, including a female version featuring Cynthia Morgan, Chidinma, Eva Alordiah, and another version featuring Davido and Olamide. Lil Kesh's rise to fame earned him a nomination for Best New Act at the 2015 Nigeria Entertainment Awards. He won the Nigerian Teen Choice Awards and City People Entertainment Awards in 2015 for his song *Shoki*. He has collaborated with several musicians, including Olamide, Davido, Patoranking, and Duncan Mighty. He was signed to Yahoo Boy No Laptop Nation (YBNL Nation), an independent record label founded by Olamide Adediji in 2012. Under YBNL, he released several hit singles. After the expiration of his contract with YBNL, Lil Kesh established his own record label, YAGI Records (Young and Getting It). Lil Kesh released his debut studio album, "Young and Getting It" (YAGI), through YBNL Nation in March, 2016. The album features productions from Young John and Pheelz, with vocals from Phyno, Ycee, Wale, Patoranking, Adekunle Gold, Davido, Viktoh, Olamide, and Chinko Ekun.

Statement of the problem

There is a growing body of literature on how music shape peoples' attitudes towards sexual violence, gender and cultural norms. Existing studies in Nigeria have examined the representation of gender and sexuality in music using critical discourse analysis theory, feminist theory and content analysis to examine content and themes in selected pop music. However, a pragmatic approach in deconstructing the language used in some of the music and how they act as enablers of rape is nonexistent in the literatures. Hence, this paper builds on existing literature by exploring the subject from a pragmatic perspective, using conceptual insights from Mey's 2001 Pragmeme – a theory which emphasizes contextualization of linguistic choices in given settings. This paper therefore examines how language used in selected Nigerian Pop songs index rape culture and act as enablers of rape and other acts of sexual violence. I purposively selected two Nigerian pop artistes – Olamide and Lil Kesh and interrogate one of their songs each that enable rape culture from a pragmatic perspective.

Theoretical framework

This paper draws on conceptual ideas from Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts theory which examines how language is used in context to convey meaning and insights from Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual metaphor theory. Mey's pragmatic act theory involves a total user involvement and has two things that are involved in his explanation of context.

Context

Context of the user involves the situation, by being an active (co) participant and language user; the situation involves the user by defining what he or she can say in the situation. Most importantly, Mey is not only concerned about users but also about how the users within the confines of their environment are able to utilise their language resources to communicate, that is, 'what the empowerment of the participant is grounded in'. In essence, Mey (2001: 226(Mey1985:336) observes that whenever people communicate, society is the 'silent', but by no means 'sleeping' partner. In other words, the social construction is subject to societal constraints but the way individuals find their way around such constraints is of importance in Mey's pragmatic theory – pragmatic acting/ pragmeme. Pragmatic acting is defined basically as "using language on common ground", involving the other participants of the situation as well as the material and other conditions determining the "ground". Hence, when it comes to Nigerian pop music, the artists determine the "grounding" based on several variables – reference strategies with least economy of effort, Metaphor based on shared sociocultural knowledge and the possible pragmatic function. These are concepts from the theory that can be applied to the analysis of the music texts. We discuss these in turns: Reference, metaphor and contextual beliefs (Assumptions).

Reference

Reference deals with the way listeners assign names to objects being discussed. In line with Yule (1985:22) "reference is not simply a relationship between a word or phrase and an object or person in the world. It is a social act, in which

the speaker assumes that the word or phrase chosen to identify an object or person will be interpreted as the speaker intended". Hence, reference assignment may include (but not limited to) the use of personal names, address terms, use of deictic expressions and particularly indexicals.

Metaphor

In explaining conceptual metaphor, Lakoff describes a love relationship thus: *our relationship has hit a dead-end street*. In this proposition, love is conceptualised as a journey. Other examples about love in the English language are: *look how far we've gone*; *our relationship is off the track*, *the marriage is on rocks*. These are everyday English expressions, and they are neither poetic nor are they used for any special rhetorical effect. The expressions simply involve matching the experience from one source domain of journey to a target domain of love. In cognitive mapping, correspondences are made between domains in terms of structural, ontological and orientation mappings.

Lakoff explains further that our cognitive orientation is formed through our lived experiences and "these experiences will definitely have their cultural bearing" (Maaleej (2004:50). In discussing an issue such as sex, the choice of words used in metaphorising sex and other related phenomena will reflect interactants' socio-cultural experience. Also, we must note, according to Cazal and Inns (1998:184) that metaphorisation is possible because "meaning does not reside firmly in a concept or word." This fact enables words and concepts to be carried from one domain to another via link of association and similarity. The conceptual bearings of embodied experiences shared via socio and socio-cultural cognition by the selected artists will be explicated in our analysis.

Assumptions

An assumption in pragmatic terms is used to mean an interaction or action-based belief shared by discourse participants. Yule (1985:127) explains that "in order to recognise what is meant, even when it is not actually said (or written), the speaker(s) must be able to depend on a lot of shared assumptions and expectations. That is, what is said against a background of what is unsaid but taken as given." Such unsaid things are foregrounded based on shared beliefs or mutual contextual beliefs (MCB). Hence, a lot of assumptions are deployed in the choice of words used by the artists in their songs based on shared beliefs and in-group membership.

Review of relevant literature

Existing literatures have examined rape culture from different perspectives. For instance, Ibitoye (2022), using Fredrick and Robert's Objectification (1997) theory selected music that objectifies the female body. According to the study, the songs are suggestive of sexual objectification with lyrics laced with sexual innuendos and weird erotic dance movements.

Using content analysis, Kayla (2019) identified sexual themes in different genres of music in America. The study findings revealed that rap and hip-hop music provide the audience with misogynistic views against women than any other genre of music. The five misogynistic themes discovered are: sexual slurs, objectification, aggressive behaviour, explicit content, and manipulation.

Cable (2017) shows that rape culture is prominent in American pop music by comparing song's lyrics to general themes of rape culture and testimonials of sexual assault. Using Critical discourse analysis, the study found out that most of the songs selected reveal trivialization of sexual violence, victim blaming and men's dominance.

Khan (2017) condemned the categorization of songs as rape music or rape culture. He is of the opinion that the music pleasurable dynamic can be understood through a non-normative kinky fetish framework. He is of the opinion that such binary categorizations are devoid of a good understanding of the music landscape. The foregoing paragraphs reflect scholarly attention to gender, sexuality and rape culture in music. However, a study on the two artistes interrogated in this paper is sparse. This paper therefore fills this gap on rape culture in music from a pragmatic perspective.

Methodology

We have purposively selected a song each from Olamide (July,2014) and Lil Kesh (July,2015) based on their popularity and prevalence of rape culture in the songs. Going by google trend data analytics, the two songs still trend as of 2025.

| Category: All categories | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| | | | |
| Region | | Olamide story for the gods: (1/7/14 - 2/11/25) | Lil Kesh Efejoku: (1/7/14 - 2/11/25) |
| Abia | | | 100% |
| Adamawa | | | |
| Akwa Ibom | | | |
| Anambra | | 68% | 32% |
| Bauchi | | | |
| Benue | | | |
| Borno | | | |
| Bayelsa | | | |
| Cross River | | 100% | |
| Delta | | 84% | 16% |
| Ebonyi | | | |
| Edo | | 70% | 30% |
| Ekiti | | | |
| Enugu | | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-----|------|
| Federal Capital Territory | | 65% | 35% |
| Gombe | | | |
| Imo | | 50% | 50% |
| Jigawa | | | |
| Kaduna | | 56% | 44% |
| Kebbi | | | |
| Kano | | | |
| Kogi | | | |
| Katsina | | | |
| Kwara | | | 100% |
| Lagos | | 65% | 35% |
| Nasarawa | | | |
| Niger | | | |
| Ogun State | | 62% | 38% |
| Ondo | | 60% | 40% |
| Osun | | | 100% |
| Oyo | | 66% | 34% |
| Plateau | | | |
| Rivers | | 50% | 50% |
| Sokoto | | | |
| Taraba | | | |
| Yobe | | | |
| Zamfara | | | |

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11&geo=NG&q=popular%20rape%20themed%20music%20in%20Nigerai,Olamide%20(story%20for%20the%20gods),Lil%20Kesh%20(Efejoku&hl=en

The songs were subjected to pragmatic analysis while focusing on the linguistic elements that index rape culture.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Music, especially pop music, is a platform where beliefs, feelings, attitudes and intentions towards issues can be accessed. In the selected Nigerian

pop music, we find use of different reference strategies, use of metaphors and propagation of erroneous assumptions amongst others.

Reference strategies in selected Nigerian Pop Music

Referring expressions include proper names, definite noun phrases, indefinite noun phrases, pronouns and anaphors (anaphoric, homophoric and cataphoric). Reference strategies act as place holders for things or people being discussed in the songs. In using these strategies, the artists give a way of identifying the thing or person being discussed or mentioned in their songs. For example, let us consider the use of naming in the songs. Naming in the songs, refer to things and people. Sometimes, naming could be the real names of items or slangy words. These naming as a reference strategy requires some level of common ground or shared cultural knowledge. Let us exemplify with sample extracts from the songs:

mo ti mu dogoyaro (dorogoyaro) { I have drank dogoyaro}
Like monkey tail (Monkey Tail, Monkey Tail)
Caro, Ba mi wey Claro (Claro o Claro o) { Help me warp claro}
I want to do sina today (Sina today) (I want to flirt today)

In this song extract, Olamide informs that he has taken dongoyaro. Dogoyaro is a medicinal leaf in Nigeria (Neem leaves) with several benefits. Dongoyaro in this case acts as a stimulant. He also mentions ‘monkey tail’. Monkey tail is a slangy expression; it is a concoction that some people make by themselves. It is maurijuana leaf soaked in gin or whisky. Then, he finally names another stimulant – Caro (Ba mi we claro). From information gathered, claro is the last part of weed. All of this preparation and naming reveals the artists quest “to do shina” – to flirt.

Name dropping as a reference strategy helps the listener to have a clearer picture of what the artist intends to communicate. These names are only relatable to those who have the same shared cultural knowledge of the ideas expressed therein. Thus, in-group membership, which most youths are expected to have given them access to the intended information packed in the song. It gives them an idea of how the artist is able to flirt with an inducer or stimulant before engaging in his sexual activity.

It is not out of place to infer that anyone who has been induced may not be in his/her right senses. Such a person might engage in sexual violence. Hence, the song not only normalizes rape but gives the listener the process involved in preparation for the sexual activity ahead.

Let’s consider naming in Lil Kesh

Lil Kesh uses phonoaesthetics and ellipsis to name a stimulant that a certain child of a pastor uses before engaging in illicit acts.

For example:

Igbati mo wo club t imo ri omo to n mo kigbe lailai

Omo pastor **ton faa ci** –

The use of ellipsis in the first instance means that the artiste was reluctant to name what he initially saw the child of a pastor doing. Then, he dropped the

name through the use of a sound. ‘Ci’ as used here could stand for anything-cigarette or any other thing that can be smoked.

Use of Metaphors in selected Nigerian pop music

Metaphor provides a platform for describing or talking about a thing in terms of another. Let us consider an excerpt from Lil Kesh’s song:

Bami loke oh, eda ri jimi keh { my father in heaven, forgive me}
Awon omo eleyin **caterpillar** yi o mafe gbemi le {These
children with backsides like caterpillar don’t want to leave me}
Emi ti yo bai, mi ode le gboran mon –{ I am drunk now and I
can’t be obedient anymore}.
Maye ti sanwo sinu account mo tife turn up gan

Here, reference is made to ladies with big buttocks who are head bent on having a go at him. He compares the lady’s backside to a caterpillar. This is a structural metaphor. The artist later announces that he is now drunk and cannot hear anything again. Getting drunk as a stimulant aid whatever act he engages in. This part encourages drinking and getting drunk before engaging in any sexual act. The vivid description of the lady’s backside aims to objectify the potential of the backside as an object that can be used as a tool. As a follow up to the task ahead, the artiste informs that he is about to engage in the sexual act with the use of metaphor.

Mo fe da’ko, mo fe gbin cassava ----- I want to farm, I want to
plant cassava (metaphoric)

O ti di passa d passa – euphemising the movement of the backside
You dey make me dey shaba d shaba – You make me doff my hat!
Emi ni the mana the mana – I’m the man!
Emi ni mo mu fun won ma lo kana – I service other girls
Won awilo awilo – **sexual connotation links to the waist dance
of awilo**

For the champion, I fi be milo -----For his prowess, he likened
himself to a champion and milo advert has used that slogan ‘ milo
for champions’

This extract of the song is laden with vivid description of his sexual encounter. In line 1, he makes reference to his intention to farm. Here, farm refers to the female vagina (ontological/structural metaphor), while cassava refers to the penis (Structural metaphor). Hence, the artist makes his intention known after being drunk. He also describes the movement of the backside with a euphemistic phonesthetics. Later in the song, he asserts that he is indeed a champion. This goes to show how different metaphors are explored to give a vivid description of how to engage in any sexual encounter with emphasis on a stimulant.

Assumptions in Olamide’s Story for the gods and Lil Kesh Efejoku

Assumption in pragmatic terms is used to mean an interaction or action-based belief shared by discourse participants. Yule (1985:127) explains that “in order to recognise what is meant, even when it is not actually said (or written),

the speaker(s) must be able to depend on a lot of shared assumptions and expectations. That is, what is said against a background of what is unsaid, but taken as given.” Such unsaid things are foregrounded based on shared beliefs or mutual contextual beliefs (MCB). Beliefs inferred from the selected songs are as follows:

Propagation of erroneous belief about Consent

Olamide’s *‘Story for the gods’* propagates the erroneous belief that when a girl says no, she means yes. Let us examine an excerpt from the song:

“She say she no wan wait ...”

“Now, she says morogo, he has broken my hand bla blab la”

Here, the artist informs that the girl in question initially did not want to engage in sex with him but that when he finally gets down with her, she changes her tune because she enjoyed the act. Invariably, her excuses are ‘story for the gods’, they are not true and should not be taken as anything serious. For any fan who believes in this artiste, it is enough reason to disregard any female gender’s words when it comes to sexual matters. This goes against the culture of “No” means “No”.

Also, Drug and getting drunk before Sex is propagated in the two songs: The two songs give a general belief that it a good thing to be on drugs before engaging in an sexual encounter

Consider Lil kesh:

Emi ti yo bai, mi ode le gboran mon –{ I am drunk now and
I can’t be obedient anymore} and Olamide’s mo ti mu
dogoyaro (dorogoyaro) { I have drank dogoyaro}
Like monkey tail (Monkey Tail, Monkey Tail)

Sex as conquest

When sex is metaphorized as conquest, it means that there will be a victor and a villain. The victor is the conqueror. Here, Olamide projects the idea of a conqueror. Someone who is ready to do anything to get his satisfaction. He explicitly says he will be aggressive and is not bothered about what his partner feels. He practically tells the lady to endure the act even if she is pained. This extract encourages listeners to be insensitive to the feelings of their sexual partner. This aggressiveness signpost violence and this might extend to rape. As such, encouraging fans to disregard feelings and go for the kill act as an enabler of rape culture.

La leyi odaron {Tonight, you’re in trouble}
Sare saluwa la salamo { quickly do ablution and get ready to pray}
Bo ba dun e ko faramo { Endure it even it is hurting you}
Cause laleyi ma kanran mo {cause tonight I’ll be aggressive}

Judging by the lyrics of the song, Olamide advocates sex as a conquest where the villain deserves no pity. Such strong choice of words as being in trouble, being aggressive, and enduring pain in sexual context act as indices of violence which may be emulated by the artist’s fan base.

Conclusion

Rape culture can be propagated in various ways. In this paper, we have identified how the artistes used an enabler before engaging in any sexual encounter. By so doing, they get ideas into the heads of their listeners who aspire to be like them. The artistes often use slang words for common drug substance that known on the streets, most especially by young persons who are in tune with what is going on around them. The artistes use different naming strategies to refer to things, people and acts. This include the use of slangs, metaphors, phonesthetics and ellipsis, all of which are deployed with the background knowledge that there is some level of sharedness of what these things mean in the context of discourse. Pop songs provide a veritable site for interrogating goings-on amongst the youth in any given society. It is thus essential to provide pragmatic explanation to some of these songs in view of prevailing acts in them which might be useful for engaging and developing youth orientation programs.

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LANGUAGE AS A TOOL OF ENGENDERING OR ENDANGERING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The interplay between language and law is a critical aspect of the Nigerian justice system, with far-reaching implications for delivering justice and protecting individual rights. This paper seeks to assess language as a tool for either fostering or jeopardizing the justice system in Nigeria. It also examined the connection between language and law, the interaction of local languages with English in the Nigerian legal system, and the broader implications of language in the Nigerian justice system. Using a qualitative approach with a critical assessment and reviews of relevant literature, the paper's findings revealed the vital role that language plays in shaping the accessibility, fairness, and overall effectiveness of the justice system in Nigeria. Additionally, it indicates that language barriers have created significant hindrances for many Nigerians, particularly those from rural or linguistically marginalized communities, who struggle to fully comprehend and engage with the legal system process. The study recommends, among other things, that the justice system should actively work to integrate local languages into legal proceedings, documentation, and legal education.

Keywords: Endangering, Engendering, Language, Legal Education, Nigeria Justice System

Introduction

The relationship between Language and law is profound, with language serving as the primary tool through which laws are created, interpreted, and enforced. This interplay is crucial because the effectiveness of legal systems primarily depends on the precision, clarity, and interpretation of legal language (Aluya & Olukemi, 2024). Laws are conveyed through language, making legal language an essential component of the legal system. The drafting of legal documents—such as statutes, contracts, court judgments, and more—requires careful selection of words and phrases to ensure that the intended meaning is clear and unambiguous. The language used in statutes must be precise and clear to avoid misinterpretation. Legislative drafters employ specific terminology and carefully structure sentences to convey the exact meaning of the law. Ambiguities in statutory language can lead to disputes over interpretation and inconsistent application of the law. For instance, the terms and conditions of a contract are legally binding, and any ambiguity in the language can lead to disputes (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022). Courts often examine the wording of

contracts to determine the intent of the parties and the legal obligations arising from the contract.

The interplay between language and law is central to the functioning of legal systems, as language is the medium through which laws are created, communicated, interpreted, and enforced (Solan, 1993). He stated that the effectiveness of the legal system depends on the clarity and precision of legal language, as well as the ability of legal professionals to interpret and apply the law correctly. The study of legal linguistics provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in the use of language within the legal domain, highlighting the importance of careful language use in ensuring justice and fairness (Itari & Aluya, 2024). Language, being a fundamental means of communication, serves as a bridge between the legal framework and the people it aims to serve. Conversely, the law, as the cornerstone of a society's governance, relies heavily on language to articulate and enforce its principles (Alo, 2017). In the Nigerian context, where diverse languages and legal traditions coexist, the relationship between language and law can either engender or endanger the justice system, depending on its navigation.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have examined the nexus between language and law. The most current of these studies will be evaluated nevertheless, to demonstrate their applicability and relationship to the current study. Okaphor & Akachukwu (2014), sought to appraise language rights under Nigeria legislation. The findings of their study revealed that language right in Nigeria is not entirely in bad situation where there are no laws at all protecting the language rights of persons. It has been shown that there is no specific legislation in Nigeria on language rights. Apart from where a particular enactment makes a specific provision recognizing and protecting language rights of persons, there are other provisions where they can be implied.

Umeji's (2016) comparative study of Nigeria's legal frameworks and international human rights instruments highlights the gap between policy and practice. The study argues that language plays a crucial role in implementing gender-sensitive laws. This review underscores the need for linguistic and cultural contextualization in legal reform efforts. Michael (2016), examined the communication of an interpreter and fair trial under Nigerian criminal justice system. He argued in his paper that, English language is the official language of all the courts in Nigeria and if the language is not understood by the accused person standing trial in a criminal matter, an interpreter should be provided, failure upon that, their right to a fair trial would have been breached. Though the failure to provide an interpreter has always been treated as a matter of procedure and a conviction would not be disturbed on appeal except it can be shown that the failure to provide an interpreter led to miscarriage of justice.

Adeniran (2017) examines the role of local languages in the Nigerian legal system, highlighting the tension between the use of English as the official language of law and the need for linguistic diversity. The study reveals that the exclusion of local languages from legal proceedings can lead to misunderstandings and miscarriages of justice. This review underscores the

importance of considering the interplay between local languages and English in the Nigerian legal system.

Okoye's (2019) research examines the impact of language on women's access to justice in Nigeria. The study finds that gendered language barriers hinder women's participation in legal processes. This review highlights the need for language training for legal professionals to promote gender equality.

The reviewed studies mainly tackle language barriers and complex legal language, whereas the present study seeks to address the broader implications of language in the Nigerian justice system. It covers aspects such as legal education, legal professionals' training, and the potential marginalization of certain groups due to language-related issues.

Olusegun & Oyelade (2022), sought to access justice for Nigerian women, a veritable tool to achieving sustainable development. The study discovers that women have limited access to justice as a result of challenges plaguing Nigeria's justice system. The study concludes that urgent steps must be taken to solve these challenges so that the Sustainable Development Goals will stand a better chance of being achieved by 2030.

The use of complex, esoteric language in the legal realm can serve as a barrier to entry, effectively excluding those who lack the necessary linguistic and educational resources from fully participating in the justice system. This can lead to the marginalization of certain groups, undermining the principles of fairness and equal access to justice. The coexistence of these local languages and the English language in the legal domain creates a complex dynamic that can both engender and endanger the delivery of justice. Momodu (2019), asserted that on one hand, the prevalence of English as the dominant language of the courts, legal documentation, and legal education has facilitated a certain level of standardization and cohesion within the Nigerian justice system. The use of a common legal language has enabled the development of a shared jurisprudential framework, allowing for the effective dissemination of legal knowledge and the consistent application of the law across the country. However, the exclusive or disproportionate use of English in the legal system has also given rise to significant challenges (Edem & Aluya, 2019). For many Nigerians, particularly those from rural or linguistically marginalized communities, the English language remains a foreign tongue, presenting a significant barrier to their full participation and understanding of legal proceedings. This linguistic divide has led to a lack of access to justice, as individuals struggle to comprehend the nuances of the law, communicate effectively with legal professionals, and advocate for their rights (Adegbola, 2016).

Furthermore, the integration of local languages into the legal framework is not without its own set of complexities. Osasona pointed out that with over 500 languages spoken across the country, the task of accommodating and prioritizing the linguistic needs of diverse communities has been daunting. Additionally, the lack of standardized legal terminologies in many local languages has hampered the effective translation and interpretation of legal

concepts, potentially leading to inconsistencies or misunderstandings (Osasona, 2016).

Omoniyi (2018), argued that the dominance of English in the legal system has also exacerbated pre-existing social and economic inequalities, as individuals with limited proficiency in the language are at a disadvantage when navigating the complexities of the justice system. This, in turn, has undermined the principles of fairness and equal access to justice, as certain groups are effectively excluded from the legal process.

To mitigate these challenges, Omoniyi observed that the Nigerian legal system has, in recent years, sought to incorporate elements of local languages into its operations. The provision of translation and interpretation services in courtrooms, the use of local languages in legal education, and the development of legal terminologies in indigenous languages have all been attempts to bridge the linguistic divide and make the justice system more inclusive (Omoniyi, 2018).

The Justice System in Nigeria

According to Alemika (2013), the justice system in Nigeria is a complex framework that includes traditional, civil, and Islamic law. It is designed to ensure the enforcement of laws, protection of human rights, and the provision of justice through a combination of the Constitution, statutory laws, customary laws, and religious laws. The Nigerian judiciary is an independent arm of government, as outlined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). It is responsible for interpreting laws, protecting rights, and ensuring justice. The judiciary is divided into several levels: the Supreme Court, which is the highest court in Nigeria, with the final appellate jurisdiction. It hears cases from the Court of Appeal and has the power to determine the constitutionality of laws and acts of government; the Court of Appeal, the second-highest court, which hears appeals from lower courts. It has jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters and issues related to elections; and the Federal High Court which deals with matters related to federal law, including revenue, taxation, and trade disputes. Each state equally has its own high court, which handles civil and criminal cases within the state's jurisdiction (Aluya & Edem, 2023). The Customary and Sharia Courts deal with cases based on customary law and Islamic law, respectively. Their jurisdiction varies by region, reflecting the diverse cultural and religious practices in Nigeria.

Customary law is an integral part of the Nigerian legal system, particularly in rural areas. It is based on the traditions and customs of various ethnic groups and covers matters such as marriage, inheritance, and land disputes. Customary law is recognized under the Constitution, but it must not conflict with statutory law or principles of natural justice. Similarly, in some northern states, Sharia law is applied, particularly in matters of personal status, such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Sharia law is implemented through a parallel system of courts, known as Sharia Courts, which exist alongside the regular judicial system. Sharia law in Nigeria is limited to Muslim citizens and applies only in states that have adopted it as part of their legal system.

As clearly stated by The Federal Ministry of Justice, Nigeria (2020), despite its comprehensive structure, the Nigerian justice system faces several significant challenges. Although the judiciary is constitutionally independent, there have been concerns about undue influence from the executive branch. This has sometimes resulted in accusations of politically motivated decisions, undermining public confidence in the judiciary. Corruption is a pervasive issue in Nigeria, and the judiciary is not immune. Instances of bribery and other forms of corruption have been reported, leading to questions about the integrity of judicial decisions. There is also the problem of delays in justice delivery. The Nigerian judicial system is often criticized for delays in delivering justice. Cases can take years to resolve, leading to a backlog of cases and prolonged pretrial detention for many accused persons. These delays are due to several factors, including insufficient funding, lack of infrastructure, and procedural inefficiencies.

Akinseye-George (2010) noted that apart from the fact that access to justice is limited for many Nigerians, particularly those in rural areas and the economically disadvantaged, legal representation is often expensive, and there are insufficient legal aid services to assist those who cannot afford private counsel. He further observed that the coexistence of multiple legal systems (common law, customary law, and Sharia law) can create confusion and inconsistency in the application of justice. Human Rights Watch, (2019) revealed that human rights violations, including unlawful detention, police brutality, and inadequate prison conditions, are ongoing concerns in Nigeria and that the justice system has been criticized for not doing enough to protect citizens' rights and hold violators accountable. The Nigerian government has faced pressure both domestically and internationally to reform its justice system to better safeguard human rights.

Language as a Tool of Engendering Justice System in Nigeria

Adebola (2016), argued that the effective translation and interpretation of legal proceedings, the use of plain language in legal documents, and the provision of language assistance services can all contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and accessible justice system. By addressing the linguistic challenges faced by litigants and defendants, the justice system can work towards ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their linguistic background, have an equal opportunity to understand and participate in the legal process. Beyond the mere encoding of the law, Rackley (2020), stated that language also plays a critical role in the interpretation and application of legal principles. Judges, lawyers, and other legal professionals must engage in a deep analysis of the language used in legal texts, parsing the nuances of words, phrases, and contextual cues to determine the intended meaning and appropriate application of the law. This interpretive process is particularly crucial in cases where the language of the law is ambiguous or open to multiple interpretations (Rackley, 2020).

The influence of language on the law extends beyond the courtroom, shaping the very structure and organization of the legal system. The choice of language, or combination of languages, used in legal proceedings,

documentation, and education can have significant implications for access to justice and the fair representation of diverse linguistic communities (Scarpa & Jan, 2019, Aluya, 2023).

The law can also regulate the use of language, as seen in the regulation of defamation, hate speech, and other forms of linguistic expressions that are deemed harmful or contrary to the public interest. Legal language carries authority because it comes from institutions that hold power, such as legislatures, courts, and government agencies. The way laws are written and enforced can have significant implications for individuals and society. For example, legal definitions of terms like "marriage," "citizenship," and "property" can have far-reaching effects on people's lives. Legal language is a means of social control, as it regulates behavior by establishing what is lawful and unlawful. The use of legal terminology can also influence how society perceives certain actions or behaviors. For example, the legal distinction between "murder" and "manslaughter" reflects different levels of culpability and intent, shaping public perceptions of these crimes. Austin J. (1962). Based on the distinctive features of the legal language characterized by obscured expressions and circumlocutions, long-winded construction and tortuous syntax, apparent meaningless repetitions and archaisms as well as the linguistic diversities in Nigeria, it would, however, appear that the language of law, by default is programmed to endanger justice system in Nigeria except conscious interventions are made.

Language as a Tool of Endangering the Justice System in Nigeria

One of the key challenges facing the Nigerian justice system according to Momodu (2019), is the linguistic diversity of the country. Nigeria is home to over 500 languages, with the three major languages being Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. This linguistic diversity can create significant barriers in the legal system, particularly for individuals who do not have a strong command of the dominant languages used in the courtroom, such as English or pidgin English. The inability to effectively communicate with legal professionals or understand court proceedings can profoundly impact an individual's ability to access justice and exercise their legal rights (Momodu, 2019). In furtherance to this argument, Ehonwa, G. (2020) asserted that Nigeria is a linguistically diverse country with over 500 languages spoken, noting that the official language of the judiciary is English, but many Nigerians are more proficient in their indigenous languages. Furthermore, the complexity of legal language itself can further exacerbate the challenges faced by litigants and defendants in the justice system. The specialized terminology and jargon used in legal documents and court proceedings can be intimidating and inaccessible to the average Nigerian citizen, who may not have the necessary legal expertise or education to comprehend the nuances of the law. This linguistic barrier can lead to a lack of understanding of the legal process, undermining the principles of fairness and due process (Osasona, 2017).

The misuse or neglect of language in the justice system can endanger the principles of justice and lead to the marginalization of certain groups. For instance, Omoniyi (2018), argued that the exclusive use of English or the failure

to provide adequate translation services in courtrooms can effectively exclude non-English-speaking individuals from the legal proceedings, denying them their right to a fair trial. Similarly, the use of language that perpetuates biases, stereotypes, or discrimination can undermine the impartiality of the justice system and compromise the delivery of just outcomes (Omoniyi, 2018).

The importance of language in the justice system is particularly evident in the context of legal education and the training of legal professionals. The language used in legal education, from textbooks to classroom discussions, can shape the mindset and perspectives of future lawyers, judges, and legal practitioners. If the educational system fails to adequately address the linguistic diversity of the country and the importance of language in the legal process, it can perpetuate a legal culture that is disconnected from the realities of the people it serves.

The Broader Implications of Language in the Nigerian Justice System.

The role of language in the Nigerian justice system extends far beyond the mere execution of legal proceedings and documentation. Language, in its varied dimensions, has a profound impact on the broader societal and political implications of the country's judicial processes. The implications of this language-based exclusion are far-reaching. Babalola (2010), stated that individuals who struggle to navigate the legal system due to linguistic barriers were less likely to seek legal recourse for their grievances, potentially leading to a systemic underrepresentation of certain socioeconomic or ethnic groups within the judicial process. This, in turn, has perpetuated existing power structures and social inequalities, as the legal system has failed to adequately address the concerns and needs of marginalized communities (Babalola, 2010). At the heart of this issue lies the fundamental question of access to justice. Alabi (2012) asserts that the dominance of the English language, which serves as the primary language of the courts, legal education, and legal literature, creates a significant barrier for many Nigerians who are more comfortable communicating in their local languages. This linguistic divide has effectively excluded a substantial portion of the population from fully engaging with and understanding the legal system, undermining the principles of equality and fairness before the law (Alabi, 2012). The language divide in the justice system also has exacerbated regional and ethnic tensions within the country. As different linguistic and cultural groups struggle to have their voices heard and their interests represented within the legal framework, the potential for conflict and divisiveness has in turn increased. This has undermined the cohesion and unity of the Nigerian state, posing a significant challenge to the country's long-term social and political stability (Emezie, 2014).

Nwabueze, B.O. (2016) suggested that the Nigerian Constitution provides the foundation for the rule of law and protection of fundamental rights. Ensuring these provisions are equitably enforced is critical for justice. However, Nwabueze observed that many laws in Nigeria are outdated and do not reflect contemporary social economic, and political realities and that this misalignment can lead to the application of laws that are no longer relevant or fair, thereby endangering justice. Furthermore, Nwabueze noted that legal provisions that are ambiguous or overtly complex can be difficult for judges

and lawyers to interpret consistently, leading to varied and potentially unjust outcome. On the features of legal language, Crystal and Davy (1969), Bhatia (1993) and Tiersma (1999) implicated the lexicon of legal language as being filled with technical vocabulary and archaism, outdated words and expressions which has made it inaccessible to those unfamiliar with the legal system, leading to confusion and misunderstandings.

Police Investigations and Interrogations

The language used during police investigations and interrogations plays a crucial role in determining the accuracy of information gathered and the treatment of suspects (Berk-Seligson, 2009). In Nigeria, where multiple languages are spoken, language barriers can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications, potentially resulting in wrongful convictions or miscarriages of justice (Okere, 2011).

Research has shown that the use of a suspect's native language during interrogations can improve the accuracy of information gathered and reduce the risk of false confessions (Russell, 2016). Conversely, the use of a language that is not familiar to the suspect can lead to confusion, anxiety, and decreased comprehension, potentially resulting in inaccurate or unreliable information (Shuy, 1998). Furthermore, language can also impact the treatment of suspects during police investigations and interrogations. For instance, the use of aggressive or confrontational language can create a hostile environment, leading to increased stress and anxiety for the suspect (Leo, 2008). This can result in suspects becoming more susceptible to suggestion or coercion, potentially leading to false confessions or inaccurate information (Gudjonsson, 2003). The language used during police investigations and interrogations is a critical factor in determining the accuracy of information gathered and the treatment of suspects. Ensuring that suspects are interviewed in a language they understand, and that language is used in a clear and respectful manner, is essential for promoting justice and preventing miscarriages of justice.

Legal Drafting and Interpretation

The language used in legal drafting and interpretation plays a crucial role in shaping the justice system. Ambiguous or unclear language can lead to misinterpretation, confusion, and ultimately, miscarriages of justice (Crystal, 2011). In Nigeria, where multiple languages are spoken, the use of complex legal language can exacerbate existing inequalities and limit access to justice for marginalized communities (Okere, 2011). Clear and concise language, on the other hand, can promote justice by ensuring that laws are understood and applied consistently (Bhatia, 1993). Effective legal drafting and interpretation require consideration of the social, cultural, and linguistic context in which laws will be applied (Gibbons, 2003).

In Nigeria, efforts to promote plain language drafting and interpretation can help address issues of accessibility and inequality. This includes using simple language, avoiding technical jargon, and providing clear definitions and explanations (Williams, 2009). Furthermore, involving diverse stakeholders in the legal drafting process can help ensure that laws are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all citizens (Kurzon, 2001). By prioritizing clear and inclusive

language, Nigeria can promote a more just and equitable legal system.

Recommendation

In light of the findings, the paper recommends thus:

- i. The expansion of the use of local languages in the justice system since the use of local languages in legal system has created significant barriers for many citizens, particularly those from linguistically marginalized communities.
- ii. Investment in language-inclusive legal education and training to ensure that legal professionals, including judges, lawyers, and court staff, have the necessary language skills to effectively communicate with and serve all segments of the population should be a top priority.
- iii. Establishing mechanisms for continuous stakeholder engagement and feedback to create a more inclusive and responsive justice system. There should be established channels for regular dialogue and feedback from diverse linguistic communities. This could involve the creation of language-focused advisory boards, the organization of community forums and consultations, and the implementation of grievance redressal mechanisms that are accessible to individuals regardless of their language proficiency. By actively incorporating the perspectives and experiences of all linguistic groups, the justice system can work to address the unique challenges they face.
- iv. Judges must articulate their reasoning clearly to ensure that the judgment is understood and can be applied in future cases. Legal precedents, which are based judicial on language, play a crucial role in common law systems. By prioritizing clear and inclusive language, Nigeria can promote a more just and equitable legal system. By prioritizing clear and inclusive language, Nigeria can promote a more just and equitable legal system.

Recommendation

Conclusion

The intricate relationship between language and law in the Nigerian justice system is a complex issue that has far-reaching implications for the country's social, political, and economic landscape. The findings presented in this paper underscores the critical role that language plays in shaping the accessibility, fairness, and overall effectiveness of the legal system. At the core of this issue is the tension between the dominance of the English language, which serves as the primary language of the courts, legal documentation, and legal education, and the rich diversity of over 500 local languages spoken across Nigeria. While the use of a common legal language has facilitated a certain level of standardization and cohesion within the justice system, it has also created significant barriers for many Nigerians, particularly those from rural or linguistically marginalized communities, who struggle to fully comprehend and engage with the legal process.

The exclusion of local languages from the legal framework has exacerbated pre-existing social and economic inequalities, as individuals with limited proficiency in English are at a distinct disadvantage when navigating

the complexities of the justice system. This, in turn, has undermined the principles of fairness and equal access to justice, as certain groups are effectively marginalized from the legal process.

To address these myriads of problems, the justice system should actively work to integrate local languages into legal proceedings, documentation, and legal education. This could involve providing professional translation and interpretation services, developing standardized legal terminologies in indigenous dialects, and mandating the use of local languages in certain legal contexts. Investment in language-inclusive legal education and training to ensure that legal professionals, including judges, lawyers, and court staff, have the necessary language skills to effectively communicate with and serve all segments of the population should be a top priority; Establishing mechanisms for continuous stakeholder engagement and feedback to create a more inclusive and responsive justice system. There should be established channels for regular dialogue and feedback from diverse linguistic communities. This could involve the creation of language-focused advisory boards, the organization of community forums and consultations, and the implementation of grievance redressal mechanisms that are accessible to individuals regardless of their language proficiency. By actively incorporating the perspectives and experiences of all linguistic groups, the justice system can work to address the unique challenges they face. Judges must articulate their reasoning clearly to ensure that the judgment is understood and can be applied in future cases. Legal precedents, which are based judicial on language, play a crucial role in common law systems. By prioritizing clear and inclusive language, Nigeria can promote a more just and equitable legal system. By prioritizing clear and inclusive language, Nigeria can promote a more just and equitable legal system.

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LEXICAL GAPS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR TRANSLATION: EXAMPLES FROM AMINATA SOW FALL'S *THE BEGGARS' STRIKE*

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Abstract

This study entitled "Lexical Gaps in the Translation of *The Beggars' Strike*", deals with source-language words and/or expressions that have no equivalent or are non-existent in the target language, and that constitute, therefore, what is called lexical gaps in the target language. Specifically, it aims at investigating the translatability of lexical gaps in *The Beggars' Strike*" (which is the target text of Aminata Sow Fall's novel, *La grève des Bàttu*), and the strategies used by the translator to solve the problems posed by such lexical gaps. The study adopted the cultural translation theory which emphasises diversity of cultures as well as the Interpretive Theory of Translation which gives pre-eminence to translating the meaning of a text and not its words taken in isolation. Four research questions guided this study in line with the objectives. The findings buttress the point that lexical gaps, whether they be culturally grounded or simple words, do not denote an impossibility of translation as they can be expressed through various translation techniques such as borrowing, adaptation, or domestication among others. The study recommends that in case of borrowing, footnotes or a glossary should be used to expatiate words or expressions which are unfamiliar to target readers.

Keywords: Lexical gap, culture, equivalent, adaptation, domestication

Introduction:

It is obvious that with a good translation one does not need to read through the source text for a better understanding of the text in question (target text). As a matter of fact, many a times such target texts are considered as original works by uninformed readers until they are confronted with the presence of a language substratum or borrowed words that point clearly to the source text or language. Indeed, a closer look at some of these "faithful" translation works could reveal the existence therein of lexical gaps which theoreticians like Peter Newmark (1988) refer to as cases of untranslatability. For the purpose of this study, we considered certain source-text words – in *La grève des Bàttu* – which do not have equivalent words in the target text – *The Beggars' Strike*. This study aims, therefore, at investigating the translatability of lexical gaps in our corpus and the solutions proffered by the Translator. Our objectives are to:

- define what is a lexical gap;

- evaluate the problems lexical gaps pose in general to a translator
- identify lexical gaps in the work selected, notably *The Beggars' Strike*, and
- assess the translator's ways of circumventing the problems posed by the said lexical gaps.

Four research questions guided this study. They are:

- What is a lexical gap?
- What problems do lexical gaps pose to the translator?
- What are the lexical gaps in *The Beggars' Strike*?
- How did the translator overcome the problems posed by the presence of lexical gaps in *The Beggars' Strike*?

