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## PREFACE

We are happy to announce the resumption of publication of the Journal of Languages and Literatures (JALAL) with this rich edition. It is rich in the variety, quality and scholarly acumen of its contents. This richness is further evidenced by the diverse origins of its contributors and the wide scope of their research. Consider, for instance, Jalaluddin Ibrahim's paper, which investigates the sociolinguistic diffusion of the quotative *be like* (e.g., I was like, "You got it just right") and other forms (e.g., say, go, think) in the cosmopolitan context of Manchester, UK. It explores a rapid language change in progress within the British English quotative system.

The paper's central finding is that 'be like' has become the most frequent quotative in Manchester, demonstrating significant functional versatility. Its usage is conditioned by a complex interplay of social and linguistic factors, including the speaker's age, gender, and social class, as well as the grammatical person and the type of quote (speech, thought, or gesture).

The research is firmly situated within the variationist sociolinguistic paradigm. It employs a quantitative analysis of 4,100 tokens of spontaneous speech, collected from a corpus of Manchester residents. This work directly contributes to the global study of quotative innovation by providing a crucial data point from an urban British context. By confirming, refining, and at times challenging findings from other varieties of English (like American and Canadian), it underscores the advanced grammaticalization of *be like* and its pivotal role in the ongoing evolution of narrative discourse.

Equally engaging is the contribution to Literary Studies by Umma Abubakar and Miracle Oluwaseun Akeju on the role of the African

novelist as a social critic, viewed through the prism of the seminal works of Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. Their area of investigation is postcolonial African literature, specifically examining how narrative fiction interrogates colonial and postcolonial power structures.

The main thrust of Abubakar and Akeju's paper is its argument that Achebe and Ngũgĩ, while employing distinct strategies, function as vital social critics who challenge historical injustices and advocate for African agency and cultural integrity.

The paper employs a New Historicist critical framework to situate the literary texts within their specific socio-historical contexts, and it uses a comparative approach to juxtapose Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and "The Novelist as a Teacher" with Ngũgĩ's *A Grain of Wheat* and "Writers in Politics." This comparison reveals Achebe's focus on cultural erosion and the writer as educator, contrasted with Ngũgĩ's emphasis on political betrayal and the writer as activist.

Kayode Titus Elusakin's paper engages the socio-political commentary embedded within the legendary Highlife and Afrobeat musician Sonny Okosun's iconic protest song, "Which Way Nigeria?" The paper situates itself at the intersection of music, language, and political discourse, examining how popular music serves as a potent tool for social critique.

The research rigorously critiques Nigerian leadership and collective societal failings, arguing that the song's lyrics—though four decades old—remain critically relevant today, highlighting enduring issues like corruption, economic mismanagement, and a loss of national direction.

The analysis, anchored in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), specifically employs Norman Fairclough's framework. This approach allows for a systematic examination of how Okosun's lyrical language constructs power relations, ideologies, and knowledge about the

Nigerian condition, moving beyond mere textual analysis to interpret the song's socio-cultural significance.

Elusakin's paper significantly contributes to the fields of cultural studies and discourse analysis by demonstrating the enduring power of music as a meaning-making resource and a form of social activism. It positions Okosun's work as a timeless, heuristic text that not only diagnosed a national crisis in its time but continues to offer a lens through which to analyse Nigeria's persistent socio-economic and political challenges.

Fatai Shittu's contribution takes us into the dynamic intersection of language and literature, specifically investigating the profound influence of Nigerian English (NE) on the Nigerian novel. Its primary focus is the sociolinguistic fabric of Nigerian literary production, questioning how and why the English language is adapted to serve uniquely Nigerian communicative and cultural needs.

The mainstay of the paper is its identification of five principal factors that guide the use and choice of English in Nigerian novels: The author (with their background, age, and profession), the settings (physical, social, cultural), the characters, the theme, and the primary target audience. The study argues that since all these elements are intrinsically Nigerian, the language of the novels inevitably becomes Nigerian English.

The study's qualitative approach, anchored in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, provides the lens through which language is seen as a system of meaningful choices shaped by context and culture. The methodology is operationalized through a content analysis of three selected Nigerian novels: *Trafficked*, *Hope in Anarchy*, and *The Last Days at Forcados High School*. Shittu's work not only identifies the features of Nigerian English but also systematically applies those insights to literary criticism. It demonstrates that the use of NE in literature is not a degradation of the English language, but a creative

and necessary nativization that produces a viable, vibrant variety capable of fully expressing the Nigerian experience.

Ahmadu Mohammed Dauda's critical review of Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy's *An Introduction to English Morphology* assesses the pedagogical value and scholarly contribution of this foundational textbook designed for undergraduate linguistics students.

The review provides a balanced analysis, lauding the book's exceptional clarity, logical structure, and comprehensive coverage of core concepts like morphemes, inflection, and derivation, which make it an ideal introductory resource. The review, employing a descriptive and evaluative approach, systematically summarizes the book's content before critiquing its strengths and weaknesses.

Dauda positions Carstairs-McCarthy's work as an essential entry-point text. It concludes that while the book is masterful in its simplicity and pedagogical design, its place is deliberately limited to the introductory level, as it lacks in-depth engagement with complex theoretical frameworks and the interface between morphology and phonology, leaving those areas to more advanced, specialized studies.

Olatinwo and Amusan's study explores the functionality of rituals as instruments for social transformation in Femi Osofisan's play, *No More the Wasted Breed*. Moving beyond the conventional view of rituals as mechanisms for cultural preservation, the paper establishes that Osofisan redefines them as dynamic, contested spaces for critiquing oppression and envisioning communal renewal. The analysis focuses sharply on the conflict between characters embodying destructive traditions (like Elusu) and those advocating for reform (like Olokun and Saluga), highlighting rituals concerning virgin sacrifice and patriarchal domination.

This paper contributes a critical intervention by shifting the conversation on ritual in African theatre from a symbol of cultural continuity to a potent vehicle for political and ethical critique,



particularly in postcolonial contexts. It concludes that Osofisan's work demonstrates the potential of ritual to catalyse resistance, foster gender equity, and inspire social regeneration, offering a significant rethinking of its role in contemporary African drama.

The study by Nafisat Umar Yabo, Shafaatu Muhammad Anka, and Idris Hashim Haruna amply illustrates the intrinsic connection between socio-cultural practices and wellbeing. It explores the critical, yet underutilized, role of indigenous cultural resources in addressing the severe security challenges—particularly banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence—plaguing Zamfara State, Nigeria. Its central focus is the intersection of folklore and security, arguing that traditional values embedded in oral literature are potent tools for peacebuilding and social control.

The core of the paper is its analysis of specific Hausa and Fulani oral forms, primarily proverbs and songs, demonstrating how they historically functioned to instil norms of patience, conflict avoidance, truthfulness, and social harmony.

This paper contributes a significant cultural perspective to the predominantly political, legal, and economic analyses of Nigeria's security crisis. By applying the Functionalist theoretical framework, it highlights the purposeful use of folklore to validate cultural identity and maintain social order. Ultimately, the study posits that the contemporary neglect of these folkloric values is a key factor in the region's moral and security decay, making a compelling case for a return to these cultural roots as a vital component of sustainable community resilience and development.

Abdulkareem Kehinde Yahaya and Fatima Usman Yaro, on the other hand, undertake an investigation of the critical area of pronunciation intelligibility in English language teaching, with a specific focus on the challenges faced by Nigerian learners. Their central concern is the inseparable relationship between the mastery of English vowel sounds

and the accurate production of stress patterns, which is identified as a fundamental missing link in achieving intelligible pronunciation.

The paper's major thrust is the argument that a deep understanding of vowel quality—particularly the central vowels and the schwa (/ə/)—and the concept of weak and strong forms is the true key to intelligible pronunciation, rather than relying solely on memorized stress-placement rules. It posits that the phonological environment of a vowel and the number of syllables in a word are the primary determinants of its pronunciation.

This study proposes a model that shifts pedagogical focus from rote learning of rules to a systemic, vowel-conscious approach for teaching stress and rapid speech, thereby aiming to fill a significant gap in the pedagogical phonology of English as a second language in Nigeria.

Olatunde Oluwabunmi Adesewa's research examines the intersection of language, gender, and commerce by analysing the sociocultural presuppositions embedded in the English language attributed to women in Nigerian billboard advertisements. Its central subject is how advertisers strategically leverage deeply held cultural beliefs about women—such as their roles as beautifiers, caregivers, and homemakers—to craft persuasive messages.

The analysis reveals a dual function: these advertisements both confirm and contradict prevailing sociocultural perceptions. While some ads reinforce stereotypes (e.g., women as symbols of beauty), others subtly challenge them (e.g., women as financially independent). Crucially, the study finds that these presuppositions, whether confirming or refuting stereotypes, are consistently used to create direct and indirect connections between the female image and the product, ultimately serving to boost the product's appeal and image.

This research significantly adds to the fields of pragmatics, gender studies, and critical discourse analysis. It highlights how commercial

language does not merely reflect societal norms but actively engages with, and sometimes reshapes, them for persuasive ends.

Tolulope and Akin Folarin's study engages the strategic use of language in political communication by analysing metadiscourse markers in the 2021 budgetary speeches of governors from Nigeria's six Southwestern states. Its subject is political discourse; specifically, how linguistic tools are deployed to structure arguments and persuade audiences.

The paper's methodology involves the application of Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse, which distinguishes between interactive markers (which guide the reader through the text) and interactional markers (which engage the reader directly). The core finding is that interactive markers are the most dominant, with transitional markers like "and" being particularly prevalent, indicating a discourse focused on logical sequencing and coherence. However, a significant use of interactional markers, especially self-mentions ("I," "we"), reveals a concurrent strategy to build a personal connection and shared responsibility with the citizenry.

This study highlights how Nigerian governors use metadiscourse to persuasively present complex budgetary issues, manage audience expectations, and legitimize their policy agendas. The comparative analysis between states further enriches our understanding of rhetorical variations in political leadership.

M.A. Sajo and Rabi Dan'azumi's study, "Stylo-Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Poems of Abba Gana Shettima," occupies a distinct space in the scholarly discourse of African literary stylistics. Its focus is the intricate relationship between linguistic form and poetic meaning, specifically within the context of three thematically rich poems by the Nigerian poet Abba Gana Shettima: *Kangale Kori*, *Nightfall*, and *Nji*.

The paper's mainstay is a detailed examination of the rhetorical devices Shettima employs to articulate themes of famine, insecurity, and

environmental anxiety. It identifies and analyses twelve such devices—including anastrophe, anaphora, and most prominently, consonance and alliteration—demonstrating how they are not merely decorative but are functionally calibrated to convey the poems' emotional and socio-cultural weight.

Methodologically, the research is qualitative, employing a descriptive and analytical approach through close reading of the texts. This is underpinned by the theoretical framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), which guides the analysis in connecting linguistic choices to their broader contextual meanings.

The paper showcases how a rigorous stylistic analysis can illuminate the nuanced encoding of socio-political and cultural realities in African poetry. It concludes that such a method is essential for a deeper, more systematic interpretation of the genre, moving beyond impressionistic reading to a structured understanding of how poetic language creates meaning.

Okache.C. Odey's paper examines the complex interplay between migrants' experiences and their evolving notions of home through a literary analysis of three of Tendai Huchu's novels, viz *The Maestro*, *The Magistrate*, and *The Mathematician*. Its concern is contemporary African migration literature, specifically focusing on the diasporic experiences of Zimbabweans in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The study's cornerstone is the argument that migrants' lived experiences in transnational spaces profoundly shape their understanding of home, revealing it to be a fluid, multifaceted concept rather than a fixed geographical location.

As a scholarly discourse, this research carves a specific niche by addressing a gap in existing criticism on Huchu's work. While previous studies have examined identity and mobility in the novel, this paper distinctively centres on how the characters' direct experiences inform

their personal definitions of home, thereby contributing a focused insight to ongoing conversations in postcolonial and migration studies.

Obaje and Idakwo explore the dynamic interface between literature and science, arguing against the historic "two cultures" divide. Their investigation focuses on the complementary relationship between these fields, asserting that they are symbiotic rather than mutually exclusive.

The study is grounded in a qualitative literary analysis of four prose fictions: two science fiction novels (E.M. Forster's *The Machine Stops* and Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*) and two African feminist narratives (Bilkisu Abubakar's *The Woman in Me* and Asabe Kabir Usman's *Destinies of Life*). The methodology employs Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory as a framework to demonstrate how literary and scientific systems are interconnected.

This research positions itself within interdisciplinary studies, building on the work of thinkers like Gillian Beer and Katherine Hayles. By analysing both Western and African texts, it contributes a cross-cultural perspective, demonstrating how literature forecasts scientific and ethical dilemmas, critiques societal norms, and explores universal human conditions like empathy, identity, and the impact of technology, thereby validating the essential synergy of the arts and sciences.

Halima Lawal and Shafaatu M. Anka's paper, "Understanding Pragmatic Norms in Nigerian Languages: A Cross-Linguistic Approach," interrogates the intricate relationship between language and culture within Nigeria's multilingual landscape. Its subject is cross-cultural pragmatics, specifically examining the culturally embedded rules of language use in the three major Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba.

The key component of its argument is that pragmatic norms—such as politeness strategies, speech acts, and idiomatic expressions—are not universal but are profoundly shaped by specific cultural values. It demonstrates how communal ethos in Igbo, hierarchical respect in

Hausa and Yoruba, and other cultural ideologies dictate how meaning is constructed and interpreted.

By underscoring the cultural specificity of communication, the paper offers a critique of universalist claims in pragmatics. It synthesizes existing research on these major languages to argue for the vital importance of pragmatic awareness in fostering effective intercultural communication, improving language pedagogy, and promoting national integration in Nigeria.

Isah M. Galadima and M. A. Sajo's study delves into the digital political discourse of former Nigerian Vice President Atiku Abubakar, situating its analysis within the interdisciplinary field of political communication. The central focus is how language is strategically used on social media to construct political identity, moral authority, and ideological resistance within Nigeria's opposition landscape.

The cornerstone of the paper's argument is that Atiku's Facebook posts constitute a deliberate synthesis of moral populism and affective rhetoric. Through his discourse, he legitimizes his opposition stance while humanizing his political image, performing a form of "governance in absentia."

The research analyses a corpus of forty-five purposively selected Facebook posts through a framework that integrates Critical Discourse Analysis as its core, with insights from Pragmatics, Stylistics, and Syntax to dissect both the macro-ideological and micro-linguistic features of the posts.

The paper contributes to understanding how digital platforms are reshaping political legitimacy in emerging democracies. It demonstrates the power of linguistic analysis to decode the mechanics of persuasion and recommends greater attention to empathy-driven communication, positioning linguistic literacy as essential for critical civic engagement in the social media age.

Haruna and Atimga locate their research at the intersection of cultural globalisation and contemporary African literature, using Aliyu Kamal's novel *Hausa Girl* as its primary case study. The paper's central concern is the adaptation and impact of foreign cultural influences on the Hausa-Muslim society of Northern Nigeria, as reflected in the themes and critiques within the novel.

The mainstay of the paper's argument is that the social and moral conflicts portrayed in *Hausa Girl* are not merely fictional but a direct reflection of the specific historical moment of its production—a period marked by the rise of the "Kannywood" film industry and public debates over morality, foreign media, and Islamic values.

The paper's analytical methodology, grounded in New Historicism, illuminates how literature both shapes and is shaped by its historical circumstances, offering a nuanced understanding of a local Nigerian cultural phenomenon within the globalised flow of media and ideas.

This sixteen-paper edition of JALAL is, without doubt, a sumptuous offering for the scholarly and intellectual appetite. We are confident it will provide a significant and stimulating contribution to the field. Bon appétit!

**Prof. Muhammad Tahir Mallam**  
Editor-in-Chief, JALAL.

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# **Critical Discourse Analysis of a Legendary Highlife and Afrobeat Musician, Sonny Okosun's Song: "Which Way Nigeria?"**

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## **Abstract**

*Songs, signs and images are useful meaning-making tools in diverse communicative contexts. Sometimes, musicians use their songs to entertain and pass information, with a view to correcting some anomalies or educating the masses. The precariousness of Nigeria's economy was so conspicuous that Sonny Okosun had to use his song to create awareness and make invaluable suggestions on how to put an end to the intractable economic woes and social malady in Nigeria. The condition of people today is very much similar, or perhaps worse than what was obtained about 40 years ago, when Sonny Okosun sang the song. The condition of people today reinforces the nostalgic feelings of the evergreen song, and thus, the relevance of this study. The method that was used for the analysis of the song is Critical Discourse Analysis, as postulated by Norman Fairclough (2005). In his view, Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary approach used to analyze the role language plays in the construction of knowledge, ideology and power. Critical Discourse Analysis is used in order to ensure that the meaning of the song is adequately understood. The study therefore arrived at the culpability of the leaders, with their mindless infliction of pains and blatant subjugation of the governed, coupled with the massive embezzlement of public funds, by the government officials, which has invariably pauperized the masses and made Nigeria to remain in a comatose, and perhaps, the Capital of the Poorest*

*Countries in the World, according to The Cable (2023).*

**Keywords:** Communicative Context, Critical Discourse Analysis, Economic woes, Social malady.

### 1.1. Introduction

The present economic climate is uncalled for, judging from the economic reality that people have lived with and coupled with the sensitization of the prevalent conditions, as orchestrated by the lyrics of the music legend, Sonny Okosun's "Which Way Nigeria?" This reality is brought to fore, as a sensitization through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis which is adopted in analyzing the lyrics.

Critical Discourse Analysis is used as a veritable tool to arrive at the intended meaning and purpose of the lyrics, as postulated by Fairclough (2005). CDA is an interdisciplinary approach used to analyze the role language plays in the construction of knowledge, ideology and power. He distinguishes power within the discourse (use of language) and power behind the discourse (Social role of the speaker).

Sonny Okosun was a celebrity, who used language metaphorically. Though, he was a musician and an "influencer", it is apparent that he also had adequate understanding of the nuances and the use of English. However, subjecting his lyrics to critical discourse analysis, one would discover the beauty of his wordings, which is aimed at correcting the social ills. It is enough to add that a song is one of the potent meaning-making tools in diverse communicative contexts. Songs are a form of semiotic affordances and also a discursive sign that is often utilized to communicate feelings in either a covert or an overt way. Suffice it to add, that the period in which Okosun released the song was during the military regime. A period that if words were not well crafted, the song writer or the musician could easily have been arrested. The song raised some fundamental questions and at the same time offered solutions, in order to improve Nigerians' standard of living and put an end to some anomalies. Or what do we say of a nation, in which her citizens are dying in the midst of plenty? Nigeria is a country that has quantum of

natural resources, coupled with preponderance of capable human capacity with intellectual sagacity, but inevitably characterized with demonic (heartless) few, whose only trade is to drain the blood of the Nation and the masses. Yes, indeed. Which way Nigeria! Sonny Okosun captured the mood of the Nation and felt, as a musician and an “influencer”, the need to use his song to sensitize and create awareness with a view to ensuring an emergence of a peaceful, stable and a prosperous Nigeria. Music, as we all know, is a work of art and communication media that serves to convey the messages of the song writer or the musician. Fathoni. M., Ibnu Akbar, Suhaeli Robbi Awaludin, Gustin Rainaldi, Slamet. Riadi Jaelani (2023) add that music plays an important role in voicing human civilization through its creativity, where the process of conveying messages to the wider community can be done through music. That message was indeed conveyed and disseminated by Sonny Okosun through his song.

