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## AMBIGUITY IN TIV DISCOURSE

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines ambiguity in Tiv discourse and how it can be interpreted. Ambiguity connotes a situation where a word or sentence has more than one meaning or interpretation. Ambiguity affects communication in language where meaning is distorted between a speaker and a listener, leading to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. This study therefore examines ambiguity in general with emphasis on lexical and structural ambiguities. Other causes or factors that are responsible for ambiguity in Tiv such as homonymy and polysemy are also examined. The study reveals instances of such ambiguities in Tiv discourse. The choice of appropriate words and the role of context are used to disambiguate such ambiguities. This is done, in order to ensure effective communication in Tiv as well as to contribute to the development of the Tiv language.*

**Keywords:** Ambiguity, Lexical and Structural Ambiguity, Tiv.

### **Introduction**

“Tiv” refers to an ethnic and linguistic group found largely in Benue state and other parts of Nasarawa and Taraba states. It also refers to the language spoken by this ethnic group. According to Ngutswen (2013) the word “Tiv” has a Bantu origin which means “a beloved child”. Akase (2017) claims that the word Tiv is derived from “Tive” meaning “their name”. This means that, it is a name for the Tiv race. It is also the name of the

ancestral father of the Tiv nation who had two (2) sons, *Ichôngo* and *Ipusu* who are the main sources of Tiv descents. The Tiv in Benue numbers about 6.5million people based on the 2006 demographic census data projection in Nigeria. The figure is expected to be higher than this by now. The migration and history of the Tiv to the Benue valley has different accounts. Makar (1975) maintains that the origin of the Tiv could be traced to the Bantu stock of the southern Africa. They journeyed through the Congo to the south west region in Manfa division across the mountains of Cameroon to the Benue valley in about the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Bohannan (1954) argues that Tiv originated from *Swem*, a hilly area in the republic of Cameroon. Many modern scholars on Tiv histography like Dzugba (1985), Tseror (1992) have supported the Bantu connection and origin of Tiv. Gbor (1981) concludes that linguistics and ethnological similarities have proved that Tiv are part of the Bantu ethnic stock.

Tiv language is a southern Bantu language which has severally been classified as a member of the Benue-Congo family of Niger-Congo phylum (Abraham, 1940). The language is predominantly spoken in Benue state where the Tiv are also a dominant ethnic group. It is one of the minority languages in Nigeria with a rich linguistic history. Tiv as one of the Bantu group of languages has elements of ambiguity which affects speakers or users of the language when conveying meaning to listeners.

Tiv language has some effective communication. However, in most conversation, certain words or sentences are ambiguous and are interpreted in more than one way. This in turn hinders effective transfer of ideas or messages from the speaker to the listener. It is in view of this that this work is set

out to identify such ambiguities and find solutions to them. Moreover, a lot of studies have been done on Tiv language; but, most of the studies have focused on phonology, morphology and syntax. The absence of any preliminary work on ambiguity in Tiv discourse has created a vacuum in the study of Tiv language and needs attention. It is as a result of this that the study seeks to look at ambiguity as found in Tiv discourse. Against this background also, it is hoped that the study will provide useful information for Tiv language developers. It will set the foundation for further research in this area. Teachers and learners of Tiv language will also find the study useful. This study will provide insight into the nature of ambiguity that exists in Tiv discourse as well as proffer solution to the ambiguities discovered.

### **Methodology**

The study is descriptive in nature. The method of data collection is both primary and secondary. The primary method involves the gathering of data through the researcher's interaction with the native speakers using his intuitive knowledge of the language. There were no formal questionnaires or interview questions that were used to elicit data. The researcher engaged himself in dialogues or discussions with native speakers and makes notes of some of the ambiguities found in the dialogues. Apart from this, he also listened to native speakers at various forums such as community meetings, burial ceremonies, marriage ceremonies and other social gatherings or functions where notes were made on ambiguities consciously or unconsciously used by speakers at such gatherings. These notes formed part of the data for this work. The secondary method of data collection is through copious reading of textbooks and journal articles that are related to the topic. Data collected is

analyzed in such a manner that the possible meanings of words, sentences or structure are arrived at in order to disambiguate the ambiguities in Tiv discourse.

## **Conceptual and Empirical Review**

### **Ambiguity**

Ambiguity is not a new concept in the study of meaning (semantics) or linguistics in general. According to Fromkin and Rodman (1993), ambiguity is a term used to describe a word, phrase or sentence with multiple meanings. This definition categorizes ambiguity into word or sentence level. They further explains homonymous ambiguity; that is, when meaning can be interpreted or understood in more than one way. They maintained that ambiguity is when two or more meanings are traced to one source. This explains the fact that two meanings could be expressed by one word or sentence. They identified two (2) types of ambiguity as: lexical and grammatical or structural ambiguity. Kempson (1999) also argues that, ambiguity is the state of having two possible interpretations.

The above descriptions of ambiguity have unveiled the fact that ambiguity is associated with a word or sentence being possible of multiple interpretations. Consequently, it is seen as an obstacle to discourse, since a word or sentence could mean several things. Successful communication occurs only when the reader correctly interprets the symbol used by the writer of which ambiguous words or sentences pose obstacle to this process; hence, frustrating communication. This has in turn attracted the attention of linguistic scholars the world over.

Leech (1981) stress that ambiguity is an obstacle to communication. Meaning is essential to the study of communication and as communication becomes a more critical factor in social organization, the need to understand it becomes

more pressing. This implies that ambiguities in discourse disrupt communication of the intended meaning by the presence of an ambiguous word or structure due to the fact that such do not fall within an obvious context. Pushpinder and Jindal (2010) in a similar view assert that meaning is threatened in the domain of language by the fact of ambiguity. They point out that rarely does language convey to the hearer the meaning the speaker intends. It is an obvious fact that most words in Tiv language have more than one referent. This shows that our vocabularies are enlarged when one word has different meanings in different contexts. The single word then becomes the equivalent of many different words. This explains that ambiguity enlarges our vocabularies as much as homonymy and polysemy. Ambiguity can therefore be seen as a word or sentence which is understood in more than one way. Mathews (1997) group ambiguity into lexical ambiguity and structural ambiguity (otherwise known as syntactic or grammatical ambiguity). Malmkjaer (2002) however adds phonetic ambiguity as the third group. This study however, does not focus on phonetic ambiguity.

### **Lexical Ambiguity**

Lexical ambiguity is a construction that is deemed to have more than one meaning as a result of the presence of a specific word in it. Usually, lexical ambiguities are caused by homonyms. Fromkin and Rodman (1993) clearly state that homonyms create lexical ambiguity; for instance: “Bat” in the sentence “he saw the bat” might mean an animal or among others, a table tennis bat or a police bat. Without a particular context, a sentence like this will be subject to more than one interpretation. This means that a sentence is ambiguous when an ambiguous word is found in the sentence. This type of ambiguity is also known as word based ambiguity. Similar view is shared

by Akwanya (2002) that lexical items play a pivotal role in the interpretation of a sentence, such that the sentence may be subject to more than one interpretation if the item is not sufficiently specified in the context. Other causes or factors responsible for lexical ambiguity in Tiv include homonymy and polysemy as discussed below:

### **Homonymy**

Most words that create lexical ambiguity are homonyms. Ozo-mekuri (1999) defines homonyms as lexical items with the same form but different meaning. Ogbulogo (2005) sees it as a situation when a word form (spoken or written) has two or more unrelated meanings. According to this definition, the meanings of homonyms are unrelated. Ozo-mekuri (1999) also agrees that homonyms have unconnected meaning; such words are thus, treated as different lexical units. For instance: “bear” is an instance of homonyms in a sense like “she cannot bear children”. The ambiguity is created by the presence of a homonym “bear” which may mean “to tolerate” or “to give birth”.

However, it is pertinent to note that, an additional context can help disambiguate the sentence. Akwanya (2002) has observed that these lexical items are related by the meaning of one including and excluding that of another; that is, the meaning of one item is more restricted and is part of the meaning of another. However, it is possible to have partial homonym (or heteronym) where there is identity just within a single medium. Homonym is therefore distinguished from either homophony or homograph; the former relating to the spoken word and the latter to the written word. It is also distinguished from polysemy.

## **Polysemy**

Polysemy occurs when one form of a word (written or spoken) has multiply meanings which are related by extension. It is also a single lexical item with several related meanings. Kempson (1999) defines polysemy as an item whose semantic representation involves a disjunction between all the interpretations that the lexical item may bear; each listed with the context which determines the particular interpretation. A thing of importance to note from the above definitions is that the words must be related and all senses related to one thing. For instance, “head” refers to part of the body, leader of group, position or part of furniture. The different senses of “head” are derived from an autometonymical referent. One of the meanings is central and the others metaphorical. The relationship between polysemy and ambiguity is similar to that of homonymy. A word used in a sentence is possible to be interpreted in several ways.

Ejele (2003) distinguishes polysemy from homonymy that polysemy has to do with identical form having related meanings while homonymy has to do with identical forms having unrelated meaning. Kempson (1999) further argues that, the initial problem in assessing the homonymy-polysemy distinction is to decide whether one has to allow for vacillation of meaning within a single lexical item according to context. This points to the fact that while homonymy allows for a few vacillations in a context, polysemy goes beyond a single view. Ogbulogo (2005) also shares the same view that distinction between polysemy and homonymy is not always clear. However, one indication of this can be found in the typical dictionary entry for words. Polysemous words are entered as simple units in dictionaries with numbers suggesting the list of possible meanings while homonyms are listed as different lexical items.



The study of polysemy reveals to our understanding the sense relations of words. Words often have senses of use. These are the primary and secondary senses. Primary sense of a word connotes the popular and dictionary meaning understood by speakers of the language at the mention of the word in isolation. All other meanings given to the word are secondary. Ullmann (1977) therefore defines sense as the information a name conveys to the hearer. A true understanding of ambiguity therefore lies in the identification of the sense of the word as used in a particular context or discourse especially where lexical ambiguity is involved. Homonyms and polysemy cause ambiguity and the identification of such word as used in context helps in interpreting ambiguity. The grammar of every language gives its speakers the ability to detect and interpret discourse. Ambiguity can therefore be seen as a central notion in understanding discourse. It is not only lexical or structural but also associated with homonyms, polysemy and senses of the word which are the possible causes of ambiguity. It is based on this fact that a single word can be used to stand for more than five different things that are related.

### **Structural Ambiguity**

Words are combined to form sentences which form larger units of discourse. Structural ambiguity derives from the organization of the elements of the sentence rather than a word in the sentence. Fromkin and Rodman (1993) argue that two or more meanings may not be as a result of lexical ambiguity, but two or more structures underlying the same string of words. This is ambiguity as a result of different structures, permitted by the rules of syntax rather than an ambiguous word. Structural ambiguity therefore, entails sentences which are syntactically ambiguous, and are not dependent for their ambiguity on any

word in them. Rather, it is their grammatical structure which causes the ambiguity. This type of ambiguity can also be explained in terms of deep and surface structures. When a sentence is structurally ambiguous, it has two underlying interpretations which would be represented in the deep structure; that is, one surface structure can express those two deep structures (Yule, 2007). Structural ambiguity is also known as constructional homonymy. Ullmann (1977) explains that most ambiguities of this nature could be clarified by context and the speaker of a language by intonation.

### **Role of Context in Disambiguation**

Context helps to remove ambiguity if words could be put in their right context. The context will always determine which interpretation will be possible. This means that the meanings of the greater part of ambiguous sentences used in conversation are worked out by referring to the context of the speech act. Context helps to limit the range of possible interpretations that are possible. Many words have more than one meanings but the context of surrounding circumstances will usually clarify the sense in which is used. The context of discourse is necessary in order to understand it. Though sentence interpretations is generally facilitated by the context, the linguist must nevertheless develop techniques of analyzing ambiguity and such techniques should be available for analyzing sentences whose ambiguity is known to arise from isolating the sentence from its context. What this means is that recent linguistic research has its focus on the techniques of general grammar in analyzing meaning. This means that communication is adequately analyzed by means of techniques of general grammar that allows one to take account of all and temporary conventions of discourse including actual context of use.

## Data Analysis

The data for this work is now presented and analyzed below. Some of the **lexical ambiguities** identified in Tiv discourse include the following:

1.

À vîhí *íshé* yòl ná  
He/she spoil eye body his  
“He has spoilt his eye himself”

The word *íshé* in sentence (1) is ambiguous for it has more than one meaning and can be interpreted to mean any of the following:

íshé  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{eye} \\ \text{price} \end{array} \right.$

The ambiguity can be removed by restructuring the sentence as follows:

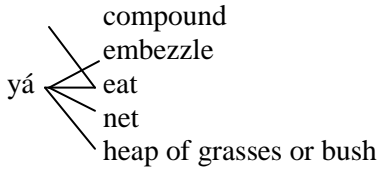
- i. Abo vîhí *íshé* kwàghyán ké kàsúá  
Abo spoil price food in market  
“Abo spoilt the price of food in the market”
- ii. Wán là ká òr *íshé* ímôm  
Boy the is person eye one  
“The boy is one eye person”

From the above analysis, the ambiguity in sentence (1) has been resolved.

2.

Msen ngù á *yá*  
Msen has a compound  
“Msen has a compound”

From example 2, the word *yá* is ambiguous for it has more than one meaning as seen below:



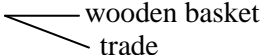
The sentence can be reconstructed to disambiguate the ambiguity as follows:

- i. Msen ngù éren m̀zòúgh ké **yá** nà  
Msen is doing meeting at compound his  
“Msen is holding a meeting at his compound”
- ii. A **yá** ínàrégh k̀ m̀zòúgh  
He embezzle money belong meeting  
“He embezzled the meeting’s money”
- iii. Vè **yá** m̀ngíshím kpishí  
They eat garden eggs plenty  
“They should eat plenty garden eggs”
- iv. Ìnyòn wà **yá** shá k̀n nè  
Bird lay net on tree this  
“A bird has laid net on this tree”
- v. Ngòm k̀sù àkòr k̀n **yà**  
ké ìtyév  
Mother my keep seed yams in heap of bush  
on farm  
“My mother kept seed yams in a heap of bush on  
the farm”

3.

Kwàsé né zúá á m̀tsérà shá **kpéngà** nà  
Woman this gets profit on wooden basket this  
“This woman gets profit on this wooden basket”

The lexical item *kpéngà* from example 3 is ambiguous and can be interpreted to mean the following:

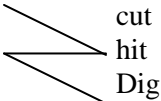
Kpéngà 

The ambiguity in example 3 can be resolved by restructuring the sentence as follows:

- i. Aya wá íkǵáv shín *kpéngà*  
Aya put load in wooden basket  
“Aya put load in the wooden basket”
- ii. Ako èrén *kpéngà* ú kwágh mán  
Ako do trade in something drink  
“Ako trades in drinks”

Examples of homonymous ambiguity in Tiv are:

4.

Tsèhé 

- i. Á *tsèhé* kpèkpè yòú  
He cut wall house  
“He has cut the wall of the house”
- ii. Tom *tsèhé* ngùhár ké íwèn  
Tom hit leg on stone  
“Tom hit his leg on the stone”
- iii. Térèm *tsèhé* ítyô yòú ná  
Father my dig foundation house his  
“My father has dug the foundation of his house”

From example 4, sentence **i** – **iii** have different meanings due to the ambiguity of the word “tsèhé” found in those sentences.

5.

Tindí ———— send  
                  /          law

- i. Aba *tindí* wán nà ké màkérántá  
Aba send child his to school  
“Aba has send his child to school”
- ii. Álú u vîhí *tindí* yô, ánà ú rîtsáhà  
If you spoil law then give you punishment  
“If you break any law, you will be punished”

Examples of polysemous ambiguity in Tiv include:

6.

Ìtyòúgh ———— head  
                  /          leader  
                  /          brilliant

- i. *Ìtyòúgh* nâgh iv á ivú  
Head his full of gray hair  
“His head is full of gray hair”
- ii. Kàán nán lú *ityòúgh* kî tsómbúr né?  
Who is the leader of family this  
“Who is the leader of this family”
- iii. Wàn né ngù á *ityòúgh*  
Child this is brilliant  
“This child is brilliant”

7.

Kèér ———— make  
                  /          limp

- i. Wantor sòó ú *kèér* úsú  
Wantor want to make fire  
“Wantor wants to make fire”
- ii. Á pásè ér wán ná *kèér*

He reveal that child his limp  
“He revealed that his child limps”

Examples of **structural ambiguity** in Tiv include:

**8.**

Ká nyí ú lú ôrôn  
It what you are reading  
“What are you reading?”

The question is ambiguous as any of the following answers will be correct:

- i.** M̀ ngù ôrôn wàsíkà  
I am reading letter  
“I am reading a letter”
- ii.** M ngù ôrôn bíbílò  
I am reading Bible  
“I am reading Bible”

The above two (2) answers and many others are correct and suitable to the question since it is ambiguous. The ambiguity from the question can be disambiguated by restructuring the question as follows:

- iii.** Ká nyí tàkérádá u ôrôn ke bíbílò?  
It what book you reading in Bible?  
“What book are you reading in the Bible?”

The restructuring of the question above provides a specific answer to the question to avoid the ambiguity as follows:

- iv.** M̀ ngú ôrôn gènesè  
I am reading Genesis  
“I am reading Genesis”

The response here is different and more specific. There is no ambiguity in the response.

**9.**

Sé zúà shín ínyà

We meet in ground

“We will meet downstairs”

This sentence is ambiguous for it can also be translated to mean “we will meet in the great beyond” as seen below:

Sé zúà shín ínà

We meet in ground

“We will meet in the great beyond”

The sentence can be restructured to remove the ambiguity as seen below:

Mé kóhól wé shín kpòyòú ú shín ínà lá

I meet you down room which in ground the

“I will meet you downstairs”

There is no ambiguity in the above sentence since it is reconstructed to resolve the ambiguity.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, efforts have been made to discuss ambiguity, its types and other causes of ambiguity in Tiv discourse as well as the role of context in disambiguation. A point of note however, is that, ambiguity affects communication and therefore attention should be given to language use; that is, the use of words and sentences especially in Tiv discourse. This involves a careful choice of lexical items and sentences in Tiv in order to avoid ambiguity; but to enhance effective communication and development of the language.

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## LA PULSION DU RADICALISME DANS PETIT PIMENT D'ALAIN MABANCKOU

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### Résumé

*Peu à peu, le radicalisme s'infiltré dans la mode de vie. Cette communication s'est tachée d'examiner la pulsion du radicalisme allant de la source de l'idée radicale à la manifestation de l'être radical dans la pensée d'Alain Mabanckou à travers Petit piment. Pour parvenir à nos fins, l'approche psychanalytique et le principe d'inertie d'Isaac Newton ont été employées. A la fin, cette communication a établi que le radicalisme ne s'acquiert pas sans cause. Nous nous sommes servis des causes pour identifier le radicalisme réactionnaire et le radicalisme de conviction. La pulsion de radicalisme réactionnaire se présente dans notre corpus comme l'enfermement et l'abnégation imposée alors que le radicalisme de conviction à la pensée doctrinaire et le besoin d'être comme instigateurs.*

**Mots clés :** *radicalisme, pulsion, réactionnaire, abnégation, instigateurs*

### Introduction

De nos jours, la littérature africaine adopte un nouveau contexte. Selon Philippe, il s'agit d' « un paysage littéraire en constant mouvement, dont le cœur bat enfin au rythme du monde qui nous amène à renouveler l'expérience » (3). Cette littérature dont les auteurs se distinguent par « la force de leur écriture et une vision du monde » (Philippe 3) établit sa virilité dans des récits qui peint le réalisme sociale, merveilleux et violent. Elle retrouve son expression dans ce qui Papa Samba Diop

appelle une littérature émancipée soucieuse parfois de rester strictement autobiographique. Selon Diop, il s'agit d'une écriture de transgression : qui accorde « à l'érotisme, l'ivresse et la fête un approfondissement et une signification parfois tragiques »(14). Avec l'essor de la nouvelle génération, la littérature africaine est désormais jugée comme « 'fiction surpolitisée, discours misérabilisé', 'discours rebelle', 'forme Monstrueuse', 'écritures de la violence' » (Ahimana 6). Ces attributs, que nous évoquons isolent la littérature africaine de nos jours, et appelle notamment notre intérêt.

Dans *Petit piment* d'Alain Mabanckou, le roman qui sert de notre corpus de base, Petit Piment, un orphelin grandit dans un orphelinat à Loungo, sous la direction abusive de Dieudonné Ngoulmoumako. La révolution socialiste viendra tout bouleverser. Petit Piment prendra ensuite la fuite pour aller vivre la liberté, l'errance et le vagabondage aussi que des rencontres. Jusqu'à pousser les limites des mœurs. Ce roman est caractérisé d'attitudes, actions et logiques scandaleux, violent et merveilleux par lesquels nous examinons la pulsion du radicalisme par le principe d'inertie de Newton et par l'approche psychanalytique.

### **Définition de termes clefs**

#### **Radicalisme**

Le radicalisme peut être conçu comme « attitude qui refuse tout compromis en allant jusqu'au bout de la logique de ses convictions ([www.cnrtl.fr/definition/radicalisme](http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/radicalisme)). La littérature africaine du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle semble adopter les critères radicaux car d'après Mabanckou, « j'appartiens à une génération d'écrivains qui brisent les barrières, refusent la départementalisation de l'imaginaire parce qu'ils sont conscients que notre salut réside dans l'écriture... Cette écriture qui devient alors à la fois un enracinement, un appel dans la nuit et une

oreille tendue vers l'horizon » ([www.college-de-france.fr/site/alain-mabanckou/course-2015-2016.html](http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/alain-mabanckou/course-2015-2016.html)). Il n'est pas question de contester le fait que les caractéristiques du roman africain de la nouvelle génération ont des traits radicaux car l'un des auteurs (Mabanckou) se déclare briseur de barrières.

### **Mœurs**

« Habitudes, sentiments, croyances communs à un groupe social » selon *Le dictionnaire de la philosophie Larousse*. En guise d'élaboration, le même dictionnaire précise que « Les mœurs ou habitudes sociales constituent la première forme du droit, fondé sur la tradition, ou droit coutumier ». Alors, les mœurs sont sacrosaintes dans l'étude du radicalisme. Ceci est dû au fait que les mœurs soient le point du départ.

### **Pulsion**

Freud utilise pour la première fois le terme de *pulsion* en 1905, dans *Trois Essais sur la théorie de la sexualité*. Selon lui, « Par pulsion, nous désignons le représentant psychique d'une source continue d'excitation provenant de l'intérieur de l'organisme, que nous différencions de l'excitation extérieure et discontinue. La pulsion est donc à la limite des domaines psychique et physique » ([https://psychia.ru/fr/freud/1905/3\\_essais11.html](https://psychia.ru/fr/freud/1905/3_essais11.html)).

Selon Freud, la pulsion ne pose aucun problème, on a souvent à confronter la représentation et ses conséquences. Alors pour lui, la pulsion s'exécute dans quatre caractéristiques : la poussée, la source, l'objet et le but. La source est corporelle. Elle suscite le stimulus d'un organe, qui peut être n'importe lequel ; La poussée est la communication de l'énergie pulsionnelle elle-même ; Le but est la satisfaction de la pulsion, c'est-à-dire la possibilité pour l'organisme d'accéder à une décharge pulsionnelle, ramenant la tension à son point le plus bas et

d'obtenir ainsi l'extinction temporaire de la pulsion ; Et l'objet est n'importe quoi qui permet la satisfaction pulsionnelle qui permet au but d'être atteint.

### **Le radicalisme et les mœurs dans *Petit piment* d'Alain Mabankou**

Le radicalisme peut être conçu comme « attitude qui refuse tout compromis en allant jusqu'au bout de la logique de ses convictions ([www.cnrtl.fr/definition/radicalisme](http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/radicalisme)). Ici, nous retenons l'attitude ou la logique extrême et à ce titre nous citons l'accorde de la pertinence à des attitudes ou idées des personnages acariâtres qui sont étêtement : délinquants comme Robin le terrible et les jumeaux ; méchants comme Dieudonné, prostituées comme Mama Fiat etc. N'oublions pas la politique qui se dit démocratique, mais ne veut aucune modification ni opposition.

Quant aux mœurs, elles régissent la conduite de l'homme même avant l'organisation du droit. Etant un animal social, l'homme se sert des mœurs pour bien vivre en groupe. Il sera juste alors d'avouer que les mœurs servent de déterminant du radicalisme. Cela fait de la paire «Mœurs-Radicalisme» deux opposants. Et l'homme est souvent cultivé dans le premier. Comment donc se trouve-il dans le dernier ?

Pour nous trouver une réponse, nous avons recours au principe d'inertie ou la première loi de mouvement d'Isaac Newton qui s'énonce ainsi : « Tout corps persévère dans l'état de repos ou de mouvement uniforme en ligne droite dans lequel il se trouve, à moins que quelque force n'agisse sur lui, et ne le contraigne à changer d'état » (Du Chatelet 17). Ce qui se traduit dans le contexte de notre étude, que tout individu demeure dans les limites de la morale adoptée en société à moins que cet individu rencontre un autre principe qui corrompt sa morale de

base. Car, le radicalisme est «attitude d'esprit et doctrine de ceux qui veulent une rupture complète avec le passé institutionnel ([www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/radicalisme/65994](http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/radicalisme/65994)). Ce passé institutionnel évoque les mœurs. La rupture du passé met en valeur d'autres pratiques qui sont désormais une manifestation du radicalisme. «Historically, radicalism takes place in circumstances where liberal constitutional reforms of government seem to have exhausted their capacity for stabilizing protracted domestic crisis, as was the case in the interwar years. (Papadimitriou 150). Le radicalisme se manifeste alors, lorsque les mœurs s'avèrent insuffisants ou incapable de résoudre les défis de la vie en groupe, pour mettre en place un radicalisme réactionnaire.

Le radicalisme réactionnaire est manifesté dans notre corpus par les orphelins de Louango. Ayant subi la règne autoritaire de Dieudonné et son équipe, les orphelins commencent à s'endurcir. Notamment songi-Songi et Tala-Tala, qui viennent d'un petit orphelinat de Pointe-Noire pour bénéficier d'une bonne éducation : « mais comme ils étaient récalcitrants, défiaient sans relâche l'autorité du directeur et des surveillants de couloir, il ne se passait pas un jour sans qu'ils soient punis ou humiliés en face de tout le monde comme lorsqu'on les attachait tels des chiens au pied d'un filao et qu'on les laissait là même par temps de pluie »(79). Le directeur et ses employés punissent méchamment ces pensionnaires. « En fait le directeur nous incitait à détester ces gamins, et donc nous encourageait sans le dire clairement à les rosser à la moindre occasion » (80). Dieudonné impose à ces pauvres orphelins la grève de faim pour se protéger. Ainsi, Petit piment, Tala-Tala et Songi-Songi adoptent la révolte en petits pas : « Nous étions devenus, nous aussi, des petits fumeurs, monnayant auprès de

Songi-Songi et Tala-Tala notre nourriture contre ces mégots qui nous excitait tellement que nous riions comme des hyènes... Les jumeaux nous apprirent les attitudes des grandes personnes en train de fumer » (81). Mais le radicalisme est-il toujours réactionnaire?

Concevant le radicalisme par ces provocateurs, il existe encore un radicalisme qui n'est pas réactionnaire. Ce radicalisme est d'une conviction, du fait que les idées qui le renforcent sont inventées ou adoptées d'un inventeur. D'après Papadimitriou "Radicalism as a political vision, as a form of political thinking based on fundamental principles, is much less concrete than reactionary language and its counter-Enlightenment sensibilities or the politics of counterrevolution"(150). Le radicalisme réactionnaire semble être plus agressif et plus féroce que le radicalisme de conviction. Mabanckou présente dans notre corpus de base le radicalisme de conviction dans la politique. En effet, c'est le cas du Congo, qui emprunte au soviétiques leur socialisme. En suite, l'auteur présente Robin le terrible, qui emprunte les inventions radicales de Robin des Bois : « il était surnommé Robin le terrible parce qu'il se prenait pour Robin des Bois, le héros du Moyen Age qui se cachait avec sa clique de brigands dans une forêt d'Europe et dépouillait les riches pour redistribuer aux pauvres » (148). Dans les deux cas, nous voyons le décalage des mœurs pour adopter les idées radicales des autres, ajoutées à d'autres idées inventées par une conviction personnelle.

### **La pulsion du radicalisme réactionnaire dans *Petit piment* d'Alain Mabanckou**

#### **L'enfermement**

L'homme est un animal social et la vie sociale se poursuit en communauté. Selon Fadéla Hebbadj, « La solitude,



c'est pas une chose naturelle. L'homme n'est pas fait pour vivre sans ses frères » (110). Mabanckou semble proposer l'enfermement comme la force qui contraigne à changer d'état, en dressant des êtres enfermés. Bien que ces êtres soient nourris, habillés, éduqués, entourés de camarade etc. ils ont toujours le sentiment d'être isolés. Bonaventure, s'en plaint : « Lorsqu'on aime quelqu'un, lorsqu'on veut de quel qu'un, on sort, on se promène avec lui, on ne l'enferme pas dans un ancien bâtiment comme s'il était en captivité » (51). C'est en effet, la réalité de Petit Piment et Bonaventure. L'enfermement naît en l'homme le désir de l'émancipation. C'est le sentiment d'être enfermé qui interrompt ce « l'état de repos ou de mouvement uniforme en ligne droite » (Du Chatelet 17) de ces pensionnaires. Alors ce désir de s'émanciper prend le titre de la poussée. La préoccupation principale des pensionnaires c'est la liberté. Mais une fois face à la liberté, certains reculent vers l'enfermement peut-être parce qu'il se trouve incapable de la vivre. C'est d'ailleurs le cas de Bonaventure.

D'autres l'embrasse, s'en jouissent et la pousse jusqu'au bout, tel que Petit Piment, Songi-Songi et Tala-Tala, qui exploitent leur liberté pour laisser fleurir le radicalisme. Voilà le but. « L'émancipation évoque le déracinement. On se déracine de l'ordre du passé, de la fondation d'auparavant et de ce que nous sommes qui nous limite, qui nous enferme et qui nous dénie l'épanouissement » (Adamson 157). Pour ces adolescents, l'enfermement est symbolisé par l'orphelinat de Louango, les murs qui les entourent leur inspirent l'enfermement. Ils se croient enfermés du monde, de la civilisation, de la liberté, de l'amour, de la tendresse mais aussi de l'avenir. Certes, l'enfermement est une pulsion du radicalisme chez ces jeunes. Il provoque la révolte chez eux. Dans ce cas, il s'agit d'un

radicalisme réactionnaire. Toutes les indulgences de ces adolescents à Pointe-Noire ne sont qu'une réaction qui cherche à faire enfouir toutes les sentiments d'être enfermé physiquement et d'être réduit à un régiment particulier, ce qui est aussi un enfermement mental. Voilà donc l'objet.

### **L'abnégation imposée**

L'abnégation n'est pas une voie facile. « Sacrifice volontaire de soi-même, de son intérêt » (Petit Robert 2013). Si l'abnégation est difficile, il faut donc que l'entrepreneur soit conscient de ce qu'il fait, et des conséquences. Dans le cas de l'orphelinat de Louango, l'abnégation est imposée. « Nous avons observé la grève de la faim pendant deux jours, mais les contrôleurs ne se pointèrent pas. Nous en avons marre et, la nuit dans le dortoir, nous nous goinfrions grâce aux vivres piqués par les jumeaux dans le réfectoire. A quoi cela servait-il de faire une grève de la faim si le président de la République n'était pas au courant ? » (121). Dieudonné réduit ces orphelins par sa gestion autoritaire qui interdit aux pensionnaires une vie normale, ce qui ne manque pas de conséquences.

Considerons Bonaventure qui d'après Petit Piment, avait « une stature robuste qui aurait fait peur à n'importe quel garçon qui lui cherchait noise. Mais il n'était en réalité qu'un colosse aux pieds d'argile » (66). L'abnégation imposée finit par rendre l'entrepreneur très dur. Car la suppression de sentiment aussi bien que de volonté est une aberration. Cette aberration semble prendre le titre de la force qui agit et qui provoque la mutation mentale chez ces orphelins de la ligne droite ou de l'état de repos. Ce qui rend valable le principe d'inertie. Dans le cas de Bonaventure, il devient aboulique. Sa perte d'initiative est provoquée par l'autorité exagérée que Dieudonné exerce sur les orphelins. Il devient l'objet de la risée car il se trouve incapable

de se défendre, incapable de l'autodétermination, il se cache de sa réalité par de petit gestes.

Quant à Petit Piment, l'aboulie se manifeste chez lui comme l'instabilité, le changement continu de projet. Ce garçon n'arrive pas à rester réellement sur un intérêt. Apparemment, son inconscient cherche une expression libérale après des années d'abnégation imposée. Ajouté, semble-t-il, aux pertes : celle du Papa Moupelo. Depuis cette perte, Petit Piment passe de l'intérêt à la lecture « Comme elle, je voudrais lire et lire encore des livres écrits en plus petits caractères que ceux que je lis a la bibliothèque de l'orphelinat et tant pis si mes yeux en souffrent et que je finis par porter de grosses lunettes comme elle »(90) ; à l'intérêt dans la politique socialiste « Avec la Révolution, j'avais donc vite fait de retourner ma veste et de devenir celui qui récitait sans trébucher les discours du président de la République pendant le cours de conscientisation. Ces membres du parti qui nous visitaient me félicitaient, et c'était pour cela que Dieudonné Ngoulmoumako me mettait au premier rang » (63).

Petit Piment trouve ce qui aller devenir sa cure psychanalytique chez Nianguï qui le soigne d'un amour évident dans l'orphelinat. Celle-ci le quitte aussi après une longue révélation qui éclaire qu'elle l'a trouvé devant la porte de l'orphelinat il y a treize ans (103). En plus, elle révèle aussi son histoire au monde. Mais après le départ de Nianguï, Petit Piment retombe et exprime sa perte en ces termes : « la page sur laquelle son histoire dans cette établissement était écrite venait elle aussi d'être arrachée et qu'après avoir perdu Papa Moupelo je venais de perdre maintenant celle qui était presque comme la mère que j'aurais voulu avoir » (112). En plus, chez Mama Fiat 500, ou il a l'occasion de se purger en racontant sa vie, et en jouissant d'un

amour exceptionnel. Mais la perte de Mama Fiat qui interrompre cette cure va le mener jusqu'à la schizophrénie.

En réalité, Petit Piment, en tant que l'enfant choyé du directeur n'avait aucune raison, en dehors de la pulsion du radicalisme, à quitter l'orphelinat avec les jumeaux car selon lui : « Ces membres du parti qui nous visitaient me félicitaient, et c'était pour cela que Dieudonné Ngoulmoumako me mettait au premier rang » (63). Il était capable de tout gérer sans fuir. Cette pulsion résulte donc de la suppression de sa volonté. Naissant en lui le désir d'un ailleurs dont il est ignorant. Voilà donc le changement d'état, suggéré par le principe d'inertie. C'est pourquoi il a sauté à l'opportunité que les jumeaux lui offrent à prendre la poudre d'escampette. Il se peut que cette escampette soit autre chose pour lui que la délivrance. Etant donné qu'au cours de sa narration entière, Petit Piment n'a jamais exprimé son mécontentement dans l'orphelinat. La fuite vient, semble-t-il, d'une poussée d'expressionnisme : « Non seulement je m'étais transformé physiquement, mais je parlais aussi comme les membres du groupe et j'avais donc réussi à me départir de cette expression soignée qu'on exigeait de nous à Louango » (154). Fruit d'une aboulie protractile. En d'autres termes, le goût de l'aventure né de son instabilité psychique.

En fait à Pointe-Noire, ou il est l'adjoint des Jumeaux, il désire la personnalité de Robin des Bois aussi bien que le titre de Robin le Terrible pour créer un personnage syncrétiste : « C'était à mon tour de rêver d'être Robin des Bois, de vouloir porter son nom comme sobriquet et de posséder ce que le défunt Robin le Terrible n'avait pas pu avoir : le grand cœur de ce personnage »(154). Il est cependant, pertinent à noter qu'il est bien content d'être Petit Piment avant le désir d'être quelqu'un d'autre : « J'étais fier de mon surnom de Petit Piment, car cela

voulait dire qu'ils reconnaissaient que je n'étais pas un poltron. Beaucoup dans notre bande croyaient à tort que je devais mon sobriquet au fait que je fourrais mon nez partout – on disait, pour me charrier, que j'avais un groin – et que j'étais aussi excité qu'un moustique d'étang » (153). On se demande donc par curiosité : si Petit Piment est aussi reconnu et qu'il en est très fier, pourquoi vouloir être Robin des Bois ? Pourquoi être si aboulique alors qu'il vit déjà son *Alta ego* originel ? Cette succession de changement de personnalité démontre un trouble déjà culminant.