To be more specific, the study endeavoured to answer the following questions: What are the source-text words or terms that cannot be found in the target language and constitute, for that reason, a lexical gap? Are they culturally grounded or simple lexical items or expressions of language? Could it be said that the words in question are untranslatable? What translation techniques did the translator use to resolve this thorny problem?

The fact that translation has always been possible in practice does not preclude translation scholars or theoreticians from asking questions about untranslatable words or cases of untranslatability. Works on untranslatability belong in general to two classes, namely linguistic approaches that lead to an impossibility of translation, and discursive approaches that affirm the opposite. Among the many theoreticians and translators in the first class, can be found Sapir and Worf (1956) for whom the impossibility of translation derived from the fact that every language has its unique way of splitting and structuring reality (e.g. Eskimoos who have thirty different words to describe snow), as well as Catford and Newmark. Catford (1965) expounded this theory in his book *Linguistic Theory of Translation*: "Cultural untranslatability arises when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the source language text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL is a part. For instance, the names of some institutions, clothes, foods and abstract concepts, amongst others." In effect, Catford (1965:101) held that: "to talk of 'cultural untranslatability' may be just another way of talking about colloquial untranslatability: the impossibility of finding an equivalent collocation in the TL. And this would be a type of linguistic untranslatability." In other words, Catford reduced cultural untranslatability to a type of linguistic untranslatability, that is to say, it is due to lack of equivalent linguistic or cultural elements in the target language.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted two theories, the first is the cultural translation theory presented most significantly by Homi K. Bhabha in a chapter entitled "How Newness Enters the World: Postmodern Space, Postcolonial Time and the Trials of Cultural Translation" (in *The Location of Culture*, 1994/2004). This theory emphasises diversity of cultures and a discursive approach to cultural

translation. The other one is the Interpretive Theory of Translation propounded by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer.

Cultural Translation Theory

Cultural translation theory explores how translation is not just a linguistic transfer but also a negotiation of cultural identities, histories, and ideologies. It posits that translation involves cultural adaptation and transformation rather than mere word-for-word substitution (Bassnett, 1998). The theory was significantly developed by Homi Bhabha (1994), who introduced the idea of the "third space"—a hybrid cultural zone created through translation. This theory emphasizes that translation can challenge power dynamics and reshape cultural narratives (Venuti, 2017).

This theory emphasises diversity of cultures and a discursive approach to cultural translation. It gives pre-eminence to translating the meaning of a text and not its words taken in isolation. Thus, it counters the notion of untranslatability canvassed by some linguists like Catford (and also Peter Newmark) as discussed above.

Interpretative Theory of Translation:

The Interpretative Theory of Translation (ITT), also known as the theory of sense, was developed by scholars at the École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT) in Paris, particularly by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer. This theory argues that translation is not merely a direct transfer of words from one language to another but involves three key stages: comprehension, deverbalization, and reformulation (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1995, p. 23).

1. Comprehension – The translator first understands the meaning of the source text beyond its literal words, considering context, culture, and intention.
2. Deverbalization – The translator separates meaning from linguistic form, focusing on the underlying sense rather than individual words.
3. Reformulation – The translator expresses the same meaning in the target language, ensuring naturalness and clarity.

This theory highlights the importance of cognitive and contextual factors in translation, emphasizing that translators should prioritize sense over literal equivalence (Lederer, 2003, p. 45). It is particularly influential in conference interpreting, where rapid understanding and reformulation are essential instead of looking for correspondences. According to Inyang (2010, p. 68), the idea of translation by correspondence is a mistaken affirmation of the impossibility of translation:

According to the Interpretive Theory of Translation, translation by correspondence allows its advocates, including Newmark, to discuss problems of translation that are in fact fake problems. They include words which are considered untranslatable because they cannot be transcoded (i.e. words taken out of context whereas in context and within a text, anything can be translated.) ...

Lederer (1994), cited by Iman Sridi (2014, p. 135), affirms that « all words taken in isolation are untranslatable »; [However, at the level of the text,] « anything can be translated because words are actualised and assume meanings that can be re-expressed»

Very pertinent to this study are the definitions of cultural translation and lexical gaps in translation.

The Concept of Culture in Translation: Cultural Translation

The recognition of the important role culture plays in translation is what led to the cultural turn or shift in Translation Studies in the 80's, with many definitions of the concept put forward since then. According to Bassnet (2014, p. 92) cultural translation refers to the process of translating not just words but also cultural concepts, values, and norms from one language to another. It goes beyond linguistic equivalence and focuses on adapting meaning to ensure cultural appropriateness and comprehension for the target audience. Also worthy of note here is the definition given by Conway (2012),

Cultural translation is a concept with competing definitions coming from two broad fields, anthropology/[ethnography](#) and cultural/[postcolonial](#) studies. (...) For anthropologists, foreign cultures are “carried across” to domestic readers in textual form, as described in articles and books, while for cultural studies scholars, what is “carried across” is not so much culture as it is the people who leave their place of origin and enter a new locale, bearing their culture with them.

Thus, it is a well-known fact that Translation Studies does not concern itself with only language issues but also with cultural matters. Cultural translation is part of cultural anthropology in the sense that it is a discipline which questions translation through cultural differences. The following are some key aspects of cultural Translation:

1. Intercultural Mediation – The translator acts as a bridge between cultures, ensuring that the translation captures both linguistic and cultural nuances (Venuti, 2017, p. 55).
2. Adaptation vs. Literal Translation – In some cases, direct translation is not effective, and adjustments are needed to reflect cultural realities (Bhabha, 1994, p. 224).
3. Postcolonial and Anthropological Perspectives – Cultural translation is often discussed in postcolonial studies, where it refers to the translation of cultural identities, traditions, and ideologies between dominant and marginalized cultures (Spivak, 2000, p. 12).

For example, translating humour, idioms, or religious references requires cultural sensitivity to avoid misinterpretations. A well-known example is the translation of brand slogans — companies often modify their messages to fit local cultural norms rather than providing a word-for-word translation.

Thus, it is a well-known fact that Translation Studies does not concern itself with only language issues but also with cultural matters. Cultural translation is part of cultural anthropology in the sense that it is a discipline which questions translation through cultural differences. Having looked at the explanation of

the theories adopted and the concept of cultural translation that are vital for this work, we shall now look at our research questions.

What is Lexical Gap in Translation?

According to Newmark (1988) and Baker (2011), lexical gaps refer to instances where a word or phrase exists in the source language but has no direct equivalent in the target language. These gaps can arise due to cultural, conceptual, or linguistic differences between languages. For example, certain cultural practices, objects, or emotions that are specific to one language group may lack a direct lexical counterpart in another. Baker (2011, p. 56) explains that these gaps are especially pronounced when translating idiomatic expressions, culturally bound terms, or specialized jargon. Similarly, Newmark (1988, p. 102) notes that lexical gaps pose significant challenges in achieving both semantic and pragmatic equivalence, particularly in literary and technical texts.

Global Language Services (2024) sees lexical gap as a term used to describe the absence of a word in a particular language where it is present in another.” It goes on to affirm that they are several types of lexical gaps, namely:

1. Phonological gaps – potential words which are permitted by the phonotactic rules of the language but wouldn’t make any sense.
2. Morphological gaps – words which could exist based on the morphological and grammatical rules of word formation in a given language (including the stem and affixes) that aren’t actual words.
3. Semantic gaps – also called an ‘accidental gap’ or ‘lacuna’; this is a word with a distinct meaning which is missing from the vocabulary of a language.

As a matter of fact, lexical gaps exist in all languages in respect of translation. The following are two examples of lexical gaps in English listed by Global Language Services (2024): 1. Schadenfreude: a German word which describes the pleasure one feels from someone else’s misfortune. This word doesn’t exist in English though there is a word derived from ancient Greek, “epicaricacy” which is rarely used. 2. Fargin – a Yiddish word which describes the joy one feels at the success of others.

Some other examples of lexical gaps in English given by Day Translationsblog (2018) are as follows:

1. In Czech language, they say “vbyafnout”. But there is no equivalent English word for it though it means in English the act of jumping out in order to scare a person. (...) 4. In English, there is no word available to describe the action of looking into the distance, but for the Japanese, it is called “boketto”. 5. You scratch your head in an effort to remember something. It is the long description of the action in English. For Hawaiians however, they call it “pana po’o”.

One notable lexical gap in English is the fact that it has only one verb, “to know”, to account for a pair of verbs in Spanish, i.e “conocer” and “saber”, and also in French, i.e “connaître” and “savoir”. Thus, it behoves the translator to

know that the French do say “connaître quelqu’un”, meaning “to know someone”, but never “savoir quelqu’un”; and again that they do say both “connaître quelque chose” and “savoir quelque chose”, meaning “to know something”. Pidgeon English filled this gap with the verb “sabi”. But it has no nuance in meaning between “know” and “sabi” as seen in Spanish or French.

Methodology

One major difficulty in translation has to do with filling lexical gaps which occur when a word or expression in the source language (SL) has no direct equivalent in the target language (TL). Generally speaking, translators’ resort to many options, notably choosing between borrowing (with or without a footnote), and coining or rephrasing words or expressions of the source language which do not exist in the target language. This study looked at how the translators tackled this challenge based on the following peculiarities of the word or expression:

Culture-Specific Words or Expressions

Munday (2016, p. 98) explains that a Translator will actually have a challenge translating culture-specific words or expressions that do not exist in the target language. He gives the following examples:

- The Danish word *hygge* (a sense of coziness and well-being) has no exact English equivalent.
- The Japanese term *tsundoku* (積ん読) refers to the habit of buying books and letting them pile up unread, which lacks a precise counterpart in many languages.

Translating such words that do not have direct equivalents from the target languages constitutes a real problem to a translator. But a cultural reference or an explanation would do here.

Loss of Meaning and Nuance

According to Newmark (1988, p. 74), Lexical Gaps can lead to semantic loss, as translators struggle to convey the full emotional, cultural, or connotative weight of a term. For instance:

- The German word *Fernweh* (a longing for faraway places) is often translated as “wanderlust,” but the two words have slightly different connotations.

This happens quite often in translation without any explanation as we shall see in some examples below.

Risk of Over-Explanation

Venuti (2017, p. 120) explains that to compensate for lexical gaps, translators may need to paraphrase or add explanations, which can make the translation wordy or unnatural. For example:

The Arabic word *tarab* (طرب), which describes a deep, almost ecstatic emotional response to music, requires a long explanation in English. Again this study revealed the authors’ attempt to over-explain which is as a result of the loss of meaning or nuance created by lexical gaps.

Difficulty in Technical and Legal Translation

In technical, legal, and medical translation for instance, missing terms that a translator is not able to convey the meaning into the target language can

create ambiguities or legal risks. Malmkjær (2010, p. 102) explains that some legal concepts, such as the German *Schadenersatz* (compensation for damages), may not have a direct equivalent in other legal systems. In this situation, a translator may have to adapt or explain such concepts if they are not fully understood.

Challenges in Machine Translation (MT)

Baker (2018, p. 62), looking at the challenges from the angle of Machine Translation, underscores that Lexical Gaps present a major hurdle for Machine Translation, as literal translations may be misleading or incorrect. Without cultural awareness, AI-based translation tools often fail to capture the intended meaning.

Results and Discussion

Most of the lexical gaps in *Beggars' Strike* can be classified as semantic gaps – also called an ‘accidental gap’ or ‘lacuna’ as they deal with source-language words having a distinct meaning which is missing from the vocabulary of the target language. The list is long and far from being exhaustive. Some of the words or expressions and their French translations as found in *The Beggars' Strike* are as follows: not exhaustive as we chose to omit many Wolof words or expressions used by the author together with their French transcription such as on page 17, *Gaa ñi am na lu xew* – also written in French: “quelque chose est arrivé” (Something’s happened.) and on page 18, *Xana daal atte yalla la!* With the French transcription, “C’est un coup du sort.” (It must be fate). The following are examples of lexical gaps found in the target-text *Beggar's Strike*:

| S/No. | ST - <i>La grève des Bàttu</i> | TT- <i>Beggars' Strike</i> |
|-------|--|---|
| 1 | Baasi salté: chapitre 5, p. 54 | A delicious couscous p. 39 |
| 2 | Baay jagal: chapitre 2, p.17 | Mending pots and pans chapter 2 p.10 |
| 3 | Beeco: chapitre 2, p. 18 | Pagne p.11 |
| 4 | Bóóli: chapitre 14, p. 116 | Bowls p. 88 |
| 5 | Boroom bàttu: chapitre 2, p.15 | Crowd of beggars chapter 2, p. 8 |
| 6 | Boroom bàttu: chapitre 2, p.17 Il se convertit au boroom bàttu sans bàttu, mais main tendue. | He became a ‘bàttu-bearer without a bàttu’ simply holding out his hand for alms. chapter 2 p.10 |
| 7 | Boubous: p. 18 | Boubous p. 11 |
| 8 | Bouts de bois: chapitre 2, p. 17. “Pour nourrir et habiller ses deux épouses et ses huit bouts de bois...” | had two wives and eight children to feed and cloth p. 10 |
| 9 | <i>Céy yalla!</i> Chapitre 1, p. 13 | Chei yalla! P. 7 |
| 10 | Cuuraay: chapitre 2, p. 19 | Intoxicating smoke of Cuuraye |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | | incense p. 12 |
| 11 | Gongo: chapitre 2, p. 19 | Captivating perfume of gongo p. 12 |
| 12 | Jom: chapitre 4, p. 76. “vertu de jom | “virtue of jom which constitutes a restraint on any reprehensible behavior p. 56 |
| 13 | Marabouts: chapitre 1, p.8 | Marabouts chapter 4 pp. 4, 31 |
| 14 | Monsieur Dabo: chapitre 3, p. 20 | Monsieur Dabo p.18 |
| 15 | Ndéysaan : chapitre 4, p. 31. “d’éternels ndéysaan” | Endless exclamations of ‘Ndesan!’ p.21 |
| 16 | Serigne Birama: chapitre 1, p. 9 | Serigne Birama p.4 |
| 17 | Sokhna: chapitre 1, p. 9 | Sokhna, chapter 1 p. 4 |
| 18 | Talibés: chapitre 1, p. 5 | Talibés chapter 1, p. 1 |
| 19 | Tiem: chapitre 4, p. 43 | Not translated p. 31 |
| 20 | Toubabs: chapitre 3, p. 26 | White people p. 17 |
| 21 | Turki: chapitre 1, p. 12 | <i>turki</i> , was translated as it is on page 6 |

Culturally Grounded French Words in the Source-Text and Their Translation

Boubous: (chapitre 2, p. 18).

Collins Dictionary defines boubou as a long flowing garment worn by men and women in Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and some other parts of Africa. Christa Clarke (2023, para. 1) stated in her blog that the origin of the word boubou “is a French distortion of the Wolof word *mbubb* which refers to a loose-fitting ankle-length caftan worn in Senegal.” Thus it is little wonder the word is commonly used in the above-mentioned countries. However, this kind of garment is hardly known as “boubou” in Nigeria where it is rather called “babariga” in the North and “agbada” in the South-West. We suggest, therefore, that a brief explanation of the words “babariga” and “agbada” be added as a footnote to the translation.

Bouts de bois: (chapitre 2, p. 17.)

Jenny (2010) provides in his blog a useful information on the origin of the expression “bouts de bois” whose literal meaning in English is “bits of wood”. He stated in that Blog that in Senegal and Mali, “according to tradition, you don’t count people, for fear of attracting the attention of the gods to what a large household you have. Instead, you count “bouts de bois,” bits of wood, useless to the gods.” Thus, the narrator said “huit bouts de bois” (eight bits of wood) in accordance with the belief of the people. But this cultural dimension of the source-text is completely lacking in the target-text as the translator chose to translate the expression “eight children”.

Marabouts: (chapitre 1, p.8)

Both Collins and Cambridge dictionaries list “Marabout” as an English word. Among the various meaning they give to the word marabout, let’s retain the

following: for Collins, one of the meanings of the French word “marabout” is “a type of African witch doctor” while for Cambridge, it is among others, “a Muslim religious leader or teacher, especially in North Africa.” Though the use of this word is widespread in North Africa, Senegal and the Sahel as well as Côte d’Ivoire, it is not that common in Nigeria. Nigerians talk of “Alhajis” and “Mallams”, rather than “Marabouts”. Here again, there is no gainsaying the use of footnote to explain the connection between these three words could enhance the reception of the text by target readers.

Monsieur Dabo: (chapitre 3, p. 20)

Cambridge Dictionary translates the French word “monsieur” differently as “Mister”, “man, gentleman” and “Sir”. Concerning the last option (Sir), it explains its usage as “a polite form of address (spoken or written) to a man”. But the fact that it can be used separately as “Oui, Monsieur” meaning “Yes, Sir”, or as an epithet to a name like “Oui, Monsieur Dabo” with the same meaning of “Yes, Sir”, and not “Yes, Sir Dabo” creates a semantic gap in English. Even the expression “Yes, Mister Dabo” does not capture the politeness inherent in the French expression. This must be the reason why the translator gave the same French expression, “Yes, Monsieur Dabo” in the target text. Again, we are of the opinion that adding an explanation here as a footnote could be quite helpful to target readers.

Toubab: (chapitre 3, p. 26)

YourDictionary (2024) defines Toubab is a word which refers to a person of European descent (“a White man”), and it is used most frequently in the Gambia, Senegal, Guinea and Mali, and also Côte d’Ivoire. It states also that it is most likely derived from the Wolof word for Europe “Tougal”; and it draws an analogy between the word Wolof meaning the people of Jollof, and Toubab meaning the people of Tougal (Europe). In Nigeria, most people do not know this word, Toubab. The common word Nigerians use to describe or refer to people of European descent is “Oyibo”. So the translator settled for the word “whites” which is global, instead of “Oyibo” which is more local.

The examples canvassed above show the difficulties in translating lexical gaps consisting of culturally grounded words or expressions and the need to resort to borrowings and footnotes.

Borrowed Words/Expressions in the Source-Text with or without Footnote

It is noteworthy that the author of the source text, Aminata Sow Fall, dealt with the lexical gaps in her novel written in French by using many borrowed words and expressions from her vernacular language, Wolof and adding a footnote to most of them. This translation approach consisting of borrowing words from the source language and explaining them with footnotes is an alternative to rephrasing or explaining the words in question as shown in the following examples in *La grève des Bàttu*.

Borrowed Words/Expressions in the Source-Text with Footnote:

| S/No. | ST - <i>La grève des Bàttu</i> | With Footnote | Translation of footnote |
|-------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Baasi salté: chapitre 5, p. 54 | couscous préparé avec une sauce délicieuse | a couscous prepared with a delicious sauce |
| 2 | Baay jagal: chapitre 2, p.17 | Réparateur | Repairer |
| 3 | Beeco: chapitre 2, p. 18 | petit pagne qui se porte en dessous d'un plus grand pagne. | little cloth worn under a wrapper |
| 4 | Bóóli: chapitre 14, p. 116 | grande assiette creuse | Big hollow plate |
| 5 | Boroom bàttu: chapitre 2, p.15 | Les mendiants. Ils tendent, pour demander l'aumône, le bàttu qui est une petite calebasse. | Beggars. They stretch out the <i>bàttu</i> which is a little calabash in order to ask for alms. |
| 6 | Cuuraay: chapitre 1, p. 19 | Encens | Incense |
| 7 | Gongo: chapitre 1, p. 19 | Encens | Incense |
| 8 | Tiem: chapitre 4, p. 43 | expression de mépris | Spiteful way to address someone |
| 9 | Turki: chapitre 1, p. 12 | habit qui se porte sous le boubou ou le caftan | Dress worn under a flowing gown or caftan |

Borrowed Words/Expressions in the Source-Text without Footnote:

| S/No. | ST - <i>La grève des Bàttu</i> | No Footnote | Not Translated |
|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1 | Jom: chapitre 4, p. 76. | | |
| 2 | Ndéysaan : chapitre 4, p. 31. | | |
| 3 | <i>Céy yalla!</i> Chapitre 1, p. 13 | | |

Borrowed Words/Expressions in the Source-Text and Their Translation:

A good example of borrowed words/expressions in the source-text is the word *Bàttu* which has nothing to do with the French word *battu* (beaten – past participle form of the verb *battre* which means to ‘beat’). *Bàttu* is the name

given in Wolof to a kind of wooden bowl or calabash which is commonly used by beggars in Senegal to ask for alms. These begging bowls are the tools and insignia of beggars in the region and in a metonymic sense, they stand for the beggars themselves.

There is no gainsaying that within the setting of the novel – notably the environment where the story takes place and which, by the many linguistics (Wolof names and words), religious and socio-cultural indices, refers to the Sene-Gambia – the use of this metonymy can be easily understood because of the shared knowledge of the link between *Bàttu* and beggars. But the case is completely different in the target text setting where the word *Bàttu* is unknown. The translator must, therefore, find a corresponding word in the target language or, where this does not exist, resort to an oblique way of translating *Bàttu*. In other words, s/he must go beyond seeking a word-for-word translation – which Seleskovitch and Lederer call transcoding – and look at the meaning of the sentence and interpret it so as to render a sense-for-sense translation that will correspond to or remain faithful to the ‘vouloir dire’ of the author. We believe this is what Dorothy S. Blair did by translating the said title as *The Beggars’ Strike* and not as *The Bàttu Strike*. However, the translator’s position here contrasts sharply with her approach in translating the same word as *bàttu* on page 8, and adding an explanatory note: “the calabash which serves as a begging bowl”.

Another example of borrowed word found in the source text is “talibés” which is derived from Arabic into French. Rowan Hughes (2020) stated that

The Senegalese talibé system has its roots in the 14th century but it has evolved dramatically since about the 1960s, from a respected system of religious education and character building into a fraught system of exploitation. Today, predominantly rural families entrust their sons to urban-based Islamic teachers known as marabouts. However, instead of receiving the anticipated Islamic education, tens of thousands of these “talibé” children typically experience conditions of deprivation, extreme corporal punishment and being forced to beg for daily quotas of money as well as their own food for 8 to 10 hours a day. The United Nations considers the talibé system today to be a form of modern slavery.

From the above quotation, it is obvious that the word “talibés” has a significant religious and socio-cultural dimension and its usage is specific to Senegal and some some neighboring countries such as Gambia and Mauritania. But in Nigeria which is outside that geographical spread, such a word is quite unknown, and besides, it has a corresponding word which is called ‘almajiri’ or ‘almajirai’ in the plural. Kabiru (2010) defines this term as follows:

In Nigeria, the word “Almajiri” means those who left their villages or town, parents, relations, and friends in search of Islamic religious knowledge and scholarship.

Okonkwo (2017) expatiates on its origin:

The term “Almajiri” is a Hausa word for pupil or student and emanates from the Arabic word ‘AlMuhajir’ which means a seeker of Islamic knowledge. (...) The Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria started around the 11th century in Kanem-Borno and was later replicated in the Sokoto Caliphate after the triumph of the Jihad led by Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio.

We cannot help but observe the notable similarity between these two systems of talibés and Almajiris. Therefore, merely italicizing “talibés” instead of translating it as ‘almajiris’ does not help the intended Nigerian readers and their likes but constitutes rather a lexical barrier to the understanding of the target text. This obstacle could have been remedied by the use of a footnote explaining that the word talibé is called Almajiri in Nigeria.

However, the translator is justified not to choose a footnote, and opt rather for a foreignization of the target text. Indeed, by introducing this word which is unfamiliar to readers of the target-text, she contributes through this translated work in enriching the vocabulary of people from other geographical areas. Thus, we find here the double function of translation: revealing or exposing linguistic and socio-cultural elements expressed in the source text and importing or introducing same into the target text

Some other vernacular words, phrases or expressions which the translator chose to leave untranslated are Sokhna, Serigne and Chei yalla! To mention but a few. According to Fatou Sow (2002. P71),

The male title Serigne (nowadays used for ‘Mr’) designates a religious man; the female title Sokhna, (now used for ‘Mrs’) either designates the female relative of a Muslim holy man, or a woman who has religious knowledge and learning.

In the context of the target text, let’s say in the Nigerian environment, these words could easily have been translated as Alhaji or Mallam (a word derived from Hausa and meaning in Nigeria and other parts of Africa, a Muslim religious teacher, a learned man or a scribe), and Alhaja (a female relative of a Muslim holy man) respectively. As a matter of fact, this word ‘Mallam’ translates perfectly another word ‘Marabout’ which means a Muslim saint and is from French and Portuguese through Arabic. However, the translator chose not to translate them but rather to use them as borrowed words, signaling their foreignness by putting them in italics.

Other source-text words in Wolof are:

turki, (ST - p. 12) This word was translated verbatim (as *turki*) on page 6 of the target text without any explanation nor a foot note to explain what it meant. Let’s recall here that the author of the source-text did use a footnote to explain that *turki* meant a cloth worn under a flowing gown or caftan. Here again, the translator could have simply borrowed a leaf from the author who used foot notes on several occasions to explain the many vernacular words in her text.

Ndéysaan: This is a common Wolof interjection listed by Janga Wolof website (2025) in “Comprehensive Guide to Wolof Interjections”. It expresses pity, sympathy, or disappointment; similar to “Oh no!” or “What a shame!” in English. Once more, the translator’s choice of borrowing this vernacular word could have been backed with a footnote explaining it.

Conclusion

This study of the lexical gaps in the translation of *The Beggars Strike* highlights the difficulties in finding appropriate words in a target language where particular words of the source language do not have equivalent in the said target language. These difficulties can lead to a situation of apparent untranslatability which is a cause of loss in translation when the translator chooses to omit the source-text word or expression in the target-text. But considering the emphasis laid by the Cultural Translation Theory on diversity of cultures and a discursive approach to cultural translation as well as the pre-eminence given by the Interpretative Theory of Translation to translating the meaning of a text and not its words taken in isolation, this study looked at the possibility of translating lexical gaps in *Beggars’ Strike* even where it seemed impossible.

The study found that the translator used various techniques such as borrowing and explanation to translate cases of lexical gaps in the target text. For instance, she borrowed the Wolof word *bàttu* on page 8, and added an explanatory note to it: “the calabash which serves as a begging bowl”. Also, she borrowed the French word “*talibés*”, merely italicizing it, instead of translating it as ‘*almajirai*’. Though this does not help the intended Nigerian readers, the translator succeeds in enriching the vocabulary of the target readers by domesticating this word. But in some other cases as shown above in sub-section and in the used of words such as “*Sokhna*”, “*Serigne*” and “*Chei yalla!*”, to mention but a few, the translator chose to omit the source-text words, not minding the loss in translation. This shortcoming could have been remedied by the use of footnotes in line with the author of the novel who used a lot of borrowed words from her vernacular Wolof language and resorted to explaining them in footnotes.

Finally, this study has shown that the lexical gaps in *Beggars’ Strike* are very much translatable. Even the ones left untranslated by the translator can be translated using the methods or techniques of borrowing, explanation and footnote. The study recommends, therefore, the correct usage of the above-mentioned translation techniques to solve lexical gaps problems. In addition, Translators may choose to use a glossary where they decide against the use of footnotes.

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A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF DJ ZUBIS' *TA'AZIYA*

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Abstract

This study is a sociolinguistic investigation into a Nupe song titled *Ta'aziya* (condolences) by DJ Zubis. *Ta'aziya* is a track in the Nupe musical artist's album titled "Boro toh Elu". A total of twelve (12) sampled texts are purposively selected from the song and analysed based on Dell Hymes Ethnography of Communication, the mnemonic of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G, which means setting, participants, end, act, key, instrumentality, norm and genre. Being constant in the song, setting and participants are first explained. The analysis is in a tabular form. The findings of the study reveal that the intents of the song are to: urge people to be grateful to Allah even in bereavement or grief, always seek Allah's forgiveness, and to be humble, all of which are achieved through informative and directive acts. The artist explores gestures such as weeping to reveal the depth of his grief and nodding to confirm oneness and supremacy of Allah. The text is characterised by code mixing and switching between Arabic and Nupe languages. The study concludes that DJ Zubis' "*Ta'aziya*" is a religious song not only intended to lament the demise of his departed colleagues in Nupe music and film industry but also to promote the teachings or gospel of Islam.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, DJ Zubis, *Ta'aziya* (condolences), code mixing/switching

Introduction

Sociolinguistics is a discipline that yokes sociology and linguistics. Every society or situation has unique linguistic codes and modes of exchange acceptable to it. In other words, the concern of sociolinguistics is how social factors of age, ethnicity, religion, sex, status and educational level, etc. affect linguistic choices and their communicative values or interpretation in a given society. To buttress this, Agbo (2013, p. 219) submits that people signal aspects of their social identity through language. Social contexts are parts of modern linguistics because language is by its nature a social phenomenon. Hence, the effectiveness of a given language text rests on the oars of form and situation (Alabi 2008, p.252). In sociolinguistics, there are many determining factors for differences in language use. Principal ones among them are: social class, which deals with the position of the speaker in the society or in the speech event viz the position of his/her audience; geographical origin, which is responsible for accent and regional dialects; sex, which brings about differences in the pattern of language use between man and woman, especially in terms of intonation and speech quantity; Religion, which focuses on the pattern of language use informed by religious beliefs and spirituality; culture, which is the

totality of ways of life of a people or social group, and social context, which concerns the situational and psychological effects of language use. It is in line with these, that Lawal (1997, p. 27) asserts that “variety and variability are unique inevitable features of language ... in widely differing circumstances.” Of all these social variables that influence language use, variables of religion and social context are of particular concern to this study.

Language and Social Context

Besides the general principles of language use, there are situation or speech-event-bound requirements in language use. For example, the language used at funeral events is different from the language used at marriage or naming ceremonies. This is why functional linguists characterise (social) context as the core of linguistic communication and language as a social activity being performed in a social world. The primary focus of functional linguists, who belong to the schools of sociolinguistics, systemic functional linguistics, (critical) discourse analysis, text linguistics, pragmatics and forensic linguistics, etc. is specific context of language use.

Ta’aziya

Ta’aziya is an Arabic term for mourning or condolences. It concerns outward social and emotional expressions and actions such as weeping, social and religious performances in dirges and funeral rites as well wistful discourse about the deceased or an entity associated with death ((Mulemi 2017). It is also described as the process of adapting to a loss of a fellow human being influenced by culture, religion and social events such as grieving rituals (Sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and_dentistry/mourning). DJ Zubis’ *Ta’aziya* is a song (a dirge) by one of the leading modern young Nupe artists and musicians popularly called DJ Zubis. It is a mournful piece of music with linguistic flavours from Arabic language and performed in memory of his departed Nupe traditional artists – musicians, actors, actresses and comedians. *Ta’aziya* is also sung in memory of Wachin Hussain, the former *Ezonuwa* (Village Head) of Kutigi, the headquarters of Lavun Local Government Area of Niger State. As an oral performance, the physical setting of the song is a mimicked cemetery. *Ta’aziya* is the sixth track in one of DJ Zubis’ musical albums titled “*Boro toh Elu*”, which was released in 2018. Other tracks in the album are: *Ebo Cinci’o*, IGP Police, Yes, *Etsu Yahaya*, *Boro toh Elu*, *Gani Kutigi* and *Siyasa*. DJ Zubis is well known for his artistic performances on inevitability of death, mortality of man, resurrection, morality, man’s infallibility, patience, forgiveness and most importantly, women emancipation and justice. Hence, some of his critics consider him as a feminist. DJ Zubis is from Kutigi, the Head Quarters of Lavun Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

Code Switching and Religion in *Ta’aziya*

The sociolinguistic concepts of code-switching and code-mixing are elements or features of spoken language – conversation, involving alternation of codes and styles (Hymes 1974). They are well known linguistic traits of every average bilingual in any society. They are used by some people

interchangeably. However, code mixing deals with the use of two or more distinct linguistic codes or systems within a single utterance while code switching focuses on the psychologically or sociologically motivated movement from one discrete code to another within a communicative event (Waris 2012). In other words, while code mixing is intra-sentential, code switching is inter-sentential. Socially discursive strategies of code mixing and code switching are consciously explored by language users to showcase their social group affinity, solidarity, identity and in most cases, to exclude non-members of a social group from full participation in a speech event. This is why Agbo (2013, p. 237) submits that language choice is a declaration of national affinity or pride.

Psychologically motivated code switching is typical in condolence messages, greetings or songs by Muslims. That is, there are established expressions in Arabic that feature in condolence messages or funeral events by Muslims. A typical example of these kinds of expressions are *Inna lillahi wa inna ilahi raji'u*, which means from Allah we came and unto Him we shall return and *Allahu Akbar*, which means Allah is the greatest, respectively. Islamically, these expressions are expected to be uttered on receiving news about occurrence of a death or a calamity before any other expression in our indigenous codes follows. These show that religion is a motivational factor in our language use. As Agbo puts it 'acquiring a religion, to some extent, involves learning a new vocabulary' (p. 231). All these, as Kim (2006) submits, mean that code-mixing and switching are influenced by the topic of discourse and the physical context or setting of a performance, as evident in DJ Zubis' choice of cemetery to perform his *Ta'aziya* (condolences or mourning) on his departed fellow Nupe artists. Similarly, in line with Albirini (2011) and Gumperz (1977), DJ Zubis alternates between Arabic and Nupe in his *Ta'aziya* for the purposes of introducing formulaic Islamic expressions regarding death, quoting directly from the Holy Qur'an to emphasise importance of his message or death discourse and indicating his pan-Muslim identity, as evident in his repetition of *Allahu Akbar* which means Allah is the greatest, among others.

Oral Literature

Oral literature or orature is not only as old as man but also a life-time literary art in every culture or society, especially, African cultures. It cuts across prose genre (i. e proverbs, folktales, riddles and jokes), drama genre (i. e traditional dances, wrestling and festivals), and poetic genre (i. e songs, lullaby, etc.). Orature is, irrespective of its genre dramatic because it requires physical presence of the artist and his/her audience. One of its rhetorical features is repetition, especially epizeuxis when in religious context. Epizeuxis is a free immediate kind of repetition device employed in religious drama to suggest the intensity of a speaker's feeling or emotion (Wales 1989, p.153). Unlike ordinary conversation, which considers repetition as a problem of redundancy, in religious oral performance or artistic drama, repetition is a powerful resource of interpersonal involvement, she added. Orature is more entertaining, more enlightening and more persuasive than the written works of art. In the words of

Ker and Usman (2018, p.1) “one can only imagine how dull human life could be ... without personal experience of ... music and art.”

Theoretical Framework

Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication is the theoretical framework for this study. It was developed in 1962 as “Ethnography of speaking” before it was modified in 1964 as “Ethnography of Communication” to capture both verbal and nonverbal human communicative events. It is a theory for analysis of language from the wider contexts of the socio-cultural practices and beliefs of members of a particular group or speech community (<https://www.communicationtheory.org>>...). It is partly a reaction to Chomskyan mentalist, universality, and structuralist schools of language study. Its focus is the description and functional analysis of society and culture through language. Ray and Biswas (2011) describe language as a cultural behaviour that navigates and helps us to share knowledge, arts, morals, beliefs and everything acquired by man as a member of a society. Hymes (1962) developed the following mnemonic of S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G, which is a short form of all the components of the theory:

Setting/ Scene means the physical and psychological time and place of communicative event. It includes the nature of communication and the degree of formality of language use as determined by situational and cultural practices. Different settings/scenes determine different linguistic behaviour. For example, our linguistic behaviour when we are bereaved or at a funeral event sharply differs from our linguistic behaviour at political campaign rallies.

Participant deals with the speaker and his/her interactive and non-interactive audience in communication event.

End concerns the purpose, goal and outcome of communication. The “end” may be to entertain an audience; promote an individual, a people, a belief or a service; or educate an audience, etc.

Act sequence deals with the institutional or culture-based order of participation in an exchange or a speech event. For example, folktales open with phrases like “once upon a time”, “a long time ago” while Islamic religious discourses open with expressions like *Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim* (which means in the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful) and *Asalamum Alaikum* (which means may peace be upon you).

Key takes care of certain physical behaviours we engage in, in addition to our utterances in order to achieve our communicative intents. It includes facial expressions, gestures, body movements and different kinds of tones we deploy to make our audience laugh, relax, sober, cry, etc.

Instrumentality involves channel/styles employed in discursive practices. It could be informal/casual, formal, spoken or written. In an informal setting, one of the examples here is code switching/code mixing.

Norm is the rule governing the socio-cultural behaviour of a people, group or speech community. In most traditional African societies, the young is not only

expected to greet the elder first, he/she is also expected to accompany his/her words of greeting with a bow or prostration as a mark of respect.

Genre takes care of discourse domain. There are different ways of identifying discourse genres in different speech communities. Specific communication events such as funerals, condolences, political campaign rallies, marriage ceremonies, coronation and classroom lecture are distinct discourse domains (genres).

Methodology

This study is qualitative. The data for it, which are in Nupe and Arabic languages are presented through transliteration and translation into English language before they are socio-linguistically analysed. The analysis is in a tabular form for easy understanding. Setting/scene, participant and genre are constant in the song under investigation. Hence, they are singled out from the table and analysed first. This is to avoid redundancy in the analysis and consumption of space in the table. The researcher is an ideal Nupe native speaker. Hence, he relies heavy on introspection in the study.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

As earlier stated, the analysis in this study is tabulated for easy understanding. The physical setting of DJ Zubis' *Ta'aziya* is a mimicked cemetery. The participants or the oral performing artists in the song are two men and a lady. The lady is in black attire while one of the men is in white attire and the other man, DJ Zubis', himself, is in green attire. Both the lady in black gown and the man in white cloth symbolize mourning while DJ Zubis who wears green attire represents hope in grief and confidence that the departed colleagues are resting in peace and tranquility. The discourse domain or genre of the song is condolences. This introductory description of the setting, participants and genre of the song is necessary because they are constant and do not form part of the tabular analysis of the study.