Which Way Nigeria?

Which Way to Go?

I love my Father's Land

I Want to Know

Which Way Nigeria

Is heading to?”

What Rhetoricity!

### **Brief History of Sonny Okosun**

Sonny Okosun was a renowned Nigerian musician, singer and songwriter born on January 1, 1947, in Esan, Benin City, Nigeria. His music career spanned over four decades, blending traditional African rhythms with rock, soul and funk. He started his music career in the 60s, with his band name as: Ozzidi Sound and International Success. He was a successful musician. He passed away on May 24, 2008, leaving behind a legacy as a pioneer of African liberation music and a voice of social justice, [www.lagosjumpradio.com](http://www.lagosjumpradio.com) May 2, 2024.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

1. How does the use of textual or stylistic strategy reinforce the intended meaning of the lyrics?
2. To what extent does the philosophy or personality of the singer create sensitization of the prevailing situation?
3. Of what relevance is the hegemony of the song and cultural relativism?

## **1.3. Literature Review**

Brown and Yule (1989) opine that language is not used only for the description of things; rather, it is also used for doing things as well. In lending credence to that, Halliday (1978) is of the view that language is considered to be a social act, because people communicate in social setup. Language, as used in literature, is didactic. Through language, lessons and morals are taught. Rosita, Purwanto and Rosyidi (2019) explain that a song is a written literature that expresses a person's feelings and thoughts, as outlined in every series of words used in the song. When reading the lyrics of a song, a person not only reads the lines of the sentences, but also tries to understand the meaning of the verse or stanza of the song. Suffice it to say that many song writers and singers have, at various times, used their songs to do some or all of the following: educate, encourage, incite, expose and even correct the societal ills.

In 2021, Adele released an album called "30". One of the most famous songs on this album is titled "Easy on me". The song 'EASY ON ME' implies a divorce and a message to parents. Given their depth philosophy, the song lyrics try to encourage children under the category of parental separation. Many researchers critique some lyrics, simply because, behind the lyrics of a song, there is a meaning that the creator wants to convey from their thoughts, beliefs and feelings towards something. That in mind, there is every tendency to use song lyrics to influence listeners in psychological aspects, as done by Sunny Okosun's "Which Way Nigeria?"

### 1.4. Research methodology

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research method for the object of research. The data, wording of the lyrics "Which Way Nigeria?" were sourced through the extensive internet search and downloading from the *You Tube app*.

Researcher adopted Fairclough's 3D model of discourse analysis, which is comprised of text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. Fairclough's 3D model examines the relationship between words and analyses the representation, relations and identity within the text.

The theoretical frame work for this study is critical discourse analysis. CDA analyses the discourse critically, and reveals the hegemony in the use of the text and the socio-cultural relevance of the object of analysis. This theoretical framework provides adequate illustration on how language is used in a specific context, as expatiated in the lyrics highlighted.

#### Lyrics of the song:

Which Way Nigeria? Which Way to Go? (2x)  
I Love My Father's Land, I Want to Know  
Which Way Nigeria is Heading to?

Many years after independence!  
We still find it hard to stand.  
How long shall we be patient,  
Before we reach the promise land?  
Let's Save Nigeria,  
So Nigeria Won't Die (in appendix).

### 2. Discussion and Critical Discourse Analysis

The data were collated and downloaded from the songs of a legendary musician, Sonny Okosun, by the researcher. The song lyric is entitled: "Which Way Nigeria?". The lyric is comprised of seventeen (17) stanzas, though with the repetitions of the refrain, and have been

subjected to critical discourse analysis.

### **Stanza 1**

Starting from the refrain of the lyrics in the first stanza, the song writer used the refrain to elicit historicity and emphasis on the hopelessness and the helplessness of the down trodden Nigerians. The first stanza raises questions on fundamental issue, as affecting the perception of the enormity of hopelessness in Nigeria.

The stanza, "Which Way Nigeria?" goes beyond mere questioning our level of awareness. Rather, it is preparing our mind to channel a better way, so as to navigate the nation out of the impending doom. The use of rhetoric is to bring us to life and wake us up from our slumber.

### **Stanza 2**

This is full of lamentation, and utter regret. In the true sense of it, the stanza, "Many Years after Independence, We still Find it Hard to Stand...." is chronicled to admonish the government and the governed. At the end of the stanza, the song writer clearly solicited our collective efforts, which would make Nigeria to rise again and perhaps save the "bleeding" soul of the nation, Nigeria.

### **Stanzas 3, with 5**

This stanza is a reflection of the admonishment stated earlier. This is posing a challenge and at the same time propping Nigerians, both the led and the leaders, to wake up and put the nation on the right track.

### **Stanzas 4, with 6**

The song writer, here, identified the underlying issues that have worsened our conditions. He stressed further that, rather than blaming the government alone, we should also blame the masses, because they are culpable. For instance, how does one explain the total neglect, avarice, excessive ostentatious living and personal aggrandizement on the part of the selected wealthy people that are indirectly killing the masses and sabotaging the efforts of the Government? They hoard goods, inflate prices and sometimes influence government to pass



hostile laws or formulate hostile policies. Government too, inflates contracts, embezzles and siphons money meant for development. All actions, overtly and covertly, worsen the economic situations, and by implication impact the society negatively.

### **Stanzas 7, with 9**

Stanza 7 and 9 are a replica of stanzas 3 and 5 on admonishing the leaders and the led.

### **Stanzas 8, with 10**

The reality of Nigerian's predicament is cleverly articulated here. We are being castigated for not learning from our past mistake. We have some problems at hand, yet we feel as if nothing is spoilt. We have refused to grow. We are obstinate to the point of being grandiose foolhardiness. The oil boom has turned to our oil doom, yet we fail to redirect our thinking. There is a marked contrast in the land. Few are extremely comfortable while a few of us live through excruciating pains, uncommon hardship, and suffer from abject poverty and neglect.

Socioeconomic malady has drafted a huge number of people to the city, with a view to getting white collar jobs. They have left the farm where they could be engaged in agriculture. Majority of them have become not only nuisance, but also miscreants and grandiose Area Fathers and Area Mothers. We have left undone, all what we ought to have done. Hunger is much prevalent in the country, as we can scarcely feed ourselves, without importing food, in spite of our expanse arable land. What a shame! What is in a nation, without adequate priority and focus? What is in a Nation that is now regarded as the Capital of Poverty, The Cable (2023). Invariably, stanza 10 is saying that the hunger that has pervaded the entire nation is a self-inflicted problem. The song goes further to encourage Nigerians to go back to farm, and make agriculture the mainstay of the economy, as it was in the 60s and 70s.

### **Stanzas 11 and 13**

They reinforce the earlier refrain that engenders the need for reawakening of Nigeria's glory

### **Stanzas 12 and 14**

They talk about personal aggrandizement and their race to become millionaires and billionaires, at the expense of the down trodden masses. A few people are getting richer, while the majority is getting poorer, because of the selfish interest of the elite. The lyrics enjoin us to wake up, immediately, and strive hard to remove ourselves from the self-inflicted bondage. Emphasis is specifically placed on the continued existence of the nation, Nigeria. It says: "We should take a giant stride and rebuild the battered nation".

### **Stanzas 13, 15 and 17**

These stanzas bring about the usual rhetoric of sensitizing people, concerning the present predicament in Nigeria. This is full of suspense and perhaps, questions the resilience and docility of the Nigerian masses, the downtrodden, who have failed to do the needful, but rather watching Nigeria going down abysmally, and even to the point of total collapse.

### **Stanzas 16**

This stanza is full of presuppositions and the outcome of reality, as opined in a saner clime. It also foregrounds the reality of what the scripture foretells about the meek and the righteous. A metaphor is here displayed, by bringing to people's awareness that, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverb 14:34). Meaning that, if all Nigerians should behave well, Nigeria will not collapse and lose her relevance in the committee of Nations, in whose citizens are well nurtured and well catered for. With the above in mind and well harnessed, Nigeria is hoped to become an Eldorado, a safe haven.

## **Linguistic Analysis**

It is apparently clear that the nature of the sentence used in the song, according to Structure, is virtually Simple Sentence. Simple Sentence is used, perhaps so as to make quick and easy inferences from the import of the message. In addition, the language used is very simple for any semi literate or any common man to perceive and digest. Often than not, some stanzas raise questions while others provide possible solutions, with a view to creating an awareness to the prevailing problems, and also initiating the supposed solutions that can mitigate the harsh reality of the problems. Above all, the language is profoundly accessible, entertaining and thought provoking.

## **Conclusion**

Using critical discourse analysis, we observed that the import of the message in the analyzed song is suggestive of confusion, betrayal of hope, deep rooted corruption, lack of direction, and insensitivity, much more of the leaders than the led.

The nation, Nigeria, has lost her bearing on the path of sanity. The falcon can no longer hear the falconer. Things have fallen apart and the Centre can no longer hold (Achebe 1958). Nigeria, which was once the pride of Africa, has lost her relevance through sheer greed, covetousness, corruption, ethnic rivalry, bigotry, lack of vision and bad leadership. The song writer used suspense and rhetoric to project the problems of Nigeria. The song says Nigeria is drifting towards total collapse, as the citizens are groaning under unbearable hardship. Nigeria, which was flowing with milk and honey, has invariably become the capital of World poverty. As at the time Sonny Okosun waxed the lyrics, Nigeria was not as bad as it is now. The Naira exchange to a Dollar then was about 1 Dollar to 3 Naira, but today 1 Dollar is about 1,600 naira (one thousand and six hundred naira). The situation now is precarious and devastating.

The song took us through the memory lane, reminding us of the palatable situation of Nigeria independence contrary to the near-collapse of Nigeria now.

The economy is now in shambles, the roads are bad, the infrastructure is dilapidated, Naira has lost its value, and living condition of the masses is extremely bad, even when Nigeria is about the third richest among the OPEC countries. What a misnomer!

Nigeria is now characterized by gross indiscipline, especially among the elite, coupled with unbridled desire for embezzlement, inefficiency of the highest order, laziness, lackadaisical attitude, compromised judiciary, and unfettered desperation to become millionaires and billionaires, even at the expense of the teeming population.

From the foregoing, can we then ask? Is the solution to the precarious situation of Nigeria at sight? The answer is NO. The reason is that, there is unspeakable moral decadence and perversion among the leaders and the led. The electorate is not ready to take the bull by the horns, by choosing good and effective leaders, owing to bribery and corruption during elections. And the leaders too are thirsty and desperate for wealth, and also desperate to embezzle public funds, in an unprecedented proportion. Honesty is unappreciated, and corruption is the order of the day. However, the end of the song enjoined us to turn in a new leaf, in order to ensure that Nigeria does not die.

It is therefore apparently clear that this analysis has contributed to the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge, as songs can be adequately used to mitigate the recurrence of bad leadership and the desperation to acquire wealth through embezzlement of public funds, at the expense of the masses and the nation, Nigeria. In addition, the song is also charging all Nigerians to turn in a new leaf, and make Nigeria to manifest her good potential, as the enviable Giant of Africa.

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## **Metadiscourse Markers in the 2021 Budgetary Speeches of South-West Governors**

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### **Abstract**

*Budgetary speeches, as a form of political discourse, highlight how rhetoric plays a significant linguistic role in enabling government leaders to achieve diverse socioeconomic objectives. This study examines the deployment of interactive and interactional metadiscourse devices in the 2021 budgetary speeches of Southwest governors. Qualitative and quantitative approaches, using the descriptive method of analysis were employed in the study. Hyland's metadiscourse framework serves as the theoretical framework for the study. The data for the study consists of the 2021 budgetary speeches of the six (6) Southwest governors in Nigeria. Using a random sampling technique, relevant aspects of the speeches were extracted and subjected to linguistic analysis. Findings from the study indicated that interactive markers are the most functional metadiscourse elements in budgetary speeches. Interactional markers were also identified in the study. A comparison of the usage of the two metadiscourse categories revealed that Osun state budgetary speech contains the highest frequency (21%) of interactional metadiscourse markers, while Lagos state budgetary speech contains the highest frequency (24%) of interactive metadiscourse markers. The study argues that metadiscourse markers are effective for presenting the multifaceted issues of a budgetary speech in a persuasive manner to the audience.*

**Keywords:** Metadiscourse markers, political discourse, budgetary speeches in the South-West, Nigeria

## Introduction

The main role of human language is to communicate ideas, thoughts, emotions feelings and intentions from the sender/speaker to the hearer/receiver. Wardhaugh (1992) states that communication is a social act that demands well-planned efforts of two or more persons engaged in the activity. For effective communication to take place, aside from the sender and receiver, a well-structured language, with refined grammatical, phonological, semantic and pragmatic features is a necessity. This well-structured language is described as “right and good language” (Rahardjo 2002 p. 95). He explains that right language is a language that expresses appropriate rules, pattern, formation and structure, while good language is a language that is communicated through the appropriate condition. The point here is that good communication requires appropriate use of language.

Since communication occurs between two or more peoples, it is then a social activity {Wardhaugh 1992}. It could occur as spoken or written language. Wigneell (1994 p. 61) cited in Anwar (2016) states that the two forms of language oral/ written language are both sophisticate but in different patterns. Oral form of language tends to be grammatically complex, whereas second form of language tends to be lexically dense. The language used in communication by politicians has attracted linguistic interest. This is because politicians use language more than to communicate; it is an invaluable tool useful to them in the aspect of manipulating the minds of their listeners as well as convincing them. The special usage of language is common in political communication between political actors and their listeners and has begotten the concept of political discourse. Oseni and Odebiyi (2021) posit that language is used by politicians to influence people’s decisions. In budgetary speeches, language is also employed to do more than pass information to the parliamentarians and the entire citizenry. It is used to present valid arguments to win the hearts and support of the state for a successful administration.

To achieve this persuasive intention of political actors, there is need to consciously select words and carefully chain them as sentences to

create engaging text or speech. The process is technically referred to as metadiscourse. Research works have supported that metadiscourse devices are strong techniques to create a very persuasive discursive strategy. Therefore, this work focuses on creation and engagement of interactive and interactional metadiscourse devices in the 2021 budgetary speeches of Southwest governors. The study will focus largely on the occurrences of these markers with a view to establish the dominating metadiscourse marker in budgetary speeches

### **Theoretical framework**

Metadiscourse refers to the expressions that the text producer or writer engages to comment on, guide and direct the understanding of the text. Metadiscourse houses language or expressions that carry more than text content but help text consumers to organize, understand, interpret and dissect information that is presented. Various models of metadiscourse have been developed by scholars in an attempt to simplify the concept for practical purpose. This study adopts Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse.

Hyland (2005) among other scholars, examined metadiscourse to create a better, understandable and make clarity of the elusive distinctions, assumptions, and classifications of metadiscourse. Hyland, therefore, defined metadiscourse as an umbrella term for the self-reflective expressions used to discuss or manipulate interactional meanings in a text, helping the text producers or writer to express a viewpoint and engage with the audience as members of a text community" (Hyland, 2005 cited in Akinseye, 2021). The framework has also been applied in academic contexts, with Akinseye (2023) showing that students relied more on interactive markers such as transitions and frame markers than on evidentials or endophoric markers. Hyland (2005) conceives metadiscourse as an explicit and flexible set of linguistic devices that can also perform non-metadiscourse functions; to him therefore, the actual devices that plays this functions can only be identified and recognized via text analysis. Taking insight from Thompson and Theleta's (1995) difference between interactive and interactional materials, Hyland used below categories and sub-categories to develop his model of metadiscourse.



## The Interactive Dimension

The concern of this division is the cognizance of text producers about their text consumers or readers and the fundamentals that are needed to adjust for probable knowledge, interest, rhetorical expectations, and comprehension abilities. Hence, the markers in this group cater for methods of arranging discourse rather than an experience. The Interactive resources aimed text organization and build up as a result of the writer's perception of the targeted audience. Transitional markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses are the five sub categorization of this interactive dimension of Hyland model of metadiscourse (Akinseye 2021)

**Transitional Markers:** These mainly consist of adverbials phrases and conjunctions that assist the text consumers understand pragmatic connections of the text propositions. Transitional markers signal additive, causative, and contrastive relations of the writer's thoughts. The major role of transitional marker is that they must perfect a link between ideas that are internal to the text and ideas that are external to the text, such as the inclusion of new idea

**Frame Markers:** These denotetext boundaries or textual structures. Just like transitional markers, frame markers are interior to the text. They are meant to order arguments in the text. They are used to hierarchise or organise parts of text using words or phrases, such as *first, then, at the same time*

**Endophoric Markers:** These referte to constructions or phrases that point to other parts above or beneath but within the text. Endophoric devices assist to make arguments clear, understandable and explicit to the audience or text consumers. The idea of an Endophoric Marker is to help and aid comprehension and providing material to help clarify an argument.

**Evidentials:** Items grouped under this subcategory are those that guide the reader's understanding and establish command of the subject by differentiating who is responsible for a particular position or argument. Evidentials maybe from reliable to unreliable sources of information.

**Code glosses:** These are linguistic resources such as words or phrases that supply additional and supplementary data through illustrating restating, elaborating or explaining previously mentioned or discussed point or position. Code glosses are tools used to ensure the text consumers have good grasp of the text

### **The interactional dimension**

The aim of the interactional metadiscourse devices is to identify the ways and manners by which writer's carryout or conduct interaction by intruding and commenting on their message. This process could sometimes be called 'voice' or personality of the writer. Items subsumed under Interactional dimension of metadiscourse are by functionality called evaluative and engaging. The intention of interactional markers is to express oneness of the constructed text with the audience. Hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers are the subcategories of interactional dimension to metadiscourse as found in the work of Hyland (2005)

**Hedges:** These are words and phrases engaged by the writer or text producer to acknowledge alternative viewpoints. Hedges are deployed by writer to deny a complete responsibility or claim to the presented argument. The proposition is supplied as an opinion not a fact, and this is done by using words such as 'perhaps, might or possible'. Hedges devices steer the text consumers to a conclusion or reasoning of the writer's choice.

**Boosters:** Booster devices enable a text producer or writer to proclaim with certainty in the presence of diverse alternative views. Booster are also used to give weight and credibility and strength to and argument through suggesting that the audience draw same inference as the writer. Words like *clearly, decisively, obviously* used by writer to pull and influence the reader and to create connectivity with the audience. . According to Hyland, boosters and hedges have pivotal role in expressing commitment in a text while paying respect for the reader.

**Attitude Markers:** In text production and consumption, attitude markers are those words that signify the text producer's influence on the argument by the use of attitude verbs like *prefer, agree, s* adverbs;

*hopefully, fortunately* and adjectives; *amazing, remarkable, appropriate*. Attitudinal markers show the mood of the writer on the argument. The mood could surprise, frustration or obligation, etc.

**Self-Mentions:** The sub category here, deals with use of pronominals (first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives I, me, mine, exclusive we, our, ours). Texts often contain information about their producer or writer, the use of pronominal such as ‘we’ in an argument of a text draws the writer into the text in a powerfully.