### **La pulsion du radicalisme de conviction dans *Petit piment* d'Alain Mabankou**

#### **La pensée préceptrice**

Ce qui est réalisé « by critiquing the limits... of the past, or by identifying with certain aspects of their activism... in fact articulating their own ...vision » ( Nachescu 32). L'emprunt du radicalisme de conviction et son analyse produit d'autres idéologies qui sortent d'une synthèse d'idées ou d'élimination de certaines idées. Prenons au titre d'exemple, le mouvement féministe. « According to many historians, the analogy between sex and race was 'founding rhetoric' for second wave feminism » (Nachescu 46). Cette vision de Nachescu éclaire la vie de Mama Fiat 500. Le radicalisme chez elle s'exprimé dans l'usage de son corps par plusieurs hommes, dans une société où les mœurs permettent à une femme de le donner à un seul homme. Ayant hérité cette pratique de sa mère, elle l'analyse de telle manière : « A-t-on jamais cherché à savoir ce qu'il y a derrière chaque femme qui marchande ses attributs, hein ? » (178). Elle semble développer cette idée : la société ne semble pas condamner son père qui a déserté une femme se débrouiller sans aide, avec huit enfants (179). Puis ses frères qui la voient

comme la honte de la famille, semblent avoir oublié que « c'est grâce à ce commerce que nous avons eu un toit à nous, mes sept frères et moi » (179). Ces pensées semble démontrer son radicalisme, c'est-à-dire, poursuivre ce commerce malgré les mœurs. Le fait d'avoir l'affection du président ne l'empêche d'en garder plusieurs autres. Elle emploie les connaissances transmises par la mère pour demeurer obstinément prostituée. Selon elle :

On ne naît pas pute, on le devient. Un jour ou l'autre on se regarde dans la glace, l'horizon semble bouché parce qu'on est au pied du mur. Et puis on franchit le pas, on propose à un passant son corps avec un sourire de circonstance, parce qu'il faut aguicher comme dans tout commerce. On se dit que ce corps, même si on le déprécie un soir, on le lavera le lendemain afin de lui rendre sa pureté. Et on le lave une fois avec l'eau de Javel, on le lave deux fois avec de l'alcool, puis on ne le lave plus du tout, on assume désormais ses actes parce que les eaux de la terre ne pourront jamais procurer de la pureté à qui que ce soit (178).

C'est en fait, ce qu'elle fait, assumer impudemment ses actes, elle vit sa liberté de pute, de « mauvaise herbe » (179). Mama Fiat 500, de son vrai nom, Maya Lokito a reçu la prostitution de sa mère comme précepte, elle la développe de manière plus avancé que sa mère. Le principe d'inertie se vérifie lorsqu'elle dit « On ne naît pas pute » cela explique déjà la force qui contraigne le détour de « l'état de repos ou de mouvement

uniforme en ligne droite » (Du Chatelet 17). Notons que le féminisme s'emploie dans notre contexte comme radicalisme.

Le Congo, désirent la Révolution socialiste scientifique, adopte des modifications qui répondent au goût du président. Pour cette adaptation, qui est d'ailleurs un emprunt idéologique dans la politique : « Le directeur avait mobilisé ses réseaux pour que ses neveux Mfoumbou Ngoulmoumako, Bissoulou Ngoulmoumako et Dongo-Dongo Ngoulmoumako suivent une formation idéologique à Pointe-Noire et deviennent par la suite les chefs de la section du Mouvement national des pionniers de notre orphelinat » (41). Ce socialisme est une rupture des mœurs et des traditions politiques du passé imposées par les français par le biais de la colonisation. « Dialectiquement parlant, c'est l'impérialisme et ses valets locaux qui ont écrit notre histoire, nous devons renverser les choses car la superstructure ne devrait pas l'importer sur l'infrastructure » (43). Le renversement dont il s'agit pour eux, est fondée sur la le gout du président : « Notre président avait ainsi, dès son bas âge, le souci de la communauté et le sens du sacrifice »(45). Ce renversement ne sera pas sans adaptations particuliers car le Congo a ses réalités mais aussi ses atours : une jeunesse ignorante et des établissements bourrés d'adolescents. Il se peut donc que cette richesse soit le fondement du choix idéologique.

Finding the core concepts that define radicalism's ideological stance or the prevailing themes of its rhetoric is not an easy task. We need to correlate the political-ideological level, the personality and the process. Radicalism in politics and ethics creates political traditions and patterns of thought; radical personalities formulate discourses and attitudes beyond

parliamentary institutions; radicalization as a historical process that creates major possibilities for authoritarian regimes or fascism could be understood as a conjectural specificity (Papadimitriou 151).

Le président du Congo tourne donc à d'autres idéologies. « Le gouvernement avait pris la décision d'interdire la religion dans les établissements publics du pays, y compris dans les orphelinats... Le même gouvernement avait décrété que l'enseignement du marxisme-léninisme devait être la priorité du pays » (47).

Quant à Robin le terrible, « son obsession de Robin des Bois remontait à son enfance où, après l'école, il s'enfermait dans la bibliothèque de l'église Saint-Jean-Bosco, lisait les aventures de son personnage préféré et mettait enfin un visage sur son nom » (148), il adopte d'autres pratiques pour adapter son environnement. Il ne fait son délinquance que pour son propre gain. Il emprunte l'idéologie de Robin des Bois, « sauf que Robin le Terrible n'avait jamais mis les pieds dans une forêt et dépouillait indifféremment les riches et les indigents » (148).

Mabanckou semble adopter ces personnages pour démontrer que l'idéologie radicale est acquise par la paire enseignement-apprentissage. Car les personnages que nous avons évoqués : Mama Fiat 500, les valets du socialisme au Congo, Robin le Terrible, aussi bien que Petit Piment ont subi un moment de radicalisation par l'apprentissage. Ce qui semble reconnaître une idée d'Irina Bokova : « On ne naît pas extrémiste violent, on le devient, par initiation et par incitation » (1). Ils acquièrent donc le radicalisme de conviction par une initiation doctrinale continue pendant une période donnée de leurs vies.



Cette acquisition du radicalisme de conviction sera, semble-t-il, une dialectique du principe d'inertie.

### **Le besoin d'être**

Le besoin d'être est un désir d'être reconnu et d'appartenir aux groupes sociaux. Il s'agit de cette intégration des adolescents qu'évoque Amélie Nothomb dans *Antechrista* : Elle est intégrée... Ce mot avait pour moi une signification gigantesque. Moi, je n'avais jamais été intégrée à quoi que ce fut. J'éprouvais envers ceux qui l'étaient un mélange de mépris et de jalousie. J'avais toujours été seule... Je rêvais d'être intégrée » (16). Ce besoin d'être intégré se trouve parmi les adolescents. Ceci semble venir du fait que l'adolescence est un carrefour dans la vie humaine. « Structurée par l'idéalisation, l'adolescence est une maladie de l'idéalité : soit l'idéalité lui manque ; soit celle dont elle dispose ne s'adapte pas à la pulsion pubertaire et son besoin de partager avec un objet absolument satisfaisant » ([www.kristeva.fr/le-mal-radical.html](http://www.kristeva.fr/le-mal-radical.html)). Il s'agit d'une étape délicate de la vie humaine. Selon *le dictionnaire de la philosophie Larousse*, elle recouvre la « période de la vie humaine allant de quatorze à vingt ans environ chez le garçon, de douze à dix-huit ans chez la fille ». Elle est selon Kristeva, « nécessairement exigeante et hantée par l'impossible » ([www.kristeva.fr/le-mal-radical.html](http://www.kristeva.fr/le-mal-radical.html)). Il paraît que cette étape de la vie représente un bouleversement majeur parce que « du point de vu psychologique, elle est marquée par l'apparition de l'instinct sexuel et par le brusque développement des sentiments, moraux et religieux ... l'âge des crises mystiques, de l'opposition au milieu familial » (*Philosophie Larousse*).

Il est à noter que les pensionnaires de l'orphelinat de Louango sont des adolescents. Ces adolescents partagent la même histoire et réalité : celle d'être abandonné, celle d'être

rejeté, celle d'être maltraité, celle de rêver. L'idéalisation est pour ces jeunes la sortie de l'orphelinat. Bien que chacun à sa manière idéale de sortir, la manifestation de l'idéal de chacun démontre soit son gout, soit le degré du trouble psychique, résultant de sa condition sociale et/ou sa vie de l'enfant sans parents. Pour Petit Piment, jadis Moïse, cette sortie idéale est le secours du Tout-Puissant par des prodiges. Il s'en plaint du retard que Le bon Dieu observe à cette tâche :

Je m'inquiétais depuis que j'attendais le secours de Dieu, en particulier lorsque le directeur levait sa main sur nous et que le Tout-Puissant ne nous adressait aucun signe qui nous aurait rassurés ... Dieu s'était-Il dédit et avait-Il choisi un autre Moïse plus noir, plus beau, plus grand, plus intelligent, plus libre et vivant dans un autre pays où l'on priait, où l'on dansait et où l'on chantait plus que dans le notre ?(19).

Quant à Bonaventure, sa sortie idéale réclame son amour paternel idéal, nié par le père Zakarie Kokolo :

A l'aide d'un bâtonnet, il dessinait par terre un avion dont il prédisait que c'était celui qui atterrirait un jour devant l'orphelinat rien que pour lui. Sa passion pour les avions était si obsessionnelle que dès qu'il en entendait un passer dans le ciel, il ne tenait plus en place, courait vers la fenêtre et restait là pendant longtemps jusqu'à ce que l'appareil disparaisse dans les nuages. Il se retournait vers moi, l'air

abattu : -L'avion n'a pas atterri ici... On m'a encore oublié (73).

Cet idéal vient donc du sentiment d'être rejeté, ce qui carbure la conduite aussi bien que la pensée de Bonaventure. Tout ce que cet être troublé fait, porte en gras, son émotion et le rejet du père qui le hante : « Bonaventure était plus lucide, lui qui disait que cet établissement était un endroit où on avait regroupé des mômes dont personne ne voulait » (51).

L'adolescence est déjà hantée par le besoin d'être. Le sentiment du rejet vient pousser ce trouble au summum. Ce besoin est ce dont le radicalisme dévore pour atteint la radicalisation totale d'une personne. En effet, la vie de Robin le suggère bien. Car celui-ci avait l'amour familial aussi bien que l'éducation qu'il lui faut. Toutefois, le besoin d'être qui pousse les personnes de son âge vers l'impossible, l'exige à se radicaliser. Dans son cas l'idéalisation dont il « dispose ne s'adapte pas à la pulsion pubertaire et son besoin de partage avec un objet absolument satisfaisant » ([www.kristeva.fr/le-mal-radical.html](http://www.kristeva.fr/le-mal-radical.html)). Il avait accès à une éducation dite idéale, et se dispose d'une bibliothèque où il passait ses journées entières : « Ces mêmes garçons racontaient aussi que son obsession pour Robin des Bois remontait à son enfance où, après l'école, il s'enfermait dans la bibliothèque de l'église Saint-Jean-Bosco, lisait les aventures de son personnage préférait et mettait enfin un visage sur son nom » (148). Il est évident que l'adolescent possède un objet d'obsession. Le « besoin de partage avec un objet absolument satisfaisant » que postule Kristeva est évident dans la vie de Robin le Terrible dont l'objet satisfaisant est Robin des Bois : plus tard lorsqu'il abandonna l'école, il s'échappa du domicile parental pour vivre, disait-il, comme Robin des Bois »(149). Robin le Terrible abandonne sa vie réelle

pour aller vivre l'idéal en compagnie (imaginaire) de son objet satisfaisant, Robin des Bois.

La même analyse s'applique à Petit Piment, qui s'épripie des personnages vagues sans vraiment se fixer sur un seul objet d'obsession. Il est une fois attiré par la personnalité de Petit Jean aussi bien que celle de Robin des Bois. Bien qu'il n'ait pas un objet d'obsession fixe, Petit Piment passera sa vie de délinquant en fierté : « J'étais fier de mon surnom de Petit Piment, car cela voulait dire qu'ils reconnaissaient que je n'étais pas un poltron » (153). Peut-être parce qu'il arrive à satisfaire cette pulsion, c'est-à-dire, le besoin d'être « c'était à mon tour de rêver d'être Robin des Bois, de vouloir porter son nom comme sobriquet et de posséder ... le grand cœur de ce personnage »(154). La fierté de délinquance ! Toutefois, il abandonnera cette vie pour vivre d'autres besoins : « Non, je ne voulais plus regarder en arrière. J'assumais désormais mon égoïsme et je vivais ma liberté de chien errant dans une ville qui semblait tout broyer » (168). D'autres pulsions le hantaient à cet instant. Le désir de la liberté et celui de l'errance. Ces deux pulsions semblent s'imposer à l'adolescent tirant profit de cette « maladie de l'idéalité » qu'évoque Kristeva. Alors, en dehors du besoin de survie, il se satisfait de « ces instants de vagabondage » (168), carburé par la liberté et l'errance. Ces mêmes besoins instaurent et renforcent les caractéristiques de l'adolescence « l'âge des crises mystiques, de l'opposition au milieu familial » (*philosophie Larousse*).

### **Conclusion**

Nous avons pris comme acceptation de base, que le radicalisme est déterminé par les mœurs. En suite, nous avons vérifié le principe d'inertie sur le béhaviorisme des personnages en ce qui concerne le radicalisme. Ayant essayé de suivre la ligne tracée par Mabankou dans le roman *Petit piment*, nous

découvrons que la pulsion du radicalisme réactionnaire se présente comme l'enfermement et l'abnégation imposée alors que celle du radicalisme de conviction se présente comme la pensée préceptrice et le besoin d'être. Mais en fin Mabanckou semble avoir tenté de faire la différence entre la pulsion et le radicalisme. Il se sert de la vie de Petit Piment pour démontrer que le radicalisme est définitif alors que la pulsion pourrait être calmée : « je ne voudrais pas vous donner trop d'espoir car la maladie que vous avez est irréversible. Néanmoins je vais vous prescrire des médicaments afin de calmer les effets secondaires » (242). Nous déduisons donc que le cerveau radicalisé sera définitivement radical. Toutefois la pression des manifestations du radicalisme est possible.

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## INVESTIGATING MATERIAL CLAUSES IN THE IGBO LANGUAGE

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### **Abstract**

*This paper investigates material clauses in the Igbo language. Material clause is one of the six kinds of clauses that account for transitivity. The investigation is based on the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) developed by Halliday. Systemic Functional Grammars is organized into three modes of meaning - experiential mode, textual mode and interpersonal mode. The system of transitivity is the focus of the experiential mode. Both paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of the experiential grammar of the Igbo language clause are investigated. Data used in the analysis were generated by the author, who is a native speaker of the Igbo language, from oral utterances. The data are categorized into participant and process, which are core elements of transitivity system on the perspective of SFG. As expected, the investigation confirms that material processes in the Igbo language are verbs of actions and happenings. The processes have Actor, Goal and Beneficiary in addition to Circumstance as participants. While the Actor is an obligatory participant, Beneficiary, Goal and Circumstance are optional participants. On the difference between doing and happening material clauses, it is observed that while the Actor inputs the required energy for the realization of the process, and impacts on the Goal in some Actor + Process configurations; the Process rather impacts on the Actor in some instances of Actor + Process configurations of doing material clauses. Moreover,*

*in a happening material clause, the process is represented as a happening and the Actor serves as the medium through which the happening is actualised.*

**Key Words:** Systemic Functional Grammar in Igbo; SFG Transitivity in Igbo, Igbo Material Clauses/Processes

### **List of Abbreviations**

M.pr:	material process
Part:	participant
PART:	participle
PST:	past tense
SFG:	Systemic Functional Grammar
1SG:	first person singular

### **Introduction**

Material clause is one of the six aspects of transitivity in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). The study is targeted at observing, analysing and arriving at a conclusion on the material clauses in the Igbo language. SFG framework is adopted for this study in view of the position of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 20) that “languages evolve - they are not designed, and evolved systems cannot be explained simply as the sum of their parts. Our traditional compositional thinking about language needs to be, if not replaced by, at least complemented by a ‘systems’ thinking whereby we seek to understand the nature and the dynamic of a semiotic system as a whole”. This model of grammar perceives language as a functional system. According to Butt and colleagues (2000), “Systemic Functional Grammar is a way of describing lexical and grammatical choices from the system of wording so that we are always aware of how language is being used to realize the meaning”. Lamidi (2008:17) states that “Halliday considers grammar to be a network of systems of



interrelated contrasts. Here particular attention is paid to semantics and pragmatics in the expression of meaning such that the theory cannot be separated from daily experience”.

Accordingly, Systemic Functional Grammar is a viable framework for describing and modelling language, and also a potent resource for making meaning and choices. This theoretical model treats language beyond its formal structures and takes the context of culture and the context of situation in language use (Halliday 1985, 1994, Matthiessen 1995, Martin & Rose 2003). Systemic Functional Grammar is a form of grammatical and meaning description, and is a part of the systemic functional linguistics which is a social semiotic approach. Systemic Functional Grammar is a theory of grammar based on the view that language is a system for making meaning. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:23), “Systemic theory gets its name from the fact that the grammar of a language is represented in the form of system networks, not as an inventory of structures”. The term **systemic** refers to the fact that every grammatical structure of a language involves a choice from available sets of options, against the earlier notion that grammar is a composite of rules. **Functional** stands for the fact that every time we make a choice from the available options, we are doing so in order to fulfil a communicative purpose; while **grammar** refers to the fact that there is an overall organisation to the possible options. The adoption of the SFG, no doubt, increases and diversifies the number of grammatical theories that have been applied on the study of the Igbo language.

### **Transitivity in Systemic Functional Grammar**

Transitivity in Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is a summation of process types. Process, which forms the nucleus of the clause, is realised by the verbal group. Halliday (1994, 2014),

Thompson (2013), Eggins (2004) and Martins et al (1997) have identified three major processes to include material process, mental process and relational process; and three other process types which include verbal process, behavioural process and existential process. Halliday (1967:199) gives the meaning of transitivity as “the set of options relating to cognitive content, the linguistic representation of extra linguistic experience, whether of the phenomena of the external world or of feelings, thoughts and perceptions”. Transitivity analysis is the realisation of the experiential strand of ideational metafunction (Martin et al 1997). By experiential strand, a clause is construed as a representation of experience. It is used to explore the content or the experiential meaning in a clause. A clause is defined as a realization of events.

The role of transitivity in a clause is summarised by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) who argue that the system of TRANSITIVITY provides the lexicogrammatical resources for construing a quantum of change in the flow of events as a figure – as a configuration of elements centred on a process. It also accounts for “who or what does what to whom or what?” (Iwamoto 2008). Thompson (2013: 95) describes transitivity as “a system for describing the whole clause, rather than just the verb and its objects” and compares transitivity in SFG and transitivity in TGG by stating thus “it does, though, share with the traditional use of focus on the verbal group, since it is the type of process which determines how the participants are labelled” (Thompson 2013: 95). Transitivity system takes care of the doings, happenings, saying, sensing, beings and existence in a clause. Transitivity analysis is helpful in revealing the participants involved in an action, how they relate to others and if they take an active or passive role in a clause (Nguyen, 2012).

Transitivity covers all phenomena and anything that can be expressed by a verb: event, whether physical or not, state, or relations (Halliday 1985, 1976:159). Transitivity is represented as a configuration of a **process**, **participants** involved in the process, and ways in which the participants may unfold called **circumstances**.

### Material Processes: Processes of “Doing” and “Happening”

Material clause accounts for the outer world of actions and events. Material process represents “doing or happening”. It involves physical actions which makes it to correspond with the traditional definition of verb as a ‘doing word’ (Thomson 2004:90). Examples of material process include the following verbs: running, throwing, eating, dancing, walking, playing, etc. A material clause is usually made up of an **actor** (the participant who does or performs the action of the process), a **goal** (the participant that is impacted by the action) and at times a **beneficiary** (a participant benefiting from the action). Some material clauses have a **range/scope** participant (which specifies the scope of the action). A material clause can be probed with the questions “What did *x* do?” and “What happened to *x*?” in which case *x* is a participant.

- |    |               |             |                  |
|----|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. | The man       | flogged     | the boy.         |
|    | Actor         | M.pr        | Goal             |
| 2. | The boy       | was flogged | by the man.      |
|    | Goal          | M.pr        | Actor            |
| 3. | Franklin      | gave        | Paul a pen       |
|    | Actor         | M.pr        | Beneficiary Goal |
| 4. | The President | celebrated  | his homecoming.  |
|    | Actor         | M.pr        | Scope            |

Examples (1), (2), (3) and (4) are material clauses. Example (1) can be probed with the question “What did the man do?”, example (2) can be probed with “What happened to the boy?”, example (3) can be probed with the question “What did Franklin do”, while example (4) can be probed with “What did the President do?”. “The man”, “Franklin” and “the president” are **Actors** because they are participants which respectively perform actions in those clauses; “the boy” and “a pen” are **Goals** as a result of being the participants which are affected by the action of the **Actors**; “his homecoming” is **Scope** because it limits the celebration of the President to a particular event; “Paul” is **Beneficiary** because he enjoys or benefits from the action of Franklin in (3); while “(was) flogged”, “gave” and “celebrated” are Material processes because they indicate actions performed by “the man”, “Franklin” and “the President”, respectively.

### **Material Processes in Igbo**

Material processes are processes that express whatever an entity does and what happens to an entity. In other words, material processes usually indicate physical actions or happenings. They are resources for construing experience of dynamic change in the flow of events in the world around us, comprising the happenings and activities of the physical world and our own participation in its unfolding drama (Mwinlaaru 2017: 259). Material clauses in Igbo can be examined based on the following analytical areas:

- Verbs classified as material processes in Igbo
- Participants involved in material processes in Igbo
- Circumstance in material processes in Igbo
- How material processes in Igbo are probed

- Differentiating doing material clauses from happening material clauses in Igbo

### Verbs Classified as Material Processes in Igbo

Material processes involve verbs that indicate actions - 'doing' - and verbs that indicate events - 'happening'.

. They include such verbs as in table (1).

Table 1. Examples of material processes in Igbo

S/N	Material Process	Gloss
1.	gbu	kill
2.	wè	take
3.	saa	wash
4.	si	cook
5.	gbu	kill
6.	nye	give
7.	ga	walk
8.	bu	carry
9.	rì	climb
10.	kù	plant
11.	dee	write
12.	kwọ	grind
13.	su	pound
14.	mèpee	open
15.	mèchie	close
16.	jìde	hold
17.	hapù	leave
18.	fe	fly
19.	guzò	stand
20.	kee	tie

## Participants Involved in Material Processes in Igbo

Material processes may involve only one core participant *Actor* (the doer entity in the material clause), two or three participants - obligatory *Actor* and any or both optional *Goal* (entity that suffers or bears the action of the Actor) and *Beneficiary* (the entity which benefits from the material process or the entity for whom or to whom the process is said to take place) as exemplified in examples (5 - 7).

5.      Ụzò     ahụ     mèpèrè.  
Door    the     open+PART  
Part: Actor     M. pr

"The door opened."

6.      Nneka           kèrè     azịzà.  
Nneka           tied     broom  
Part: Actor     M.pr.    Part: Goal

"Nneka tied the broom."

7.      Amaka           nyèrè                 Adaeze           egò.  
Amaka           give+PST            Adaeze            money  
Part.Actor     M.pr     Part.Beneficiary: Recipient   Part.goal

"Amaka gave Adaeze some money."

The only involved participant in example (5) is the Actor *Ụzò*. However, we have two participants - the Actor *Nneka* and Goal *azịzà* in example (6) and three participants in example (7) - the Actor *Amaka*, Beneficiary *Adaeze* and Goal *egò*. *Beneficiary* comes in two forms. It can either be a *Recipient* or a *Client*. *Beneficiary* is a *Recipient* when it is the receiver or recipient of

something from the Actor via the Process (one to whom something is given). **Beneficiary** is a **Client** when it is the receiver or recipient of service from the Actor via the Process (one to whom a service is rendered). For instance, while the Beneficiary **Adaeze** in example (7) is a **Recipient**, the **Beneficiary** (Adaeze) in example (8) is a **Client**.

8. Amaka            nyèrè            egò            màkà            Adaeze.  
 Amaka            give+PST money            because            Adaeze  
 Part.Actor        M.pr                                  Part.Goal Beneficiary: Client  
 "Amaka donated some money because of /for Adaeze."

The structural difference between **Recipient Beneficiary** and **Client Beneficiary** is that while **Client Beneficiary** usually involves the use of the complementizer "maka" or "maka ... ka" (as in examples '7', '9' and '10'), **Recipient Beneficiary** usually involves the use of the complementizer "ka" or non-inclusion of any complementizer (as in examples '8', '11' and '12').

9.            Nneka            nyèrè            onyinye        màkà            lfeanyi.  
               Nneka            give+PST gift                                  for            lfeanyi  
               Actor            M.pr                                  Goal            Beneficiary: Client

"Nneka gave an offering for lfeanyi."

10.          Màkà lfeanyi        kà            Nneka            jìrì nye        ònyinye  
               For lfeanyi Com Nneka                                  Aux+PST give            gift  
               Beneficiary: Client Actor                                  M.pr                                  Goal

"Nneka gave an offering because of lfeanyi."

11.	Nneka	nyèrè	Ifeanyi	ònyìnye.
	Nneka	give+PST	Ifeanyi	gift
	Actor	M.pr	Beneficiary: Recipient	Goal

"Nneka gave Ifeanyi a gift."

12.	.Ifeanyi	kà	Nneka	nyèrè	ònyìnye
	Ifeanyi	Com	Nneka	give+PST	gift
	Beneficiary: Recipient		Actor	M.pr	Goal

"It was Ifeanyi that Nneka gave a gift."

The structural insertion of *màkà* complementizer before a Client Beneficiary occurs whenever a Client Beneficiary appears post-Process. But whenever a Client Beneficiary appears pre-Process, it is usually preceded by 'maka' and 'preceded by 'ka'. Similarly, the structural non-inclusion of a complementizer in a material clause with Recipient Beneficiary usually takes place when Recipient Beneficiary appears post-Process (as in example '11'). However, 'ka' complementizer is usually inserted after a Recipient Beneficiary whenever a Recipient Beneficiary appears pre-Process (as in example '12').

Unlike what we have in the English language where *Beneficiary* and *Goal* are reversible in some structures, the Igbo language does not allow any structural reversal of *Beneficiary* and *Goal*. This is demonstrated in table (2).

Table 2. Non-Reversal of Beneficiaries and Goals in Igbo

S/N	The Igbo language	The English language			
1.	John zìjèrè Tony	envelope	John	sent	an envelope to Tony



John	send+PST	Tony	envelope	Actor	M.pr
Goal		Beneficiary			
Actor	M.pr	Beneficiary	Goal		
"John sent an envelope to Tony."					
2. *John	zìjèrè	envelope	Tony	John	sent
Tony	an envelope				
John	send+PST	envelope	Tony	Actor	M.pr
Beneficiary	Goal				
Actor	M.pr	Goal	Beneficiary		
"John sent an envelope to Tony"					

In table (2), while the reversal of *Goal* and *Beneficiary* in "2" does not affect the grammar or change the meaning of the clauses in "1" and "2" of the English language, the case is not the same in Igbo. The reversal of *Beneficiary* and *Goal* renders the clause in "2" of the Igbo language ungrammatical and meaningless.

### Circumstance in Material Processes

Clauses with Material processes may be extended to accommodate circumstances. For instance, the clauses in examples (5) and (6) are re-written in examples (13) and (14) with the inclusions of circumstances.

13. Uzo ahù mètèrè n'ùtùtu.  
 Door the open+PART in morning  
 Part: Actor M.pr Circumstance  
 "The door opened in the morning"
14. Nneka kèrè azịà n'ime ulo.  
 Nneka tied broom inside house  
 Part: Actor M.pr. Part: Goal Circumstance  
 "Nneka tied the broom inside the house."

## Probing Material Processes in Igbo

Material processes can be probed in different ways depending on the kind and the place of participants. They can be probed with the question formats: *x mere gini?* and *Gini mere y?* where *x* stands for an **Actor participant** and *y* stands for a **Goal participant**. Specifically, **Client participants** and **Recipient participant** can be probed with *Onye/Gini ka ....?* For instance, examples (5), (6), (7) and (8) can be probed with *x mere gini?* As in:

Ụzọ ahụ mètè gini?

15. Ụzò ahù mètèrè.  
 Door the open+PART  
 Part: Actor M.pr  
 "The door opened."  
 Nneka mere gini?
16. Nneka kètè azịzà.  
 Nneka tied broom  
 Part: Actor M.pr Part: Goal  
 "Nneka tied the broom."  
 Amaka mètè gini?
17. Amaka nyètè Adaeze egō.  
 Amaka give+PST Adaeze money  
 Part.Actor:M.pr Part.Beneficiary: Recipient Part.goal  
 "Amaka gave Adaeze some money."  
 Nneka mètè gini?
18. Nneka nyètè ònyinye màkà lfeanyi.  
 Nneka give+PST gift for lfeanyi  
 Actor M.pr Goal Beneficiary: Client  
 "Nneka gave an offering for lfeanyi."

Examples (44), (45) and (46) can be probed with *Onye ka ...?* as in:

19. Onye kà Nneka jìrì màkà ya nye ònyinye?

20.	Màkà	Ifeanyi	kà	Nneka	jìrì nye	ònyinye
	For	Ifeanyi	Com	Nneka	Aux+PST+give	
	Beneficiary: Client		Actor		M.pr	Goal

"Nneka gave an offering because of Ifeanyi."

Onye kà Nneka nyèrè ònyinye?

21.	Nneka	nyèrè	Ifeanyi	ònyinye.
	Nneka	give+PST	Ifeanyi	gift
	Actor	M.pr	Beneficiary: Recipient	Goal

"Nneka gave Ifeanyi a gift."

22.	Ifeanyi	kà	Nneka	nyèrè	ònyinye.
	Ifeanyi	Com	Nneka	give+PST	gift
	Beneficiary: Recipient		Actor	M.pr	Goal

"It was Ifeanyi that Nneka gave a gift."

The actions of material clauses may or may not be directed from one entity to another entity. This leads to *doing* and *happening* material clauses.

### **Differentiating Doing Material Clauses from Happening Material clauses**

A doing clause involves the extension of the process from one participant (the Actor) to another participant (the Goal) and impacts it in some way. Such a material clause represents a

doing (or an action). On the other hand, a happening material clause is a material clause where the outcome of the process does not extend to a Goal but confines to the Actor. Examples (23) and (24) below demonstrate doing and happening clauses respectively:

23.      Emeka                      gbàrà                      ùlò      ọkū  
             Emeka                      burn+PST                      house      fire  
             Actor                      M.pr                      Goal      pr.COMP  
             "Emeka burnt a house."

24.      Ùlò      gbàrà                      ọkū  
             House      burn+PST                      fire  
             Actor      M.pr                      pr.COMP  
             "A house got burnt."

The Actor in example (23) brings about the unfolding of the process. We can logically conclude that Actor is derived from transitive clauses, as it inputs the required energy for the realisation of the process and impacts on the Goal participant. In the example, the Actor + Process configuration goes through to impact on the Goal - ùlò. However, the role of the Actor in example (24) does not fall into the above definition and configuration. The Actor + Process configuration in example (24) does not pass through. The Actor behaves differently as the process simply impacts on the Actor. As demonstrated in example (24), the process is represented as a happening and the Actor serves as the medium through which the happening is actualized. For instance, the Actor - Ùlò - in example (24) represents an entity which logically does not have the capacity to bring about the unfolding of the process by itself. The difference in a doing clause and in a happening clause or between the Actor

of a doing clause and the Actor of a happening clause in Igbo is made clearer in examples (25 a,b) and (26 a,b) below:

- 25a. Nneka gbàjiri òsisi.  
 Nneka break+PST stick.  
 Actor M.pr Goal  
 "Nneka broke a stick."
- 25b. Òsisi gbàjiri  
 stick break+PST  
 Actor M.pr  
 "A stick broke."
- 26a. Asùrù m ikē akwù.  
 AGR+pound+PST 1SG bunch palmfruit  
 M.pr Actor Goal  
 "I pounded a bunch of palmfruits."
- 26b. Ikē akwù sùrù m.  
 bunch palmfruit hit+PST 1SG  
 Actor M.pr Goal  
 "A bunch of palmfruits hit on me."

While example(26a) is a doing material clause, example (26b) is a happening material clause. Examples (26a) and (26b) only differ in agency but similar in content meaning. While (26a) portrays the clause as action with Actor and Goal, (26b) portrays it as a happening impacting on the Actor. However, the case is different in examples (27a) and (27b). The two clauses do not portray common experience. They portray different experiences since while the Actor in (27a) brings about the process of 'pounding' and the Actor in (27b) brings about the process of "hiting" which have different experiences (meanings). It is worthy of mention that the reversal of the Actor and the Goal of a doing material clause does not always result to another doing

material clause as we have in examples (26a) and (26b). This is demonstrated in examples (27a) and (27b) below:

- |      |                    |           |        |
|------|--------------------|-----------|--------|
| 27a. | Azàrà              | m         | ùlò.   |
|      | AGR+sweep+PST      | 1SG       | house. |
|      | M.pr               | Actor     | Goal   |
|      | "I swept a house." |           |        |
| 27b. | *ùlò               | zàrà      | m      |
|      | house              | sweep+PST | 1SG    |
|      | Actor              | M.pr      | Goal   |

Unlike what we have in (26a) and (26b), the reversal of the Actor and Goal of example (27a) in (27b) renders the structure ungrammatical.

We can deduce from examples (26a) and (26b) that the Actor/Process configuration in doing material clauses in Igbo does not follow a particular linear order. In other words, while the configuration in (26a) appears in Process + Actor order, the configuration in (26b) appears in Actor + Process order.

### Summary and Conclusion

As shown on table (1), material processes in Igbo are verbs of actions and happenings. The processes accommodate Actor, Goal and Beneficiary as participants. While the Actor is obligatory, Beneficiary and Goal are optional. Beneficiary could be in the form of Recipient or Client. It is observed that the structural difference between Recipient Beneficiary and Client Beneficiary is that while Client Beneficiary usually involves the use of the complementizer *maka* or *maka ... ka* as demonstrated in examples (7), (9) and (10), Recipient Beneficiary usually involves the use of *ka* or non-involvement of any complementizer as demonstrated in examples (8), (11) and (12). Unlike what is obtainable in some languages like the English language, Beneficiary and Goal are irreversible in the Igbo

language. This is illustrated in table (2). Material clauses can be probed with the question formats *x mètè gini?* and *Gini mètè y?*, where *x* stands for an Actor and *y* stands for a Goal. It is also observed that while the Actor inputs the required energy for the realization of the process, and impacts on the Goal in some Actor + Process configuration; the Process rather impacts on the Actor in some instances of Actor + Process configuration. Moreover, in a happening material clause, the process is represented as a happening and the Actor serves as the medium through which the happening is actualized.

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## CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURE IN A NIGERIAN CHILD OF 8 -10 YEARS.

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### **Abstract**

*This study focused on conversation between a Nigerian child of about 8 years with his mother/ caregivers that give birth to implicature. The aim of the study was to find out whether implicature, a coined pragmatic concept is a natural and recurrent thing in children while conversing. The study also seeks to find out whether implicature is acquired or learnt. The instrument used to gather data were observation and interview. The collection of data was through diary and video recording of the conversations between the child and the mother/caregivers. Recordings of what the child produced were done on weekly basis for a period of 3 months where conversations in different contexts in daily activities took place with the child's interlocutors. It was a longitudinal study where a total of six excerpts were randomly selected for critical analysis. The researchers recorded what the mother/ caregiver said mostly in English since that was the mode of communication between the child and the mother. The nature of communication was in the form of questions to the child at different contexts and as the child responded, the implicature often came from the child as a result of the child's responses to the questions he is asked. The theoretical framework adopted for the analysis for this work is Grice's (1975) theory of cooperative principle. The result showed that the process of producing conversational implicatures occurred by flouting maxims and showed that as*

*long as man (adult or child ) communicate implicature would always be there*

*Keywords: conversation, communication, implicature*

## **Introduction**

Language is an integral part of human existence. Without it, man is incomplete because communication would be difficult among human beings. Language therefore becomes the primary form of social integration central to human society, and serves to regulate individual consciousness and social action. Without language, man as a social animal cannot exist without relating with others in an interpersonal capacity. This relationship involves communication of ideas, emotions and thoughts with the next person. Language therefore becomes an instrument of sharing meaning. This entails that the use of language is governed by social rules, a set of conventions shared by the language users. Those conventions change and evolve naturally. Children are not explicitly told these conventions, but acquire them by trial and error like many other conventions.