Tabular Analysis of the Data

| TEXT | | | ANALYSIS | | | | |
|------|--|---|---|-----------------|---------|--|--|
| S/N | Transliteration | Translation | End | Act sequence | Key | Instrumentality | Norm |
| 1. | <i>Mi'etigi nya engba dana mi ma'e ji asalatu ya tuchi Soko.</i> | I am weeping and saluting the messenger of Allah. | Urging people not to be ingratitude to prophet Muhammad and by implication Allah, even in the face of | informative act | Weeping | Code mixing as evident in 'mi'etigi asalatu ...' <i>Asalatu</i> is an Arabic word. | It is expected of every Muslim to be self-controlled and grateful to Allah in mourning or misfortune |

| | | | bereavement or adversity | | | | |
|----|---|--|---|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 2. | <i>Astagafrillah. Soko fa gani be dan wuwayi na zhi goga'ani na'e.</i> | We seek forgiveness from Allah. May Allah forgive our departed colleagues. | Admitting and lamenting being a sinner | directive act (requesting) | The speaker explores low tone to humble himself before Allah. | Code switching, as evident in the sentence “Astagafrillah”, which is Arabic while the remaining part of the text is in Nupe language. | Every Muslim is encouraged to always seek Allah’s forgiveness because of his fallibility. |
| 3. | <i>Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Inna lillahi wa inna illaihim raji'un</i> | Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest. From Allah we came and unto Him we shall return. | Announcing death of a person | Informative act. | The speaker raised his face and two hands up as if he is addressing Allah directly or physically | Apostrophe. | It is a norm in Islam to raise up your hands as a Muslim while asking God for anything; the act is believed to hasten acceptance of prayers. |
| 4. | <i>Kullu nafsi zaikatul maut. Almautu wa'id, sababu kasira</i> | Every living soul shall taste death. Death is only one but its causes are many. | Warning and urging faithfuls to be more committed to the worship of Allah. | Informative act. | Nodding of head in confirmation of this natural fact. | A verse from the Holy Qur'an | Every Muslim is urged to be expectant of his/her own death anywhere, anytime and through any means. |
| 5. | <i>Ajali de ga be'ajin zhiri zuma yi ede bokun eleleba ma yi kabari.</i> | Immediately a person dies, he/she will be dressed in a white cloth and taken to his/her grave. | Preaching humility especially to the rich and the influential members of society. | Informative act. | Demonstrating sleep (in the grave) by swaying or placing the right cheek on the right palm. | Nupe language | Every Muslim is expected to be humble and moderate in his/his spending. |
| 6. | <i>Waga'a chizan dochi bo wa'a de dozhui</i> | The death of some people is irreplaceable. | Comforting the bereaved. | As above. | Waving or moving a right finger left and | As above | Excessive public display of grief or |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|--|--|------------------|---|
| | <i>be'ani. Amma bana ya'ade chichin ya dozhi tuna kpewoga Soko yebu'u ga we kami wuchi gama wula nyu tso ba wu'u</i> | But no matter the depth of love between you and the dead, know that God loves him/her more, hence his/ her death. | | | right in demonstration of man's inability to change the will of God. | | lamentation over a death is discouraged as it may portray God as a wicked being and consequently lead to blasphemy. Hence, sympathizers are advised to comfort the bereaved to avert his resort to blasphemy. |
| 7. | <i>Lahilaha ilallahu, Muhammadu rasulillah.</i> | There is no God except Allah and prophet Muhammad is His messenger. | Confessing being a Muslim and promoting Islam. | As above. | Simultaneous movement of head and right fingers left and right to demonstrate or confess oneness of Allah. | Arabic language. | No one qualifies to be a Muslim until the person accepts and practises that there is no God except Allah and that prophet Muhammad is His messenger. |
| 8. | <i>Imani yaji'o zuriya nya Baba Zonuwa zhi ... Wachin Hussaini dabo be'a ... Wu dabo na wuwa Igboro lo yayi ...</i> | The family of late Ezonuwa Wachin Hussain, be patient. Ezonuwa is no more. While he was alive he assisted us a lot. | Sympathizing with the family of the deceased and promoting his positive legacies or ideals to comfort the family member and lovers. | Initial part of the text is a directive act while the latter part is an informative act. | | Nupe language. | It is a norm in Islam to emphasize good parts of the dead and de-emphasize the ugly parts. |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 9. | <p>- <i>Soko'u ji Mustapha gafara, Mustapha Danjuma dabo be'a.</i></p> <p>- <i>Salisu Muhammad, sarkin wasa nya payi dabo be'a.</i></p> <p>- <i>Mahmudu Mokwa dabo be'a.</i></p> <p>- <i>Isah DVA dabo be'a.</i></p> <p>- <i>Maimuna mimi'e tso dabo be'a.</i></p> <p>- <i>Salamatu Kogi' etso dabo be'a.</i></p> <p>- <i>Usman Zubairu kpaki' etso lona.</i></p> <p>- <i>Aisha Ndanusaé etso'e lona</i></p> | <p>- May God forgive Mustapha. Mustapha. Danjuma is no more.</p> <p>- Salisu Muhammad, the former leader of Nupe traditional artists is no more.</p> <p>- Mahmudu Mokwa is no more.</p> <p>- Isah DVA is no more.</p> <p>- Maimuna Mimi is also no more.</p> <p>- Salamatu Kogi is equally no more.</p> <p>- And there goes Usman Zubairu.</p> <p>- There goes Aisha Ndanusa.</p> | <p>Lamenting the death of some of his colleague Nupe musician s and artists.</p> | <p>Informative act.</p> | <p>Weeping and pointing towards the direction of cemetery.</p> | <p>Mixing of Nupe and Arabic codes</p> | <p>It is allowed to moderately lament the death of a colleague, relative, friend, etc. in Islam.</p> |
| 10. | <i>Astagrafrillah</i> | May Allah forgive us. | Confessing being a sinner and seeking forgiveness. | Directive act of requesting. | The speaker raises his palms and head up. | Arabic language. | Seeking Allah's forgiveness always is a norm in Islam. |
| 11. | <i>Lahilaha ilallah</i> | There is no God except Allah. | Promoting Islam. | Informative act. | The speaker moves one of his fingers left and right to demonstrate oneness of Allah. | As above | One cannot be a Muslim without uttering, believing and practicing the text: "There is |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|------------------|------------------|---|------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | | | no God except Allah”. |
| 12. | <i>Allahu Akbar.</i> <i>Allahu Akbar.</i> <i>Allahu Akbar.</i> | Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest. | Promoting Islam. | Informative act. | The speaker mildly nods his head in demonstration of Allah’s supremacy. | Arabic language. | As above. |

Findings of the Study

Findings of this study reveal that the setting of DJ Zubis’ *Ta’aziya* is a mimicked cemetery while the participants are two men and a lady dressed in black, white and green attires. The genre of the song is condolences while its intents are to urge people to: be grateful to Allah even in the face of grief or bereavement, always seek Allah’s forgiveness, praise God and to be humble. Hence, the participants in the song explore informative acts to achieve their communicative goals except in texts 2, 8 and 10 where they deploy directive acts to seek Allah’s forgiveness and urge the bereaved to be patient. The participants also explore gesture such as nodding, movement of head and fingers left and right and weeping, etc. as the keys to affirm that there is no God except Allah and to demonstrate the depth of their grief over the demise of their colleague artists as well as Wachin Hussaini, the late *Ezonuwa* (Village Head) of Kutigi. In terms of instrumentalities, the artists employ resources of code mixing and code switching in the song. These are evident in most sampled texts analysed. The study finds that it is a norm in Islam to: be self-controlled in the face of bereavement or grief; be expectant of death any moment, anywhere and through any means; worship no deity except Allah; accept Prophet Muhammad as the messenger of Allah and seek Allah’s forgiveness always, etc.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that Dell Hymes Ethnography of communication is a suitable theory to account for religious discourses or texts from socio-linguistics perspective. The study also concludes that DJ Zubis’ *Ta’aziya* is a religious song intended not only to condole with the families and friends of the departed Nupe traditional artists as well as the families and friends of Late Wachin Hussain, the former village head of Kutigi but also to promote the ideals, norms or gospel of Islam and in the process, reveal the religious identity of the participants and that of the people whose deaths are the subjects of the song. In all, Dj Zubis’ *Ta’aziya* is a sermonizing text.

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MOTIVATION ET ATTENTES DES APPRENANTS DU FRANÇAIS À L'UNIVERSITÉ FÉDÉRALE DE TECHNOLOGIE D'OWERRI

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Résumé

L'apprentissage du français à l'Université Fédérale de Technologie d'Owerri (FUTO) revêt une grande importance en raison des avantages académiques, professionnels et culturels qu'il offre aux étudiants. Bien que le français soit une langue stratégique globalement, les étudiants de FUTO rencontrent plusieurs défis dans son apprentissage, principalement dus à des facteurs institutionnels, pédagogiques et motivationnels. Cette étude explore les motivations, attentes et défis des étudiants en matière d'apprentissage du français. Parmi les défis majeurs figurent la marginalisation du français dans le programme universitaire, l'insuffisance des ressources pédagogiques et humaines, ainsi que des difficultés liées à la motivation des étudiants. L'étude souligne la nécessité d'adopter des stratégies pédagogiques et institutionnelles adaptées pour améliorer l'efficacité de l'enseignement.

Mots clés : Apprentissage de français, programme universitaire, motivation des étudiants

Introduction

Dans un monde de plus en plus globalisé, la maîtrise de plusieurs langues est devenue un atout essentiel pour les étudiants, notamment dans un contexte universitaire et professionnel. Le français, en tant que langue internationale et seconde langue la plus parlée de monde après l'anglais, joue un rôle clé dans la communication, les échanges culturels et les opportunités économiques. En Afrique de l'Ouest, et plus particulièrement au Nigéria, un pays anglophone entouré de nations francophones, l'apprentissage du français constitue une compétence stratégique (Ibirinde, 2021, Adegbite, 2004). Donc, le français a été désigné comme une matière obligatoire dans les écoles primaires et le premier cycle de l'enseignement secondaire, mais devient optionnel dans le second cycle de l'enseignement secondaire (Politique nationale de l'éducation, 2014). De plus, le Guide du professeur pour le programme révisé d'éducation de base de 9 ans (BEC) en langue française (2020) définit trois objectifs principaux pour l'enseignement du français dans les écoles nigérianes : permettre aux apprenants d'acquérir des connaissances suffisantes de la langue pour la communication et l'apprentissage, développer des compétences linguistiques essentielles pour la poursuite des études, et élargir les capacités cognitives ainsi que l'identité culturelle des apprenants.

C'est pour cette raison que, comme les autres universités nigérianes, l'Université Fédérale de Technologie d'Owerri (FUTO) propose des cours de français afin de répondre à cette exigence linguistique. Le français est proposé comme cours optionnel à tous les étudiants de première année pendant deux semestres : FUTO FRN 101 et FUTO FRN 102. Ces cours sont dispensés par quatre enseignants qualifiés en français. Ils initient les étudiants aux bases de la langue française, notamment les salutations, l'alphabet, la prononciation, les éléments de grammaire, avant de progresser vers des aspects plus avancés tels que les dialogues et la compréhension écrite. L'objectif général de la création de l'Unité de Français est de former des diplômés bilingues, compétents et compétitifs sur le marché mondial de l'emploi (FUTO Computer Science Handbook: Program & Curriculum, 2025).

L'enseignement et l'apprentissage de français à FUTO ne s'effectue pas sans des défis, surtout concernant les besoins et les préférences des apprenants qui varient en fonction de plusieurs facteurs, notamment leurs motivations professionnels et académiques ainsi que leur exposition préalable à la langue française (Bamgbose, 2011). Il est donc essentiel d'évaluer ces besoins et préférences afin d'adapter les méthodes d'enseignement et d'améliorer l'efficacité de l'apprentissage. La présente étude se propose d'analyser les motivations et les attentes des étudiants de l'Université FUTO à l'égard de l'apprentissage du français, en mettant en évidence les difficultés auxquelles ils sont confrontés ainsi que les stratégies susceptibles d'être mises en œuvre pour optimiser l'acquisition de cette langue

Problématique de l'étude

Malgré l'importance du français dans les échanges régionaux et internationaux, de nombreux étudiants nigériens éprouvent des difficultés à l'apprendre et à le maîtriser, les programmes d'enseignement ne tiennent pas toujours compte des attentes et des objectifs spécifiques des étudiants, ce qui peut entraîner un désintérêt et un faible engagement dans l'apprentissage. Cette situation s'explique en partie par le fait que les programmes d'enseignement ne tiennent pas toujours compte des attentes et des objectifs spécifiques des apprenants, ce qui peut engendrer un désintérêt et un faible niveau d'engagement. Ce constat s'observe notamment à l'Université Fédérale de Technologie d'Owerri (FUTO), où l'évaluation systématique des besoins et des préférences des étudiants reste insuffisante. Cette étude vise donc à combler cette lacune en analysant les attentes, les motivations ainsi que les obstacles rencontrés par les étudiants dans l'apprentissage du français. Elle s'inscrit dans une dynamique d'amélioration des approches pédagogiques et de renforcement des compétences linguistiques, en mettant l'accent sur l'adaptation des méthodes d'enseignement aux besoins et préférences réels des apprenants.

Objectifs de l'étude

Cette étude analyse l'état actuel de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage du français à FUTO, en explorant les attentes, motivations et défis des étudiants. Plus précisément, cette étude vise à :

1. Évaluer les motivations des étudiants de FUTO en matière d'apprentissage du français.

2. Analyser les attentes des étudiants de FUTO en matière d'apprentissage du français.
3. Identifier les défis rencontrés dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de français à FUTO
4. Proposer des stratégies d'amélioration pour rendre l'apprentissage du français plus efficace et attractif à FUTO

Présentation de FUTO et l'enseignement de français

L'Université Fédérale de Technologie d'Owerri (FUTO) figure parmi les établissements d'enseignement supérieur les plus réputés du Nigéria, avec une spécialisation affirmée dans les domaines des sciences et de la technologie. Il s'agit d'une université fédérale située à Owerri West, dans la ville d'Owerri, capitale de l'État d'Imo. Elle est entourée des communautés d'Eziobodo, Ihiagwa, Obinze, Okolochi et Emeabiam. FUTO est la première université fédérale de technologie des régions du Sud-Est et du Sud-Sud du Nigeria. FUTO est également la plus ancienne université de technologie du Nigéria. Elle a été fondée en 1980 par un décret exécutif, à la suite de la composition et de la nomination du premier conseil provisoire par le premier président civil du pays, Shehu Shagari.

L'université a ouvert ses portes avec 225 étudiants et 60 membres du personnel, dont 28 enseignants et 32 agents administratifs. Depuis lors, ces effectifs ont connu une croissance remarquable. À l'instar des autres universités fédérales nigérianes, la FUTO est placée sous l'autorité d'un chancelier – généralement une personnalité royale –, tandis que la gestion quotidienne est assurée par un vice-chancelier. L'actuelle vice-chancelière est la Professeure Nnenna Nnannaya. Aujourd'hui, la FUTO accueille plus de 25 000 étudiants, affectueusement appelés les "Futoites". À l'Université fédérale de technologie d'Owerri (FUTO), les cours de français sont codifiés sous les intitulés FUTO FRN 101 et FUTO FRN 102. Ils proposent une initiation progressive à la langue française en abordant les éléments fondamentaux tels que : les salutations et les présentations, l'alphabet et la prononciation, les notions grammaticales de base (verbes, conjugaisons, accords), la construction de phrases simples, les dialogues usuels, ainsi que la compréhension et l'expression écrites élémentaires. Une ouverture à la culture francophone et aux expressions idiomatiques complète cette formation. Ces cours sont dispensés à raison d'une heure par semaine dans chaque département concerné. Ils visent à doter les étudiants d'une compétence fonctionnelle en français, en leur permettant de développer des aptitudes linguistiques essentielles à la communication. Par ailleurs, ils contribuent à une sensibilisation interculturelle, en familiarisant les apprenants avec les réalités sociolinguistiques et culturelles du monde francophone.

Motivation des apprenants du français à l'Université Fédérale de Technologie d'Owerri (FUTO)

L'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère est un processus complexe, façonné par une multiplicité de facteurs, parmi lesquels figurent les motivations intrinsèques des apprenants, leurs aspirations académiques et professionnelles, ainsi que les obstacles qu'ils peuvent rencontrer au cours de leur parcours

(Dörnyei, 2005). Dans le contexte spécifique de l'enseignement du français à la FUTO, il s'avère fondamental de cerner en amont les ressorts motivationnels des étudiants. Une telle compréhension permettrait de mieux adapter les approches pédagogiques, en vue d'optimiser l'efficacité de l'enseignement et de favoriser une appropriation durable de la langue.

En premier lieu, la motivation la plus répandue parmi les étudiants est de nature académique et contraignante. Bien que le français soit classé comme une matière optionnelle, il est fortement recommandé, voire implicitement exigé, pour la validation de certaines filières. Ainsi, nombre d'étudiants s'y inscrivent principalement pour satisfaire aux exigences du cursus universitaire, en particulier pour réussir les cours codifiés FUTO FRN 101 et FUTO FRN 102. Pour ces apprenants, l'apprentissage du français ne découle pas nécessairement d'un intérêt personnel ou d'une volonté d'ouverture linguistique, mais plutôt d'une nécessité administrative : il s'agit d'un passage obligé pour obtenir leur diplôme de licence. Cette motivation extrinsèque, souvent marquée par un faible engagement affectif, peut influencer la manière dont ces étudiants perçoivent l'utilité et la valeur de la langue française dans leur parcours.

Pour d'autres étudiants à FUTO, le français est considéré comme un atout pour poursuivre des études supérieures, notamment dans des pays francophones comme la France, le Canada ou la Belgique. Par ailleurs, certains étudiants manifestent une motivation professionnelle, conscients de l'importance stratégique de la langue française dans l'espace ouest-africain et au-delà. Pour ces étudiants, apprendre le français représente une opportunité d'élargir leurs perspectives d'emploi, surtout dans des organisations régionales ou internationales telles que la CEDEAO, l'Union africaine ou encore des ONG opérant dans des zones francophones. Dans un contexte de plus en plus mondialisé, la maîtrise du français est perçue comme un atout pour l'insertion professionnelle et la mobilité dans les pays francophones. Du point de vue communicationnel, certains étudiants expriment le besoin de pouvoir interagir de manière efficace dans des situations de la vie quotidienne, que ce soit lors de voyages, de séjours d'échange, ou dans le cadre de rencontres interculturelles. Ce besoin met l'accent sur les compétences orales : savoir saluer, se présenter, poser des questions simples, exprimer une opinion, ou encore suivre une conversation courante. À ce titre, les apprenants ont besoin d'activités pratiques, interactives et contextualisées, qui vont au-delà de l'enseignement traditionnel centré sur la grammaire.

D'autres étudiants se laissent guider par une motivation culturelle. Curieux de découvrir la richesse de la culture francophone, y compris sa littérature, sa musique, sa gastronomie ou encore son cinéma, ces apprenants perçoivent la langue française comme une passerelle vers d'autres horizons culturels. Cette forme de motivation, souvent intrinsèque, favorise un engagement plus profond et une attitude plus positive à l'égard de la langue. Enfin, une minorité d'étudiants s'inscrivent au cours de français pour des raisons personnelles. Il peut s'agir, par exemple, d'un désir de pouvoir communiquer avec des amis, des partenaires ou des membres de la famille issus

de pays francophones, ou encore d'un simple intérêt pour les langues étrangères. Ces motivations personnelles, bien que moins fréquentes, jouent un rôle important dans la persévérance et la réussite de l'apprentissage. En somme, les motivations à apprendre le français à la FUTO sont multiples et souvent imbriquées. Comprendre ces dynamiques est essentiel pour adapter les méthodes d'enseignement et favoriser un apprentissage plus efficace et plus engageant.

Les attentes des étudiants du français à l'Université Fédérale de Technologie d'Owerri (FUTO)

Les étudiants inscrits aux cours de français à FUTO nourrissent des attentes diverses qui reflètent à la fois leurs motivations, leurs objectifs personnels et leurs aspirations professionnelles. Ces attentes, bien qu'hétérogènes, convergent vers un même désir : tirer un bénéfice concret et durable de l'apprentissage du français au-delà du cadre académique immédiat. Tout d'abord, sur le plan pédagogique, les apprenants attendent un enseignement dynamique, interactif et centré sur l'apprenant. Ils souhaitent que les cours soient moins théoriques et plus axés sur la pratique réelle de la langue, en particulier la compréhension et l'expression orales. Beaucoup espèrent des méthodes plus modernes, l'utilisation de supports audiovisuels, des jeux de rôle, des conversations dirigées, et des activités en petits groupes pour renforcer la participation active et la confiance en soi à l'oral.

Ensuite, les étudiants expriment des attentes fonctionnelles. Ils souhaitent pouvoir utiliser le français dans des contextes concrets : pour voyager, communiquer avec des francophones, ou encore comprendre des documents ou films en version originale. Cette attente s'inscrit dans une logique utilitaire, où la langue est perçue comme un outil de communication, et non seulement comme une discipline académique. D'un point de vue professionnel, les étudiants attendent que l'apprentissage du français leur donne un avantage compétitif sur le marché du travail, notamment dans les domaines où la maîtrise d'une langue étrangère est valorisée. Ils espèrent que cette compétence linguistique leur ouvrira des portes vers des opportunités régionales et internationales : stages, bourses, emplois dans des ONG, institutions internationales, ou même une éventuelle migration vers un pays francophone.

Par ailleurs, certains nourrissent une attente culturelle. Ils souhaitent, à travers l'apprentissage du français, découvrir les réalités socioculturelles des pays francophones, notamment la littérature, la musique, le cinéma, et les modes de vie. Pour ces étudiants, apprendre le français est aussi un moyen d'élargir leur horizon culturel et de s'ouvrir à d'autres visions du monde. Enfin, sur le plan institutionnel, les étudiants espèrent que l'Université et les enseignants valorisent davantage le cours de français. Cela inclut une meilleure structuration du programme, la disponibilité de ressources pédagogiques adaptées, des conditions d'apprentissage améliorées (locaux, équipements, bibliothèques), et une reconnaissance plus formelle de l'utilité de cette matière dans leur cursus. Les attentes des étudiants du français à la FUTO vont bien au-delà de la simple réussite académique. Elles traduisent un désir d'acquisition de compétences utiles, transférables et valorisables dans différents domaines de

leur vie future. Prendre en compte ces attentes permettrait non seulement de renforcer la motivation des apprenants, mais aussi d'optimiser les résultats de l'enseignement/apprentissage du français dans un contexte non francophone.

Défis rencontrés dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français à FUTO

L'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français à l'Université Fédérale de Technologie d'Owerri (FUTO) sont confrontés à un ensemble de défis multiformes, qui influencent négativement la qualité de la formation et l'engagement des apprenants. Ces difficultés, d'ordre institutionnel, pédagogique, logistique, linguistique et motivationnel, méritent une attention particulière pour une amélioration durable du système. Tout d'abord, sur le plan institutionnel, l'un des principaux défis réside dans la marginalisation du cours de français dans le programme universitaire. En tant que matière optionnelle, le français est souvent perçu comme secondaire, voire accessoire, par les étudiants et parfois même par les autorités universitaires. Cette perception limite l'investissement institutionnel dans la dotation en ressources humaines et matérielles nécessaires à un enseignement efficace.

En ce qui concerne les ressources pédagogiques, le manque d'ouvrages adaptés, d'outils technologiques modernes (comme les laboratoires de langue, les applications interactives ou les plateformes numériques d'apprentissage), ainsi que l'insuffisance de supports audiovisuels nuisent considérablement à la dynamique de l'enseignement. Les enseignants doivent souvent faire face à une pénurie de matériel ou se contenter de méthodes traditionnelles qui ne répondent pas aux attentes actuelles des étudiants. Du côté des ressources humaines, on observe fréquemment une insuffisance de personnel qualifié pour couvrir la demande croissante. Le ratio enseignant-étudiants est souvent déséquilibré, ce qui affecte la qualité de l'interaction en classe, limite le suivi personnalisé des apprenants, et peut conduire à une démotivation tant chez les enseignants que chez les étudiants.

Les défis sont également d'ordre linguistique et psychopédagogique. Étant donné que la majorité des étudiants à la FUTO n'ont jamais été exposés au français auparavant, ils rencontrent des difficultés à assimiler les bases de cette langue étrangère, notamment la prononciation, la grammaire et l'orthographe. Cette situation est exacerbée par le fait que l'environnement immédiat est majoritairement anglophone, ce qui limite les opportunités de pratiquer la langue en dehors de la salle de classe. Sur le plan motivationnel, de nombreux étudiants s'inscrivent au cours de français par obligation académique, sans réel intérêt personnel. Ce manque d'engagement intrinsèque rend l'apprentissage plus difficile, d'autant plus que certains perçoivent la langue comme inutile à leur avenir professionnel, notamment dans les filières scientifiques et technologiques.

Enfin, les contraintes d'emploi du temps constituent un obstacle notable. Les cours de français sont parfois programmés à des heures peu propices, ou en concurrence avec des matières jugées prioritaires. Cela peut entraîner un taux d'absentéisme élevé et une baisse du rendement académique dans les cours de français. En somme, les défis liés à

l'enseignement/apprentissage du français à la FUTO sont nombreux et interconnectés. Pour y faire face, il serait nécessaire d'adopter une approche holistique qui inclut la valorisation institutionnelle du français, la modernisation des méthodes pédagogiques, le renforcement des capacités des enseignants, et la motivation des apprenants à travers des contenus contextualisés, pertinents et stimulants.

Stratégies pour améliorer l'efficacité et l'attractivité de l'apprentissage du français à la FUTO

L'amélioration de l'enseignement/apprentissage du français à la FUTO nécessite une série de mesures concertées, innovantes et adaptées au contexte spécifique d'un environnement technologique et majoritairement anglophone. Ces stratégies visent à rendre le français non seulement plus accessible, mais aussi plus pertinent, utile et attractif pour les étudiants issus de diverses disciplines scientifiques. Tout d'abord, le renforcement des ressources humaines qualifiées doit être considéré car l'un des défis majeurs militant contre l'apprentissage de français à FUTO est le manque criant de professeurs de français qualifiés pour répondre à la demande croissante des apprenants. A présent, il y a juste quatre professeurs de français a FUTO chargés d'enseigner toute l'université. Ce déficit se traduit par des surcharges horaires pour les rares enseignants disponibles, une limitation du suivi individualisé des étudiants, et parfois, une réduction de la qualité pédagogique due à la fatigue ou au manque de diversité dans les approches. Pour remédier à cette situation, plusieurs actions sont envisageables y incluent le recrutement de nouveaux enseignants de français, notamment des diplômés de Lettres modernes ou des professionnels en fin de formation (masters/doctorants en didactique des langues) ou encore la partenariats avec des institutions francophones, telles que l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), les ambassades (notamment celle de France), ou des ONG linguistiques, pour la mise à disposition de volontaires ou assistants de langue.

Une autre stratégie pour améliorer l'efficacité et l'attractivité de l'apprentissage du français à la FUTO est la révision et la contextualisation du contenu pédagogique est nécessaire. Afin d'accroître la pertinence du français pour les étudiants de filières technologiques, il est essentiel d'adapter les contenus enseignés à leur domaine d'études. Cela implique l'introduction de modules spécialisés tels que le français pour les sciences, le français des affaires, ou le français pour la technologie, l'élaboration de situations d'apprentissage contextualisées : simulations de présentations scientifiques en français, lecture de documents techniques simplifiés, jeux de rôles en entreprise, et puis l'utilisation de textes authentiques liés à l'innovation, à l'environnement ou à l'ingénierie, pour stimuler la curiosité disciplinaire des étudiants.

D'ailleurs, le renforcement et la valorisation institutionnelle du français a FUTO est une condition sin qua non pour améliorer l'efficacité et l'attractivité de l'apprentissage du français. Il est impératif que l'Université reconnaisse la valeur stratégique de la langue française dans un monde de plus en plus globalisé. Cela pourrait passer par une meilleure intégration du français dans

les cursus universitaires, notamment en tant que compétence transversale, utile dans toutes les disciplines. La création d'un centre de langues ou d'un laboratoire de langues moderne dédié à l'apprentissage des langues étrangères (dont le français) permettrait aussi d'en faire un espace de pratique régulière et attrayante. Aussi, il faut la reconnaissance officielle du cours de français comme compétence transversale, avec des crédits valorisés dans le cursus. Cela sera suivi par l'amélioration de la gestion de l'emploi du temps, car à présent, le français est attribué juste une heure par semaine pour chaque Département, ce qui est grossièrement inadéquat. En plus, Il serait judicieux de revoir la programmation des cours de français afin de les intégrer à des horaires plus adaptés et éviter les conflits avec les matières dites « majeures ». Cela renforcerait la participation des étudiants et limiterait l'absentéisme.

On encourage aussi la formation continue et soutien aux enseignants. Il est essentiel de mettre en place des programmes de formation continue pour les enseignants de français, afin qu'ils puissent s'approprier des méthodes didactiques innovantes, adaptées aux réalités des apprenants de milieu non francophone. La gestion universitaire doit encourager l'unité d'études de français dans l'organisation des ateliers pédagogiques, des séminaires et des collaborations avec des départements de français d'autres universités nigérianes ou étrangères (francophones) seraient bénéfiques pour le perfectionnement des enseignants. Aussi, l'introduction des TICE (Technologies de l'information et de la communication pour l'enseignement), comme les plateformes d'apprentissage en ligne (Moodle, Duolingo, TV5MONDE), les podcasts, les vidéos éducatives, les jeux éducatifs ou les applications mobiles, permettrait d'actualiser l'enseignement et de stimuler davantage les étudiants. L'accès à une bibliothèque numérique de ressources francophones contribuerait aussi à diversifier les supports d'enseignement. Il faut aussi le développement de cours hybrides ou de micro-leçons en ligne, via Google Classroom, WhatsApp éducatif ou Moodle.

Conclusion

L'enseignement du français à FUTO doit être réévalué et amélioré pour répondre aux besoins des étudiants et aux exigences du monde moderne. Il est essentiel de renforcer les ressources humaines qualifiées, de diversifier les méthodes pédagogiques et de moderniser les infrastructures. En outre, une valorisation institutionnelle du français, avec une meilleure intégration dans les cursus universitaires et l'adaptation du contenu aux réalités des étudiants, est indispensable. L'introduction de nouvelles technologies, telles que des plateformes en ligne et des applications mobiles, ainsi que la révision de l'emploi du temps, permettrait d'améliorer l'engagement des étudiants. La mise en œuvre de ces stratégies garantirait une acquisition plus efficace du français et offrirait aux étudiants des opportunités d'ouverture culturelle et professionnelle.

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TWEETING THE ONE CHANCE UPRISING IN NIGERIA: INVESTIGATING DISCOURSE ACTS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

The transformation brought about by social media in engaging with national issues has garnered significant attention from social scientists. This paper explores the discourse acts in tweets and online comments concerning "One Chance," a form of robbery targeting commuters in public and private vehicles. Utilising Speech Act theory and a qualitative textual approach, it examines the actions, narratives, and language that shape and mobilise public perception through these tweets. The findings indicate that X users and commenters primarily emphasize providing eyewitness accounts, warning potential victims, and reporting incidents. These contributions were categorized into three types of speech acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. The study concludes that X serves as a vital platform for discussion, where safety concerns, civic engagement, and policy demands converge.

Keywords: One Chance, Discourse Acts, X, Social Media, Digital Activism.

Introduction

Since Nigeria transitioned from military rule to democracy in 1999, the political landscape has significantly evolved, facilitating increased civic participation, free speech, and activism among the populace. The embrace of democracy as a political ideology and operational system by contemporary societies has spurred citizens to engage actively in political processes (Balogun & Akano, 2021). Though traditional forms of activism—such as protests, strikes, and community organization—have historically been pathways to effecting change, the digital revolution has introduced new avenues for engagement. Social media platforms have emerged as crucial instruments in elevating public awareness and fostering substantial socio-political change across various contexts. In Nigeria, social media platforms like X, Facebook, and WhatsApp have empowered citizens by providing them with tools to organize effectively, amplify their voices, and hold those in power accountable (Okocha & Arsum, 2022). As noted by Phil (2022), the phenomena of social media and hashtag activism have evolved into significant forms of advocacy that mobilize public support for specific causes. Over the years, social media has demonstrated its capacity to catalyze activism in Nigeria, exemplified by the #EndSARS movement of 2020, which protested against police brutality. This movement highlighted the potential of X as a platform for advocacy, facilitating real-time reporting and fundraising efforts. The campaign ignited following a tweet on October 3, 2020, documenting the tragic shooting of a man by Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) operatives in Ughelli, Delta State

(Ugwuede, 2020). Such movements illustrate a broader trend in which Nigerians leverage social media as a battleground for discourse, ensuring that pressing social and political issues remain in public discourse. Furthermore, the emergence of the One Chance uprising on X showcases the spontaneous nature of digital activism, as individuals share personal narratives and alert the public about the rising threat of fraudulent commercial vehicles involved in robbery, assault, and, in severe instances, abduction. This digital campaign underscores how civilians are harnessing social media as a mechanism for advocacy, awareness, and survival, particularly in contexts where governmental and security responses are inadequate.

One Chance and Digital Activism

The phenomenon of "One Chance" in Nigeria, particularly in major urban centers such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, has become a significant concern in discussions surrounding urban safety and crime. This term encapsulates a violent urban crime trend, wherein unsuspecting passengers unwittingly board fraudulent commercial vehicles operated by criminals. Victims of "One Chance" face a range of harrowing experiences, including robbery, assault, kidnapping, and in extreme cases, even murder (Akinyele, 2022). The insidious nature of this crime, often masked by an appearance of normalcy, exacerbates the risk to individuals, resulting in financial instability, emotional trauma, and, tragically, sexual violence or death in the most severe instances (Ifechi, 2024). Despite reports of these incidents increasing in recent years, law enforcement agencies have struggled to respond effectively. Contributing factors to this inadequacy include the absence of a comprehensive database to monitor private vehicles operating as public transport, insufficient background checks on drivers, and inadequate policing in high-risk areas (Ifechi, 2024). As a direct reaction to this persistent threat, the populace has increasingly turned to social media as a mechanism for self-protection and community awareness. X, in particular, has emerged as a potent platform for mobilizing and championing social and political protests globally (Innocent & Adetunji, 2013). The discourse surrounding "One Chance" has thus taken on a dynamic life within this digital space. Victims utilize the platform to share firsthand accounts of their experiences and to alert the public about specific crime hotspots. In turn, concerned citizens leverage the platform to demand governmental accountability and action. The emergence of hashtags such as #OneChance, #OneChanceSurvivor, and #Crime reflects a collective demand for reforms aimed at enhancing safety.

In contrast to traditional media, which often covers these incidents retrospectively, X serves as a real-time warning system, enabling users to navigate urban environments more safely based on current updates from their peers. The urgency and community-driven nature of the "One Chance" uprising echo previous digital movements, highlighting the immediacy of collective action facilitated through social media. The linguistic variations present within these discussions—ranging from urgent alerts and emotional expressions to direct appeals for justice—underscore the significance of analyzing the discourse within these tweets. Such an analysis reveals how language functions

not merely as a descriptive tool but actively influences public perception, behaviors, and the pursuit of accountability from governmental institutions. For instance, a straightforward tweet warning, "Avoid Third Mainland Bridge after 8 PM, One Chance gangs are operating heavily tonight," exemplifies how effectively information is conveyed, catalyzing action, eliciting emotional responses, and inciting dialogue regarding security failures. Although social media's role in addressing issues of insecurity is on the rise, existing research has predominantly focused on large-scale movements such as #EndSARS or #BringBackOurGirls, often neglecting the nuanced discussion surrounding "One Chance." This study aims to address this gap by investigating the discourse acts present within tweets related to "One Chance," thereby enriching our understanding of digital activism and public safety discourse within the Nigerian context. The objectives of the study include examining: (i) the discourse acts present in One Chance-related tweets, (ii) the performative nature of the tweets, and (iii) how discourse acts on X contribute to public safety. To achieve these objectives, the study will be guided by the following questions: (i) What discourse acts are used in One Chance-related tweets? (ii) What is the performative nature of the tweets? and (iii) how do the discourse acts on X contribute to public safety? By examining these tweets and digital conversations in general, the study seeks to highlight the role of social media in shaping public awareness, influencing discourse, and driving digital activism in Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

Language transcends its function as a mere tool for communication, emerging as a potent force that shapes social relations and constructs individual and collective identities. This study utilizes Speech Act Theory as a conceptual framework to analyze how users negotiate meaning through their tweets. By employing various discourse acts, individuals articulate demands and foster solidarity within their digital interactions. John Searle's Speech Act Theory (1969) elucidates the multifaceted nature of language, demonstrating its capacity to convey information while simultaneously performing actions. He categorizes linguistic acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary dimensions. The locutionary act pertains to the act of stating something, while the illocutionary act encompasses the intended meaning or action conveyed by the speaker. The perlocutionary act, on the other hand, focuses on the effects that speech has on the listener. Within the illocutionary framework, Searle identifies several classifications: assertives (or representatives), directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. Assertive acts articulate a state of affairs, encapsulated in examples like stating, claiming, or suggesting. Directives aim to compel the addressee to take action, encompassing orders, challenges, and requests. Commissive acts commit the speaker to a particular course of action, with examples including promises and intentions. Expressive acts convey the speaker's emotional state, represented through expressions of gratitude, condolences, and other sentiments. Lastly, declaratory acts create a new state of affairs, including baptizing or sentencing. During the recent social upheaval, X users engaged in performative discourse, where strategies such as

warnings, accusations, and calls to action became prevalent. An analysis grounded in Speech Act Theory will illuminate the effectiveness of these discourse strategies in eliciting societal responses, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of language within social movements.

Methodology

The research utilises a qualitative methodology to examine #Onechance-related tweets, specifically focusing on data gathered using the X Advanced search feature. The justification for this study's qualitative research method is its ability to facilitate in-depth exploration of complex phenomena, subjective experiences, and meanings, providing rich insights beyond what quantitative data can capture. A purposive sampling method was employed to select the tweets and comments. The choice of this research instrument is based on its flexibility and the fact that it allows us to select participants (tweets and comments) that contribute to answering the research questions. A total of 10 tweets and 10 comments relating to the 'One chance' discourse and tweets with the #Onechance were selected, ensuring that only content in English and Pidgin English was included, with English as the primary language in this digital discourse. The tweets and comments were selected from March 2016 to February 2025. The analysis employs Speech Act Theory (Searle, 1969) to draw insights from the collected data. Using qualitative methods and speech act theory is deemed particularly appropriate for exploring the nuances of the studied content.

Data Analysis

The performative power of Twitter discourse is fundamentally rooted in its capacity to actively convey information and influence and shape sociopolitical landscapes. The platform enables language and actions to transcend mere expression, enacting social phenomena that impact social norms, political processes, and individual behaviors. This influence is attributed to several unique characteristics of Twitter, including its real-time communication capabilities, extensive reach, and potential for collective mobilisation. The notion of performativity suggests that language functions as a social action, implying that uttering certain statements can effectuate change. On Twitter, this is exemplified by how a tweet can serve multiple roles: it may provide information, construct specific social identities, or catalyse new forms of action. Ultimately, the performative power of Twitter discourse lies in its dual capacity to communicate information and enact change, shaping and influencing the sociopolitical sphere in profound ways. This duality is further amplified by the platform's salient features and its ability to foster collective. To explore the performative power of Twitter discourse, this section employs speech theory to dissect a collection of tweets and comments categorised into distinct functional groups. The textual analysis will focus on three types of contents, namely Warning Tweets, Narrative Tweets and Activism Tweets. Warning Tweets alert the public about specific locations or strategies employed by One Chance criminals, thereby contributing to community safety. Narrative Tweets encompass personal accounts and eyewitness reports related to One Chance experiences, providing insights into the mobilisation role of social

media in public discourse, particularly concerning crime awareness and community mobilisation. Activism Tweets advocate for governmental action, emphasizing the need for justice and enhanced security measures in response to the One Chance phenomenon. By examining these categories, the study aims to shed light on the dynamic role of social media in public discourse, particularly concerning crime awareness and community mobilization.

Tweet 1: "Angry mob lynched one chance people, burnt their vehicle in Abuja. Throwback Times #onechance #crime #viralvideo #abuja #mob."

(Throwbacks, 2025).

Tweet 1 exemplifies a performative speech act, as it conveys both details of an event and encapsulates the collective emotional response of the mob's anger. The use of the term "lynched" conveys a sense of violent, extrajudicial retribution to what is perceived as injustice, highlighting a significant erosion of trust in formal law enforcement mechanisms. By employing hashtags, the tweet situates itself within a larger conversation about crime and public safety, inviting engagement and fostering awareness among its audience. The phrase "Throwback Times" suggests a reflection on historical events, indicating that such acts of violence are not isolated incidents but rather part of a persistent pattern in society.

Tweet 2: #OneChance is a known crime in Lagos for not less than 15 years. Don't forget, we're under-policed."

(Eniola, 2016).

Tweet 2 functions as a locutionary act, shedding light on the persistent nature of the issue surrounding "One Chance." It emphasises the inadequacy of policing by suggesting that these problems have been long-standing and insufficiently addressed. The directive "Do not forget" calls for ongoing awareness and vigilance from the audience, positioning them as participants in a broader conversation about crime and public safety. Additionally, the reference to being "under-policed" critiques systemic failures within law enforcement. This phrase underscores the notion that state responses have historically fallen short in effectively dealing with the complexities of crime, implying a need for reform and accountability within the policing system.

Tweet 3: "LADY NARRATES HER EXPERIENCE WITH ONE- CHANCE TAXI. #onechance #theft #crime #taxi."

(Brekete Family, 2023).

Tweet 3 transitions to a personal narrative, functioning as an illocutionary act designed to enhance awareness and caution among readers. Using the term "narrates" suggests a storytelling approach that enhances relatability and impact. The inclusion of hashtags emphasizes the themes of theft and crime, while the personal anecdote adds emotional depth, underscoring the urgency and significance of the issue.

Tweet 4: "One chance don change level to kidnapping. Abuja howfa?"

(Bonnie, 2024).

Tweet 4 embodies a growing concern regarding the escalation of crime and the increased threats faced by the public. The phrase "don change level" suggests a significant deterioration in safety conditions, indicating that the nature and frequency of criminal activities are intensifying. Furthermore, the rhetorical question "Abuja howfa?" provokes communal reflection and dialogue, emphasising a collective apprehension about safety issues. This invites discourse on the necessity for proactive measures and collaborative action within the community to address these emerging threats.

Tweet 5: "I've been away because I was robbed & beaten but thankfully. I'm fully recovered now! Here's what to look out for so you don't end up like me. #crime #onechance."

(Diary of a Lagos Bachelor, 2023).

Tweet 5 exemplifies a synthesis of personal narrative and a cautionary message, utilizing the act of sharing knowledge as a performative element. The phrase "Here is what to look out for" serves to establish the author as a figure of authority, intent on empowering others and mitigating the risk of similar adverse experiences. Additionally, the author's portrayal of their recovery journey conveys a sense of hope, indicating that although the experience was traumatic, the potential for overcoming such challenges exists. This duality of sharing both personal struggle and resilience not only informs the audience but also fosters a supportive community ethos.