**Engagement Markers:** Like the name suggests, engagement markers are used to engage the text reader or audience. Through the use of engagement markers, attention is shifted and focused directly to the audience. These markers helps to meet audience’s expectations as they are carried as discourse participants through engagement marker with use of pronouns such as *you, your* or inclusive *we*. Interjected phrases such as *you may notice*, or *by the way* may also be used as engagement markers.

To a reasonable extent, the work of Hyland (2005) on producing a model of metadiscourse that is complete and pragmatically grounded, has been adjudged to be commendable. Though some limitations have been identified from this Hyland taxonomy. Stanford (2012) states that elements of metadiscourse must be explicit and clearly identifiable in the text. They should not be illusionary. However, the idea of categorizing the writer’s attempt to present themselves in the writing is herculean, at best. To Stanford (2012), language is fluid, words or phrases can serve dual purpose, first, as metadiscourse function and second a propositional role at a time. Therefore, metadiscourse taxonomy formats can only approximate the intricacies of language usage.

In sum, metadiscourse is very important because it shows the presence of the writer in a text and the writer’s perception and understanding of the text consumers. It serves as a powerful tool that enables writers to shape the thoughts of their readers. Metadiscourse is a way of appearing credible and convincing to the text audience. In short, from the study of metadiscourse, a successful writing largely rely on the writer

understanding the readers and presenting a considerate text in order to achieve the aim of the discourse.

## **Methods**

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches, using the descriptive method of analysis. The data consist of the 2021 budgetary speeches of Governors, with two speeches each drawn from the six Southwestern states of Nigeria, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Ogun, Ekiti, and Lagos, making a total of 12 speeches. These states were purposively selected because of their cultural, linguistic, and economic affinities. Simple frequency and percentage were used to identify the categories and sub-categories of metadiscourse elements, while random sampling techniques were applied to select relevant aspects of the speeches, which were then subjected to linguistic analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

Meta discourse strategies in the 2021 budgetary speeches of Southwest Nigerian states. This section of the analysis discusses the metadiscourse elements deployed in the budgetary speeches of the selected Southwest states. The analysis is guided by Hyland's (2005) classification of metadiscourse markers which are categorized into two: interactive and interactional.

### **Interactive Metadiscourse markers**

Interactive elements spotlight on text arrangement and construction as a result of the appraisement writer's assessment of the audience. The Five subdivisions of interactive dimension to metadiscourse markers are: Transitional markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses.

### **Transitional markers**

Transitional markers function primarily to signal relationships between clauses or sections of a text, such as addition, contrast, consequence, or causality. They are typically realized through conjunctions and adverbial phrases, which help readers navigate the logical flow of the argument or narrative. These markers bridge internal textual ideas with

external contextual references, thereby promoting coherence and cohesion within the discourse.

In the analyzed budgetary speeches, transitional markers are pervasively used to structure the discourse and maintain logical continuity.

<b>Specific transitional markers</b>	<b>Ekiti %</b>	<b>Oyo %</b>	<b>Ogun %</b>	<b>Ondo %</b>	<b>Lagos %</b>	<b>Osun %</b>	<b>Total in no</b>
And	14.2	7.5	20.4	13.5	22.9	21.7	1204
But	11.8	29.4	5.9	29.4	11.8	11.8	17
thus	20	0	60	0	20	0	5
however	0	13.3	6.7	20	33.3	6.7	15
furthermore	0	50	0	0	0	50	2
subsequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
in addition	0	17.6	11.8	5.9	47.1	17.6	17
Total	13.8	8.02	20	13.4	23.1	21.2	1260

*Table 1a showing the usage of transitional markers in 2021 Southwest Nigerian states Budgetary Speeches*

Table 1a presents a comparative breakdown of transitional markers employed in budgetary speeches from six Southwestern Nigerian states: Ekiti, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Lagos, and Osun. A total of 1,260 transitional markers were identified across all speeches, revealing both quantitative and qualitative variations in rhetorical strategy among the states. The most dominant transitional marker is “and,” accounting for the vast majority of occurrences (1,204 out of 1,260), with the highest frequency found in Lagos (22.9%) and Osun (21.7%). This high prevalence suggests a rhetorical preference for additive sequencing, likely used to list policies, actions, or initiatives. The frequent use of “and” supports a discursive style that emphasizes accumulation, coordination, and continuity. Lagos State, in particular, employs the greatest overall proportion of transitional markers (23.1%), which may indicate the complexity and breadth of issues covered in its speech. This aligns with the observation that Lagos, as Nigeria’s economic hub, often addresses a broad spectrum of policy areas, necessitating a more

elaborative discourse. Other markers, such as “but” and “however,” though far less frequent, introduce contrast or concession. Interestingly, “but” is particularly prominent in Oyo and Ondo (29.4% each), suggesting these states may have used more balancing or contrasting rhetorical strategies—perhaps to acknowledge challenges while proposing solutions. “However” appears most frequently in Lagos (33.3%), reinforcing the state’s nuanced approach to managing competing priorities or addressing counterpoints. Less frequently used are markers like “thus” (5 occurrences), “in addition” (17 occurrences), and “furthermore” (2 occurrences). These markers, while sparse, often carry more formal or emphatic functions and may appear in more carefully structured or evaluative sections of the speeches. Notably, “furthermore” is used exclusively by Oyo and Osun, perhaps suggesting a more formal register or deliberate layering of arguments in those states’ rhetorical approaches. Interestingly, “subsequently” is completely absent across all texts, indicating a near-total avoidance of this marker in the speeches analyzed. Its absence could point to a limited use of temporal sequencing as a rhetorical device in these political communications, where additive and contrastive relations appear to dominate. In summary, the data reveal a heavy reliance on “and” as a basic additive marker, reflecting a preference for straightforward accumulation of ideas and initiatives. However, variation in the use of less frequent markers like “but,” “however,” and “in addition” offers insight into the rhetorical complexity and strategic choices made by each speaker. Lagos emerges as the most linguistically rich in transitional marker use, likely due to its broader governance scope. Overall, the table illustrates how transitional markers not only serve a cohesive function but also reveal deeper rhetorical priorities and communicative strategies in political discourse.

Examples:

- i. The proposed 2021 Budget summarily defines the policy thrust and direction of governance in Ekiti State in the Year 2021. 9.(*Text 1 :Ekiti Budgetary Speech*)

- ii. As an elected Governor, I consider myself and, indeed, the State blessed by the candour and civility with which this House conducts its business. (*Text 2 :Ondo State Budgetary Speech.*
- iii. Furthermore, in a determined bid to expand the state infrastructure network to feed the State economy. (*Text 3: Oyo State Budgetary Speech*)
- iv. As a demonstration of the importance our Administration attaches to education and the role of teachers, in addition to catering for the welfare of teachers, we have also restored the payment of running cost in our schools (*Text 3: Ogun State Budgetary Speech*)
- v. We, however, remain focused despite these challenges. (*Text 3: Lagos State Budgetary Speech*)
- vi. In addition, it is important to reiterate that our budget mapped out detailed plans to set us on the clear path to development. (*Text 3 : Osun State Budgetary Speech*)

The transitional markers identified in the budgetary speeches perform a range of discourse functions that enhance coherence, emphasize key points, and manage the logical progression of ideas. In Example 1, the marker “and” is used to coordinate ideas, linking the proposed budget with the overarching policy direction of the administration. This additive function connects two related points, helping the speaker present the budget as both a financial plan and a governance tool. Similarly, in Example 2, “and” again functions as a coordinating conjunction to blend personal reflection with institutional appreciation, reinforcing the speaker’s ethos and aligning with the values of the legislative audience. In Example 3, “furthermore” serves as an additive transitional marker that introduces new but related information. It emphasizes continuity and development, underscoring the administration’s commitment to expanding infrastructure as an extension of previously stated goals. Example 4 includes “in addition”, which also functions additively, allowing the speaker to elaborate on earlier claims regarding education by highlighting additional government efforts. In Example 5, the marker “however” introduces contrast, signaling a shift from acknowledging the state’s challenges to reaffirming the administration’s focus and determination. Lastly, in

Example 6, “in addition” reappears to mark elaboration, reinforcing the speaker’s intent to communicate a comprehensive and proactive development strategy. Together, these transitional markers structure the discourse in a way that enhances clarity, logical flow, and persuasive impact across the budgetary texts.

### Frame Markers

According to Hyland (2005), frame markers are an integral component of the interactive dimension of metadiscourse. They are used to organize discourse by indicating shifts in topic, sequencing of information, or temporal boundaries within a text. These markers help guide the audience through the rhetorical structure of the discourse, clarifying transitions and demarcating stages in the communication. In political discourse such as budgetary speeches, frame markers are particularly important as they support logical progression, facilitate audience comprehension, and establish a formal, structured tone.

Specific frame markers	Ekiti %	Oyo %	Ogun %	Ondo %	Lagos %	Osun %	Total in no.
first	9.1	0	32	5	41	14	22
second	21.1	5.3	5.3	21.1	21.1	51.1	19
third	0	0	0	33.3	0	66.7	3
Then	25	75	0	0	0	0	4
at the same time	0	0	0	0	100	0	1
Next	0	14.3	14.3	0	43	29	7
shortly	0	0	0	0	50	50	2
Total	12.1	9	16	10.3	31.03	22.4	58

*Table 1b showing the usage of frame markers in 2021 Southwest Nigerian states Budgetary Speeches*

The revised data on frame markers in the 2021 budgetary speeches of Southwest Nigerian states (Table 1b) presents a more focused view of the actual linguistic strategies employed by state governors. A total of 58 frame markers was identified across the six speeches, with Lagos



State accounting for the highest usage (31.03%), followed by Osun (22.4%) and Ogun (16%). Oyo State had the lowest share of frame markers (9%), suggesting varying rhetorical preferences among the speakers. Among the specific markers, “first” and “second” were the most frequently used, appearing in all six states except Oyo (for “first”). These markers perform essential sequencing and listing functions, helping structure the speech into digestible segments. Their prevalence suggests that most governors sought to present their budgetary plans in a step-by-step format, which improves logical flow and aids audience comprehension. “Third” was significantly less frequent, found only in Ondo and Osun, which may imply a rhetorical tendency to group points into two main ideas rather than extending lists further. The marker “then”, used predominantly in Oyo (75%) and Ekiti (25%), reflects a chronological or narrative-based structure, often used to describe a sequence of actions or developments. This style can create a sense of story progression or build momentum in policy narration.

“Next” appeared across Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, and Osun, with Lagos using it the most (43%). This marker reinforces forward movement and planning, often used to transition between sections or phases of budget execution. “Shortly”, a temporal frame marker, was used exclusively by Lagos and Osun (50% each), likely to highlight promptness or anticipated near-future results—a rhetorical device that may enhance perceptions of responsiveness and efficiency. Finally, “at the same time”, found only in Lagos, introduces simultaneity, suggesting multi-tasking or concurrent policy actions—useful for conveying complexity or robust governance. This distribution of frame markers reveals not just stylistic variation but also strategic rhetorical choices. States like Lagos and Osun, which use a wider range and higher frequency of frame markers, appear to favor structured, temporally anchored, and future-oriented discourse, potentially reflecting the complexity or scale of their governance agenda. In contrast, states like Oyo and Ekiti, with lower frequencies or limited variation in marker types, may rely more on narrative cohesion or implicit textual organization, which could affect how accessible or persuasive their speeches are to broader audiences. Overall, while frame markers occur less frequently than

transitional markers, their targeted deployment enhances clarity, logical flow, and audience orientation, making them crucial tools in the effective delivery of political and policy discourse.

Examples are highlighted below:

- i. First, I appreciate God Almighty, the giver of life, for another opportunity to perform this Constitutional duty. (*Text1 :Ekiti Budgetary Speech*)
- ii. I will now highlight some of the achievements of our cardinal objectives during 2020 fiscal year. Text 3 (*Oyo State Budgetary Speech* )
- iii. This substantially assisted the students to keep up with their learning process over the long period of the COVID-19 lockdown which has assisted them to quickly complete the sessional activities shortly on their resumption after the ease of the lockdown; Text 5 (*Osun State Budgetary Speech*)

In Text 1, the frame marker “First” functions as a sequencing device, indicating the initiation of the speech and marking the first point of rhetorical emphasis. By opening with a reference to divine gratitude, the speaker frames the discourse within a culturally resonant and respectful register, which helps establish rapport with the audience. This marker also prepares the listener for a structured and orderly presentation of ideas to follow. Also in Text 2, the use of “now” serves as a referential frame marker that signals a transition into a key segment of the speech. It indicates a temporal and rhetorical shift, alerting the audience that the speaker is moving from introductory or contextual remarks to the substantive exposition of achievements. This helps maintain coherence while highlighting the importance of the upcoming content. In Text 3 , the marker “shortly” is employed within a time-bound reference to describe the students’ return to academic activities post-lockdown. This temporal frame marker situates the policy outcome within a specific phase of the COVID-19 recovery period. Beyond its informational role, it subtly communicates government responsiveness and the timely implementation of education-related interventions. Collectively, these examples reveal that while frame markers are fewer in number compared to other

metadiscourse elements like transitional markers, their strategic placement is essential for structuring the speech, managing information flow, and reinforcing speaker-audience engagement. Their usage underscores the speakers' awareness of discourse organization and the temporal realities surrounding governance activities.

**Endophoric markers**

According to Hyland (2005), endophoric markers are linguistic devices used to refer to information previously mentioned within the same text. Their primary purpose is to guide readers by linking new information to established content, thereby enhancing clarity and comprehension. These markers serve a vital function in helping audiences navigate complex texts by reinforcing connections between ideas and reducing ambiguity.

Specific endophoric markers	Ekiti %	Oyo %	Ogun %	Ondo %	Lagos %	Osun %	Total in no.
mentioned above/ aforementioned	0	0	50	50	0	0	2
as follows	100	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	33.3	0	33.3	33.3	0	0	3

*Table 1c showing the usage of endophoric markers in 2021 Southwest Nigeria states Budgetary Speeches*

Table 1c presents the distribution of endophoric markers across the budgetary speeches of the 2021 Southwest Nigerian states. A total of three instances of endophoric markers were identified in the data, with the most frequently used being the phrase "aforementioned/mentioned above." This marker appeared in Ekiti, Ogun, and Ondo state speeches, each at a rate of 33.3%. Notably, Oyo, Lagos, and Osun states did not use endophoric markers in the analyzed speeches. The low occurrence of endophoric markers across the speeches—especially in Oyo, Lagos, and Osun—suggests that the speakers may not have felt the need to

explicitly reference earlier points in their speeches. This could be due to a more fluid or narrative-driven approach, where the speakers relied on implicit connections between ideas rather than explicitly pointing back to earlier content. The usage of endophoric markers appears to be less of a priority in these speeches, which may have focused more on progressive, forward-thinking discourse without the need for frequent referential cues.

### Examples:

- i. This Budget of Recovery and Economic Restoration is in accordance with the five (5) Pillars of my Administration and the classification is as follows: Agriculture & Rural Development –*Text 1 : Ekiti State Budgetary Speech*)
- ii. Honourable members, all the aforementioned achievements among others had resulted into National and International recognition... (*Text 2: Ondo State Budgetary Speech*)
- iii. Arising from the aforementioned fiscal assumptions and parameters, total State revenue is estimated at N339 billion in 2021. (*Text 3: Ogun State Budgetary Speech*)

While endophoric markers traditionally connect the new information to prior content, the examples above suggest that their role is more dynamic and multifunctional. They are not only used for referencing previously mentioned topics but are also employed strategically to strengthen the speaker's argument and validate the effectiveness of policy proposals. In these speeches, the markers help speakers to link past achievements to current goals, which serves not only a clarifying function but also a persuasive one. For instance, in Text 1 (Ekiti), the phrase “in accordance with the five (5) Pillars of my Administration” uses an endophoric reference to remind the audience of previously outlined principles, thus reinforcing the speaker's commitment to his administration's strategic framework. This not only aids comprehension but also lends authority and coherence to the speech, showcasing a structured and well-planned approach. In Text 2 (Ondo), the marker “all the aforementioned achievements” links the speaker's current statement to a previously detailed list of accomplishments, making the

transition to a claim of national and international recognition smoother and more credible. This reference boosts the persuasive impact of the speech, as it aligns past achievements with ongoing goals, thereby reinforcing the speaker's competence and success. In Text 3 (Ogun), the marker "arising from the aforementioned fiscal assumptions" connects the budget estimates to prior fiscal parameters, reinforcing the logical progression of the budget's rationale. This reference not only clarifies the connection between different sections of the speech but also demonstrates the well-founded basis of the budgetary forecast, lending the speaker's financial planning greater legitimacy. Endophoric markers in these budgetary speeches transcend their basic referential function. While they clearly serve to link new information to earlier content, they also function as tools of rhetorical persuasion. In referencing past policies or achievements, these markers help speakers validate their plans and demonstrate continuity and success. The use of these markers suggests a deliberate attempt by the speakers to build a logical, coherent narrative, not just for comprehension, but for the persuasion of their audience, reinforcing the credibility of their budgetary proposals and leadership. This dual function of endophoric markers—clarifying the text while enhancing its persuasive impact—reflects the complex demands of political speeches, where both coherence and rhetoric must align to successfully communicate policy intentions. As such, endophoric markers are critical to maintaining the logical flow of budgetary speeches, while also strengthening the speaker's persuasive appeal.

### **Evidential markers**

Evidential markers are linguistic elements that serve to indicate that a particular proposition or claim originates from an external source, distinct from the speaker or writer. These markers are often used to cite authority, reference studies, or incorporate outside expertise to validate claims and increase the credibility of the information presented. In the analysis of the 2021 Southwest Nigerian budgetary speeches, only one instance of an evidential marker was identified. The instance was found in the Ogun State Budgetary Speech:

**Example:**

In the same vein, through the National Association of Livestock Husbandry Scientists and Technologists of Nigeria (NALHSATON), the activities of livestock farmers to boost protein production, the intake of which is encouraged according to the United Nations' target of protein consumption, are further enhanced and improved upon in the State.” (Text 4 – Ogun State Budgetary Speech)

The use of evidential markers in the speeches of Southwest Nigerian governors is remarkably rare. The single occurrence found in Ogun State reflects the speaker's reference to an authoritative external body—the United Nations—to support the state's commitment to improving livestock farming and enhancing protein production. This evidential marker serves to reinforce the validity of the claim by tying it to a widely recognized international standard, thereby legitimizing the budgetary proposal on livestock farming. The limited use of evidential markers across all the speeches suggests that budgetary discourse in this context is not heavily reliant on external authorities or sources to justify claims. Instead, the governors generally take ownership of the content of their speeches, presenting their proposals and policies as directly emanating from their own governance frameworks and agendas.

**Code glosses markers**

Code glosses are linguistic devices that provide additional clarification or expand on the meaning of a previously stated idea. They help make the message clearer by offering further elaboration, often in the form of examples, definitions, or clarifications. In the context of budgetary speeches, code glosses are typically employed to simplify complex ideas and ensure the audience grasps the government's plans and initiatives more effectively.

The result of the analysis is presented below.