Again, language is a means of communication among all human and a means of initiating the child into the culture of his people. Language schedule is naturally designed in such a way that this process of initiating the child into his “language” cum culture follows the same time-table in all normal children. According to Yule (1997:176):

All normal children, regardless of culture, develop language at roughly the same time, along much the same schedule. Since we could say the same thing for sitting up, standing, walking, using the hands and many other physical activities, it has been suggested that the language acquisition schedule has the same basis as the

biologically determined development of motor skills.

Thus, Agbedo (2003; 2009) affirms that language develops and functions within a uniquely human biological matrix. Whether a child is born a ‘tabular rasa’(Carnie, 1989) or that the child comes into the world with innate abilities cum device to acquire language (Spada,1993), the fact remains that all normal children climb this ladder of acquisition at the same rate. However, Yule (1997) states that under normal circumstances in Western cultures or the Western world, the human infant is certainly helped in his or her language acquisition by the typical behaviour of the adults in home environment. Little wonder then most studies in language acquisition use children utterances from the Western world. Even African authors give examples of utterances of the child in languages from the Western world whenever they investigate language acquisition and language development. The present study has not also escaped from the above norm because the child being studied and whose result is being reported was also often times spoken to by the parents in English even though the parents’ first language is Eggon; a dialect found in the NasarawaEggon local government area of Nasarawa state of Nigeria.The parents are civil servants who belong to the middle class echelon of the Nigerian society.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The study aimed at examining what could be termed conversational implicature in a Nigerian child of age between 8 – 10 years. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Determine whether the child under study actually implicates in his conversations or not;

- ii. Determine why the child under study implicates conversationally.

### **Justification for the Study**

The justification lies in the fact that it seeks to clarify the misconceptions people have about the language abilities of children, especially as regards their ability to convey meanings. Halliday (1975) for example, identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years. It is these functions that help children to bring out meanings of what they intend to communicate per time. Another justification for the study was that the study sought to foster the fact that children do what their adult counterparts do ( imitate) and in this regard, implicate in their use of language. (Skinner, 1957).

### **Literature Review**

This section discusses the concepts of Language, Pragmatics, Implicature and the theoretical framework.

### **Language**

Language has been variously defined by scholars. Without doubt, language is the most incontrovertible determiner of meaning. Sapir (6) defines it as a purely human and non instructive method of communicating ideas, emotion and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. This means that language is individualistic and it is subject to individual interpretation. Similarly, Crystal (355) sees language as the concrete act of speaking, writing or signing (sign language) in a given situation. Language is all pervasive in our lives and its function is that of communication. One might say that the value of language to the human species is the communicative power it affords. Although no one doubts that language is useful for communication, there are different views

on how important communication is to language and language acquisition.

### **Language Acquisition: An Overview**

Language acquisition is the gradual but natural process by which a child becomes a competent user of his/her language(s). The term, *language acquisition* is commonly used to describe the process whereby children become speakers and competent users of their native language or what is usually referred to as first language (L1) (Agbedo, 2003). Acquisition, it should be stated here, is different from learning. As acquisition is claimed to be automatic and unconscious, learning is said to involve a formal process by which one consciously learns rules such as taught by a teacher. This stand is actually the position of Krashen (1982) when he states that language knowledge that is ‘learned’ is conscious and becomes unconscious or automatic only when acquired’.

Carnie (2007:14) in his own view argues:

One of the most common misconceptions about language is the idea that children and adults “learn” languages. Recall that the basic kind of knowledge we are talking about here is subconscious knowledge... conscious knowledge (like the rules of algebra, syntactic theory, principle of organic chemistry, or how to take apart a carburettor) is learned. Subconscious knowledge like how to speak or the ability to visually identify discrete objects is not learned.

This, according to him in part explains why classes in the formal grammar of foreign languages often fail abysmally to train people to speak those languages. Being immersed on the other

hand in an environment where you can subconsciously acquire a language is much more effective. Language acquisition is thus the effortless process by which the child acquires his language. In summary, Agbedo (2003:73) states that “in acquisition, the process is sub-conscious and effortless; in learning, the process is conscious and effortful.

Through acquisition, the child gradually internalises the language in his environment. According to Lock (2004) and Volterra, Caseli, Capirci and Pizzuto (2004), babies actively produce sounds from birth onward. The purpose of this early communication is to attract attention from caregivers and others in the environment. At first year, according to Santrock (2007:306), babies’ sounds and gestures go through this sequence: (i) Crying – babies cry even at birth, crying can signal distress, tiredness, hunger or feeling sleepy; (ii) Cooing – babies coo at about 1 to 2 months; (iii) Babbling – this occurs in the middle of the first year and includes strings of consonant – vowel combinations and continuations, such as *ba, ga, pa, ta*; (iv) Gestures – infant starts using gestures such as showing and pointing at about 8 to 12 months of age.

In most normal children, the child progresses in his language acquisition task to one-word utterance at 12 to 18 months, two-word-utterance at 18 to 24 months and three-word utterance at 2 to 3 years (Yule, 1997, Agbedo, 2003 and Santrock, 2007). This language acquisition schedule is followed by all normal children regardless of their cultural background. At early stage in life, children recognize and perceive utterances from all languages of the world. In a study carried out by Kubl (1993&2000), she reports that from birth up to about 6 months of age, infants are “citizens of the world”, as they recognize when sounds change

most of the time no matter what language the syllables come from. But after 6 months, they get better in perceiving the changes in sounds from their own language.

Santrock's, (2007) study found out that a child's first key words are those that name important people (dada), familiar animals (cat), vehicles (car), toys (ball), food (milk), body parts (eye), clothes (cap), house hold items (clock) and greeting term (bye). According to him, these were the first words of babies. They are the first words of babies today. Yule (1997:180) goes further to state that at the two-word stage, word combinations such as *baby chair*, *mommy eat*, *cat bad*, appeared while at telegraphic speech; *Andrew want ball*, *eat drink milk* and *this shoe all wet* are the likely utterances.

The present paper does not disprove the above examples for a child acquiring English language. But do Nigerian children acquiring English language also produce the same utterances as exemplified above since the children that Santrock studied belong to a different linguistic environment? This study therefore focused on a Nigerian child's utterances and his ability to implicate and bring out meaning in conversation therein in a linguistic environment.

### **Pragmatics**

There have been some major approaches to the explanation of meaning from the period of the Greek philosophers through the medieval period to the 19th century and early 20th century. These efforts have shown that so far, no theory has been comprehensive enough to systematically account for the explanation of word and sentence meanings as well as other ramifications of meaning in English. Each theory has had its limitations. Since the earlier theories have failed to provide a satisfactory explanation of meaning, further attempts and

improvements are daily being made. One of such contemporary approaches is pragmatics.

The term ‘Pragmatics’ originates in philosophical studies and was coined by the philosopher C. W. Morris in the 1930s. It developed as a subfield of linguistics in the 1970s and since then, several scholars have embraced the field. Pragmatics is therefore a relatively new area of study as such we know less about it than semantics and syntax. It is for now the most rapidly growing approach to the language. Pragmatics studies primarily how people produce and comprehend a communicative act or speech act in a natural speech situation; usually a conversation. Pragmatics draws a lot of insight from semantics and accounts for those aspects of meaning not covered by semantics.

Pragmatics is a new paradigm or programme of research which is obliged to come out with definitions of that research, which implies that there is a research object in question. Several scholars have attempted to define what pragmatics is. Some of the definitions include that of:

Yule (3) who sees pragmatics as a branch of linguistics, concerned with the use of language in social contexts and the way in which people produce and comprehend meaning through language. Similarly, Finch (13) asserts that pragmatics focuses on what is not explicitly stated and on how we interrupt utterances in situational contexts. Pragmatics gives a further deeper and generally more reasonable account of human language. It provides a greater understanding of how the human mind works, how humans communicate, how they manipulate one another, and in general, how they use language.



## Conversation

This can be viewed from formal and informal viewpoints. Schegloff (1972:128) observes that conversation can be described by the formula a-ba-b-a-b where 'a' and 'b' are parties to the conversation and in the context of this discourse, the conversation is between the child and his mother or caregiver. Also, Yule (1996:143) opines that conversation can be described as an activity where for the most part, two or more people take turns at speaking. This means that conversation is an 'exchange' which takes place between two or more people.

The first major concern with conversational analysis was pioneered by a breakaway school of sociology known as ethno methodology which became popular in the 1950s. Owen (1990:249) asserts that ethno methodology refers to the methods used by people to build the social world in which they live. Parts of the efforts at building human society were furthered by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) who paid close attention to orderliness of conversation, an aspect often neglected by scholars.

Many scholars have in various ways studied examined and analysed conversational discourse. Prominent among these scholars are Sinclair and Coulthard (1985), Stubbs (1983), Cook (1989), Levinson (1995), Yule (1996), Mey (2001), Onadoko (2000 and 2002) Olaniyan and Oyekola (2002) etc. Most of the past works on conversation analysis have viewed conversation as an informal spoken discourse which takes place between two or more conversationalists (interactionalists) in institutionalised settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms and the like. For example, Levinson (1995) partially towing the line of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), and working on insights from Grice (1975), highlights conversational structures and

conversational implicatures with more emphasis on how “it is possible to mean (in some general sense) more than what is actually said (i.e. more than what is literally expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered”. Levinson’s work is useful in that it has created an insight into how effective meaning negotiation can be enhanced through the cooperative efforts of the interactants. Also, Mey (2001:138) focuses on organization of conversation as a social interaction, conversational management and maintenance techniques with a view to acquainting the conversationalists (participants) with basic skills through which “a conversation that has halted or has trouble maintaining the proper speed, can be helped along”.

The present study is aimed at investigating cooperation in conversation between participants, that is between child and mother discourse. For the sake of this study therefore, we shall define conversation as an alternated spoken interaction holding between two or more participants in formal or informal settings where turn taking and its related phenomena are sequenced in line with the goals of the participants. Because the question and answer session between the child and the mother are largely the outcome of the interaction of two or more independent, goal directed individuals, with dissenting opinions and ideas, the present study contends that the participants may adopt quite a number of techniques that enhance cooperation in interaction between them.

### **Types of Conversation**

There are two major types of conversation. They are:

1. Intrapersonal Conversation (Soliloquy, monologue)
2. Interpersonal Conversation (Dialogue, conversation, interview)

**Intrapersonal Conversation** has to do with the idea that conversation may occur between or within one person. This is more or less psychological or spiritual rather than physical. One major feature of intrapersonal talk is that it occurs in the brain of a participant. Intrapersonal conversation is an utterance with no expectation of a response which an interpersonal discourse demands. It is important to state that prolonged intrapersonal talk is very popular among neurotic patients and highly disturbed people. Of recent, intrapersonal talks like personal letters, diaries and recorded tapes are no longer intrapersonal because such documentations will be read and heard by another person at another time no matter how late or sooner it may be. The Child Mother discourse which is the question and answer session from which our data is drawn is not an example of intrapersonal conversation.

**Interpersonal Conversation** is the conversation that occurs between two or more parties. In the majority of interaction situations, two parties are believed to be communicating. But Onadeko (1999) in his study of courtroom conversation discovered a three party talk situation and allocates + HIGHER, MID HIGHER and HIGHER to the roles of the magistrate, counsels and litigants respectively. Although interpersonal conversation is good, it has short comings – such as, it is a good source of enmity, angry words, challenges and counter challenges. The child mother discourse which is our main data for this study is a good example of interpersonal conversation.

### **Aspects of Spoken Discourse**

Most times spoken discourse is viewed alongside written discourse. Both are, no doubt, forms of communication that are naturally occurring. That is, the communication occurs within a natural social situation. However, unlike written language that is

planned, spoken language is largely unplanned, spontaneous and casual. Sentences are not usually syntactically linked. In spoken discourse, the speaker makes use of fillers such as: gestures and mannerisms like “well”, “erm”, “I think”, “you know”, “if you know what I mean” – etc which are not easily analysable in the traditional grammatical sentence analysis. Also, in spoken discourse, the speaker can easily replace words with his own idiolects or expression(s) as he speaks. For instance:

This guy – for this man

This babe – for this lady

Such expressions are not easily analysable according to the rules of sentence grammar. Again, spoken discourse usually contains many incomplete sentences. As a result of the problems highlighted above, it is difficult analysing spoken discourse into sentences. Instead, propositions in spoken discourse are analysed into utterances where an utterance is a unit of language or action which can account for the structure of language used in unplanned discourse.

In the discourse analysis model of linguistic description, the term sentence is associated with written discourse, while the term utterance is associated with spoken discourse. These days, there is no distinction, the term utterance is used for both spoken and written discourse. In the present study, we are not analysing sentences in isolation, but a chunk of sentences known as utterances at a stretch. It is the utterances in *The Child Mother Chat* that are subjected to pragmatic analysis using Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principle.

### **Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principle**

Influenced by Austin (1962), the proponent of speech acts, and later Searle (1969), Grice (1975) tries to expand the scope of pragmatics with his cooperative principle. This is one of the first

attempts to account for meaning as it develops in conversation. To this end, Grice distinguishes between what a sentence means and what someone means by uttering that sentence. For instance:

A. Did you enjoy the play?

B. Well, I thought the ice creams they sold in the interval were good.

It is quite apparent that ‘B’ is saying in an indirect and therefore relatively polite way that he did not enjoy the play, even though he does not actually say so. In ordinary language terms, we might say that B implies that he did not like the play even though he did not say so. In order to avoid confusion over the term ‘imply’, which has a more technical use within philosophical logic, Grice contains the term ‘implicature’ for this kind of indirect, context-determined meaning. Hence, in the above example, B implicates that he did not enjoy the play.

From the above, the term ‘implicature’ is used by Grice to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest or mean, as distinct from what the speaker literally says. What is said, according to Grice, is the intended sense and reference of the utterance and what is tacitly implicated. Grice identifies two types of implicatures. They are conventional and conversational implicature. *Conventional implicature* refers to the conventional meaning of a word or an expression. For example, the word spinster in the sentence: she is a spinster implicates that she is unmarried or an adolescent in thinking. Conversely, *conversational implicature* refers to the inferences that the addressee (listener) generates from the speaker’s utterances beyond the semantic content of the sentences uttered. This kind of inferences, as noted earlier on, enables the addressee to understand the speaker’s implied meaning.

Grice reviewed in Odebunmi (2003:55) discussed conversational implicature in respect of the cooperative principle. The principle implies that interactants in a conversation conform with certain conventions that develop or lead to cooperative behaviour in their social interaction. It is the conventions that Grice calls the cooperative principle (CP). The cooperative principle encompasses a set of guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation to achieve cooperative ends, (Levinson 1995). Grice argues that meaning is largely determined by conversational maxims. He also opined that conversation works because two or more parties mutually agree to cooperate in accordance with particular maxims. This mutual agreement enables the listener to work out the intentions of the speaker. Thus participants in conversation adhere to a cooperative principle, which speakers will normally obey or adhere to. Grice presents the principle in the following terms:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purposes or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged, (Grice, 1975:45).

### **Implicature**

The term ‘implicature’ was coined by the philosopher H.P. Grice who developed the theory of cooperative principle which is the assumption that participants in a conversation normally attempt to be informative, truthful, relevant and clear [Grice 24]. Grice went on to identify two types of implicatures. They are conventional and conversational implicature. Conventional denotes an implicature that is part of linguistic meaning of a sentence. While conversational implicature on the other hand is an indirect implicit speech act; what is meant by a

speaker's utterance that is not part of what is explicitly said. Conversational implicature have become one of the principal subjects of pragmatics and that is why the writer has decided to do a study on it using Nigerian children. The details of this would still be mentioned in the next section which is the theoretical framework.

### **Theoretical Framework**

As earlier on stated above, implicature is a special term in pragmatics. Grice identified three types of general conversational implicatures which would form part of the theory upon which the analysis of this study would be anchored.

- i. The speaker deliberately flouts a conversational maxim to convey an additional meaning not expressed literally.
- ii. The speaker's desire to fulfil two conflicting maxims results in his/her flouting one maxim to invoke the other.
- iii. The speaker invokes a maxim as a basis for interpreting the utterance. Eg.
  - a. Do you know where I get some gas?
  - b. There is a gas station around the corner.

Example A: How did you like the guest speaker

B: Well, I'm sure, he was speaking English.

Example A: Where is John?

B: He is either in the cafeteria or in his office.

### **Research Methodology.**

#### **Sources of Data Collection**

The main data for this study was sourced from the child being studied who is between the ages of 8–10 years. The child was studied in his own home, a natural environment. The researcher therefore from time to time observed the child and using longitudinal method and diary recording, recorded most of

the utterances the child produced especially as it relates to questions and answers that he gave.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The utterances gotten as responses to the questions the child being studied is asked shall form the base for the data to be used for the analysis for this study. The analysis would be done in a tabular form where the utterances are by the left hand side of the table and the maxims to be used for measurement are by the right hand side. Thereafter, if an utterance obeys the maxim a tick is applied, but where otherwise, an X or asterisk is used.

### **Data Analysis**

There are six excerpts where the researcher has curled his data from and these excerpts are subjected to analysis thus:

#### Excerpt 1

- A. Where is your brother
- B. My mummy has gone out

#### Discussion

The expected answer from the question was for the child to categorically answer and state where his brother was. His response, “my mother has gone out” does not make reference to the brother but instead makes reference to the mother who is not the subject of discussion. The implied meant for the answer given is that the mother and the brother have gone out together.

#### Excerpt 2

- A<sub>1</sub>: Get me my sandals
- B<sub>1</sub>: Its rainy outside
- A<sub>2</sub>: Is praise your friend?
- B<sub>2</sub>: We attend the same school.



## Discussion

From the analysis and observation of the utterances given above, it is observed that the utterances/conversations adhere to the conversational rules of turn taking where speakers in a dialogue take their turns to speak one after the other. Taking a look at excerpt 2, A<sub>1</sub> made an imperative statement: “Get me my sandals”. And B<sub>1</sub> responded: “It’s raining outside”. B<sub>1</sub>’s answer above has no direct bearing on the first utterance by A<sub>1</sub>. However, in the context within which the utterance was made, the utterance has value and meaning. It is not totally out of place. The utterance implied that the sandals in question are located outside the immediate environment or vicinity. i.e. where the conversation was taking place and due to the rain, B<sub>1</sub> would not be able to get the sandals. Having considered this scenario, it then implies that B<sub>1</sub> cannot get to where the sandals are located because of the rain. In ordinary conversation, after A<sub>1</sub> had made the sentence: “Get me my sandal” B<sub>1</sub> should have been polite enough to say I am sorry, it’s already raining outside and as such, I would get your sandals for you when the rain stopped.

In the same vein in the dialogue between A<sub>2</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> where A<sub>2</sub> asked: “Is Praise your friend?” and B<sub>2</sub> answered: “We attend the same school”. Ordinarily, the question asked by A<sub>2</sub> demands a “yes” or “no” answer. The answer given by B<sub>2</sub> does not have direct bearing on the question that A<sub>2</sub> asked. The implication here is that B<sub>2</sub> implicates and implies that Praise is not his friend they just attend the same school.

### Excerpt 3

A<sub>1</sub>: Help me with your pencil

B<sub>1</sub>: But I have only one

A<sub>2</sub>: Ok, have some biscuits

B<sub>2</sub>: My mummy will beat me

### Discussion

In excerpt 3, A<sub>1</sub> requested B<sub>1</sub> to help him with his pencil but instead of granting the request, it is a protest that B<sub>1</sub> raised. The implicature here is that if the interlocutor B<sub>1</sub> was in possession of more than one period, he/she would have parted with it in answer to utterance A<sub>1</sub> in utterance A

### Excerpt 4

A<sub>1</sub>: Are you on your way to church?

B<sub>1</sub>: Obviously.

### Discussion

In excerpt 4, A<sub>1</sub> being a questioning statement requires a “yes” or “no”, a positive affirmation or confirmation of A<sub>1</sub> statement of question. The answer given by B<sub>1</sub> implicates that B<sub>1</sub> was on his way to church.

### Excerpt 5

A<sub>1</sub>: No school today?

B<sub>1</sub>: We have closed uncle.

A<sub>2</sub>: So soon? How was your exams?

B<sub>2</sub>: I took third position in my class.

A<sub>3</sub>: Third? Wow? Congratulations. You did well.

B<sub>3</sub>: Chinedu took first.

A<sub>4</sub>: Who is Chinedu?

B<sub>4</sub>: Aunty Esther’s child.

### Discussion

In utterance A<sub>1</sub>, which is a question: “No school today”? The expected answer to the enquiring question is a “yes” or “no” with an explanation attached. Unfortunately, the answer given to the above question was also implicated. Instead of B<sub>2</sub> to answer the question with a fine or not fine, he went further to say, “I took third position in my class.

Similarly, following the dialogue in A3, the speaker said, “Third? Wow! Congratulations, you did well”. The response given by B<sub>3</sub> to the above is “Chinedu took first”. This is also implied that he did not do well like what Chinedu did since Chinedu came first.

#### Excerpt 6

A: I like your bag, would you dash me?

B: My food is inside.

A: Ene, what’s in your bag?

B: It’s my own

A: Are we fighting?

B: Leave me.

#### Discussion

In this excerpt, A<sub>1</sub> started with a question,: “Would you dash me?” In an ordinary English conversation, this question demands a yes/no answer. If the child was asked the question: What is in your bag? And the child answered, “My food is inside”. That would be alright. Instead what happened is that from the answer given by B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub> has implied in his/her answer that he knows why A<sub>1</sub> asked the question, and went ahead to answer the next question that would have been asked if the first question was answered correctly.

In excerpt A<sub>2</sub> the speaker asks: “I like your bag, would you dash me?” The answer given by B<sub>2</sub> should have been. Yes, I would dash you or no, I would not dash you. Instead, the speaker in B<sub>2</sub> went ahead to implicate in his answer by saying, “My food is inside” even though speaker A<sub>2</sub> did not ask what was inside the bag. Similarly, A<sub>3</sub> asked a question, “Are we fighting”? and B<sub>3</sub> answered: “Leave me alone”. Again, one would have expected B<sub>3</sub> to give a yes or no answer first before saying “leave me”.

Instead B<sub>3</sub> implicated his answer by just going to answer the way he did.

### **General Discussion**

From the analysis of excerpts 1 – 6 above, the writer observes that even though, the focus of this discussion and analysis was not on turn taking, the interlocutors which were made up of an adult (A) and a child (B) several times observe the turn taking rules. The writers also observe that since children also observe the turn taking rules, it presupposes that turn taking is a natural phenomenon that man is endowed with. The writers also further observe that most of the answers given by the child as B were mostly implicated alluding to the fact that children also implicate in their utterances making implicature to be a phenomenon for both the adults and the young at every point in time.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion that can be drawn from this discourse is that implicature is a natural phenomenon with man (Children inclusive). One does not prepare to imply in a discourse, it comes naturally as a result of the individuals' disposition, position or reaction to the discourse at hand. Although one would have thought that since studies that have been conducted by researchers focus on adults, one would have thought that children would have to be taught to imply or implicate but this was not the case in this study. We saw the child under study naturally implicating and implying which goes a long way to help us appreciate the more what implicature is that it just happens without necessarily preparing for it. From the study done, it was discovered that implicature is not learnt but acquired naturally, that as long as man communicates as an adult or a child, man would always naturally imply or implicate. The writer

however recommends that further studies be conducted on other aspects of implicature as it relates and affects Nigerian children.

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## **IMPACT OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE (L1) ON ACQUISITION OF SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE**

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### ***Abstract***

*There is no doubt that children face numerous challenges in acquiring language especially second language. Linguists and researchers in the field of education have divergent opinions concerning the functional role of L1 in acquiring L2. This paper undertakes a cursory look at impact of L1 in acquiring L2 among primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A of Taraba State. Three (3) research questions and hypotheses guided the study and sixty (60) teachers formed the sample size for the study. Language Background Questionnaire was used for data collection. The study revealed that L1 significantly impact on acquisition of L2 in terms of writing ability, reading ability and speaking ability of the pupils in the study area. The paper concluded that L1 is the pivotal pillar for acquiring L2, and it was recommended among others; that government should provide teaching and learning materials in L2 for all primary schools, and that teachers should encourage children to write, read and speak in L2 as much as possible.*

**Keywords:** *Indigenous language, second language, English language, Hausa/Fulani language.*



## **Introduction**

Language is one of the basic tools of identification in any nation, Nigeria inclusive. In other words, language is a vital tool for human communication in any human communities. In support of this, Richards (2010) describes language as the human vocal noise or arbitrary graphic representation of the noise in writing used systematically and conventionally by a speech community for purpose of communication. For Williams (2009), indigenous language (L1) of a child is the part of their personal, social and cultural identity, which brings about the reflection and learning of successful social patterns of acting and speaking. Little wonder, Lothingington cited in Alikali and Lukman (2019) emphasized the significant role of language in developing world where education is considered as competing motives of economic development and cultural maintenance. That is, language is essential for economic and social advancement of people in the developing world. In fact, Otagburuagu (2007) argued that learning of second language (L2) was necessitated by the trade and commerce that characterized colonial period. Put differently, the social and political factors that engendered colonization also served as the primary factor that gives rise to the adoption of English language as L2 in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, etc. The author further argued that multilingualism as well as desire for social integration contributed immensely to the use of L2 in Nigeria (Otagburuagu, 2007).

The statement above explains why English language is the sole official language in some African countries such as Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Dominica and Barbados, in the Caribbean; and Vanuatu's, Fiji and the Solomon Island in the Pacific (Williams, 2009). Supporting this view, the Encyclopedia Americana, states

that more than half of the world's scientific research and technical journals, as well as newspapers are printed in English. Three fourths of the world's mail is written in English, and English is the language of three fifths of the world's radio station. Campbell (2005) asserts that English is the acceptable medium in the travel industry and in international communication. Simply put, English language is the language of communication between the people with different cultures; and also the language of communication online and e-mail through computers.

Evidently, the importance of L2 to social and national development cannot be understated. However, it has been observed that L1 served as a useful tool for acquisition of L2 so as to solve learning and communication problems. For Brock-Utne (2005), if one wants to overcome poverty, children must be allowed access to knowledge in their L1 at early education. This explains why the Federal Government of Nigeria emphasized that the language of immediate community should be used as a medium of instruction at lower arm of primary education (FGN, 2013). But in spite of this policy, Thondhlana (2012) maintained that L2 'English' remains the 'de facto' language in many Nigerian classrooms from primary to higher education without considering the interference of L1. Needless to say the nature and structure of the native language, cultural environment, age, method of acquisition and the amount of efforts invested are some of the factors that affect the learning and proficiency of a L2.

The assertion above points to experience in L1 as a crucial factor to master, assimilate and internalize the L2. That is, as the children learn L2, they incorporate the L2 linguistic input into their model of the L1. Little wonder, Lado(2008)

maintains that individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture. A second language learner thinks in the L1 and tries to express himself in the L2 which results to conflicts, and this conflict is as a result of the L1 interference. This explains why Verghese (2007) argued that L1 model has a negative effect on the L2 learner in terms of expression. For Bhela cited in Owhoeli (2011), thinking in the L1 structures and speaking in the L2 model is the major challenge for L2 learner. That is, the plight of L2 learner is hinged on the L1 interference while the learners use the L2. In other words, a learner has difficulties in L2 in terms of phonology, vocabulary and grammar due to the interference habits from L1 on L2 (Beardsmore, 1982). Interference is the result of old habits of the L1, and must be unlearned before the learning of the new habits of L2 (Dualy, Burt, & Krashen, 1982).

Definitely, the learners of L2 tend to transfer the forms, meaning and culture of their L1 to the foreign language and culture when attempting to speak, read and write the language. By learning L2 habits, L1 habits are also transferred and then the errors occur (Beebe & Seliger, as cited in Ucheoma, 2011). Similarly Beardsmore (1982) suggests that if the learners have difficulty in phonology, vocabulary, inscription, and grammar of L2, they are due to the interference of habits from the L1. Nemati and Taghizade, (2013) point out that very few L2 learners become successful in achieving native speakers level, the majority of L2 learners cannot achieve native speakers' level of ability. That is, the L1 has some negative effects on the L2 acquisition. The influence of L1 seems inevitable on L2 acquisition, as (Lord, 2010) observed that while many studies analyze the effect of L2 acquisition on the L1, very few studies

examine the converse situation. It is against this backdrop, this study examines the impact of indigenous language (where Fulani and Hausa is the L1) on acquisition of second language (English L2) among primary school pupils in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State.

### **Statement of Problem**

There is no doubt that languages impact on each other in one way or the other. Take for instance, when English is considered as the L2, there is inter-lingual interference from L1 (Fulani and Hausa). Of course, the language which a group of people considered to be inhabitants of an area acquire in their early years and which normally becomes their natural instrument of thought and communication may interfere with the L2, and these interferences may manifest itself in any aspect of the language such as phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. As the recent evidence has demonstrated parallel activation of words in both languages, word recognition suggests that acquiring proficiency in a L2 does not imply that the individual has acquired the ability to switch off the influence of the L1. Thus, the extent at which L1 influences on the acquisition of L2 in terms of writing, reading and speaking has become a source of concern to multi-linguistic researchers. In view of the above, this study examines the impact of L1 (Fulani and Hausa) on acquisition of L2 (English) among primary school pupils in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Generally, the study aims at examining the impact of indigenous language (L1) on acquisition of second language (L2) among primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State. Specifically, the study will ascertain:

1. the extent to which the use of indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area.
2. the extent to which the use of indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area.
3. the extent to which the use of indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) writing ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?
2. To what extent does indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area?
3. To what extent does indigenous language (L1) impact second language (L2) speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between indigenous language (L1) and second language (L2) reading ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State.
2. There is no significant difference between indigenous language (L1) and second language (L2) writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area.

3. There is no significant difference between indigenous language (L1) and second language (L2) speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area.

### **Review of Related Studies on L2 Acquisition**

Studies have shown that L1 connotes the terms like ‘Mother Tongue’ and ‘First Language’. Perhaps that is why Awoniyi (2010) construes indigenous language as the language used by a group of people considered being the inhabitants of an area, acquiring in their early years and which normally their natural instrument of thought and communication become. For Bamisaye (2009), indigenous language or and mother tongue is the first language (L1) that a child acquired in his/her immediate community as language of the community. The author affirms that L1 is not learnt but acquired, this is because it encodes early concept of the child. Indigenous speakers are regarded as speakers of that very language; whereas a second language is a non-native language that is widely used for the purpose of communication, usually as a medium of education, government, or business. English for example, has foreign language status in Japan, but second language status in Nigeria (Crystal, 2015). This explains why Nutsukpo (2006) construes second language as the language learnt after the indigenous language. That is, it is the language acquired after first language has been acquired. It may be language(s) spoken by other ethnic groups within the country. For instance, if a Yoruba man learns Hausa language, then Hausa becomes his second language. In other words, indigenous language is acquired through total immersion, usually with no formal training with family members and friends as tutors.

At this juncture, it must be emphasized that L1 paves way for a L2 acquisition among children. That is, indigenous language learnt at home is extremely important and forms the foundation for all later language development. Of course, parents, family members and early childhood professionals are the essential influences on the development and maintenance of the L1. Little, wonder, Clarke (2009) opines that L1 helps the child understand how other languages work. In one side, children who have the opportunity to maintain their L1 can extend their cognitive development in acquiring English as a L2. On the other hand, their level of competence in the L2 could be related to the level of competence they have achieved in L1. Hence, children with a sound knowledge of their L1 will be able to transfer skills from one language to another (Clarke, 2009). That is, Hausa/Fulani languages have a direct influence on acquisition of English language in terms of writing, reading and speaking among primary school pupils in Jalingo.

Based on the above assertion, several studies on L2 acquisition affirms that learning becomes less problematic, if a child masters L1 in the habits of speaking, reading and writing which can be transferred to the learning of the L2. Take for instance, Karim and Nassaji (2013) investigated the L1 transfer in L2 writing among elementary school children in Iran, and they found out that when L2 learners write in L2, their L1 has an effect on their writing. That is, writing in L2 becomes simple for those children who have mastered L1 model. Though, Dulay and Burt (2012) observed that interference results from the old habits (indigenous language) which ought to be unleashed before new habits (second language) could be mastered. But when one is learning a L2, one inevitably uses L1 and that error results from the interference of the L1. The study conducted by Duskoya

(2009) revealed that children tend to master L2 than its perfection. This is hinged on inherent differences in morphology between L1 and L2 where omission of plurals on nouns, lack of subject verb agreement, and adjective disagreement due to L1 influence on L2. The author argued that in some L1 models, the nouns do not distinguish singular and plural, and in some cases the finite verb does not agree with its subject in person and number. These morphological errors are interferences between the terms of L1 on the L2 subsystem.

Apart from morphological errors, the study carried out by Lord (2008) revealed phonological modification of L1 on acquisition of L2. The study used 15 participants (students), they are divided into experimental and control group; English monolinguals and Spanish monolinguals are in the control group and native English speakers with high proficiency in Spanish are in the experimental group. At first, participants filled out a language background questionnaire and also asked for information regarding their language experience and use. After that recording of the tasks and reading out a list of isolated words are continued by them. The monolingual control groups performed tasks in their L1. But experimental group do it in both Spanish and English. The result showed that the effects of L2 interference in L1 are dependent on the level of attention that the participants give to their speech. In other words, phonological awareness promotes reading ability of students in L2 acquisition.

In support of this, Widjaja and Winskel (2014) assessed seventy-three grade one children on phonological awareness, letter knowledge, word and non-word reading skills. The subtests administered were rhyme detection task, a syllable detection task, an onset deletion and a phoneme deletion task. The study discovered that children do not like reading in L2 due to



phonological plight associated with reading in L2. Little wonder, Bhela (2009) affirms that the learners rely on their L1 when they want to produce a response in the L2. A high frequency of errors occurs in L2 when the structures of two languages are different, so it indicates an interference of L1 on L2 (Nemati&Taghizade, 2013).

Similarly, Oller and Tullis(2013) compared processing times of native and non-native readers of English in reading English text. They discovered that non-native readers produced the same number of fixations and regressions as did native readers, but their fixations were much longer. This indicated that bilinguals process more slowly in their L2. In support of this, Marsh and Maki (2016) revealed similar result when measuring the time bilinguals needed to compute answers to simple mathematical problems, they computed much faster in their L1. This shows that children prefer speaking in their L1, which subsequently affects their reading ability in L2.

In fact, the study conducted by Fatemi, Sobhani and Abolhassan (2012) concerning the differences in consonant clusters orally in the L1 and L2 discovered that if the structures of L1 and L2 were different, learners have difficulty in L2 pronunciation because they encountered unfamiliar phonological rules, which prompted by their L1. Simply put, the alphabetic rules, consonant and vowels of L1 come in contact with fluency of L2 pronunciation thereby negatively impacting on children's speaking ability. Perhaps, Idiagboni (2009) was right to have reported that among the three major languages in Nigeria, Hausa seems to pay less attention in speaking Standard English. The author used socio-linguistic approach on the ethno linguistic influence of the Nigerians' attitude towards the English language and revealed that Hausa people regard English language as a

language of Christianity and foreigners who have come to subdue their cultural and religious institutions. He observed that ethnic influences are inevitable as one must recognize the influence of the L1 which serves as the pioneer language thoughts, feels and experience which the English language cannot serve.