Tweet 6: "Should civilians take justice into their own hands, or should the law take its course? #Onechance #CrimeAndPunishment."

(Crime Fighters NG News, 2025).

The exploration of justice, particularly in the context of personal safety versus legal processes, raises fundamental questions about the efficacy and integrity of law enforcement in tweet 6. Engaging with this topic encourages a critical examination of societal values and the role of legal systems in protecting individuals while upholding justice. The use of hashtags emphasises a broader conversation surrounding the implications of justice and punishment, urging a deeper reflection on moral and ethical dimensions. This discourse reflects individual perspectives and collective societal challenges associated with ensuring justice in a complex world.

Tweet 7: "Caught in the belly of #onechance robbers: Nigeria's major cities hotbed for crime on passengers."
(The ICIR, 2023).

The use of metaphorical language in discussing urban environments often evokes a profound sense of entrapment and peril in tweet 7. This reinforces the perception that major cities pose significant risks to their inhabitants and visitors. Such expressions serve as cautionary signals, contributing to a broader narrative emphasising fear and vulnerability within urban settings. The term "hotbed for crime" particularly underscores the notion of a systemic issue, implying that the challenges associated with urban safety are not isolated incidents but rather widespread, deeply ingrained concerns that warrant critical examination and response.

Tweet 8: "#OneChance: Be Vigilant, Police Warn Nigerians."

(Punch Newspaper, 2024).

The aforementioned directive exemplifies an authoritative speech act, underscoring the police's function in ensuring public safety. The term "warn" carries significant weight, indicating a serious threat and emphasising the urgency of the situation. This language calls for heightened public awareness and suggests that law enforcement is responding to an acknowledged issue, albeit in a largely reactive capacity. This reflects the complexities of police communication, where the necessity for immediate action intertwines with the broader implications of public perception and trust in law enforcement agencies.

Tweet 9: "Police nab #onechance couple in Abuja, recover vehicle."

(The Cable, 2024).

The current report on police action serves as a significant locutionary act, embodying a narrative that instills a sense of hope and justice within the community in tweet 9. Nevertheless, it simultaneously prompts a critical examination of the overall efficacy of law enforcement agencies in tackling the more significant, more complex issue of crime. The vehicle's successful recovery indicates a favorable resolution, yet phenomena such as "One Chance" underscore the necessity for comprehensive and systemic approaches to crime prevention and reduction. The juxtaposition of immediate successes with ongoing challenges highlights the need for a deeper analysis of the structural factors contributing to criminal behavior and the eventual formulation of holistic strategies to address these root causes.

Tweet 10: "'One-Chance' victim diŕs after Abuja Hospital allegedly rejected her because she didn't have a police report. #Onechance."

(YabaLeftOnline, 2023).

Tweet 10 serves as a critical commentary on Nigeria's complex interplay of crime, healthcare, and bureaucratic oversight. The term "One-Chance" victim diŕs" functions as a performative speech act, offering more than just a report of a tragic event; it seeks to provoke an emotional reaction from the audience. The use of "diŕs," with the dollar sign likely indicating censorship or emphasis, emphasises the seriousness of the incident and calls attention to the loss of life. The inclusion of the word "allegedly" introduces a layer of skepticism regarding the actions of the hospital, suggesting that the details surrounding the victim's death may be subject to dispute. This word choice signals a critical perspective on institutional practices, particularly within the healthcare sector, where bureaucratic necessities—such as the requirement for a police report—can have fatal consequences for individuals in distress. The implication is that the healthcare system failed the victim, exposing systemic flaws that prioritize administrative procedures over the sanctity of human life. By utilising the hashtag #Onechance, the tweet connects this tragic occurrence to the broader narrative surrounding crime in Nigeria, reinforcing the notion that "One

Chance" transcends mere criminality to become a societal concern with extensive ramifications. Ultimately, this tweet encapsulates the widespread frustration and despair regarding the shortcomings of both law enforcement and healthcare systems, advocating for accountability and systemic reform in response to these pressing issues.

The second phase of the textual analysis examines the comments on X to shed light on the dynamic role of social media in public discourse, particularly concerning crime awareness and community mobilisation.

Comment 1: "Sha dey careful for night... A friend of mine was a victim last week... Along that Kubwa side."

(Day Dreamer, 2024).

Comment 1 utilises colloquial language that cultivates a sense of community and shared experience among its audience. The expression "Sha dey careful" serves as an informal cautionary statement, drawing upon the resonance of Nigerian Pidgin English to enhance relatability. Furthermore, the mention of a personal connection—having a friend who was a victim—heightens the immediacy of the warning. This remark encapsulates a collective apprehension, indicating that crime is viewed not merely as an isolated occurrence but as a communal issue that impacts the entire populace. The reference to the "Kubwa side" situates the perceived threat within a specific geographical context, reinforcing the notion that certain areas are regarded as more dangerous.

Comment 2: "Husband & Wife Chukwudi Okorie And Chibuzor Okorie Doing 'One Chance'. What Are They Going To Give Birth To?"

(Patriot Olayinka, 2024).

The use of sarcasm in this context functions as a powerful rhetorical device aimed at critiquing the moral character of criminals in comment 2. Through the strategic employment of rhetorical questions, the author effectively dehumanizes the perpetrators, implying that their actions are so egregious that they forfeit the right to procreate. This assertion embodies a broader societal disdain and moral outrage, positioning the individuals in question as unworthy of leaving a familial legacy or contributing to the continuation of their lineage. Furthermore, including specific names adds a layer of personal engagement to the critique, making it more pointed and underscoring the absurdity of their behaviors. This approach fosters a deeper emotional response from the audience, reinforcing the idea that the actions of these criminals are not merely abstract societal issues but relatable, real-world transgressions that warrant condemnation. Overall, the text illustrates how sarcasm can serve as an effective tool for moral commentary, simultaneously providing social critique and evoking a visceral reaction from the reader.

Comment 3: "Just remove one of their foot from ankle joint then release them... They need to be limping so they preach to others."

(ڤك Nenim, 2024).

Comment 3 highlights a profound yearning for retribution, mirroring the emotional anguish endured by victims of crime. The proposition of inflicting

physical harm as a form of punishment signals a significant disillusionment with the legal system, which is often viewed as failing to deliver adequate justice. This extreme viewpoint reflects the desperation and indignation faced by those impacted by criminal acts, pointing to a troubling societal trend towards vigilante justice as individuals seek alternatives to the perceived shortcomings of law enforcement. The implications of this shift warrant critical examination as it raises questions about the efficacy of existing legal frameworks and the emotional needs of victims.

Comment 4: "See how they all look innocent."

(Mr Gunners, 2023).

Comment 4 critically examines the deceptive nature of appearances, positing that individuals engaged in criminal activities often do not conform to the stereotypical image typically associated with criminals. It underscores a broader societal skepticism and distrust, pointing out that external appearances can effectively obscure malicious intent. This analysis contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding safety and trust, illuminating the complexities of identifying potential threats within public spaces. By challenging preconceived notions about criminality, it invites a reevaluation of how we perceive risk and safety in our communities.

Comment 5: "May we not fall victims to these as we go
about searching for our daily bread. Amen!"

(PHD, 2024).

The prayerful tone of comment 5 intricately weaves together a shared aspiration for safety in the face of urban dangers. The expression "searching for our daily bread" serves as a poignant metaphor for the struggle for survival, implying that the pervasive threat of crime significantly complicates attaining essential needs. Furthermore, the communal affirmation of "Amen!" reinforces a sense of solidarity among individuals who share these fears and fosters collective resilience when confronted with adversity. This interplay of hope and fear emphasises the broader social context in which these sentiments are situated, highlighting the urgent need for communal support and protective measures in urban environments.

Comment 6: "They don't look like people that spend
millions. Police should locate their sponsors ASAP."

(Amanda, 2024).

Comment 6 raises an important point regarding the socioeconomic dynamics surrounding criminal activity. It suggests a degree of skepticism about the accused's financial background, indicating a belief that they might be embedded within a more extensive criminal network. The call for law enforcement to "locate their sponsors" highlights a fundamental belief that crime does not occur in isolation but is a symptom of broader systemic issues. This perspective underlines the necessity of addressing the root causes of crime—such as poverty, lack of education, and social inequality—rather than solely focusing on punitive measures against individuals. Such an approach advocates for a reexamination of justice systems, promoting a more holistic understanding of

the factors contributing to criminal behavior and emphasising the importance of comprehensive strategies for prevention and intervention.

Comment 7: "One chance and police are they not the same in this country 🙏." (Scholastica, 2024).

The frustration with law enforcement in comment 7 underscores a more profound concern regarding the relationship between police and criminal elements within society. The use of the crying emoji effectively communicates emotional turmoil and a profound sense of hopelessness regarding the efficacy of the justice system. This emotional response encapsulates a more significant trend of diminishing trust in public institutions, particularly reflecting perceptions of the police's inadequacies in safeguarding citizens and maintaining justice. Such sentiments can illuminate potential areas for critical examination within criminology and public policy discussions.

Comment 8: "For all of una wey no go enter motor or bus unless una see woman inside, this na the update. Crime is not gender or tribe based."

(OLUWAFEMI DARK ART AFC, 2023).

The use of Pidgin English in comment 8 effectively engages a local audience while simultaneously conveying essential information regarding safety practices. The assertion that "crime is not gender or tribe-based" challenges prevailing stereotypes and highlights the universality of criminal behavior, which calls for vigilance across all social identities. This commentary functions as a performative speech act to educate the audience and foster a sense of unity in their collective experiences of vulnerability. Addressing the issue in a culturally resonant manner encourages a shared understanding of the importance of safety and awareness in their community.

Comment 9: "This is so bad, when will all these end?"

🙏🙏"

(BIG YSTAR, 2023).

Comment 9 articulates a deep frustration and despair in response to the persistent crime issue. The use of a rhetorical question underscores a desire for resolution and change, while the inclusion of crying emojis enhances the emotional resonance of the statement. This comment functions as an illocutionary act aimed at eliciting sympathy and solidarity from readers, ultimately drawing attention to the significant emotional impact that crime exerts on individuals and communities alike. Through this expression, it effectively communicates the urgent need for collective understanding and action in addressing the challenges posed by crime.

Comment 10: "One chance in Abuja is too much. Was their victim last month but thank God for life."

(UKEEH, 2023).

Comment 10 opens with a powerful declarative statement that articulates outrage over the rampant occurrence of crime. Including a personal narrative, specifically the victim's experience, infuses the discussion with emotional depth, making the issue more tangible for the audience. The phrase "thank God for life" reflects a profound gratitude for survival, emphasising the fragile

nature of safety that individuals encounter in urban settings. This commentary is situated within a broader societal framework of fear and vulnerability, underscoring the need for heightened community awareness and mobilisation against crime. By detailing their experience as a victim, the commenter personalises the matter, thereby intensifying its urgency and relatability. The emotional resonance of the narrative is underscored by the acknowledgment of life's precariousness, encapsulating the complex emotional landscape faced by those living in environments affected by crime. This duality of gratitude and vulnerability reveals contemporary society's intricate dynamics of survival and safety.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of tweets and comments related to the “One Chance” uprising illustrates a complex interplay of linguistic functions outlined in the Speech Act Theory. This investigation reveals how users effectively utilised locutionary acts to convey reports of incidents, share personal narratives, and issue situational alerts, transforming the platform into a vital communal safety network. Moreover, the study highlights the employment of illocutionary acts, which delivered warnings, demanded accountability from government entities, and mobilised citizens to maintain vigilance. The directive and accusatory tones adopted in these communications imparted information and invoked immediate responses both behaviorally and institutionally. Furthermore, the tweets and comments analysed exhibited perlocutionary effects, generating emotional responses such as fear, outrage, empathy, and user solidarity. This emotional engagement underscores the pivotal role of social media in not simply reflecting realities but actively constructing, negotiating, and participating in a digital movement aimed at addressing institutional shortcomings and enhancing calls for justice and security. The findings suggest that the discourse surrounding the “One Chance” uprising on social media transcends mere description, embodying a participatory framework that actively challenges existing structures and advocates for reform.

Conclusion

This study delves into the role of language in shaping discussions on social media regarding the "One Chance" uprising in Nigeria. An analysis of tweets reveals that language serves not merely as a means of communication but also embodies a sense of urgency, mobilises action, and fosters a spirit of digital activism. How language is constructed and employed online significantly influences public discourse, articulating collective grievances and concerns. The study illustrates how social media platforms function as conduits for opinion-sharing, open discourse, resistance, and societal change through the Speech Act Theory lens. As digital activism continues to evolve, it is crucial to investigate the linguistic strategies underpinning these movements and their implications for public policy, governance, and civic participation in Nigeria.

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PROBLEMES TERMINOLOGIQUES RELEVES DANS LE COURS DE PHILOSOPHIE DE CASTEL JEAN ET LEUR TRADUCTION EN ANGLAIS

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Résumé

Comme c'est le cas pour tout texte philosophique, les unités terminologiques du cours de philosophie de Castel Jean constituent l'un des facteurs de la technicité de ce texte et surtout l'un des obstacles majeurs à sa compréhension globale. Il importe donc de bien les cerner et les définir afin de pouvoir les traduire. Nous avons donc entrepris dans cette étude, de faire l'étude de quelques-unes de ces unités terminologiques et de montrer les démarches traductionnelles adoptées en vue de résoudre les problèmes qu'elles posent. L'approche traductionnelle adoptée est la théorie des termes proposée par Teresa Cabré ; théorie qu'il a construite à partir des diverses théories linguistiques et qui s'appesantit sur la spécificité des termes sans pour autant les traiter comme s'ils étaient différents des mots non-spécialisés du lexique. L'étude révèle que dans les cas où les termes correspondants existent en langue cible (suggestion à échéance : posthypnotic suggestion), une consultation des dictionnaires philosophiques permet, en général, de les trouver. Dans les cas où il n'existe pas de termes correspondants consacrés en langue cible (comme dans le cas de « dénéantisation »), le traducteur se trouve obligé de trouver des termes ou expressions susceptibles d'être acceptées par les lecteurs cibles car étant conformes aux normes de leur langue.

Mots-clés : termes, unités terminologiques, spécificité, normes

Abstract

As it is the case for most philosophical texts, the terminological units found in Castel Jean's lecture notes, translated and published as *A Comprehensive Philosophy Course - Baccalauréat Model*, contribute in no small way to the technicality of this text. As such, they constitute one of the major obstacles to its overall understanding. It is, therefore, important to clearly identify and define these terms in order to facilitate their translation into the target language. Thus, this research undertook to study some of the difficult terms in Castel Jean's philosophy course and to show the approaches adopted so as to translate them effectively from French into English.

The approach adopted is the theory of terms proposed by Teresa Cabré ; a theory which he developed from various existing linguistic theories and which accounts for the specific nature of terms without treating them as different from non-specialised words of the lexis. The study reveals that in cases where the corresponding terms exist in the target language (e.g. suggestion à échéance : posthypnotic suggestion), a simple reference to philosophical dictionaries can settle the matter generally. However, in cases where there are no established corresponding terms in the target language (e.g. "denéantisation"), the translator cannot help but look for new terms or explicitations that are acceptable to target readers because they conform to the norms of their language.

Keywords : terms, terminological units, specificity, norms

Introduction

Le texte philosophique se spécifie par la réflexion critique qu'il émet sur le monde physique et métaphysique (s'attaquant à un ou des problèmes donnés et soulevant un ou plusieurs de leurs enjeux), son style argumentatif (problématisation, conceptualisation et pensée spéculative), son intérêt instructif et surtout par ses prises de position qui lui imposent une seule interprétation valable. Du point de vue stylistique, malgré la syntaxe complexe et parfois l'expressivité qui caractérisent les textes philosophiques, nous pouvons dire qu'en général le texte philosophique se distingue par sa réserve ou simplicité littéraire, c'est-à-dire par le fait que ce qui prime en lui, ce n'est point les effets littéraires ou l'aspect prosodique du style mais plutôt l'aspect rhétorique, en d'autres termes, l'argumentation ou le raisonnement et notamment les concepts. Pour cela, il s'est doté au fil du temps d'une terminologie propre constituée de notions et de concepts forgés par différents philosophes à partir de mots ordinaires et dont le sens technique varie d'un philosophe à l'autre. Ces notions et concepts tels que : l'idée, l'identité, la conscience, l'être, l'en-soi, l'absurde, l'existentialisme, l'idéalisme, etc..., ont en majorité un caractère autoréférentiel et sont donc sujets au sens ou à l'interprétation que leur donne tel ou tel philosophe. Au contraire, le texte scientifique ou technique se distingue par son style impersonnel, son objectivité, son caractère descriptif, et la stabilité de ses termes ou concepts.

En général, l'étude des termes ressortit à la terminologie que Le Petit Robert (2010) définit de la manière suivante :

- 1°. L'ensemble des mots techniques appartenant à une science, un art, à un chercheur ou un groupe de chercheurs. (...)
- 2°. L'Etude systématique des « termes » ou mots et syntagmes spéciaux servant à dénommer classes d'objets et concepts.

Pour ce qui concerne l'étude systématique des termes, retenons d'un côté la définition suivante tirée du dictionnaire Larousse en ligne (2019) fort pertinente en matière de spécificité du discours philosophique et de sa traduction :

La terminologie est une discipline qui a pour objet l'étude théorique des dénominations des objets ou des concepts utilisés par tel ou tel domaine du savoir, le fonctionnement dans la langue des unités terminologiques, ainsi que les problèmes de traduction, de classement et de documentation qui se posent à leur sujet.

Et de l'autre, la norme ISO 1087 (1990) qui précise que contrairement à la lexicologie qui traite des mots de la langue courante, « la terminologie ne s'intéresse qu'aux termes, mots simples ou complexes appartenant à une langue spécialisée, elle analyse les réseaux de notions auxquelles ils renvoient mais elle étudie aussi leur signification et leur comportement ».

En d'autres termes, la terminologie permet de cerner non seulement les termes propres à la philosophie mais aussi les notions auxquelles ils se rapportent. Il va sans dire que l'on ne peut parler de la philosophie ni entamer la traduction d'un texte philosophique sans connaître au préalable sa terminologie ou le vocabulaire philosophique. S'il importe dans la traduction technique de connaître le sens des termes (qui d'ailleurs sont stables ici) et de trouver ou "forger" leurs équivalents dans la langue d'arrivée, il en va de même et davantage dans la traduction des textes philosophiques où le sens des termes et des concepts varie selon les auteurs et les époques.

Ce travail se penche sur les difficultés que l'on éprouve à appréhender la terminologie du discours philosophique composée de termes et mots techniques (souvent tirés du langage ordinaire mais ayant pris un sens nouveau ou spécial) exprimant diverses notions et concepts. En effet, l'une des difficultés majeures dans la compréhension du texte philosophique réside en l'appréhension du sens de ses unités terminologiques. Il s'agira donc de savoir distinguer et définir les mots clés (termes, notions et concepts) qui englobent les unités terminologiques du texte philosophique.

Le but de ce travail est d'étudier les termes relevés du cours de philosophie de Castel Jean et de montrer les difficultés à surmonter pour les traduire en anglais. Les objectifs sont de relever des termes ou mots techniques du cours de philosophie de Castel Jean, définir ou expliciter les termes relevés, et montrer l'approche ou la stratégie adoptée pour traduire ces termes en anglais. Ce travail est une recherche qualitative ayant trait à l'étude des termes ou mots techniques propres au discours philosophique. Il vise à montrer par l'analyse et l'explicitation de ces termes et mots techniques comment ces derniers constituent des problèmes lexico-sémantiques non seulement pour la compréhension de tout texte philosophique mais en outre pour la traduction. La source primaire de la collecte des données de ce travail est le cours de philosophie niveau Baccalauréat de M. Castel Jean. Les sources secondaires, dûment mentionnées dans la section des références, sont les dictionnaires en ligne et les blogs et sites d'informations sur l'internet.

Cette étude est basée sur la théorie des termes proposée par Teresa Cabré (1999); théorie que l'on peut construire à partir des diverses théories linguistiques et qui va inclure différents aspects des théories de la connaissance et de la communication. Selon Cabré (1999, p. 10),

les termes, les unités qui constituent l'objet du domaine de connaissance appelé terminologie, peuvent être analysés à partir de disciplines différentes et, en tant qu'ils sont des objets polyédriques, ils peuvent participer de son champ d'étude et même devenir une partie centrale de l'objet d'analyse et de théorisation. À partir de la linguistique, il est parfaitement possible et plausible d'élaborer une théorie des termes, théorie où ils sont décrits comme des unités de forme et de contenu, dont l'usage dans certaines conditions discursives particulières leur fait acquérir une valeur spécialisée. Logiquement, cette théorie doit être suffisamment large pour rendre compte de la spécificité des termes, sans toutefois les traiter comme des unités différentes des mots du lexique non spécialisé.

Sans entrer dans les détails des relations ou affinités entre les termes relevés anglais et leurs équivalents français cette étude a fait ressortir les liens étymologiques et morphologiques que partagent nombre de ces termes.

Particularités terminologiques : termes, notions et concepts philosophiques

Le terme :

Selon Kocourek (1982 :77) cité par Marie-Françoise Mortureux (1995),

Le terme est une unité lexicale définie dans les textes de spécialité. L'ensemble des termes s'appelle la terminologie [...] Les termes sont [...] des unités lexicales dont le sens est défini par les spécialistes dans les textes de spécialité.

A la définition du mot "terme" donnée par Kocourek (1982), ajoutons cette autre définition issue de la norme ISO 1087 :1990 ISO (Terminologie – Vocabulaire) : « [le terme est] la désignation au moyen d'une unité linguistique d'une notion définie dans une langue de spécialité. » Ce qui caractérise le terme, c'est donc la singularité de son sens. Marie-Françoise Mortureux (1995) parle dans son article : Les vocabulaires scientifiques et techniques de "monoréférentialité, monosémisation et de caractère explicite de la définition spécialisée" ; et Salah Mejri (2008, p.6) souligne l'importance de la stabilité terminologique et de "son impact sur la traduction spécialisée" :

Une terminologie est dite stabilisée si elle est communément partagée dans un cadre normatif le plus souvent consacré par les dictionnaires reconnus. Comme le terme a pour contrepartie le

concept, la stabilité terminologique présuppose une stabilité conceptuelle. (...) Si la terminologie n'est pas stabilisée, elle est soit marquée soit fluctuante. Quand elle est marquée, c'est le cadre théorique dont elle est tributaire qui offre la garantie de stabilité.

L'universalité et la stabilité des termes techniques sont donc des critères essentiels du texte technique. Or nous constatons que contrairement aux termes scientifiques ou techniques, les termes philosophiques changent de sens d'un philosophe à l'autre ou d'un système à l'autre. S'il importe donc dans la traduction technique de connaître les termes propres au domaine donné et à trouver ou "forger" leurs équivalents dans la langue d'arrivée, il en est autant et même davantage dans la traduction des textes philosophiques où le sens des termes et des concepts varie selon les auteurs et les époques. Considérons à propos le sens de deux termes philosophiques, "catégorie" et "dialectique", relevés dans le Peruzzo Bordas Encyclopédie, Volume 10/19, Philosophie (1968 :9):

- *Catégorie* : 1 – *Chez Aristote* : ce qui peut être affirmé le plus généralement de l'être. Il y a dix catégories : substance, qualité, quantité, relation, temps, lieu, situation, action, passion, avoir. *Syn. de prédicament*. 2 – *Chez Kant* : concepts fondamentaux de l'entendement groupés en quatre grandes classes : quantité, qualité, relation, modalité.
- *Dialectique* : 1 – *Sens primitif* : art du dialogue et de la discussion. Chez Platon, la dialectique est la démarche de l'esprit par laquelle on remonte de concept en concept jusqu'aux idées les plus générales ; chez Aristote, la dialectique a pour objet les raisonnements qui portent sur des opinions probables, par opposition à l'*analytique* qui traite de la démonstration rigoureuse. 2 – *Au Moyen Age*, «dialectique» désigne la logique formelle. 3 – *Chez Kant* : la dialectique est une logique de l'apparence (illusion transcendantale). 4 – *Chez Hegel* : démarche de la pensée qui se déroule en trois temps : affirmation (thèse), négation (antithèse), négation de la négation (synthèse).

Ces deux exemples montrent l'instabilité des termes du texte philosophique contrairement au texte technique. Il est donc nécessaire de distinguer les variations de leurs acceptions chez les différents philosophes. Il arrive même parfois que des concepts philosophiques se contredisent comme le cas de l'idée chez Platon et chez Aristote. Le premier conçoit l'idée comme une réalité immuable et indépendante de la chose. Le second conçoit les Idées comme des abstractions mentales ou formelles des choses et ne peuvent exister séparément des choses.

Soulignons ici le fait que les termes du langage philosophique sont souvent tirés du langage ordinaire mais ils s'en démarquent en prenant une acception spéciale ou particulière. A titre d'exemples, relevons les items acte et

puissance : selon le Robert (2010), dans la langue courante, l'acte signifie entre autres « l'action humaine considérée dans son aspect objectif plutôt que subjectif » et la puissance, « l'état de celui qui peut beaucoup, qui a une grande action sur les personnes, les choses ; la domination qui en résulte ». Mais en philosophie et particulièrement dans le langage d'Aristote, être en puissance désigne une existence virtuelle ou potentielle par rapport à être en acte qui désigne le passage de l'être du stade virtuel à un stade accompli. Ainsi dirait-on que l'objet d'art est en puissance dans le matériau. Il est en acte lorsqu'il est créé par l'artiste.

Il convient de rappeler à ce niveau les liens sémantiques que la linguistique établit entre les mots "terme", "notion" et "concept" et que nous illustrons ici par deux citations de Wikipédia (Concept philosophie, 2019) : la première relative au lien concept-terme affirme que « en linguistique, on dira que le concept est dénoté dans le langage par un terme qui le désigne : le concept est nommé signifié, le terme le désignant est nommé signifiant ». La seconde souligne la différence subtile entre "terme" et "notion" en affirmant que 'En fait, selon Eugen Wüster, l'un des créateurs de la discipline [terminologie], le terme est une unité à deux faces comportant une dénomination (dans une langue quelconque) faisant référence à une notion (c'est-à-dire une unité d'ordre conceptuel). Lorsque par exemple j'utilise le terme "port USB", la suite de caractères forme la dénomination et renvoie à une notion informatique particulière qu'il serait trop long de développer ici'.

Quelle différence y a-t-il entre les mots notion et concept ?

En ce qui concerne les mots "notion" et "concept", bien qu'ils soient employés souvent comme synonymes, ils se distinguent par quelques nuances subtiles qu'il faut clarifier pour savoir dans quelles circonstances employer l'un ou l'autre.

La notion : Le Petit Robert (2010) définit le mot notion entre autres comme une « connaissance élémentaire (ou) une connaissance intuitive, synthétique et assez imprécise (que l'on a d'une chose) ». On parlera alors de notions de morale, du bien et du mal, de justice, etc.

Le concept : Parmi les définitions que le Petit Robert (2010) donne du mot concept, retenons la suivante : « philo : représentation mentale générale et abstraite d'un objet ». Loïc Da Fonseca (2017, para. 3) donne aussi une définition pertinente du mot concept lorsqu'il écrit dans "Quelle est la différence entre notion et concept" :

Concept aussi provenant du latin, de *conceptus* (« se saisir de » ou « recevoir »), on emploiera "concept" (dans les sciences ou la philosophie) quand on fera allusion à une idée abstraite, séparée de son sens concret, de la réalité, du phénomène ou de la situation à laquelle elle se réfèrera. Selon Kant, le "concept" se rapporterait à une quelconque **idée générale, non absolue**. On catégorisera alors le

matérialisme, l'idéalisme ou l'existentialisme
comme étant des concepts (et non pas des notions).

Finalement nous ne manquerons pas de relever l'analyse que Hegel a faite du mot "concept". En effet dans *La Phénoménologie de l'esprit*, œuvre de Hegel traduite par Jean Hyppolite (1941) et citée par Castel Jean (n.d.) dans son cours de philosophie, Hegel soutient que la compréhension du concept constitue une "victoire de l'esprit sur l'objet". Il écrit à ce propos :

C'est seulement dans la pensée que je suis en moi ;
l'appréhension conceptuelle seule est une pénétration
de l'objet qui alors ne s'oppose plus à moi mais à qui
j'ai pris ce qu'il avait pour soi, vis-à-vis de moi... le
tableau multicolore du monde est devant moi, je suis en
face de lui et dans cet acte, je dépasse l'opposition, je
m'approprie le contenu. Le "je" est chez soi dans le
monde quand il le connaît et plus encore quand il l'a
saisi par concept. Cela est le comportement théorique.

L'ensemble de ces notions et concepts et leurs termes ou mots techniques forment donc l'essentiel de la terminologie philosophique.

Les résultats de l'étude Quelques termes relevés dans le "Cours de philosophie de Castel Jean" et leur traduction :

L'accoutumance :

Texte source (p. 190):

nous disons toujours que cette tendance
est effet de l'**accoutumance** (...)
Toutes les conclusions tirées de l'expérience
sont donc des effets de l'**accoutumance**
et non des effets du raisonnement.

Texte cible (p. 190):

: we always say, that this propensity
: is the effect of **Custom** (...)
: All inferences from experience
: are, therefore, effects of **custom**,
: not of reasoning.

Les différentes acceptions du terme accoutumance en anglais sont les suivants: *habit, custom, habituation, dependency, addiction*, etc. Mais pour ce qui est de l'équivalent de "l'accoutumance" en anglais, nous avons d'abord choisi "habit". Cependant, en réalisant que David Hume avait écrit "Custom" dans son texte original, nous sommes convenus de garder le mot de l'auteur et qui plus est, de ne point retraduire le texte français vers l'anglais mais de garder le texte original anglais.

Le "aufhebung" ou "aufheben" – dépassement (dialectique) :

Texte source (p. 194):

(...) tout est réglé par la contradiction
et ce qui donne vie aux choses et à
l'esprit, c'est le perpétuel mouvement
d'affirmation, de négation de contradiction,
de **dépassement**. L'histoire pour Hegel,
c'est donc l'inscription successive des

Texte cible (p. 194):

: (...) everything is regulated by contradiction
: and what gives life to things and to
: the mind, is the perpetual movement of
: affirmation and negation, contradiction and
: **sublation**. History is, therefore, for Hegel,
: the successive imprint of

différents **dépassements** ou des : various **sublations** or of
 différents moments dialectiques (aufhebung) : various dialectical moments (aufhebung).

Un concept philosophique hégélien sur lequel butte tout traducteur français est le "aufhebung" (nominatif) ou "aufheben" (gérondif) qui signifie tout à la fois supprimer (négation) et conserver (préservation). Ce concept est rendu médiocrement en français par le terme "dépassement" ou encore par "relèvement" chez Derrida. Or comment traduire "dépassement" en anglais ? Ou plutôt comment trouver le(s) terme(s) équivalent(s) en anglais ? Les dictionnaires de langues française n'en donnent pas l'acception philosophique et une traduction littérale comme "overtaking" ou "exceeding" ou encore "surpassing" donnerait un non-sens. C'est donc dans les dictionnaires philosophiques bilingues, les ouvrages d'auteurs anglais/anglophones et les traductions anglaises de textes allemands qu'il faut chercher afin de dénicher le(s) terme(s) équivalents à "aufhebung" ou "aufheben". Dans sa thèse intitulée : *Hegel's concept of sublation : A critical interpretation*, Ralph Palm (2009) affirme qu'il n'y a pas de traduction directe ou mot pour mot en anglais pour ce concept de Hegel : « The problem is that there is no literal, direct translation for aufheben. Any English term would simply be a place-holder, because there is no single verbum verbo equivalent. Nor is such a word-for-word substitution strictly necessary » (P.14).

Plusieurs termes sont également proposés en anglais comme équivalents de "aufheben" : "lift up", "abolishment", "sublation", "preservation", "suspension", etc. Ralph Palm (2009) nous rappelle à propos la dispute entre trois traducteurs de G.W.F. Hegel, à savoir H. S. Harris, T. F. Geraets et W. A. Suchting (1991) – les deux premiers proposant *sublation* comme traduction adéquate de "aufheben" et le dernier proposant en contre-partie *suspension*. Ralph Palm (2009) opte, quant à lui, pour le terme traditionnel de "sublation". C'est aussi le terme que nous avons choisi dans notre traduction :

La dénéantisation :

Texte source (p. 204):

Texte cible (p. 204):

Il est toujours au contraire, un être ouvert, : He is always, on the contrary, an open being,

colonisateur, tentaculaire, capable pour : coloniser, tentacular, capable of

reprendre sa « dénéantisation ». : resuming the undoing of his "nihilation".

Ce terme de dénéantisation est dérivé du terme néantisation qui signifie pour Sartre le fait de néantiser (en anglais, *nihilation*) ou de produire du néant dans le monde en éliminant une chose de notre monde intentionnel, et auquel est attaché le préfixe privatif "de". Nous l'avons compris comme étant la négation de la néantisation, en d'autres termes se donner de l'existence. Nous aurions pu le traduire en anglais par "*deannihilation*", dû à l'affinité lexicale entre néantiser et *nihilation*. Mais vu que l'usage n'a pas encore consacré ce terme, nous l'avons donc traduit par *undoing his nihilation*, visiblement en faisant recours à l'explicitation du terme. Il convient donc d'observer ici que ce terme sartrien de dénéantisation n'a pas un équivalent dans la langue cible, à savoir en anglais.

L'impensé : the "unthought" ou the "unthought thought"

Texte source (p. 237):

La pensée est donc sous la dépendance
d'un impensé. L'impensé étant ce que

je ne pense pas mais en vertu duquel
je pense.

Texte cible (p. 237):

: Thought is, therefore, under the control of
: an "unthought thought" – the "unthought
thought" being what
: I do not think but in accordance to which
: I think.

Nous avons été guidé dans notre choix par Anthony Judge (2012). Celui-ci cite dans son article en ligne : *Unthought as Cognitive Foundation of Global Civilization: Implications of God, debt, overpopulation, waste, negligence encroachment and death?* Diane Louise Prosser Macdonald (1995, p.49) qui traduit ce terme par "unthought thought" et Antonio T. De Nicolas (2003, p.xiii) qui écrit "the unthought". Mais il souligne que le terme "unthought thought" a acquis une certaine pré-éminence suite aux travaux de Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Phénoménologie de la perception, 1945).

La suggestion à échéance : "posthypnotic suggestion"

Texte source (p. 235):

L'hypnose s'appelle encore
suggestion à échéance ;

: Texte cible (p. 235):

: Hypnosis is also called
: posthypnotic suggestion ;

Pour ce qui est de l'appellation de l'hypnose comme suggestion à échéance, nous avons éprouvé du mal à trouver tout de suite les termes équivalents. L'expression *suggestion "with a deadline"* (suggestion avec une date butoir) ne convient pas dans ce cas. Par contre *"time bound " suggestion* qui signifie une suggestion "limitée dans le temps" ou encore "définie dans le temps" nous a semblée une traduction convenable. Mais éventuellement, nous avons trouvé que l'expression consacrée par l'usage est "posthypnotic suggestion". Remarquons que le dictionnaire de l'association américaine de psychologie définit ce terme comme suivant : « posthypnotic suggestion : a suggestion made to a person during hypnosis that he or she acts out after the hypnotic trance. The suggested act may be carried out in response to a prearranged cue, and the person may not know why he or she is performing the action » (APA, n.d.). L'expression anglaise a le mérite de montrer le rapport explicite qui existe entre ce genre de suggestion et l'hypnose.

La dialectique :

Texte source (p. 164):

L'âge du philosophe : à l'âge de trente ans,
l'individu commence à apprendre la **dialectique**

: Texte cible (p. 164):

The philosopher's age : at the age of thirty,
the individual starts learning **dialectic**...

Texte source (p. 228):

Marx a hérité de Hegel l'idée de la
dialectique et précisément de la nécessaire
contradiction qui conditionne

: Texte cible (p. 228):

Marx inherited from Hegel the idea of
dialectics and, precisely, the necessary
contradiction which determines

la vie, le développement, l'évolution de
tout système.

life, development, evolution of
any system.

Ce concept changeant mais fondamental de la pensée philosophique se traduit différemment en anglais par *dialectic* ou *dialectics* mais aussi par son adjectif, *dialectical*. Le dictionnaire sur ligne Merriam-Webster (n.d.) donne les définitions suivantes du mot anglais *dialectic* :

1 philosophy : LOGIC_sense 1a (1)

2 philosophy

a: discussion and reasoning by [dialogue](#) as a method of intellectual investigation specifically : the [Socratic](#) techniques of exposing false beliefs and eliciting truth

b: the Platonic (see PLATONIC_sense 1) investigation of the eternal ideas

3 philosophy : the logic of appearances and of illusions : the logic of [fallacy](#). // the dialectic of Kant

4 philosophy

a: the [Hegelian](#) process of change in which a concept or its realization passes over into and is preserved and fulfilled by its opposite also : the critical investigation of this process

b Marxism

(1) usually dialectics plural in form but singular or plural in construction : development through the stages of thesis (see THESIS_sense 4), [antithesis](#), and synthesis (see SYNTHESIS_sense 2b) in accordance with the laws of [dialectical materialism](#)

Nous avons traduit ce terme de dialectique (nominatif) par *dialectics* pour ce qui est relatif au marxisme et par *dialectic* pour tous les autres cas.

Réflexions sur la traduction des termes relevés :

Comme nous l'avons déjà dit, les termes dénotant les notions et concepts philosophiques ainsi que les mots ou expressions empruntées au langage ordinaire mais ayant pris un sens particulier constituent les mots difficiles qui déterminent la technicité du texte philosophique. Ajoutons à cela que ce sont souvent des termes propres ou mots essentiellement techniques, forgés par les philosophes et/ou connus surtout par leur sens ou valeur philosophique (cas de néologismes comme *différance* de Derrida, *denéantisation* de Sartre, etc...) ou tirés de la langue ordinaire mais auxquels les philosophes donnent une acception particulière (l'essence, l'absurde, etc...) – ce qui n'est pas sans nous rappeler le classement fait par Laurent Lagarde (2009, p. 126) des termes techniques (dans la traduction spécialisée) en termes techniques au sens strict (TTSS) et termes techniques empruntés au vocabulaire courant (TTEVC). En général, nous constatons une grande affinité lexicale dans ce domaine, due aux emprunts massifs entre nos deux langues de travail : dialectique/ *dialectic* ou encore *dialectics*, idées/*ideas*, intériorité/*interiority*, justice/*justice*, maïeutique/*maieutics*, métaphysique/*metaphysics*, etc. Mais il y a aussi des termes équivalents plus difficiles à trouver car n'ayant aucune

affinité avec les termes originaux : dépassement/*sublation*, dénéantisation/*negating his nihilation*, l'avenir/*tomorrow*, etc.

Conclusion

Les unités terminologiques du cours de philosophie de Castel Jean constituent l'un des facteurs de la technicité de ce texte et surtout l'un des obstacles majeurs à sa compréhension globale comme c'est le cas pour tout texte philosophique. Il importe donc de bien les cerner et les définir afin de pouvoir les traduire en langue cible. Dans les cas où les termes correspondants existent en langue cible (suggestion à échéance : posthypnotic suggestion), une consultation des dictionnaires philosophiques permet aussi, en général, de les trouver. Remarquons cependant que même dans les cas d'affinités lexicales (dialectique : dialectics), ces termes sont susceptibles d'un changement de sens d'un philosophe à l'autre. Ainsi, le traducteur est souvent confronté à des situations où les dictionnaires bilingues et/ou philosophiques l'obligent à choisir entre plusieurs significations ou définitions prises hors contexte. Le traducteur doit donc savoir identifier dans le texte les termes justes afin de trouver leurs équivalents en langue cible.

Dans les cas où il n'existe pas de termes correspondants consacrés en langue cible (comme dans le cas de « dénéantisation »), le traducteur se trouve obligé de délaissier les dictionnaires et les logiciels de traduction pour aller chercher des termes ou expressions susceptibles d'être compris par les lecteurs cibles. En général, face à toutes ces difficultés, le traducteur doit savoir se situer au niveau du texte ou discours et parfois, aller au-delà du texte même (par exemple, voir le texte original s'il s'agit d'une traduction, interroger le domaine de connaissance en question, savoir le terme consacré par l'usage et/ou la traduction, etc...) pour trouver le terme équivalant dans la langue cible.