Specific code glosses	Ekiti %	Oyo %	Ogun %	Ondo %	Lagos %	Osun %	Total in no.
In other words	0	0	0	0	0	100	1
such as	23.1	0	31	8	0	38	13
For example	0	0	0	0	100	0	1
consequently	0	0	13	25	0	63	8
Total % for each state	13.04	0	22	13.04	4.3	48	23

*Table 1e showing the usage of code glosses in the 2021 Southwest Nigerian states Budgetary Speeches*

The analysis of code glosses in the 2021 Southwest Nigerian states' budgetary speeches reveals interesting variations in usage across the states. A total of 23 code glosses were identified across the six speeches, with Osun state having the highest frequency, accounting for 48% of the total occurrences. In contrast, Lagos state recorded the lowest usage, with only 4.3%. The most frequently used code gloss was "such as", which appeared 13 times across the speeches. This indicates that many of the speakers used this phrase to introduce specific examples or further explain their points. Other code glosses, such as "In other words", "Consequently", and "For example", were also used, but their frequency varied greatly depending on the state. The high frequency of code glosses in Osun state's budgetary speech can be attributed to the speaker's tendency to embellish the speech with detailed numerical data, which helped clarify the government's plans and initiatives. This approach contrasts with other states like Lagos, where fewer code glosses were used, possibly suggesting a more direct or less detailed explanation of the budgetary proposals.

Examples :

- i. While new roads projects had also been flagged off for construction and now at various stages of completion including the construction of road in virgin areas where road never existed before such

- asIdanre to IjokaAkure and Okitipupa to Igbokoda. (*Text 2 : Ondo State Budgetary Speech*)
- ii. This academy is mainly online and self-paced which means, people can take these courses from their homes which will reduce gatherings and the spread of Covid-19. (*Text 4 (Ogun State Budgetary Speech)*)
  - iii. For example, under our urban regeneration projects in Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Ikeja and Kosofe, we are undertaking 17 critical road projects covering over 24km. Just to mention a few, this includes....(*Text 5: Lagos State Budgetary Speech*)

In this instance, "such as" in example I above functions as a code gloss that introduces specific examples of road construction projects. The speaker uses this gloss to clarify the scope of the new infrastructure developments by providing concrete examples of road projects that are being constructed in previously undeveloped areas. The inclusion of locations like Idanre to IjokaAkure and Okitipupa to Igbokoda helps make the abstract notion of road construction more real and tangible for the audience. The use of "such as" ensures that the audience understands the scale and significance of these projects, thereby enhancing the perceived effectiveness of the government's efforts in developing infrastructure. Also in ii above, the phrase "which means" serves as a code gloss that explains the nature and benefits of the online and self-paced academy being introduced. By using this gloss, the speaker provides a clearer interpretation of what "online and self-paced" entails, explaining that it allows people to take courses from the safety of their homes, thereby reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission. This gloss plays a crucial role in ensuring the audience understands the practical advantages of the academy, specifically in terms of health and safety during the pandemic. The use of "which means" makes the message more accessible and relevant to the audience, emphasizing the timely nature of the initiative. Finally, example iii, is used as a code gloss to list specific projects under the broader category of urban regeneration. The gloss serves to elucidate the types of projects being undertaken, specifically highlighting 17 road projects in key urban areas such as Ikoyi, Victoria Island, Ikeja, and



Kosofe. The use of "this includes" helps break down the broader concept of "urban regeneration" into concrete examples that the audience can easily visualize.

### Summary of Interactive Metadiscourse Markers in 2021 Budgetary Speeches of SouthWest Nigerian States

<b>Interactive metadiscourse markers</b>	<b>Ekiti %</b>	<b>Oyo %</b>	<b>Osun %</b>	<b>Ondo %</b>	<b>Lagos %</b>	<b>Osun %</b>	<b>Total in no.</b>
Transitional	14	8.1	20	14	23.4	21.4	1250
Frame markers	13	9.3	17	4	33.3	24.1	54
Endophoric markers	0	0	0	100	0	0	2
Evidential	0	0	100	0	0	0	1
Code glosses	11	0	18	11	21.4	11	28
Total	14	9.4	20	13.2	24	22	1335

*Table 1f showing the usage of interactive discourse markers in the 2021 budgetary speeches of Southwest Nigerian states*

The analysis of interactive metadiscourse markers across six SouthWest Nigerian states in their 2021 budgetary speeches reveals that these linguistic devices were used to guide the audience through the discourse and enhance textual coherence. The most frequently employed interactive marker was transitional markers, accounting for a total of 1,250 instances—the vast majority of all interactive markers. These markers were most prominently used in Lagos (23.4%) and Osun (21.4%), indicating highly structured speeches with strong logical flow and coherence. Oyo recorded the lowest usage at 8.1%, suggesting a less transitional-heavy delivery style. Frame markers, used to structure the speech and highlight rhetorical steps, had a total of 54 occurrences. They were most evident in Lagos (33.3%) and Osun (24.1%), while states like Ondo (4%) showed minimal usage. Code glosses, which provide clarification or elaboration of terms, appeared moderately (28 instances), with Lagos (21.4%) and Osun (18%) again showing higher engagement. Oyo did not employ any. Endophoric markers and evidentials were almost completely absent, with only 2 and 1 instances

respectively—suggesting that governors rarely referred back to earlier points in the text (endophoric) or cited external sources (evidentials). Overall, Lagos (24%) and Osun (22%) demonstrated the highest total usage of interactive metadiscourse, reflecting more structured, audience-oriented communication. In contrast, Oyo (9.4%) and Ondo (13.2%) employed fewer interactive markers, indicating comparatively straightforward and less rhetorically layered presentations. The total number of interactive markers identified across all six states was 1,335.

**Interactional Metadiscourse markers in the selected budgetary Speeches**

The purpose of the interactional metadiscourse marker is to explicate the ways text producer carry out interaction by intrusion and commenting on the argument presented in the text. Interactional metadiscourse is seen as the presence or personality of the writer in the text. They are evaluative and engaging. Interactional metadiscourse consist of five subcategories namely; Hedges, Boosters, Attitude Markers, Self-Mentions, and Engagement Markers.

**Hedges markers**

Hedges are essential interactional metadiscourse markers that allow speakers to express caution, probability, or politeness by softening the strength of their claims. In political and fiscal discourse such as budget speeches, hedges serve to present projections without overstating certainty. The modal verb may is a particularly common hedging device, often used to indicate potential outcomes or deferential suggestions.

Specific hedges	Ekiti	Oyo	Ogun	Ondo	Lagos	Osun
May	0	37.5	25	0	25	12.5
Might	0	50	50	0	0	0
possible	0	0	42.86	28.57	14.29	14.29

*Table 2a showing the usage of hedges in 2021 Southwest Nigerian states Budgetary Speeches*

Table 2a presents the distribution of selected hedges (may, might, and possible) across the 2021 budgetary speeches of six Southwest Nigerian states. The use of "may" is most prominent in Oyo State (37.5%), followed by Ogun and Lagos (25% each), while Osun accounts for 12.5%. "Might" appears exclusively in Oyo and Ogun, each with 50% usage, and is absent in the other states. Furthermore, the word "possible" is most frequently used in Ogun (42.86%), with lesser occurrences in Ondo (28.57%), Lagos, and Osun (14.29% each). Notably, Ekiti State recorded no use of any of the three hedges, indicating minimal reliance on linguistic strategies of uncertainty or tentativeness in its speech. Overall, Ogun State demonstrates the highest combined use of hedging devices, suggesting a more cautious or probabilistic tone in its budgetary rhetoric.

Examples:

- i. There is high propensity that the Internally Generated Revenue may still slide further owing to the disruption of economic activities as a result of COVID-19 and END SARS protest which may affect the profits of many organizations. (*Text 3 :Oyo Budgetary Speech*)
- ii. Honourable Members of this House of Assembly may wish to recall that during my presentation of the Year 2020 Budget,...” (*Text 6: Osun Budgetary Speech*)

In both examples, may functions as a linguistic hedge to signal probability and soften the speaker’s assertions. In example i, the double use of may reflects the speaker’s strategic caution. The first instance (may still slide further) suggests an anticipated but uncertain economic downturn, while the second (may affect the profits) underscores the potential negative consequences of sociopolitical disruptions. Here, may allows the speaker to present serious concerns without asserting them as definitive, maintaining flexibility in the face of unpredictable variables like the pandemic and protests. Akinseye (2023) supports this view by noting that such modals convey the speaker’s subjective judgment or belief that there is a chance or likelihood for the desired outcome to occur, expressing an optimistic perspective without guaranteeing certainty. Similarly, in example ii, may wish to recall

serves a different but equally important hedging function. Rather than indicating probability, it conveys politeness and deference. The speaker avoids imposing a direct demand by offering the audience the option to recall past events. This usage aligns with the formal and respectful tone of legislative discourse, where authority and audience autonomy are carefully balanced. Therefore, the modal “may” is deployed to manage uncertainty and maintain rapport with the audience. Its use in these budgetary speeches reflects an awareness of the speculative nature of economic forecasting and the need for rhetorical sensitivity in political communication.

### **Booster markers**

Booster markers are linguistic expressions used to assert certainty, reinforce conviction, and align the speaker with the audience's values and expectations. In political and budgetary discourse, boosters are employed to project confidence, affirm policy direction, and reinforce the legitimacy of government actions. These lexical choices are not merely rhetorical flourishes; they function as persuasive tools that establish authority and solidarity with the audience.

Examples:

- i. *Let me categorically state that we shall not rest on these laurels as our aspiration has been rejuvenated to do more. (Text 1: Ekiti Budgetary Speech)*
- ii. *However, the nature of our recurrent commitments shows clearly that we cannot reduce recurrent expenditure beyond certain level because of personnel related costs... (Text 2: Ondo Budgetary Speech)*
- iii. *In fact, Government continues to make people the centre piece of our administration's development agenda through strengthening of citizens' participation..(Text 3 :Oyo Budgetary Speech)*
- iv. *Essentially, we are conscious and committed to the economic sustainability of our State in year 2021 and the outer years ahead..(Text 4 :Ogun Budgetary Speech)*
- v. *In tackling the pandemic, we committed additionally, a major chunk of the N20billion COVID-19 intervention fund to the health sector.*

*I can confidently say that for us in Lagos State,...(Text 5 :Lagos Budgetary Speech)*

- vi. *Essentially, the plans are short and long term in nature. These plans recognise and accommodate our resolve to drive the State tourism with Public Private Partnerships. (Text 6 : Osun budgetary Speech)*

The use of booster markers like “categorically”, “clearly”, “in fact”, “essentially”, and “confidently” in budgetary speeches plays a critical role in reinforcing the speaker’s authority and certainty. These markers assert the speaker’s unwavering commitment to their message, creating a stronger connection with the audience by ensuring that their statements are seen as definitive and trustworthy. “Categorically”, as seen in the Ekiti speech, serves as a forceful declaration that leaves no room for doubt. Stating something categorically emphasizes that the speaker’s statement is final and absolute. This term helps build confidence among the audience, assuring them that the government is firm in its decisions and will not hesitate in its future endeavors. It projects certainty and reinforces the credibility of the speaker’s message. Similarly, the use of “clearly” in the Ondo speech works to underline transparency. When the speaker says that the nature of their recurrent commitments shows “clearly” that certain fiscal decisions cannot be altered, the term suggests that the facts are irrefutable and easily understood. This boosts the credibility of the statement and signals to the audience that the reasoning behind the government’s decisions is straightforward and transparent. In Oyo’s speech, the phrase “in fact” introduces the statement as an indisputable truth. When the speaker uses this phrase, the authority of the claim is strengthened, presenting it not as an opinion but as a fact supported by evidence. This phrase aims to persuade the audience to accept the statement as undeniable and reinforces the idea that the government’s actions are grounded in reality, further enhancing the speaker’s reliability. The term “essentially”, used in both the Ogun and Osun speeches, highlights the core or fundamental nature of the speaker’s argument. It is meant to focus the audience’s attention on the most important aspects of the policy, ensuring that they understand the central themes of the

government's plans. In both instances, the use of "essentially" signals that, the government's commitment to sustainability and development is not superficial but foundational, and thus crucial to the state's long-term strategy. Finally, "confidently", as seen in the Lagos speech, communicates the speaker's strong belief in the effectiveness of the government's actions. This booster conveys assurance, emphasizing that the government is not acting hesitantly but with full conviction. Through the use of "confidently", the speaker aims to instill trust in the audience, assuring them that the government's approach is not only well-considered but also certain to succeed. Together, these booster markers help to frame the budgetary speech as a message of certainty, commitment, and transparency. They provide the speaker with a means of conveying both the strength of their position and their unshakable confidence in the government's ability to fulfill its promises.

### **Attitude markers**

Attitude markers are essential linguistic tools used to express the speaker's subjective stance toward the subject matter. These markers reflect the writer's mood and provide insight into their perspective, feelings, or judgments regarding the issues discussed. In budgetary speeches, attitude markers are employed to guide the audience's emotional engagement with the discourse, highlighting the government's position or approach toward particular actions, achievements, or challenges. The selected examples—cordially, undoubtedly, tenaciously, and significantly—illustrate how these markers function within the speeches.

Examples:

- i. Mr Speaker, permit me to acknowledge with profound gratitude, the symbiotic productive partnership between the Legislative and the Executive Arms of Government in Ekiti State, which has been (cordially) wonderful." (*Text 1: Ekiti Budgetary Speech*)
- ii. The infusion of above 10,000 trained able-bodied youth will (undoubtedly) revolutionize the economic base of Ondo State. (*Text 2: Ondo Budgetary Speech*)

- iii. It is a fact that for many indigent families, education is their only hope; it is more or less, the only lifeline with which they can be lifted out of poverty, and they hold (tenaciously) to their belief in the State Government to provide their children with both qualitative and quantitative education. (*Text 5: Lagos Budgetary Speech*).
- iv. The massive road construction across the State has (significantly) opened up the State for ease of business operations..." (*Text 6 :Osun Budgetary Speech*).

In example (i) above, the use of “cordially” in Ekiti’s speech conveys warmth and mutual respect between the Legislative and Executive Arms of Government. The term adds a positive tone to the partnership being described, suggesting that the collaboration is not only productive but also amicable and cooperative. The marker “undoubtedly” in example ii, is a strong attitude marker that conveys certainty and unwavering confidence. By using this term, the speaker asserts that the infusion of over 10,000 trained youth will have an indisputable and positive impact on the state’s economic development. “Undoubtedly” emphasizes that there is no question or skepticism about the potential of this initiative, presenting it as a transformative and inevitable force. This choice reinforces the speaker’s belief in the success of the plan and encourages the audience to adopt the same certainty and optimism. Also, “tenaciously” in iii expresses a strong sense of persistence and unwavering determination. In this context, it highlights the steadfast belief that many indigent families hold in the State Government’s ability to provide a better future through education. The use of “tenaciously” conveys the depth of their commitment to the government’s promises, emphasizing that this belief is not easily swayed. It suggests that these families have a firm, resolute attachment to the idea of education as a pathway out of poverty, and the government’s responsibility is to honor and support that belief. Finally, the term “significantly” in the Osun speech highlights the considerable impact of the road construction efforts on the state’s business environment. Furthermore, the word “significantly” elevates the importance of the infrastructure project, framing it as a key

achievement that is bound to have lasting and meaningful effects on the state's economy.

### Self-Mention markers

Self-mention markers serve as linguistic devices that allow speakers to include themselves in the discourse and to create a sense of involvement with their audience. These markers help establish a connection between the speaker and the audience, making the message more personal, relatable, and authoritative. They also signal accountability and inclusivity, reinforcing the speaker's role in the decisions being presented. In budgetary speeches, self-mention markers like "I," "We," and "Our" are particularly important because they convey a direct relationship between the government and its citizens, underscoring the speaker's responsibility and the collective nature of the government's actions.

#### Examples of Self-Mentions in Budgetary Speeches

- i. I present the highlights of 2021 Draft Budget.”(*Text 1 :Ekiti Budgetary Speech*)
- ii. Mr Speaker, I am glad to inform you that, it is a new dawn for our people at Igbokoda, Ilaje Local Government Area...”( *Text 2 : Ondo Budgetary Speech*)
- iii. We have also successfully transformed and strengthened our investment cum public-private institution to facilitate both foreign and local partnership.” (*Text 3 : Oyo Budgetary Speech*)
- iv. Our appreciation to the entire citizens of Ogun State, for your resolute support and understanding during these difficult times.” (*Text 4: Ogun Budgetary Speech*).
- v. More than ever before, our government remains committed to communal cohesiveness and inter-ethnic unity.” (*Text 5: Lagos Budgetary Speech*):
- vi. In our commitment to further develop our rural and urban communities, ...” (*Text 6: Osun Budgetary Speech*):

The first-person pronoun “I” in example i presents the speaker as the primary subject of the discourse. In Ekiti's speech, the use of “I”



conveys a sense of personal responsibility and direct engagement with the budget. Similarly, in Ondo's speech, the speaker uses “I” to personally communicate good news to the audience, reinforcing their role as a representative of the people and fostering a personal connection with the citizens. This aligns with Hyland’s (2005) view that self-mentions foreground authorial presence and position the speaker as personally accountable. Furthermore, the pronoun “We” is commonly used to refer to a collective entity, often the government or administration. In Oyo's speech, “We” reflects a collective effort, signaling that achievements are the result of group action rather than individual will. This emphasizes unity and collaboration, drawing the audience into the ongoing efforts of the government. As Hyland (2001) notes, such inclusive pronouns construct solidarity and shared responsibility between speaker and audience. The possessive adjective “Our” is used to convey a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. In Ogun’s speech, “Our” expresses collective gratitude, underscoring the speaker’s connection to the people and highlighting the mutual support between citizens and government. Similarly, Lagos and Osun’s speeches employ “Our” to stress communal unity, suggesting that governance is a collaborative rather than a top-down process. Akinseye (2023) also emphasizes that such markers reinforce government–citizen connection by framing political action as a shared enterprise.

### **Engagement markers**

Engagement markers are linguistic devices used by speakers or writers to directly involve the audience in the discourse, thereby transforming them from passive listeners into active participants. According to Hyland (2005), engagement markers function to acknowledge, address, and build a relationship with the audience, often through direct references, appeals, questions, or inclusive pronouns. In the context of budgetary speeches, they play a crucial role in fostering trust, encouraging shared responsibility, and legitimizing the proposals being presented.

- i. I appreciate your perseverance and continued support at all times.(Text 1 : Ekiti Budgetary Speech)

- ii. Mr. Speaker and Distinguished Honourable members, I seek your permission to briefly highlight the performance of the Year 2020 budget. (*Text 3: Oyo Budgetary Speech*)
- iii. Our appreciation to the entire citizens of Ogun State, for your resolute support and understanding during these difficult times. (*Text 4 (Ogun Budgetary Speech)*)
- iv. I thank you all for your kind attention, and wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year in advance... (*Text 6: Osun Budgetary Speech*)

The deliberate use of “you” and “your” across the budgetary speeches serves a key interpersonal function: it establishes a direct communicative bridge between the speaker and the audience. This creates a dialogic tone rather than a monologic delivery, making the speech more inclusive and audience-oriented. In Ekiti’s speech, the phrase “your perseverance and continued support” explicitly acknowledges the role of citizens and lawmakers, reinforcing mutual effort and appreciation. Similarly, in Oyo State, “your permission” appeals to institutional respect and protocol, while subtly involving the audience in the unfolding content of the budget discourse. Ogun’s speech reflects gratitude and collective resilience, thanking citizens for “your resolute support and understanding.” This positions the public not just as recipients of policy, but as contributors to the state’s stability during difficult times. Osun’s speech closes with “I thank you all... and wish you...”, a classic performative act that offers recognition and goodwill. This approach helps humanize the speaker and builds emotional rapport with listeners, particularly at a moment of conclusion when impressions are strongest.