In the same vein, Odumuh (2007) studied the influence of ethno linguistic on English language usage of Nigerians. He confirmed that these influences affect all levels of linguistic analysis in the areas of writing, reading and speaking. According to him, the speaking problem is the most prevalent for all learners due to interference from L1, which conditioned their ability to pronounce strong sound of a L2. Of course, this is true of an English man learning Hausa or Fulani, as well asan Hausa/Fulani man learning English. One can definitely say that L1 finds its way when a L2 learner tries to speak the target language. In support of this, Ngozi (2011) did a study on the interference of phonology of Igbo language in acquisition of English in Imo state, Nigeria. The study used the oral speech of students in the acquisition of English language and found out that the segmental feature of the students' L1 interfered with their responses to the oral tests. According to her, all the students deviated in pronouncing the English sound segments that were not available in Igbo phonology also constituted pronunciation problems to the students tested. In essence, L1 interferes with virtually all aspects of L2 acquisition process for the second language learners.

## **Research Methodology:**

### **Research Design**

This is a descriptive research design that examines the impact of L1 on acquisition of L2 among primary school pupils in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State.

### **Study Area**

The study covered all the primary schools in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State, where Hausa and Fulani are used as L1 and the medium of communication outside the school environment.

### **Target Population**

The population of this study comprised all primary school teachers in Jalingo Local Government Area of Taraba State. The available data from Taraba Universal Basic Education (TUBEC) shows two hundred and eighty-five (285) serving teachers in Jalingo local government area.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Simple random sampling technique was employed to select six (6) primary schools in Jalingo local government and ten (10) teachers were randomly selected from each of the schools. The total sample size for this study stood at sixty (60) teachers from six (6) primary schools in the study area.

### **Instrumentation**

The Language Background Questionnaire was adopted and cultured to probe into the experiential background of the children concerning their L1 and L2 acquisition (to be completed by teachers). The instrument is titled 'Indigenous and Second Language Acquisition Questionnaire (ISLAQ)' with two sections- A and B. Section A contains demographic data of the respondents while section B seeks opinions of the respondents on the subject matter. On the whole, ISLAQ contains 15 items

structured on a 4-response key Likert-scale type with assigned numeric values respectively (4 - Strongly Agree, 3 - Agree, 2 - Disagree and 1 - Strongly Disagree 1).

### **Validity**

The instrument was face validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo. The three experts were requested to review and scrutinize the various items of the instrument in terms of their clarity, correctness, appropriateness of language, adequacy of items in addressing the research questions and relevance to the study.

### **Reliability**

The instrument reliability coefficient was obtained through pilot-testing of the instrument on five (5) respondents (teachers) in a primary school outside the sampled schools in Jalingo local government area. Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis was employed (*with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences-SPSS*) to determine the reliability coefficient of the research questionnaire, which stood at 0.85%.

### **Procedure for Administration**

Before administering the research instruments, the researcher requested for permission from the respective school authorities in order to make use of their teachers as the research respondents. The research instrument was administered and collected on the same day of the administration.

### **Procedure for Data Analysis**

Mean and Standard Deviation were employed for answering the research questions that guided the study, while T-test was used to test the three null hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The research questions were accepted with the mean ratings from 2.50 to 3.0 otherwise anything below benchmark of 2.50 was rejected.

## Data Analysis

Out of the sixty (60) questionnaires administered, fifty-six (56) were properly filled and returned. Therefore, the analysis was based on returned questionnaire.

### Descriptive Analysis of Data

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondent by gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Male	23	41.1
Female	33	58.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above provides gender information of the respondents as twenty-three (23) representing forty-one point one percent (41.1%) are male respondents while the remaining thirty-three (33) representing fifty-eight point nine percent (58.9%) are female respondents. Therefore, majority of the respondents are female.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondent based on pupils writing, reading and speaking ability in second language

<b>Languages</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Indigenous Language	35	62.5
Second Language	21	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above reveals the writing, reading and speaking ability in both L1 and L2 among primary school pupils in all the sampled schools in the study area. Based on the table, thirty-five (35) respondents with sixty-two point five percent (62.5%) affirmed that pupils in their school could write, read and speak L1 while the remaining twenty-one (21) respondents indicating thirty-seven point five percent (37.5%) agreed that pupils in their school could write, read and speak L2. Therefore, the respondents revealed that majority of pupils prefer L1 in terms of writing, reading and speaking to L2.

### Research Questions

**RQ 1:** To what extent does L1 impact L2 writing ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?

**Table 3:** Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the extent at which L1 impact L2 writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area .

S/N	Items on L2 Writing Ability	Valid N=56	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	L1 helps in developing writing ability of children in L2.	56	2.589	1.108	Accepted
2.	The learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1.	56	2.643	1.017	Accepted
3.	Writing in L2 is dependent on mastery knowledge of learner in L1.	56	2.786	1.928	Accepted

4.	Pupils in my class find it difficult to write in L2 than L1.	56	2.554	1.025	Accepted
5.	Pupils in my class prefer to write in L1.	56	2.518	1.128	Accepted
<b>Grand Total Mean</b>			<b>6.545</b>	<b>1.241</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Table 3above reveals the opinions of respondents on the impact of L1 on L2 in relation to writing ability of primary school pupils. Based on the table, the mean scores of respondents- 2.589, 2.643, 2.786, 2.554 and 2.518 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 1 - 5 seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 – 3.49 for acceptance level.

The results from the table indicated that majority of the respondents affirmed that L1 impacts L2 writing ability of primary school pupils in the study area. The results revealed that L1 helps in developing writing ability of children in L2, learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1, writing in L2 is dependent on mastery knowledge in L1, children find it difficult to write in L2 than L1 as well as children prefer to write in L1 with mean scores of 2.589, 2.643, 2.786, 2.554 and 2.518 respectively explicate the influence of L1 on writing ability of children in L2.

**RQ 2:** To what extent does L1 impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?

**Table 4:** Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the extent at whichL1 impact L2reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area

S/N	Items on L2 Writing Ability	Valid N=56	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
6.	The difference in vowel pronunciation affects L2 learner in reading English.	56	3.179	4.169	Accepted
7.	The learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1.	56	2.643	1.017	Accepted
8.	The difference in constant pronunciation affects L2 learner in reading English.	56	2.568	1.999	Accepted
9.	Pupils in my class find it difficult to read in L2 than L1.	56	2.554	1.025	Accepted
10.	Pupils in my class prefer to read in L1.	56	2.518	1.128	Accepted
<b>Total Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.692</b>	<b>1.868</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

The table above indicates the opinions of respondents on the impact of L1 on L2 in relation to reading ability of primary school pupils. Based on the table, the mean scores of respondents- 3.179, 2.643, 2.568, 2.554 and 2.518 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 6 - 10 seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 – 3.49 for acceptance level.



The results from the table indicated that majority of the respondents affirmed that L1 impacts L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area. The results revealed that difference in vowel pronunciation, learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1, difference in constant pronunciation, children find it difficult to read in L2 than L1 as well as children prefer to read in L1 with mean scores of 3.179, 2.643, 2.568, 2.554 and 2.518 respectively elucidate the influence of L1 on reading ability of children in L2.

**RQ 3:** To what extent does L1 impact L2 speaking ability of primary school pupils in Jalingo L.G.A, Taraba State?

**Table 5:** Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the extent at which L1 impact L2 speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area

S/N/Items on L2 Writing Ability	Valid N=56	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
11. The unfamiliar phonological rules of L2 affect second language learners in speaking fluently.	56	2.541	1.952	Accepted
12. The learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1.	56	2.643	1.017	Accepted
13. L1 model conditions the ability of learners to pronounce strong sound in L2.	56	2.621	1.896	Accepted

14.	Pupils in my class find it difficult to speak in L2 than L1.	56	2.554	1.025	Accepted
15.	Pupils in my class prefer to speak in L1.	56	2.518	1.128	Accepted
<b>Total Grand Mean</b>			<b>2.575</b>	<b>1.403</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

From table 5 above, all respondents bear their minds on the impact of L1 on L2 in relation to speaking ability of primary school pupils. Based on the table, the mean scores of respondents- 2.541, 2.643, 2.621, 2.554 and 2.518 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 11 - 15 seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 – 3.49 for acceptance level.

The results from the table indicated that highest number of respondents agreed that L1 impacts L2 speaking ability of primary school pupils in the study area. The results revealed that unfamiliar phonological rules of L2 affect children, learners of L2 rely on their knowledge of L1, L1 model conditions the ability of learners to pronounce strong sound in L2, children find it difficult to speak in L2 than L1 as well as children prefer to speak in L1 with mean scores of 2.541, 2.643, 2.621, 2.554 and 2.518 respectively clarify the influence of L1 on speaking ability of children in L2.

### **Summary and Discussion of Results**

The results of data collected were discussed below:

The results of this study revealed significant difference between the reading ability of children in L1 and L2. In fact, L1 significantly impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area. This is supported by Clarke (2009) who

submitted that children with a sound knowledge of L1 will be able to transfer skills from one language to another. Also, Karim and Nassaji (2013) investigated the indigenous language transfer in L2 writing, and they found out that writing in L2 becomes simple for those children who have mastered L1 model. The study conducted by Duskoya (2009) revealed that children tend to use L2 without mastering it. This is hinged on inherent differences in morphology between L1 and L2 where omission of plurals on nouns, lack of subject verb agreement, and adjective disagreement due to L1 influence on L2. These morphological errors are interferences between the terms of L1 on the L2 subsystem.

In the same vein, the findings revealed significant difference between the reading ability of children in L1 and L2. Needless to L1 significantly impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils in the study area. This is in agreement with Lord (2008) who underscored phonological modification of L1 on acquisition of L2, which showed that the effects of L2 interference in L1 are dependent on the level of attention that the participants give to their speech. In other words, phonological awareness promotes reading ability of students in second language acquisition. The study by Widjaja and Winskel (2014) on children phonological awareness, letter knowledge, word and non-word reading skills discovered that children do not like reading in second language due to phonological plight associated with reading in second language. Perhaps Bhela (2009) was right to have concluded that children rely on L1 when they want to produce a response in the L2.

Lastly, this study revealed significant difference between the reading ability of children in L1 and L2. Put differently, L1 significantly impact L2 reading ability of primary school pupils

in the study area. Thus L1 interferes with virtually all aspects of L2 acquisition process for the second language learners. In other words, the alphabetic rules, consonant and vowels of L1 come in contact with fluency of L2 pronunciation thereby negatively impacting on children's speaking ability.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, this paper underscored the significant role of L1 in acquiring L2 among primary school pupils in the study area. It could be said that in learning L2, L1 helps in coordinating appropriate intervention programmes with minimal errors for L2 learners thereby providing them a strong foundation they need to build L2 and a higher level of proficiency in L2. To this end, L1 is essential for acquiring L2 among children. In addendum, L1 helps to improve writing, reading and speaking ability of these children as shown in this study. That is, L1 builds communication skills and vocabulary level among primary school pupils in Taraba State in general and Jalingo Local Government Area in particular.

### **Recommendations**

Based on this study, the following recommendations are made;

- There is the need for training and retraining of primary school teachers in teaching languages in general and L2 in particular.
- Also, teachers are expected to encourage children to write, read and speak in L2 as much as they can.
- Parents are expected to play a complimentary role by encouraging children in the use of L2 even at home at the expense of L1 with a view to improving their proficiency.

- Finally, only the experienced teachers should be allowed to teach all our indigenous languages so as to inculcate L1 model necessary for learning other languages.

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## LA PSYCHO-SEMIOTIQUE CULTURELLE DANS *LARMES DE CENDRES* DE JUSTIN MINTSA

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### **Résumé**

*La sémiotique, domaine de la linguistique structurale, considérée comme l'étude des signes linguistiques et non linguistiques, s'avère un outil pratique d'analyse dans plusieurs domaines y compris, la littérature. Cette communication se propose de faire l'analyse psycho-sémiotique des objets rituels dans Larmes de Cendres de Justin Minsta. Nous nous concentrons sur les Référents des objets rituels qu'on peut trouver dans le roman. On s'appuie sur la théorie Typologique des Personnalités de type A et type B de Meyer Friedman et Ray Rosenman (1959). Cette théorie fait voir les réactions de ces deux personnalités devant des situations diverses. On se rend compte que la personnalité de type A est agressive, compétitive, et hostile mais la personnalité de type B garde son sang-froid, elle est patiente, et elle se détend car elle prend les choses tranquillement. Il s'ensuit que pour vivre en paix dans l'univers du roman, il est préférable de choisir la personnalité de type B.*

*Mots clés : représentamen, réfèrent, typologie, personnalité type A et type B*

### **Introduction**

Une société est un groupe d'individus unifiés par un réseau de relations et de traditions. Dans chaque société humaine, il existe toujours des moyens de communication qu'on appelle la langue. La langue consiste de signes linguistiques qui peuvent être verbaux, graphiques, écrits, ou gestuels. Dans le

Schéma de Jakobson (213-260), la langue joue des rôles référentiel, expressif, poétique, conatif, phatique et métalinguistique. Le domaine de la sémiotique qui s'occupe des objets rituels est la sémiotique culturelle. La sémiologie est une idée ou un concept capturé par les signes, les symboles et les motifs. C'est une branche de la linguistique structurale qui s'occupe de la sémantique, la syntaxique et la pragmatique. La sémiologie s'occupe des signes qui se trouvent dans une communauté linguistique. Dans *le cours de linguistiques générale* (73-77) de Ferdinand de Saussure, (publié par Bally et Sechehaye en 1915), le signe linguistique est conçu comme l'union entre le signifiant (la représentation matérielle) et le signifié (la représentation mentale).

Saussure (74) définit le signe comme la combinaison du concept et de l'image acoustique, le signe est arbitraire. Le signe est un objet qui porte un message codifié qui a besoin d'être interprété à son interlocuteur.. Le signifiant est l'aspect du signe linguistique qui s'occupe de la partie matérielle comme le son, la lettre, ce sont des choses physiques et le signifié s'occupe des aspects mentaux du signe comme l'image mentale, l'idée formée d'un signifiant. L'union du signifiant et du signifié donne le Référent ; donc, on peut définir le référent comme ce qu'un signe désigne. D'après C. S. Peirce (3) la sémiotique est une science de base qui constitue le fondement de la psychologie et de la sociologie ; pour lui le mot 'signe' désigne les Représentamens dont la pensée et l'action humaine sont les interprétants. Le Représentamen selon Peirce fait partie d'une relation triadique dans laquelle un fondement est relié à un objet par le biais d'un interprétant (Le Représentament-l'Objet-l'Interprétant)

Dans le signe peircien, le signe-véhicule est comme le concept du signifiant saussurien, le sens représente l'image mentale de l'objet et le référent représente l'objet, l'idée ou la dénotation. L'idée de la sémiotique peircienne nous permettra d'étudier les référents culturels qu'on peut trouver dans le roman. Pour le signe peircien, il existe trois parties importantes, à savoir : le Représentamen, le référent et l'interprétant. Donc, on peut trouver cette relation triadique dans l'anthropologie culturelle avec des référents déterminés par la tradition. La façon dont la culture sociale et mentale s'est transmise d'une génération à l'autre est appelée la tradition. On dit que la culture est la civilisation d'une société qui s'accorde avec une certaine mentalité et qu'à chaque société sa culture, soit matérielle ou mentale présentée sous forme d'un code déterminé par une convention. Ernst Cassirer (29) décrit certains types de système de signe comme des formes symboliques qui forment la culture d'une société. Cassirer insiste que les deux formes de la sémiotique culturelle ont le but d'étudier le système de signes dans une culture et d'étudier à la fois la culture comme un système de signes en examinant les avantages et les désavantages exprimés par un individu qui appartient à cette culture.

La sémiotique culturelle étudie la culture comme une partie de la sémiotique. On peut trouver aussi le processus de signe dans la culture ; un processus de signe se produit lorsqu'une chose fonctionne comme un signe et pour chaque processus de signe il existe un signe, un interpréteur et un message qui est envoyé à l'interpréteur par un signe. Selon le signe saussurien, on doit avoir une corrélation entre le signifiant et le signifié et cette corrélation est appelée « un code ». Les codes constituent la culture d'une société qui contrôle les

comportements des membres de la société. Donc pour cette étude nous nous concentrons sur les signes culturels qui peuvent s'entourer de message en terme explicite et les signes culturels avec des référents ambigus. Nous nous concentrons sur les objets et les idées représentés par le représentamen et aussi les images créées par les référents chez l'interprétant qui renvoie la réalité extralinguistique dans l'univers imaginaire du roman. Notre étude s'appuie sur la sémiotique de la culture pour faire sortir les objets rituels et puis on applique la théorie typologique de la personnalité de Friedman et Rosenman pour expliquer les effets des objets rituels sur la personnalité des personnages dans le roman. Selon cette théorie, la personnalité de type A est centrée sur elle-même, elle est ambitieuse et un peu impulsive. Cette personnalité a tendance à avoir des problèmes médicaux comme des problèmes cardiaques ou vasculaires. Mais la personnalité de type B est moins ambitieuse et moins impulsive, elle est centrée sur les autres, elle a des émotions plus diluées, elle est stable mais elle a tendance à être facilement dépressive et cela peut la mener aux problèmes psychologiques. Ce qui nous intéresse est le fait que les personnalités des personnages dans le roman sont fluctuantes par leurs expériences chez les Référents culturels que leur société leur accorde.

Dans le roman *Larmes de Cendres*, Justine Minsta, une écrivaine gabonaise (née le 8 septembre, 1949 à Oyem) raconte l'histoire d'un médecin qui tombe sérieusement amoureux d'une belle fille qu'il a nommée La Bleue. C'était un coup de foudre et l'amour de premier instant car, même la fille n'est pas au courant qu'il l'aime. Il rencontre Cécile, une autre jeune fille qui ressemble à sa Bleue et il l'invite à l'accompagner au Bénin, elle accepte et ils voyagent ensemble. Chez son grand-père, le roi et tout le monde sont ravis de les voir mais quand ils arrivent

à la hauteur d'un arbre qui se trouve chez son grand-père, Cécile s'écroule sur le sol et on demande au docteur de l'emmener à l'hôtel car elle ne peut pas entrer dans le palais. Pendant sa visite au Bénin, le docteur se rend compte qu'il est de sang royal, car son père est un prince qui est le fils exilé du roi. Après ce voyage de découverte, retournant à Merville, il raconte toutes ses expériences à ses parents qui sont époustoufflés et fiers de lui. Le docteur décide de cultiver son propre jardin avec le même arbre que celui devant lequel Cécile est tombée au Bénin car l'arbre est doté de pouvoirs extraordinaires. Avant que le docteur ne retourne à Oton, son père, qui est un avocat, lui demande d'assister à l'audience d'une veuve en procès contre sa propre famille pour le viol. En arrivant à la cour de justice, il est étonné de découvrir que l'accusée est son amie Cécile et que la victime est sa Bleue, Flore Ondo Beyeme. La Bleue vient de perdre son mari et il y a eu un complot entre sa mère et sa sœur aînée qui sont de connivence avec un inconnu pour la faire violer au nom de la tradition même contre la volonté de sa belle-famille. La tante Bidzodzo jette l'*akia'a* sur la Bleue et ses sœurs. Par cet *akia'a* les filles ne se marient pas ou n'auront jamais d'enfants mais la Bleue défie son *akia'a* en se mariant. Le docteur et Ntam, la belle-sœur de la Bleue, sont chargés de son traitement car elle devient psychologiquement malade à cause des expériences qu'elle subit donc il emmène la Bleue chez lui et l'installe près de l'arbre. Après des jours la Bleue commence à être guérie par la thérapie de l'arbre. Lorsqu'elle était guérie, elle s'est mariée avec le docteur deux ans après. Les parents du docteur sont scandalisés par la nouvelle de leur mariage mais après quelque temps, ils ont fini par l'accepter ainsi. La Bleue tombe enceinte mais malheureusement elle meurt après l'accouchement de sa fille. Son corps est saisi par sa famille qui

prétend qu'elle n'est pas mariée selon la coutume. A travers ce roman, l'auteur invite le lecteur à critiquer les référents culturels qui existent dans la société du roman.

### **Les Référents culturels dans le roman**

Dans le roman, on peut trouver des référents culturels qui sont explicites et d'autres au sens complexe. Comme nous l'avons dit, les référents explicites ont des signifiés simples ; on peut facilement déchiffrer leur sens mais les référents ambigus ont besoin du contexte pour être compris. Les référents culturels qu'on peut trouver dans le roman sont :

1. ***Akia'a*** : c'est un référent qui peut expliquer la relation triadique de Peirce, entre le Representamen, l'objet et l'interprétant dans la culture de la société linguistique du roman. Le mot *Akia'a* représente une idée, c'est le fait de laisser une femme célibataire et sans enfants diriger le rituel incantatoire d'un nouveau-né, au cours duquel on jette « *l'akia'a* » sur les filles. Chez l'interprétant, ce référent donne l'image d'une fille qui ne peut jamais avoir d'enfant et ne peut jamais se marier. Dans la tradition romanesque, lorsqu'on jette *l'akia'a* sur un nouveau-né la fille ne peut pas se marier ou avoir des enfants mais elle avoir des riches courtisans de son choix. Dans le roman, les filles de Kaeyii ; Biloa (la Bleue) et Nghet (Cécile) ont cet *Akia'a* à leur naissance grâce à leur tante Bidzodzo qui ne s'est jamais mariée et qui n'a jamais eu d'enfants elle-même. Donc d'après la croyance culturelle, *l'akia'a* permet aux fils de vivre une vie normale mais pour les filles, elles doivent se soumettre à *l'akia'a* si non cela peut leur coûter très cher. Le narrateur dit :

..A la naissance de ses filles, elle avait laissé sa belle-sœur Bidzodzo, qui n'avait jamais eu d'enfant et ne s'était jamais mariée, diriger le rituel incantatoire au cours duquel le sort du nouveau-né était jeté : l'akia'a...en revanche, elles allaient être de riches courtisanes. Aucun homme de leur choix ne devait leur résister... (p.22).

2. **Akengba** : c'est un référent culturel dans la culture du roman.« *L'akengba* » représente un rituel de veuvage qu'une femme subit lorsqu'elle perd son mari. Biloa, la veuve est obligée de subir un acte-clé pratiqué par sa sœur et sa mère au nom de l'Akengba. Le Representamen « *Akengba* »est un rituel de veuvage dans lequel la veuve est officiellement violée et l'identité du violeur reste un secret. Lorsqu'on dit *Akengba*, le Référent (idée) c'est d'enfermer la veuve dans une chambre sombre en lui enfonçant un chiffon dans la bouche pour l'empêcher de crier avant d'être violée. Dans la culture du roman, il est nécessaire pour une veuve de subir ce rituel pour montrer qu'elle aime suffisamment son mari. Pour l'Interprétant,*Akengba* signifie l'ultime preuve d'amour pour le défunt. La sœur de Biloa lui dit :

...nous sommes des Africains. Nous sommes des vrais Noirs...tu sais ce que les gens vont croire si tu ne subis pas le rituel du veuvage ? Ils vont croire que tu n'aimes pas suffisamment ton mari. Ce rituel c'est ton ultime preuve d'amour pour lui (p.23-24)

D'après la mère de Kan, *Akengba* est un rituel acceptable chez-eux selon leur culture mais pour les blancs, il peut avoir d'autres référents comme *le viol*. Dans leur coutume il est normal et officiel pour une veuve d'être violée par un inconnu. Elle dit « c'est chez les Blancs que cela s'appelle viol, dans notre coutume, cela s'appelle *akengba*, un rituel. La veuve doit passer par ça. C'est officiel, bien que l'identité de l'auteur soit tenue secrète, même vis-à-vis de la veuve, à qui on bande les yeux pour la circonstance » (p.34).

Le mot *akengba* dans la culture du roman est un référent culturel qui montre clairement la relation triadique entre le Représentamen, l'Objet et l'Interprétant. L'objet ou l'idée d'*akengba* est le veuvage, mentalement le mot *akengba* donne l'image d'un rituel pour la femme qui a perdu son mari chez l'interprétant.

3. ***Moan'ke* et *Esa***: dans le roman le *moan'ke* et l'*Esa* sont des événements physiques qui distinguent deux types de petits-enfants dans une famille ; le premier désigne l'enfant de la sœur alors que le dernier désigne l'enfant du fils. Si par exemple l'on a trois enfants (une fille et deux garçons) et à l'avenir ils se sont mariés avec des enfants, on désigne les enfants des garçons comme des *Esa* car ils sont les vrais membres de cette famille mais pour les enfants de la fille, on les appelle des *moan'kecar* ils appartiennent à une autre famille c'est-à-dire la famille du mari de la fille. Kan se sent ridiculisé forcément par la famille de sa mère parce qu'il est l'enfant de la sœur. Il dit « ...C'est une disposition d'esprit atavique. Je considérerais cette attitude comme du pur racisme. Mes cousins issus des frères de ma mère



étaient des Esa à part entière » (p.46). Les deux référents ont les mêmes dénotations « les petits-enfants » mais avec une opposition binaire « garçon » et « fille ». Kan qui n'a jamais connu la famille de son père est toujours entouré par la famille de sa mère, il ne peut pas se sentir à l'aise avec eux car il est un *moan'ke* et est désigné ainsi. Donc, le Representamen *moan'ke* a un Référent d'un fils de la sœur chez l'Interprétant ce Représentamen a une image d'inégalité, de ségrégation et même de racisme.

4. **L'Arbre** : dans le roman, l'arbre a des pouvoirs mystérieux. Nous avons vu que lorsque Kan a emmené Cécile pour la première fois chez son grand-père, elle ne pouvait pas y entrer car l'arbre l'en a empêchée. Elle est tombée à la hauteur de l'arbre donc pour les gens du village lorsque cela se passe la personne est considérée comme un porte-malheur, une personne de mauvais augure. Ngo, le journaliste avertit Kan d'être prudent avec Cécile car elle peut lui apporter des malheurs. Kan dit : « ... à l'approche de l'arbre tentaculaire, je sentis qu'elle ralentissait le pas. Je mis ce fait sur le compte de la fatigue...mais quand nous arrivâmes à la hauteur de l'arbre, à mon plus grand désarroi, elle s'écroula sur le sol. Tout le monde s'arrêta et, au lieu de voler à son secours, ils s'en écartèrent avec des mines hostiles... ». (p.44-45). Vers la fin du roman, nous voyons que l'arbre a raison car Cécile est la base de tous les malheurs que souffre sa sœur Biloa, la femme de Kan et c'est elle-même qui la tue. Le Representamen, « *arbre* », est un référent culturel car chez l'interprétant, il signifie un protecteur qui protège les gens contre le malheur, et

aussi un guérisseur. C'est l'arbre qui aide Biloa à se guérir de son état de démence.

5. **Costume-cravate** : dans le roman, ce référent qui dénote un moyen de s'habiller, est un vêtement porté avec une cravate surtout chez les blancs. Lorsqu'un Béninois dans le roman porte un *costume-cravate*, il est regardé comme un étranger, comme quelqu'un blanc parce qu'il s'habille à l'européenne. En visitant le Bénin, le pays de son père, Kan porte un *costume-cravate* pour assister au dîner d'accueil organisé pour lui par son grand-père. Avec ce costume, il est vu comme un étranger, comme quelqu'un qui n'appartient pas à la communauté. Kan qui a la mission d'affermir son identité devient troublé car il porte un *costume-cravate*. Il dit : « ... Au fond de moi, je déplorais le fait d'être en costume-cravate alors que tout le monde était en tenue traditionnelle... j'étais irrité par cette tenue qui faisait de moi un étranger, à un moment aussi important de l'affermissement de mon identité... (p.56). Le Representamen « *costume-cravate* » a le Référent des gens occidentaux et chez l'Interprétant c'est un habillement qui montre que la personne ne fait pas partie du milieu africain.

### **L'analyse Psychologique des Référents dans le roman**

Dans le roman, on a tiré des objets concrets et des concepts désignés par des mots ou des expressions référentielles. Nous avons établi que les référents peirciens sont des objets qui ont des expressions gravées dans le domaine de la pensée. Les référents peuvent être des expériences et des actions-réactions désignées par le Representamen. Ces expressions référentielles peuvent être des objets comme *l'arbre* dans le roman, des actions comme *Kpanligan*, l'art de raconter une histoire, l'état

comme *Akia'a*, et aussi une relation comme *Moan'ke* et *Esa* qui ont toujours des représentations. Nous avons constaté que dans le roman, ces référents culturels ont aussi des effets psychologiques sur les types de personnalité des personnages. Nous utilisons les types de la personnalité pour classer les personnages touchés par ces effets comme la personnalité de type A et la personnalité de type B de Meyer Friedman et R.H Rosenman (1976).

### **Les Personnalités de Type A et Type B**

La personnalité de type A est une personne très compétitive, autocritique, hostile et agressive. Les personnages de type A sont facilement enroutables et ont tendance à réagir de manière excessive. Ils ont tendance à être facilement éveillés à la colère ou à l'hostilité qu'ils peuvent exprimer ou non. Selon Friedman et Rosenman (1959), la personnalité de type A est une conduite caractérisée par une hyperactivité, un sentiment d'urgence, un énervement facile, il est aussi caractérisé par le besoin de contrôler son environnement afin de réduire son incertitude. Selon eux la personnalité de type A est plus prédisposée aux maladies liées au stress telles que les maladies coronariennes, l'hypertension et ainsi de suite. Ils disent que ce type de personnalité rend la personne plus susceptible et sa réaction est déclenchée par des choses dans son environnement donc la personne a toujours des hormones de stress. Ils n'aiment pas être les vaincus donc ils doivent gagner à tout prix.

D'après Friedman et Rosenman (1976) la personnalité de type B a tendance à être plus tolérante envers les autres, la personne qui fait partie de ce type de personnalité est plus réfléchie et détendue. Ce type de personnalité ressent moins d'anxiété, il fait preuve d'un niveau plus élevé d'imagination et de créativité. Pour Friedman et Rosenman, ce type de

personnalité travaille régulièrement avec plaisir sans être stressé. Lorsqu'il n'a pas atteint ses objectifs, il ne craint pas d'être en concurrence car même s'il perd, il apprécie les divers avantages qu'offre le jeu. Ce type de personnalité est créatif et aime exploiter de nouvelles idées et de nouveaux concepts, il est facile à vivre. Pour ce type de personnalité, il n'y a pas tendance à l'hostilité car il est toujours détendu.

### **Les Personnalités de Type A et Type B dans le roman**

Dans le roman, on peut voir les référents culturels qui contribuent au changement de personnalité des personnages ; ces référents leur font exhiber des caractéristiques de personnalité de type A ou celles de type B. Les exemples sont :

1. *Akia'a* A la naissance de Biloa l'une des filles de Kaeyii, c'est Bidzodzo, sa tante célibataire qui a dirigé le rituel ; on lui a jeté automatiquement *l'akia'a* qui la suit toute sa vie. Biloa ne peut pas vivre une vie normale car elle est obligée de se soumettre à *l'akia'a* pour éviter les conséquences capitales. Dans le roman, tante Bidzodzo jette *l'akia'a* sur les filles de Kaeyii ; Biloa (la Bleue) et Nghet (Cécile) dès leurs naissances. Donc d'après la croyance culturelle, *l'akia'a* laisse les fils vivre une vie normale mais pour les filles, elles doivent se soumettre à *l'akia'a* si non cela peut leur coûter très cher. Cécile est affectée psychologiquement par ce référent car elle n'arrive pas à se marier, elle devient très agressive vers sa petite sœur qui est mariée. Pour elle, sa sœur Biloa n'a aucun droit d'être mariée à cause de *l'akia'a* mais Biloa s'est mariée deux fois et elle a enfanté une fille. On peut dire que Cécile appartient à la personnalité de type A, car elle est agressive, hyperactive, elle est facilement énervée, elle a toujours le besoin de contrôler

son environnement afin de réduire son incertitude. C'est pour cela qu'elle est de connivence avec sa mère pour arranger viol de Biloa ; elle est de connivence avec ses parents pour empêcher Kan d'enterrer sa mère. Son hyperactivité lui donne de l'argent et avec l'argent, elle contrôle les affaires de sa famille et même ses parents la respectent comme la personnalité de type A. Cécile n'aime pas perdre donc elle doit gagner à tout prix. Pour Biloa, l'*akia'a* fait d'elle une personnalité de type B, elle est calme, tolérante envers les autres, elle est plus réfléchie et détendue. Elle ressent moins d'anxiété, elle travaille toujours avec plaisir sans être stressée, elle ne craint pas d'être en concurrence. Elle est créative, c'est ainsi qu'elle transforme le jardin du docteur en un paradis. Elle aime exploiter de nouvelles idées et de nouveaux concepts ; c'est ainsi que malgré l'*akia'a*, elle s'est mariée et eu un enfant. Elle est aimable, les parents de son premier mari l'aiment beaucoup et même son deuxième mari Kan l'aime bien. Comme une personnalité de type B, elle n'est pas hostile aux gens car elle est toujours détendue.

2. *Akengba* est un référent culturel suivi par une veuve pour prouver son amour pour son mari défunt. Dans le roman, Biloa est attirée dans ce piège par sa mère et sa sœur aînée Cécile, elle est violée par un inconnu. Accablée par cet acte, Biloa perd totalement la raison. C'est donc *akengba* qui est à la base de sa maladie mentale et au changement de la personnalité de type B à la personnalité de type A. Elle devient hostile et agressive envers sa mère et sœur et elle les poursuit en justice pour le viol. Elle n'arrive pas à gagner le procès donc elle

devient énervée, elle est stressée et elle tombe sévèrement malade, elle ne veut pas manger et si on l'oblige à manger, elle le fait avec gourmandise et après elle vomit tout ce qu'elle a mangé.

3. Les référents *Moanke et Esa* ont des effets psychologiques sur les personnages dans le roman. Pour Kan, le personnage principal du roman, ces référents lui donnent le sentiment d'être stigmatisé par la famille de sa mère. Kan est stigmatisé par la famille de sa mère car il est un *moan'ke* ; le fils d'une fille. Pour être un Esa, Kan doit chercher sa propre famille c'est-à-dire la famille de son père car un *moanke* ne peut jamais être à l'aise. Kan est un homme de la personnalité de type B mais a cause du référent *moanke*, il a dû montrer quelques caractéristiques de la personnalité de type A. Kan devient énervé comme la personnalité de type A par le référent *Moanke*. Il veut connaître sa propre origine donc il devient aussi hyperactif, il organise un voyage clandestin au Bénin dans le but de retrouver la famille de son père qu'il n'a jamais connue. Kan a besoin de contrôler son environnement afin de réduire l'incertitude que le référent *moanke* lui donne. Comme la personnalité de type A, le voyage à Cotonou est une tâche qu'il doit accomplir de n'importe quel moyen car il doit réussir aussi. Son sentiment d'être ridiculisé par la famille de sa mère transforme sa personnalité de type B en personnalité de type A. Mais sa personnalité change encore lorsqu'il retrouve l'amour chez Biloa ; il change de type A en B.
4. *L'Arbre* avec ses pouvoirs mystérieux joue des rôles importants par rapport aux types des personnalités des

personnages dans le roman. Nous avons vu que lorsque Kan emmène Cécile pour la première fois chez son grand-père, l'arbre lui signale sa personnalité. Le fait qu'elle ne puisse pas passer par l'arbre montre que sa conduite peut lui apporter des malheurs. Cela veut dire que la personnalité de type A est dangereuse pour les autres et même pour elle-même. L'arbre aussi peut changer des types de personnalité. Nous avons vu que Kan plante le même type d'arbre dans son jardin et lorsqu'il emmène Biloa qui est souffrante d'une maladie psychologique, le pouvoir de l'arbre la guérit ; sa personnalité est changée aussi par son contact avec l'arbre. Elle change de la personnalité A en personnalité B et elle retrouve la joie de vivre avec sa nouvelle famille.

5. *Costume-cravate* est une façon de s'habiller qui a des dénnotations ambiguës. Au monde occidental c'est une façon d'être classiquement habillé qui est aussi appelée *le complet* ou *veston* porté par les hommes. Mais dans la communauté linguistique du roman, la façon d'être bien habillé est de s'habiller à l'africaine c'est-à-dire de porter des tissus africains. Donc, lorsqu'un indigène porte *le costume-cravate*, on le met à part, il est ségrégé car la culture de la société romanesque traduit cet habillement comme une trahison de la culture africaine. Pour la première fois, Kan décide de rendre visite à son pays natal à l'insu de son père. Il n'est pas au courant de leur culture, donc il se trouve habillé en *costume-cravate*. Il est regardé comme un étranger, esclavagiste ou un colonialiste. Kan se sent psychologiquement en désarroi, il devient irrité comme la personnalité de type

A. On peut dire que sa personnalité en ce moment important de sa vie change. Au lieu d'être détendu comme la personnalité de type B car il assiste à son dîner d'accueil mais comme la personnalité de type A, Kan est perplexe, il veut contrôler son environnement même s'il ne peut l'exprimer. Dans son état d'énervement, il ne sait pas comment affermir son identité.