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DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED HATE SPEECHES AGAINST PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI

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Abstract

Politics has been part of every society since the beginning of man's civilization. Speeches at every circumstance are geared towards explaining, persuading, amusing, informing or influencing ideas. The link between language and politics has long been recognized. In every political dispensation of every human society, politicians and political players usually resort to hate speeches. In the course of doing this, there might be issues of misinterpretation. This paper investigates social media politics and hate speeches against President Muhammadu Buhari. The population of the study consists of Nigerians and international communities. The data analysed were taken from 2014 to 2023. The source of data for this study is the social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) and also the print media. The participants cut across different categories of people who in some cases are not necessarily or directly the hate speakers. The study was conducted using qualitative descriptive design in order to describe the hate speeches on social media against President Buhari. The Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) perspective of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) formed the basis for the analysis. In this paper, ten hate speeches were selected and analysed. It was found that the forms of the hate speech which manifested in the data are: accusation, insult defamation, blasphemy, slander, provocation, incitement and distribution of fake news. The findings also show that the hate speeches against President Muhammadu Buhari have great impact on his personality and government. The study recommends the need to educate the public about the negative effects of hate speech and the need to promote a culture of tolerance and respect. This will help to reduce the prevalence of hate speech in the society.

Keywords: Language, Politics, Social media, Hate speeches

Introduction

Language is a unique human attribute which is used as a medium of communication. It is a formidable instrument by which human experience is analysed (Martinet, 1970. ke P20). According to Kekere-Ekun (2006) it is through language that man features effectively in the society. As a system of communication, it does not exist in a vacuum, but operates in a context of

situation. It is these contexts which determine the variations in language that we call register. Language is very crucial to human survival and existence. The primacy of language cuts across all facets of human life - government, education, health, religion, politics, and so on. Taiwo (2009. P.92) observes that language conveys power. It moves people to exercise their franchise, debate and even revolt. It therefore has impact on political stability or polarization.

The election of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 made history in Nigeria as it was the first time an incumbent and a member of the ruling party; the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was voted out of office and the main opposition taking over mantle of leadership as the President and Commander-in-Chief in a democratic dispensation. It is therefore of paramount importance that a democratically elected president or government should place premium attention on the electorates as democracy is government of the people by the people and for the people; good governance therefore, is the primary means of building, establishing and strengthening these social relationships. From this point of view, it is quite agreeable that politics has now become a linguistic affair while language has become a political issue, (Ayeomoni and Akinuolere 2012) that must be ventured into and this has prompted this study which attempts a discourse analysis of hate speech against President Muhammadu Buhari on social media from year 2014-2023.

Objectives of the study

This study has the following objectives:

- (i) To find out whether there are hate speeches against President Muhammadu Buhari as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- (ii) To ascertain what kind hate speeches are found on social media against President Muhmmudu Buhari
- (iii) To identify the factors responsible for the hate speeches;
- (iv) To find out the implications of the hate speeches on President Mohammadu Buhari's administration

Languages and politics

Since this study is on a discourse analysis of hate speech against President Muhammadu Buhari, it is important to understand the relationship that exists between language and politics. In doing this, we subscribe to the view of Chilton (1998. P.20) which states that politics is "the art of governance and power" while language is "the universal capacity of humans in all societies to communicate. Politics is a struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice, Bayran (2015. P.23). It is concerned with power to make decisions, control resources, and control other people's behaviours and values. In this process, language plays a crucial role, since every political action is prepared, accompanied, influenced and played out with language. Therefore, language plays an important role in politics because its main function in different political situations is to enable politicians form structurally stable social relationships. Fairclough (2006. P.1) observes that it can "misrepresent as well as represent realities, it can weave visions and imaginations which can be implemented to change realities and, in some cases,

improve human well-being but it can also rhetorically obfuscate realities and construe them ideologically to serve in just power relations”. In order words, language use in politics when put into action can yield democratic dividends or achieve the reserve.

The intrinsic link between language and politics has long been recognized, even in the days of Aristotle, when he opines that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals and man is the only animal which God has endowed with the gift of speech (Politics 1-11). Beard (2000. P.2) suggests that it is necessary to study the language of politics because it enables us to “understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power.”

Hate speech

Several attempts have been made to define hate speech. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe conceived hate speech as covering of expressions which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance. As a result, it generates stigmas, stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory practices against those who are construed as being different (ICIR 2015). Hate speech to Kukah (2015), is any communication that denigrates a particular person or a group on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or other characteristics. It can be in the form of any speech, gesture or conduct, writing or display and usually marks incitement, violence or prejudices against an individual or a group. It is a speech that employs discriminatory epithets to insult and stigmatize others on the basis of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other forms of group membership (Adibe, 2015).

In the Nigerian context, hate speech include acts of insulting people for their religion, abusing people for their ethnic or linguistic affiliation, expressing contempt against people because of their place of origin (Umar, 2015. P.5). From the foregoing definitions, it suffices to align with the thought of a political scientist and media commentator, Adibe (2015), that hate speech is a catalyst for violence and that it is very doubtful if there would be hate-motivated violent attack anywhere without hate speech and the hatred that it purveys.

In the same vein, according to Neisser (1994 P. 337), hate speech refers to “all communications (whether verbal, written, symbolic) that insult a racial, ethnic and political group, whether by suggesting that they are inferior in some respect or by indicating that they are despised or not welcome for any other reason”. On the other hand, Kayambazinthus and Moyo (2002) refer to hate speech as “war waged on others by means of words.” This understanding of hate speech is particularly true when it comes to hate speech on social media networks. Online hate speech is mainly characterized by the use of words and symbols.

As regards motivation of hate speech, many scholars have pointed out several factors, such as lack of tolerance, political clashes, discrimination, enmity and the openness of social media as motivating hate speech online. For instance, even before the emergence of social media, Spiegel (1999. P.375)

predicted that the internet will be another communication tool for racists and “hate-mongers” to spread their messages. Nemes (2002. P. 193) considered the internet a very important channel for those who want to spread messages of hate. Withschge (2008. P.75-92) however, present a more balanced understanding of the Web’s potentials within political communication. On the one hand, he endorses Brant’s views of a “horizontal, open and user friendly nature of the internet,” which affords people with opportunities for greater participation in the public sphere. On the other hand, however, he subscribes to Dahlberg’s counter arguments that the Web might facilitate abusive postings and even contribute in silencing some voices. Witschge argues that whether the Web enables deliberation or not, it depends on how people utilize the opportunities provided online.

Stating the effects of hate speech, Leets (2002 P.223) says it violates the individual’s dignity, result in humiliation, distress and psychological or emotional pain. Similarly, Nemes (2002) avers that hate speech can provoke pain, distress, fear, embarrassment and isolation to individuals. While hate speech towards groups of people can bring inequality problems and isolation, it creates the feeling of fear and discourages them from participating in the community and expressing their opinions. Adding to the argument, Nielsen (2002. P.165) avers that the degradation and humiliation brought by hate speech can silence the ‘victims’ and therefore reinforce existing hierarchies in society; while Parekh (2006) says it can also lead victims to become aggressive and dangerous.

According to Gagligardone et al. (2014. 13-15) online hate speech is not essentially different from similar expressions found offline. However, there are some specific characteristics as well as challenges unique to online content and its regulation. They summarize these characteristics as permanence, itinerant, anonymity or pseudonym and trans-nationality. On permanence, hate speech can remain online for long period of time and in different formats across different platforms and can be repeatedly linked. In this sense, the architecture of any particular platform influences how long topics ‘stay alive’. For instance, Twitter is built around the idea of trending topics, which may facilitate quick and wide dissemination of hateful message. However, if topics are ignored, discussion rapidly fades. Facebook on the other hand, provides the opportunity for long lasting discussion threads. Notwithstanding, online hate speech content may particularly be itinerant, which means that even when it is removed from one platform, it may find expression elsewhere, possibly on the same platform under a different name or on different online spaces. If a website is shut down, it can be quickly reopened using a web-hosting service with less stringent regulations or via reallocation to a country with laws imposing higher threshold for hate speech. The itinerant nature of hate speech also means that poorly formulated thoughts that would not have found public expression and support in the past may now arrive on spaces where they can be visible to a large audience.

Essentially, the office of the president is the highest political office in any country; therefore, it needs to be in constant touch with the people and this

can only be made possible through deliberate efforts to avoid clashes and resentment from the citizens.

The lacuna which this study recognizes is that hate speech against President Buhari has not been studied and analysed to the best of the researchers' knowledge. It is therefore this gap in scholarship that this research work intends to fill.

Empirical review

Very recently, researchers are beginning to show interest in hate speech as it is taking over our political and social media spaces. Attempts have been made by researchers to analyse hate speech in our society. One of these attempts was made by Bassey who in 2020 carried out a study on electoral campaign and hate speech in the print media. His study focused on the use of hate speech before, during and after the 2015 general elections. The study does an analysis of the January 19, 2015 advert on the Punch Newspaper. The research design adopted was the content analysis. The paper discovered that the advertisement should not have been allowed because it promoted hate speech and was against the ethics of the Nigeria Press Council. The study therefore concludes that the advertisement was inimical to democracy and against the ethics of journalism. However, Bassey's study differs from the present one because while the study focused on hate speech in electoral campaign in print media, the present study pays attention to discourse analysis of hate speech against President Muhammadu Buhari on social media.

Okoro in 2016 conducted a research on pragmatic analysis of selected political speeches of President Muhhamadu Buhari. The study was undertaken to identify the pragmatic acts of locution, illocution and perlocution of President Muhammadu Buhari's speeches during the campaign build-up of the March 2015 general elections. To do this, the study adopted the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) using the illocutionary acts of expressive, commissive, declarative, directive, assertive and verdictive. The data for the study were drawn from five purposively selected speeches of President Buhari. Formal Declaration of Interest for Presidency, My Manifesto and Vision for Nigeria, his speech at Chatham House, London, Acceptance Speech and Inaugural Speech. The quantitative research methodology was used, of which the descriptive survey method was employed for the analysis of data. These speeches were labelled A, B, C, D and E and ten sentences were extracted from each speech thereby generating a total number of fifty sentences from which one hundred speech acts (direct and indirect illocutionary acts) were obtained. The result of the analysis showed that the Overall Relative Frequency Percentages (ORFPs) of the selected speeches were: directive 28%, assertive 60%, expressive 16%, declarative 20%, commissive 42% and verdictive 34%. The result further revealed that these speeches were characterized by a preponderance of assertive and commissive acts which are mostly used as mobilization strategies especially in political campaigns by candidates to persuade their listeners in order to win elections. The study was concluded on the note that President Buhari should match his words with actions in order to

fulfill all his campaign promises as Nigerians expect a complete turn around and positive change in all aspects of their nation's life.

Bamigbola (2017) did a critical discourse analysis of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari's Post-Election Speeches. The two speeches analysed were his acceptance speech as the president-elect on April 1, 2015 and his inaugural speech after his swearing-in on May 29, 2015. This study relying on Fairclough and Dijk's models for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar examined the rhetoric in the language use of the speaker and the trend of the speeches. The findings of the study revealed that the use of language of the speaker center's on current happenings and pervading feelings in the society. The study also found that the speaker's propositions and views are based on his previous experiences as a minister, a military head of state and a long-term participant in the political arena of the nation.

Fiberesima in 2021 examined social media and hate speech with a view to looking at its implications for socio-political stability in Rivers State. Seven hundred (700) questionnaires were retrieved from the public to whom these questionnaires were distributed. Responses to questions were analysed and statistical results revealed a significant positive relationship between social media and hate speech. His findings revealed that those that propagate hate speech are usually elected officials, political parties candidates for elective positions, opinion makers and civil society officials (26-51).

From the foregoing, it is clear from the available findings that some scholarly works have been done on hate speech on social media. It is, however, important to note that there is still a gap to fill in that, no study has been carried out on the analysis of hate speech against President Muhammadu Buhari on social media. This present study will be of a great significance to knowledge and scholarship.

Theoretical framework

Political discourse analysis (PDA) is the analysis of political discourse from a critical perspective (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). It focuses on the reproduction and contestation of political power through political discourse. "PDA should answer genuine and relevant political questions and deal with issues that are discussed in political science" (Van Dijk, 1997). In discussing PDA, three major scholars have contributed in terms of theory and method. These scholars include: Van Dijk (1997), Chilton (2004), and Fairclough and Fairclough (2012). Van Dijk's approach will be centered on in this study.

Van Dijk (1997) gives an adequate explanation on the theory and application of PDA. According to him, PDA is about political discourse as well as a critical enterprise. It is a critical enterprise because it is an offshoot of CDA. He further contends that the relationship between CDA and PDA lies in the fact that CDA is interested in how power, power abuse and dominance are reproduced and that one cannot isolate power when discussing politics.

For Van Dijk (1997), political discourse simply means 'doing politics'. He notes that not all discourses that mention 'politics' is qualified to be called political discourse. He identifies certain factors that determine if a discourse is actually a political discourse. These factors include; actors or authors, viz,

politicians; activities or practices; and context. Aside politicians who are both the actors and authors of political discourses, “we therefore should also include the various recipients in political communicative events, such as the public, the people, citizens, the masses and other groups or categories” (Van Dijk, 1997).

On the other hand, it is not all the actions performed by politicians and other participants that can fit in as political discourse. Thus, Van Dijk (1997) contends that it is not enough to conclude that a discourse is political because a politician partakes in it, rather the activities and practices of the participants constitute factors that will determine if a discourse is political or not. Political discourses must have political implications and functions. Van Dijk (1997) highlights that political activities or practices of participants could be participating in political actions, such as governing, ruling, legislating, protesting, dissenting, or voting. In addition to activities and practices, Van Dijk recognizes context as another important factor in determining a political discourse. Just like in any other model of discourse analysis, context is an indispensable tool for arriving at an unbiased and objective result. Van Dijk (1997:14) opines thus:

Participants and actions are the core of such contexts, but we may further analyse such contexts broadly in terms of political and communicative events and encounters, with their own settings (time, place, circumstances), occasions intentions, functions, goals, and legal or political implications. That is, politicians talk politically also (or only) if they and their talk are contextualized in such communicative events such as cabinet meetings, parliamentary sessions, election campaigns, rallies, interviews with the media, bureaucratic practices, protest demonstrations and so on.

In addition, the outcome of such contexts must be political in nature such as enactment of laws and norms, distribution of social resources etc. Van Dijk (1997) remarks that gender, medical, corporate and educational discourses, even though the outcomes affect people, do not fall under political discourse.

The choice of PDA for the analysis of hate discourse data is because PDA is a perspective of discourse analysis which is concerned with analyzing politically related discourses. It is more appropriate because since this study is on hate speeches used in the Nigerian political domain, it then became imperative to adopt PDA to enable us highlight the political discourse structures of hate speeches and achieve other objectives of this work. More so, PDA is an approach that seems to be nominally applied to the study of hate discourses. The hate discourses that form the data for this study qualify as political discourses because they were uttered by political actors, in a political context and about a political activity.

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative descriptive design in order to describe the hate speech on social media against President Muhammadu Buhari. Data gathering for this study involves two methods. The first part of the data used

cover the period of 2014 to 2023 during which President Buhari had his campaigns, was declared president-elect and acted in office as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This set of data was sourced from the social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube Instagram, Twitter, etc.) and also print media. The data was collected through automated technique. Different categories of people, (civil servants, health workers, teachers, market women, students, artisans, commercial drivers, etc.) were added up into a WhatsApp group where they were made to forward posts from different sources that relate to hate speech against President Muhammadu Buhari. Fifty hate speeches were gathered through the WhatsApp group created. The participants in the WhatsApp group are not necessarily the speakers of the hate speeches. For this paper, ten out of the fifty hate speeches gathered were analysed.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data presented and analysed below are ten of the hate speeches gathered from the social media for the purpose of this study.

HS 1

Major General Muhammadu Buhari has emerged as the APC flag bearer and President Goodluck Jonathan has emerged for the PDP. Now the battle for the soul and future of our nation begins. The focus of light shall prevail over the forces of darkness and God's counsel alone shall stand over Nigeria. I stand with Jonathan. Let's get it on.

(Ayo Fayose former Governor of Ekiti State.)

Fani Kayode, commonly called FFK in a frantic effort to discredit the APC and its flag bearer, Mohammadu Buhari, termed it the “forces of darkness and his party then, “forces of light. The darkness symbolizes that no good can come out of Buhari and his party, and therefore the future of Nigeria is at stake if APC and indeed Buhari emerged victorious in the election. The representative of the force of darkness is definitely a misfit for a country that has enough darkness already. Therefore, no wise Nigerian would vote for APC (Buhari) with this type of derogatory description and representation.

HS 2

Buhari is likely to die in office if elected, like the late President Yar'adua. (Ayo Fayose former Governor of Ekiti State.)

The nation's first lady Dame Patience Jonathan at the presidential campaign rally in Kogi State, described Gen. Buhari as unfit to be Nigeria president, calling him old and brain death. This hate speech could result in damage to the individual's dignity, that is damage the qualities that make a person valuable to someone else (Harenm, 1994). Making jokes and mockery of a person's age can result in normalizing negative aspects which is an effect of hate speech. This reinforces prejudice and it is hard to overcome (Costelloe, 2015).

HS 3

Anybody that comes and tells you change, stone that person. (Credited to Patience Jonathan, *Nation* 15/03/15)

Change is the slogan of the All-Progressive Congress (APC) and indeed Buhari during 2015 general elections. The then Nigerian first lady, at a presidential rally held in Calabar was recorded to have given this insightful statement to the members of Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) to stone anyone that promises them change.

HS 4

*Our people no dey born shittren wey dem no dey fit count.
Our men no dey born shidlrren troway for street. We no dey
like the people for that side.* (Credited to Patience
Jonathan, politics rally at Uyo)

At the same rally in Calabar, the First Lady then openly mocked and sarcastically castigated Buhari by saying "Our people no dey born shildren wey dem no dey fit count. Our men no born shildren thruway for street. We no dey like the people for that side is a derogatory statement obviously referring to the Northern parts of the country where the awful practice of child abandonment known as 'Almajiri' is still practiced. Normalizing negative aspects of a hate speech reinforces stereotyping and very difficult to overcome, therefore group stereotyping creates tension between people, which can lead to a more serious situation in future (Costeline 2015).

HS 5

*Buhari is a mistake, Northerners can't vote someone like
him again in 2023.* (Credited to Northern Elders Forum).

This statement credited to Northern elder's forum fits into hate speech classification because it evidently reveals the name of the person been attacked. This implies that the statement is a direct affront against the person of Buhari. Therefore, it is explicitly a hate speech. Implying that the President did not fulfill the expectations of the citizens and this has made people to lose confidence in him.

HS 6

*The Buhari government is a calamity that befell the
Nigeria state* (AIT News Review)

Yes, this comment could be seen as coming from a frustrated and disappointed person. In the comment, Buhari's government has been reduced to calamity.

HS 7

*Nowhere is safe, not the President's hometown nor his
region, ... nor BRT buses on Lagos roads; Buhari has
failed us a President.* (Credited to Northern Elders Forum).

This comment is a direct and explicit speech showing the speaker's negative attitude towards President Buhari. The extract represents judgment and accusation that Buhari is a failure. In this case President Buhari is also accused of not being able to protect Nigerians and in indeed his own people.

HS 8

*Overfeeding gave us energy to fight Jonathan, Now Buhari
has caused mass starvation.* (Credited to Omokiri)

This comment is credited to Reno Omokri, one of the most known critics of Buhari. Here, out of curiosity and outspokenness, he expresses his thoughts by

comparing Jonathan's government and Buhari's in relation to the welfare of the citizens. His judgement on Buhari's government is negative and sentimental. It is an open confrontation full of hate speech.

HS 9

Bandits were created by Gen. Buhari to oust Jonathan
(Credited to Omokiri)

This statement was made by Nuhu Ribadu, former EFCC boss. This comment is a strong accusation leveled against President Buhari. The speaker shows a kind of dislike towards Buhari by uttering this statement which sparked tension and uproar across the country. The seriousness of this can be understood from the fact that many northern politicians and rulers are being pointed at as being responsible for the unrest in the North East and indeed Nigeria generally.

HS 10

Buhari is now being used to define a global example of horrible and destructive leadership (Credited Robert Gordon University).

A good and successful leader possesses traits and attributes that qualify him as one, such as fulfilling campaign and electioneering promises, empowering the people and taking absolute responsibilities of the welfare of his people. Buhari is been described as a "horrible and destructive leader" before the whole world because he did not perform well.

Conclusion

The findings of the study at this point affirm that there are hate speeches against President Muhammadu Buhari. It was found that the forms of hate speech that are prevalent in the data are: accusation, insult, defamation, blasphemy, slander, provocation, incitement and spreading of fake news. The study concludes that there are hate speeches against President Muhammadu Buhari on the social media.

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STANCE AND ENGAGEMENT MARKERS IN NAIRALAND DISCUSSIONS ON IBRAHIM BADAMASI BABANGIDA'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The publication of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB), a former Nigerian military ruler (1985-1993), autobiography in 2025, an era where social media amplifies diverse viewpoints, has reignited debates about his legacy and political actions, prompting a reassessment of his contributions and shortcomings. These analyses and discussions on platforms like Nairaland provide valuable insights into how IBB's portrayal aligns with or diverges from public sentiment. Adopting Hyland's (2005) framework of stance and engagement markers to meticulously analyse twenty excerpts from vibrant discussions on Nairaland, a prominent online forum. The research delves into how users articulate their attitudes towards IBB and engage with one another, emphasising the linguistic strategies employed to express both support and criticism, particularly about the controversial annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election. The findings reveal a striking polarisation in user responses: while some participants wield positive stance markers to defend IBB's political legacy robustly, others deploy negative markers to vehemently challenge his credibility and decisions. Furthermore, engagement markers are pivotal in facilitating interaction, inviting users to share personal anecdotes and counterarguments, thereby enriching the dialogue. This analysis not only underscores the intricate dynamics of narrative construction in digital spaces but also highlights the transformative role of online platforms in shaping public perceptions of political figures. Ultimately, this research aspires to deepen the understanding of how linguistic choices in online discussions reflect and influence societal attitudes towards democracy and leadership in Nigeria, offering critical insights into the interplay between language, identity, and political discourse.

Keywords: Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, autobiography, Nairaland, stance markers, engagement markers.

Introduction

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, commonly known as IBB, governed Nigeria during a time marked by significant political turmoil and a decline in democratic practices. His administration is particularly infamous for the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election, which is often regarded

as one of the most credible elections in Nigeria's history (Nwankwo, 2021). The release of his autobiography on February 25th, 2025, has reignited debates about his legacy and political actions, prompting a reassessment of his contributions and shortcomings. In an era where social media amplifies diverse viewpoints, analysing discussions on platforms like Nairaland provides valuable insights into how IBB's portrayal aligns with or deviates from public sentiment. Despite the profound impact of IBB's governance on Nigeria's political landscape, public opinion remains sharply divided. On Nairaland, users express contrasting views, ranging from strong support to intense criticism, often shaped by personal beliefs, ideological affiliations, and historical interpretations (Olaniyan, 2019). This paper aims to understand the dynamics of these conversations, focusing on the stance and engagement markers that characterise them. The primary aim of this research is to analyse the discussions surrounding IBB's autobiography on Nairaland, with particular emphasis on identifiable stance and engagement markers. The specific objectives are :

1. To identify the stance and engagement markers in the conversations about Babangida's autobiography.
2. To analyse the stance markers that reflect users' attitudes towards IBB and his narrative.
3. To explore the engagement markers that reveal how users interact with one another in discussions about IBB.

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do stance and engagement markers manifest in conversations about IBB's autobiography on Nairaland?
2. How do stance markers reflect users' attitudes towards IBB and his claims?
3. What engagement markers are present in the discussions, and how do they shape user interaction?

This study is significant as it provides a nuanced analysis of public opinion in Nigeria, particularly concerning historical and political figures. By examining how digital platforms facilitate discussions about controversial leaders, this research sheds light on the complexities of collective memory and identity in Nigeria (Jones, 2020). It offers essential insights into the role of social media in shaping political discourse and influencing perceptions of democracy in the country.

Theoretical Framework

Hyland's (2005) model of stance and engagement markers serves as the theoretical foundation for this research, providing a nuanced lens through which to analyse user interactions in Nairaland discussions of Babangida's autobiography. Stance markers comprise hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention, which signal the writer's assessment of the truth of their claims and their emotional involvement with the subject matter. In the context of Babangida's autobiography, these markers illuminate how users express uncertainty, assert their opinions, or convey personal feelings regarding the political figure, thus shaping their identity within the discourse. Hedges are

linguistic tools, such as "might" or "perhaps," allow users to express caution or uncertainty, reflecting the contentious nature of Babangida's legacy. For example, a user might say, "He might have had good intentions," which conveys a sense of ambiguity about the former president's motives. Boosters like "definitely" or "undoubtedly" enhance the certainty of a statement, potentially revealing a user's strong allegiance or critical stance toward Babangida. An example could be, "He contributed to Nigeria's infrastructure," indicating a robust affirmation. Attitude Markers encapsulate the emotional responses users have towards Babangida's autobiography. Phrases such as "I admire" or "I am frustrated with" offer insights into the user's engagement with the text and the figure. Self-Mention refers to the use of first-person narratives that create a personal connection, as users reference their own experiences and perspectives, influencing how they relate to the subject matter and to each other in the discussion.

Engagement markers encompassing reader pronouns, directives, questions, shared knowledge, and personal asides further facilitate the interactive quality of online discourse. These markers invite readers into the conversation, generate community involvement, and establish a rapport between contributors. Reader Pronouns refers to the use of pronouns such as, "you" or "we" fosters inclusivity and encourages others to participate in the dialogue, which is vital in collective platforms like Nairaland. Directive involves using commands or requests, prompting responses, such as, "Think about his policies." This action engages other readers directly in the conversation, stimulating further discourse. Questions pose challenges or encourage reflection, often revealing the speaker's uncertainties and desire for connection, for example, "What do you think about his role in Nigeria's history?" Shared knowledge refers to references to common knowledge about Nigeria's political landscape that help ground discussions and build a collective framework for understanding Babangida's narrative. Personal Asides are linguistic tools such as informal remarks and side comments which personalise the conversation, adding depth and a human touch that can resonate with readers.

By applying Hyland's framework, this study highlights the complex interplay of stance and engagement markers, enhancing our understanding of how users construct meaning and identity in the context of Babangida's autobiography discussions. Through qualitative analysis of excerpts from Nairaland, this research aims to map the linguistic landscape of these conversations and illuminate the socio-political implications of autobiographical narratives in Nigeria's digital public sphere.

Methodology

A qualitative research design focused on discourse analysis of user-generated comments on Nairaland about IBB's autobiography. This approach was chosen to explore stance and engagement markers in shaping the conversation regarding IBB's legacy and the reception of his narrative (Aluya, 2016). The data for this study consist of twenty comments extracted from threads in Nairaland that discuss IBB's autobiography. These comments were

selected based on their relevance to how stance and engagement markers contributed to shaping the conversation about IBB's legacy. Data were collected over a two-week period, with particular attention to threads that generated significant user engagement. Comments were evaluated for their relevance to the research questions, and attention was given to the diversity of perspectives represented, as discourse analysis focusing on stance and engagement markers provided insight into user attitudes and interactive styles.

Data Analysis

Excerpt 1

"Lame book, lame writer... No pun intended."

At the heart of this excerpt lies a marked disdain for both the written work in question and its author, articulated through the repeated use of the word "lame." This term is not merely an adjective but a potent expression indicative of the speaker's complete dismissal of the book's value, as well as a scathing critique of the writer's abilities. To label something as "lame" implies that it is not only inadequate or inferior but also lacking in substance, creativity, or skill—essentially rendered useless in the eyes of the speaker. The choice of words suggests a strong emotional reaction, perhaps rooted in disappointment or frustration, which serves to heighten the intensity of the criticism. The addition of "No pun intended" introduces a level of meta-commentary, indicating that the speaker is consciously aware of the playful potential of their choice of words. By clarifying that there is no intention of cleverness in their phrasing, the speaker underscores the straightforward nature of their critique (Edem & Aluya, 2023). This statement emphasises their direct engagement with the subject and sheds light on their awareness of literary devices, suggesting a degree of literary analysis in their thought process. In doing so, the speaker elevates their critical stance from mere opinion to a reasoned examination, although it firmly steers in derision. Overall, this excerpt is a microcosm of the speaker's broader attitude towards literature and authorship, suggesting an uncompromising standard for what constitutes quality writing. The intensity of their contempt, coupled with the thoughtful acknowledgement of their word choice, generates a tense dynamic that invites readers to ponder the weight and consequences of literary expression.

Excerpt 2

"Someone told me IBB used to frequent Ogbomosho; there is a family that looks like him there!"

In this statement, the speaker navigates the complex labyrinth of personal histories and ethnic identity through a seemingly innocuous piece of hearsay. The phrase "someone told me" effectively positions the speaker as a conduit for information rather than a direct source, which inherently raises questions about the reliability and authenticity of the claim being made. This distance from the source of information underscores a key theme in this excerpt: the precarious nature of memory and anecdote in the context of larger narratives about identity, heritage, and belonging. By mentioning "Ogbomosho," a specific geographic locale in South-West, Nigeria, the speaker anchors their commentary within a tangible setting that carries cultural and historical significance in Nigeria. This

reference offers a sense of authenticity, inviting the audience to align or juxtapose their understanding of IBB's life against what is presented. The notion that "there is a family that looks like him there" opens the floodgates of speculation regarding ethnic and familial connections, hinting at a larger narrative about lineage and identity politics (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022). This statement implies that resemblance equates to kinship, suggesting that physical characteristics might provide insights into broader social or historical dynamics. Furthermore, this excerpt awakens a latent curiosity in the audience, prompting them to question the nuances of personal and collective identity within the intricacies of Nigeria's diverse ethnic tapestry. In doing so, the speaker subtly invites readers to explore deeper how individual histories intersect with cultural narratives, navigating the delicate thresholds of rumor and fact. Thus, this claim, while seemingly trivial at first glance, encapsulates a rich confluence of cultural identity, personal connection, and the weight of collective memory.

Excerpt 3

*"Oh I see where the Yoruba propaganda ends, no evidence
no links just Yoruba propaganda."*

Here, the speaker adopts a combative tone, openly critiquing what they perceive to be an inherently biased narrative stemming from the Yoruba community. The phrase "Oh I see" acts as a dismissive acknowledgment, revealing a condescending attitude towards those whom the speaker perceives to be propagating this supposed bias. By reinforcing the term "propaganda" through its repetition, the author intensifies their attack, reinforcing the idea that the message conveyed by the Yoruba people is neither genuine nor credible (Aluya, 2016). This choice of language emphasises the speaker's belief that the information is crafted for manipulative purposes, aiming not to inform but rather to distract or mislead the audience.

The assertion "no evidence, no links" is a direct challenge to the validity of opposing viewpoints, underlining the speaker's conviction that the arguments made by the Yoruba proponents lack substantial backing. This critical stance signals a desire for accountability in discourse, implying that assertions of identity and truth should be fortified with concrete proof. The phrase works as a rallying cry for those who may share the speaker's scepticism about the Yoruba narrative, fostering an environment conducive to combative debate and staunch division. Upon analysis, this excerpt engages with broader themes of ethnic conflict and the contentious nature of historical narratives in Nigeria. The outright rejection of Yoruba voices suggests an unwillingness to engage with diverse perspectives, exemplifying the deep fissures that often characterise discourse surrounding ethnic identity and historical interpretation (Aluya & Iangba, 2024). Ultimately, the statement serves as an invitation—an overture to align with the speaker's viewpoint while disregarding what they deem as unfounded claims propagated by a specific ethnic group.

Excerpt 4

"Look well at the eyes of the youthful IBB in photos ...those are not northerner eyes."

The assertion made in this statement hinges on the insinuation that physical appearance is indicative of one's ethnic identity, extending the conversation into the realm of ethnic stereotypes and assumptions. By commanding the audience to "look well at the eyes," the speaker is not merely encouraging a casual observation; rather, they are imploring a meticulous examination intended to reveal deeper truths about heritage and belonging (Aluya & Obande, 2024). This directive invites the audience to engage in a form of ocular scrutiny that elevates the physical traits of an individual to a point of ethnic contention, thus reinforcing the idea that appearance can serve as a gauge for legitimacy within a given community. The phrase "those are not northerner eyes" serves as a stark categorical assertion, delineating clear boundaries within the classifications of identity. The use of "not" implies a definitive exclusion from the northern ethnic group, suggesting an insider knowledge of what constitutes "northerner" features. In this way, the speaker navigates the complex interplay of appearance and identity, reducing an individual's ethnic authenticity to a visual characteristic. Such a declaration also relays an implicit criticism of those who may wish to claim a wholly integrated Nigerian identity, hinting at the speaker's belief that adherence to ethnic distinctions remains paramount. Moreover, this excerpt exposes underlying biases and broader societal tensions regarding representation and identity within Nigeria. It reflects a fraught conversation about how ethnicity is perceived and defined, revealing a deep-seated need for clarity in categorical distinctions. This lens of scrutiny, focused squarely on the individual, underscores the speaker's desire to challenge accepted narratives and provoke discourse surrounding ethnic affiliation, thereby reinforcing the complexities embedded within Nigeria's socio-political landscape.

Excerpt 5

"We have given you the evidence Go and find it in the Archives Babangida took power on the 27th August 1985. Now go and get the Daily Times and Daily Sketch of that day."

The urgency embedded in this statement pulses with a sense of defiance, presenting a call to action that demands the audience engage with historical evidence as validation for the speaker's assertions. The phrase, "We have given you the evidence," articulates a strong sense of confidence or perhaps exasperation, indicating that the speaker has already made their case, which they believe should be acknowledged by others. This insistence reflects an underlying frustration with skepticism and a desire to reinforce their standpoint in light of tangible documentation. By referencing specific historical outputs like the "Daily Times" and "Daily Sketch," the speaker posits that credible journalism serves as reliable evidence to support their claims about Babangida's assumption of power on the significant date of August 27, 1985. This reference works rhetorically and substantively; it lends an aura of authenticity to their argument while simultaneously challenging the audience to engage in diligent

inquiry. The instruction, "Go and find it," conveys a challenging imperative, encouraging the listeners not only to question their knowledge but also to seek verification beyond mere opinion actively. In this excerpt, the speaker positions themselves as an authoritative voice—presumably someone who has researched and uncovered the truth—while simultaneously urging others to rise to the occasion by validating the discourse through independent verification. This tactic serves as an evocative gesture, allowing the speaker to assert their credibility while inviting; however, it also suggests an underlying narrative of disenfranchisement, framing the task of uncovering truth as a shared burden fraught with the potential for partisan interpretations and propagandist narratives. Overall, this excerpt serves as a pivotal moment in the larger narrative, engaging with themes of historical legitimacy, accountability, and the role of media in shaping collective memory. The insistence on archival evidence shifts the dialogue from subjective opinions to objective truths, rendering a call to history as not only a quest for understanding but also a challenge to prevailing myths and attitudes surrounding leadership and governance in Nigeria.

Excerpt 6

"I also have the evidence that what you said it's a lie, if you doubt, look into his archive both when he entered the military and when he became Head of state."

In this excerpt, the speaker asserts a strong position against an opposing claim, emphasising their confidence in the evidence they possess. The phrase "I also have the evidence" serves as a powerful declaration, suggesting that the speaker is not merely participating in a debate but is armed with concrete proof that can substantiate their argument. This assertion of evidence is crucial in political discourse, where the validity of claims often hinges on the ability to provide verifiable information. By stating that the opposing viewpoint is a "lie," the speaker not only dismisses the other party's argument but also positions themselves as a guardian of truth, suggesting that they are committed to revealing what they perceive as the reality of the situation. The directive "if you doubt, look into his archive" is particularly significant. It invites the audience to engage in their own investigation, thereby empowering them to seek out the truth independently. This call to action reflects a belief in the importance of historical documentation and the role it plays in shaping public understanding. By referencing "his archive," the speaker implies that there is a wealth of information available that can clarify the historical context surrounding Ibrahim Babangida (IBB), particularly during pivotal moments in his career, such as his entry into the military and his ascension to the role of Head of State. This specificity not only enhances the credibility of the speaker's argument but also encourages the audience to consider the complexities of IBB's political journey. Moreover, the phrase "when he entered the military and when he became Head of state" adds layers of context that are essential for understanding the nuances of IBB's leadership. It suggests that the speaker is not merely interested in a singular event but is instead advocating for a comprehensive examination of IBB's career. This approach invites the audience to reflect on the broader

implications of IBB's actions and decisions, encouraging a more nuanced discussion about his legacy. Overall, this excerpt encapsulates a broader theme of historical interpretation and the struggle for narrative control. The speaker's insistence on the existence of evidence reflects a desire for truth in a landscape often marred by misinformation and bias. By framing the opposing viewpoint as a "lie," the speaker not only seeks to discredit it but also to assert their own version of events as the more legitimate narrative. These dynamics highlight the contentious nature of political discourse, where historical facts can be weaponised in the battle for public opinion.

Excerpt 7

"Zombies are really angry with IBB."

In this succinct yet provocative statement, the speaker employs the term "zombies" as a derogatory label for individuals who are critical of Ibrahim Babangida (IBB). The choice of the word "zombies" is particularly revealing; it implies that those who express dissatisfaction with IBB are not only lacking in independent thought but are also mindlessly following a trend or narrative. This characterisation serves to diminish the legitimacy of their grievances, suggesting that their anger is not rooted in rational discourse but rather in a collective emotional response that lacks depth or understanding. The phrase "really angry" intensifies the sentiment expressed, indicating that the speaker perceives a significant emotional reaction from this group. The use of "really" serves to amplify the speaker's disdain, suggesting that the anger is not only misplaced but also excessive. This choice of language reflects a broader tendency in political discourse to dismiss dissenting opinions as irrational or overly emotional, thereby undermining the complexity of the issues at hand. By framing the critics in such a negative light, the speaker seeks to rally support for IBB, positioning him as a misunderstood figure rather than a controversial one. Furthermore, this excerpt highlights the polarisation that often characterises political discussions. By labelling critics as "zombies," the speaker creates an "us versus them" dynamic, which can alienate those who may have legitimate concerns about IBB's legacy. This tactic serves to solidify the speaker's own position while simultaneously marginalising opposing viewpoints. It reflects a broader trend in political rhetoric where opponents are dehumanised or caricatured, making it easier to dismiss their arguments without engaging with the substance of their claims. In essence, this excerpt encapsulates the emotional undercurrents of political discourse, where language is wielded as a tool for both persuasion and division. The speaker's choice to label critics as "zombies" not only reveals their disdain for dissent but also underscores the challenges of fostering constructive dialogue in an environment rife with animosity and partisanship. This raises important questions about the nature of political engagement and the ways in which language can shape perceptions and influence public opinion.

Excerpt 8

*"I see Yoruba people need someone to whine them anyhow
Walahi Abiola no win any election. God punish Buhari for
recognising that stupid mofa! June 12 na big scam for fools."*

This excerpt is a vivid expression of the speaker's strong emotions and opinions regarding the Yoruba people, the late Moshood Abiola, and the political landscape surrounding the June 12 elections in Nigeria. The phrase "I see Yoruba people need someone to whine them anyhow" suggests a belief that the Yoruba community is overly sensitive or easily manipulated, implying that they require constant reassurance or validation. This characterisation not only reflects a dismissive attitude towards the Yoruba but also serves to position the speaker as someone who perceives themselves as more discerning or enlightened. The use of "Walahi," an Arabic term often used in Nigerian Pidgin to emphasise sincerity, adds a cultural dimension to the statement, grounding it in a specific linguistic and social context. This choice of language may resonate with certain audiences, reinforcing the speaker's connection to their cultural identity while simultaneously alienating others who may not share the same sentiments. The phrase "God punish Buhari for recognising that stupid mofo!" is particularly incendiary, revealing deep-seated frustration and anger towards President Buhari for his acknowledgment of Abiola. The use of "stupid mofo" is a crude insult that underscores the speaker's contempt, indicating that they view Abiola's legacy as fundamentally flawed and unworthy of celebration. The assertion that "June 12 na big scam for fools" is a powerful dismissal of the significance attributed to Abiola's electoral victory. By labeling it a "big scam," the speaker not only undermines the legitimacy of the election but also casts doubt on the collective memory and sentiments of those who view June 12 as a pivotal moment in Nigeria's democratic history. This statement reflects a broader trend in political discourse where historical events are reinterpreted or dismissed based on current political alignments and sentiments. Overall, this excerpt is emblematic of the intense emotions that often accompany discussions of political figures and events in Nigeria. The speaker's use of strong language and cultural references serves to engage their audience while simultaneously alienating those who may hold differing views. This highlights the challenges of navigating political discourse in a context where emotions run high and historical narratives are deeply contested.