### Summary of Interactional Discourse Markers in SouthWestern Budgetary Speeches (2021)

<b>Interactional markers</b>	<b>Ekiti %</b>	<b>Oyo %</b>	<b>Ogun %</b>	<b>Ondo %</b>	<b>Lagos %</b>	<b>Osun %</b>	<b>Total in no.</b>
Hedges	7	12.3	23.3	15.1	15.1	27.4	73
Boosters	33.3	0	0	0	33.3	33.3	3
Attitude markers	7.14	11	14.3	11	32.1	25	28
Self-mention	12	13	19	20	22	16	769
Engagement markers	7.4	7	7.4	25	7.4	47	122
Total	11	12	17.3	20	20	21	995

*Table 2f showing the usage of interactional discourse markers in the 2021 budgetary speech of Southwest Nigeria states*

The data in Table 2f provides a comprehensive overview of the distribution of interactional discourse markers across budgetary speeches from the six Southwestern Nigerian states: Ekiti, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Lagos, and Osun. The five categories of interactional markers analyzed include hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers.

Among these, self-mentions emerged as the most dominant category, accounting for the highest frequency of usage with a total of 769 instances, making it the most favored rhetorical strategy across all speeches. This high occurrence reflects the governors' tendency to position themselves personally within the discourse, using first-person pronouns such as *"I," "we,"* and *"our"* to assert responsibility, project authority, and create alignment with the audience.

In contrast, boosters were the least utilized, appearing only 3 times in total—equally distributed across Ekiti, Lagos, and Osun states. This limited use suggests a cautious rhetorical style, possibly reflecting the governors' preference for moderate or diplomatic expression over assertive certainty.

Engagement markers, particularly those involving second-person pronouns like “*you*” and “*your*,” were used to directly address the audience and emphasize participation, with Osun State contributing nearly half of the total usage (47%). This indicates a more dialogic and audience-inclusive tone in Osun’s address.

Attitude markers appeared moderately across the states, signaling evaluative language and emotional stance toward policy content, while hedges—despite their moderating role in discourse—were the least used overall (73 instances), suggesting a general tendency toward assertiveness or confidence in the budget presentations.

In terms of state-by-state comparison, Osun State recorded the highest proportion of interactional markers (21%), reflecting a rich use of rhetorical strategies to engage, evaluate, and assert. Conversely, Ekiti State had the lowest proportion (11%), indicating a comparatively restrained rhetorical style.

Overall Summary of Metadiscourse Usage in the 2021 Budgetary Speeches of SouthWest Nigerian States

Metadiscourse category	Ekiti	Oyo	Ogun	Ondo	Lagos	Osun	Total
1. Transitional markers	174	101	246	169	293	267	1250
2. Frame markers	7	5	9	2	18	13	54
3. Endophoric markers	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
4. Evidential	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
5. Code glosses	3	0	5	3	6	11	28
6. Hedges	5	9	17	11	11	20	73
7. Boosters	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
8. Attitude markers	2	3	4	3	9	7	28
9. Self-mention	90	96	143	151	166	123	769
10. Engagement markers	9	8	9	30	9	57	122
<b>Total % for each state</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>2320</b>

*Table 2g: Showing the total record of interactive and interactional metadiscourse elements in the 2021 Budgetary Speech of the six selected Southwest states in Nigeria.*

The analysis of the 2021 budgetary speeches of six SouthWest Nigerian states—Ekiti, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Lagos, and Osun—reveals significant differences in the use of metadiscourse markers, which are essential in guiding the audience through the text, structuring the speech, and establishing a connection with the audience. Lagos and Osun stand out with the highest overall usage of metadiscourse devices, recording 22.1% and 22%, respectively. These states made extensive use of both interactive and interactional markers, which helped to create a more complex and rhetorically rich speech style. Lagos, in particular, employed a large number of transitional markers (293) and self-mentions (166), indicating a strong effort to structure the discourse and engage the audience. Similarly, Osun utilized substantial amounts of transitional markers (267) and also showed high usage of engagement markers, such as “you” and “your” (57), to directly involve the audience. This reflects a strategy of addressing the public and creating a sense of inclusivity and ownership within the speech. In contrast, Oyo recorded the lowest usage of metadiscourse markers, with only 10% of the total. This suggests a simpler, more direct approach in its budgetary presentation. While Oyo did use transitional markers (101), their overall use of frame markers, code glosses, and other devices was relatively minimal, indicating a less rhetorically complex style compared to other states. Moderate usage of metadiscourse markers was observed in Ogun (19%) and Ondo (16%), reflecting a balance between engagement and informational delivery. For instance, Ogun utilized a considerable amount of self-mentions (143), reinforcing the speaker’s involvement in the proposed plans, while Ondo employed a higher number of engagement markers (30) to connect with its audience. The total number of metadiscourse markers across all six states was 2,320, underscoring their significant role in shaping the communicative strategies of the budgetary speeches. Lagos and Osun employed the most sophisticated rhetorical techniques, incorporating various devices to structure the content and directly engage the

audience. On the other hand, Oyo showed a preference for a more straightforward and less interactive presentation style, using fewer markers. This variation reflects different rhetorical priorities in the delivery of the budget speeches, with some states opting for a more detailed and inclusive approach, while others maintained a simpler, more concise style.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this research examined the use of metadiscourse devices in the 2021 budgetary speeches of the governors from the South West states of Nigeria. The study revealed significant disparities in the frequency and selection of metadiscourse markers across these states, reflecting the varying rhetorical skills of the speakers and the distinct economic priorities of their respective states during this period. Notably, the analysis shows that interactive markers are the most frequently used elements in these speeches, playing a critical role in structuring the discourse and engaging the audience. However, interactional metadiscourse markers also emerged as vital linguistic features, as they foster a sense of inclusion and personal involvement in the communication process. These markers help establish a connection between the speaker and the audience, making the speeches more relatable and participatory. Ultimately, the study highlights the dynamic interplay between linguistic choices and the strategic goals of the speakers, underscoring how metadiscourse markers contribute to the overall effectiveness and persuasiveness of the budgetary speeches in the South West Nigerian context.

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## Understanding Pragmatic Norms in Nigerian Languages: A Cross-Linguistic Approach

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### Abstract

*This theoretical paper explores the pragmatic dimensions of communication in three major Nigerian languages—Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. Drawing on established pragmatic theories, it examines the culturally embedded norms that govern language use in these linguistic communities. Key pragmatic features such as politeness strategies, speech acts, discourse markers, and idiomatic expressions are discussed in light of their sociocultural significance. The paper aims to highlight the implications of pragmatic awareness for intercultural communication, language teaching, and national integration in Nigeria's multilingual setting.*

**Keywords:** Pragmatic norms, Nigerian languages, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, politeness, intercultural, pragmatics.

### Introduction

Nigeria's linguistic landscape, with over 500 languages, provides a unique context for studying pragmatic norms. The nation's major

languages—Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, each reflect deep-rooted cultural ideologies that shape how language is used in daily life. Pragmatics, the study of language in use and context, becomes essential in understanding not just what people say, but how and why they say it in particular ways. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of how language is used in context. It examines how meaning is constructed and interpreted beyond the literal content of utterances, taking into account factors like speaker's intention, social relationship, cultural expectations, and situational context. According to Levinson (1993), pragmatics is “the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language”. In simple terms, pragmatics helps explain how we understand implied meanings, politeness, and appropriate usage of language depending on who is speaking, to whom, and what setting. This paper investigates the pragmatic norms in the three major aforementioned languages in Nigeria, focusing on core pragmatic elements such as politeness and speech acts of these languages from a theoretical perspective, shedding light on how cultural context informs speech behavior and communicative expectations.

## **Speech Act**

Speech acts refers to actions performed through utterances, such as requesting, apologizing, promising, and refusing. Austin (1962) introduced the concept, stating that to speak is to act. He distinguished between locutionary acts (the actual utterance), illocutionary acts (the intended meaning or function) and perlocutionary acts (the effect of the hearer) Searle (1969) further refined this theory and categorized speech acts into five types: Assertives (stating, describing), directives (requesting, commanding), commissives (promising, offering), expressive (thanking, apologizing), and declarative (appointing).

### **Politeness**

Politeness refers to the strategies used by speakers to show respect, deference, and consideration. Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed that politeness is a universal feature of human communication, designed to manage interpersonal relationships by addressing the social

"face" of speakers and hearers. They define face as two basic human needs:

- Positive face: the desire to be liked, admired, and included.
- Negative face: the desire to have freedom of action and not be imposed upon.

When speaking, individuals often perform face-threatening acts (FTAs) — actions that could potentially damage the hearer's or speaker's face. To minimize these threats, speakers choose different politeness strategies, depending on the social distance, power difference, and the seriousness (ranking) of the imposition. They identified four main politeness strategies. Firstly, bald on record which means speaking directly without any politeness in case of urgent commands. Secondly, the positive politeness which refers to seeking to establish closeness and show solidarity such as compliments, and friendliness. Thirdly, the negative politeness which entails showing respect for the hearer's autonomy through indirectness as in apologizing and hedging. Lastly, off-record, that is hinting without directly stating the intended message such as using hints, metaphors. Their model emphasizes that culture influences how these strategies are realized, even though the basic needs for face are considered universal.

## **Review of Empirical Studies**

Politeness has long been a subject of interest in sociolinguistics, with various researchers investigating how different cultures use language to manage social interactions. One of the most significant contributions to this field is Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which suggests that individuals engage in politeness strategies to protect their "face" – their social identity as perceived by others. While Brown and Levinson's framework has been widely applied, it has also been critiqued for its supposed universality.

Cross-cultural research further highlights how perceptions of politeness vary globally. Umarovna and Xalilobna (2024) explain how cultures differ in their use of speech acts and politeness. For example, in English-speaking cultures, a direct request such as "Can you help me

with this?” is generally acceptable. However, in many Asian cultures, indirectness is preferred to maintain harmony and avoid imposing on others. A Japanese speaker, for instance, might say, “I wonder if it would be possible for you to help with this,” which softens the request. This contrast reinforces the importance of context and cultural norms in pragmatic expression—a principle that also applies to Nigerian languages, where varying levels of directness and politeness reflect local values.

Numerous studies have shown that politeness strategies are culturally specific and vary according to social norms, values, and expectations. Below is an exploration of previous studies that examine politeness strategies in three major Nigerian languages: Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo.

Nwoye (1989), whose pioneering works on the Igbo and linguistic politeness informed further studies, examined the operations of politeness, the notion of face, and cultural perceptions of what constitutes being polite in Igbo society. His study emphasized that request acts among the Igbos are culturally viewed not as impositions but as expected social behavior rooted in communal life. The group-oriented structure of Igbo culture means that requests are perceived as shared obligations and directness in making requests is common and socially accepted. Nwoye’s study on the Igbo language shows that politeness in this context is not only about mitigating face-threatening acts but also about reinforcing communal bonds through open and direct communication.

In addition to studies on the Igbo, Zailani and Umar (2021) conducted a pragmatic investigation titled “Politeness Strategy in Hausa Request Act: Common Ground of Speaker and Hearer as Cooperators.” Drawing on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, their study analyzed naturally occurring conversations among Hausa speakers, examining politeness strategies through the sociological variables of power (P), distance (D), and the ranking of imposition (R). Their findings revealed that Hausa speakers heavily rely on the cultural value of cooperation and shared responsibility, using politeness strategies that emphasize mutual understanding and community cohesion. The concept of face in Hausa interactions is protected not

only by indirectness but by appealing to the hearer's role as a cooperator. This highlights the communicative ethos of Hausa culture, where requests are framed within socially embedded norms of solidarity and reciprocity.

This study, like that of Nwoye on the Igbo, reinforces the argument that politeness strategies are deeply culture-specific and that the universality claimed by Brown and Levinson may not be uniformly applicable across different cultures. In Hausa, as in Igbo, requesting is socially constructed not as an imposition but as an enactment of communal responsibility, underscoring the central role of community and cooperative interaction in both languages. The research findings from Zailani and Umar (n.d.) suggest that the act of requesting is understood as a social norm that not only reflects respect for the addressee but also signifies the requester's connection to the broader social fabric, where communal ties and collective well-being take precedence over individual desires.

Similarly, in the Yoruba language, the notion of politeness has been thoroughly examined, particularly in relation to speech acts and discourse markers. As one of the major languages of Nigeria, Yoruba speakers employ distinct politeness strategies that reflect social hierarchies, respect for elders, and the significance of maintaining social harmony. According to Odebunmi (2001), Yoruba politeness strategies are heavily influenced by social status, age, and the context of interaction. In Yoruba culture, the use of honorifics, titles, and discourse markers such as "e ku" (you have done well) or "e jò" (please) are frequently deployed to ensure that requests, suggestions, and other speech acts are received without threatening the addressee's face.

A notable aspect of Yoruba politeness is the extensive use of indirect speech, particularly in requests. Akin to the Hausa and Igbo, Yoruba speakers often rely on indirectness to mitigate the imposition of a request. For example, a request for a favour may be framed not as a direct demand but as a suggestion or a question designed to preserve the dignity of both parties. This linguistic behavior is supported by the

notion of "èbọra" (deference), where speakers show respect through both languages and behavior, further embedding politeness within Yoruba discourse patterns.

The studies on Yoruba and Igbo highlight the importance of face-saving strategies in African languages and the intersection of culture, language, and social norms in the use of politeness. While there are shared elements such as the emphasis on indirectness and social responsibility, there are also distinct cultural nuances that define how politeness is manifested in these languages. For instance, Yoruba speakers' use of titles and honorifics in their interactions is often more explicit compared to Igbo speakers, where communal expectations may be signaled more implicitly through directness in speech.

To further buttress, these studies illustrate that politeness strategies in African languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo are not universal but instead deeply rooted in cultural norms that shape how individuals interact. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory serves as a useful framework for understanding politeness in these languages, but as the studies by Nwoye, Zailani, Umar, and Odebunmi show, politeness is also context-dependent and influenced by specific cultural expectations. This reinforces the argument that politeness strategies are culture-bound and that a more nuanced understanding of politeness requires an appreciation of the local socio-cultural context in which communication occurs.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987): This theory explores how individuals use language to manage face and maintain social harmony. The concepts of positive and negative face are culturally interpreted in Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba societies.

### **Pragmatic Norms in Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba Politeness Strategies**

Politeness manifests in different ways across Nigeria's major languages. Yoruba speakers often use elaborate greeting systems and



honorifics, signaling deference, especially to elders. Igbo speakers embed politeness within communal values, using expressions that promote group cohesion. In Hausa, politeness is structured around formalized greetings and respect markers that align with Islamic and hierarchical traditions.

Adegbija (1989), in a comparative study of politeness phenomena in Nigerian English, Yoruba, and Ogori, identifies key strategies of both positive and negative politeness in these languages. Positive politeness strategies include greetings, making small talk, being agreeable, and using honorific plural pronouns for singular persons. Negative politeness, on the other hand, involves modulation of tone, use of formal titles, and indirectness markers. His findings confirm that the interpretation of utterances as polite or impolite hinges on the pragmatic context in which they occur. For example, in Yoruba and Ogori cultures, the age and social status of an addressee significantly influence how politeness strategies are deployed, the greater the status, the more elaborate and indirect the speech. This supports the idea that universal politeness strategies are often customized within cultural frameworks and languages.

Balogun and Ajayi (2024) explain that politeness in Yoruba culture is divided into two forms; linguistic and non-linguistic. Linguistic politeness involves the use of honorific pronouns such as *ẹ*, *ẹyin*, *wọn*, and *àwọn* to show respect. Non-linguistic politeness encompasses non-verbal expressions like gestures. In interactions between individuals of different ages or social statuses, the younger person is expected to lower their gaze, as maintaining direct eye contact with elders is considered impolite. During conversations, younger individuals should wait for elders to finish speaking before contributing. In traditional Yoruba settings, wives are culturally discouraged from addressing their husband's relatives by name; instead, they use appellations or pet names, such as *\*bàbádúdú\** ("dark man") or *\*ìyáòròbò\** ("plump woman"). Greetings are a significant aspect of politeness in Yoruba culture. Young men are expected to prostrate, while young women kneel when greeting elders. Additionally, daughters and wives typically offer items to older men while kneeling, acknowledging the man's role

as the head of the family. In Igbo culture, politeness is deeply embedded in speech behaviour and social interaction. Some key politeness practices include:

- a) Use of respectful address forms: Igbo speakers use specific titles such as *Dede* (elder brother), *Nne* (mother), *Nna* (father) when addressing others, particularly elders, as a mark of respect (Nwoye, 1992).
- b) Greetings: Greetings are central in Igbo culture. One must greet elders first when entering a place. Common greetings include *Ndeewo* (general greeting), *I bola chi?* (Have you woken up?), and *Ka chi fo* (Goodnight).
- c) Indirectness in Requests: When making requests, the Igbo often avoid direct commands. Instead of saying "Give me water," one might say *Bikonyere m mmiri* (Please help me with water) (Nwoye, 1992).
- d) Deference through body language: Bowing slightly, kneeling, or using a soft tone when speaking to elders demonstrates respect.
- e) Avoiding confrontational language: Disagreement is often expressed indirectly to avoid threatening the hearer's face. These politeness strategies reflect the communal and hierarchical structure of Igbo society, where respect for age and social status is paramount.

## Speech Acts

Speech acts such as requests, apologies, compliments, and warnings differ widely in form and interpretation across the three languages, reflecting their sociocultural foundations.

## Yoruba

- Requests are often wrapped in proverbs: *Òrò òfò kọ́ ló n dá ọkọ ọdẹ́ lórí* – "An empty word doesn't

disturb a hunter"  
(used before asking for a favor to lessen imposition)

- Apologies: *Ẹ jòó, ẹ má bínú* – Please, don't be angry
- Compliments: *O wù mí lójú* – I admire you / You are admirable
- Blessings: *Kí Ọlórún bù kún rẹ* – May God bless you (used to show goodwill)

## Igbo

- Requests: *Biko nyere m aka* – Please assist me
- Apologies: *Ndo, abụghị m ime ya n'echiche* – Sorry, I didn't mean it
- Compliments: *I mara mma nke ukwu* – You look very beautiful
- Indirect warning: *Egbe bere, ugo bere* – "Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch"  
(used when cautioning for peace)

## Hausa

- Requests: *Don Allah, zan iya samun taimako?* – Please, can I get help?
- Apologies: *Yi hakuri* – Sorry
- Compliments: *Kayan ki sun yi kyau sosai* – Your clothes are beautiful
- Blessings: *Allah ya saka da alheri* – May Allah reward you with goodness

These examples show that speech acts are not only linguistic performances but also culturally anchored social rituals.

## Discourse Markers

Discourse markers guide conversation and show speaker attitude, agreement, or transition. These markers differ by language and context.