### **Conclusion**

Cette étude révèle les influences des référents culturels sur les gens dans l'univers romanesque. Nous avons montré la relation triadique du processus de la sémiotique peircienne ; le Représentamen (un signe ou une chose qui représente autre chose), l'Objet (ce que le signe ou le Représentamen représente), l'Interprétant (l'habitude que nous avons d'attribuer telle signification à tel signe dans tel contexte...). Nous avons vu comment ces référents peuvent avoir des influences sur les personnages du roman. On peut dire que les référents culturels sont à la base de toutes les crises dans le roman car ils ont des effets divers sur les personnages. Les référents culturels ont des pouvoirs pour faire la fortune ou la ruine des personnages du roman. Il y a des référents culturels comme *Akia'a* qui a des effets négatifs sur les personnages ; ce référent brise la vie de Biloa et celle de sa sœur Cécile. Biloa trouve sa mort prématurée après l'accouchement de sa fille et pour sa sœur elle est sous l'influence de l'*akia'a* ; célibataire et sans enfants, elle voit s'écrouler son univers tout entier. *L'arbre* comme un référent culturel a des effets positifs sur les personnages ; il change les personnages comme Kan et Biloa de la personnalité de type A en personnalité de type B. Donc il est nécessaire de sélectionner avec prudence et précaution les référents culturels dans la société



car ils jouent des rôles très importants dans le développement des types de personnalité des gens qui vivent dans l'univers du roman. Lorsqu'il existe des référents culturels qui sont capables d'avoir des effets négatifs sur les personnalités des gens, on peut les transformer en référents culturels positifs pour avoir une société paisible et pour qu'il y ait une coexistence pacifique entre les gens d'une société.

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## **DEVELOPMENT OF REMNANT NIGERIAN LANGUAGES: THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the issue of developing remnant Nigerian languages and the role of the government as well as the speech community in orthography development. The motivation for this paper stems from the fact that many endangered Nigerian languages are unwritten and efforts have been made over time to develop writing system for these languages but yield little or no result. Beyond these concerted efforts, many indigenous languages are gradually going into extinction due to dearth of writing system, proper planning and poor implementation of policy on small size languages. However, this paper sets out to explicate strategies that could be adopted by the government and the community to forestall the endangerment of remnant Nigerian languages. This study, among other things, shows that unless the government, its Agencies (Ministry of Education, Committees and Societies) and the community put concerted efforts in establishing rapport with specialized institutes, such as NINLAN, SIL, SOAS, Living Tongues Institute, and departments of linguistics all over the country to develop writing system and devising metalanguages for these languages, majority of these languages will be endangered or lost in the near future. The study concludes by reiterating the pivotal role of the government in policy making and implementation, thus advised that the government should provide guidelines, funds and promote the*

*use of indigenous orthography in all levels of education and the media. Also, the study suggests relevant actions on the part of the community and government in order to minimize worst cases of language endangerment. Finally, this paper recommends that Readers Project be set up in every state of the federation as a way to develop, document and revitalize remnant Nigerian languages.*

**Keywords:** Endangerment, extinction, government, remnant languages, orthography, speech community

## **1.0 Introduction**

Over the years, the concern of linguists, researchers, language activists, community members and the government has been to develop language materials for unwritten languages of the world through orthography development. The quest to develop written codes is anchored on the fact that many languages of the world are unwritten and purely oral which makes the collection and archiving of natural and raw data impossible or futile (cf. Williamson, 1984). However, the need to develop readable materials for unwritten languages becomes imperative, not only to the accessible speakers of those languages, but for the purpose of education, grammar and/or collection of textual materials for posterity. It is argued that the lack of an orthography exposes a language to timely death or extinction (in the case of endangerment and lack of stored information) such that, the vitality of such a language depends on the production of textual and readable materials (e.g. Latin language). For a language to be vital, it must be codified to an acceptable level. To achieve this, collaborative effort must be ensured.

Okon (2018) reiterates that the development of orthography for unwritten languages is a collaborative effort of

both the linguists, language activists, the speech community as well as the government and other language regulating agencies. Daniels & Bright (1996) remark that “humankind is defined by language; but civilization is defined by writing.” This is to say, mass literacy is made possible through standardized orthography and possibly, a requirement for the survival of oral languages. Goody (2000) reports four benefits of an orthography to include; documentation of ideas, histories, policies and facts about a language. In Nigeria, as in other countries of the world, minority languages are severally endangered due to the presence of English as a national language against indigenous languages and most importantly, the lack of orthography. It is in the light of this that an attempt is made to examine the issue of orthography development for remnant Nigerian languages and the role of the government and the speech community herein along with linguistic decisions. Here, an attempt is made also to address this problem by advocating and succinctly examining the role of government in developing orthography for indigenous languages in line with Lewis & Simons (2010) and Oko’s (2018) proposition accordingly. According to Lewis & Simons, a language is not determined by the number of its speakers, but partly if it is written, standardized and used in education, mass media and enjoyed government support.

Another major concern of this paper is the dearth of writing system (orthography) in some Nigerian languages. As a matter of fact, remnant Nigerian languages have been receding in the spoken form with no written form, and risk extinction as transmission remained predominantly oral. The quest to develop orthography for these languages has been a daunting and protracted one, hence this paper is set out to suggest methods that could be adopted by the government and the speech

community to forestall endangerment of remnant Nigerian languages. In so doing, a number of strategies will be examined and how these strategies revitalize languages of the world. It is expected that these lessons be learnt to avert the ugly situation of some Nigerian languages currently facing extinction. Thus, this paper is intended to be a study of the role of government and the community through the development, preservation, implementation and archiving of linguistic information about a language (or languages) so that it can be accessible to the people.

## **2.0 The Concept Orthography**

Orthography is seen as an ethical and methodological approach to describe, encode, develop and preserve linguistic information of a language through the process of designing and implementing writing system. According to Williamson (1984), orthography refers to the symbols and the rules that are followed in writing a language. Ken (2014) says, the term orthography was not in use until recently. He reports that grammatology was the first term that was used in 1952 by Gelb to mean the study of writing. Matthews (2007) defines grammatology as the study of the nature and history of writing system. Other terms such as graphemics (Augst, 1986) and graphology (Crystal, 1995) were used to compositely refer to the art of writing and the impact of writing on how people think about a language. Largely, orthography is the process of creating a new, standard system for writing a language (Ferguson, 1968; Sebba, 1998).

Following Emenanjo (2010), orthography has to do with a comprehensive writing system that is generally recognized and acceptable. He quotes Williamson (1984) as saying that a standard orthography enforces conformity in general writing practice in a given language. That is to say, efforts must be geared towards uniformity in developing orthography for

unwritten languages. The uniformity in developing orthography must, for instance, determine the standard alphabet and its letters, the diacritics to be used, spelling rules and other conventions, tone differentiation, word boundary and punctuation marks. Alas, the enterprise of orthography development is largely a practice of language management hence, should be seen as an important venture for linguists, the speech community and the government. The reason is that the tradition of literacy depends on the formal existence of orthography. Thus, the concern of linguists and field researchers is to develop readable materials for minority languages and making it as practical as possible.

The survival of many minority languages is a sensitive issue to linguists because unwritten languages face endangerment due to some factors such as social, political and economic inequalities caused by national policies. A response to this problem is the introduction of orthography as part of language management activity because the practice of writing a language helps in maintaining the function of a language which perhaps, changes the status of a language through codification. A language is functional if it is used by accessible speakers of a speech community and above all, codified. On the other hand, a language loses its functionality if speakers of the language choose to speak a dominant language for the sole purpose of recognition, status, economic, political prestige, etc. As each day passes, children are born, old speakers die and language choices are made which, however, puts the language at risk of endangerment or extinction. Thus, the attention of linguists is drawn to this overwhelming fact to develop, codify and preserve minority languages.

In Nigeria, as in other countries of the world, many minority languages are endangered due to social, political and economic reasons. To resolve this anomaly, different types of orthography have been studied by linguists as befitting for minority languages, for instance, non-standardized, incomplete orthography, systematic multidialectal, unilectal and multidialectal orthographies (Unseth, 2014). Linguists often resort to using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to develop orthography for local languages. The IPA which provides a conventional list of symbols (i.e. letters) is used to write local languages. To develop a good orthography for any language, one must follow the convention of symbols (usually the Latin alphabet) and rules in writing a language. The choice of symbols is hinged on five methods according to Williamson (1984:13). They are:

- i. The use of special symbols often taken from the phonetic alphabet such as the hooked **ɓ** and **ɗ** used in Hausa, the **ɛ̃** (inverted e) of Kanuri or the **ɔ̃** (inverted c) in Efik.
- ii. The use of a letter with diacritics, for instance, the sub dots used in Yoruba to represent **ẹ** and **ş**.
- iii. The use of digraph (usually two letters representing one sound e.g. **gh,sh,ny**).
- iv. The use of single Latin letter with a usual value e.g. the use of **p** in Yoruba for the voiceless labial velar stop /**kp**/.
- v. The use of spelling rule e.g. the spelling of **ebwo** (fish) as **ebo** in Igede.

The use of this method provides the impetus for developing orthography for unwritten Nigerian languages. Apart from these choices, a number of linguistic treatments are



required. For instance phonological information (vowels, consonants, syllable and tone) as well as morphological information (word boundary, processes of enriching the terminology of the language), spelling rules, syntactic diagnostics, numeral system, etc. In studying Nigerian languages, for instance, Kay Williamson reiterated that every Nigerian language has its own set of vowels. She identified and grouped vowels into groups out of which a language may belong (see Williamson, 1984). Along this classification, Karshima (2104) reports that Tiv falls under the six-vowel languages with six vowels germinate divided into short and long-**a, e, i, o, ô, u** and **aa, ee, oo, ôô, uu**. In the Jamaican orthography, it was revealed that IPA sound-symbol method is used to represent long vowels. It is germane to state that the Tiv vowel system shares in the spirit of Cassidy and LePage's (1967) Jamaican orthography. However, the use of double letter makes it easier to identify long sounds in languages of this group. This process is very productive in Tiv as shown below:

- |      |                                 |                       |               |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| i.   | <b>ka</b> 'it is'               | <b>kaa</b> 'to tell'  |               |
| ii.  | <b>ta</b> 'to hit with a stone' | <b>taa</b> 'to        | help someone' |
| iii. | <b>ma</b> 'to drink'            | <b>maa</b> 'to build' |               |

Intermittently, the choice to develop a standard orthography hinges around phonology from which complex sound sequences are taken into consideration out of which syllable and word boundary are explicated. Beyond this consideration, a standard orthography must reflect the exact information about the language, the linguistic choices as well as the sentiment of the speakers and owners of the language about their language, that is, orthography must be seen as the expression of people's identity. This is reflected in the Abureni

speech community in Bayelsa State, for instance, to preserve their language and project their identity by voluntarily providing ample information about their language to linguists for the purpose of documentation. This is to say that providing a linguistic framework is a step to writing a language and cannot be done in isolation of the speech community concerned. The speakers and owners of the language must be interlocking toward providing ample information about their language from which linguistic diagnosis are made.

To the linguist, the creation of orthography is a compromise between linguistic and sociolinguistic realities (Ken, 2014). In other words, both linguistic variables and sociolinguistic factors are always interlocking when developing orthographies for unwritten languages. Primary to these factors is the choice of symbols (letters) supported by IPA from which samples are drawn and incorporated into unwritten languages. This is not gainsaying the fact that secondary or sociolinguistic factors are invaluable in orthography decision, but of optimal importance is associating linguistic elements with graphic symbols for sociolinguistic decision. In this case, firm understanding is required by taking social realities such as acceptability (i.e. orthography must be accepted by the speech community) beyond the linguistic scope. The reason here is that for an orthography to be developed, the socio-cultural variability of the speech community must be taken serious and perhaps, the participation of the speech community makes orthography development a collaborative venture. Only this way, orthography development can be achieved. Other sociolinguistic factors are secondary to this assertion, such as the government factor, religious factor, socioeconomic value, and existing literature. It is, however, against these claims that this study intend to look at

the government as a major actor in the promotion of orthography development for minority languages within the ambiance of language management.

Furthermore, the relationship between a speech community's identity and language spoken is integral in the determination of orthography. This is, there is a stronger identification between speakers of the language, the language itself and the prestige that comes with the use of the language. This garner relationship kick starts the development of a language to meet the needs and choices of the speakers in communication, trade and commerce as well as in education in the wider speech community. In so doing, the community may form virile team of language enthusiasts who are believed to be custodians of the culture of the people to help in the documentation process. In other words, there is a high degree of community participation in the development of orthography to serve the needs and choices of language users in the community. However, the community's role in devising orthography is important, hence forms the basis of argument in this paper.

### **3.0. Strategies for Developing Remnant Nigerian Languages**

Orthography development is largely a language management activity because it requires the intentional linguistic and conscious efforts of the speech community to develop, codify and preserve their language. Language preservation enterprise encompasses the actual language development, the planning and policy. To Chaudenson (1989), orthography development is a tripartite activity of planning, policy and management. When a language is codified, policies are made to preserve and encourage the use of the language. Chaudenson (1989) cited in Ken (2014) that language development beckons on policy, planning and management. In other words, when a

language is developed, policies are made through effective planning and management. Policies are made to give status, to allow proper language planning and to promote the continuous existence of a language. Spolsky (2009) describes language policy as the choices made by individual speakers on the basis of rule-governed patterns recognized by the speech community. These choices create language planning and management. The argument of this paper is based on the fact that proper planning of Nigerian languages is achievable in that it accords minority languages status through orthography development and provision of standardized writing system. This will serve as a useful leverage to endangered languages. In India, the planning and management of minority languages gave the impetus for the development of Darma, an unwritten and severely endangered language (Oko, 2018). This concerted effort in India can be sustained in Nigeria in order to develop practical orthography as a requisite for successful maintenance and revitalization of remnant Nigerian languages.

Agbedo (2000) quotes Weinstein (1980) as saying that language planning is a government authorised long-term sustained and conscious effort to alter a language function in the society for the purpose of solving communication problem. Communication, in this context, refers not only to the spoken form of a language, but the written form as well. This is gainsaying the fact that orthography development and management is vital in sustaining unwritten languages through the provision of policies or planning in the development and use of language in the society. This according to Agbedo (2000), involves the assessment of resources, complex decision making, the assignment of different functions to different varieties of language in the speech community and the allocation of

resources. Sadly, these prospects are less prioritized as many indigenous languages are endangered and efforts to revitalize and develop them are dwarfed by poor allocation of funds to language institutes (NINLAN, NERDC), individual researchers and language enthusiasts.

As earlier reported, over a handful minority languages are extinct or near extinction due to lack of orthography or a codified system of writing that is accepted and recognized. The lack of orthography often leads to extinction of the language, its culture and orature. To avert the ugly trend of endangerment, orthography should be developed and effective management be ensured in the preservation or revitalization of minority languages. Language management is one of the many duties of the government and the community. To Kloss (1969), language management must be seen as language planning either status or corpus planning along with acquisition planning (Cooper, 1989). This type of planning according to Kloss (1969), is necessary in the management of minority languages. In effect, the government may ensure the use of an orthography through acquisition planning in schools, and ensure implementation of policy through corpus planning which deals exclusively with orthography development. The speech community on the hand, must promote the development of its language and ensure that it is fit for teaching and learning in their areas of jurisdiction. This way, the government will ensure the provision of laws, guidelines and allocation of funds for the purpose of language development in the community concerned.

#### **4.0 The Way Forward**

One of the pertinent roles of the government is the formation of policy, implementation and management of local

languages. In Nigeria, there are over 400 languages which require proper planning. Sadly, minority languages are gradually going into extinction due to the presence of dominant languages. These languages lack orthographies, a unified writing system and proper management they deserve. It is on the occasion of these challenges that this paper is set to examine the role of the government in revitalizing remnant Nigerian languages through orthography development.

The government, which is the highest decision making body is responsible for the development of minority languages. The early stage of orthography development starts with the speech community and at the later stage, the linguists in the codification or graphisation and lastly the government in planning, managing, preserving and archiving language materials. Apart from the general role of government and the community, the following roles are attributive in the development of orthography for minority languages:

- i. Proper planning and policy making on minority languages: One of the duties of government is ensure that local languages are effectively planned and prioritized. This way, the survival of minority languages becomes resolute and thus, makes it possible for language development.
- ii. Radical development of minority languages through codification: When unwritten languages are identified, the government and the speech community must ensure that a process of reduction or codification is put in place. This effort is usually triggered by language activists who are interested in the development of their language. Notably among this concerted and sustained effort is the Kana

project occasioned by the Ogoni speech community in Khana Local Government of Rivers state. The project produced the orthography of Kana and texts, orature and terminology for the teaching and learning of Kana. It is advised that such concerted effort be made by the government and the speech community through funding and proper planning in developing local languages.

- iii. Establishment of language Readers Project. Readers' project is one of the most successful parameters in the development of orthography for minority languages. The government can initiate readers' project to cater for minority languages as one of its policies. For instance, the Rivers Readers' Project produced over 7 orthographies in 2011 and still producing orthographies for minority languages around the riverine area. The establishment of Readers Project revitalizes the numeral systems, produces texts (Abureni poetry), pictorial dictionaries and enriches the terminology of minority languages to fashion their metalanguage, promote and propagate their language at both local and national levels. This strategy has proven to be effective in some parts of the country; hence it becomes pivotal on the government to establish Readers Project in the 36 states of the federation.
- iv. Empowerment of language institution(s) through proper allocation of funds. Language institutes in Nigeria are major actors in the aspect of orthography development for minority languages. The government can partner with departments of

Linguistics, for instance, department of Languages and Linguistics in NSU, Keffi, University of Jos, University of Uyo, etc. to document the languages of the domiciled environment. The department of Languages and Linguistics, Nasarawa State University, Keffi through TETFUND embarked on the documentation of the linguistic profile of the languages of Nasarawa state over the years. The essence is to document the languages of Nasarawa state and create a database for minority languages in the state. It is expected that a similar effort be made by sister departments all over the country through the documentation of Nigerian languages. It is advised that the government ought to provide adequate funding to ease the campaign of developing orthographies for minority languages.

- v. Promotion of academic activities through funding of orthography conferences. Expatriate linguists, indigenous linguists and non-governmental agencies who are interested in the preservation of local languages through orthography development must garner the support of the government. The government especially, the Ministry of Education can partner with foreign organizations like Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), Living Tongues Institutes or School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London to develop orthographies for minority languages through training and retraining of linguists, languages activists and the speech community on the importance of orthography development. This can be seen in the instance of the



Olukumi language where linguists and language activists were trained, and partnership established (Living Tongues Institute) with adequate funding to create database for local languages, especially the Olukumi, a language of the Anioma people of Delta state. A bilingual dictionary of English-Olukumi was produced as a response to the dearth of materials in the language by Dr. B.E. Arokoyo. This concerted effort is plausible in preventing remnant Nigerian languages from extinction.

- vi. Promotion of televised programs in local languages. Government-owned media should resuscitate the learning of local languages. The BBC learning English is one of the televised programs in the United Kingdom which not only promotes English language, but simplify the learning of English through examination and re-examination of English orthography and its complexity. It is advised also that government-owned media like NTA should embark on the teaching and learning of minority languages through review of orthography or spelling rules.
- vii. Provision of grants to field researchers in the documentation of minority languages. Research grants can be provided to field researchers to develop and document orthography for under-defined Nigerian languages by the government, speakers and owner of these languages. This will, however, encourage the impetus for writing local languages. Chief Paul Eriki is known to be helpful in

- awarding grants to students and researchers in Isoko annually. This commendable effort is encouraged.
- viii. Promotion of indigenous orthography for the purpose of education by empowering small size Nigerian languages through writing and publishing of language materials for educational development at all levels of education. This way, it will encourage literacy in indigenous languages.
- ix. Sponsoring writing workshops for texts, and devising metalanguages for remnant Nigerian languages. Government can form virile language planning agencies (committees/societies) to organize workshop(s) to people knowledgeable in their language who in turn write texts in their language, design a standard writing system, produce relevant texts in all genres of writing and fashion their metalanguage. This has been the experiences of all developed languages in the world. In the instance of Kriol, an English-based creole spoken in New South Wales, Australia, the University College of Belize through the Ministry of Education organized the first orthography workshop where participants were trained in phonetics and the IPA to enable them write Kriol. This successful concerted effort can be incorporated in Nigeria, hence the government is advised to do so.
- x. Liaising with the appropriate educational bodies for effective development, teaching, learning and examining local languages at all levels of formal education-NINLAN, NERDC, WAEC, NECO. In a bid to develop indigenous Nigerian languages,

orthographies were produced by NERDC in 35 Nigerian languages (Manual I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII) as reported by Olude (1997) for the sole purpose of teaching and learning. Languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Efik, Ibibio, Fulfulde, Mumuye, etc. are used all levels of education (Universities, Colleges of Education, WAEC and NECO). It is advised that a similar effort be made to other remnant Nigerian languages through collaboration with appropriate educational bodies. This way, minority languages will be developed and used at all levels of education.

- xi. Establishment of language enthusiasts committee. The community concerned through its local authority can form a virile team of language enthusiasts who are passionate about the preservation of their language and culture. The team may be drawn from a large pool of native speakers from diverse professions, cultural and social backgrounds. Notable among them are community elders and family heads who are thought to be custodians of their culture and history. This strategy has been the experience of various languages in Bayelsa, especially the Abureni speech community. In the same vein, the Mada speech community formed a committee to revive the Mada language and since then produced notes on some aspects of the language in 1992 which serves a great purpose today. This step should be taken to avert the ugly situation of many remnant Nigerian languages.

- xii. Ensure village awareness on the importance of documenting language(s) as well as the culture. A meeting between villages can be ensured to enable participants to discuss how a minority language can be lost in the presence of a dominant language in communication. This way the people will become aware of the need to preserve their language for intergenerational transmission and readily understand the benefits of orthography. This has been the practices in the Kuy village in Cambodia. This strategy has been effective given the small size of the speakers of the language, hence it is hoped that if the community takes up this strategy seriously, majority of remnant Nigerian languages will develop over time.

In sum, a collaborative effort is expected of the government, the speech community and language institutes such as National Institute of Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) and Nigerian Education, Research and Development Council (NERDC) in harnessing synergy for the development of minority languages through orthography development. This can be achieved if government is directly responsible on matters of language development, documentation, management, and preservation and archiving. In doing so, many unwritten languages will be accorded special status thereby preventing them from endangerment and extinction.

Also, the gross significance of orthography development is the preservation and documentation of ideas, histories, and thoughts in minority languages. It encourages mass literacy and save minority languages from extinction. The rich value of a language is preserved and transmitted to the next generation if a writing

system is developed, preserved and revitalized. Therefore, government must promote and ensure that minority languages are effectively planned, developed, preserved, and archived for posterity and documentation purposes.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

The primary focus of this paper is to identify the role of the government and the community in preserving minority languages through orthography development. However, instances and strategies adopted by other major Nigerian languages have been drawn and adopted as methods for preventing minority languages from endangerment. These successful concerted efforts if adopted by the government and the speech community, majority of Nigerian languages will become stronger in constant use in teaching and learning, and will forestall endangerment of remnant Nigerian languages which is the major question this study aspired to answer.

From this study, it was shown that orthography development is a means of preventing language endangerment or extinction. As such, orthography design must be a collaborative effort of both the government and the community. The government being the highest decision making body is responsible for the development of minority languages through proper planning, policy formation and implementation, allocation of resources, provision of grants to field researchers and the assignment of diverse functions on minority languages and enforcer of policies. It is germane to state that it is imperative of the government to establish and initiate orthography conferences or workshops or establish Readers' Project in the 36 states of the Federation in order to cater for minority languages through effective codification and planning and forestall the prevalent remedy of language extinction. The

community on the other plays a pivotal role as in the documentation of a language. It is argued that if the community takes the challenge of codifying a language seriously through conscious awareness, orthography development workshop, formation of a language committee of lettered native speakers from diverse professions and engaging team of linguist to work with them, their language will be preserved, documented and revitalized. This method is proven to be successful in the orthography stories of Kuy in Cambodia, Darma in India, Abureni in Bayelsa State, Nigeria etc. this explains why this study argues in favour of the importance of the community in the development and revitalization of remnant Nigerian languages.

It is represented in this study that literacy in a language is not the only outcome of developing orthography, but a major benefit of orthography development. That is, when speakers of a language can write in their language, they are tactically empowered with the ability to create and revitalize their own language. This way, teaching, learning and publication of readable materials in the language becomes pivotal. This paper advocates for the rapid response of the government and the community in the development of unwritten languages for the purpose literacy across levels of education as demonstrated in the case of Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. It is reiterated in this work that if the strategies highlighted above are applied to many dying Nigerian languages, literacy will be promoted. Above all, there are grave effects such as language loss, language death, extinction etc. as speculated by Krauss (1992) that only about 10% of the world's existing languages will survive into the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century if there are no proper planning, developmental efforts by the government and the community. It is said that a loss or death of a language is loss of cultural wealth accumulated and loss of a

unifying force which welds the community together (cf. Ohiri-Aniche, 2104). Therefore, the attention of the government and the community is drawn to act upon the strategies or roles outline in this paper to forestall the ugly trend of language endangerment, loss or extinction

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## LES VUES FUTURISTES DE LA TRADUCTION ET DE L'INTERPRÉTATION AU NIGÉRIA

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### **Résumé**

*La traduction et l'interprétation sont devenues des pratiques habituelles dans différents établissements au Nigéria. Elles sont aussi appliquées dans toutes les facettes des activités au Nigéria. Comme la langue est dynamique, la traduction et l'interprétation qui sont les produits des langues développent de plus en plus d'être traditionnelle à la période moderne. La traduction dans tous les domaines de connaissance est certes primordiale particulièrement dans le cadre académique, social, communicatif, religieux, culturel et politique. Cette étude vise à examiner les vues futuristes de la traduction et l'interprétation au Nigéria. Cette étude aussi tend à considérer des vues futuristes de la traduction et l'interprétation dans le domaine religieux, politique, social, et organisationnel au Nigéria. Dans toute communauté linguistique, on croit que la langue existante dans telle communauté doit avoir des espoirs et des perspectives d'avenir. Il est nécessaire de noter que l'existence des langues mène l'existence de la traduction et l'interprétation. L'étude conclut que il n'y a pas de pays qui peut développer sans considérer ses langues et comment les langues sont transformées de pouvoir faire la communication vers la traduction et*

*l'interprétation. L'existence de communautés, des organismes religieux et des entreprises au Nigéria continuera à renforcer les deux concepts partout.*

**Mots clés :** *communauté, interprétation, langue, perspectives, traduction*

## **Introduction**

Cette étude vise à étudier les perspectives de la traduction et interprétation au Nigéria plus particulièrement à l'avenir. Comme la technologie se développe dans le monde entier, la traduction et l'interprétation débattent l'intention d'être humain à travers la langue. Le rôle d'une langue dans la société entière est certes inévitable et il se renforce vers la traduction et l'interprétation. La langue est un véhicule par lequel les communicateurs comme le traducteur et l'interprète emploient de faire accomplir la communication écrite et orale respectivement. Bien que la traduction et l'interprétation exhibent de nombreux points communs, ces deux concepts exigent des compétences et des différentes formations. Il est clair comme l'eau de roche qu'on peut être un bon traducteur sans pour autant être compétent en interprétation. Le processus de la traduction peut-être découpé en trois phases successives. Tout d'abord, la compréhension qui est une assimilation du sens véhiculé par un texte, du vouloir dire d'un auteur. Dans le même temps, nous avons ladé verbalisation, la situation où on oublie des mots ordinaires mais, nous insistons sur les sens et enfin, la réexpression qui est une reformation du vouloir dire en langue cible.

Le Nigéria est entouré de certains pays francophones, il est préférable que les Nigériens soient acquittés avec la langue française, qui peut les aider dans certaines activités, en particulier dans la traduction et l'interprétation. La République

du Bénin est située à l'ouest du Nigéria, le Tchad et le Cameroun se trouvent à l'Est tandis que la République du Niger se trouve au Nord du Nigeria. Il est très primordial de noter qu'il y a trois langues locales au Nigéria, c'est-à-dire, le Yorouba, l'Haoussa et l'Igbo. De plus, l'Anglais est une langue officielle au Nigéria, nous consacrons le Français, l'Espagnol, l'Arabique, l'Allemand, le Russe, le Chinois comme langues étrangères. Aujourd'hui, nous effectuons la traduction et l'interprétation vers les langues au niveau privé ou comme les activités d'établissement. Les communicateurs font la traduction et l'interprétation individuellement et collectivement. Lorsqu'on réfléchit sur un message ou une phrase donc, on fait autant l'interprétation. La traduction et l'interprétation sont exercices de cœur, le message d'une personne doit être assimilé pour faire achever la compréhension absolue du message.

D'après Steiner (1998):

La traduction, comme tout acte de communication, suppose un processus d'interprétation. Souvent, plusieurs interprétations sont possibles, et cela met le traducteur en situation de choisir. L'analyse linguistique et la contextualisation du message permettent normalement d'écarter une partie des alternatives, mais il faudra toujours choisir entre celles qui restent, et ce sera forcément des facteurs extérieurs au texte qui vont dicter le choix. Parmi eux, il y a des facteurs liés à la subjectivité du traducteur (comme ses croyances, ses préférences, ses objectifs personnels), mais également des contraintes

liées aux normes en vigueur (par exemple, les normes de traduction), ainsi qu'un possible contrôle institutionnel sur l'interprétation.

Selon, Steiner, le rapport entre la traduction et l'interprétation est certes intime parce que la traduction présume un processus de l'interprétation. Nous pouvons avoir les diverses interprétations à une idée, ça dépend sur le contenu et le message de langue de départ. Il est très important à noter qu'on ne peut pas produire une bonne traduction sans avoir sa mode d'interprétation. De plus, dans le monde entier notamment, les organismes mondiaux comme l'organisation de l'unité africaine, CEDEAO, Zone Monétaire Ouest-Africaine (ZMOA), Eléphant Blanc, Fond Monétaire International (FMI), etc., la traduction et l'interprétation jouent un rôle essentiel pour bien passer le message au public.

### **Le Point de Divergence entre la Traduction et Interprétation**

La traduction et interprétation appartiennent aux novices comme la même chose, mais, les deux concepts sont les métiers à part entière. La traduction et l'interprétation sont souvent confondues parce qu'elles relèvent du même domaine, les métiers du traducteur et d'interprète sont pourtant différents. La traduction consiste à traduire un document écrit, tandis que l'interprétation consiste à transposer oralement un discours. Ça veut dire que la traduction est toujours écrite et l'interprétation est orale. De plus, la tâche du traducteur consiste à des documents qui restituent avec précision le sens et le contenu de l'original tout en respectant les règles grammaticales et stylistiques de la langue du lecteur, tandis que le travail de l'interprète consiste à exprimer oralement, dans la langue des auditeurs, le message et les intentions de l'orateur original. Une

bonne traduction doit donc se lire comme un document en soi. Dans de nombreux cas, comme dans le domaine législatif, la traduction est authentique ce qui signifie qu'elle a la même valeur juridique que la version originale, contrairement, au traducteur, l'interprète est visible. Elle permet la communication interpersonnelle. L'interprète parle à la première personne et devient la voix de l'orateur. Dans les deux notions (la traduction et l'interprétation), le traducteur traduit des idées exprimées à l'écrit d'une langue à une autre langue tandis que l'interprète traduit des idées exprimées oralement ou par l'utilisation de parties du corps (Langues des sens) d'une langue à une autre. L'interprétation peut-être considérée comme un sous-domaine de la traduction au regard des processus mis en œuvres (études en traduction), en pratique ces activités requièrent des aptitudes très différentes et ont un rapport au temps également différent.

D'après Lucie Quinquis (2013):

En traduction, le traducteur donc, va traiter des documents écrits ou audio/vidéo mais il ne va pas être amené à parler. Une bonne maîtrise de la rédaction est l'élément clé de cette profession. Il va devoir se servir d'un contexte, aller faire des recherches selon le thème de son document. Il se voit imposer des délais plus ou moins courts mais a quand même le temps de s'imprégner du document. C'est une gymnastique totalement différente de celle de l'interprétation. Il est donc très rare qu'une personne ait la capacité d'être un bon traducteur et un bon interprète. La maîtrise de langues étrangères et l'idée de

traduire un message sont les seuls points communs entre ces deux métiers.

La tâche du traducteur est différente de la tâche de l'interprète. Chez Lucie, la maîtrise de langues étrangères et l'idée de traduire un message sont les seuls points communs entre les deux métiers. Au niveau de la traduction, il y a assez temps de faire l'exercice, en revanche, il n'y a pas de temps au niveau de l'interprétation. L'interprétation est effectuée par le temps temporel.

### **Genèse de la Traduction**

Tout d'abord, la sainte Bible est une source précoce de la traduction. La traduction est un exercice qui à sa provenance directement de la religion par ailleurs, dans cette étude, nous ne pouvons pas abandonner l'origine du concept. D'après l'histoire, la Bible a été écrite en Hébreu. En revanche, le Nouveau Testament a été écrit avec la langue grecque, c'était pourquoi nous avons l'église orthodoxe grecque. Selon Demanuelli (1995:14):

Aux sources historiques de la traduction, on trouve d'abord les textes sacrés comme La traduction grecque de l'ancien testament dite des septante la traduction latine de la Bible par saint Jérôme la vulgate, etc.

En d'autres termes, Nida (1964 :20) a donné de nombreux exemples à propos de la traduction de la Bible.

Comme traduire la parabole du figuier dans une langue qui ne connaît cet arbre que par son espèce non-comestible véreuse ? Quant au nom de Dieu, les difficultés rencontrées pour le traduire semble ressusciter la de très anciens interdits, etc.

Aujourd'hui, nous avons plusieurs exemples de la langue ancienne dans la sainte Bible, le texte d'Hébreu commence avec les mêmes mots que le Seigneur a parlé sur la croix : *Héli, Héli la ma zabatani*, cette phrase était traduite comme : Mon Dieu, mon Dieu pourquoi tu m'as négligé ? Ensuite, le Mark 5 :41 nous donne les mots du Seigneur : *Talithacumi.....* Et immédiatement on ajoute qu'elle est traduite comme : Jeune femme, je te dis, lève-toi. De plus. Il y a un vers dans la Bible qui est traduit aux diverses langues presque 1,100 langues du monde Jean 3 :16 : Car Dieu a tant aimer le monde qu'il a donné son fils unique, afin que quiconque croit en lui ne périsse point, mais qu'il ait la vie éternelle. John 3: 16, '*For God so love the world and give his only begotten son, that he whosoever believeth in Him will not perish but have everlasting life*'.

Les exemples que nous avons donnés justifient la vérité que la traduction a commencée de la Sainte Bible. D'autre part, l'histoire nous montre qu'il y a des traducteurs et l'interprète qui sont spécialistes dans les textes religieux. Nous pensons à Ajayi Crowther qui a traduit la Bible à Yorouba en 1843, il a donc gardé le sens du message original, Jérôme (traducteur de Vulgate), Martin Luther (traducteur de la Bible Allemande en 1534, Nida (traducteur à la Société Américaine de Bible) etc. Par exemple, la traduction de Louis Second dit : Poussez vers l'éternel des cris de joie, Vous tous habitants de la terre. Ce message est exprimé en Anglais avec une esthétique et une différente tonalité, '*make a joyful noise unto the lord all ye land*' (*King James*), dans l'autre version '*shout for joy to the lord all the earth*' (*New International Version*).