Excerpt 9

"Abiola won. Better accept it. Yeah, I'm not fond of the idea of an Abiola presidency, but not allowing him to take over helped fuel a near civil war scenario."

In this excerpt, the speaker acknowledges the opposing viewpoint while firmly asserting that Abiola's victory is an undeniable fact. The phrase "Abiola won" serves as a definitive statement that seeks to establish a consensus on a historical event that remains contentious in Nigerian political discourse. By following this assertion with "Better accept it," the speaker challenges dissenters to confront the reality of the situation, positioning themselves as a voice of reason in a landscape often clouded by emotional rhetoric and partisan bias. The admission of discomfort with the idea of an Abiola presidency adds complexity to the speaker's stance. This nuance indicates that while the speaker recognises the legitimacy of Abiola's electoral victory, they also grapple with the implications of that victory. The phrase "not allowing him to take over helped fuel a near

civil war scenario" introduces a critical perspective on the political decisions made in the aftermath of the election. It suggests that the refusal to accept Abiola's presidency had far-reaching consequences, potentially leading to instability and conflict within the nation.

This acknowledgment of the potential consequences of political decisions engages the audience in a broader discussion about governance and stability. It invites reflection on the importance of democratic processes and the need for political leaders to respect the will of the electorate. By framing the discussion in terms of national unity and the dangers of political exclusion, the speaker elevates the conversation beyond mere partisan bickering, urging a more thoughtful consideration of the implications of political actions. Overall, this excerpt serves as a reminder of the complexities inherent in political discourse, where historical facts are often intertwined with personal beliefs and emotional responses. The speaker's willingness to confront uncomfortable truths while also acknowledging their own biases reflects a more nuanced understanding of the political landscape, encouraging a dialogue that transcends simplistic narratives.

Excerpt 10

"You mean ibos like Joel Obianuju Odumakin, Chidi Odinkalu & co, are zombies? Ipob are getting sense las las."

In this excerpt, the speaker employs the term "zombies" derogatorily to describe individuals from the Igbo ethnic group, specifically targeting prominent figures such as Joel Obianuju Odumakin and Chidi Odinkalu. This choice of language implies that these individuals lack independent thought or agency, framing them as mindless followers rather than critical thinkers. The rhetorical question embedded in the statement suggests disbelief or mockery towards the idea that these individuals could be considered anything other than mindless adherents to a particular narrative. This tactic serves to undermine the credibility of the individuals mentioned, positioning the speaker as someone who perceives themselves as more enlightened or aware.

The phrase "Ipob are getting sense las las" introduces a contrasting perspective, indicating a shift in perception among members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The use of "getting sense" suggests that the speaker believes there is a growing awareness or understanding among IPOB members, implying that they are beginning to recognise certain truths that may have previously eluded them. This acknowledgment of a potential awakening among IPOB members adds a layer of complexity to the speaker's argument, suggesting that while they may dismiss certain critics as "zombies," they also recognise the capacity for change and growth within the community.

This excerpt reflects a dismissive stance towards the Igbo community while simultaneously acknowledging a potential awakening among them. The juxtaposition of derogatory language with a hint of recognition creates a tension that underscores the complexities of ethnic and political identities in Nigeria. It highlights the challenges of navigating discussions about ethnicity and political allegiance, where language can serve as both a tool for division and a means of fostering understanding.

Overall, this excerpt encapsulates the contentious nature of political discourse in Nigeria, where ethnic identities are often weaponised in debates over legitimacy and authority. The speaker's use of derogatory language serves to reinforce their own position while simultaneously alienating those who may hold differing views. This raises important questions about the role of language in shaping perceptions and influencing public opinion, particularly in a context where historical grievances and contemporary political realities intersect.

Excerpt 11

"You hoarded the truth till now? To what end?"

This excerpt is a powerful expression of frustration and accusation, suggesting that an individual or group has deliberately withheld crucial information from the public. The phrase "hoarded the truth" is particularly evocative, as it implies not just a passive withholding of information but an active and intentional act of keeping knowledge away from others. This choice of words evokes a sense of betrayal, as it suggests that the individual in question has prioritised their own interests or agenda over the collective need for transparency and honesty. The term "hoarded" also carries connotations of greed and selfishness, as if the truth is a valuable commodity that the speaker believes should be shared freely rather than kept in reserve.

The rhetorical question "To what end?" serves as a critical challenge to the person being addressed, compelling them to justify their actions. This question is loaded with implications; it suggests that the speaker believes there is no valid reason for the withholding of information, thereby framing the act as not only unethical but also counterproductive. By asking this question, the speaker invites the audience to engage in a moral or ethical debate about the importance of transparency and accountability in public discourse. It raises fundamental questions about the responsibilities of individuals, particularly those in positions of power or influence, to share information that could impact the lives of others.

This excerpt also reflects a broader theme of distrust in political and social institutions. The speaker's accusation implies a belief that there are systemic issues at play, where information is manipulated or concealed for ulterior motives. This sentiment resonates with many individuals who feel disenfranchised or misled by those in authority. By framing the discussion in terms of "truth" and "hoarding," the speaker taps into a collective yearning for honesty and integrity in public life, suggesting that the failure to provide this can have far-reaching consequences. Moreover, the emotional weight of the statement suggests a deep-seated frustration with the status quo. The speaker's tone conveys a sense of urgency, as if they believe that the truth is not just important but essential for the well-being of society. This urgency is further amplified by the implication that the truth has been withheld for a significant period, raising concerns about the potential damage caused by this lack of transparency. The speaker's challenge to the listener to consider the implications of their actions serves as a call to action, urging individuals to reflect on their own roles in the dissemination of information and the ethical responsibilities that come with it.

Overall, this excerpt serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of transparency in governance and public discourse. It challenges the audience to consider the implications of withholding information and the ethical responsibilities that come with knowledge. The speaker's frustration is palpable and their call for accountability resonates with a broader societal desire for truth and openness in an era often characterised by misinformation and manipulation.

Excerpt 12

"This rufai na edddiot. Since when did IBB become a saint and an impeccable source of knowledge, fact and evidence?"

In this excerpt, the speaker employs a derogatory term, "edddiot," to insult Rufai, indicating a strong disapproval of his views. The use of such a term immediately sets a confrontational tone, suggesting that the speaker is not merely engaging in a debate but is instead dismissing Rufai's opinions as foolish or misguided. This choice of language reflects a broader trend in political discourse where personal attacks are often used to undermine the credibility of opponents rather than addressing the substance of their arguments. By labeling Rufai in this manner, the speaker seeks to delegitimise his perspective and position themselves as more knowledgeable or rational.

The phrase "Since when did IBB become a saint" serves as a critical inquiry into the perceived elevation of Ibrahim Babangida (IBB) to a status of moral superiority. This rhetorical question implies skepticism about the narratives surrounding IBB, suggesting that the speaker believes there is a disconnect between IBB's past actions and the reverence he is purportedly receiving. By questioning IBB's status as a "saint," the speaker challenges the notion that he can be viewed as an impeccable source of knowledge, fact, and evidence. This skepticism is rooted in a belief that IBB's historical actions disqualify him from being seen as a trustworthy figure, thereby inviting the audience to reconsider the narratives that have been constructed around him. The phrase "impeccable source of knowledge, fact and evidence" further emphasises the speaker's disdain for the idea that IBB could be viewed as a reliable authority. This assertion reflects a broader critique of how historical figures are often romanticised or vilified based on contemporary political alignments and sentiments. The speaker's insistence on questioning IBB's credibility serves to highlight the complexities of political legacies, where individuals may be celebrated or condemned based on selective interpretations of their actions. Moreover, this excerpt underscores the tension between historical memory and contemporary political discourse. The speaker's challenge to Rufai's views reflects a broader struggle over how history is remembered and interpreted, particularly in a context where political allegiances can shape perceptions of past events. By framing IBB's legacy in such a critical light, the speaker invites the audience to engage in a deeper examination of the narratives that inform their understanding of political figures and events.

Overall, this excerpt encapsulates the contentious nature of political discourse, where personal attacks and skepticism about historical narratives intersect. The speaker's use of derogatory language and rhetorical questioning

serves to challenge prevailing narratives while also reflecting a broader frustration with the political landscape. This raises important questions about the nature of authority and the ways in which historical figures are remembered and interpreted in contemporary discussions.

Excerpt 13

"Bet you..Some GenZs aren't even aware or seen that book.. 'Why we struck.'"

This statement implies a generational divide in knowledge or awareness regarding historical events, specifically referencing a book that may hold significance in political discourse. The phrase "Bet you" serves as a challenge to the audience, indicating that the speaker is confident in their assertion about the ignorance of younger generations. This choice of language not only engages the audience but also positions the speaker as someone who possesses knowledge that the younger demographic may lack. By framing the statement in this way, the speaker seeks to provoke curiosity or defensiveness among younger listeners, potentially igniting a desire to learn more about the historical context being referenced.

The mention of "Some GenZs" specifically targets a demographic that is often characterised by its digital nativity and perceived detachment from historical events. This characterisation suggests that the speaker believes younger individuals may be more focused on contemporary issues and less aware of the historical narratives that have shaped their current political landscape. By invoking the title of the book, "Why We Struck," the speaker emphasises the importance of understanding historical events and the motivations behind them, suggesting that such knowledge is crucial for informed political engagement. Furthermore, the reference to the book itself serves as a gateway for deeper exploration into the political history of Nigeria, particularly the events surrounding the military coups and the subsequent implications for governance and democracy. The speaker's assertion that younger generations may not be familiar with this text highlights a perceived gap in historical awareness, which can have significant implications for how future generations engage with political discourse. This gap in knowledge can lead to a cycle of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of past events, ultimately affecting the political landscape.

The tone of the statement carries an undertone of urgency, as if the speaker is imploring younger audiences to bridge this knowledge gap. By framing the discussion around a specific text, the speaker not only highlights the importance of historical literacy but also positions themselves as a custodian of knowledge, urging the younger generation to take an active interest in their political heritage. This call to action reflects a broader concern about the implications of historical ignorance in shaping future political dynamics. Overall, this excerpt serves as a reminder of the importance of historical awareness in political discourse. It challenges younger generations to engage with their past and understand the narratives that have shaped their present. The speaker's confidence in their assertion underscores the need for

intergenerational dialogue and the sharing of knowledge to foster a more informed and engaged citizenry.

Excerpt 14

"Not ethnic bigots But Yorubas especially E-BOLA Tinubus urchins."

In this excerpt, the speaker distinguishes between general ethnic bigotry and a specific focus on the Yoruba community, particularly targeting supporters of Bola Tinubu. The phrase "Not ethnic bigots" serves as a preemptive defense against accusations of prejudice, suggesting that the speaker is aware of the potential backlash that could arise from their statements. This defensive posture indicates a desire to clarify their position while simultaneously launching an attack on a specific group. The use of "Yorubas" as a target for criticism reflects a broader trend in political discourse where ethnic identities are often invoked to frame political disagreements.

The term "E-BOLA" is a play on words that combines Tinubu's name with a derogatory connotation, suggesting that his supporters are not only misguided but also harmful. This linguistic choice serves to dehumanise Tinubu's supporters, framing them as a collective that is not only politically misguided but also socially detrimental. The use of such derogatory language reflects a strong anti-Yoruba sentiment, engaging in ethnic labeling to criticise a specific political faction. This tactic can be seen as an attempt to rally support among those who share the speaker's views while simultaneously alienating those who may identify with Tinubu or the Yoruba community. The phrase "Tinubus urchins" further emphasises the speaker's disdain, suggesting that the supporters are akin to pests or nuisances rather than legitimate political actors. This choice of language serves to diminish the credibility of Tinubu's supporters, framing them as unworthy of serious consideration in political discourse. By employing such derogatory terms, the speaker seeks to reinforce their own position while undermining the legitimacy of opposing viewpoints. Moreover, this excerpt highlights the complexities of ethnic identity in Nigerian politics, where allegiances are often shaped by historical grievances and contemporary power dynamics. The speaker's focus on the Yoruba community and Tinubu's supporters reflects a broader struggle over representation and power within the political landscape. By framing the discussion in such stark terms, the speaker invites the audience to engage in a more polarised debate, where ethnic identities become battlegrounds for political conflict.

Overall, this excerpt serves as a reminder of the challenges inherent in navigating political discourse in a context marked by ethnic diversity and historical tensions. The speaker's use of derogatory language and ethnic labeling reflects a broader trend in political rhetoric, where identities are weaponised to advance specific agendas. This dynamic raises important questions about the role of language in shaping perceptions and influencing public opinion, particularly in a context where historical grievances and contemporary political realities intersect.

Excerpt 15

*"Ethnic Bigots Are Upset That IBB Debunked The Igbo Coup
Narrative - Rufai Oseni."*

This statement asserts that there is a backlash from ethnic bigots in response to Ibrahim Babangida's (IBB) actions, specifically his efforts to challenge the narrative surrounding the Igbo coup. The phrase "ethnic bigots" positions the critics as prejudiced, suggesting that their opposition to IBB is rooted in bias rather than legitimate concerns. This labeling serves to delegitimise the critics' arguments, framing them as motivated by narrow-mindedness rather than a genuine engagement with the issues at hand. By using such charged language, the speaker seeks to rally support for IBB while simultaneously marginalising dissenting voices. The term "upset" indicates that the emotional response from these critics is significant, suggesting that their anger stems from a perceived threat to their established narratives or beliefs. This emotional framing serves to heighten the stakes of the discussion, implying that the truth revealed by IBB is not just a matter of historical accuracy but a challenge to the identity and legitimacy of those who oppose him. The speaker's choice to highlight the emotional reactions of critics underscores the contentious nature of the discourse surrounding IBB and the Igbo coup narrative.

Furthermore, this excerpt engages the audience by framing the discussion as one of truth versus prejudice. By positioning IBB's revelations as a challenge to the biases held by ethnic bigots, the speaker invites the audience to consider the implications of these narratives on broader societal dynamics. This framing suggests that the acceptance of IBB's perspective could lead to a more nuanced understanding of history, while the rejection of it perpetuates division and misunderstanding. The reference to the "Igbo coup narrative" itself is significant, as it points to a historical event that has been subject to various interpretations and political manipulations. By asserting that IBB has debunked this narrative, the speaker implies that there is a need for a re-evaluation of historical events and the motivations behind them. This call for reevaluation resonates with broader themes of historical memory and the ways in which narratives are constructed and contested in political discourse.

Overall, this excerpt serves as a critical commentary on the intersection of ethnicity, history, and politics in Nigeria. The speaker's use of charged language and emotional framing reflects the complexities of navigating these issues, highlighting the challenges of fostering constructive dialogue in a context marked by deep-seated biases and historical grievances. This dynamic raises important questions about the role of historical narratives in shaping contemporary political identities and the potential for reconciliation through a more honest engagement with the past.

Excerpt 16

"Tribal bigots have gone bunkers since IBB launched his book. Nigerians from all over the country are eventually speaking out after years of seeing through the agenda of these bigots who are only driven by envy and hate"

In this excerpt, the commenter employs a vehement tone to address the reactions of what they term "tribal bigots" in the wake of IBB's book launch. The phrase "gone bunkers" is particularly evocative, suggesting a state of chaos or irrationality among those who oppose IBB. This choice of words not only conveys the author's disdain for these critics but also implies that their reactions are extreme and unwarranted. The term "tribal bigots" serves as a powerful label, categorising a group of individuals based on their perceived prejudices and biases. This categorisation is significant as it frames the discussion in terms of identity politics, suggesting that the critics are not merely individuals with differing opinions but rather members of a larger, problematic group that embodies tribalism and bigotry. The assertion that "Nigerians from all over the country are eventually speaking out" introduces a sense of collective awakening among the populace. This phrase implies that there has been a long-standing silence or complicity in the face of tribal bigotry, which is now being challenged. The author positions themselves as part of a broader movement, suggesting that the release of IBB's book has catalysed a national conversation about prejudice and the motivations behind it. The use of "eventually" indicates a delayed response, hinting at a historical context where such discussions were perhaps stifled or ignored. This framing invites readers to consider the implications of this awakening, suggesting that it is not only timely but necessary for the progress of Nigerian society.

Furthermore, the phrase "driven by envy and hate" serves as an engagement marker that invites readers to align with the author's perspective. By attributing negative motivations to the critics, the author seeks to delegitimise their arguments and reinforce their own stance. This rhetorical strategy is effective in polarising the discourse, as it positions the author and their supporters as champions of truth against a backdrop of envy and hatred. The emotional weight of these words is significant; they evoke a sense of moral superiority and righteousness, compelling readers to reflect on their own positions regarding IBB and the criticisms he faces. Overall, this excerpt is a call to action, urging readers to recognise the broader implications of tribalism and to stand against it. The author's assertive language and framing of the issue as a collective struggle against prejudice resonate with those who may feel similarly marginalised or silenced. By invoking a sense of unity among "Nigerians from all over the country," the author not only seeks to galvanise support for IBB but also to challenge the status quo of tribalism in Nigerian society.

Excerpt 17

Facts!

They've been wailing over my threads for some days now.

Truth must be told, no matter how bitter it tastes".

In this excerpt, the commenter asserts confidence in the validity of claims with the emphatic declaration of "Facts!" This exclamation serves as a powerful stance marker, immediately establishing the author's position as one grounded in truth and evidence. The use of an exclamatory statement conveys a sense of urgency and conviction, suggesting that the author is not merely presenting an

opinion but rather a well-founded assertion that demands recognition. This approach is particularly effective in engaging readers who may be skeptical or critical of the author's views, as it positions them as a reliable source of information. The term "wailing" is a derogatory engagement marker that diminishes the opposing viewpoint, framing critics as overly emotional and irrational. This choice of language serves to delegitimise their arguments, suggesting that their responses are not based on reasoned discourse but rather on emotional outbursts. By characterising dissenters in this way, the author seeks to create a dichotomy between themselves—representing rationality and truth—and their critics, who are portrayed as lacking composure and reason. This rhetorical strategy is effective in reinforcing the author's position while simultaneously discrediting opposing views.

The phrase "truth must be told, no matter how bitter it tastes" encapsulates the author's commitment to honesty, even in the face of discomfort. This statement acknowledges the potential for truth to be unpalatable, suggesting that the author is aware of the contentious nature of their claims. By framing the discussion in terms of truth-telling, the author elevates their argument to a moral imperative, compelling readers to consider the ethical dimensions of the discourse. This approach not only reinforces the author's credibility but also invites readers to engage with the complexities of the issues at hand. Overall, this excerpt reflects a combative tone, as the author positions themselves as a defender of truth against what they perceive as irrational criticism. The assertive language and emotional weight of the statements serve to galvanise support for IBB while challenging the legitimacy of dissenting opinions. By framing the discussion as one of truth versus emotional reaction, the author seeks to engage readers in a broader conversation about the nature of discourse in Nigerian society.

Excerpt 18

"There was an igbo coup planned and masterminded by people of igbo extraction. QED ipob is a disease".

In this excerpt, the commenter makes a bold and definitive claim regarding an alleged coup, stating that it was "planned and masterminded by people of igbo extraction." This assertion is laden with implications, as it not only attributes responsibility for the coup to a specific ethnic group but also suggests a level of organisation and intent that carries significant weight in the discourse surrounding ethnic identity and political power in Nigeria. The phrase "planned and masterminded" conveys a sense of conspiracy, implying that there was a deliberate effort to destabilise the political landscape, which serves to heighten the stakes of the discussion. The use of "QED" (quod erat demonstrandum) as a stance marker is particularly noteworthy, as it indicates that the author believes they have conclusively proven their point. This abbreviation, often used in mathematical or logical arguments, lends an air of authority to the author's claims, suggesting that they are not merely opinions but rather conclusions drawn from evidence. By employing this term, the author seeks to elevate their argument to a level of intellectual rigor, inviting readers to accept their conclusions as valid and well-founded.

The phrase "Ipob is a disease" is a striking engagement marker that dehumanises the group in question, framing them as a societal ill that must be addressed. This choice of language is provocative and polarising, as it not only vilifies the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) but also positions them as a threat to the social fabric of Nigeria. By using such strong language, the author seeks to elicit a visceral reaction from readers, compelling them to consider the implications of IPOB's actions and the potential consequences for national unity. Overall, this excerpt reflects a strong bias and a willingness to provoke strong reactions from readers. The author's language choices serve to polarise the discussion, framing it as a battle between those who uphold national integrity and those who threaten it. By presenting their claims as definitive and supported by evidence, the author seeks to engage readers in a critical examination of the narratives surrounding ethnic identity and political power in Nigeria.

Excerpt 19

"We should all be disgusted at the elite gathering and fawning over a man who should be a pariah to society".

In this excerpt, the commenter employs the collective pronoun "we" to create a sense of shared moral outrage, inviting readers to join in their condemnation of the elite's actions. This rhetorical strategy is effective in fostering a sense of community among those who may feel similarly disillusioned by the political landscape. The phrase "disgusted at the elite gathering" serves as a stance marker that critiques the actions of a specific group, suggesting that the elite are out of touch with societal values and priorities. By framing the elite as a distinct and problematic group, the author seeks to galvanise support for their perspective and encourage readers to reflect on the implications of such gatherings.

The term "fawning" implies a lack of integrity or authenticity in the elite's admiration for IBB, suggesting that their actions are motivated by self-interest rather than genuine respect. This characterisation serves to undermine the legitimacy of the elite's support for IBB, framing it as a superficial display rather than a meaningful endorsement. The phrase "a man who should be a pariah to society" further emphasises the author's moral judgment, positioning IBB as someone who has committed transgressions that warrant social ostracism. This strong language serves to provoke readers, compelling them to consider the ethical implications of supporting a figure like IBB.

Overall, this excerpt reflects a strong moral judgment and a call for accountability. The author's use of collective language and emotive phrasing invites readers to engage in a broader conversation about the role of the elite in society and the responsibilities that come with power. By framing the discussion in terms of moral outrage, the author seeks to challenge the status quo and encourage readers to reflect on their own values and beliefs regarding political leadership and accountability.

Excerpt 20

"IBB is one greatest enemy of Nigeria nobody is talking about."

This statement serves as a strong stance marker, positioning IBB as a significant threat to the nation. The phrase "one greatest enemy" is particularly striking, as it elevates IBB's perceived threat to a level that suggests he is among the most dangerous figures in Nigeria's political landscape. This characterisation is designed to provoke thought and discussion, challenging readers to reconsider their views on IBB and his impact on the country. The phrase "nobody is talking about" introduces a sense of urgency and frustration, implying that the author believes an important conversation is being overlooked. This rhetorical strategy serves to draw attention to what the author perceives as a critical issue that requires public discourse. By framing the discussion in this way, the author seeks to engage readers in a dialogue about the implications of IBB's actions and the need for greater scrutiny of his role in Nigerian politics. Overall, this excerpt serves as a provocative challenge to the status quo, urging readers to confront uncomfortable truths about IBB and his legacy. The accusatory tone and strong language compel readers to reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions, fostering a sense of critical engagement with the issues at hand. By positioning IBB as a significant enemy of Nigeria, the author seeks to galvanise support for a broader conversation about accountability and the responsibilities of political leaders in shaping the nation's future.

Conclusion

The lively and often fervent discussions that have arisen around Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's autobiography on the well-known online platform, 'Nairaland' exemplify the complex interplay of stance and engagement markers that significantly influence public discourse concerning contentious political figures in Nigeria. This examination reveals a notable polarisation among users, underscoring the deeply divided opinions shaped by various factors, including personal narratives, differing historical interpretations and the intricate ethnic affiliations that characterise Nigeria's sociopolitical environment. Supportive comments frequently utilise positive stance markers to reinforce and celebrate IBB's legacy, highlighting his contributions to the nation and portraying his tenure in a favourable light. In contrast, critical responses employ negative markers that question IBB's credibility and scrutinise his political decisions, thereby illuminating the emotional and evaluative stances users adopt towards him. This linguistic dichotomy not only reflects individual sentiments but also offers a deeper understanding of the broader societal attitudes towards democracy, governance, and leadership in Nigeria.

Moreover, the engagement markers present in these discussions play a vital role in enhancing user interaction, fostering a sense of community, and encouraging the sharing of diverse perspectives. By inviting participants to recount personal experiences, pose thought-provoking questions, and engage in lively debates, the dialogue surrounding IBB's controversial legacy becomes richer and more multifaceted. This dynamic exchange reveals the complexities and contradictions of his political journey, showcasing the transformative

potential of digital platforms like Nairaland in shaping collective memory and identity in contemporary Nigeria. Ultimately, the analyses highlights the crucial role of social media as a democratic space where citizens can engage in meaningful conversations about historical narratives and political accountability. By facilitating such discussions, platforms like Nairaland not only contribute to the discourse surrounding IBB but also influence broader conversations about governance and leadership, empowering individuals to reflect on their experiences and fostering a culture of engagement essential for a thriving democracy. Thus, the discussions surrounding IBB's autobiography transcend the narrative of a single individual, embodying the larger societal struggles and aspirations that define Nigeria's political landscape today.

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THE IMPACT OF PRE-READING ACTIVITIES ON THE LEARNERS OF FRENCH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The study investigated the effects of pre-reading activities on the achievement of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) students of French in reading comprehension at the Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State. Employing a quasi-experimental design, specifically a non-equivalent pre-test and post-test control group approach, the study sampled 108 NCE II students from the French Department, who were divided into experimental (52) and control (56) groups. The Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT) was used to measure students' comprehension skills, with data analyzed using mean scores and ANCOVA. Findings revealed that students exposed to pre-reading activities demonstrated significant improvements in identifying main ideas, supporting ideas, summarization and retelling, compared to their counterparts in the control group. The experimental group consistently outperformed the control group, with notable mean gains across all assessed comprehension skills. These findings aligned with existing literature, underscoring the effectiveness of pre-reading strategies in enhancing students' cognitive engagement and comprehension. The study concluded that structured pre-reading activities played a crucial role in improving reading comprehension and recommended their integration into reading instruction to enhance academic performance.

Keywords: Pre-Reading, Activities, Reading Comprehension, Achievement, NCE.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a cognitive process that involves decoding text, understanding its meaning and interpreting its underlying messages. According to Ilogho (2015), reading comprehension goes beyond the mere ability to read words on a page; it involves the integration of prior knowledge with new information to construct a coherent understanding of the text. This process requires not only the ability to decode written language but also the capacity to engage with the text critically, making inferences and synthesizing information to form a comprehensive interpretation. Reading comprehension is therefore seen as an active and dynamic interaction between the reader and the text, where the reader actively constructs meaning based on the context, purpose

of reading and the reader's own experiences and knowledge base. Similarly, Edet (2020) emphasizes that reading comprehension is an essential literacy skill that encompasses the ability to grasp the explicit content of a text and to infer the implicit meanings embedded within it. He posits that comprehension is achieved when a reader can extract, process and relate the information presented in the text to their existing cognitive framework. This understanding aligns with the idea that reading comprehension is not a passive reception of information but an active, interpretative process. Reading comprehension skills refer to the cognitive abilities that allow individuals to effectively understand, interpret and derive meaning from written texts. According to Ibrahim (2018), reading comprehension is not merely the ability to decode words but involves a complex interaction between the reader's prior knowledge, the text and the context in which reading occurs. This multifaceted process requires the reader to engage in various levels of thinking, from literal understanding of the text to higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Pre-reading activities are instructional strategies employed before engaging students in reading a text, aimed at enhancing their comprehension by preparing them cognitively and emotionally for the reading task ahead. These activities serve as a bridge between the reader's prior knowledge and the new content they are about to encounter, thereby facilitating deeper understanding and retention of information. Pre-reading activities encompass a range of practices, such as activating prior knowledge, where students recall what they already know about a topic, thus creating a mental framework to which new information can be connected. Another common pre-reading strategy is previewing, which involves examining titles, headings, subheadings, pictures and summaries to gain a general sense of the text's content and structure. This method helps to set a purpose for reading, making the process more goal-oriented and focused. Vocabulary preparation is also a vital aspect of pre-reading activities, where unfamiliar or challenging words are introduced and explained beforehand, reducing potential barriers to comprehension. In essence, pre-reading activities are designed to prime the reader's mind, enabling them to approach the text with an informed and prepared mindset, ultimately leading to a more effective and meaningful reading experience. It is in the light of the above discussion that the researcher has seen the grave need to investigate the effect of pre-reading activities on reading comprehension achievement of NCE students of French in reading comprehension In Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State.

Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is a critical skill for academic success and overall intellectual development, particularly among NCE students. In Federal College of Education, Pankshin, the status of reading comprehension among students presents a concerning picture. Many students exhibit significant difficulties in understanding and interpreting texts, which adversely impacts their performance in other academic areas. Despite the central role of reading comprehension in education, a considerable number of students struggle to

grasp the main ideas, infer meanings and apply the knowledge gained from reading to practical contexts.

Several challenges contribute to this problem. One of the primary issues is the lack of effective pre-reading activities that prepare students to engage with texts meaningfully. Pre-reading activities, which include strategies such as predicting content, activating prior knowledge and setting reading purposes, are often overlooked or inadequately implemented in the classroom. As a result, students approach reading tasks with little to no contextual preparation, leading to superficial engagement with the material and poor comprehension outcomes. If these challenges are left unaddressed, the consequences could be far-reaching. Poor reading comprehension skills at the NCE level can lead to a cascade of academic failures, reduced self-esteem and diminished prospects for future educational and career opportunities. Students may become disengaged from the learning process, leading to higher dropout rates and contributing to a cycle of educational underachievement in the region.

However, there exists a significant gap between the current status of reading comprehension in FCE Pankshin and this ideal. The absence of structured and consistent pre-reading activities in the curriculum leaves students ill-prepared to tackle reading comprehension tasks effectively. This gap highlights the need for targeted interventions that integrate pre-reading activities into the teaching process, ensuring that students are better equipped to understand and engage with the texts they encounter. Addressing this gap is crucial for improving reading comprehension skills and, by extension, the overall academic success of NCE students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effects of pre-reading activities on the achievement of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) students of French in reading comprehension In Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State in order to:

1. determine the pre-test and post-test achievement of students in identifying main ideas in the experimental and control groups.
2. determine the pre-test and post-test achievement of students in identifying supporting ideas in the experimental and control groups.
3. determine the pre-test and post-test achievement of students in summarisation in the experimental and control groups.
4. determine the pre-test and post-test achievement of students in retelling in the experimental and control groups.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identifying main ideas in the experimental and control groups?
2. What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identifying supporting ideas in the experimental and control groups?
3. What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in summarisations in the experimental and control groups?

4. What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in retelling in the experimental and control groups?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and they will be tested at 0.05 level of significance in this study:

1. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identification of main ideas in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identification of supporting ideas in the experimental and control groups.
3. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in summarisation in the experimental and control groups.
4. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in retelling in the experimental and control groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Comprehension

The concept of reading comprehension is a never-ended concept to be discussed. Christopher (2017) states that reading is the art of creating meaning with text. The two keywords here are creating and meaning. If there is no meaning being created, there is no reading taking place. To do this practice, the way how readers can understand and create the meaning of what they read will depend on how they can perceive as well as to make sense words, sentences, or even a connected text in their mind or thought. This process will require the readers to use background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience of the readers to help them in comprehending the written text.

Background knowledge really helps reader in reading comprehension. As what had been stated by Basila and Jajua (2019), reading comprehension is about relating background knowledge to new knowledge contained in the written texts. The comprehension of written text is significantly influenced by the individual's prior knowledge, which plays a crucial role in the reading process. Adequate familiarity with a subject enables the reader to effectively interpret the text, generate inferences, construct mental imagery and critically assess the author's perspective. Okurumeh, Okurumeh and Asarhasa (2019) also had the same idea of activating background knowledge to comprehend any reading text. They stated that in order to make sense of any text, a reader needs to have preexisted knowledge of the world of the writer. It can be assumed that the wider a reader has background knowledge, the easier he or she can comprehend what they are reading. If a reader is familiar with the background of the writer, he or she will not need to think hard to catch the idea in the text.

Since reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text/message, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge have a big role within this context (Galle, Alaku & Paul, 2020). This understanding comes from the interaction among the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge

outside the text/message. Reading is thinking and understanding and getting at the meaning behind a text. They emphasized that reading activity must be directed toward the understanding and catching the idea that the text provides. In this situation, activating prior knowledge before, during and after reading a text will be proficient to the readers. They think about what they already know about a text's structure or topic before they read. They make connections to their lives, other books and the world as they read. These connections are brought to bare when they have finished reading.

Good readers spend time thinking and talking about what they read and connect it to their personal experiences (Ugwu, Jatau & Gwamna, 2020). Pronouncing every word in a proper way without identifying the meaning of the text, reading activity will just be a waste of time. Readers have to realize that they are in the situation of learning someone else's experience (author) and try to reflect it in their own experience. The more they can connect what they read to their own experience, the better it benefits their lives.

Carter and Nunan (2021) explained that reading comprehension is an active process rather than passive one. Thus, the reader has been typically described as 'extracting' meaning from a text. In another vein, the ground has shifted again to talk of reading as 'interactive' rather than simply 'active'. Readers are seen as negotiating meaning; meaning is partial within the text and writers' intentions may not be privileged over readers' interpretations. The term interactive refers to the situation of two ways communication. The readers and the writer actually are doing an indirect communication in which readers try to get the meaning of what the writer want to communicate by their writing.

Jatau, Ugwu and Gwamna (2021) on the other hand, states that comprehension is the reconstruction of the author's message. The author constructs a message and encodes it in printed language and the reader decodes the printed language and reconstructs the message. When all goes well, communication occurs. Thus, two minds with one thought and the implications of that thought reader must see the writer's point of view. Reading is usually conceived as a solitary activity in which the reader interacts with the text in isolation. To gain the information contained in the text, readers must have such kind of willing to comprehend what the text is about and try to make connection within the text. If there is no such connection, reading will be meaningless since the reader has no interaction with the ideas and the information that is available in a reading passage. The information is isolated in written form and the readers just need to reveal it through doing reading activity.

Reading Comprehension Skills

Identifying Main Ideas

Identifying the main idea is crucial for comprehending a text's central point or theme. It involves recognizing the most important information or argument that the author is trying to convey. This skill requires careful reading and analysis to determine the overarching message or purpose of the text. Mitchell and Carter (2020) postulated that identifying the main idea, readers can better understand the context and significance of the information presented. The main idea represents the primary message or argument that the author

wants to convey. By understanding the main idea, readers are able to identify the key points and supporting details within the text. This allows for a deeper comprehension of the author's intended meaning and helps to establish a stronger connection between the reader and the text. In addition, being able to extract the main idea from a text can aid in summarizing and synthesizing information, making it easier to recall and apply the knowledge gained from reading. In essence, the main idea serves as a guiding thread that helps readers navigate through the text and extract its core essence. Lampariello (2017) observed that it serves as the foundation upon which the rest of the information in the text is built. For example, in a scientific research paper about the effects of climate change on coral reefs, the main idea could be "Climate change is causing significant damage to coral reefs worldwide." This main idea would then be supported by evidence, such as data on rising ocean temperatures and increasing acidity levels, as well as studies documenting the decline of coral reef ecosystems.

Identifying Supporting Details

Supporting details provide evidence, examples, or explanations that reinforce the main idea. They help to further clarify and support the main idea by providing specific information or examples. To Mitchel and Carter (2020) these details can include statistics, research findings, expert opinions, or personal anecdotes. They offer additional information to support the author's claims or arguments. For example, if the author is discussing the benefits of exercise, they could provide specific statistics on how regular physical activity reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Critical Thinking

Assessing a reader's ability to analyze, evaluate and synthesize information from the text. According to Ismail (2020) this skill is crucial in today's information age, where individuals are constantly bombarded with a vast amount of information from various sources. Being able to critically think allows individuals to distinguish between credible and unreliable sources, as well as form their own opinions based on evidence and logical reasoning. By such as assessments that measure critical thinking strategy, education and employment processes are ensuring that individuals are equipped to make informed decisions and contribute to a well-informed society.

Summarization

Summarization involves condensing the main ideas and key details of a text into a concise and coherent form. This process requires readers to analyze the text and determine which information is most important. Thompson (2018) opined that by summarizing a text, readers can gain a clear understanding of the main points without getting bogged down in unnecessary details. Summarization is a valuable skill that can help readers quickly grasp the main message of a text and retain key information. It requires readers to extract the most important information while omitting minor details. Summarization is an essential skill that allows readers to effectively comprehend and remember the main points of a text. Summarizing helps readers consolidate their understanding of the text and enhances their ability to communicate the main

points to others. For example, when reading a research article on a complex scientific topic, summarizing the key findings and methodologies allows a reader to quickly understand the main conclusions without having to delve into every technical detail. This summary can then be shared with colleagues or used as a reference point for further discussions or research.

Retelling

Retelling refers to the ability to recount or narrate the main events or ideas of a text in one's own words. Retelling is a valuable skill as it helps individuals better understand and remember what they have read. The ability to retell a text accurately and effectively plays a crucial role in comprehension and knowledge retention. To Khansir (2020), it requires readers to comprehend and internalize the content before expressing it in a coherent and organised manner. Furthermore, retelling a text helps readers identify key points and main ideas, enabling them to summarize and condense complex information into a concise form. This process enhances their critical thinking strategy as they evaluate and prioritize the most important aspects of the text. For example, in a classroom setting, after reading a chapter from a history textbook, students are asked to retell the main events and key figures in their own words. This exercise not only helps them understand the material better but also allows them to analyze and synthesize the information, ultimately deepening their understanding of the subject. In addition, when studying for an exam, summarizing and condensing complex information into concise notes can help students review and remember important concepts more effectively. Moreover, retelling allows readers to engage with the material on a deeper level, as they actively process and synthesize the information, fostering a deeper understanding and connection to the content. The ability to retell a text not only improves comprehension and knowledge retention but also promotes analytical thinking and meaningful engagement with the material. Retelling helps solidify understanding, as it requires readers to actively engage with the text and construct meaning from their perspective. This process of retelling allows readers to make connections between the text and their own experiences, facilitating a more personalized and meaningful understanding of the material. In addition, retelling encourages critical thinking strategy by requiring readers to analyze and evaluate the information they have read.

Making Notes

Making notes involves recording key points, main ideas, supporting details and personal reflections while reading. This strategy helps readers to stay engaged with the material and actively process information. According to Christopher (2017) this not only enhances comprehension but also aids in organizing thoughts and making meaningful connections between different concepts. Moreover, the act of reflecting on the text through note-taking promotes critical thinking and analysis skills. Note-taking helps readers organise their thoughts, capture important information and create a reference for future review. In addition, notes serve as a visual representation of the text, allowing readers to see the main ideas and supporting details at a glance. This active involvement promotes better comprehension and enhances overall

learning outcomes. It enhances active reading by promoting engagement with the text and facilitating critical thinking.

The Concept of Pre-Reading Activities

Pre-reading activities are activities that are used with the students prior to the actual reading material. These activities aim to provide students with required background knowledge needed to have a better comprehension when they interact with a text. Pre-reading activities are also useful tools for setting up a purpose for reading. That is why, it should be considered as vital activities in order for the learners' schema to be activated to prevent any failure in comprehending a piece of written text. Through the use of pre-reading activities, students get familiar with the topic, vocabulary, or complex structures in the passage.

According to Anderson (2020), pre-reading activities are strategies used to prepare learners for reading by activating their prior knowledge, building their background knowledge and setting a purpose for reading. This means pre-reading activities are instructional strategies used to prepare learners for the reading process by introducing them to the content and context of a text before reading. These activities help learners to activate their prior knowledge, build background knowledge and develop a purpose for reading. Pre-reading activities play a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension. Harmer (2020) defines pre-reading activities as activities that prepare learners to read by introducing them to the topic, vocabulary and structure of a text. These preparatory activities act as stepping stones for learners to familiarize themselves with the subject matter, key terms and overall organization of the text. Through these activities, learners can establish a stronger foundation for comprehending the material they are about to read.