## Hausa

- *Toh* – Okay / then
- *Ai* – Indeed / truly
- *Amma* – But
- *Kuma* – Also / moreover

## Igbo

- *Nke a bu eziokwu* – That's true
- *Ya mere* – Therefore / that is why
- *O dika* – It seems / it appears
- *Ka anyi hụ* – Let us see (used to conclude an idea)

## Yoruba

- *Àmò* – However
- *Şe ni* – Indeed
- *Nítorí náà* – Therefore
- *İyẹn ni pé* – That means

These markers reveal speaker stance and help maintain coherence in oral narratives and conversations.

## Idiomatic Expressions

Idioms function as pragmatic tools that convey culturally loaded messages indirectly, often tied to wisdom, morality, or communal values.

## Yoruba

- *Omọ tí a kò kó, ní yóò gbé ilé tí a kọ tà* – "A child not trained will sell the house that was built"
- *Kì í sùn mọni ká má sáré* – "One who oversleeps must run"

- *Tí kò bá sí àìmò, kò ní sí àsìṣe* – "Without ignorance, there is no error"

## Igbo

- *Onye nwere mmuò adighi egbu onye nwere ego* – "The spiritual man does not kill the rich man"
- *A gaghi eji onu ekwu aka* – "You cannot describe a hand with the mouth"
- *Egbe bere, ugo bere* – "Let the kite perch, let the eagle perch" (advocates peaceful coexistence)

## Hausa

- *Komai nisan jifa kasa za ta fadi* – "No matter how far a throw, it falls to the ground"
- *Hannunka mai sanda* – "Your hand is holding a stick" (implies hidden threat)
- *Da kai da ni, za mu ci tuwo* – "You and I will eat *tuwo*" (used to express companionship or unity)

Idioms serve as culturally sanctioned ways to advise, reprimand, or persuade indirectly.

## Cultural Dimensions of Pragmatics

Cultural values such as age, gender, religion, status, and community orientation influence how pragmatic norms are structured. In Yoruba and Hausa cultures, age hierarchy and respect for elders are paramount. In Igbo culture, the communal ethos determines indirectness and conflict avoidance. For instance, a child reprimanding an elder directly is considered rude across all three cultures.

The concept of face also varies: saving face through indirectness is essential in Hausa and Yoruba, while in Igbo, collective harmony outweighs individual assertion. These norms become critical in

multicultural and urban contexts, where pragmatic misalignment may cause misunderstanding.

## **Implications for Intercultural Communication and Education**

Nigeria's multilingual society demands pragmatic competence as a key communication skill. Yet, formal education often neglects this, focusing instead on grammatical correctness and vocabulary memorization.

Teaching pragmatic norms can foster:

- Respectful and inclusive dialogue
- Conflict prevention
- National integration

Public institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and media, should integrate intercultural pragmatics training. For example, doctors in Hausa-speaking regions must learn respectful greeting protocols; teachers in Igbo communities should master indirect ways of issuing commands; broadcasters in Yoruba-speaking areas should understand honorifics and cultural references.

Promoting pragmatic awareness strengthens national unity and ensures that communication is not only correct but also culturally sensitive and effective.

## **Conclusion**

This paper emphasizes the value of understanding pragmatic norms within and across Nigerian languages. By analyzing Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba through a pragmatic lens, we gain insight into how language reflects and reinforces cultural values. Promoting pragmatic awareness can improve interpersonal communication, enrich language education, and strengthen intercultural harmony in Nigeria's pluralistic society.

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## **Presuppositions in the Language Use of Women in Nigerian Billboard Advertisements**

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### **Abstract**

*Based on certain sociocultural perceptions about women, the language use by women is believed to differ from that of men. This has likely contributed to the increased representation of women in advertisements, even for products that are not traditionally considered feminine. This paper, therefore, aimed to find out the sociocultural presuppositions in the English language use attributed to women in billboard advertisements in Nigeria. The objectives of the paper were to: (i) explore how presuppositions confirm or contradict some sociocultural perceptions about language use attributed to women; (ii) explicate how advertisers connect the language use attributed to women to the advertised products; and (iii) assess how presuppositions affect images of the advertised products. The purposive sampling technique was used to select twenty-five (25) advertisements featuring women. Fifteen advertisements were duly analysed, using the pragmatic presupposition approach and the typology of presuppositions. This study shows that: certain sociocultural perceptions about the language use attached to women are confirmed and refuted through texts, images, contexts and background beliefs; advertisers connect the language use attributed to women to advertised products directly and indirectly; and the sociocultural perceptions about women and their attributed English language use boost the images of advertised products. It is concluded, therefore, that presuppositions in the English language use, attributed to women in*

*billboard advertisements in Nigeria, confirm and refute certain sociocultural perceptions about women.*

**Keywords:** Language, pragmatics, presuppositions, women and advertisements.

## **Introduction**

According to Barron and Schneider (2002, p. 1), “that speech communities differ in their use of language is now a well-established fact”. The above implies that language is dynamic and contributes to how users behave. The dynamic characteristic of language gives room to variations in the way language users say the same thing, which could be interpreted and understood in different ways, according to the situations that abound when making the statement. Pragmatics is the field of linguistic study that allows language to be studied situationally, contextually, and extra/non-linguistically. These views are summarised by Verschueren and Östman (2009, p. 1), who assert that pragmatics is “the cognitive, social, and cultural science of language and communication”. The pragmatic study of language uses tools, such as context, speech acts, inference, implicature, mutual contextual belief, non-verbal communication, and presupposition, which is the focus of this study.

Language usages, therefore, depend on contexts, participants, intentions, and others for effective communication. The perceptions of a given people about what they see around them dictate their reactions and consequently inform their utterances at a given time and space (Zdenek, James, & Nobuko, 2012). This is connected to the observation that advertisers could be exploiting certain sociocultural perceptions about women to presuppose their language use in advertisements. The fact that the advertised products have little or nothing to do with women and that the accompanied texts cannot be proven exclusively as women-specific are the pedestals on which this study is placed. Therefore, this study aims to examine the sociocultural presuppositions

in the English language use attributed to women, especially in billboard advertisements in Nigeria.

## **Aim and Objectives**

This study aims to determine the sociocultural presuppositions in the English language use attributed to women in billboard advertisements in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to:

- i. investigate the sociocultural perceptions about the English language use attributed to women in advertisements;
- ii. assess how advertisers connect sociocultural perceptions to the advertised products; and,
- iii. explore how sociocultural perceptions affect images of advertised goods and services.

## **Research Questions**

- i. In what ways does the English language use attributed to women reflect the sociocultural perceptions about them?
- ii. How do advertisers connect the perceptions in the language use attributed to women to advertised products?
- iii. What are the effects of the sociocultural perceptions in the English language use attributed to women on the advertised goods and services?

## **Review of Related Literature**

This section shall examine the different terms that are relevant to this study to establish a firm bedrock for its analysis. The concepts to be reviewed are, pragmatics, presuppositions, and women in advertisements.

## **Pragmatics**

The study of language beyond the speech level has become a major concern to Linguists since the intentions of speakers at different times are more often implied than expressed. Information given is correctly

and fully understood when certain extra/non-linguistic factors are considered. This aspect of language study is within the purview of pragmatic theory (Wisniewski, 2007). In the same vein, Finch (2000, p. 149) describes pragmatics as “a relatively newer area of linguistics than semantics consisting of a cluster of approaches which cohere around the preoccupation with the contextual constraints on meaning”. This definition underscores the possibility of saying something and meaning something else.

In addition, Mey (2004, p. 6) submits that “a truly pragmatic consideration has to deal with the users in their social context; it cannot limit itself to the grammatically encoded aspects of contexts, as the “grammaticalisation” requirement seems to imply”. This opinion is yet another pointer to the influence of socio-cultural factors on language. For example, women are expected to be silent when important decisions about the home and society are being taken. Such silence in many situations has been considered a message, especially when it is accompanied by certain postures and facial expressions. These kinds of languages can only be noticed and fully understood when speakers share the same or similar beliefs (Penelope & Sally, 2003). Socio-cultural and contextual factors, therefore, are key to effective communication through inference, presupposition, context, and implicature among others. In the next subsection, presupposition as a pragmatic tool adopted in this study is examined.

### **Presupposition**

Presupposition according to Mey (2004), is one of the most discussed topics in the study of pragmatics. Linguistic scholars such as Levinson (1991), Mey (2004), Atlas (2006), Yule (2008), Delogu (2009) and many others have contributed to the discussions on presupposition. Levinson (1991) makes a distinction between ordinary linguistic notions and technical usages termed pragmatic inferences. According to him, presuppositions are “too sensitive to contextual factors” to be considered primarily on linguistic structures of sentences. Hence, he posits that presuppositions are better seen as pragmatic inferences. This position of Levinson (1991) however seems to have laid too much emphasis on contextual factors at the expense of background

knowledge between interlocutors, which may not be within the contexts of the utterance. On his part, Atlas (2006) bases his conception of presupposition on Frege's (1892) work "on sense and reference" notion, which he calls referential presupposition. This is a position that sees presuppositions as references that are necessary to establish truth conditions of an utterance about time and time frame. The truth/falsity conditions, however, may not be the only reason for making an utterance (Mey 2006).

Yule (2008) distinguishes between presuppositions and entailments. He opines that presuppositions are made by speakers while entailments are made by sentences. This is an approach that combines linguistic forms and contexts into the study of presupposition. He opines that assumptions are made through a wide range of words, phrases and structures that are indicators of potential presuppositions and can become presuppositions when context is put into consideration. Using this background, he identifies different types of potential presupposition such as, existential, factive, non-factive, lexical, counterfactual, and structural. The following examples are created based on Yule's (2008) ideologies:

- (a) Potential presupposition arises when a part of an utterance is a subordinate clause that could be considered isolated from the whole utterance and may or may not be a presupposition of the whole utterance. For example:

"She drives the car, though the driver was sick".

The potential presuppositions here are;

- (i) there is a car,
  - (ii) there is a driver. (That the driver was sick did not necessarily presuppose why she was driving the car.)
- (b) Existential presupposition assumes the existence of the entities mentioned by the speaker. It is a presupposition that is associated with possessive constructions and definite noun phrases. For example;

“My sister is in the house”.

This presupposes that; I have a sister and there is a house.

- (c) Factive presupposition is a presupposition that takes a statement to be true because it contains certain verbs like; know, realise, understand, discover or a phrase containing ‘glad’. For instance:

“I didn’t know he had lost his job”.

This statement presupposes that; (i) he had a job, (ii) he lost the job.

- (d) Lexical presupposition is a presupposition that uses asserted meaning conventionally to presuppose non-asserted meaning. It simply involves using a particular expression that is stated to presuppose another expression that is not stated. For instance;

He managed to pass the examination. (He passed the examination with great effort.)

- (e) Structural presupposition is a presupposition that takes certain sentence structures to be conventionally true. It means a part of a sentence is assumed to be true and makes any other part to be true. This is very evident in WH- questions. For example;

Who opened the door? (It is presupposed that the door was closed.)

- (f) Counter-factual presupposition expresses what is not true, and the opposite of what is true or contrary to the fact expressed. E. g; If I had gone to school, I would have travelled with them. (I did not go to school. I did not travel.) The typology of presuppositions identified by Yule (2008) and the pragmatic presuppositions by Mey (2004) were used in the analysis of this study.

Delogu (2009, p. 195) states that presuppositions "are genuine examples of the semantic/pragmatic interface". Delogu (2009) claims that presuppositions are triggered by lexical items, syntactic structures or inducers, pointing out that linguistic forms play central roles in the concept of presupposition. This position is considered to have

underplayed the influence of extra-linguistic factors in presupposition (Levinson, 1991).

The approach of Mey (2004), like Levinson (1991), and Yule (2008), among others, conceptualises presupposition beyond the speech level. He identifies two types of presuppositions, semantic and pragmatic, on which he establishes his approach. He posits that the semantic presupposition from which the pragmatic presupposition developed focuses on the logical relationships that exist among the contents of an utterance, while the pragmatic presupposition entails the incorporation of shared knowledge and contexts to interpret and understand an utterance (Mey, 2004). He asserts that semantic presupposition “does not hold up to our pragmatic expectations”, and this is a vital statement for the adoption of pragmatic presupposition in the analysis of this study.

Moreover, pragmatic presupposition centres on the general acceptance that spoken languages cannot be fully interpreted and understood through linguistic composition alone. Worthy of note is that other researchers like Soler and Jorda (2007); Verschueren and Ostman (2009); Schneider and Barron (2014); and Kecskes (2014), among others, have found Mey (2004) and Yule (2008) viable in their discussions on pragmatics and presuppositions specifically. Therefore, while the typology of presuppositions identified by Yule (2008) is adopted to study the connections between texts and advertised products, the pragmatic presupposition by Mey (2004) is adopted to examine the background beliefs in the English language usages attributed to women.

### **Background Beliefs**

The pragmatic presupposition emphasises the importance of contexts to effective communication through background beliefs and metapragmatic reality, which are its components Mey (2004). Background beliefs are “assumptions shared or presumed to be shared” by interlocutors at a given time and space which allow communication to effectively take place. It is also known as the common ground (Delogu, 2009). It could be seen as the underlying understanding of

existing rules and circumstances that speakers are exposed to, which guide them to make effective references in speech situations. They are the necessary knowledge that enables speakers to make correct evaluations and judgments in their day-to-day activities. The background beliefs are a vital tool to examine the intentions of advertisers in the selected data of this study and to establish the possible sociocultural presuppositions attached to English language usage by women.

Furthermore, the metapragmatic reality could be described as the conditions for doing pragmatics. It is a process that studies the suitability of a given utterance during a conversation, taking into consideration, the available extra-linguistic factors. According to Mey (2004, p. 190), "It raises questions such as: how do people use their language in their respective social contexts? What kind of freedom do they enjoy in their use of language, and how is that use constrained?" In essence, the metapragmatic reality could be seen as the theoretical principles or guidelines for doing pragmatics; the approach helps this research to examine the extra-linguistic factors in the data. The elements of metapragmatic reality adopted for use in this analysis are contexts and colours

## **Contexts**

According to Mey (2004, p. 39), "context is more than just reference. Context is action. Context is about understanding what things are for; it is also what gives our utterances their true pragmatic meaning and allows them to be counted as true pragmatic acts....". In essence, context entails the physical, psychological, linguistic, and sociocultural settings in a given discourse. The physical context includes time, participants and the circumstances that inform the making of the utterance. The sociocultural context deals with the beliefs, habits, and value systems of interlocutors and their religions, among others. Linguistic context expresses the purposes of an utterance about social factors, while the psychological context indicates the state of mind of the speakers (Adegbija, 1999). Contexts are considered useful in this research since they examine the sociocultural presuppositions in the



English language usages attributed to women in billboard advertisements in Nigeria.

## **Colour**

Colour is said to give “both psychological and visual information” that has sociocultural implications. Several activities of man, such as burials, weddings, occupations, safety, religions, and businesses, among others, are influenced by sociocultural views about colours. (Racoma, 2019). In fact, “cultural influences that affect colours can shift the context of your message and brand perceptions” as would be seen later, through the analysis of this work. For example, the blue colours in some contexts have positive implications such as calmness, love, and peace. In contrast, it is associated with negative implications like sadness and loneliness in others. The sociocultural perceptions of red colours are equally different from place to place. While red symbolises passion and happiness in some contexts, it means danger, warning or caution in others (Kushtan, 2022). These perceptions about colours would be used to analyse implied messages about the products in the data. Therefore, the elements of pragmatic presuppositions identified by Mey (2004), specifically used in this paper, are the background beliefs, contexts, and colours.

## **Women in Advertisements**

According to Belch and Belch (2001, p. 14), “any paid form of non-personal communication about an organisation’s product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor” is known as an advertisement. Advertisers employ deliberate strategies to promote the images of advertised products to increase sales, and they get paid for their services (Aren 1999). Moreover, the socio-cultural perceptions about women being the weaker sex, delicate, attractive, homemakers and housewives who raise children and take care of their husbands have possibly contributed to their representations in advertisements (Coates, 2013). Igoe (2006, p. 1) also says:

Throughout history, advertisements aimed at women have often questioned women's intelligence and

integrity, making them appear more as objects than actual human beings. As advertisers strive to convince women of the necessity of a product, women seem to be presented with images of their inadequacy.

Although present-day women in some advertisements are created to deviate significantly from stereotypical representations, the effects of previous representations still influence how society relates to women and how women perceive themselves (Igoe, 2006). It is believed that these sociocultural perceptions about women are reflected in the ways women use the English language. This paper, therefore, examines sociocultural perceptions as reflected in the English language usage attached to women, especially in billboard advertisements in Nigeria.

### **Data Analysis**

The analytical tools adopted for this research are the pragmatic presupposition, Mey (2004), and the typology of presuppositions, Yule (2008). The elements of pragmatic presuppositions used in the analysis are; background beliefs, contexts, and colours, while the typology of presuppositions used are; existential, lexical, factive, and counterfactual. These elements were used to examine the sociocultural presuppositions in the English language usage attributed to women, especially in billboard advertisements in Nigeria.

### **Background Beliefs**

The background beliefs about beauty, submission, reservation, dependency, and attraction, among others, attributed to women can be seen through data one, five, six, eight, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen. For example, the words “FOR VISIBLY FAIRER SKIN”, and “STRONG INSIDE BEAUTIFUL OUTSIDE”, are linked to the beauty, attractions and delicate features attributed to women. They imply that as women are beautiful, the products are also beautiful; as women are culturally held to be delicate, the products are also held to be delicate, and as women are held to be attractive, so are the products. These connote that the products have good quality, and are effective.

Therefore, the background beliefs about women as being beautiful, attractive and delicate are upheld in the advertisements.

In addition, the beliefs that women cook in the family, that they are soft-hearted, caregivers, dependents, and reserved can be seen in data, two, three, four, seven, ten, nine, and eleven. From "Feel Good, Do Good" in datum two, the kindness and soft-heartedness that are generally attributed to women can be implied. In other words, the kindness and soft-heartedness attached to women are likened to the health and social benefits of the exercise. Essentially, just like the perceived softness and kindness of women promote a healthy and peaceful life, so also do the benefits of the exercise to the heart promote a healthy and peaceful life. These background beliefs could be directly and indirectly connected to the products advertised to boost their images.

### **Contexts**

Physical, linguistic, psychological and sociocultural contexts are assessed through the data. For instance, the physical contexts in data three, five, six, eight and thirteen could be linked to the perception that women are, caregivers, and reserved among others. Linguistic contexts that inform, direct, enlighten, encourage etc., are studied through data one, four, seven, eight, ten and fifteen. Psychological contexts of happiness, pride, satisfaction, and calmness among others, tend to depict the feelings and emotions of the women in the adverts through data two, three, six, eight, eleven, and twelve. These contexts infer that the products are effective as could be seen through the feelings and emotions of the women in the advertisements. More so, the sociocultural contexts that can be examined through data seven, nine, ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen are; health, food and drink, home, and fashion, etc., which are also creatively used to boost the images of the products.