### **Traduction et interprétation au cadre académique**

Pendant longtemps, la traduction a été employée comme un moyen complémentaire dans l'apprentissage des langues



européennes, dans les écoles primaires, secondaires, l'Ecole Normale Supérieure et l'Université. La traduction en particulier devient un sujet d'études dans les cours de langues étrangères et dans la formation universitaire des traducteurs. Dans certaines villes au Nigéria, nous avons les écoles des langues où on apprend les langues et tous éléments de la traduction et l'interprétation. Par exemple au Nigéria parmi autres, nous avons les écoles suivantes:

- *Easy Language School, 283, Herbert Macaulay Way, Yaba, Lagos. (Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Efik, Kanuri, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Hebrew, Russian, Dutch )*
- *Andel S Art Academy, Eric Moore, Surulere, Lagos. (dance group, training French classes)*
- *Dy Language Solution, Ojodu Berger, Lagos.*
- *ConoisseurConsults, Cadastral Zone A8, Wuse II, Abuja.*
- *Foursquare Language School (Geman, French, Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese, Italian, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and others )*
- *Michael School of Foreign Languages, Badagry Expressway, Ojo, Lagos.*
- *Tiezkomultilink Com Ng, Ibrahim Babangida Way, UyoAkwalbom.*
- *Indian Language School, 14/16, Aro Avenue, Ilupeju, Mushin, Lagos.*
- *Maxi Language School, AmuwoOdofin, Lagos.*
- *Chinese Language Classes, Plot 8, State Secretariat, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos.*
- *Kwara College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Olorunsogo Road, Ilorin West, Kwara State.*

- *LIV Language Center, Lea Primary, Kary, Abuja Municipal, Abuja.*
- *Mr. Jean Global Language Academy, Asokoro, Abuja.*
- *AllukhuriyyaZaure School, 14, Lamido Street, Dogarewa, SebonGari, Kaduna.*
- *Gaphill International Company, 10, Edede Street, Owerri Town, Owerri Municipal, Imo. Etc.*

Nous pouvons donc constater que la plupart des écoles de langues se trouvent à Lagos parce que la ville est un premier contact et elle est une ville commerciale. De plus, selon Commission Européenne (1989):

Aujourd'hui, plus que jamais, nous avons tous besoin des langues que soit pour voyager, pour étudier à l'étranger, pour faire des affaires ou pour travailler. C'est pourquoi il convient d'encourager l'apprentissage des langues étrangères dès les plus jeunes âges et tout au long de vie.

Les langues sont les instruments de faire la traduction et l'interprétation. Il est donc nécessaire de bien maîtriser la langue de bien faire une bonne traduction et interprétation. Le monde entier est dynamique, la communication est certes dynamique. Au Nigéria aujourd'hui, tout le monde a besoin de la traduction et l'interprétation pour bien faire la communication idéale. Cela la raison, nous avons beaucoup d'écoles des langues au Nigéria. La plus part des étudiants maîtrisent les diverses langues locales et les langues étrangères pour faire la commerce, la traduction, l'interprétation, l'enseignement, le voyage, le travail, et pour être bilingue et biculturel. Nous remarquons aujourd'hui que dans l'École Normale Supérieure, l'Université, l'Alliance Française

et le Village français du Nigéria Badagry, il y a plusieurs cours sur la traduction et l'interprétation pour promouvoir les concepts.

### **Traduction et Interprétation, Outils Modernes de Maîtriser une Langue Maternelle**

Pour bien apprendre une langue étrangère, tout d'abord, il est le mieux de maîtriser la langue maternelle. Mais, à plusieurs reprises aujourd'hui, au Nigéria, les enfants nigériens n'ont pas d'intérêt à ce qui concerne la langue maternelle. Les parents doivent traduire et interpréter certaines expressions avant qu'ils puissent comprendre les expressions dans la langue maternelle. Selon UNESCO (2003 :15) :

Langue maternelle désigne la première langue d'un enfant, celle qu'il apprend à la maison des membres plus âgés de sa famille (voir pour une définition plus développée). Le terme a parfois pris une signification plus symbolique en termes culturels, de telle sorte qu'une personne peut dire : 'Je ne parle pas réellement ma langue maternelle'. Le terme apparenté de *langue du foyer* désigne toute langue ou toutes langues parlées (s) au foyer de l'élève.

Le monde s'avance et l'apprentissage des langues locales change. Au Nigéria parfois, l'Anglais devient la première langue de contact parmi la classe instruite. Parfois, cette classe de peuple au Nigéria enseigne leurs enfants à travers l'Anglais. Ils font l'interprétation de leurs messages aux enfants. La première langue qui est la langue maternelle devient la deuxième langue de cette classe. Les enfants d'aujourd'hui particulièrement les enfants yoroubas ne comprennent pas leur

langue maternelle, Yorouba. Pourquoi ? Leurs parents doivent interpréter et parfois traduire les éléments grammaticaux ou les expressions des langues locales surtout l'Anglais à Yorouba. Ceci nous montre que la traduction et l'interprétation sont plus de traduire une langue à l'autre. La place de deux concepts est si grande dans notre société langagière. S'il y n'a pas de traduction et interprétation, la maîtrise de la langue locale devient de plus en plus difficile.

### **Traduction et Interprétation : Dispositifs Religieux**

Le rôle de la traduction et l'interprétation dans les activités religieuses est inévitable. Sans aucun doute, nous ne pouvons pas avoir une religion sans le message et on doit donc communiquer le message au passionné. Parmi les mécanismes de faire envoyer le message est la traduction et l'interprétation. Au Nigéria aujourd'hui, la religion a sa place particulièrement à ce qui concerne l'usage des langues. Par ailleurs, il n'y a pas de divergence entre la traduction de documents religieux et la traduction de textes généraux, il est évident que le sens doit dominer dans la traduction. Et, nous notons aujourd'hui que les églises ont l'intérêt sur la traduction de leurs documents pour bien faire l'évangélisme. Dans le monde entier, nous avons beaucoup de revues chrétiennes et autres littératures religieuses traduites en diverses langues, par exemples : Réveillez- Vous, Tour de Garde, Le Mirror des Femmes Chrétiennes et Les Tracts.

De plus, il y a certaines églises au Nigéria qui aiment traduire leurs documents aux autres langues soit langues locales soit langues étrangères. Par exemple; Deeper Life Bible Church, Mountain of Fire Ministry, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Winner Church (Faith Tabernacle), etc, traduisent leurs documents et messages aux diverses langues. Egalement, ce

groupe d'églises s'engage en interprétation. Au Nigéria, il y a des petites églises qui n'ont pas de capacité financière de faire traduire leurs documents, mais, elles font souvent l'interprétation du message particulièrement à la langue locale. Ainsi, il est très nécessaire de noter que le système de la traduction et l'interprétation continue parmi les églises et bien sûr le système continuera à l'avenir de promouvoir les églises dans le monde entier. Il y a des églises au Nigéria qui exécutent l'interprétation particulièrement dans la conférence, séminaire, etc.

### **Traduction et Interprétation: Cadre Social et Communicatif**

Lorsqu'on parle de la traduction et l'interprétation au niveau social et communicatif, on constate que les deux concepts sont utiles pour faire accomplir une bonne communication. Par exemple, quand on dit en Anglais, 'Individual with his/her own taste'. Ce proverbe doit être interprété en cœur avant de trouver sa traduction française. L'équivalence du proverbe est 'A chacun son goût'. Il y a donc l'élément de l'interprétation au moment qu'on fait traduire le proverbe. Dans la vie sociale, la traduction et l'interprétation seront importantes car ce sont les éléments de la communication. La communication est bien faite lorsqu'on peut traduire le contenu dans la langue source à la langue cible. A l'avenir, la traduction et l'interprétation seront indispensables parce que comme la communication continue, la traduction et l'interprétation ne cesse jamais.

### **Traduction et Interprétation: Mécanismes Outils aux Diverses Etablissements**

Aujourd'hui au Nigéria, la traduction et l'interprétation deviennent les mécanismes dans plusieurs établissements. Les industries et les autres établissements gouvernementaux et non-gouvernementaux sont au courant de l'avantage de deux notions pour faire une publicité au public et de faire mettre les clients au

courant de l'efficacité de leurs produits. Les langues sont les instruments de réaliser ce but. Pour attirer plusieurs clients vers un produit, le message de la publicité doit être envoyé au public à travers la traduction. Plusieurs établissements emploient la traduction de leurs modes, par exemples les banques, les établissements de télécommunication, les établissements multinationaux comme ; chevron, Mobil, Shell Nigeria, etc. La fonction du traducteur sera énorme parce que l'individu est au courant de l'exigence de la traduction dans la société, surtout, le gouvernement du Nigéria.

### **Doublage ou Sous-titrage: Forme de Traduction et Interprétation**

Il est évident que les diverses sociétés de films au Nigéria a commencé d'englober le sous-titrage de leurs pièces. Le sous-titrage ou le doublage est une technique liée aux contenus audiovisuels, notamment cinématographiques, consistant en l'affichage de texte au bas de l'image, lors de la diffusion d'un programme, comme un film. Il est fondamental de noter que le sous-titrage ou le doublage est un exercice sous la traduction. En Afrique, le concept de sous-titrage est très célèbre parmi les promoteurs et les producteurs des films. Donc, on ne fait pas de traduction mais le sous-titrage ou le doublage ou la paraphrase dans la production des films. La traduction englobe deux langues – langue de départ et langue cible, en même temps, nous avons la même chose dans la production du film où nous avons deux langues principales. Pourquoi donc le sous-titrage ? Nous employons le mot sous-titrage parce que tous ceux qu'on fait sont le résumé de la parole des acteurs/actrices. Il est toujours une mis-formation du concept qui peut obliger le malentendu parmi les spécialistes langagiers.

## Conclusion

En guise de conclure, nous pouvons donc préciser que la traduction et l'interprétation seront avantageux aux peuples entiers du pays nigérian parce que les deux notions se trouvent dans toutes activités dans le pays. Les deux notions ne peuvent pas cesser parce qu'elles sont les instruments de la communication et la communication est un produit des langues et surtout les langues supposent les outils sociaux pour faire achever l'entendement absolu parmi la communauté linguistique. Il est nécessaire de noter que l'existence de diverses langues mène à l'existence de la traduction et l'interprétation. L'étude conclut qu'il n'y a pas de pays qui peut développer sans considérer ses langues et comment les langues sont transformées de pouvoir faire la communication vers la traduction. L'existence de communautés, des organismes religieux et des entreprises au Nigéria continuera à renforcer les deux concepts partout.

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## STRUCTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSLATING PHRASES IN *ONCE UPON FOUR ROBBERS* INTO FRENCH

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### **Abstract**

*Studies in drama translation are often centered on general difficulties of translating plays with particular focus on rhyming, verse forms transposition, gesticulations, cultural elements and other extra linguistic materials . Little or nothing has been done on what translation of grammatical aspects poses to translation of a dramatic text such as Once upon Four Robbers of Femi Osofisan into French. Translation of phrases in the play engenders language reformulations which have significant effects on the sense of the entire message. We draw our data from the dramatic text and its French version: Il était Une fois quatre voleurs by Nicole Medjigbodo. We adopt both descriptive and analytical approaches in our analysis. About eight types of phrases with sundry examples from both the original and the version were treated. This is to enable us cover varying degrees of phrases and their structural imports in the translation of Once upon Four Robbers into French. Linguistic theory of Translation (1975) by J.C. Catford is employed to analyze our data. We conclude that the difficulty in translating phrases in English in the play into French is multidimensional. Though language variation in translating the phrases into French may contribute to the structural embellishment of the version, the nucleus of the assignment is the re-expression of meaning. We recommend, to a large extent, the linguistic approach of J.C. Catford in treating similar texts.*

*Keywords: Translation, structural imports, drama, language*

## **Introduction**

Every text is a web of words. A word is a sound or a group of sounds that correspond to an idea. Every idea is a product of language which is otherwise expressed as a code. Though a code or a means of communication is a reserve of a given community called a linguistic community, variation in its usage equally comes to play in literary parlance. Words modification in sentences and language manipulations lead to varying degrees of meaning. These language maneuverings constitute the ecstasy of every genre of literature. Drama is distinguished as it involves stage performance, use of choice words to demonstrate this in dramatic text for stage performance and reading pleasures.

One language structure people hardly take account of is the use of phrases in written drama. Phrases in written drama help readers in the understanding of the actions of the dramatis personae. For phrases in apathetical positions, they give additional information which may come in form of gesticulation to add glamour to the setting and plots of the play. When phrases are employed in the presentation of the actors and the actresses, they impress the messages in the mind of the spectators or readers of the play.

*Once upon Four Robbers*, published in 1980 was written by Femi Osofisan. The play, written between 1976 and 1978 and republished in 2011, centers on armed robbery and public execution in 1970s. Armed robberies, as bi-products of Nigeria civil war, were daily experiences in Nigeria. This led to the promulgation of Armed Robbery and Firearms Decree 47 of 1970. As a result, convicted armed robbers were executed by a

military firing squad in the 1970s. To witness the event at the Lagos Bar Beach and other public places, members of public were invited. In the play, so many gang members were shot dead including the Leader, Alhaja's husband who has just been ridden with bullets at the Bar Beach Show (the site of his public execution). Angola, Major, Hassan (ex-soldiers turned armed robbers) and Alhaja, an attack trader who watched in horror, the execution of their leader, were filled with indignation. Aafa, a muslim preacher who also doubles as babalawo (Ifa priest), reinforces the robbers with magic to enchant their victims and make away with their monies and goods. He gives them the injunctions to rob only public places and corrupt leaders. The magic works only for three times.

The last operation at the market initially brought the robbers fortune with one of the soldiers led away in dance with the robbers making away with the traders' monies. Luck however ran against them as Major tried to outsmart other robbers by appropriating to himself the whole booties. Soldiers came on them, seized the money from Major and kept same for themselves instead of returning the monies to the robbed traders agreeing with themselves to tell the public that the robbers went away with the money. The audience is left with the judgment: executing the armed robbers and corrupt soldiers, and sparing corrupt politicians, fraudulent civil servants, corrupt judicial officers and profiteers or freeing them.

Translating phrases for phrases is a herculean task for Nicole Medjigbodo. Besides playing down on Yoruba cultural leanings of Femi osofisan in the play, Medjigbodo, the translator of the play into French, is faced with the choice of communicating the sense or giving the sense as presented by the author of the original to the reader of the translation.

Translation of phrases in *Once upon Four Robbers* into French reveals linguistic variations that ensue in language transmission across codes and the implications it has on the messages the structure (phrases) carries from one language into another. We observe the limitability of the linguistic theory of translation in sense transfer with language structures and with particular reference to the use and translation of phrases in drama.

Phrases are of different types. Each type presents challenges according to the structure of other language elements in which it appears in a sentence. This study employs both descriptive and analytical approaches in the appraisal of the examples drawn from both the original and the version of the dramatic text of our study.

### **Drama Translation and Problems**

Drama translation is simply the translation of dramatic texts from one language and culture into another language and culture. It is transposing the original dramatic text whether translated or adapted on to the stage. In the view of Zuber Skerrit in *Translationjournal.net* (1988: 485), “drama translation is a science and the center of the success of this kind of translation is the written text as the basis of stage production, taking the individual performance ability into account.” Though written, dramatic text does not lose sight of the peculiarities of stage production and performance.” To perform on stage, spoken and unspoken languages constitute the basis of action. To Basnett MC Guire (1985:87) cited by Zuber Skerrit “a theatre text exists in a dialectical relationship with the performance of that text”. This definition underlines the indispensability of dialectical relationship in the action in display. How this dialectical relationship within the same language of drama is transported

into another language without variance to the original message is a force to reckon with in drama translation.

Looking at language and its structure in drama translation, Walter Benjamin in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation* (1997:194) asserts that “pure language is force hidden within certain texts, a poetic potential, a kernel that is striving to go beyond the immediate shell of words”. Be it as it may, drama uses language that matches the personality and pedigree of the characters. Where language is culture routed and action is culture inspired, the translator is under obligation to reconstitute in favour of his target audience without despising the culture and language of the original text. While meaning takes precedence over form in translation, the translation of phrases midfields in drama translation. Language is, indeed, the carrier of message in literature and the astute use of same is a task to do for drama translator as language structure does not all the time allow for lexical re-expression.

Writing on problems encountered while translating theatrical plays, Louise Ladouceur in <http://theatretranslationcompany.org> observed that most translators of theatrical plays chose to make the text understandable rather than rigidly close to the original words. However, in literary translation, particularly in the translation of drama we need to distinguish text understandability from rigid adherence to the words of the original text that convey the drama message. In his effort to make the title of the play: *Once upon four Robbers* understandable to the francophone readers, Nicole Medjigbodo opted for slim lexical correspondence as “*Il était une fois quatre voleurs...*” with suspension marks. The marks do not only betray the frustration of the translator in finding accurate re-expression of the noun phrase the author used in

entitling the play but present the title as the common opening formulae of a storyteller. The word “robbers” bears heavier sense than “voleurs” (thieves).

To rob is to take money or property illegally from a place, organization or person, often with violence. This explains clearly the violent activities of the Robbers in the play. Substituting such a word as “robbers” for “voleurs” (thieves) who steal but not often with violence is an under translation of the gravity of the crime. Though the word “bandits” can conveniently translate the word “robbers” in this case, content based title would successfully translate the spirit of the original in the target language. Again, since the title of the original text does not present or imply ‘Once upon a time there were four robbers’, substituting that phrase for a sentence could not as well be said as rigidly having close equivalents of the version to the original text. Even while the remark of Louise Ladouceur is a fact, the translator has it as a duty to, to a great extent, wear the spirit of the author to produce equivalent effect of the message on the target reader.

One of the paramount characteristics that set drama apart from other genres of literature is performance on stage before spectators. Speak ability, perform ability and extra linguistic features make up other distinct natures of drama. In dynamic view, employing dynamic and pragmatic equivalences rather than using formal and linguistic approaches in translating the entire message constituent of a text has been a key in a successful drama translation.

The translation of plays in verse forms presents a peculiar problem. According to Gillepsie Stuart (1992:104) in *Translation and Literature*, “apart from the fact that poetry is by its very nature untranslatable, so that even the most brilliant

versions of Shakespeare and Racine are perversions, there is a wide linguistic difference between English and Spanish that makes rhyming too difficult in English and too easy in Spanish. Golden Age dramatists, moreover made use of a great variety of verse forms considered appropriate to the content, whereas in Elizabethan drama, there is a preponderance of blank verse, an increasing use of prose and diminishing use of rhyme”. These observations could be true of translating Golden Age plays. However the translation of *Once upon Four Robbers* into French, though not in verse forms, is fraught with omission of songs, poems and incantations that enhance the fervor of the original text. These omissions in the French translation of the play explain again the shortcoming of the translator in the appreciation of the cultural lodes of the original text.

Competence and performance constitute the hallmarks of a successful translation. Translating drama from one language into another transcends being bilingual. Like every other genre of literature, performance or close performance in the original culture of the writings helps to decipher the meaning of the coded messages. It’s obvious that the cultural setting of the play is Yoruba. The Yoruba culture and beliefs feature across the play. It behoves the translator of such a text to understand that one of the interests of the author is selling Yoruba culture, traditions and beliefs to the Anglophone world. The translator of the play into another language such as French should have as well sustained this interest by translating the songs, poems and incantations which are oral literary markers of Yoruba tradition so as to market same to the Francophone world.

In the case of translating phrases in *Once upon Four Robbers* into French, the major constraint is not only situated in the structural equivalent but equally in intended meaning. It

takes interpreting the thought expression of the author and imagination of the practical display of the action of the Dramatis Personae to understand and re-express the phrasal messages of the original. But of what importance is the use of phrases in drama?

### **Use of Phrases in Drama**

A phrase is one of the fundamental structures of language. It is a group of words that express a concept and is used as an integral unit within a sentence or clause. <http://www.dailywritingtips.com> defines a phrase as a small group of related words within a sentence or a clause.” In drama where song and dance form part of the message passed, phrases amplify the understanding of such messages. This is evident in the Yoruba songs in the play translated into English by the author, Femi Osofisan himself. For example: “And said, Aafa of *billowing robes!*” for “Won ni , Aafa abewu yetu yetu!” the adjectival phrase “of billowing robes” succinctly describes the appearance of the Muslim preacher in robes in the play.

A phrase could be used as a guide to the actions on the stage. It describes how an actor or an actress comports him/herself on the stage. How he or she gesticulates; the movement on the stage, the arrangement of items, the description of the scene, the asides, the behind the scene actions, etc, are well illustrated by phrases. Phrases can separate one item of discussion from another thereby making the story inside another story distinct. This could be in form of flashback, reveries and projection into the future. For example, “the execution centre stage is a set of barrels arranged one upon another behind a tall white stake” p.21 is illustrative of the preparation for action and performance on the stage. The phrase: *arranged one upon*



*another behind a tall white stake* is indicative of the execution scene set for the Robber.

The understanding of the perform ability of actors in the written play is often presented in acoustic manner using a phrase to achieve this. This may be done with the use of gerund phrase as in the description preceding one of MAJOR's parts on page 23 of the play. "(taking out his knife); one more step, Angola, and your blood's going to wet this market" (p.23). The action of drawing out his knife is a performance that precedes the words of the actor. The acoustic imagery of taking out his knife comes suddenly to the imagination of the reader of the play. Thus this presents an imaginative scene of acting before the reader.

A phrase is employed in the emotive presentation of words in a play. In the text understudy, noun phrase is used to express the boastful achievement of one of the robbers: "That Alhaji in Kano with his ten Alsatians and fifty guards!" (p.25). This is a fore statement to how the innocent businessman was brought down in cold blood with machine guns by the robber.

Uses of phrase in written plays are inexhaustible. How these phrases are translated into French bearing the same impression on the target readers as they do on the readers of the original text is our focus of this study. While language structure is not unidirectional as it is dependent on the author's diction, maturity and experiences, translating language structure such as phrase in drama is a matter of linguistics in original author's thought process and the corresponding meaning issues. Every word is an item of meaning in a string of structure.

Translating phrases from one language into another is an effort that at times brings the structure of the target language into conflict with the original especially when translating structure for structure runs counter to the sense of the message. The

language structure becomes elegant where the phrasal structure of the two languages can be retained without prejudice to the intended meaning of the message of the author of the original text.

### **Structural implications of translating phrases in *once upon four robbers* into French.**

Language is a code used in any given social situation to communicate ideas. In the words of J.C. Catford (1980:1), “language is a type of patterned human behavior.” In translating drama, language behavior is externalized or manifested in some kind of bodily activity on the part of a performer; and presupposes the existence of at least one other participant in the situation as a spectator or as a reader.

In this section, we study different types of phrases employed in the original text and how they are translated into French by Nicole Medjigbodo. By this, we appraise the translation of the examples identified and the ensued manipulations. The implications the re-expression in French has on the structure of the phrases in English are viewed in the light of the meaning of the messages intended by the original.

The first type of phrase we consider is the Appositive phrase. By appositive phrase we mean that phrase which restates a preceding term or expands or explains it, in a parenthetical statement. The following example from the text illustrates this and its translation demonstrates its structural implication in French. We henceforth recognize *Once upon Four Robbers* as *Once upon..* and *Il était une fois quatre voleurs* as *Il était une fois...* for the purpose of the analysis of our data.

Example 1: He repeats this, *gets the same response and playing his instruments*, starts the song of the story-teller (*Once upon... p.19*)

Translation: il répète la formule, obtient la même réponse et tout en jouant de son instrument, commence à jouer (Il était une fois... p.3)

The phrase: *playing his instrument* in the sentence of the original assumes a different grammatical structure in the translation. “Tout en jouant de son instrument”, an aside, is structured in present participle (participle present) often composed with the preposition *en* and adding the ending form – *ant* to the stem of the verb in French. The use of *tout* taken as an adverb and signifying *tout -à -fait* (completely) though by nature *l’adjectif indéfini* (indefinite adjective) changes the level of meaning of the original in the above example. What does the phrase: *playing his instrument* in the sentence of the original connote in the entire message? “As he begins to play his instruments”, of course. Variation in the corresponding meaning of the version to the original originates from sense rearrangement of the whole idea presented in the original. It’s about the traditional opening expression of a story-teller in Yoruba oral tradition. “He shouts out the traditional introductory formula: ALOO! As usual, everybody replies: AAALO! He repeats this, gets the same response and, playing his instrument, starts the ‘Song of the Story-Teller’. (*Once upon..* p.191). The translation: “il lance la formule traditionnelle d’introduction: ALOO! Le public répond : AAALO! Il répète la même formule, obtient la même réponse et, tout en jouant de son instrument, commence à chanter”.

Looking critically at what pushes for meaning variation of the phrase in question, we discover possible shaky touch or lack of contact experience with the Yoruba oral tradition of story-telling in the moonlight. The expression: “la formule traditionnelle d’introduction” translated for “the traditional

introductory formula” is conserving the implicit where explicit message is inevitable. Translating literature is target audience oriented. The adjectival phrase: *the traditional introductory formula* is of what or who? Ability to answer this question would make the version read “la formule introductive traditionnelle d’un narrateur”: AALO O! The phrasal adverb: ‘As usual’, in the original, is paramount to the cultural understanding of the declaration of the story-teller. That is omitted in the translation. ‘As usual’ (comme d’habitude) reminds us of the spontaneous reaction of whoever hears the formula: Aalo o!. It goes beyond “le public”. It is “tout le monde” (everybody).

Efforts to employ literal translation or lexical correspondence in translating the verb “gets” as “obtient” and the phrase: “playing his instrument as “tout en jouant de son instrument” speaks volumes of the problem of thinking of words rather than the message. This accounts for the lacuna in the re-expression of the message of the original in French. The translation can read thus: *il lance la formule introductive traditionnelle d’un narrateur :Aaalo o! Et comme d’habitude, tout le monde répond « Aaalo o ! » Il répète cette formule et obtient la même réponse. Il commence à jouer de son instrument et à chanter la chanson d’un narrateur.* Here, the appositive phrase in the original becomes a phrasal verb as the object of the sentence structure.

Translating a gerund phrase poses a structural challenge that has to do with the interpreting before re-expressing the message of the original in French. A gerund phrase includes a verbal hybrid that functions as a noun (or adjective). It can serve as the subject of the sentence or object of the sentence or as the object of a preposition. In the case of the following example, the

gerund phrase which serves as the object of the sentence in the original text becomes an infinitive verb in the translation.

**Example II:** Major: The only rubbish I know is you standing there, you bundle of guinea-worm (*Once upon...* p.23)

Translation: Major : En matière de bêtise, c'est quand je vous vois rester là, tas de vermisseaux (*Il était une fois...* p.8)

The above quotation is a response to the reaction of Angola, a fellow armed robber to Major, who after the death of their leader, insists the gang remains resilient in armed robbery. To major, they should call it quit. Angola considers Major's speech as rubbish (Nonsense). 'What? Why the rubbish from your mouth?' (p.23). What follows is the question under appraisal. Translating 'what's the rubbish from your mouth?' as 'Quoi! Qu'est-ce que c'est que ces bêtises?' lays the foundation for playing down on the meaning force of the French version. A well de-verbalized text would opt for a better alternative such as: 'Mais comment! Quelle barbe provient de ta bouche? Or 'Quelles bêtises débite-toi?' are capable of keeping the flow of the conversation and at the same time retaining the meaning of the original message..

Now to the example itself, one wonders if the translation stems from the original message or it's a message of its own. The original message does not begin with the expression or imply the structure such as 'as for the rubbish' but with an expression of insult: *the only rubbish I know is you standing there, you bundle of guinea-worm*. The gerund phrase 'standing there' becomes 'rester là' with the items around it presented in weak impression to the target reader. The translation: "En matière de bêtise, c'est quand je vous vois rester là, tas de vermisseaux" hardly penetrates the spirit of the original and this affects the correspondence accorded it. In translating from

English into French, the use of infinitive verbs can substitute verbs ending in -ing in translating a list of instructions, guidelines and manual guides of the statement at the initial position. Therefore, it may not be out of place to render the statement as “ Toi, rester là, es la seule bêtise que je reconnais; toi une statue de vers”. This suggestion does not only keep the style and movement of the message but also retains the sense of the message level of language used by the author.

The use of infinitive phrase features through the whole play. By definition, an infinitive phrase includes the word ‘to’ and a verb as the basis of a modification of a root sentence. In the following example, we observe the replacement of an infinitive phrase with a verb used in reflexive form in the translation.

**Example 3:** Angola; He’s beginning *to dodge* (*Once upon...p.34*)

Translation: Angola: Il cherche à *se défiler*, oui! (*Il était une fois...p.24*)

The conversation between Alhaja and Aafa shows a kind of secret other gang members are not made to know. This prompts the question of Major who does not see the correlation between the duo and the Aafa’s promise to make them rich. His question “but what’s the man talking about? I thought you wanted to make us rich?” elicits Angola’s reaction in which the infinitive phrase features. The verb “se défiler” used to translate ‘to dodge’ in the first instance is out of the context as it means ‘to take cover (from the enemy).’ The actors in question are not enemies neither do they engage in a free-for-all. They are birds of the same feather. The sentence “He’s beginning to dodge” here implies “he wants to or he’s trying to avoid (fulfilling) his promise. « il cherche à s’esquiver or il essaie de s’esquiver/éviter la tache » translates the original message better.

While the original acts as the subject of the sentence, the version is rather a complement. Even where swap in grammatical category should not be a problem if the sense is retained, the meaning accorded the phrase of the original is capable of confounding the message of the author to the French reader, actors and audience of the version. This brings to question the issue of literality versus choice of words in translation. Where a translator tries to be literal in his approach, he must keep his eyes on the communicability of his product to his target audience without destroying the initial meaning of the message. In a situation where the grammatical category has to be varied, it should be done in favour of the sense as such will be equally reacted to by the readers of both the original and target texts. The following example illustrates this idea.

**Example 4:** *To rob* only the public places (*Once upon ...*, p.35)  
Translation: *N'attaquer* que les lieux publics (*Il etait une fois...* p.25)

The use of ‘**ne expletif**’ to translate the warning of Aafa is a welcome approach in this example. The infinitive phrase serving as the subject of the statement in the message of the original assumes just an infinitive level to pass the warning. The style and sense restituted here is an example of translation done with the interpretation of what we call “le vouloir-dire” and “le vouloir-comprendre” of the message in literary translation.

Translating Noun phrase in the play, at times, puts the translator at a crossroad as he has to choose between lexical adaptation and fetching another insult to translate insult. A noun phrase, as we know, consists of a person, or thing and another modifier. Many noun phrases are continuous. They contain words in sequence. However, a noun phrase may be discontinuous, meaning that is broken up into more than one

element. We dwell on the continuous one for the purpose of our analysis of the example that follows.

**Example 5:** Angola: Let me mangle *the foul-mouthed coward* (*Once upon...* p.23)

Translation: Angola: laisse-moi massacrer *cet enfoiré* (*Il était une fois ...* p.8)

First, the noun phrase of the original simply becomes a demonstrative adjective in the version. Meaning is the central issue in translation. As J.C. Catford (1965) stresses replacement of one textual material by another textual material as translation, the phrase: *the foul-mouthed coward*, is it replaceable by *cet enfoiré*? The two words are not compliments, of course; but they are not as well complementary at the level of meaning. The expression: *The foul-mouthed coward* is fallout of the conversation between Major and Angola. The public execution of Leader freezes the heart of Major who thought that was the end of them all and decided to quit. Angola saw this attempt as cowardice. *A foul-mouthed* person swears a lot and uses offensive language. The word *enfoiré* used to substitute the same means ‘a bugling idiot’ a French synonym of it is ‘imbécile’. While both ‘foul-mouthed’ and ‘enfoiré’ are expressions of insult, they hardly convey the same meaning. Where is the place of the word ‘coward’ that makes up the noun phrase in the original going by the translation? While we do not translate words but sense, words are tools through which meaning is derived depending on their usage in the sentence. What we observe in the translation of the insult above is not trying to find exact meaning of the message of the original but using one insult to translate another. This runs counter to the assertion of J.C Catford that translation is unidirectional as the preservation of



the style he calls on the translators to ensure may be a difficult venture as we can see in the example.

To translate the noun phrase in the play, the translator opts for a transposition process of translation. Where literalism seems not to communicate the spirit of the original text, the version changes the grammatical class. Its function is equally affected as each language respects the structural order of the language. Let us consider the following example.

**Example 5:** her resistance breaking down before *her overt sexual provocation* (*Once upon ...* p.60)

Translation; ‘ne pouvant résister aux avances d’Alhaja (*Il était une fois... p.59*)

Alhaja, the wife of the executed leader, is here making serious efforts to seduce the soldiers. They understand her seductive message – sexual advances! The soldiers, because of her sexual provocation, nearly fall prey of the woman. That scenario informs the context in which the statement was structured. The word ‘resistance’ accorded the attribute of breaking down fades out in the translation as the stylistic elegance of the original gives way to ‘the soldiers’ possessing the quality. The noun phrase of the sentence “her overt sexual provocation” becomes the possessive adjective (aux avances d’Alhaja) in French. We conclude that in dynamic equivalence stance, when the style (the form) does not convey meaning at the same level as the style of the author, sense takes preeminence. Literary translation demands astute understanding of both the web of words and the message the whole amalgamated units of words bear.

The translation of the participial phrase presents another form of variation in the grammatical point of view of the whole message. The following example affirms this. A participial

phrase consists of verbs ending in -ing or -ed or another irregular form of a verb, and serves as an adjective.

**Example 6:** Then *discovering the costumes*, they begin to pick and choose, and then to dress up, gradually establishing the various roles they will be playing (*Once upon... p.20*)

Translation: Puis ils font leur choix parmi les costumes, en s'identifiant peu à peu aux différents rôles qu'ils vont interpréter (*Il était une fois... p.4*)

From a participial phrase to a simple sentence, the translator could not de-verbalize the elements that make up this structure. A close look at the original reveals that the actors, at first, notice the costumes on the stage. The action of noticing (discovering) is not depicted in the version. The action of picking, choosing and dressing up in the costumes is very significant to the understanding of the kick-off of the drama. All these are not represented in the structural reconstruction of the version. The choice of costumes by the actors establishes the roles each of them would play. In other words, they choose costumes that match their role play. The version is a departure from the perform ability of the actors. The impression it gives on the actors interpreting the roles instead of playing same moves the actors from being performers to being critics of the play. Deformed understanding of the imaginable arrangement of the stage is capable of signaling the code wrongly in the translation. When the play is staged by the actors of the two books (the original and the version), it is certain the actors would act the part differently. Such a lacuna will generate different reactions from the audiences of the *plays*. Though change in grammatical point of view may enrich the understanding of the play, the translator needs to prioritize meaning in his expression of the message in another language such as French. The variation in the

point of view as seen in the analysis above could be considered as the translator's attempt to rewrite the message of the original author which is doing something else in translation discipline.

The use of preposition is vital in many languages of the world as they show the relationship between two words and expressions. A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and a noun or pronoun that serves as the preposition's object and often one or more adjectives. In the play understudy, we note where a prepositional phrase is restructured in a way to appeal to the emotions of the reader of the French version. We consider this in the example that follows.

**Example 7:** Major: This day is beautiful *in the sunlight* (*Once upon ...* p.69)

Translation: Major: Quelle belle journée ensoleillée! (*Il était une fois ...* p.73)

Major is here asked to say his last words having been tied up for execution. The time setting is a broad day light. The sun shines brightly and so Major describes the day as 'beautiful in the sunlight'. The French version presents an exclamatory statement that is capable of sparking off emotional outrage. *Quelle belle journée ensoleillée !* (What a beautiful sunny day). This re-expression is in the effort of the translator to sustain the tempo of the message in the original text. The declarative statement of the original is transposed into an exclamatory one creating different affective reactions between the source text readers and target text readers of the message of the play.

In drama translation, like in every translation of literature, there is always the need to interpret beyond the form. However where we have literal translation communicating the meaning of the original text, the version has a safe passage. The

following example of another prepositional phrase illustrates this idea.

**Example 8:** Then, *at the orders of their officer*, they take position. They fire. (*Once upon... p.21*)

Translation: Puis, *sur l'ordre de leur officier*, ils prennent position et ils font feu (*Il était une fois... p.5*)

The above translation respects both the grammatical and semantic structures of the original. However the second segment of the sentence: *They take position* and the simple sentence that follows: *They fire* are taken as a unit of idea in the translation as *Ils prennent position et font feu*. The second part of this compound sentence (*font feu*) is suggestive of a meaning different from that intended by the original. *Ils font feu* (they make fire) is not the same as *They fire*. When soldiers 'fire', they shoot. If the message is interpreted in that understanding, "Ils tirent" would be a better option to translate *they fire*.