Wallace (2022) defines pre-reading activities as techniques used to help learners access their prior knowledge, build their background knowledge and develop a framework for understanding new information before reading. This definition emphasizes the importance of building a mental framework that learners can use to connect new information to what they already know. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2020) describe pre-reading activities as techniques used to engage learners in the content of a text, activate their prior knowledge and set a purpose for reading. Engaging learners in the text's content from the beginning fosters curiosity and motivates them to explore the material further. In this definition, pre-reading activities are referred to as techniques used for guiding learners before reading comprehension properly begins. This guidance sets the stage for successful comprehension and paves the way for a more rewarding reading experience. However, Richards and Schmidt (2020) define pre-reading activities as strategies used to help learners prepare for reading by developing their comprehension skills, activating their prior knowledge and building their vocabulary. In this definition, the focus shifts towards enhancing learners' comprehension skills and vocabulary, both of which are integral components of successful reading.

Types of Pre-reading Activities

Hassan (2020) has postulated the following as major pre-reading activities: previewing, pre-questioning, semantic mapping, brainstorming and providing background knowledge

- **Previewing:** This type of pre-reading activity is, particularly, suitable for passages that are culturally not familiar. Students are encouraged to draw inferences before reading by decoding contextual clues like pictures, titles and headings.
- **Pre-questioning:** According to Royer (2022), pre-questioning should consist of a set of written questions. Taglieber (2018) stated that students can generate their own questions about the topic of the passage.
- **Semantic mapping:** In semantic mapping, students use brainstorming strategies. Nevertheless, this strategy is organized and controlled by the teacher. As students suggest their personal ideas about a topic, the teacher writes these ideas on the board.
- **Brainstorming:** one of the most popular kinds of pre-reading task is 'brainstorming' in which teachers ask the students to examine together the title of the selected material they are about to read. The teacher makes a list of all the information that comes to his/her mind as students read the title on the board. These pieces of information are then used to further recall and, in the process, considerable knowledge will be activated.
- **Providing background knowledge:** This activity is especially suitable for culturally unfamiliar passages. As one culture may be different from the other one, it becomes very difficult for the teacher to activate the students' existing schema towards the target culture, which results in having a lack of comprehension to have a sufficient comprehension; students should be supported to have enough background knowledge.

Effect of Using Pre-Reading Activities on Reading Comprehension

Many studies aimed to investigate whether pre-reading activities were efficient and effective for language learners' reading comprehension. These studies reported positive results when incorporating pre-reading activities, as compared with classes with no pre-reading activities. According to Alemi and Ebadi (2020), the participants were divided into experimental group and control group. Three types of pre-reading activities, pictorial context, vocabulary pre-teaching and pre-questioning were carried out for the experimental group. They found that the pre-reading treatment group demonstrated better comprehension as compared to the non-treatment group. That is, regardless of the type of pre-reading activities, they were all comparatively more effective in improving the participants' reading comprehension skills.

Yeeding (2023) investigated the effects of pre-reading activities on learners' motivation and reading comprehension ability. Results showed that the students were highly motivated, enthusiastic to read. After the experiment, they scored significantly higher. In another experimental study Taglieber, Johnson, & Yarbrough (2018) provided the experiment subjects with 3 pre-reading activities: guessing reading content from pictures, learning vocabulary

before reading and pre-reading question. The control group did not receive any of the 3 pre-reading activities. A pre-test and post-test were administered to both groups. It was discovered that the experimental group performed better than the control group. In addition, the reading scores from the reading with guessing reading content from pictures and pre-reading questioning were better than the reading with learning vocabulary before reading.

Hashemi, Mobini and Karimkhanlooie (2022) investigated three treatment groups with three pre-reading activities (pre-questioning, brainstorming and KWL) compared to a control group. The findings showed that high school students who received the pre-reading treatment were more successful than those who received no treatment. Also, the KWL activity (what I already know, what I want to know, what I have learned) outperformed the other two pre-reading activities (brainstorming and pre-questioning) in terms of beneficial impacts.

Han and Im (2020) also conducted a study incorporating three pre-reading activities: providing pictures, pre-questioning and pre-teaching vocabulary, with no such activity for the control group. Pre-reading activities' groups received higher scores than the control group. Also, pre-questioning was most effective for high-level students, while pre-teaching vocabulary was most effective for low-level students.

Mihara (2020) investigated the effects of two pre-reading activities, vocabulary pre-teaching and pre-questioning on EFL university students. The results revealed that pre-questioning was more effective than vocabulary pre-teaching. Jamalinesari (2022) also examined two types of pre-reading activities (guessing meaning from pre-reading questions and vocabulary definition) on the reading improvement of high school students and their findings revealed that the guessing meaning from pre-reading questions group performed better than the vocabulary definition group. The pre-questioning activity was also better than other activities.

Theoretical Framework

The Schema Theory, propounded by Frederic Bartlett in 1932 and later expanded by Richard Anderson in 1977, serves as a suitable theoretical framework for this study on the effects of pre-reading activities on the achievement of NCE students of French in reading comprehension. Schema Theory posits that prior knowledge, organized into cognitive structures called schemata, plays a crucial role in understanding and interpreting new information. The theory emphasizes that comprehension is an interactive process where readers activate relevant background knowledge to make sense of a text. Key principles of Schema Theory include the activation of prior knowledge, the integration of new information with existing schemata and the restructuring of schemata based on new learning experiences. In the context of this study, pre-reading activities such as brainstorming, previewing and discussion help students activate their prior knowledge, making it easier to understand and retain new reading materials. By engaging students in pre-reading activities, educators can enhance their comprehension skills, as these activities bridge the gap between their existing knowledge and the new concepts

introduced in the reading passages. This aligns with Schema Theory's assertion that learning is most effective when new information is connected to what learners already know, thereby improving their reading achievement.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the quasi-experimental design, specifically the non-equivalent pre-test and post-test control group design. The choice of this design was to help the researcher ascertain the effects of the discussion method on Nigeria Certificate in Education students' achievement in reading comprehension in Federal College of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria. The population for this study consisted of a total of 125 NCE II students enrolled in the French Department of the School of Languages at the Federal College of Education Pankshin. The sample for the study consisted of 108 NCE II students from the department of French in Federal College of Education, Pankshin. The students were divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group consisted of 52 students, while the control group had 56 students. The instrument that was used to collect data for the study was the Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT), which measured NCE II students' achievement in reading skills as outlined in the objectives of the study. The research questions were answered using the mean score method, while the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses to determine whether there existed any significant differences between the groups in their achievement in reading comprehension.

RESULTS

Answering Research Questions

Research Question One

What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identifying main ideas in the experimental and control groups?

Table 1

Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in identifying main Ideas in the Experimental and Control Groups

| Group | Pre-test | | | Post-test | | Mean Gain | Mean Difference |
|--------------|----------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-----------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Experimental | 52 | 29.87 | 6.648 | 56.71 | 8.978 | 26.84 | 23.54 |
| Control | 56 | 33.13 | 9.852 | 36.43 | 6.586 | 3.3 | |

Table 1 presents the pre-test and post-test achievement mean score of students in identifying main ideas in reading comprehension in the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group the post-test achievement mean score was 56.71 and standard deviation of 8.98, higher than the pre-test mean score of 29.87 and standard deviation of 6.65 with a mean gain of 26.84, indicating that there was improvement in the achievement of students after treatment using pre-reading activities. For the control group, the pre-test mean score was 33.13 and a standard deviation of 9.85. The post-test mean score of students was 36.43

with a standard deviation of 6.59 indicating a mean score gain of 3.3. The results show that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score (56.71) after treatment than those in the control group (36.43) who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 23.54. This means that at the pre-test the students in both groups had a poor achievement and were at the same level, but after the intervention using pre-reading activities, the experimental group performed better than the control group. It means that pre-reading activities did improve the students' achievement in identifying main ideas in reading comprehension.

Research Question Two

What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identifying supporting ideas in the experimental and control groups?

Table 2

Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in Identifying supporting Ideas in the Experimental and Control Groups

| Group | Pre-test | | | Post-test | | Mean Gain | Mean Difference |
|--------------|----------|-------|------|-----------|------|-----------|-----------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Experimental | 52 | 31.33 | 8.24 | 60.81 | 9.30 | 29.48 | 19.21 |
| Control | 56 | 30.36 | 8.15 | 40.63 | 7.50 | 10.27 | |

Table 2 shows the pre-test and post-test achievement mean score of students in identifying supporting ideas in reading comprehension in the experimental and control groups. The experimental and control groups have mean scores of 31.33 and 30.36 respectively at the pre-test, indicating that both groups performed poorly and were almost at the same level. At the post-test achievement mean scores were 60.81 and 40.63 and standard deviations of 9.30 and 7.50 and mean gains of 29.48 and 10.27 for the experimental and control groups respectively. The results show that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score (60.81) after treatment than those in the control group (40.63) who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 19.21. This means that after intervention using pre-reading activities, the experimental group performed better than the control group. It means that pre-reading activities did improve the SSII students' achievement in identifying supporting ideas in reading comprehension.

Research Question Three

What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in summarisations in the experimental and control groups?

Table 3**Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in Summarisation in the Experimental and Control Groups**

| Group | Pre-test | | | Post-test | | Mean Gain | Mean Difference |
|--------------|----------|-------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------|-----------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Experimental | 52 | 25.67 | 7.009 | 53.48 | 10.245 | 27.81 | 25.31 |
| Control | 56 | 34.13 | 10.518 | 36.63 | 8.461 | 2.5 | |

Table 3 presents the pre-test and post-test achievement mean score of students in summarisation in reading comprehension in the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group the post-test achievement mean score was 53.48 and standard deviation of 10.25, higher than the pre-test mean score of 25.67 and standard deviation of 7.01 with a mean gain of 27.81, indicating that there was improvement in the achievement of students after treatment using pre-reading activities. For the control group, the pre-test mean score was 34.13 and a standard deviation of 10.52. The post-test mean score of students was 36.63 with a standard deviation of 8.46 indicating a mean score gain of 2.5. The results show that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score (53.48) after treatment than those in the control group (36.63) who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 25.31. This means that at the pre-test the students in both groups had a poor achievement and were at the same level, but after the intervention using pre-reading activities, the experimental group performed better than the control group. It means that pre-reading activities did improve the students' achievement in summarisation in reading comprehension.

Research Question Four

What are the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in retelling in the experimental and control groups?

Table 4**Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in Retelling in the Experimental and Control Groups**

| Group | Pre-test | | | Post-test | | Mean Gain | Mean Difference |
|--------------|----------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-----------------|
| | N | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Experimental | 52 | 29.02 | 7.506 | 58.48 | 11.17 | 29.46 | 23.62 |
| Control | 56 | 32.34 | 7.735 | 38.18 | 9.84 | 5.84 | |

Table 4 reveals the pre-test and post-test achievement mean score of students in retelling in reading comprehension in the experimental and control groups. In the experimental group the post-test achievement mean score was 58.48 and standard deviation of 11.17, higher than the pre-test mean score of 29.02 and standard deviation of 7.51 with a mean gain of 29.46, indicating that there was improvement in the achievement of students in paragraph creation skill after treatment using pre-reading activities. For the control group, the pre-test mean score was 32.34 and a standard deviation of 7.74. The post-test mean score of students was 38.18 with a standard deviation of 9.84 indicating a mean score gain of 5.84. The results show that students in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score (58.48) after treatment than those in the control group (38.18) who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 23.62. This means that at the pre-test the students in both groups had a poor achievement and were at the same level, but after the intervention using pre-reading activities, the experimental group performed better than the control group. It means that pre-reading activities did improve the students' achievement in retelling in reading comprehension.

Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identification of main ideas in the experimental and control groups.

Table 5

ANCOVA Result on Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in identification of main ideas in the Experimental and Control Groups

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model | 11881.198 ^a | 2 | 5940.599 | 109.284 | .000 | .675 |
| Intercept | 9478.948 | 1 | 9478.948 | 174.376 | .000 | .624 |
| Pre-composition | 788.668 | 1 | 788.668 | 14.508 | .000 | .121 |
| Group | 11825.181 | 1 | 11825.181 | 217.538 | .000 | .674 |
| Error | 5707.719 | 105 | 54.359 | | | |
| Total | 248053.000 | 108 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 17588.917 | 107 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .675 (Adjusted R Squared = .669)

Table 5 indicates that $F(1,105) = 217.54$, $p < 0.05$, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of pre-reading activities on achievement of students in identifying main ideas in reading comprehension. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of .669, which means that 66.9 percent of the variation in the dependent variable which is achievement in identifying main ideas in reading comprehension is explained by variation in the treatment of pre-reading activities, while the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. This implies that pre-reading activities can help improve students'

achievement in identifying main ideas in reading comprehension among French students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in identification of supporting ideas in the experimental and control groups.

Table 6

ANCOVA Result on Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in identification of supporting ideas in the Experimental and Control Groups

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model | 14638.187 ^a | 2 | 7319.094 | 199.708 | .000 | .792 |
| Intercept | 5730.190 | 1 | 5730.190 | 156.354 | .000 | .598 |
| Pre-composition | 3655.065 | 1 | 3655.065 | 99.732 | .000 | .487 |
| Group | 10203.468 | 1 | 10203.468 | 278.411 | .000 | .726 |
| Error | 3848.137 | 105 | 36.649 | | | |
| Total | 292199.000 | 108 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 18486.324 | 107 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .792 (Adjusted R Squared = .788)

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists in the posttest achievement mean score of students in identifying supporting ideas in reading comprehension in the experimental and control groups. Table 10 shows that $F(1,105) = 278.411$, $p < 0.05$, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of pre-reading activities on achievement of students in identification of supporting ideas in reading comprehension. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of .788, which means that 78.8 % of the variation in the dependent variable which is achievement in identification of supporting ideas in reading comprehension is explained by variation in the treatment of pre-reading activities, while the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. This implies that pre-reading activities can help improve students' achievement in identifying supporting ideas in reading comprehension among French students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in summarisation in the experimental and control groups.

Table 7**ANCOVA Result on Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in summarisation in the Experimental and Control Groups**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model | 7768.330 ^a | 2 | 3884.165 | 44.415 | .000 | .458 |
| Intercept | 15345.089 | 1 | 15345.089 | 175.470 | .000 | .626 |
| Pre-composition | 107.695 | 1 | 107.695 | 1.231 | .270 | .012 |
| Group | 6979.869 | 1 | 6979.869 | 79.814 | .000 | .432 |
| Error | 9182.411 | 105 | 87.452 | | | |
| Total | 233138.000 | 108 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 16950.741 | 107 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .458 (Adjusted R Squared = .448)

Table 7 shows that $F(1,105) = 79.81$, $p < 0.05$, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of pre-reading activities on achievement of students in summarisation in reading comprehension. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of .448, which means that 44.8 % of the variation in the dependent variable which is achievement in summarisation in reading comprehension is explained by variation in the treatment of pre-reading activities, while the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. This implies that pre-reading activities can help improve students' achievement in summarisation in reading comprehension among French students in Federal College of Education, Pankshin.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test achievements of students in retelling in the experimental and control groups.

Table 8**ANCOVA Result on Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of Students in retelling in the Experimental and Control Groups**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|---------------------|
| Corrected Model | 14956.972 ^a | 2 | 7478.486 | 100.110 | .000 | .656 |
| Intercept | 3586.698 | 1 | 3586.698 | 48.013 | .000 | .314 |
| Pre-composition | 3843.399 | 1 | 3843.399 | 51.449 | .000 | .329 |
| Group | 13517.401 | 1 | 13517.401 | 180.949 | .000 | .633 |
| Error | 7843.796 | 105 | 74.703 | | | |
| Total | 271153.000 | 108 | | | | |
| Corrected Total | 22800.769 | 107 | | | | |

a. R Squared = .656 (Adjusted R Squared = .649)

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists in the posttest achievement mean score of students in retelling in the experimental and control groups. Table 8 shows that $F(1,105) = 180.95$, $p < 0.05$, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the

null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of pre-reading activities on achievement of students in retelling in reading comprehension. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of .649, which means that 64.9 % of the variation in the dependent variable which is achievement in retelling in reading comprehension is explained by variation in the treatment of pre-reading activities, while the remaining is due to other factors not included in this study. This implies that pre-reading activities can help improve students' achievement in retelling in reading comprehension Federal College of Education, Pankshin.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from Research Question One reveal that students in the experimental group showed significant improvement in identifying main ideas after exposure to pre-reading activities, as indicated by the mean gain of 26.84 compared to 3.3 in the control group. This aligns with the study by Oyetunde and Muodumogu (1999), who found that pre-reading strategies such as previewing and activating prior knowledge enhance students' ability to comprehend and identify main ideas in texts. The substantial mean difference of 23.54 between the experimental and control groups further confirms that engaging students in pre-reading tasks significantly improves their reading comprehension skills. The results suggest that structured pre-reading activities provide students with the necessary cognitive framework to better understand and extract key points from texts.

For Research Question Two, the results indicate that students in the experimental group improved significantly in identifying supporting ideas, with a mean gain of 29.48 compared to 10.27 in the control group. This finding is in agreement with the work of Al Odwan (2012), who found that pre-reading activities, such as questioning and predicting, help students develop better comprehension skills by directing their attention to essential supporting details in a text. The mean difference of 19.21 further reinforces the effectiveness of pre-reading activities in improving students' ability to identify supporting ideas. These results suggest that activating students' background knowledge before reading not only aids in understanding the main ideas but also strengthens their ability to recognize and analyze supporting information.

In response to Research Question Three, the findings demonstrate that students in the experimental group achieved higher scores in summarization, with a mean gain of 27.81 compared to 2.5 in the control group. This supports the study by Duke and Pearson (2002), which found that pre-reading activities, such as discussing key vocabulary and previewing text structures, enhance students' summarization skills by providing them with a clear roadmap for reading. The mean difference of 25.31 between the groups suggests that pre-reading activities enable students to filter essential points and construct concise summaries effectively. These results indicate that engaging students in pre-reading discussions and guided questioning before reading improves their ability to condense information into meaningful summaries.

For Research Question Four, the findings show that students in the experimental group performed significantly better in retelling, with a mean gain

of 29.46 compared to 5.84 in the control group. This aligns with the study by Pressley (2006), who found that pre-reading activities, such as story mapping and making predictions, improve students' ability to recall and retell texts accurately. The mean difference of 23.62 highlights the impact of pre-reading strategies on students' ability to process, retain and articulate information in a structured manner. These results suggest that pre-reading activities provide students with the cognitive scaffolding needed to enhance their comprehension and recall, ultimately improving their retelling abilities.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that pre-reading activities significantly enhance students' achievement in reading comprehension across various skills, such as identifying main ideas, identifying supporting ideas, summarization and retelling. The experimental group consistently outperformed the control group in all assessed areas, highlighting the effectiveness of pre-reading strategies in fostering comprehension. Therefore, integrating pre-reading activities into reading instruction is essential for improving comprehension skills among NCE students, ultimately enhancing their academic performance in reading-related tasks.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educators should incorporate structured pre-reading strategies, such as previewing and activating prior knowledge, into reading lessons to enhance students' ability to identify main ideas effectively. This approach will help create a cognitive framework that supports deeper comprehension.
2. Teachers should employ questioning, predicting and other pre-reading techniques to help students focus on key supporting details in texts. This will strengthen their analytical skills and improve their ability to recognize essential information that supports the main idea.
3. Educators should engage students in pre-reading discussions, vocabulary previews and guided questioning to enhance their summarization skills. These activities will help students extract and condense essential information, improving their overall reading comprehension.
4. Teachers should utilize strategies such as story mapping and prediction exercises before reading to help students retain and accurately retell texts. These activities will improve students' recall abilities, making them more effective in articulating key points from reading materials.

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LEXICALISATION OF THE ENDBADGOVERNANCE PROTEST# IN SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

This study investigates the Lexicalisation of the #EndBadGovernance protest in selected Nigerian newspapers, focusing on how specific word choices shaped public perception and representation of the protests. The importance of this research lies in its exploration of the intersection between language and political discourse, particularly in a context marked by socio-economic challenges and governance failures. The primary objectives include identifying the lexical terms used in reporting the protests, analyzing their implications for public perception, and examining the ideological meanings embedded within these choices. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research utilizes textual, content, and descriptive analysis of headlines from ten national newspapers. The findings reveal that media outlets strategically employed lexical framing to portray the protests either as legitimate civic resistance or as threats to national stability. This study contributes to the fields of media studies, discourse analysis, and political communication by highlighting the role of language in shaping public memory and national discourse, ultimately demonstrating how lexical choices can influence the legitimacy of dissent and collective identity.

Keywords: Lexicalisation, #EndBadGovernance, Nigerian Newspapers, Protest, media discourse.

Introduction

Language serves as a powerful tool in shaping societal interpretations of events, particularly through the lens of media representation. Lexicalisation, the process of selecting specific words to depict people, events, or issues, plays a crucial role in influencing public opinion. In journalism, especially during politically charged protests, word choices are rarely neutral; they reflect underlying ideologies and values (Baranov et al., 2021). In Nigeria, where media narratives intersect with intense political and economic struggles, understanding the language used in headlines is vital for comprehending how public anger is either echoed or silenced (Baranova et al., 2023). The #EndBadGovernance protest emerged as a direct response to widespread dissatisfaction with governance, economic inequality, and institutional failures (Edem & Aluya, 2019). This movement encapsulated a growing public rejection of elite impunity and systemic failure, with media coverage playing a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of the protests. Lexical choices such as “killing its youth,” “cry for change,” and “agent of oppression” carried significant emotional and political weight, framing protesters variously as

victims, disruptors, or moral actors (Ganzallo, 2024). This research aims to investigate how Lexicalisation in selected Nigerian newspapers influenced public discourse surrounding the #EndBadGovernance protests, thereby contributing to broader conversations about media, protest, and the politics of language in Nigeria.

Literature review

The literature on lexicalisation within media discourse highlights its role in shaping public understanding of political events and social protests. Scholars have examined how media utilise language to construct ideological meanings through lexical choices. Ajewole-Orimogunje and Oyelekan (2016) assert that lexicalisation serves as a tool for ideological expression, revealing that media are not neutral observers but active participants in meaning-making. Their study on Nigerian media during politically active periods demonstrates how lexical choices can project positive self-presentation of ruling parties while negatively portraying opponents. Similarly, Oyeleye and Osisanwo (2013) explore the ideological bias embedded in media representations during Nigeria's 2003 and 2007 general elections, illustrating how lexicalisation functions as a mechanism for positioning media institutions within political power struggles. Aluya and Jime (2024) further discuss the framing of electoral violence, showing how lexical choices shape public perception of political unrest. Olawe (2024) examines the strategic role of lexicalization in framing public health crises, emphasising how media language can evoke urgency and fear. Baranova et al. (2023) highlight the emotionally loaded nature of media language, demonstrating that lexical choices reflect societal attitudes and influence public perception. Collectively, these studies underscore the significance of examining lexical framing in the context of the #EndBadGovernance protests, where media language similarly shapes public understanding and legitimacy of citizen resistance.

Theoretical Framework

Framing theory explains how the media highlight certain aspects of reality while downplaying others to influence how people interpret news. Developed by scholars like Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman, the theory suggests that people view the world through “frames,” which act as cognitive structures for understanding events. Frames are abstractions that work to organize “or structure message meaning” (Arowolo, 2017). (Goffman, 1974). These frames are shaped and reinforced by media, creating particular angles through which stories are told. As Arowolo (2017) notes, “Framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called ‘the frame’) influences the choices people make about how to process that information” (Arowolo, 2017). The media create this frame by introducing (Gitlin, 1980). “organize and present the ideas, events” (Arowolo, 2017). The theory is especially relevant when covering protests, where media can frame actors as either peaceful citizens or as threats to public order “frames influence public perceptions, attitudes” (Arowolo, 2017). According to Arowolo (2017), “Frames can be designed to enhance understanding or are used as cognitive shortcuts to link stories to the bigger picture.”. According to Arowolo (2017),

“Frames can be designed to enhance understanding or are used as cognitive shortcuts to link stories to the bigger picture.” However, a criticism of the theory is that framing can be subtle and difficult to detect because, as Entman puts it, “frames are difficult to detect fully and reliably, because many of the framing devices can appear as ‘natural,’ unremarkable choices of words or images” (Arowolo, 2017). Such choices are not inevitable or unproblematic (Entman, 1993).

In the context of this study, framing theory is used to examine how Nigerian newspapers portrayed the #EndBadGovernance protest through lexical choices. The media’s role in shaping the narrative becomes critical when language like “hoodlums,” “prayer walk,” or “massacre” is used to frame protest events. Creating the mood and giving good coverage (Scheufele, 1999). The theory is helpful in identifying whether newspapers framed the protests as civic resistance, criminal unrest, or moral action. Arowolo (2017) explains that “the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning,” allowing them to subtly influence public sentiment. They not only tell the audience what (Entman, 1993). This is particularly important in politically charged environments where news framing can affect legitimacy and response to social movements frames influence public perceptions, attitudes (Olawe, 2024). The study also considers Entman’s model, where “attributing responsibility, either for a cause or a solution” is one of the common framing methods used in protest coverage (Arowolo, 2017). The media as gatekeepers... organize and present (Gitlin, 1980) media’s use of frames influences importance (Olawe, 2024). Therefore, framing theory serves as the foundation for this research in identifying and interpreting how selected newspapers used lexicalisation to construct meaning around the #EndBadGovernance protest.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore how lexical choices in Nigerian newspaper headlines shaped the framing of the #EndBadGovernance protest. The qualitative design allows for deeper interpretation of meanings, ideologies, and intentions behind specific word use in media discourse. This study adopted a qualitative research approach due to its strength in exploring meanings embedded in human language and communication. As Creswell (2018) explains, qualitative methods are suitable when researchers seek to “honor an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation” (p. 4). This aligns with the study's aim to examine how seemingly ordinary words carry ideological weight. The data was sourced from ten national newspapers: Premium time news, Punch, Vanguard, The Guardian, The Nation, Daily Post, Premium Times, Business Day, The Tide, and Daily times. These outlets were selected based on their wide readership, national relevance, and the variety in their editorial tones. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure “the researcher intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2018). Three methods were applied to analyze the data: textual analysis, content analysis, and descriptive analysis. Textual analysis helped examine how

specific lexical items function within broader semantic and ideological contexts (Babbie, 2020). Content analysis allowed for the identification of repeated word patterns and their association with protest narratives (Silverman, 2021). Descriptive analysis was used to interpret the tone and framing of each headline, categorizing them as positive, negative, or neutral. Lexical items such as “killing its youth”, “punitive”, “cry for change”, “agent of oppression”, and “unwanted protest” were specifically selected for their emotional and ideological significance within the protest discourse.

Analysis and Findings

Punch News

November 28, 2024

Headline: *“24 killed, over 1,200 detained during #EndBadGovernance protest – Amnesty International”*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **“24 killed”** – Brutal and confrontational; centers death and loss.
- **“1,200 detained”** – Emphasizes mass crackdown and state control.
- **“Amnesty International”** – Invokes external legitimacy and human rights gravity.

December 22, 2024

Headline: *“#EndBadGovernance protest: Police reject Amnesty report, demand retraction, apology”*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **“Reject”** – Assertive denial; pushes back against accountability.
- **“Retraction, apology”** – Positions the state as aggrieved, not guilty.
- **“Police”** – Puts institutional power under the spotlight.

January 22, 2025

Headline: *“#EndBadGovernance protest: Jigawa lost N5bn, fact-finding C'ttee reveals”*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **“Lost N5bn”** – Reduces the protest to economic damage.
- **“Fact-finding Committee”** – Implies state-led legitimacy.
- **“Reveals”** – Frames the report as factual and authoritative.

Punch News – Contextual Insight

Punch News constructs a narrative arc from violence to denial and finally to damage control. It opens with raw, statistical confrontation using terms like “24 killed” and “1,200 detained”, which frame the protest in the context of state-inflicted brutality. However, rather than acknowledging these human rights concerns, later headlines show the government pushing back. The police's use of “reject” and demand for a “retraction” and “apology” represent an institutional refusal to accept blame, attempting instead to discredit Amnesty International. By January, the focus pivots toward financial loss with “Jigawa lost N5bn”, reframing the protests as economically destructive rather than socially justified. Lexical shifts from mortality to money reflect a calculated re-narration of the movement by state-affiliated voices.

The Guardian

August 3, 2024

Headline: *"#EndBadGovernance Day 3: Protester recounts attack"*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **"Protester recounts"** – Focuses on personal experience and witness testimony.
- **"Attack"** – Implies victimhood and violent disruption.

August 4, 2024

Headline: *"#EndBadGovernance Day 3: Citizens continue call for change"*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **"Citizens continue"** – Demonstrates endurance and collective effort.
- **"Call for change"** – Embeds the protest within reformist discourse.

August 20, 2024

Headline: *"Fearless in October: #EndBadGovernance organisers plan second nationwide protest"*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **"Fearless"** – Conveys bravery and resistance.
- **"Plan"** – Strategic, deliberate; not spontaneous.
- **"Second nationwide protest"** – Implies expansion and long-term intent.

The Guardian – Contextual Insight

The Guardian presents a protest narrative grounded in personal dignity, collective persistence, and ideological clarity. Early on, phrases like "Protester recounts" and "attack" humanize the movement by highlighting firsthand trauma. The use of "Citizens continue" and "call for change" frames the protests not as chaos, but as organized civic participation with a defined purpose. By August 20, the movement is portrayed as fearless and tactical, with protesters "planning" a "second nationwide protest". The shift from street-level testimonies to organized strategic planning signals the protest's maturation into a sustained political force, while "fearless" casts its leaders as morally and emotionally resolute.

Daily Trust

August 6, 2024

Headline: *"Nigeria's cry for change: The #EndBadGovernance protest"*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **"Cry for change"** – Emotional, urgent, and collective.
- **"Protest"** – Civic action seeking redress.

September 5, 2024

Headline: *"Aftermath of End Bad Governance in Nigeria Protests – Daily Trust"*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **"Aftermath"** – Suggests unresolved consequences and continuity.
- **"Protests"** – Remains neutral, but rooted in mass civic action.

September 6, 2024

Headline: *“End Bad Governance Movement: Govt’s convoluted responses”*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **“Movement”** – Indicates ideological structure and momentum.
- **“Govt’s convoluted responses”** – Critiques the government as unclear, disorganized, or evasive.

Daily Trust – Contextual Insight

Daily Trust’s framing emphasizes the emotional and ideological weight of the protests, beginning with “Nigeria’s cry for change”, which captures national desperation and hope. The term “protest” is used not as chaos but as a legitimate civic plea. By September, the protest’s legacy is seen in the “aftermath”, indicating it has lasting effects beyond the street. The government is portrayed critically, with its “convoluted responses” framed as muddled and insufficient. The shift from emotional urgency to structural critique shows a movement whose impact has outlived its moment, forcing the state to scramble for legitimacy while the public maintains pressure through the continuing “movement”.

The Nation

December 22, 2024

Headline: *Police knocks Amnesty International's report on EndBadGovernance protest*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **“Knocks”** – Informal and aggressive; attempts to discredit.
- **“Amnesty International's report”** – Introduces external human rights authority.
- **“EndBadGovernance protest”** – Connects the state reaction directly to public dissent.

February 20, 2025

Headline: *10 died in 2024 protest against hardship, panel confirms*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **“10 died”** – A quantified death toll; emphasizes seriousness.
- **“Protest against hardship”** – Grounds the protest in economic suffering.
- **“Panel confirms”** – Adds official, investigative legitimacy.

March 22, 2025

Headline: *DSS releases detained EndBadGovernance protesters*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- **“DSS”** – State intelligence agency; implies state control.
- **“Releases detained”** – Indicates prior state suppression.
- **“Protesters”** – Continues framing as civic actors, not criminals.

Contextual Insight – The Nation

The Nation’s headlines illustrate a movement from state resistance to reluctant acknowledgment. The police initially attempt to undermine criticism by aggressively “knocking” Amnesty’s findings, trying to delegitimize external judgment. However, the admission that “10 died” during a “protest against hardship” reveals the human cost and validates the protest’s motive. By

March, the “DSS releases detained protesters” shows that the state’s grip is loosening, whether due to pressure or procedural necessity. The lexical trajectory moves from deflection to partial accountability, revealing a reluctant state narrative shift.

Premium Times

February 28, 2025

Headline: *EndBadGovernance Protest: Organisers declare 1 October 'National Day of Survival'*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Organisers declare” – Shows structure, intent, and leadership.
- “National Day of Survival” – Symbolic and emotionally charged; frames the protest as existential.

March 7, 2025

Headline: *EndBadGovernance: NLC speaks on protests, demands policy reversal*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “NLC speaks” – Invokes institutional authority.
- “Demands policy reversal” – Signals strategic confrontation.

March 15, 2025

Headline: *Nigerians commence protests against 'bad governance'*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Commence protests” – Formal, calculated mobilization.
- “Bad governance” – Core grievance; broad and critical.

Contextual Insight – Premium Times

Premium Times emphasizes coordinated civic resistance, connecting individual frustration to collective action. The phrase “Organizers declare” signals intentional leadership, while “National Day of Survival” dramatizes the stakes, implying that governance failures threaten basic existence. With “NLC speaks” and its “demands for policy reversal,” the movement gains institutional muscle. Finally, “Nigerians commence protests” underscores the recurring and organized nature of resistance, pointing to a society unwilling to normalize suffering under “bad governance.” The lexicon charts a shift from symbolic declaration to actionable, wide-scale mobilization.

This Day Live

August 13, 2024

Headline: *Takeaways from the EndBadGovernance Protest*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Takeaways” – Reflective, indicating aftermath and analysis.
- “Protest” – Neutral term that still maintains civil resistance framing.

March 20, 2025

Headline: *EndBadGovernance Protest: Nigerian Couple Sends SoS to FG over Indictment*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Sends SoS” – Urgent and emotional; suggests desperation.
- “FG” – Federal Government; signifies direct appeal to central authority.

- “Indictment” – Legal term indicating state accusation or criminalization.

March 21, 2025

Headline: *Chronicling the EndBadGovernance Protest as Nigerians Cry for Change*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Chronicling” – Narrative-focused, long-term framing.
- “Cry for Change” – Deeply emotional and moral appeal.
-

Contextual Insight- This Day Live

This Day Live’s coverage leans into emotional resonance and long-term societal reflection. With early mention of “takeaways,” the outlet immediately suggests that the protest left a meaningful impact. The March 20 headline introduces personal struggle through a “Nigerian couple” sending an “SOS” to the “FG,” highlighting perceived persecution and desperation. By March 21, the protest is immortalized through “chronicling,” while the phrase “cry for change” captures the public’s enduring emotional and moral plea. These lexical choices frame the movement as both historic and human, driven by the pain of ordinary citizens rather than political spectacle.

Business Day Live

August 2, 2024

Headline: *Conversations on EndBadGovernance across Nigeria*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Conversations” – Civil, ongoing, national in scope.
- “Across Nigeria” – Emphasizes scale and inclusion.

August 11, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance protest: Use of out-of-school children dangerous for Nigeria*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Out-of-school children” – Highlights vulnerable demographics.
- “Dangerous for Nigeria” – Urgent and cautionary.

August 19, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance: Nigeria must stop killing its youth. They are rightly aggrieved!*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Killing its youth” – Direct and provocative; high emotional charge.
- “Rightly aggrieved” – Morally justified frustration.

Contextual Insight – Business Day Live

Business Day Live focuses on societal impact, youth vulnerability, and national consequence. It frames the protest as a public discourse through terms like “conversations” and situates it “across Nigeria,” signaling wide relevance. The inclusion of “out-of-school children” and warnings that this is “dangerous for Nigeria” brings attention to long-term social destabilization. Most forcefully, the phrase “killing its youth” followed by “rightly aggrieved” signals that the protest is not only justifiable but a direct result of state violence. The emotional and cautionary tone highlights a nation at risk of destroying its future.

Daily Post

August 12, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance: Address demands of the youths – Musician Bongos Ikwue tells Nigerian Govt*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Address demands” – Formal, constructive; implies existing grievances.
- “Youths” – Central demographic; represents national frustration.

September 12, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance protests: You've become agent of oppression – HURIWA knocks judiciary*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Agent of oppression” – Accusatory; suggests betrayal by authority.
- “Knocks judiciary” – Blunt criticism of legal institutions.

November 8, 2024

Headline: *Mixed reactions trail Nigerian Govt's release of EndBadGovernance protesters*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Mixed reactions” – Ambiguity and division in public opinion.
- “Release of protesters” – Indicates previous state suppression.

Contextual Insight – Daily Post

Daily Post positions the protest within an ongoing dialogue between civic society and government. “Address demands of the youths” signals a call for action, grounded in generational discontent. As things escalate, the protest gains sharper political tones, with watchdog group HURIWA accusing the judiciary of becoming an “agent of oppression.” This language breaks trust between citizens and state institutions. By November, the phrase “mixed reactions” surrounding the “release of protesters” reveals a nation unsure whether to see justice, fear, or appeasement in the government’s late response. The lexical field swings from appeal to accusation to uncertainty.

Vanguard News

August 10, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance: Why protest turned violent in the north — Northern leaders*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Turned violent” – Signals escalation.
- “Northern leaders” – Regional authority perspective.

August 10, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance Protest: A mixed outcome*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Mixed outcome” – Suggests complexity, no clear resolution.

October 29, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance protest, wake-up call — Northern govts*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Wake-up call” – Metaphorical, urgent signal for reform.
- “Northern govts” – Regional institutional voice.

Contextual Insight – Vanguard News

Vanguard's coverage explores regional complexity and political response. The phrase “turned violent” casts the northern protest space as unstable, while “Northern leaders” offer a filtered interpretation of events. By describing the movement as a “mixed outcome,” the coverage invites a neutral-to-critical assessment of results. However, the later term “wake-up call” used by “Northern govts” reflects growing institutional recognition of protest legitimacy. Lexically, the shift from violence to realization shows how even reluctant power centers are forced to engage with popular pressure.

The Tide

August 5, 2024

Headline: *Hunger Protest Paralyzes Port Activities In Nigeria*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Hunger Protest” – Rooted in economic desperation.
- “Paralyzes Port Activities” – Disruption of economic function.

August 7, 2024

Headline: *The Unwanted Protest*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Unwanted” – Delegitimizing tone; protest as nuisance.

September 13, 2024

Headline: *EndBadGovernance Protesters’ Bail Conditions Punitive, Witch-hunt – AI*

Lexical Content Analysis:

- “Punitive” – Excessive punishment; harsh treatment.
- “Witch-hunt” – Politically motivated persecution.
- “AI” – Amnesty International; credible rights actor.

Contextual Insight – The Tide

The Tide provides a perspective on disruption, legitimacy, and repression. The “Hunger Protest” ties protest motivation to survival, while “paralyzes port activities” implies high-impact resistance. The phrase “The Unwanted Protest” uses delegitimizing language, suggesting elite or state disapproval. Amnesty’s framing of “punitive” bail and “witch-hunt” adds a human rights lens, pointing to a state actively persecuting dissent. Overall, the language shifts from viewing protest as an inconvenience to acknowledging its moral weight through external validation.

Discussion

Lexicalisation functions as a critical tool through which media outlets structure public perception of protests by foregrounding specific semantic frames. In the context of the #EndBadGovernance movement, terms like “killing its youth” and “punitive” evoke state-inflicted harm and position governmental institutions as hostile to their own population. This lexical construction resonates with Fairclough’s (1995) argument that discourse is “socially constitutive” and used to legitimize or challenge power structures. The Business Day Live headline, for instance, explicitly condemns state actions with the assertion “Nigeria must stop killing its youth”, framing the government

not only as violent but as morally bankrupt in the eyes of its citizens. As the document states, “the government’s heavy-handed response to the protests, including the use of force, mirrored the current situation and contributed to the escalation of public dissent” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 25). Such lexical choices do not just inform but actively shape ideology and reinforce or resist dominant narratives (Wodak, 2001). The use of “punitive” in reports about bail conditions similarly casts the state as vindictive, extending punishment beyond lawful limits. This aligns with the framing of the protest as a historical rupture, where “visual memory becomes an alternative archive of truth” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 31).