### **Colours**

It is observed that colours such as white, red, blue, green, yellow, and black, among others, could be used in the adverts to complement the

intended messages. White colour is universally believed to signify purity, holiness, and cleanliness, among others. In datum five, for instance, the white background and the white towel used by the woman in the advert could symbolise the purity and cleaning capacity of the advertised soap, meaning that, just as white is pure and holy, so is the product. The effects of the soap could be implied through the woman, who proudly exposes her pure and beautiful skin. Similarly, blue signifies love, calmness, beauty, and more, as could be implied through data one, two and nine, while red signifies danger, beauty, warning, passion, etc., as could be seen through data three, ten, twelve, and even thirteen. Every colour found in the data is therefore considered significant, as they tend to link the intentions of the advertisers to the products, directly and indirectly.

### **Existential Presuppositions**

The existential presuppositions could be examined in data one, four, five, eleven and fourteen. For example, datum one, “FOR VISIBLY FAIRER SKIN”, implies the product gives fairer skin as evident through the woman in the advert. The existence of the sociocultural beliefs that women love fashion and beauty, and the existence of a product that gives such desires are indirectly implied in the advertisement. These beliefs could be seen as the connections between the product and the image of the woman in the advert. Likewise, the text on datum four, “It’s Time to CARE ABOUT YOUR SALT. Refined, Iodised, Purified” connects the product to the image in the advert, by inferring the sociocultural views that women cook and take care of the family. The gorgeous appearance of the woman could be connected to the outstanding qualities of the salt; just like the woman stands out through her attire, so also is the salt through its refined, iodised and purified qualities. In short, through the texts, the existence of the products infers the existence of the beliefs about women, and an indirect connection between the texts, products and the image could be established. The images of the products are also possibly boosted.

## **Factive Presuppositions**

“SAVE YOUR MONEY AND COME TAKE A NEW PHONE HOME” in datum six is a factive presupposition underscoring the financial limitation and dependent status that are culturally associated with women. These perceptions are contradicted by the advertisement, which tends to encourage social and financial independence for women through savings and the media. “Think Natural Think Shaltoux. Natural Sore throat reliever” on datum seven connects the sociocultural perceptions that women are caregivers to the drug. The attributed perception of women being caring is indirectly connected to the drug as being caring to treat sore throats. The harmlessness of the drug is also implied through the image of the woman, since women are culturally considered soft-hearted, weak and harmless, making the drug suitable for many users. These factive presuppositions, again, through the texts and the images, portray the qualities, efficiency, accessibility and availability of the products, directly and indirectly adding to the value of its image.

## **Lexical Presuppositions**

The lexical presupposition could be identified in data nine, ten, twelve and thirteen. “Peak Protein Breakfast Keeps you Going” on datum nine is a lexical presupposition that assumes the importance of a good breakfast to a successful day. The image of the woman confirmed the sociocultural view that women cook and take care of the family, even in the fulfilment of religious obligations. The view that women are essential parts of the family that keep the family going could be likened to the usefulness of the milk, especially at home.

The text “STRONG INSIDE BEAUTIFUL OUTSIDE” in datum twelve could be seen as a subtle contradiction of the belief that women are the weaker sex. The message that women appear beautiful and delicate, with strong determination and inner strength, could be understood through the text. These beliefs could be linked to the hair product as being beautiful and strong, just like a woman, making it healthy for the hair. Also, “Enjoy Life (18+ Drink responsibly)” contradicts the societal perceptions about alcohol and that women

should be reserved. The relaxed, calm, controlled and beautiful appearance of the woman passes an indirect message that the drink is harmless and enjoyable, just like the sociocultural view of the woman. The physical context complements the message that just as the beautiful woman and the beautiful contexts contribute to enjoyment, so also do the calmness and purity of the drink. The 18-plus in the texts could be considered a subtle warning against underage people from drinking the product. The perceptions that women should be silent, less social, and dependent are contradicted. These identified contradictions in some sociocultural views about women are employed to boost the image of the drink.

### **Counterfactual Presuppositions**

The posture of the woman in datum two contradicts the sociocultural perceptions about women being the weaker sex and less sociable. It could be deduced that women have the strength and ability to do certain activities that are considered too taxing for them and that they are eligible to associate with people and take part in activities outside the home, without failing in their responsibilities as mothers and wives. In other words, the hidden strength of a woman could be likened to the benefits and strength of the exercise, to attract more people especially women to the exercise. Likewise, the text in datum three could be seen as counterfactual to the socio-cultural perception that women are dependent and non-ambitious. The image could be connected to the text as a way of stating that women can have dreams and that they can bring such dreams into reality by drinking the advertised beverage. The images of the products are also improved through these counterfactual sociocultural views. The next section addresses the findings of this research.

### **Discussions and Findings**

The analysis above has helped to identify certain sociocultural perceptions about women that are either confirmed or refuted, especially in billboard advertisements in Nigeria. For instance, the texts in data one and twelve for instance, help to confirm the sociocultural views that women are symbols of beauty and attraction, while the texts

in two, four and ten allow the perceptions that women are kind, homemakers, caregivers among others, to be confirmed.

From another perspective, certain sociocultural perceptions about women are contradicted in the analysis. For example, data six, eight, thirteen and fifteen have helped to identify the contradiction in the perceptions that women are silent, dependent, reserved, etc. Contradictions about the perceptions of women being the weaker sex, non-ambitious, less sociable, etc., could be identified through the images of women in data one, two, three, and thirteen, among others. The images in data nine ten and eleven on the other hand however confirm the perceptions that women are symbols of love, homemakers and caregivers.

Furthermore, contexts and colours have been useful in establishing certain sociocultural beliefs about women. The physical contexts could be seen as a link between the products and the text as evident through data four, six, eight and thirteen. The physical context in datum eight implies that the woman is in her shop, which is stocked up because of the loan she took, while the beach in datum thirteen complements the notion of enjoyment in the text. Other contextual factors like sociocultural, linguistic and psychological are equally creatively used to complement the texts.

The mutual contextual beliefs about colours examined in the adverts have also helped to connect the advertisements to the texts indirectly. The red colour in data three and thirteen could be implying the MCBs about the red colour as a warning, special attention, passion, or beauty, to add to the message being passed across through the text. Green as mutually believed to symbolise freshness could be an implied message that the GLO network is always available and effective, while the white colour, which is mutually seen as a symbol of purity, holiness, harmlessness, etc., could be a ploy to the safety and efficiency of the line.

Moreso, different types of presuppositions used in the analysis have also contributed to establishing certain connections between the participants, texts and products. The existential presuppositions in data

one and four see sociocultural perceptions about beauty, fashion, and attraction associated with women. Likewise, the lexical presuppositions have been used to confirm and contradict some social perceptions as implied through the texts and the images of the women. Specifically, it could be said that the text in datum two confirms the kindness attributed to women socio-culturally. In contrast, the image of the woman in the advert contradicts the perception that women are a weaker sex and delicate. The above are also applicable to other types of presuppositions used in this analysis.

From the analysis therefore, this research found out that: sociocultural perceptions about the language usage attached to women were confirmed and refuted through background beliefs, contexts, images of women and accompanying texts; advertisers connected the language usages attributed to women, to advertised products directly and indirectly through texts, contexts, background beliefs, colours and different types of presuppositions; the images of the advertised goods and services were boosted through the images of women and the English language usage associated with them; intended messages about the products were usually implied through colours, texts, contexts, and images of women.

## **Conclusion**

This study has concluded that advertisers presuppose certain sociocultural perceptions about women, confirmed or refuted in billboard advertisements. The conclusion that the sociocultural presuppositions help to boost the images of advertised products, which in turn help to promote sales of the products, is also arrived at. It is concluded too that the pragmatic presupposition by Mey (2004) and the typology of presuppositions by Yule (2008) are useful approaches towards analysing the sociocultural presuppositions in English language use attributed to women, especially in billboard advertisements in Nigeria.



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## **Stylo-Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Poems of Abba Gana Shettima**

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### **Abstract**

*Writers especially poets, employ rhetorical devices as techniques to convey messages in such a manner that appeal to readers' emotions or senses in their works. The aim of this paper is to conduct a stylistic analysis of rhetorical devices in three selected poems of Abba Gana Shettima, Kangale Kori, "Nightfall" and Nji in order to highlight how such rhetorical devices are calibrated in the texts to convey meaning. The objectives are, to identify the types of rhetorical device used by the poet to convey his messages, to examine how the rhetorical devices were utilised by the writer to encode his messages, and to examine the rhetorical devices in the broader social, cultural and political contexts of the texts. The study is qualitative in nature. It employed descriptive and analytical method via identification, description and interpretation of the rhetorical devices as linguistic elements that form the data for analysis. Among the findings of the study were that, 12 types of rhetorical device were used by the poet in the three selected texts; they are – anastrophe, anaphora, cataphora, parallelism, alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, rhyme, personification, simile*

*and metaphor. The rhetorical devices were used creatively to portray the periods of agony, anxiety and lamentations that characterised the themes of the poems – famine and insecurity. Consonance (23 times) and alliteration (12 times) were identified as the most frequently used rhetorical devices in the three texts. Excessive use of such sound devices indicated the poet's desire to stress the importance of the messages he sends to the reader. The study has demonstrated and concluded that, a stylistic study of rhetorical devices is capable of enhancing the interpretation of poetic texts for better understanding of their genre.*

**Keywords:** Stylistics, Poetry, Rhetorical devices, Phonology, Systemic Functional Grammar

## Introduction

The language of poetry appears to be very difficult to decode by many readers due to the complex nature of the genre of poetry. Poetic language by its nature tends to depart from the straightforward and literal nature of everyday language because, poets seek to evoke emotions, stimulate imagination, and explore profound themes in a unique and creative manner. Therefore, decoding the messages of poetry requires that a reader should carefully consider and understand the literal and rhetorical devices used to communicate the message (see Brooks & Penn, 1976; Zapruder, 2017). This study explores three selected poems of Abba Gana Shettima with a view to examining the poet's use of rhetorical devices to communicate his messages and intentions in a novel way. The poems are – *Kangale Kori*, *Nightfall*, and *Nji*. The choice of the texts was based on the observed linguistic tapestry of the linguistic codes used by the poet to encode his messages which call for scholarly attention.

The objectives of this study are, to identify the types of rhetorical device employed by the poet in the poems; to examine how the rhetorical devices were utilised by the writer to communicate his messages and intentions, and to relate the rhetorical devices to the broader social, cultural and political context of the poems. Halliday's

Systemic Functional Grammar theory (henceforth SFL), was employed as a theoretical framework. The study used descriptive and analytical method through close readings of the texts to identify, describe and interpret the data which were purposively sampled from the three selected texts.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Stylistics**

Stylistics, as an aspect of linguistics, is defined as the linguistic study of style (Leech & Short, 2007). As a subfield of linguistics, stylistics seeks to examine how language is used in various forms and contexts, such as in literary and non-literary texts to create meaning and effect on the audience. This suggests that stylistics seeks to investigate not only what linguistic devices are utilised, but how they are used by the writer to convey their messages and intentions as well as to develop our understanding of literature (Simpson, 2004). In stylistic analysis therefore, the analyst is not only interested in describing “what” use is made of language but also “why” do the authors choose to express themselves in a particular way. It can also look at “how” is such-and-such an aesthetic effect achieved through language (Leech & Short, 2007). Such relationship between linguistic description and literary appreciation are regarded as a cyclic motion whereby linguistic observation stimulates or modifies literary insight (see Alabi, 2009). The term “style” as a component of stylistics, entails the linguistic choices made by a writer or speaker that go beyond the minimum required for clear communication, adding layers of meaning, mood, or effect to a text (Wales, 2014). According to Wales (2014), there are various manifestations of style in texts. They include, style as choice – which entails the intentional use of language options in order to achieve an effect; style as deviation which refers to a departure from linguistic norms for artistic emphasis; style as man, referring to the unique personality or worldview portrayed in writing; and more representing the multifaceted ways language is used or perceived.

## **Stylistics and Levels of Language**

Simpson (2004) submits that there are seven levels of language in linguistics which can be used in stylistic analysis. This study seeks to explore the poems taking into consideration, four language levels, namely – syntax, phonology, semantics, and lexis which feature prominently in the texts under study. At the level of syntax, the analysis looks at how sentence structure, word order and grammatical choices shape the tone of the text, meaning and effect. At the phonological level, it looks at the sound patterns by identifying recurring sound features and patterns within the text. This covers alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoea, rhythm, etc. At the semantic level, the analysis investigates the word choices, manipulation and effect of such words, phrases and other linguistic elements encoded in the text to convey deeper meaning and effects within the text. It is at the semantic level that literary devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbols, imagery, irony, etc are identified and analysed; also, at this level, semantic deviation to create specific meanings and engage reader's understanding is possibly explored. The following section elaborates on the aforementioned linguistic levels and their elements.

## **Rhetorical Devices**

Rhetorical devices are techniques used by writers and speakers to persuade, create desired effect, or make their communication more impactful (Harris, 2020). Bradford (1997) contends that the term “rhetoric” is of Greek origin - *techne rhetorike* meaning the art of speech. Bradford (1997) explains that, it is the art concerned with the use of public speaking as a means of persuasion. Rhetorical devices are also referred to as a form of literary devices of language used mostly by writers especially poets to encode their messages in a condensed and creative way. Tawfiq (2020) avows poetic devices as “elements of rhetoric that are relevant to the production of poetic language”. Such devices are necessary as they enrich language by allowing for a greater depth of meaning in a few words (see Wolowsky, (2001) as cited in Sajo and Ahmed (2024). Rhetorical devices are otherwise known as figures of speech or literary devices (Glatch, 2023). Similarly, Harris

(2009) and Sajo (2010) describe literary devices as rhetorical devices used by writers to improve the effectiveness, clarity and enjoyment of their works. It is in relation to the foregoing explanations that, Ajadi (2012) argues that rhetorical analysis is an aspect of stylistic analysis in terms of examination of style of message encoding. Rhetorical devices include figurative language (any use of word whose meaning depends on its context of usage), and figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeae, rhythm, etc. (see Harris, 2009).

### **Alliteration**

Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound, mostly the first consonants of words or of stressed syllables in successive words. It is otherwise called “head rhyme”. Khemka (2018) posits that alliteration is used to project meaning as well as reader’s experience. An example can be drawn from an extract of the NTA (*Nigerian Television Authority*) news broadcast in the 2000s:

“From Kano to Kabah, Yola to Yelwa, Minna to Maiduguri all gathered for one man, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto”.

The underlined consonant sounds are respectively - /k/, /y/, /m/ used by the reporter to communicate the message using contrasting sound pairs between words in sequence. The first sound /k/ is a voiceless velar plosive in terms of the presence or absence of voicing, place of articulation and manner of articulation. The second sound /y/ is a semi-vowel in English but a glottalized consonant sound in Hausa (UCLA, 2023). The third sound /m/ is a voiced, bilabial plosive sound.

### **Assonance**

Assonance is the use of same vowel in two or more adjacent words. Terry (2000) and Tawfiq (2020) explain that the repetition of the vowel sounds in assonance may occur even when spelling varies.

## **Consonance**

It is the repetition of the final consonant sound in stressed and unrhymed syllables. For example, “She stoodu on the roadu and criedu.”

## **Onomatopoeia**

Onomatopoeia is a literary device in which a word is used to represent a sound. In other words, it refers to creating a word which describes its sounds. Examples are, “crack”, “pop”, “clap”, “splat”, etc. Onomatopoeia does not only imitate, resemble or suggest the sound it describes; it adds melody, humour, or lyrical effect to the message being encoded so as to make a reader laugh. Onomatopoeia is also used to represent sounds that animals make. They include, “meow” (for cats), “roar” (for lions), “moo” (for cows), etc.

## **Rhyme**

Rhyme is a repetition of similar sounds in two or more words. Rhyming is peculiar to poetry especially in the end lines. Rhyme is also the resemblance in the sounds of words or syllables which often come at the end of lines or stanzas hence, the name end rhymes (Benczes, 2019). They are divided into different types such as perfect rhyme, half rhyme, eye rhyme, etc.

## **Personification**

Personification, simile, metaphor, etc fall under the semantic level of language. Personification is a figure of speech which gives the qualities of a person to an animal, an object or idea (Harris, 2009). Also, Louck (2018) and Tawfiq (2020) posit that personification is giving humanistic or animalistic features to abstract concepts. An example can be seen in Achebe (1958, p. 87), “The earth had decreed that they were an offence on the land and must be destroyed”.

## **Simile**

This is a figure of speech which makes comparison of two unlike things using the terms “like” or “as”. Examples are – “as white as snow”, “as busy as an anthill”. Also, in Achebe (1958, p.35) is an example, “...the air shivered and grew tense like a tightened bow”



## Metaphor

Metaphor is another device that constructs meaning by identifying similarity. However, in metaphor, there is direct comparison without the use of “as” or “like”. Furthermore, Ogungbesan and Woolger (1978) submit that in metaphor, the writer does not indicate comparison using words such as “like” or “as”. An example can be seen in “Musa is a lion in the fight”. This contrasts with “Musa fights like a lion” which indicates simile.

## Theoretical Framework

Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) was employed as theoretical framework in this study. The framework views language as a social semiotic system which provides concepts such as form, substance and context. These provisions appear to tally with the nuances of stylistics research in trying to unveil messages encoded in texts using linguistic theories, hypotheses and concepts. SFG emphasises how language users make meaningful choices to serve different communicative functions. The Halliday’s SFG analyses language through three language metafunctions – ideational (which deals with experiencing the world), interpersonal (relating to social roles), and textual (organising messages into text). These according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) relate to the three contextual variables of field (topic of discourse), tenor (relationships) and mode (type of communication). Such features of the SFG as briefly discussed above guide the choice of the framework going by the nature of the genre of poetry which dwell on peculiar linguistic codes and context to unveil its meaning and effects. SFG is interested in how language expresses meaning and fulfills communicative goals (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

## Synopsis of the three selected poems

The first poem, *Kangale Kori*, showcases the period of the disastrous 1913-1914 drought and famine in Borno State (Shettima, 2000 in Amali, 2000). The poem exemplifies how the people and animals were ravaged by the period of hunger and starvation. The title of the poem

*Kangale Kori* was coined from the period of the hunger and starvation, hence the name which is Kanuri's term for short stalks.

The poem, *Nightfall* highlights the attributes of the night as a universal phenomenon and a period of rest for people and animals. The poet also describes night as a period for committing crimes by robbers, hoodlums and related criminals. The poet casts the picture of what happens in his immediate community which require solution by the authorities concerned to arrest the situation of insecurity at night.

The third poem, *Nji* showcases rainfall and its attributes. The writer highlights the importance of rainfall to animals and plants especially in his environment, the North-Central Nigeria during the rainy season when farmers seriously await and expect abundant rainfall for their farmlands. According to the writer, *Nji* is a Kanuri term for rainfall.

From the review of the related literature, theoretical framework and synopsis of the poems, the paper proceeds with the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings.

### **Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings**

The three poems under study are, *Kangale Kori*, *Nightfall* and *Nji*. This section therefore presents the data, analysis of the data and discussion of results. The analysis opens with the first poem *Kangale Kori*.

#### **Syntactic level**

The following data illustrate the use of rhetorical devices at the syntactic level:

##### ***Kangale Kori* (Text one)**

The poem is crafted in one stanza with a total of 18 lines. There are no punctuation marks in the entire lines of the poem. The opening line is a simple sentence using the declarative mood. It highlights the theme of the poem *Kangale Kori*.