The translation of a verbal phrase presents another linguistic dimension in literary translation. In linguistics, a verb phrase is a syntactic unit comprised of at least one verb and its dependents – objects, complements and other modifiers – but not always including the subject. It is that portion of a sentence that contains both the verb and either a direct or indirect object. We consider the translation of an example of this in the following.

**Example 9:** Five o'clock in the morning, as cold as in harmattan, they all came out to watch, *to gloat over* his death (*Once upon ... p.22*)

Translation: A cinq heures du matin, malgré un froid d'harmattan, ils sont pourtant tous venus en spectateurs pour savourer sa mort (*Il était une fois... p.6*)

The phrasal verb *to gloat over* is simply translated as *pour savourer*. Here, the simple preposition *pour* is used to amplify the verb *savourer* in the version. Though this is not an aberration the verb *savourer* does not translate *to gloat over* in this context. *Savourer* means *to savor* (to enjoy the full taste or flavor of something/to enjoy the feeling or an experience thoroughly). *To gloat over* on the other hand is to show that you are happy about your own success or somebody's else failure, in an unpleasant way. Therefore if the original is well de-verbalized in the spirit of the turnout of people to watch the execution, the translation will possibly read *A cinq heures du matin , en dépit du froid d'harmattan, ils sont sortis en masse pour assister à et jubiler de son execution capitale*. Meanwhile the modulative strategy of substituting the expression *came out* for *sont venus* may be appropriate as the variation in general point of view preserves the general idea of people coming or going out to catch glimpse of how Leader would be ridden with bullets to death.

### **Conclusion**

Drama translation is both style and sense specific taking into consideration the cultural interpretation of the original text and cultural acceptability of the receptor's correspondence. The translation of phrases in *Once upon Four robbers* is one of the linguistic barriers the translator has to struggle with in communicating the message to the target audiences. Sense is the nucleus of every message. The translator of any literary translation and by extension of any other types of text must work out the task through the words in the passage of meaning from one language into another. As we have seen in this work, efforts to adopt lexical correspondence or implied lexical structure to translate phrases in the play often resulted in meaning nonconformity. In a situation where meaning is seen as having

precedence over the form, variation in the general point of view or variation in grammatical point of view is acceptable so long the intended meaning is preserved.

Femi Osofisan, the author of *Once upon Four Robbers* employed sociological approach in the treatment of the themes of social vices and attendant measures put in place to arrest same in Nigerian society. These include armed robbery, bribery, corruption among public functionaries, religion, culture, magic, hypocrisy, nepotism, etc, The translator's emphasis is rather on the style as most of these themes are played down in the version. The author's use of Yoruba songs, poems, proverbs, incantations, etc structured many at times in different kinds of phrases and translated into English side by side add fervor to the enjoyment of the play for readers. Nicole Medjigbodo, the translator of the play into French lost sight of the relevance and importance of these artistic values of the original text as he avoids completely their translation into French. His retention of only the Yoruba version of the oral Yoruba traditions in the translation communicates nothing to a French reader who does not understand Yoruba language. The French translation plays down on the structural, contextual, extra-linguistic and stylistic importance of these devices through a faulty adoption of linguistic approach which in any way does not reject the translation of such cultural norms in any text.

In his discussion about the limits of translatability, J.C. Cartford (1965:91) states that "translation fails or untranslatability occurs when it is impossible to build functionally relevant features of the situation into the contextual meaning of the Target Language Text." He identifies linguistic and cultural occurrences as being responsible for translation failures.

Most of the constraints encountered in the translation of phrases in the play under consideration into French are due largely to the translator's attempt to preserve the formal linguistic features of the original text in the version. Substituting phrases for other language structures in translating the meaning of the text is seen as an acceptable approach as we could see in our analysis of the data. Languages do not behave the same way though they have features that communicate the same message from one language into another. Fixed expressions with corresponding equivalents in the target language need not be manipulated in spite of the structural variations. However where culturally rooted terms such as insults do not have direct fixed corresponding equivalents substituting such with entirely different terms may be seen as translation failure.

In this study, we have been able to establish various structural implications that translation of phrases portend on the translation of the dramatic text written in English and translated into French. The approach adopted for this work could be used in the analysis of any literary text of similar status in the appraisal of the translation of any grammatical structure from one language into another.

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## **EFFECTIVENESS AND LIMITATION OF COMPUTER-BASED THERAPY IN MANAGING LANGUAGE DISORDERS IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Computers are involved in many facets of daily life, and studies have adjudged computers to be effective tools in the rehabilitation of all forms of language impairments. This study seeks to establish a synergy between traditional therapy and speech-language computer therapy in achieving speech-language therapy in children with language disorder or specific language impairment. Some speech-language pathologists were interviewed, and questionnaire administered on some to know their level of integration of technology-based therapy in managing speech disorder. This work which is largely descriptive reveals that speech-language pathologists prefer targeting the habilitation and rehabilitation of computer skills as a functional endpoint of treatment for many individuals with language disorder. Findings reveal that not all clients are receptive to using computers. Ethical issues may arise with computer-based treatment if speech-language pathologists provide software without appropriate clinical evaluation and teaching. Investigation into therapeutic homes also reveals that the computer-assisted language software cannot be used wholly without the intervention or collaboration of usual traditional skills or approach for optimal result in the management of language disorder.*

*Keywords: habilitation, rehabilitation, pathologists, language impairments*

## **Introduction**

Computers are ubiquitous in the society today. Computer is also recognized as a good learning tool, providing interactive activities, enhanced graphic displays and varied practice. It is no wonder then that the interest in the use of computers in language therapy for individuals with specific language impairment and aphasia is growing and becoming recognized as a potentially useful resource. Nevertheless, there appear to be numerous software programmes offering therapy activities for individuals with language disorder. However, this paper, while acknowledging the efficiency of computer-assisted therapy in language disorder, advocates for the integration of traditional approach and technology-enhanced approach for effective management of language disorder. The research which is largely descriptive is based on the interactive sessions coupled with feedback obtained from interview and questionnaire administered on some language therapists at Enugu therapeutic home.

The term language disorder means any disorder in comprehension and use of spoken, written or other form of communication. The disorder may be spotted in the phonological aspect, morphological/syntactic aspects. It is also noted in the content of language or meaning aspects and the function of language in communication which is pragmatics or combination of any of them. Language disorders or language impairment involve the processing of linguistic information. Problems that may be experienced can involve speech sound (phonetics or phonology), grammar (syntax or morphology), semantics (meaning) or other aspects of language. This problem may be

receptive (involving impaired language comprehension) or expressive (involving language production) or a combination of both. Examples include specific language impairment and aphasia. When a person has trouble understanding others, sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings completely, then such a person has language disorder. Among others, language disorders can affect both spoken and written language and can also affect sign language. In a typical situation, all forms of language will be impaired.

Language therapy is a way or process undertaken by a professional body to rehabilitate language disorder or impairment. It deals with the assessment, analysis, and treatment of communication disorders, cognitive-communication disorders, voice disorders, and swallowing disorders, and plays an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder and other types of language disorder. Language therapy is not just the treatment or modification of a speaker's speech sound articulation to meet the expected normal pronunciation, facilitate people who stammer to speak more fluently. Language therapy is largely concerned with a broad scope of speech, language, and voice issues in communication which include:

- i. Word-finding and other semantic issues, either as a result of specific language impairment such as a language delay or as a secondary characteristic of a more general issue such as dementia.
- ii. Social communication difficulties involving how people communicate or interact with others (pragmatics).
- iii. Structural language impairments, including difficulties creating sentences that are grammatical and modifying word meaning.

- iv. Literacy impairment related to the letter-to-sound relationship (phonics), the word-meaning relationship (semantics), and understanding the ideas presented in a text (reading comprehension).
- v. Voice difficulties, such as raspy voice, a voice that is too soft, or other voice difficulties that negatively impact a person's social and professional performance.
- vi. Cognitive impairment (e.g., attention, memory, executive function) to the extent that they interfere with communication (see Brady et al 2016).

Adams et al (2015) notes that language disorder is failure in processing of linguistic information which may be primary if they have no known aetiology and secondary if they are caused by another condition such as autism, hearing impairment, general developmental difficulties, behavioural or emotional difficulties or neurological impairment. In language therapy, the therapists, before any treatment, have to observe and know the linguistic and communicative performances of the patients.

Speech services according to Factor and Weiner (2008) begins with initial screening for communication and swallowing disorders and continue with assessment and diagnosis, consultation for the provision of advice regarding management, intervention, treatment, and providing counselling and other follow up services for these disorders. Services are provided in the following areas:

- i. Cognitive aspects of communication (e.g., attention, memory, problem-solving).
- ii. Speech (phonation, articulation, fluency, resonance, and voice including aeromechanical components of respiration).

- iii. Language (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatic/social aspect of communication) including comprehension and expression in oral, written, graphic, language processing and language-based literacy.

Specific language impairment (SLI) is diagnosed when a child's language does not develop normally and the difficulties cannot be accounted for by generally slow development, physical abnormality of the speech apparatus, autism, spectrum disorder, aphasia, acquired brain damage or hearing loss.

Aphasia on the other hand is one's inability to comprehend and formulate language because of damage to specific brain regions. This damage is usually caused by a cerebral vascular accident (stroke) or head trauma although this is not the only cause. The difficulties of people with aphasia can range from occasional trouble finding words to losing the ability to speak or write; intelligence however, is not affected. Expressive language and receptive language can both be affected. Aphasia affects visual language such as sign language. To be diagnosed with aphasia implies that a person's speech or language is significantly impaired in one of the four communication modalities which include: auditory comprehension, verbal expression, reading and writing, and functional communication.

Sign language is a language which uses manual communication to convey meaning as opposed to spoken language. This can involve simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body and facial expressions to express a speaker's thoughts. Sign languages share many similarities with spoken language which depends on speech sounds; linguists consider both as types of natural language.

Spoken language disorders according to Agbedo (2015) are heterogeneous in nature and the severity of the disorder can vary considerably. Each individual with language difficulties has a unique profile based on his or her current level of language functioning, as well as functioning in areas related to language including hearing, cognitive level and speech production skills.

Technology provides a positive outlook to remediation of communication disorders and aids in achievement of speech and language goals for students having language disorders (Green, 2004). According to Cotton (2016), learning disabled, hearing impaired, language disordered, and emotionally disturbed children benefited from technology integration and at times showed more significant gains using technology than their regular education counterparts.

According to Green (2004), computer-assisted speech therapy became more and more frequent in school practice starting with the period 1990-2000 with the development of technology-based applications in a didactic context, for children and adults with or without learning. Some specialised software programs (for the English language) were developed in order to answer to the needs of specialists in the field of language pathology, which provides a wide range of attractive and stimulating formats, as well as didactic games for the vocabulary and the expressive and perceptive language development. The audio feedback completes the visual output, and the audio effects strengthen the impact of the animated visual rewards.

Nevertheless, numerous children are receiving services for speech impairments with a traditional approach. Secord (2015:152) views traditional approach as a wide variety of specific techniques, which may involve listening, imitating, physical modelling, and lots of drill and practice. Many speech-

language pathologists utilize the traditional approach in therapy and believe the traditional approach with drilling and practicing speech sounds are the only avenue to remediate distortions of speech sounds. However, traditional articulation can be motivating and exciting for children, however, it can become tedious. Students may become tired and regress despite reinforcement. To motivate children to practice speech exercises, to improve the progress of students receiving articulation therapy, and to accelerate students' ability to master phonemes were driving forces according to some interviewed speech-language pathologist.

Scholars have worked on the effectiveness of computer in speech therapy in western countries, others have also looked at the effectiveness of the traditional method, however not much has been done considering the use of computers as a tool for speech therapy in Nigeria. Nigeria being a developing country still upholds the traditional approach to language therapy as a more appropriate method for the habilitation of language disorders due to unavailability of technological tools. However, this paper will establish a synergy between traditional therapy and speech-language computer therapy in achieving speech-language therapy in children with language disorder.

### **Empirical studies**

In 2016, Cotton carried out a study in order to evaluate the effect of introducing computer-based technology in the speech therapy of disabled children. It was observed that the strongest effect was recorded in the children with learning disorders, in those with auditory disorders, language disorders or emotional disorders, which determined an orientation of the American governmental clinical research funds towards this field. It is noticeable that in Romania, just like in the USA, most

speech therapists still use traditional speech therapy methods, that can be defined as a set of specific techniques, involving listening, imitation and the physical modelling of the phono-articulatory apparatus and many exercises that have to be practiced systematically (Secord, 2015).

This therapeutic approach has undoubtedly the efficiency and the value demonstrated by the numerous children that improved or healed their language disorders, but any practitioner speech therapist can admit that this sustainable repetition technique for the correct pronunciation of sounds, syllables, words and sentences entails a decrease in the interest and motivation for practicing, since it involves a certain tiring monotony and regress.

David and Copeland (2016), worked on computer use in the management of aphasia. According to them the study surveyed speech language pathologists (henceforth SLPs) to determine patterns and frequency of computer use associated with aphasia rehabilitation. The survey instrument was mixed format, with multiple choice, yes–no, and open-ended questions, and all items were related to various aspects of the use of computer-based technology in aphasia rehabilitation. Survey results indicated that SLPs use computers more often for indirect or supplemental purposes than for direct therapy. When SLPs implemented computers in direct treatment, the amount accounted for less than 25% of the total session time. Identified barriers to using computers include a lack of access and training. Training for using computers in aphasia management occurs most often after graduate school through continuing education or self-study. In conclusion, results indicated that computer-based treatment of aphasia is being implemented to varying degrees and more often for supplemental and administrative purposes



than for direct therapy. Additionally, SLPs generally perceive computers as useful and important but not critical to successful outcomes.

Earley (2016) worked on a recovery solution for a stroke victim suffering from dysphasia from a technology perspective. This analysis of solutions addresses the needs of an affluent 81-year-old woman (Sandra) suffering with dysphasia (an impairment of the ability to use or comprehend words) as a result of stroke. It is presented from a technology perspective and its contents are only intended as recommendations to be considered by the client, her husband Joe, and her rehabilitation team. Sandra's primary needs include speech therapy, reinforcement for speech therapy, and assistance becoming comfortable and familiar with technology to allow her to use computer programs that may be recommended. According to the researcher, Sandra made significant improvement and was fortunate to have a speech therapist that is supportive of technology use in her therapy. This therapist was willing to orientate and assist Sandra in the use of selected technology programs.

The paper examined 5 available dysphasia treatment computer programs. Tigtalk Words is an inexpensive basic tool that focuses on one type of development. Computerized Home Aphasia Therapy is reasonably priced and addresses more types of development, but is designed to be used during or after the conclusion of therapy. Aphasia Mate is a thorough program and is designed to be used along with therapy, but is very expensive. Aphasia Tutor is a motivating program which works on six types of development but offers limited lessons and exercises. Parrot software offers an internet treatment service with numerous lessons which are updated constantly. It is offered online for a monthly subscription fee, allows therapist involvement, and

provides support for its users. The paper recommended that the Rehabilitation Team be convened to consider the addition of technology programs to the therapy plan. It recommends the use of Tigtalk words to build Sandra's comfort level with technology therapy and to allow therapists to assess the benefits of its use. If the use of Tigtalk words is beneficial and shows that the client may continue to benefit from more advanced programs this paper recommends that Parrot Software Internet Treatment Service be used as a reinforcement tool by the clients outside of therapy sessions.

It is strongly recommended that Sandra's clinical psychologist be very active in monitoring and addressing her psychological needs and any depression issues. The paper recommends that Joe her husband explore technology options that may provide him with information on dysphasia and support as a primary caregiver. All of these recommendations are made with the intention of Sandra's speech therapist providing orientation and assistance. These are services the therapist has already offered and agreed to provide. This paper concludes that technology offers many assistance options to Sandra and Joe, and that with proper support it may be used as an important component of a rehabilitation plan.

Katzand Wertz (1997) work presents an initial evaluation of the use of a comprehensive computer-based language therapy, Aphasia Mate. As a pilot study, the purpose was to establish positive benefits to individuals with aphasia when Aphasi aMate was added to their existing therapy program in a clinic. The study was conducted in a university-based research-teaching clinic in London, Canada. Standard care for individuals with aphasia in the clinic involves the options of individual therapy addressing specific goals and group therapy

focusing on general communication skills and participation. Computer-based language therapy had not been employed prior to the study, and Aphasia Mate was the only computer therapy program used in the clinic throughout the study. As this was an initial exploratory study and the effectiveness of Aphasia Mate had not been established previously, involvement in regular therapies in the clinic was not withdrawn during the course of the study.

One of the aims of the work was to evaluate the extent to which participant progress was specific to certain areas, or resulted in more generalized improvements (across a range of skills). Focused areas of improvement may point to the need for a close match between identified deficits and intervention methods whereas general improvements would reflect an overall therapeutic benefit. A second goal was to examine both language and functional communication outcomes as a result of using Aphasia Mate. Ten individuals with aphasia were recruited from a university-based clinic in London, Canada. Participants met the following criteria:

- aphasia resulting from a single cerebral vascular stroke to the left cerebral hemisphere;
- at least 6-months post-stroke;
- a Boston Aphasia Severity Rating Scale score greater than 0 (1 to 5 scores);
- right-handed on self-report;
- English as primary language; and
- pass a hearing screening at 40 dB HL at 0.5, 1 and 2 kHz.

All participants except one were involved jointly in individual and/or group therapy at the clinic during the course of the study. Six participants lived in their own residence. Two

lived in nursing care homes. Participants used AphasiaMate at least one hour per week over an average of 15 weeks. Several options for using the program were offered in order to maximize use. These options included using it independently on the participant's own computer at his/her home or on a computer in the clinic, or with a trained person either on a computer in the clinic or on a laptop computer brought to the participant's home. The trained person assisted the participant with computer operation only, sometimes responding using mouse-clicks when participants pointed to an item on the screen.

The trained person included either graduate students in speech-language pathology, research assistants, or one of the authors. Each participant began the program at the first level of a recommended section or subsection and progressed to other tasks when a criterion of at least 80% accuracy over two consecutive sessions was reached. Once the recommended sections and subsections were completed, participants progressed through other sections according to this criterion. For those using the program independently, progress was reviewed via saved data records every 2 weeks. Tasks on which the participant did not receive a score of 80% or better over two sessions were highlighted on a list for the participant's reference.

It was discovered that computer-based language therapy can lead to positive changes in the language and functional communication skills of individuals with chronic aphasia. As a group, study participants improved significantly and reliably on standardized measures of auditory comprehension, and showed a pattern of improvement in naming, spontaneous speech, overall ratings of communication and qualitative dimensions of communication.

The results of the study also provided early indications as to the types of patients who can benefit from using AphasiaMate and similar programs. According to the researcher, findings also suggest that patients can benefit from using AphasiaMate regardless of their time post-onset. The researcher states that it has long been held that a patient's recovery and response to treatment is best in the early period (less than 2 years) post-onset. There was little indication in the study that the amount of time spent on computer therapy is linked directly with outcomes. The participant who spent the most time in computer-based language therapy in the study, participant 1, had a small decline in WAB AQ although showed a considerable improvement in reading and writing. Conversely, the participant who spent the least time, participant 8, had the second highest WAB AQ change. Thus, response to therapy may be linked to some other as yet unspecified variable rather than exclusively to time in therapy.

The work also demonstrates that a sufficiently comprehensive program such as AphasiaMate has the scope to provide adequate and ample therapy activities within specific domains potentially precluding the need to design individual programs for each rehabilitative goal. Crerar, Ellis and Dean, (2016) worked on impairment of word comprehension and retrieval in aphasia. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of the Multi-Mode Matching Exercises module of Moss Talk Words for improving word comprehension and retrieval in individuals with aphasia. Effects of training were contrasted for two treatment schedules. Five individuals with word retrieval impairments associated with aphasia participated. Two had word comprehension difficulties suggesting semantic anomia, and three others with intact comprehension had

impairments suggesting phonologic anomia. In a single-participant design, the researchers investigated effects of training provided via computer with Moss Talk multi-mode matching exercises (spoken and written word/picture matching) paired with spoken rehearsal.

According to Raymer, Kohen, and Saffell (2015), all participants participated in two phases of training administered 1–2 times/week and 3–4 times/week, with order of phases counter-balanced across participants. Results showed improvements in word/picture yes/no verification for trained and some untrained words associated with large effect sizes ( $d > 2.5$ ) were evident in one of two participants when trained 1–2 times/week. Increases in picture naming associated with large effect sizes for trained words were noted in 5/5 participants when trained 4–5 times/week, and in 2/5 participants when trained 1–2 times/week. Increases in picture naming for untrained words were evident in 2/5 participants in the more frequent training schedule. At 1 month post training, picture naming performance remained above baseline levels, with little difference evident between sets trained with the two different training schedules. The researcher concluded that computerised lexical training exercises may lead to increases in word comprehension and production, particularly for the target words trained. More frequent training leads to greater improvements during acquisition than less frequent training, but that advantage diminishes at 1 month post treatment, suggesting that a less frequent training schedule may be just as useful as more frequent training for promoting long-term effects of lexical training.

### **Methodology**

The survey instrument (questionnaire) was mixed with multiple choice, yes–no, and open-ended questions, and all items

were related to various aspects of the use of computer-based technology in language disorder rehabilitation. The choice of mixing questionnaire with multichoice question is to avail the aphasic persons the opportunity to express their feelings on the kind of therapy they are receiving and how such therapy is enhancing or otherwise their speech production. Survey questions were developed by the researchers through a review of the literature regarding current trends in aphasia management and technological trends in speech language pathology and other allied health fields. Needs assessments at state and local conferences yielded requests for training and information on integrating computers into rehabilitation for various kinds of language disorder, and a survey was determined to be a means of reaching a broader sample of speech language pathologists to identify needs and current usage patterns. The survey questions were reviewed for content validity. On the basis of their review and input, revisions were made by the authors to more closely reflect current practice patterns in medical speech-language pathology. Observation and interview were equally adopted for exhaustive collection of needed data.

### **Impairment on language structure**

Five basic areas of language impairments have been identified by scholars. These are phonological disorders, morphological disorders, semantic disorders, syntactical deficits, and pragmatic difficulties (see Tobolce, K, & Hutuleac, C. (2008); Cotton 2016).

- i. **Phonological disorders:** are defined as the abnormal organization of the phonological system, or a significant deficit in speech production or perception. A child with a phonological disorder may be described as hard to understand or as not saying the sounds correctly.

Apraxia of speech is a specific phonological disorder where the student may want to speak but has difficulty planning what to say and the motor movements to use.

- ii. **Morphological disorders:** are defined as difficulties with morphological inflections (inflections on nouns, verbs, and adjectives that signal different kinds of meanings).
- iii. **Semantic disorders:** are characterized by poor vocabulary development, inappropriate use of word meanings, and/or inability to comprehend word meanings. These students will demonstrate restrictions in word meanings, difficulty with multiple word meanings, excessive use of nonspecific terms (e.g., thing and stuff), and indefinite references (e.g., that and there).
- iv. **Syntactic deficits** are characterized by difficulty in acquiring the rules that govern word order and others aspects of grammar such as subject-verb agreement. Typically, these students produce shorter and less elaborate sentences with fewer cohesive conjunctions than their peers.
- v. **Pragmatic difficulties** are characterized as problems in understanding and using language in different social contexts. These students may lack an understanding of the rules for making eye contact, respecting personal space, requesting information, and introducing topics.

### **Language disorders and method of therapy/intervention**

A visit to a therapeutic home at Enugu justifies the need for a dual therapy in the management of language disorder. An observation of individuals with aphasia on whom computer-based treatment system was used to determine if gains in spoken language beyond spontaneous recovery was made in Enugu



therapeutic home. Results showed that verbal language performance increased after using a computer-based treatment program in therapy sessions with speech language therapists. However, this therapy was done after some significant improvements made through traditional approach. The foregoing buttresses Raymer, Kohen, and Saffell(2015)opinion that computer-based speech or language therapy software can be seen as clinical tools. The speech therapist uses his/her clinical skill (traditional approach) in conjunction with the computer, to advise and encourage the patient. Computer-based speech or language therapy software can aid diagnosis of speech or language disorders and provide visual feedback during treatment.

Analysis from the interview shows that there is no benchmark treatment for Broca's aphasia. Its treatment is personalized according to a patient's condition and needs to observe by a language pathologist. The foregoing is confirmed by the recovery attitude of Mr. Udochukwu (27years) who went through a period of spontaneous recovery following brain injury in which he regained a great deal of language function. Few months after the injury or stroke, he received treatment in traditional way hourly based on how his case was. Udochukwu could not talk at the first three years of condition but with time he has improved significantly. Mrs. Ndidi, a language pathologist at Enugu home says the patient's gradual recovery is further aided by some computer software like Video Voice Speech Training System, Aphasia Mate, and Talk-Time-with-Tucker.

Aphasia Mate consists of eight main sections containing 146 different therapy tasks and more than 1700 individual exercises. Exercises incorporate text, graphics, and video clips and work on skills including comprehension of written and

auditory material, spelling, solving problems of time and money, and classifying semantically-related items. Tasks range from a basic to high level of difficulty, so Aphasia Mate may be used repeatedly by clients from early to late stages of treatment. Talk-time-with-tucker is a voice-activated speech therapy software program that is appropriate for children from pre-kindergarten through the fourth grade. This program's primary function is to encourage vocalization in reluctant talkers. Children can make Tucker, an animated character, move and talk by speaking into a microphone. The program keeps children engaged by encouraging them to guide Tucker through various adventures. For video voice speech training system, it is appropriate for children of all ages, as well as adults. Video Voice is easy to navigate and offers complementary software updates. A child can use the various games and displays in this software to work on his or her articulation, sound production, rate of speech, and more. Video Voice is intended to be used by those with a wide range of speech disorders and related, conditions, including apraxia, hearing impairment, oral motor articulation deficits, autism, head injuries, and more.

Similarly, melodic intonation therapy is equally often applied based on the observation that aphasic patients most at times can sing words or phrases that they normally cannot speak. Mrs. Ndidi notes that this therapy started as an attempt to use the intact melodic/prosodic processing skills of the right hemisphere in those with aphasia to help cue retrieval words and expressive language. It is so because singing capabilities are stored in the right hemisphere of the brain, which is likely to remain unaffected after a stroke in the left hemisphere. But she quickly added that all these computer-induced therapies are usually

applied much after the traditional approach/skills must have been used on the patients.

The foregoing notwithstanding, evidence from the survey questionnaire which was further corroborated by the oral interview show that cost of maintenance and inadequate knowledge of computer applications coupled with appropriate usage of relevant computer software are some of the banes of efficient utilizations of computer-based therapy for the management of language disorder.

Evidence from Enugu therapeutic home suggests the following therapeutic interventions

i. Direct interventions

This focuses on the treatment of the child individually, or within a group, depending on the age and needs of the children requiring therapy and the facilities available. In group treatment, it is thought that children benefit from the opportunities to interact and learn from one another.

ii. Indirect interventions

These are viewed to be more naturalistic in approach, allowing adults that are already within the child's environment to facilitate communication. Traditionally, these approaches create an optimum communicative environment for the child by promoting positive parent-child interaction. Riches (2017) note that indirect approaches are increasingly being adopted within a range of settings where speech and language therapists train professionals and career that work with the children, and provide programmes or advice on how to maximize the child's communicative environment and enhance communicative attempts.

iii. Parents interventions

It is observed that parents are often actively engaged in delivering interventions to younger children since most intervention models target behaviours using play to enhance generalization, but tend to be less actively involved in the administration of the intervention as the child gets older.

iv. Reinforcement interventions

This intervention involves rewards of some form, most often praise. The assumption behind overt behavioural techniques is that language or speech can explicitly be taught and that gaps in the child's skills be filled by instruction. Miller (2014) opines that majority of interventions involve the training of specific behaviours like speech sounds, vocabulary, sentence structures. Feedback from our survey shows that most therapy have shifted from explicit training paradigms to those based on social learning theory which assumes that children learn most effectively if they are trained within a social context.

**Software for managing language disorders:**

According to O'Kelly (2016) there are a number of software programs manufactured for speech and language therapy. These include:

**i. Clicker 6**

Clicker 6 is a software program that can benefit children who struggle with expressive language disorder. A child can use the sentence builder grids to learn proper sentence structure. He can also use the "forced order" grids, in which he is given a sample of words to put in the correct order. Clicker 6 also offers tools for a child to record his voice. He may listen to a model

sentence and then attempt to imitate it. This software program also offers sound matching games and additional activities to strengthen a child's expressive language abilities. Children who have little to no speech may also use the program as an augmentive and alternative (AAC) communication device.

## ii. **Fast-for-word**

It is an interactive, computer-based training program that builds the fundamental language skills critical for reading success and communicating in and out of the classroom. Fast-for-Word stimulates rapid language skill development as children learn to distinguish the various components of speech. The program consists of five 20-minute training sessions a day, five days a week. Results from the exercises are analysed daily and compared with the student's progress to date. Fast-For-Word software has been adopted nationwide by Speech and Language Pathologists as a speech therapy program, now online, that improves language processing and phonological skills using self-paced exercises that work on all aspects of expressive language:

- sound discrimination
- phonemic awareness
- listening comprehension
- vocabulary
- language structure

Fast-For-Word is one of the most widely used speech and language programs in the world, because of its ability to help as follows:

- **Participation in conversation.** Improved processing improves receptive language skills, effectively slowing

conversation and teacher instruction down, making it easier to participate.

- **Significant vocabulary gains.** Because a child will be able to listen more accurately, more words will be absorbed and then used. This applies particularly to longer words and words with blends, both of which will be easier to pick up and words relating to intangibles, that without a concrete item to point to, were hard for a child with processing difficulties to pick up.
- **Improved articulation.** Improved listening will help a child hear the sounds inside words more clearly, leading to better pronunciation.
- **Conversational skills,** relating a story. Fast-For-Word can eventually help children with speech delays learn how to relate a story, in sequence and with detail. Improved listening will allow a child to improve the ability to hear how others communicate, and over time this will translate into better communication skills, although given the integration with other aspects like reasoning, knowledge, perception improvements in communication, relating a story in particular, will occur more slowly over the year or so after completing our online speech software.

### iii. Sentence-Shaper

This can help people with aphasia to create better speech, and that this effect may carry over into spontaneous speech. The program was developed for non-fluent aphasia, but the rich support it provides for speech production may be helpful with conditions such as apraxia, children's language disorders, and even fluent aphasia. And the integration of text may allow it

to play a role in reading programs. Thus the program can be used as a communication aid, a therapy tool, or both.

#### **iv. Speech Viewer III**

Speech Viewer III is a speech and language tool that transforms spoken words and sounds into imaginative graphics. Speech Viewer III increases the effectiveness of speech therapy and speech modification for people who have speech, language or hearing impairments. You can select from over a dozen Speech Viewer exercises. Each exercise responds to your voice input with immediate, clear and meaningful feedback that helps you “see how to speak.” In addition, Speech Viewer III provides animated rewards that reinforce successful responses. The software incorporates SVGA graphics, a revised menu bar format for access to clinical exercises, point-and-click capability, pull-down menus, and enhanced phoneme (a word, phrase, or sound) model creation. The program's clinical management functions automatically collect pertinent data that allow therapists to easily document progress and see and hear results. Speech Viewer III is designed to help people of all ages who have a variety of disabilities, such as speech or language impairments, cerebral palsy, developmental delay, traumatic brain injury, and speech disorders resulting from a stroke. It is ideal for professional speech language pathologists, special education teachers, teachers of the deaf, English as a second language instructors, professionals working with accent reduction and others.

#### **iv. Sight n' Sounds**

This is a speech therapy software that helps to improve articulation and word retrieval. It is useful for aphasia and oral apraxia. It displays a word and/or picture and speaks the word (using pre-recorded human speech). It records the user speaking

the model and plays back the users' speech and the model speech for comparison. The professional version allows you to enter your own words. There are different levels of use: Single syllable words, Shortwords, organised by beginning sound, Short words organised by ending sound, pictures and words for verbs.

### **Benefits of computer use in speech-language-therapy**

The existing works on speech-language therapy vary in terms of scope, the nature of the research and also the control measures recommended. The foregoing notwithstanding, some benefits of technology-based therapy have been highlighted. For instance, some computer software programs which can improve the language skills like reading and writing of an aphasic patient have been developed (Katz, 2001, and Mortley, Wade, Davies, & Enderby, 2003). The extension of computer-based therapy to treat language disorder offers increased practice opportunities that consolidate gains in language performance (Kinsey, 1986; Loverso, Prescott, & Selinger, 1992; Mortley et al., 2003; Wallesch & Johannsen-Horbach, 2004). Aftonomos, Steele, and Wertz (1997) corroborated this in their study that verbal language performance increases after using a computer-based treatment program in individual therapy sessions with an SLP.

Other studies have also reported improvement in the skills of clients with chronic aphasia following computer-based treatment programs in spoken language (Laganaro & Venet, 2001; Weinrich, 1997), in reading comprehension (Crerar, Ellis, & Dean, 1996; Katz & Wertz, 1992, 1997), in naming ability (Bruce & Howard, 1987), and in auditory comprehension (Fitch & Thomas-Cross, 1983). Studies also suggest that individuals with aphasia who were exposed to some computer software such as the voice recognition software were able to improve their functional written language skills (Bruce, Edmundson,



&Coleman, 2003).As a result of the positive effects of technology on humans, many people including persons with language disorders are now comfortable with using computers in their homes, and this may increase the intensity of their practice. Using computers at home have enormous advantages which include: decrease in the need for travel, ability to receive prompt feedback, and provision of flexibility in access modes (Kinsey, 1986; Weinrich, 1997).Computer-based home therapy has the tendency to decrease the demands placed on caregivers in implementing home programs (Wallesch & Johannsen-Horbach, 2004). Indeed, there have been a considerable improvement in the interactive aspect of computer-based treatment as a result of technological awareness and its ever-increasing availability to consumers such as aphasic persons.

### **Limitation to computer usage**

Not all clients will be receptive to using computers or will benefit from using this technology in their rehabilitation. As with any technology, a learning curve is involved, and some rehabilitation professionals are not comfortable using computers. Ethical issues may arise with computer-based treatment if speech language pathologists provide software or Web sites without appropriate clinical evaluation and teaching. No uniform guidelines for the provision of online therapy services exist, and issues such as state licensure requirements when interstate services are provided are currently being addressed.

SLPs are the driving force behind computer-based therapy and must establish a diagnosis, create a treatment plan, and design and modify computer-based tasks for individuals with aphasia (Katz, 2001; Loverso et al., 1992; Mortley et al., 2003; Weinrich, 1997). Computers cannot perform many of the skilled roles of SLPs, nor can they replace elements of face-to-face

communication or provide individualized facilitation or moral support. In some cases, computer-based activities are not motivating for the person with aphasia (Wallesch & Johannsen-Horbach, 2004), and computers may not be available to individuals of lower socioeconomic status (Egan et al., 2004; Elman, 2001). The current Internet system and most Web sites are not accessible for many individuals with disabilities (Pinkett, 2001). Elman (2001, p. 896) stated that those individuals without Internet access will in the future be “isolated and disadvantaged.” Currently, there are no standardized educational requirements for SLPs, and evidence-based practice standards have not been established.

### **Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations**

In conclusion, the role of computers in every facet of human life cannot be overemphasized. From a review of related works, it can be seen that the computer has been employed by many speech and language pathologists in resolving all forms of language impairment. Studies suggest that comprehensive therapy programs may be beneficial for many individuals with aphasia and other language impairments, and computer-based therapy may be one feasible avenue of providing this intervention.

Findings from the survey however, reveal that the extent to which computers were used directly for treatment was limited due to lack of accessibility and knowledge, even though research supports such use as effective in improving the communication skills of individuals with aphasia. SLPs need adequate computer skills in order to stay abreast of their clients’ knowledge and to aid them in school and work re-entry. However, SLPs seem to feel that computers are helpful but not necessarily essential in the treatment of every language disorder. This perception may exist

because SLPs are confident that other methods of service delivery are effective, or because of complacency, lack of knowledge of available technology, or inflexibility. It could be argued that being able to use a computer effectively is an essential skill in a technologically driven society.

Besides, there are intangible benefits of computer use in rehabilitation, such as increased autonomy, connectedness, self-worth, and recreation. For these reasons, SLPs can confidently target the habilitation or rehabilitation of computer skills as a functional endpoint of treatment for many individuals with speech disorder. Improving the quality of life for individuals with speech impairment is the ultimate goal when implementing technology in clinical interventions.