Alternatively, lexical constructions such as “agent of oppression”, “mixed reactions”, and “unwanted protest” function as mechanisms of delegitimization, redirecting public focus from systemic grievances to controversy, disruption, or disobedience. These terms shift the narrative from civic resistance to public nuisance or moral ambiguity, a strategy frequently observed in state-aligned or conservative media to preserve hegemonic order (Richardson, 2007). The phrase “agent of oppression”, directed at the judiciary by HURIWA in *Daily Post*, reframes legal institutions as complicit in repression rather than neutral arbiters of justice. In the document, this reframing is visible in how “instances of embezzlement, lack of accountability, and inefficient public service delivery created a sense of disillusionment among the populace” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 23), but are eclipsed in certain media accounts by efforts to delegitimize dissent. Similarly, headlines citing “mixed reactions” to the release of protesters present ambiguity where there should be clarity, deflecting from the reality of wrongful detention. The term “unwanted protest” as seen in *The Tide*, recasts civic action as imposition—removing its legitimacy by implying a lack of public support. As lexical studies show, such language forms a “semantic barrier” between protest legitimacy and criminal behavior (van Dijk, 1998). The document’s reference to how “the disconnect between government and citizens breeds alienation” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 20) underscores why protesters are easily othered and their grievances dismissed in state-leaning narratives.

On the other hand, lexical choices like “cry for change”, “National Day of Survival”, and “conversations across Nigeria” reflect resistance through moral, emotional, and civic framing, suggesting suffering, solidarity, and national consciousness. These terms echo what Reisigl and Wodak (2001) describe as “discursive strategies of legitimation”, where protesters symbolically align their actions with higher values like justice, equity, and survival. The *This Day Live* headline’s use of “cry for change” evokes a deep emotional and ethical claim, presenting activism as both desperate and dignified. As noted, “the growing disparity between the rich and the poor has been a major source of public frustration” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 27), and the use of emotionally loaded language signals a moral rebuke of that inequality. Likewise, *Premium Times*’ designation of October 1 as a “National Day of Survival” elevates the protests to a symbolic struggle for existence itself, turning what could be framed as unrest into a civic ritual. Meanwhile, Business

Day Live's "conversations across Nigeria" constructs protest not as chaos but as discourse participatory, legitimate, and national in scope. These terms serve to affirm the protest's legitimacy while also asserting ideological resistance through culturally resonant, strategically framed expressions. The framing, therefore, becomes not only informative but transformative, altering the lens through which public resistance is interpreted.

Conclusion

The analysis of lexicalisation in newspaper headlines has shown how language plays a powerful role in shaping public perception of protests like #EndBadGovernance. Lexical choices not only inform readers but also influence how protesters and their actions are interpreted by society delivering news that captures attention. The findings of this study align with the reality that the perception of corruption and the lavish lifestyles of the political elite have intensified public resentment. The use of terms such as "killing its youth", "agent of oppression", and "National Day of Survival" illustrates the ideological framing embedded within media discourse emphasize the emotional resonance. These protest movements did not emerge in isolation but were shaped by long-standing grievances, as the government's heavy-handed response to the protests... contributed to the escalation of public dissent. The lexical framing of protests reflects deeper issues such as inequality, corruption, and governance failures, confirming that social inequity... has driven many to participate in the protests, highlight the devastating consequences. Ultimately, this research underscores the need for more responsible media reporting and the critical examination of language in shaping national discourse shapes public understanding, influences perceptions

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LEXICALISATION OF WAR LEXEMES IN SELECTED NEWSPAPERS HEADLINES ON THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CRISES

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Abstract

The Russian-Ukraine crisis has emerged as a significant focal point for global media, particularly since its escalation in 2022. This study investigates the lexicalisation of war lexemes in selected newspaper headlines to understand how language shapes public perception and discourse surrounding the conflict. The research employs a qualitative textual analysis of fifteen headlines from three prominent news platforms: The Guardian, BBC, and Al Jazeera. The findings reveal a diverse range of war lexemes that reflect varying editorial stances and influence public sentiment. This work contributes to the field by elucidating the role of language in framing contemporary conflicts, thereby enhancing our understanding of the media's impact on societal attitudes towards war.

Keywords: War lexemes, lexicalisation, media discourse, Russian-Ukrainian crisis, Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

The Russian-Ukraine crisis, a conflict deeply rooted in historical, political, and cultural complexities, has been a focal point for global media since its escalation in 2022. Wars are not merely fought with weapons but are also shaped through language, which acts as a social construct influencing perceptions and narratives (Allan & Zelizer, 2004; Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022). Using specific lexemes about war can significantly impact public understanding and sentiment towards the conflict. This raises questions about how these lexemes are lexicalised in different media outlets and the implications this has for public discourse. This study aims to investigate the lexicalisation of war lexemes in selected newspapers during the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, exploring how language choices reflect and shape societal attitudes towards the conflict. The study's objectives include identifying common war lexemes in newspaper articles, analysing their contextual usages, and evaluating their potential impacts on public perception (Galtung, 2000). Central to this investigation are the following research questions: What war lexemes are prevalent in news coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis? How do these lexemes vary across different newspapers? How do they influence public discourse surrounding the crises? Understanding these elements is crucial, as media language is pivotal in framing conflicts and can sway opinion during war.

Literature Review

The linguistic exploration of war lexemes has been a subject of scholarly interest within media studies and linguistics. Researchers such as Richardson highlight the significant role of language in shaping public perceptions of war, arguing that the choice of lexicon in media reporting can convey bias and influence readers' emotions. For instance, using terms like "invasion" versus "intervention" can lead to starkly different interpretations of a nation's actions, as noted by Allan and Zelizer (2004). Recent studies examining the coverage of the Syrian conflict provide valuable insights into the paradigms of lexicalisation and framing, noting how various media outlets adopt divergent approaches based on their editorial policies and target audiences (Aluya & Terver, 2024). Although these works converge on the importance of language in war narratives, they also diverge in their methodological approaches and the specific lexemes explored. This study aims to fill in some existing gaps by conducting a focused textual analysis of selected news platforms' coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, thus contributing to the discourse on how contemporary conflicts are linguistically constructed.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which posits that language is a social practice that reflects and constructs social reality. CDA provides a robust framework for analysing how power dynamics and ideologies are embedded in language use, particularly in media discourse surrounding conflicts. The framework encompasses various dimensions such as the socio-political context, the relationship between language and power, and the effects of discourse on societal consciousness (Van Dijk, 1998). This theoretical lens allows for a comprehensive examination of war lexemes, facilitating a deeper understanding of how they serve to construct narratives that shape public perceptions and attitudes toward the war.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative methodology, utilising a textual analysis approach to examine fifteen headlines from three major online news platforms: The Guardian, BBC, and Al Jazeera. These news platforms were selected for their extensive coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and diverse editorial philosophies. The study focuses on articles published on the Russian-Ukrainian crisis reported by local and international news outlets from 28th January 2022 to 29th March 2025. Data was collected by systematically searching the newspapers' online archives, identifying articles that prominently feature war lexemes. A coding framework was developed to categorise the identified lexemes based on their connotations and contextual usages. The analytical procedure involved a detailed examination of the headlines and allowed for rich qualitative insights into the lexical choices made by Journalists.

Data Analysis

In contemporary geopolitical discourse, the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has emerged as a focal point of international concern, drawing attention from media outlets and analysts alike. The data analyses presented here delve into headlines encapsulating the evolving narratives

surrounding this multifaceted war. Each headline serves as a lens through which we can examine the ongoing struggle's language, framing, and implications, revealing the intricate interplay of power, ideology, and human experience. The selected headlines span a range of themes, from accusations and military strategies to humanitarian crises and diplomatic efforts. They highlight the emotional weight of language, the portrayal of leadership, and the stark realities faced by civilians caught in the crossfire. By dissecting these narratives, we can uncover the underlying sentiments that shape public perception and influence international responses to the conflict (Cohen, 2020). Through this analysis, we aim to illuminate how language reflects and constructs the realities of war, shaping the discourse around accountability, resilience, and the quest for peace. The headlines are a powerful reminder of the human cost of conflict, urging us to engage with the ethical dimensions of warfare and the narratives that emerge from it (Aluya et al., 2024). As we navigate this complex landscape, it becomes increasingly clear that the stories we tell about war are as significant as the events themselves, shaping our understanding of justice, sovereignty, and the enduring quest for resolution in a world fraught with division and strife.

1. Putin accuses NATO of ignoring Russia's concerns as Ukraine crisis simmers (28th January, 2022 - The Guardian)

In this headline, the assertion that "Putin accuses NATO" acts as a central pivot around the narrative, crafting a vivid portrayal of a geopolitical standoff that has gained significant global attention. The verb "accuses" not only establishes a confrontational dynamic between the Russian President and the NATO alliance but also infers a sense of emotional weight in the accusation, heightening tensions and indicating a serious breach in diplomatic relations. By stating that NATO is "ignoring" Russia's concerns, the headline suggests a dismissive attitude from the Western military alliance towards what are framed as legitimate issues of security and territorial integrity from the Russian perspective. This terminology might lead readers to view NATO as reactionary and perhaps uncaring about the complexities of Russia's strategic narrative. The phrase "Ukraine crisis simmers" employs a compelling metaphor that transforms the situation from mere political discourse into an impending situation like boiling water, evoking imagery of latent danger that can erupt at any moment, thereby dramatizing the precariousness of the geopolitical climate. The overall framing invokes a position where Putin appears as a justified leader grappling with external pressures, potentially engendering a degree of sympathy or understanding for Russia's stance amidst rising international tensions.

2. Ukraine can win, says US, as fight frustrates plans for swift victory (5th March, 2022 - The Guardian)

The declaration that "Ukraine can win" emerges as a resounding note of encouragement, ostensibly supplied by the United States, and underscores a narrative of resilience and fortitude amidst conflict. This statement carries considerable weight, as it bolsters Ukraine's morale and aligns with the broader

Western agenda of supporting democratic resistance against aggression. The term "fight" emphasises a military encounter and a wider struggle that embodies the themes of endurance and tenacity, transcending the idea of a mere battlefield confrontation to evoke notions of national survival. Moreover, the phrase "frustrates plans for swift victory" hints at previous expectations harboured by military strategists and analysts, suggesting that the initial assessments of a quick and decisive campaign have evolved to reveal unexpected complexities and challenges (Aluya & Bagaiya Zidyeb, 2025). This juxtaposition between hope and reality reveals a rich tapestry of uncertainty in strategic military outcomes, propelling the narrative that while optimism persists, the on-ground realities remain resilient and tough. By framing the resistance in such a fashion, the headline galvanises international support for Ukraine while highlighting the intricate and evolving nature of the conflict, emphasising that victory is desirable and achievable through continued efforts.

3. Zelensky and Putin each vow to press on to victory in the Ukraine war (19th December, 2023 - The Guardian)

The reference to both Zelensky and Putin making personal vows to "press on to victory" spins a narrative that amplifies the inherent competitive nature of the conflict, depicting it not merely as a geopolitical struggle but as an emotionally charged contest of wills between two strong leaders. The phrase "vow to press on" implies an unwavering determination that captures the commitment of each leader to pursue their respective aims with relentless tenacity. This choice of language infuses the narrative with a sense of shared yet opposing purpose, effectively humanizing both figures while simultaneously setting them up as foils against one another in a contest of ideologies and national pride. The explicit mention of "Ukraine war" consolidates the ongoing conflict within a definitive framework, which both normalizes the protracted nature of warfare and indicates a certain inevitability about its continuation. The framing of the conflict as an enduring struggle may influence public perception to understand the invasion as part of a larger historical continuum of East-West tensions, reinforcing an understanding of the stakes involved. The overall effect of this headline is to transform the leaders' intentions into a powerful symbol of resilience, emphasising that the quest for victory is ingrained in both nations' identity and national ethos.

4. Russian attack kills two civilians in Ukraine's Kramatorsk: Governor (12th August, 2022 - ALJAZEEERA)

Here, the direct nomenclature of "Russian attack" immediately assigns unequivocal blame and responsibility for violence, constructing a straightforward narrative of aggression that resonates deeply within the context of wartime accountability. The impactful phrase "kills two civilians" humanises the abstraction of war, distilling the tragedy into the intimate loss of life, an action that undeniably tugs at the emotional identifiers of an audience that grapples with the humanitarian consequences of conflict. This careful language selection invites readers to confront civilians' stark realities amid military actions, engendering a broader discourse on the legitimacy and morality of

ongoing hostilities. The lexical choice of "Governor" not only adds an authoritative voice to the report, imbuing the statement with credibility, but also presents the civilian casualties through a political lens, heralding them as a matter of state governance and responsibility. By anchoring the narrative in the firsthand report from an official, the headline transcends mere statistics, compelling readers to engage with the ethical implications and human costs associated with military intervention in civilian areas. Consequently, it portrays war not as a series of strategic manoeuvres but as a deeply disturbing event that disrupts lives and families, igniting public empathy and concern for those affected.

5. Ukraine confirms receipt of rocket system from UK (12th August, 2022 - ALJAZEEERA)

The headline statement detailing "Ukraine confirms receipt" functions as a significant assertion of agency, implying that Ukraine is actively engaged in securing vital military support, particularly in light of the challenges posed by external threats. This choice of words cultivates a sense of empowerment, positioning Ukraine not as a passive recipient of aid but as a nation taking decisive steps to enhance its security apparatus. The "rocket system" specificity denotes the complexities involved in modern warfare, invoking a sense of escalating military strategies and technological advancements that characterize contemporary conflict dynamics. Placing the "UK" as a contributor situates the narrative within the broader context of international alliances, suggesting cooperative engagement among Western nations and a unified front against perceived aggression. The language employed also suggests a framing of solidarity; the narrative unfolding here bolsters Ukraine's image as receiving not just equipment, but a vital lifeline infused with the collective backing of its allies. Ultimately, this headline works to underscore a collective response to aggression, heralding the acquisition of military support as a crucial component in Ukraine's strategy for resistance and longevity in the face of adversity.

6. Kyiv says Russia is pursuing 'attempts to encircle' Bakhmut (5th March, 2023 - ALJAZEEERA)

The phrase "attempts to encircle" carries with it connotations of strategic manoeuvring that conjure images of historical military tactics aimed at gaining territorial advantage through encirclement, signifying a potentially dire situation on the battlefield in Bakhmut. By utilising quotations around "attempts," the headline injects a layer of scepticism concerning the veracity or success of Russia's military operations, potentially reflecting a narrative that seeks to dispute Russian claims of efficacy while presenting a counter-narrative from Ukraine's perspective. The geographic specificity of "Bakhmut" not only situates the conflict in a recognized location but also invites readers to engage with the intricacies and broader implications of combat in this area, where control and territorial integrity are hotly contested. Furthermore, "Kyiv says" connects the headline to the Ukrainian government's perspective, emphasizing that the ongoing battle is a critical pressure point in the more significant

conflict. This narrative framing invites readers to consider the stakes involved for both sides while simultaneously showcasing the resolve of Ukrainian leadership in safeguarding their sovereignty against encroaching adversaries.

7. Vladimir Putin issues fresh demands to Ukraine to end war (14th June, 2024 - The Guardian)

The phrasing "fresh demands" carries with it a connotation of ongoing discussions or possibly even negotiations that have not yet reached a resolution, hinting at the complexity and evolving nature of the dialogue between Russia and Ukraine. It implies that the situation is fluid and possibly volatile, suggesting that the demands of Putin reflect not just his position but also a strategic attempt to exert pressure on Ukraine at a crucial moment. Using the word "demands," the headline evokes images of a strongman dictating terms, reinforcing the notion of a power imbalance between the two nations, where Ukraine is placed in a position of supplication. The phrase "to end war" creates urgency, signalling a desire for resolution amidst an enduring and devastating conflict. It pushes readers to consider the ramifications of the persistent hostilities and the diplomatic efforts, or lack thereof, that shape the landscape of international politics regarding Ukraine. This framing might invite interpretations that either paint Putin as a leader still clinging to his ambitions or as someone who recognises the growing necessity for compromise in a protracted struggle, thus influencing public perceptions of both the Russian president's motivations and Ukraine's resilience in the face of adversity.

8. Putin says Ukraine goals will be 'achieved' as he repeats 'neo-Nazi' claims (30th September, 2024 - ALJAZEEERA)

The assertion that "Ukraine goals will be 'achieved'" introduces an ambiguous undertone of hope that contrasts sharply with the chilling context of Putin's concurrent obsession with labeling Ukraine's leadership and military efforts as 'neo-Nazi.' While the first part of the statement may hint at a potential pathway towards some form of resolution or even recognition of Ukraine's rights and aspirations, the juxtaposition with the incendiary term 'neo-Nazi' complicates the narrative. This deliberate framing serves to demonise Ukraine in the eyes of some audiences while simultaneously dictating the terms of the debate surrounding its legitimacy on the global stage. The repeated use of such provocative language creates a climate of fear and division, potentially fueling both internal and external propaganda efforts. It portrays Putin as an individual who may leverage these extreme characterizations to bolster his narrative around the conflict, portraying his actions as protective rather than aggressive. Collectively, this headline encapsulates a complex interplay of optimism tempered with outright vilification, emphasising the deeply entrenched narratives that characterise contemporary geopolitical discourse.

9. Vance to meet Zelensky as European leaders call for unity over Ukraine (14th February, 2025 - The Guardian)

This headline showcases a significant political development by indicating that a pivotal meeting is set to take place between Vance, a notable political figure, and Ukrainian President Zelensky. The framing suggests a bold effort towards diplomacy, which is critical in a landscape rife with conflict. The invocation of "European leaders call for unity" highlights a broader coalition of support for Ukraine, capturing a collective resolve among nations typically associated with a unified stance against aggression. Such phrasing conveys solidarity and shared responsibility, emphasizing that the challenges faced by Ukraine resonate across borders and are not merely confined to one nation. The call for unity places the conflict within a larger transnational narrative, underscoring themes of democracy, sovereignty, and international cooperation. By spotlighting Vance's engagement with Zelensky, the headline adds a layer of urgency and personal commitment to the political process, suggesting that negotiations around Ukraine are not mere abstractions but vital meetings with potential ramifications for the region and beyond. This development fosters optimism about the prospect of diplomatic solutions while reinforcing the notion that the plight of Ukraine has become a pressing global concern intertwined with the goals of European cohesion and strategic alliance.

10. Peace talks are in a parallel universe, says Ukraine front-line troops (13 March, 2025 - BBC)

The metaphorical characterisation of peace talks as existing in a "parallel universe" articulates a stark disconnect between the grim realities faced by front-line soldiers and the often-abstract discussions held by diplomats. This vivid imagery suggests that while negotiations may take place in a more tranquil, abstract environment, the lived experiences of those actively engaged in battle tell a vastly different and more desperate story. It raises questions about the efficacy and sincerity of peace efforts that appear detached from the harsh and immediate consequences of the ongoing conflict. This stark contrast fosters scepticism about the potential for real progress towards reconciliation, hinting at an inherent disillusionment among troops who are acutely aware of the toll war exacts on human life and community stability. The headline invites readers to confront the layered complexities and hardships associated with prolonged warfare, emphasising that while negotiations may signal hope, they often lack the tangible understanding and urgency that those who endure the conflict daily are most acutely aware of. Thus, the metaphor encourages a deeper reflection on the dichotomy between political maneuvering and ground realities, urging readers to consider the implications and sincerity of peace efforts within this profoundly challenging context.

11. Putin gives Trump bare minimum on Ukraine but the war goes on (19th March, 2025 - BBC)

In this provocative headline, the phrase "gives Trump bare minimum on Ukraine" strongly suggests that any concessions or discussions initiated by

Putin are not substantive or sufficiently meaningful to address the complexities and significant issues surrounding the ongoing Ukrainian conflict. The word "bare minimum" implies a profound reluctance on Putin's part to make substantial gestures toward diplomatic engagement or resolution. Such wording conveys a sense of mediocrity in diplomatic efforts. It suggests a calculated strategy where superficial interactions might temporarily placate foreign pressures while failing to engender real progress in the war-torn region (Galtung, 2000; Edem & Aluya, 2023). This notion is further emphasized by the stark assertion that "the war goes on," which candidly reflects the unending nature of hostilities and suggests an inevitable continuation of suffering on both sides. The juxtaposition of political figures like Trump and Putin invites audiences to contemplate the broader geopolitical implications of their interactions, suggesting that conversations centred on Ukraine may be as much about their political dynamics as they are about the urgent needs of those affected by the conflict. In this light, the headline frames Ukraine as a battleground and a complex and multifaceted issue woven into the fabric of international relations, power plays, and the stark realities of an unresolved war.

12. Russia accused of 'hollow' peace talks as strike injures dozens (25th March, 2025 - BBC)

In this headline, using the word "hollow" to describe Russia's peace talks offers a critical viewpoint, suggesting that the negotiations lack sincerity and substantive content. This characterisation directs the audience to perceive a disconnect between the intentions touted in diplomatic discourse and the realities experienced on the ground. The severe implications of "strike injures dozens" present a stark contrast, emphasizing the brutality of ongoing violence even amidst discussions that are ostensibly aimed at achieving peace. This juxtaposition reinforces a narrative centred not on resolution but on the alarming consistency of aggression that persists despite claims of dialogue. By intertwining the themes of injury and diplomatic insincerity, the headline invites readers to deeply scrutinise Russia's role and motives, questioning whether peace is genuinely sought or merely a façade for continued military operations. The overall implications are clear: while discussions may be taking place—perhaps as a formality or an attempt to placate international scrutiny—the tragic consequence of suffering remains ever-present, arousing emotional responses and a critical evaluation of the authenticity of peace-making efforts.

13. Fire service donates kit for latest Ukraine convoy (29th March, 2025 - BBC)

This headline, which recounts the fire service's donating a "kit for latest Ukraine convoy," highlights a beacon of hope and communal support amid the ravages of war. The word "donates" carries connotations of generosity and solidarity, evoking an inspiring sense of humanity that resonates deeply during conflict. This act of providing vital supplies not only enhances the operational capabilities of the convoy but also serves as an emblem of international camaraderie extended to a nation enduring hardship. The reference to a "latest

Ukraine convoy" signifies a continuous effort to deliver aid and necessities, hinting at the persistent realities of war that necessitate such support (Richardson, 2004; Aluya et al., 2024). This evokes an image of resilience among Ukrainian people and focused efforts from outside entities, underscoring the community's commitment to standing with those affected by the conflict. The choice to highlight the fire service adds depth, representing emergency responders often on the front lines of humanitarian crises, thus humanizing the engagement and framing it as an essential contribution to the welfare of those navigating the dire circumstances of war. The overall narrative rallies public sentiment around the importance of collective action and reinforces a shared responsibility to assist and support individuals impacted by violent conflict.

Conclusion

The lexicalisation of war lexemes in newspaper headlines during the Russian-Ukrainian crisis reveals significant insights into how language shapes public perception and discourse. The qualitative analysis of headlines from The Guardian, BBC, and AL-JAZEERA highlights the diverse editorial stances and the varying emotional resonances of the lexemes employed. This study underscores the importance of language in framing conflicts, illustrating how specific word choices can influence societal attitudes and understanding of war. By elucidating the role of media language in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the interplay between language, media, and public perception in contemporary conflicts.

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LE FRANÇAIS : UN VÉRITABLE OUTIL POUR LA PROMOTION DE L'INTÉGRATION RÉGIONALE

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Résumé

La langue, en tant que moyen de communication, joue un rôle essentiel dans la réalisation de l'intégration régionale, favorisant, entre autres, les échanges culturels, sociopolitiques et économiques. Cet objectif ne peut être atteint sans un système de communication efficace. À cet égard, la langue française (une langue internationale) a été adoptée au Nigéria comme deuxième langue officielle afin de promouvoir l'interaction non seulement entre le Nigéria et ses pays voisins francophones, mais aussi avec d'autres nations africaines et le reste du monde. L'acquisition de compétences en français peut éliminer les barrières sociolinguistiques, politiques et économiques à travers les frontières, contribuant ainsi à l'unité et à la prospérité souhaitées dans la région. Ce travail vise donc à examiner la langue française dans son rôle crucial pour la promotion de l'intégration régionale en Afrique. Il cherche à aborder les défis de l'enseignement du français au Nigéria, en identifiant les stratégies mises en œuvre pour améliorer l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français dans le pays.

Mots-clés : communication, intégration régionale, langue française, échanges culturels, sociopolitiques et économiques

Introduction

La langue française constitue un outil stratégique pour la réalisation de l'intégration régionale en Afrique de l'Ouest. Elle facilite la communication orientée vers le développement aussi bien national que régional, en favorisant la circulation de l'information, la prise de décision et la gestion (Utah, Nnamdi-Chukwu & Chidi-Mbah, 2022 ; Nzuanke, Nnamdi & Ajimase, 2020). Dans une région caractérisée par une diversité linguistique et culturelle, la question d'une langue commune de communication devient cruciale. Le processus d'intégration du Nigéria, pays anglophone, dans son environnement ouest-africain majoritairement francophone, soulève donc des enjeux majeurs de communication et d'échange.

En Afrique, plusieurs blocs régionaux participent à la dynamique d'intégration, notamment la CEDEAO (Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest), acteur principal de l'intégration régionale en Afrique de l'Ouest. Elle est composée de quinze (15) États membres, dont huit sont francophones, cinq anglophones et deux lusophones (TV5monde, 2023, CEDEAO, 2023). Dans cette configuration multilingue, la maîtrise du français

devient d'autant plus indispensable pour les Nigériens, le français étant la langue officielle de la majorité des États membres de la région. Il convient également de souligner que la CEDEAO a pour mission de promouvoir la coopération et l'intégration économique, sociale et culturelle entre ses membres. Selon un rapport de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), publié à l'occasion de la Conférence internationale d'octobre 2012, la langue française se distingue par son statut de langue internationale, fondé sur plusieurs caractéristiques essentielles. D'abord, elle bénéficie d'une large dispersion géographique, avec plus de 220 millions de locuteurs répartis dans 77 États et gouvernements membres de l'OIF présents sur les cinq continents. Ensuite, elle détient le statut de langue officielle dans 32 États et gouvernements. Enfin, elle constitue la langue principale d'enseignement dans une vingtaine de pays (OIF, 2012).

Eu égard à ce rayonnement international, et compte tenu de la situation géolinguistique du Nigéria, entouré de pays francophones, le français a été adopté comme deuxième langue officielle afin de faciliter les interactions avec ses voisins immédiats, mais aussi avec l'ensemble du continent africain et le reste du monde. La langue française s'impose ainsi comme une langue pivot de la communication internationale, utilisée à la fois comme langue officielle et langue administrative dans de nombreux pays et institutions, notamment en Afrique (Akindele & Adegbite, 2019). Dans le contexte actuel d'intégration régionale et de mondialisation, l'acquisition de compétences en français par les Nigériens apparaît de plus en plus essentielle, en raison des nombreux avantages socioéconomiques, politiques et culturels qu'elle procure. L'intégration régionale, en tant que processus dynamique, vise précisément à favoriser le développement harmonisé au-delà des barrières linguistiques, culturelles et politiques (Akindele, 2021).

Ce travail postule que la maîtrise du français par les citoyens nigériens constitue un levier stratégique pour renforcer les relations non seulement avec les pays frontaliers, mais également avec d'autres partenaires africains et internationaux. Autrement dit, la langue française peut jouer un rôle déterminant dans l'amélioration des échanges, la coopération transfrontalière et la cohésion régionale. Dans cette perspective, nous proposerons d'abord une clarification conceptuelle de la notion d'intégration régionale, avant d'examiner le rôle stratégique du français dans ce processus. Enfin, nous analyserons les principaux défis liés à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage du français au Nigéria, dans le but de dégager des pistes concrètes pour optimiser son impact dans une perspective d'intégration régionale durable.

Notion de l'intégration régionale

L'intégration consiste à réunir des composants plus petits dans un système unique fonctionnant en un. En sociologie, l'intégration est le processus ethnologique qui permet à une personne ou à un groupe de personnes de se rapprocher et de devenir membre d'un autre groupe plus vaste par l'adoption de ses valeurs et des normes de son système social. Dans le cadre de notre étude, elle s'agit du fait de s'adapter pour les peuples nigériens au sein de la région africaine. Les liens sont généralement établis afin de promouvoir la circulation

libre des données dans le système. Elle s'agit de l'égalité d'accès pour tous les membres indépendants de l'ethnie, de la religion ou de la société. Aux mêmes titres, les États peuvent décider de s'intégrer au niveau régional afin non seulement de renforcer leur coopération mais aussi de promouvoir le développement économique. Certains chercheurs dans ce domaine voient l'intégration régionale tout simplement comme le processus par lequel les États indépendants d'une région donnée renforcent leurs interactions au niveau de problème économique, de sécurité, politique, social et culturel. L'intégration régionale peut se définir donc comme un processus dans lequel les pays voisins/d'une même région géographique met en commun certaines politiques, ressources ou institutions afin de favoriser la coopération économique, politique et sociale.

Il est important de noter que l'intégration régionale est souvent organisée soit par le biais de structures institutionnelles supranationales soit par un processus décisionnel intergouvernemental soit par une combinaison des deux. Dans tout cas l'objectif principal reste l'avancement économique, sociopolitique et de sécuritaire de la région. L'intégration régionale consiste à supprimer toutes les entraves à la liberté de circulation des personnes, des biens, des services et des capitaux d'un pays à l'autre et à favoriser ainsi les échanges. Elle signifie l'unité des peuples de la région à travers les frontières linguistiques, culturelles et sociales.

Brendan Vickers, un conseiller économique auprès de secteur politique international du commerce, des océans et des ressources naturelles (Commonwealth) donne une définition apte de l'intégration régionale ainsi :

“Regional integration is a multi-dimensional process by which neighbouring countries within a demarcated geographical space increase their level of interaction with regard to economic, security, political, social and cultural issues” (1)

(L'intégration régionale est un processus multidimensionnel à partir duquel les pays voisins dans un espace géographique délimité augmentent leur niveau d'interaction à l'égard des problèmes économiques, sécuritaires, politiques, sociaux et culturels) (Notre traduction)

Comme le montre la définition plus haut, l'intégration se réalise dans le but de l'avancement économique, politique et socioculturel de la région. Elle favorise l'interaction et l'échange libre parmi les peuples de la région afin de susciter la paix et la sécurité à travers les frontières. Ce travail concerne principalement le fait de s'adapter pour les peuples nigériens au sein de la sous-région de l'Afrique de l'ouest.

Par ailleurs, dans la sous-région de l'Afrique de l'ouest, il existe la CEDEAO – un agent de l'intégration chargé de promouvoir la coopération et l'intégration dans les domaines économiques, sociale et culturelle de la région. Aujourd'hui, grâce à des dispositions communautaires prises au sein de cet espace, un Nigérien peut établir une entreprise dans n'importe quel pays de la

région sans aucun problème. Il suffira de remplir les formalités comme le même citoyen de ces pays et vice versa.

Sur le plan culturel, il y a des initiatives de développement culturel sous régional. Par exemple ; le CRAC (Centre Régional de l'Action Culturelle). C'est un centre de formation des cadres et agent de développement culturel mis en place par les États de la sous-région ouest africaine. Dans le domaine des sports, nous avons des tournois sous régionaux comme ceux de l'UFOA (Union des fédérations ouest africaines) C'est un tournoi qui se joue entre les équipes nationales de la sous-région ouest africaine. Il y a même l'organisation des foires et des festivals de musique à l'échelle sous régionale. Ces sont les divers moyens pour renforcer la coopération et la collaboration entre les États de la sous-région. Avec un tel avantage de l'intégration, il est essentiel de trouver un moyen efficace de communication parmi les citoyens au sein d'un certain bloc régional. Il s'ensuit alors que chaque pays qui désire de promouvoir son interaction internationale aie un system efficace pour pouvoir communiquer avec les autres pays de la région et du monde.

Le français et la promotion de l'intégration régionale

La langue est un des facteurs qui favorisent l'interaction et l'intégration parmi les peuples d'une société donnée. Elle se décrit comme le véhicule à partir duquel les gens expriment leurs idées, leur émotion et leur désir. La langue française est une langue étrangère adoptée au Nigeria en raison de sa valeur énorme dans le domaine économique, politique, culturel et social du monde international. Elle compte la deuxième langue la plus parlée et enseignée dans tous les continents. Parlée par plus de million d'habitants originaire. Elle est employée soit comme une langue officielle soit une langue administrative dans certains pays et les organisations internationales. Le statut de la langue française sans doute montre sa position centrale dans la vie socioéconomique de la société.

Pour bien comprendre le rôle de la langue française dans le processus de l'intégration régionale en Afrique, il est nécessaire de l'examiner à propos de ses avantages sociaux, économiques et politiques. Au niveau social, la langue française favorise l'interaction et la coopération parmi les peuples de la région. Il est à noter également qu'à partir de cette interaction entre les gens, il y aura l'échange des idées, des informations et de la culture qui pourraient aider les gens à mieux vivre. À part l'interaction soutenue de nos voisins dans la région, Il est également important de noter que la compétence en langue étrangère telle que le français devrait fournir la confiance requise dans la coopération au niveau international avec les gens de langues différentes, soit pour la raison de commerce, d'éducation, de recherche, de conférence, de séminaire soit pour le tourisme.

En plus, au niveau politique la langue française joue un rôle diplomatique important, étant donné son statut comme une langue officielle et administrative de nombreuses organisations internationales, notamment : L'Union Africaine, La CEDEAO, Les Nations Unies, L'Union Européenne, L'Organisation mondiale du commerce, le Comité international olympique et le Comité international de Croix-Rouge. Elle favorise la participation active des

gouvernements et même des individus à la contribution des idées surtout au niveau international. Le processus d'intégration exige un niveau élevé de négociations diplomatiques et participation des citoyens et ceci pourrait s'achever au moyen effectif de communication tel que le français. Ade Ojo affirme solidement l'importance de la langue française à l'intégration régionale en Afrique de l'Ouest, ainsi :

For proper understanding, cordial relationships, reciprocal and rewarding socio-economic rapport, enduring political entente, exemplary multilateral relations and transnational mobility completely devoid of jealousy, suspicions and conflicts and rooted in the vision of achieving complete regional integration between all the countries of the West African sub-region, French cannot but play a very vital role. (Ojo, 4).

(Pour la compréhension propre, relation amicale, réciproque et profitable rapport socio-économique, entente politique durable, des relations multilatérales exemplaire et mobilité transnationale complètement sans jalousie, soupçons et conflits et visé vers la réalisation totale de l'intégration régionale entre tous les pays de la sous-région de l'Afrique de l'ouest, le français ne peut que jouer un rôle important.) (Notre Traduction).

La langue française est aussi un atout économique pour les nigériens. Grâce à des dispositions communautaires prises au sein de la CEDEAO vers l'avancement de l'intégration régionale. En raison de l'intégration de l'Afrique de l'ouest et les avantages économiques accrus pour les Nigériens, il faudra qu'on prenne au sérieux l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français au Nigéria.

Défis de l'enseignement/ apprentissage du français au Nigéria

Malgré l'adoption de la langue française comme deuxième langue officielle au Nigéria, l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la langue s'affrontent toujours aux facteurs divers. Ici, nous allons relever certains facteurs nuisibles à l'enseignement/apprentissage de la langue française au Nigéria. Le premier défi c'est le problème lié à la politique d'éducation qui postule que la langue française soit obligatoire dans les écoles primaires et au premier cycle du secondaire. Cette décision vise à développer chez élèves les compétences langagières nécessaires à la poursuite des études et à l'élargissement de la pensée et de l'identité culturelle. Malheureusement, de nos jours, beaucoup d'écoles primaires au Nigéria n'offrent point la langue française comme matière. Aux mêmes titres, certaines écoles secondaires ne font pas la langue française.

Un autre défi qu'affront l'enseignement/apprentissage de la langue française au Nigéria c'est le manque d'enseignants compétents en français.

Parfois, on trouve un seul enseignant de française pour l'école entière. En plus, on observe que le choix de méthode d'enseignement reste un des défis majeurs qu'affronte la diffusion efficace de la langue française au Nigeria. Ezeodili note que la méthode d'enseignement et le manque de matériel langagier lancent des défis à l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la langue française au Nigéria (116). Il existe aussi le manque de matériels pédagogiques destinés à faciliter l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la langue tels que la télévision, l'ordinateur, la radio, etc. Il est à noter également que les coupures fréquentes d'électricité empêchent l'emploi adéquat de ces matériels pédagogiques au cas où l'on en trouve.

De plus, le contenu du curriculum doit prendre compte le résultat des recherches récentes portant sur l'acquisition/apprentissage des langues étrangères. Par exemple, on doit commencer avec les structures simples aux structures complexes. Parfois, pour les débutants, on commence par 'résumer le roman' en français. Certains d'entre eux ne peuvent pas faire des phrases correctes en français et on leur demande de résumer un roman. Le niveau différent des étudiants dans la même promotion aussi bien que la nature du programme d'étude établi par le gouvernement constituent aussi un obstacle à la diffusion du français. Je me rappelle bien mon expérience en tant qu'une étudiante débutante du FLE à l'université. Je ne sais plus que rien. Alors, quand les professeurs entraient dans la classe, plus d'une moitié de la classe ne comprenaient pas quoi qu'ils disaient. Parfois, alors qu'ils sortaient de la classe, on demandait à ceux qui étaient actifs dans la classe quoi qu'ils disaient. Issu de cette expérience embarrassante, j'ai décidé de m'inscrire au cours de français au Centre de Français.

Conclusion et Recommandations

Pour établir un meilleur rapport économique, le Nigéria a besoin du français. En effet, cette langue représente un véritable outil pour promouvoir l'échange d'idées, de culture, ainsi que la circulation des biens, des services, des capitaux et des personnes d'un pays à l'autre au sein de la région. Toutefois, la langue française au Nigéria rencontre encore plusieurs défis, certains ayant été identifiés dans cette étude. Néanmoins, des efforts ont été déployés pour surmonter ces obstacles. En premier lieu, il est impératif que le gouvernement, en collaboration avec les structures privées responsables du recrutement des enseignants à tous les niveaux, veillent à ce que seuls des enseignants qualifiés, maîtrisant la structure de la langue française et formés aux méthodes didactiques modernes, soient recrutés. Nous recommandons également la mise en place de programmes de formation continues pour les enseignants, afin de les exposer aux nouvelles méthodes pédagogiques et de renforcer leur compétence dans l'enseignement de la langue.

Le Manuel de politique de l'éducation nationale énumère cinq objectifs principaux pour la formation des enseignants, soulignant ainsi le rôle central de la formation dans la réalisation des objectifs éducatifs. Concernant les méthodes d'enseignement appropriées, nous proposons l'adoption de la méthode actionnelle, qui privilégie l'usage de la langue dans des situations réelles de communication. En effet, la langue doit d'abord remplir une fonction de

communication, et les enseignants doivent intégrer cette perspective afin d'assurer un apprentissage efficace et pertinent de la langue française.

Une autre recommandation concerne l'introduction de programmes de Français sur Objectifs Spécifiques (FOS) dans les universités nigérianes, afin de permettre aux professionnels de différents secteurs d'acquérir des compétences en français adaptées à leurs domaines respectifs. Par exemple, les médecins pourraient se former en français médical, tandis que les policiers, militaires, commerçants et agents touristiques pourraient améliorer leurs compétences professionnelles grâce à la langue française. Owoyeye (14) suggère l'introduction de diplômes en FOS dans chaque département de français des universités nigérianes, ce qui contribuerait non seulement à la diffusion de la langue française au Nigéria, mais aussi à la promotion de la paix et de la sécurité par l'interaction et les échanges libres à travers les frontières de la région. Les professionnels de différents secteurs seraient ainsi capables de communiquer efficacement avec leurs homologues dans d'autres pays et au sein de diverses organisations internationales.

Concernant l'application des décisions éducatives, comme le stipule le Manuel de politique éducative, il est crucial que le gouvernement, via le ministère de l'Éducation, veuille s'assurer que l'enseignement du français soit rendu obligatoire dans les écoles primaires et secondaires. Nous proposons que la langue française soit intégrée dans le cursus des écoles secondaires (SSS), en raison des avantages considérables de l'apprentissage des langues étrangères, comme le français, dans le développement personnel et professionnel des individus. La mise en place de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage obligatoires du français permettrait de combler le déficit de compétences en français observé chez de nombreux Nigériens. Cela favoriserait certainement la coopération entre le Nigéria et d'autres pays de la région, mais aussi au-delà de celle-ci. Autrement dit, il est nécessaire de tenir sérieusement l'enseignement de la langue française au Nigéria pour permettre aux gens de communiquer et d'interagir avec les gens d'autres pays de la région et ainsi de profiter de ces relations.

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