Findings indicated that computer-based treatment of language disorder is being implemented to varying degrees and more often for supplemental and administrative purposes than for direct therapy.

With computer-based therapy, a PowerPoint presentation could be created and sent via an e-mail attachment to the teachers so that they can visualize the progress their students made within the therapy setting while utilizing technology in the form of Sound Therapy Lite. Additionally, individual teacher/speech pathologist conferences will be conducted to allow the teachers an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the use of technology in speech-language therapy. Moreover, the conferences will provide the teachers an outlet to discuss in detail each student currently receiving speech-language therapy in their respective classrooms and how the use of technology may aid in the mastery of previously defined goals. Sound Therapy Lite is a helpful tool within the therapy realm and will be utilized with all students receiving speech-

language therapy to foster positive communication skills while diversifying instruction.

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## LA SOCIÉTÉ CAMEROUNAISE POSTCOLONIALE DANS L'ŒUVRE DE MONGO BETI

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### Résumé

*À travers ses romans, ses essais et de courageuses prises de position, Mongo Beti avait fini par être pour nous le symbole même de l'intellectuel libre, prêt à payer pour ses convictions et ne se reconnaissant d'autre maître que sa conscience. Conscient de l'engagement subversif de ses romans, Mongo Beti est d'abord révélé sous le nom d'Eza Boto : « Sans haine et sans amour » (nouvelle) paraît en 1953, puis, Ville cruelle, son premier roman, en 1954. Le choix de publier ses tout premiers écrits sous des pseudonymes pourrait s'interpréter comme l'entrée officielle de l'auteur en dissidence. Il publie par la suite trois romans en trois ans : Le Pauvre Christ de Bomba (1956), Mission terminée (1957) et Le Roi miraculé (1958), qui se déclinent en une trilogie. Après une décennie qui pourrait être interprétée comme étant une période d'observation et d'auscultation de la société africaine d'une part et du système néocolonial d'autre part, suivront Main basse sur le Cameroun en 1972, Perpétue et l'habitude du malheur et Remember Ruben en 1974, La Ruine presque cocasse d'un polichinelle en 1979, Les Deux mères de Guillaume Ismael Dzewatama en 1983 et La Revanche de Guillaume Ismael Dzewatama en 1984. Cette deuxième série de publications marque une évolution fondamentale dans le courant idéologique de l'écrivain. C'est l'ère de la dénonciation et de la contestation de l'ordre postcolonial. Cette fois-ci, Mongo Beti dévoile et persifle un*

*système dominé par le jeu d'intérêts entre l'ancien maître qui, en réalité, n'est jamais parti, et ses affidés locaux, les anciens colonisés. Les deux complices sont désormais liés dans l'entreprise de déshumanisation, d'asservissement et de pillage des ressources du continent noir.*

Mots-clés : *Cameroun, Mongo Beti, société africaine, engagement*

### **Introduction.**

Mongo Beti, il faut le souligner, n'a jamais partagé l'allégresse qui a suivi les indépendances africaines. Après son retour au bercaïl en 1991, suite à un long exil de quarante années en France, et après une phase d'observation et d'évaluation des réalités locales, l'auteur fait paraître un essai, *La France contre l'Afrique* (1993), et trois romans : *L'Histoire du fou* (1994), *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* (1999) et *Branle-bas en noir et blanc* (2000). Ces deux derniers textes, sous couvert d'une série policière, sont empreints d'une profonde sensibilité et se singularisent par la crudité des vérités exposées. Au-delà de leurs titres étranges, des romans comme *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* et *Branle-bas en noir et blanc* frappent par leur furie jubilatoire.

Après quatorze années de silence entre *Le roi miraculé* et *Main basse sur le Cameroun*, il avait peut-être envie de faire un sort à la littérature elle-même. Ses derniers textes donnent pourtant l'impression d'une boucle qui se referme, car Mongo Beti semble y avoir retrouvé la joie d'écrire de ses jeunes années, avec en prime l'amertume et le désir de foutre le bordel. Contrairement à ses habitudes littéraires, Mongo Beti adopte, pour ces deux romans qui, au fond, se complètent, le style des romans policiers. Ceci peut s'expliquer par le fait que, dans une

certaine mesure et par la force des choses, la littérature africaine, au moins dans la partie francophone du continent, n'a jamais atteint la masse populaire.

### **Le malaise social**

Les écrivains africains s'adressent, en général, à une élite intellectuelle. Or il existe un public populaire qui ne cherche qu'à lire, et qui constitue, à bien y regarder, le véritable destinataire final de cette littérature de combat. La satire semble être un choix stratégique pour atteindre ce public. Mongo Beti y prend une grande liberté d'expression pour vitupérer vertement la société camerounaise postcoloniale. *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* et *Branle-bas en noir et blanc* sont, il faut une fois de plus le souligner, des œuvres qui s'organisent dans une admirable série, tout en présentant les mêmes personnages qui participent à l'intrigue. Que ce soit à travers des personnages comme Zam, Eddie, le taximan, Norbert, Moustapha, Bébête, la mère supérieure, l'abbé Batané ou Georges (l'aventurier français), Mongo Beti exprime son dépit face au tableau inquiétant du Cameroun postcolonial. Il s'agit d'un Cameroun enserré dans les liens du système néocolonial, empêtré dans la déchéance morale et incapable de se projeter dans le futur.

Par sa critique acerbe, enveloppée d'un humour caustique, Mongo Beti présente l'image d'un Cameroun à la dérive. La dérive du pouvoir postcolonial se caractérise essentiellement par les abus de pouvoir, l'incompétence, la corruption d'une administration aux ordres, l'effondrement des valeurs socio-économiques et morales. La déchéance sociale est à l'image de la perversion de ses dirigeants, quand elle n'en est pas la conséquence. L'intervention du taximan, un des personnages de *Branle-bas en noir et blanc*, lors d'une discussion entre Eddie et Georges, est révélatrice de l'état

chaotique du pays : » l'État ici c'est quoi ? Est-ce que ça existe ? Mes frères africains là, vous êtes forts, hein, très forts. Là où les Blancs ont commencé par le commencement, vous autres vous commencez par la fin. Vous êtes très forts. Je ris quand même beaucoup(55)

Au fil de ces pages, Mongo Beti entreprend une profonde réflexion, tout en élucidant les causes profondes des maux qui expliquent la dégénérescence de l'Afrique postcoloniale. Le romancier dénonce ainsi le caractère fortement autocratique du système mis en place par le pouvoir colonial et perpétué par ses postiches locaux, un système de domination qui a fait de la nation camerounaise une monstruosité. La littérature pour Mongo Beti n'est pas un jeu mais plutôt une arme de défense contre les impérialistes occidentaux et leurs affidés locaux. *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* et *Branle-bas en noir et blanc*, se relie, d'une certaine manière, à une histoire vraisemblable, celle des élites africaines constituées en une classe aliénée et aliénante, car » l'oreille du président sont présents partout » (*Branle-bas* 3). Ces romans se veulent une dénonciation de la société camerounaise postcoloniale, minée par la terreur, l'échec politique et la désolation socio-économique.

### **La satire politique**

La verve revendicative de ces romans dénote le caractère fondamentalement biaisé des indépendances des nations africaines. *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* et *Branle-bas en noir et blanc* présentent un bilan médiocre du Cameroun postcolonial et font la satire du comportement de ses dirigeants, un comportement fait de félonie, de démission, de compromission et de tyrannie. Toutes choses qui ne manqueront pas d'étonner Georges, un des personnages clés du roman : » Si je raisonne

bien, poursuit le toubab, l'activité économique est paralysée pour une journée, parce que le président sort de son palais ou y rentre ? (*Branle-bas* 12).

Cette attitude irresponsable des dirigeants camerounais qui surprend Georges, n'étonne cependant pas Eddie : Et alors, ricana Eddie, en quoi ça vous étonne ? Quelque chose vous étonne encore dans ce pays ? L'activité économique est paralysée, est-ce le problème du président ? Aujourd'hui, c'est lui, demain c'est un autre rigolo, chef d'État de je ne sais quelle merdique République bananière, ça sera pareil, des heures à poireauter comme des cons, je devrais dire en vrais cons. Après demain, ce sera la première dame, comme ils disent ici, rebelote. (*Branle-bas* 12-13). Le sens de ces œuvres romanesques est à restituer dans son contexte politique, économique et social, à savoir un Cameroun qui a mal à ses institutions, à son administration, à ses élites. Un Cameroun en panne, pris dans le tourbillon de mille contradictions voulues et entretenues par les suppôts locaux du néocolonialisme et leurs maîtres métropolitains :

Dans certains quartiers de cette ville, notre capitale, qui n'abrite pas moins d'un million d'habitants, l'éclairage public s'allume le jour, mais s'éteint la nuit venue. Et que dire de la coupure d'eau du mois dernier ? Totale et universelle : pas une goutte du précieux liquide pour les nouveau-nés des hôpitaux et d'ailleurs, rien pour les maisons individuelles où les déjections humaines s'accumulèrent et mijotèrent trente jours durant dans les cuves des toilettes des résidences bourgeoises, empoisonnant l'air respiré

par nos pauvres bambins, sans parler des parents.  
(*Trop de soleil* 11)

Bref, Mongo Beti fait le procès de l'état délinquant des nations africaines et dénonce l'égoïsme et l'inconscience de la classe dirigeante. Une classe dirigeante dont le chef s'octroie régulièrement des semaines de villégiature à l'étranger. De la même manière, il désigne ces dirigeants égoïstes comme les responsables au premier chef de la dérive collective. Leur technique est aussi simple que cynique : infantiliser et avilir le petit peuple pour mieux l'asservir :

Chaque grand, comme ils disent, dispose d'un fief, sous une forme ou sous une autre, dans lequel il fait la pluie et le beau temps, sans aucun contrôle de l'État. C'est le cas d'un ministre dans son ministère, d'un commissaire de police dans son commissariat, d'un proviseur dans son lycée, d'un médecin-chef dans son hôpital, de mon protecteur dans son château, espèce de Chambord baroque comportant même une chambre de tortures(*Branle-bas* 133-4).

À travers le caractère de ces personnages, Mongo Beti nous révèle la trahison dont sont victimes les pays africains et leurs peuples après quatre décennies d'indépendance. Les larbins de l'ordre abusent de leurs uniformes, ou très souvent de leurs casquettes, exploitant et mutilant le peuple sans répit. Norbert, dans *Branle-bas en noir et blanc*, est le type même de ce rapace qui, en vertu de son pouvoir de flic, se croit investi d'un pouvoir illimité sur ses congénères : » Il exécute un citoyen en plein jour, et pour son compte personnel encore, il faut venir ici pour voir ça » (*Branle-bas* 56). Les détenteurs de pouvoir usent et

abusent des dispositifs de l'État, principalement la police, l'armée et l'administration : « L'État n'existe pas sinon par à-coups, et toujours sous la forme policière, quand il envoie ses policiers briser une manifestation de retraités qui sont privés de leur pension depuis six mois » (*Branle-bas* 134).

### **L'Afrique en mal de leader**

Se superpose au talent indéniable de Mongo Beti sa capacité jamais prise à défaut à observer de près les faits et à dénoncer les injustices sociales qui règnent au sein de l'appareil d'État, en particulier au Cameroun. L'auteur étale le désarroi d'une société vivant en porte-à-faux avec l'immoralité qui caractérise les gens du pouvoir, agissant en fonction de leurs pulsions basses et égoïstes. Eddie l'observe fort opportunément : « Quand tant de gens, dès qu'ils avaient pillé au point de le contraindre à la faillite un établissement financier, un organisme public, une entreprise d'État, s'empressaient de se radiner à l'étranger, leur magot tapi au fond d'une valise diplomatique complaisante » (*Branle-bas* 35-36). L'incurie qui caractérise l'élite au pouvoir est mise en relief par Mongo Beti dans une peinture poignante de la vie effrontément opulente qu'elle mène. Une élite gangrenée par une propension malade au pillage des deniers publics et de toutes les autres ressources du pays. Le président de la République et sa nombreuse cour, ses courtisans et autres clients du régime roulent carrosse, pour témoigner de leur réussite matérielle. Le narrateur, lors d'une scène marquant le retour du président d'un de ses innombrables voyages, raconte :

Défilèrent alors, à la queue leu leu et à vive allure, certes, mais sans précipitation excessive, une trentaine de Mercedes dernier cri, aux vitres teintées également, mais aussi

longue et vaste qu'un wagon-lit de l'Orient-Express ou de la Western Union. C'est celle où le président avait pris place, disait-on, car personne ne l'avait vraiment vu. (*Branle-bas* 25-6).

Pour Mongo Beti, le pouvoir s'est trompé de dépositaire pour échouer entre des mains moins méritantes et incapables. Et ce n'est pas un hasard : « Les quelques leaders qui avaient quelque peu réfléchi aux enjeux idéologiques de la libération de l'Afrique ont été très vite balayés. Et pas seulement par la méchanceté des Blancs, mais par les Africains eux-mêmes » (*Mongo Beti parle* 50). La désolation de Mongo Beti est d'autant plus profonde quand il remarque que les intellectuels font très peu pour sortir le pays de son marasme économique et de sa déchéance politique et sociale. Pire, ces intellectuels, très souvent, se sont ligués avec la classe dirigeante dans un dessein criminel de prédation de la fortune publique, avant de se constituer en une opposition aux ordres. C'est « le vrai mal, le seul mal de notre société, si l'on excepte l'obstination de nos intellectuels à singer les murs vulgaires des dirigeants de la dictature au lieu de montrer au peuple l'exemple d'une existence noble et productive » (*Trop de soleil* 70).

Dès lors qu'ils ont fait le choix de s'allier à un régime qu'ils savaient au préalable dictatorial et qu'ils qualifient aujourd'hui de corrompu, les intellectuels camerounais ont échoué dans leur fonction de repère des valeurs de la société. Le vrai drame, c'est que l'Afrique en général souffre d'un affligeant déficit de modèle, d'une absence préjudiciable de leaders responsables, capables de tracer et d'éclairer le chemin pour les masses. Le Corse, un des personnages du roman, le confirme : « l'Afrique souffre surtout de ne pas sécréter des hommes de



caractère, ou si peu, lesquels les vautours de notre capitalisme s'empresment alors d'exterminer. L'Afrique manque de vrais leaders » (*Branle-bas* 141).

### **Le drame.**

Après quarante ans d'indépendance, l'Afrique n'a su produire que des politiciens, des soldats, des policiers et des magistrats aussi corrompus et pervers les uns que les autres, et plus nocifs que les criminels qu'ils étaient censés pourchasser et punir. Le président de la République est le chef de la magistrature suprême et dispose de tous les moyens pour manipuler les élections en sa faveur, des moyens dont il fait régulièrement usage. Le Corse l'affirme : « Le chef de l'État a tous les pouvoirs, même celui d'annuler une loi votée par son Parlement » (136). Les chefs d'État africains n'ont pas véritablement pris en main le destin politique et les projets économiques et sociaux de leurs nations. Tout en dénonçant la responsabilité des dirigeants, Mongo Beti regrette amèrement que l'Afrique se montre aussi impuissante, incapable de contrôler son propre destin. Le constat est aussi clair que désolant, le continent ne s'est pas encore libéré du système colonial : « Les Français sont prêts à tout pour maintenir leur emprise ici » (*Trop de soleil* 27).

Il est désolant de constater que la propagation de la gangrène sociale est le fait des agents publics. La malhonnêteté et l'inconscience professionnelles amènent des personnages comme Norbert à considérer la corruption comme un mode de vie. » À la circulation, je me fais cent mille par jour. Alors, ici, avec vous, je vais gagner quoi ? Moi, je préfère la circulation » (*Trop de soleil* 132). À cause de ses méthodes mal adaptées, de ses choix périlleux et pour le moins irréalistes, la sphère dirigeante de l'État doit être directement tenue pour responsable

de nombre de vices qui ravagent le pays. Les réductions des salaires et la modicité de la rétribution des agents publics sont des causes de la déchéance morale collective. Moustapha se fraie un chemin illicite pour survivre. C'est ainsi qu'il se découvre du jour au lendemain des dons de marabout avec pour seule fin d'abuser de la crédulité du peuple. Avec la complicité de l'État, des affidés comme l'abbé Batané et la Mère supérieure mettent sur pied divers trafics. Grâce à leurs combines, ils tiennent en servitude de nombreuses jeunes femmes. La dictature use et abuse de sa police pour pourchasser et faire taire des journalistes qui, comme Zam, s'efforcent d'animer une presse indépendante.

Mongo Beti dénonce avec véhémence l'irresponsabilité du système politique, source de nombreux malheurs qui gangrènent la société camerounaise, dans un style d'une vigueur frappante. Dans *Trop de Soleil tue l'amour* et *Branle-bas en noir et blanc*, le lecteur découvre une langue panachée. À la langue de Molière s'ajoute le français du peuple, teinté de couleurs locales. L'auteur lui-même affirme :

Dans *Trop de soleil tue l'amour*, je mets en scène pour la première fois peut-être des gens du peuple, mais des citoyens. C'est vrai, c'est la première fois. Et j'ai l'impression qu'à Yaounde, il y a peut-être déjà l'amorce d'une langue collective, un français collectif, qui est très pauvre en ce sens qu'il n'est pas capable d'exprimer des idées très fortes ou des sentiments très profonds mais qui peut aider à la communication des gens de différentes ethnies. (*Mongo Beti parle* 147)

## La pensée de la presse

Il faut une fois de plus le souligner, si l'auteur fait le choix délibéré d'un français populaire dans ses textes, c'est essentiellement pour sa fonction communicative. Le taximan entre bien dans cette classe de personnages qui utilisent un français local. On note avec intérêt son malheur lorsqu'il est interpellé par un policier, faute de permis de conduire. Il se tourne alors vers Eddie qu'il transportait dans son taxi en lui disant : « Rien, patron, répondit le taximan. Pas de permis. Pas d'assurance. Rien. On fait tous comme ça, hein. Tu tombes sur le mange-mille-là, tu donnes deux mille, tu es tranquille pour la journée. L'assurance, le permis, tu trouves même l'argent où ? C'est trop cher » (*Branle-bas* 19). Par ailleurs, parlant des voyages du président considéré comme un oiseau migrateur à cause de ses multiples déplacements, une jeune femme demande avec candeur et insistance : « – Aka, tu dis seulement Brunei, Brunei, mais ouais, Brunei, c'est même où ? Tu connais Brunei, toi ? C'est tout près ? C'est très loin ? C'est où ? Qui connaît même ça ? » (*Branle-bas* 23).

Mongo Beti se sert de la langue comme d'un instrument malléable pour véhiculer son message. Nous pouvons affirmer à juste titre que le parler populaire utilisé dans *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* et dans *Branle-bas en noir et blanc* dévoile le statut social de certains personnages. Thomas Melone souligne à ce propos :

Mongo Beti aime dans ses œuvres à retranscrire le parler populaire camerounais. Il excelle à mettre dans la bouche de ses divers personnages le style de leur niveau éducatif ou de leur condition sociale, avec de savoureuses intrusions du parler tribal, faisant ainsi de son œuvre un condensé des

traits dialectaux, un amalgame de français volontairement maladroit et de langues indigènes, exigence de couleur locale ou variations de sa fantaisie. (183)

Le parler populaire intervient pour briser les règles du français standard et pour défendre le peuple semi-éduqué qui s'efforce de s'exprimer à sa manière. Ainsi, Mongo Beti réussit à amuser son lecteur tout en touchant son cœur. Il le met en face de ses responsabilités, le pousse à compatir au sort du peuple et à découvrir certaines vérités sociales. Mongo Beti assigne donc à son écriture une fonction de dévoilement, dévoilement d'une réalité perçue comme injuste et étouffante. Il a choisi une littérature vérité, une littérature iconoclaste, acerbe et inquiète, troublante même dans une Afrique contemporaine où les malheurs du Noir deviennent objet d'étude et de critique. En réalité, au moment de bâtir son intrigue, l'auteur se livre à un jeu intellectuel : en adoptant une langue populaire, il peut mener le lecteur où il veut, y compris dans les milieux sordides de la corruption. En somme, ce style permet de plonger dans des milieux sociaux les plus divers. L'auteur sort ainsi des sentiers battus et livre une intéressante analyse sociologique. Mongo Beti refuse de se ranger et de s'attabler aux côtés de la classe dirigeante opprimante, comme beaucoup de pseudo-intellectuels africains contemporains, une classe dirigeante qui a fait des tendances tribalistes son mode de fonctionnement et de régulation sociale.

Ce chantre de la littérature de combat a choisi de rester fidèle à sa pensée. Mongo Beti, il faut le rappeler, n'a jamais été attiré par les mirages du pouvoir. En rejetant l'invitation présidentielle de son frère *beti* qui lui proposait une place enviable au sein du sérail, en échange de son silence, le

romancier préfère mener sagement, sereinement et sans compromission aucune, sa lutte contre la dictature. Au-delà de l'univers fictionnel qui nourrit certains de ses récits, Mongo Beti puise abondamment dans les réalités quotidiennes d'un Cameroun à la dérive. Sa critique de l'auteur ne se limite d'ailleurs pas à son pays, mais s'étend à l'Afrique tout entière, une Afrique coincée entre les affres de la dictature, de la corruption et du tribalisme.

### **Conclusion**

À travers *Trop de soleil tue l'amour* et *Branle-bas en blanc et noir*, Mongo Beti expose les réalités d'une Afrique postcoloniale ravagée par une litanie de vices dont l'État et ses agents se trouvent être très souvent les principaux responsables. La justesse de ses observations et la pertinence de ses remarques ne manquent pas de ramener à l'esprit les chroniques journalistiques sur le drame de l'Afrique. Le départ prématuré de la scène de cet écrivain rebelle n'en est que plus poignant. Au point que l'on s'interroge de plus en plus sérieusement sur l'avenir de ce combat singulier. Que reste-t-il, au stade actuel de l'évolution de la pensée de ce monument du combat, pour la libération totale du continent noir ? Subsiste-t-il encore en Afrique un écrivain audacieux, ardent et aussi prolifique pour continuer la lutte avec la même ardeur ? La popularité de l'écrivain au sein de la jeunesse prouve la justesse de son discours et augure d'une transmission par-dessus tout assurée aux générations futures. Mongo Beti un des maîtres à penser de la jeunesse africaine en quête de repères.

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## THE STRUCTURE OF NOUN PHRASE IN ENGLISH

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### Abstract

*The present paper seeks to analyze the noun phrase structure in English. It further tries to look into the various constituents that make up the noun phrase structure using Huddleston's (1988) Structuralist Model of Grammar theory as its theoretical framework. The general composition of the noun phrase structure is realized in two different distinctive forms, which include a single-word noun without any accompanying unit and a noun class item plus other constituent units. These constituent units are the pre-head dependents and the post-head dependents respectively. Each of these structures has units that work in a distinctive form in order to precede or to follow the head noun in the noun phrase structure.*

**Keywords:** *sentential, constituent, noun phrase, structure.*

### Introduction

The concept of phrase is very important in English. It is a syntactic item that runs through the construction of every sentence. It is actually made up of words that are strung together to form one common relationship which acts as an independent building unit. Such unit is often labelled with different nomenclatures of individual word classes which head the entire structure thereby making it to be noted as a single recognised characteristic reference.

A phrase is characteristically identified in context by its form and by its syntactic function in the sentence. The relationship between the phrase structure and its associated head item is a descriptive one. The phrase structure is always made to become just a realisation of the syntactic events for the grammar of the language to work sporadically. In effect, each constituent item in the phrase structure is found to be a different set of category which “operates as an element in the grammatical structure of the next higher units” (Thakur 2011:147). This means that each grammatical item feeds on the other unit next to it so that individual subject item could be sequenced as a complete composite form. In theory, grammatical relations between these individual phrase constituents require a frequent account on the basis of structural description. In its sole reference to sequence, individual constituent items set a very different limit across the larger scale which requires that each unit becomes covertly part of the exponent of other linguistic variables.

The phrase theory often displays a role as a product of systemic variable where the linear arrangement of constituent units is ordered under a successive scheme of  $X^nY^nZ^n$  pattern (Halliday 1961). The range of this pattern ( $X^nY^nZ^n$ ) represents a theoretical restriction that shows that each unit is reliable and expected to occupy at least a single slot relative to argument in its context of use. This means that the class of the phrase structure accounts on the likeness of events and its frequency in the construction (Halliday 1961).

Traditionally, a phrase structure is seen as a word or words without a substantive finite verb (Omorodion 2009). This form of looking at the phrase may not be too operative and suitable in some context because it dwells solely on semantic



grounds, rather than any other means through which a phrase is identified in context. As a result, it always poses a threat to the grammatical analysis of structures that are deemed to be phrase element any time an attempt is made to deal with a suitable definition. As a strong grammatical term, however, a phrase can be identified in a sentence through an approach called “systemic constituent test approach”. This approach deals with a step – by – step means of looking at how a phrase structure should be in English. It is an approach which is purely grammatical and reflects practically, the occurrence of words in any given sequence. Accordingly, the “systemic constituent test approach” adopts five keenly acceptable models that are used to identify and theoretically analyze a phrase structure. In this case, a structure can be classified as a phrase if it could be seen as a representation of at least all or some of the following tunes of actions including being a group of words or a word, the individual word or words should work as a unit on their own, it should be headed by a class item, it is formed without a subject-predicate structure and should be substituted or replaced by a single word.

Every phrase item has an obligatory item within its structure. Such an obligatory item grammatically controls other units present and determines their gnomic role in the constituent. Indeed, it is the head item that names the constituent category of phrase being it a noun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition any other propositional forms. This means obviously that the sequence of elements realizing the constituent component of a phrase is only implied to the choice of the class item present. However, the structure of a phrase may or may not be limited to specific head. Those phrases that are limited to specific head are the headed phrases and those that are not are the non-headed

phrases (Quirk et al 1985). A headed phrase construction has only one obligatory item within the unit. The sequence of other accompanying elements represents a subordinate material in the power of modification which expands and operates as a syntactic entity occurring before and after the constituent of the unit head in order to determine the character of such phrase (Finch 2000; Chomsky 1957; Quirk et al 1985).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on Huddleston's (1988) Structuralist theoretical model of grammar. According to the model, every noun phrase is patterned with two different syntactic structures. These syntactic structures may include a single-word noun alone serving as the phrase element and a noun serving as the head plus other grammatical units. Huddleston (1988) labels these grammatical units as the pre-head dependents and the post-head dependents respectively. To him, the pre and the post-head dependents are not obligatory units as it may occur in the process of noun "phrasalization", but are brought together in order to play a peripheral function by complementing the head noun, either to define it or describe it in the surrounding context. He diagrammatically presents the noun phrase model in the following form: {Pre-head dependent} + Noun head + {Post-head dependent}

Huddleston's (1988) noun phrase model is similar to ones propounded by Halliday (1961), Quirk et al (1985), and Downing and Locke (2006). Thus, the elements that can fill both the pre-head and the post-head positions are the same. In each case, the NP is any underlined grammatical structure which has a noun as its head. This may be a pronoun, nominal element, or prototypical noun serving as the only grammatical item within the NP (see Aarts 2001; Annan 2014; Biber et al 2002; DeCarrio

2005; Finch 2001; Huddleston 1988; Leech et al 1982; Lamidi 2000; Murthy 2007; Thorne 1997). Such dependent items may either precede or follow the head in a congruent manner to become part of the NP. Accordingly, the structure of the NP may be realised as a sole and obligatory noun ( $\emptyset$ +NH); a pre-head item and a noun head (Pre-head +NH); the noun head and the post-head dependent item (NH+Post-head), and pre-head item and the noun head and the post-head item (Pre-head + NH + Post-head). Thus, even though these patterns look structurally different they are similar in function (Annan 2014).

In the first pattern which has a noun head as the only obligatory element or ( $\emptyset$  + Noun head), the NP is identified by just a single word item which becomes the only “central element of” a noun phrase typically realised by a noun or pronoun (Downing and Locke 1992:408). It also be called a bare noun (DeCarrio 2000), and it is usually a noun or the pronoun which has been drawn from “concrete entities such as persons (*man, sister, boy*), objects (*table, house, pen*), animals (*cow, tiger, bird*), places (*restaurant, London*), institutions (*government, department*), materials (*iron, glass*), and also to names of actions (*driving, laughter*), relationships (*marriage, oppression*), qualities (*beauty, speed*), emotions (*happiness, joy*), phenomena (*rain, death, luck*), concepts (*justice, truth*), and many other classes of entities” (Rodríguez-Navarro 2004:252). From grammatically and structural relations, these words identified above could be used as noun phrases in their own right. These single word item noun phrases remain the only compulsory units in both the subject and object functions without any modifying structure within the context that they are associated with as in: Joe can play piano. Or He drinks chocolate; etc

The second pattern which involves a pre-head dependent item and the noun head (Pre-head + NH), simply makes use of grammatical structures that come before the noun head (i.e. pre-head) and it represents a system of words which occur as a constituent with unlimited members, sub-classified into “micro-grammatical units” based on their functional label within the context that such units would occur in. This means that, even though, the pre-head constituents are optional, they produce a very strong relationship to co-index with the noun head. According to Huddleston (1988), the pre-head dependent is basically made up of either a determiner (such as *articles* (the, a, an); *quantifiers* (e.g. some, few, many, etc); *possessive pronouns* (e.g. my, your, his, her, our, their, etc); *demonstrative pronouns* (e.g. this, that, these, those, etc); interrogative pronouns (e.g. whose car, which book, etc); personal pronouns (a.k.a. pronominal determiners e.g. We teachers; you guys, etc); distributives (e.g. every, all, each, etc) and *compound expressions* (e.g. a few, a little, many a, what a, etc). Some if not all these determiners occur in complementary distribution with one another or they all mutually exclusive to one another.

On the other hand, modifiers are open class structures that come together to form a noun phrase. These open class structures are grammatical items that affect the meaning of the head item in some way such as quantifying the head or limiting the head into “the membership of an exclusive set”(Oliveira 2013:8). The truth conditions of these modifiers are positioned to form an indivisible unit with “the noun referent from others in the surrounding context” (Rodríguez-Navarro 2004: 254). Grammatically, there is no obvious restriction to the exact number of modifying classes that could precede the noun head. This suggests that those elements that occur in the modifier

position may be “optional” and may be present in order to “semantically restrict the denotation of the head” (Huddleston 1988:93). Some of the items that can fill the modifier position are adjectives (including general adjectives, numerals, compound adjectives and participles), modifying noun used, adverbs and clause.

In the case of NP with a noun head and post – head dependents (Post-head + NH) pattern, the post – head dependents being grammatical units which occur after the noun head actually help to “. . . specify the referent” in the noun phrase and “add supplementary information about it. When they specify or identify the head, they have a restrictive function; when they only give extra information, they have a non-restrictive or non-defining function” (Oliveira 2013:9). In this relation, the kind of information that these post dependent items carry would always function in a way that would complement the role of the headword. The post dependents’ position is occupied by elements of various forms which are realized by any of the following: adverbs; adjectives or adjectival phrase; prepositional phrases; clauses; noun appositives and reflexive pronoun.

Some other times, a clause sometimes acts as a complement of the noun head in the phrase (noun) structure. As a complement item, the clause may be “introduced by a relative pronoun or adverb” to form what is called a relativizer (Downing & Locke 2006:449). The relativizer always refers “back to the head of” the noun phrase, “which is termed as the antecedent” (ibid.). Some of these relativizers are “who, whom, whose, which, that, where, why and zero” (ibid.). This may be in various forms such as relative clause which is introduced by “wh” words, a “that” clause, “– ing” participle clause, “– ed” participle clause and the “to – infinitive” clause. All of these clause

segments are used in the post-modified position “to add supplementary information” to the referent head item which has been identified in the structure (Downing & Locke 2006:447). They actually become part of the phrase structure and must not be seen as a separate clause item in the construction.

Furthermore, noun structures can occur in a syntactic order to form a grammatical unit. In this form, the sequence of such noun phrases becomes a reflection of a catenative string. In the process of such a catenation, two or more noun phrases of the same grammatical status are “placed side by side, with one element serving to identify the other in a different way”. As a result, the second noun element is believed to be in a post-modification in order to become a “coreferential” item with the head. The second noun phrase is grammatically identified as the appositive item. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (2000), appositive nouns are normally “. . . identical in reference” and “must be included in the reference of the other” (pp.276). Appositive nouns which are found in phrase structures are of two forms: restrictive and non-restrictive in character (Quirk & Greenbaum 2000).

Accordingly, the restrictive appositive noun phrase provides information which is of much vital to the identifying appositive phrase. Such noun phrase becomes eclectically part of the identifying phrase without being marked off by commas. This restrictive form may be a prototypical phrase item or a clause. The clause item representing an appositive constituent “resembles the relative clause” and are variously marked by “abstract noun such as fact, presumption, reply, remark answer and the like” (Quirk & Greenbaum 2002:371). Restrictive appositive structure with a prototypical phrase item is exemplified in “I will visit Kweku my friend tomorrow” where

*my friend* is used appositively without being marked off with a pair of commas. The non-restrictive appositives provide information that is not so important, but rather serve as a catalyst. They are then seen as a “subordinate in the distribution of information” that modifies the appositive phrase in a “parenthetic relation” (Quirk & Greenbaum 2000:277; 377). Some of these constructions are often marked “off by commas or more weighty punctuation” that separate them from the phrase (Quirk & Greenbaum 2000:277). This can be exemplified as follows: “Eunice, a nurse, lives in Fumso” where *a nurse* is marked off with a pair of commas.

In addition to the appositives, reflexive pronoun items can equally occur after the noun head in a typical NP structure. This type of pronoun is variously marked by the “- self” which serves as a morpheme that is characteristically attached to the third person pronouns like *he*, *she*, and *they* when they occur in an objective case form; thus, *her*, *him* and *them*. These can combine with “- self” to form separate words of their own kind such as: *her + self*  $\approx$  *herself*; *him + self*  $\approx$  *himself*. Sometimes the possessive genitives like “my” and “your” can also grammatically attach with “- self” to produce such structures as *myself* and *yourself*. Thus, the reflexive takes a plural form from “-self” to “-selves” when the pronoun it combines with is plural as in *them + selves*  $\approx$  *themselves*; *your + selves*  $\approx$  *yourselves* and *our + selves*  $\approx$  *ourselves*.

Consequently, reflexive pronouns can function in two different forms – emphatic and non-emphatic (Thakur 2011). These two functional roles are realised based on a particular grammatical relationship that the pronoun (reflexive) shares with other units in the sentence. In the non-emphatic function, the reflexive pronouns occur as elements of the clause

structure (Thakur 2011). Thus, to say that they form an integral part of the clause unit and that they do not share any powerful semantic force with other units in a similar relation. They are found as “completives” that form a grammatical relation with other items in the clause (e.g. *You don't seem to be yourself today; He killed himself last year.* (Thakur 2011:22)). Under the emphatic role, the reflexive pronouns are found to be “in apposition to their antecedents” (Thakur 2011:22). That is to say that they semantically add some powerful source to the head item which becomes the action performer. In this relation, the reflexive item strongly re-engineers and affirms the role of the headword. It is this form that occurs as a post-dependent item with the noun head in the noun phrase structure. They become part of the noun phrase and share a common restrictive function with the subject head item as in “President himself has to perform such functions” where *himself* is used emphatically to refer to the president.

Finally, there is yet another pattern of NP which involves a pre-head dependent, a noun head and post-head dependent. This form establishes a relation which includes all the syntactic units that can occur *before* and *after* the noun head within the NP. Thus, of all the elements found within the NP, it is the noun headword which is most important and controls both pre-head and post-head dependents. The pre-head dependent and post-head dependent are often not compulsory but they can supply information which helps to identify the referent item in the group as in: “Joseph is the leader of the inspectorate team”.

## **Conclusion**

This study has looked at the composite structure of a noun phrase in English under the theoretical framework of



Huddleston's (1988) Structuralist Model of Grammar theory. The model sees the structure of noun phrase to be realisable with different units that may precede and/or come after the head to define its space in context. The structure of a noun phrase is identified as an endocentric type and that it depends on the other peripheral constituent units for its expansion. This shows that the NP is an integral part of every sentence where it can perform a "multiplicity of functions" as well as serves a controlling force in the English language (Quirk et al 1985:61). The perspective taken in this paper is largely descriptive and functional but a formal analysis of the NP is highly recommended so as to strike an intellectual balance in the literature on NP.

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