Cute Kanuris coined *Kangale Kori*

Line 1

Subsequent lines of the poem contain main clauses that start with coordinating conjunctions and transitional words as indicated in lines 2 and 3:

For millet stalks were stunted	Line 2
And farmers stakes stalled	Line 3
And visited the anthills for survival	Line 14
And from Bade came stories	Line 14
And the dead buried in bundles	Line 16

Other lines are formed in prepositional phrases modifying or describing nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. as in lines 5, 8, 13, and 17:

From the kraals of Kukawa	Line 5
Over lost fruits of motherhood	Line 8
With tears along nine tributaries	Line 13
Over tears flowing in haematic vales	Line 17

The last line is an exclamatory sentence ending with the title of the poem *Kangale Kori*. The sentence indicates strong emotion, portraying the devastating effect of the period of famine named *Kangale Kori* which the poet highlights and wishes it does not recur. The sentence is in anastrophe (inversion of worder) to portray fear and disbelief in the situation:

Come not again, <i>Kangale Kori</i> !	Line 18
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### **Nightfall (Text 2)**

Similar to *Kangale Kori*, “Nightfall” is also constructed in a stanza of 18 lines in a narrative verse form. It opens with a simple sentence in the declarative mood. It is followed by several lines serving as subordinate clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions:

And everybody tarried home	Line 2
For a session of prayers	Line 6
So do the robbers fortify	Line 7
And the nightgale flew to her nest	Line 12
And sent a tinkling cymbal of shrill	Line 16

All the lines above are emphasising the same issue, the “Nightfall” and its attendant implications

on the social wellbeing of the people. Other lines are crafted in subordinate clauses or prepositional phrases to further highlight the thematic focus of the poem:

Untill tomorrow morning Line 4

Even as the faithful purified Line 5

Parallelism is observed in lines 3, 8 and 14 using “to” and in lines 6 and 11 using “for”:

To take an obligatory pause Line 3

To reap and rape Line 8

To mop up any mammal found Line 14

For a session of prayers Line 6

For night rest Line 11

### ***Nji* (Text 3)**

Unlike *Kangale Kori* and *Nightfall*, *Nji* is formed in stanzas. It contains four stanzas. The first line of the first stanza opens with a simple sentence in the indicative mood stating the emotional condition of waiting for rainfall. There is however, a delay in mentioning the term “rainfall” using anaphor (delayed attribution) throughout until at end of the poem:

Men and animals were waiting Line 1, stanza 1

The mood expressed in the first line is corroborated using subsequent lines 2 and 3 with adverbial phrases showing high expectations for rain:

For months Line 2 stanza 1

Hopes lingering Line 2 stanza 1

That it will come Line 3 stanza 1

The rhetorical device used in line 3 stanza 2 states what is being awaited, this is a delayed attribution; “maiden beauty” is used as a metaphor for the rain. It is the forward reference expressed in line 2 of stanza 2 hence, the anaphor:

At last the maiden beauty came	Line 3 stanza 2
And married the fertile clay	Line 4 stanza 2

The term “rainfall” is clearly stated in the penultimate line of the last stanza:

Rainfall is a teacher	Line 4, stanza 4
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In all, each line starts with a capital letter and punctuation marks are sparingly used.

## Phonological level

### *Kangale Kori* (Text one)

The following data illustrate the use of rhetorical devices at the phonological level:

#### Alliteration

Cute <u>K</u> anuris <u>c</u> oined <u>K</u> angale <u>K</u> ori	/k/	Line 1
And farmers <u>s</u> takes <u>s</u> talled	/s/	Line 3
From the <u>k</u> raals of <u>K</u> ukawa	/k/	Line 5
<u>C</u> ame the tidings of dying <u>c</u> ows	/k/	Line 6
Even as <u>m</u> others in <u>M</u> onguno <u>m</u> ourned	/m/	Line 7

#### Assonance

Came the <u>i</u> dings of <u>d</u> ying cows	/in/	Line 6
Sapping <u>a</u> way their <u>m</u> aiden gallantry	/ei/	Line 12

#### Consonance

For millet <u>s</u> talks were stunted	/t/	Line 2
And farmers <u>s</u> takes <u>s</u> talled	/s/	Line 3
Came the tidings of dying cows	/s/	Line 6
Even as <u>s</u> mothers in Monguno mourned	/s/	Line 7
Over lost fruits of motherhood	/s/	Line 8
And visited the anthills for survival	/s/	Line 9

With tears along nine tributaries	/s/	Line 13
Of babies diseased of empty barns	/v/	Line 15
And the dead buried in bundles	/d/	Line 16
Over tears flowing in haematic vales	/s/	Line 17

### Rhyme

For millet stalks were <u>stunted</u>	Line 2
And farmers stakes <u>stalled</u>	Line 3 end rhyme
in lines 2 and 3	
With tears along nine <u>tributaries</u>	Line 13
And from Bade came <u>stories</u>	line 14 end rhyme
in lines 13 and 14	
Of babies diseased of empty barns	Line 15
And the dead buried in bundles	Line 16
Over tears flowing in haematic vales	Line 17 end rhyme
in lines 15, 16 and 17	

### Nightfall (Text 2)

#### Alliteration

The magnificent <u>t</u> orch <u>t</u> ravelled west	/t/	Line 1
To <u>r</u> eap and <u>r</u> ape	/r/	Line 8
<u>C</u> rickets <u>c</u> rawled out of their <u>c</u> rypt	/k/	Line 15

#### Assonance

<u>I</u> nsects searched for an <u>i</u> nlet	/i/	(Line 10)
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There is virtually only one instance of assonance identified in the poem.

#### Consonance

Until tomorrow morning	/m/	Line 4
To reap and rape	/p/	Line 8
Insects searched for an inlet	/s/	Line 10
For night rest	/t/	Line 11
Mosquitoes poised like mig jets	/s/	Line 13
To mop up any mammal found	/p/	Line 14

Crickets crawled out of their crypt	/r/	Line 15
And sent a tinkling cymbal of shrill	/t/, /l/	Line 16

Onomatopoeia

And sent a <u>tinkling cymbal</u> of <u>shrill</u>	Line 16
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In line 16, the three words are used which have onomatopoeaic rhythm.

Rhyme

Irregular rhyming pattern is observed, with only a pair of lines (line 1 & 2) rhyming in their penultimate words.

The magnificent torch travelled west	Line 1
And everybody tarried home	Line 2

### ***Nji (Text 3)***

Alliteration

Men and animals were waiting	/w/	Line 1, stanza 1
Fear foreboding	/f/	Line 1, stanza 2
And birth to the flowering flora	/f/	Line 6, stanza 2
Snails in exile of solitude	/s/	Line 4, stanza 3

Assonance

Loaded with <u>homes</u> and <u>hopes</u> .	/au/	Line 6, stanza 3
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Consonance

Loaded with homes and hopes	/s/	Line 6, stanza 3
Chameleons changed colours,	/s/	Line 1, stanza 4
In the nuts and bolts of life.	/s/	Line 5, stanza 4

Onomatopoeia

There is virtually no any onomatopoeia observed in the poem.

Rhyme

Irregular rhyming pattern is observed except at the end of the following pair of lines as follows:

Giving life to the pairs of fauna  
And birth to the flowering flora

Line 5, stanza 2  
Line 6, stanza 2

Semantic Level

### ***Kangale Kori (Text 1)***

Metaphor

Over lost fruits of motherhood

Line 8

In line 8, “fruits of motherhood” is used as a metaphor for children.

Personification

The peacocks of Magumeri  
Grieved over empty granaries

Line 10  
Line 11

Peacocks personified to grieve just like humans. (lines 10 & 11).

### **Nightfall (Text 2)**

Metaphor

The magnificent torch travelled west

Line 1

Magnificent torch used as a metaphor for sun.

Simile

Mosquitoes poised like mig jets

Line 13

Personification

The magnificent torch travelled west

(Line 1)

The magnificent torch (which is a metaphor for sunlight), is given the feature of humans – travelling.



***Nji* (Text 3)****Metaphor**

At last the maiden beauty came

Line 3, stanza 2

And married the fertile clay

Line 4, stanza 2

In the line above, maiden beauty is used as a metaphor for rainfall which is said to have come and married the fertile clay.

**Personification**

At last the maiden beauty came

(Line 3, stanza 2)

And married the fertile clay

(Line 4, stanza 2)

Snatching us from the jaws of poverty

(Line 7, stanza 2)

And frogs prayed

(Line 2, stanza 4)

Rainfall is a teacher

(Line 4, stanza 4)

Personification occurs where it is expressed that the rainfall (the maiden beauty) came. The act of coming is a human attribute. Personification also occurs where it is expressed that the rain married the fertile clay. This literally means, it has rained (i.e., the long-awaited rain falls on the ground). Frogs are given the feature of humans in line 2 of stanza 4 where it is expressed that they prayed, which literally indicates such croaking sounds of the frogs at night. Rainfall is also personified as a teacher in line 4 of the last stanza, that is, stanza 4.

A Table indicating distribution of the Rhetorical devices in the three poems

S/ N o.	Poe m	Allite ratio n	Asso nanc e	Conso nance	Onoma topoeia	Rh ym e	Si mil e	Meta phor	Personi fication	To tal
1	<i>Kan gale Kori</i>	5	2	11	0	3	0	1	1	23
2	<i>Nig htfal l</i>	3	0	9	3	1	1	1	1	19
3	<i>Nji</i>	4	1	3	0	1	0	1	6	15
To tal	3	12	3	23	3	5	1	3	8	57

## Discussion of Findings

From the analysis at the syntactic, phonological and semantic levels,<sup>12</sup> rhetorical devices were identified in the three texts. At the syntactic level, four devices - anastrophe, anaphora, cataphora, and parallelism were identified as rhetorical devices used by the poet to encode his messages. Also, the use of declarative sentences suggest the poet's zeal to convey information directly, thereby making such type of sentence the primary tool for stating facts, sharing opinions and explaining situations. The three poems share similar themes of emotional and psychological imbalance with lack of rainfall resulting in poor harvests as portrayed in *Kangale Kori* and *Nji* as well as insecurity in "Nightfall". At the levels of phonology and semantics, eight rhetorical devices were identified. The table above illustrates such devices. They are – alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, rhyme, simile, metaphor and personification. Total number of the phonological and semantic (rhetorical) devices used is 57. Breakdown of the devices per poem shows that *Kangale Kori* has 23, "Nightfall" contains 19 while *Nji* has 15. The table illustrates that the writer used alliteration 5 times in *Kangale Kori* more than in the other two poems – "Nightfall" has 3 while *Nji* contains 4. Also, *Kangale Kori* comprises 11 instances of consonance followed by *Nightfall*'s 9 and *Nji* with 3. This indicates that "consonance" is the most frequently used phonological device which appeared 23 times in the three poems. It was followed by "alliteration" which was used 12 times. This suggests that consonance and alliteration are the most frequently used devices in the three texts. Personification was rarely used by the writer in the two poems, *Kangale Kori* and "Nightfall" in contrast with *Nji* which contains 6.

Excessive use of alliteration by the poet suggests that, he tries to give poetic flow to the language of the poem in order to project key messages of the texts which were on famine and insecurity. This agrees with Khemka (2018) that, alliteration has various effects in a text especially poetry as it projects meaning as well as reader's experience. Excessive use of "consonance" indicates poet's effort in stressing the relevance of messages he is sending to the reader. This is corroborated in Harris (2005), Terry (2000), Harris (2009) and Gamm (2023) that

“consonance” in poetry emphasises words by forcing the audience to take a pause and think deeper into rhyming words.

The poems also contain irregular rhyming pattern. In all, 5 instances of rhyme are observed in certain pairs of lines. The irregularity of the rhyming pattern of the poems may be foregrounded to the subject matters of the texts which depict periods of famine as exemplified in *Kangale Kori* and *Nji* and insecurity as highlighted in *Nightfall*. The stylistic effect of this proposition can be linked to the state of mind of the writer as he casts the picture of the setting of the texts showcasing a people ravaged by famine and insecurity. Onomatopoeia was rarely used in the three texts. It was used three times in *Nightfall*. Onomatopoeia is often used to add humour, action or melody to the text to provide excitement and enable the reader to remember the contents of the message. This was rarely used by the poet. This perhaps could be due to the nature of the situation he was portraying which was a sad period of grief and lamentation that did not warrant any lyrical effect.

## Conclusion

This study is a stylistic analysis of rhetorical devices of the three poems, *Kangale Kori*, “*Nightfall*” and *Nji*. Descriptive analytical method was used to explore the phonological poetic devices of the poems. Twelve types of rhetorical devices were used by the poet to encode his messages. At the level of syntax, declarative sentences, anastrophe, anaphora, cataphora, and parallelism were used by the poet to convey his messages in the poems. Consonance and alliteration were the most frequently used rhetorical devices at phonological level in the poems. The devices were excessively utilised by the poet to stress and emphasise on the importance of the messages he was sending to the audience in order to educate them on the periods of famine and insecurity in his society. Lack of regular rhythmic pattern of the poem virtually depicts the psychological situation characterised by the periods portrayed in the poems. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the stylistic study of rhetorical devices is capable of enhancing the interpretation of poetry for better understanding of its genre.

From the overall analysis therefore, the rhetorical devices employed by the poet have helped to illuminate the socio-cultural and political contexts of the people in the texts. This is in line with Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) SFG which views language as a social semiotic system that provides concepts such as form, substance and context. The language metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual), were seen to have been actualised in the analysis in providing the framework for the interpretation of the three poems. The ideational metafunction showcased the analysis of contents of the poems by examining how the writer represented his experience in the manner he encoded the messages to portray emotions of people. The interpersonal metafunction has helped to interpret the social relationships and emotions of the people in the three poems. The textual metafunction unveiled how the poems were structured to create cohesion using numerous adjuncts in the form of prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses. These together have helped in understanding the poems' "what", "who" and "how" the messages were encoded to convey messages.

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## **A Pragma-Stylistic Analysis of Atiku Abubakar's Online Political Discourse**

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### **Abstract**

*This study argues that Atiku Abubakar's Facebook discourse represents a deliberate linguistic construction of moral authority, empathy, and ideological resistance within Nigeria's digital political landscape. Guided by the theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2006), Pragmatics (Grice, 1975; Searle, 1976), Stylistics (Leech & Short, 2007), and Syntax (Chomsky, 1981; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), the research examines how language operates as a mechanism of persuasion and identity performance in online political communication. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, descriptive, and empirical approach, analyzing forty-five purposively selected Facebook posts published between 2023 and 2025. The corpus includes condolence messages, political critiques, and ceremonial reflections, which were examined through Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model and supported by pragmatic, stylistic, and syntactic analyses. The findings reveal that Atiku Abubakar's discourse is characterized by the fusion of moral populism and affective rhetoric. His use of religious intertextuality, modal intensifiers, and syntactic foregrounding functions to legitimize his opposition stance while humanizing his political image. Through*

*the strategic use of pronouns, metaphors, and evaluative lexis, he constructs solidarity, moral credibility, and leadership ethos. The study recommends greater scholarly attention to the role of empathy-driven and ideologically charged digital communication in shaping democratic discourse, suggesting that linguistic literacy is essential for citizens' critical engagement with political narratives in the social media era.*

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Stylistics, Syntax, Political Communication, Atiku Abubakar, Nigeria

## Introduction

Social media has evolved from an informal network of interpersonal exchange into one of the most dynamic instruments of political communication in the twenty-first century. It has reshaped the modes through which political actors engage with the public, dismantling traditional hierarchies of information flow and redefining the construction of political legitimacy (Enli, 2017). In the Nigerian context, where politics has historically been mediated through ethno-religious affiliations and elite-controlled media, platforms such as *Facebook* have created new spaces for direct civic engagement. These platforms have enabled politicians to articulate ideology, mobilize followers, and counter the framing of their actions by conventional media establishments (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2021).

Atiku Abubakar's *Facebook* discourse exemplifies this transformation. As a former Vice President and perennial presidential candidate, his social media presence constitutes an archive of contemporary Nigerian political rhetoric. His posts, spanning condolence messages, political critiques, and national reflections, offer a rich linguistic site for examining how opposition leaders use digital communication to enact moral authority and challenge dominant power structures. The uploaded dataset, which contains more than forty posts from 2023 to 2025, demonstrates a pattern of communicative behaviour in which Atiku oscillates between affective and assertive registers. He deploys empathetic discourse when responding to national tragedies, expresses solidarity with victims of violence, and simultaneously constructs



oppositional stances through condemnation of governance failures. These alternating discursive modes underscore the pragmatic flexibility of his online persona, a persona that embodies compassion and resistance in equal measure.

The discursive hybridity observable in these posts reflects what van Dijk (2006) conceptualizes as the ideological work of political discourse. Language in this sense is not a neutral instrument but a performative act that constructs and contests power. Through specific lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic choices, Atiku's posts transform public communication into a site of ideological struggle. His recurrent lexical emphasis on "*integrity*," "*justice*," "*empathy*," and "*moral decay*" contrasts sharply with his representation of the ruling government as "*corrupt*," "*forgery-ridden*," or "*heartless*," thereby setting up binary oppositions that define moral and political legitimacy. This polarization is neither an incidental nor a stylistic ornamentation; it is a deliberate exercise in discursive framing, one that situates him as the ethical corrective to a failing system.

What emerges, therefore, is a digital reconfiguration of opposition politics in which online discourse becomes a form of governance in absentia, a means of performing leadership through language rather than institutional authority. The *Facebook* platform serves not only as an alternative public sphere but as an arena for affective citizenship, where emotion and ideology converge in the articulation of national conscience. Atiku's discourse embodies this convergence by employing religious references to align himself with cultural norms, invoking empathy to create interpersonal proximity, and mobilizing moral outrage to stimulate political consciousness.

This study seeks to unravel the linguistic and ideological mechanics underlying this phenomenon. It asks how Atiku Abubakar uses specific linguistic resources to construct empathy, legitimize his political stance, and articulate ideological resistance within Nigeria's digital public sphere. To achieve this, the research applies an integrated analytic framework that draws upon Critical Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Stylistics, and Syntax. This integration enables a

multidimensional exploration of both macro-level ideological formations and micro-level linguistic features, providing a comprehensive account of how digital political texts operate simultaneously as communicative acts and ideological performances.

The relevance of such an inquiry extends beyond Nigeria's political landscape. In an era where digital communication increasingly shapes political legitimacy, understanding the discursive mechanisms through which politicians like Atiku build moral and ideological authority offers insights into the broader evolution of political language in postcolonial democracies. The present study, grounded in authentic data from the politician's verified posts, contributes to the ongoing conversation on how digital rhetoric mediates the relationship between political actors and citizens in Africa's emerging democracies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The analytical foundation of this study is built upon an interdisciplinary framework that connects the macro-sociological dimensions of power and ideology with the micro-linguistic structures of text and meaning. The principal orientation derives from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model. Fairclough's model situates discourse within three interrelated planes: the textual level, which deals with the linguistic features of a message; the discursive practice, which examines how the text is produced, circulated, and interpreted; and the social practice, which relates discourse to broader ideological and institutional forces. Applying this triadic model allows the study to interpret Atiku Abubakar's *Facebook* posts not only as linguistic artefacts but as social actions situated within Nigeria's ideological landscape. The textual analysis identifies recurrent lexical patterns and syntactic structures, the discursive practice evaluates how posts are shaped for social media consumption, and the social practice explores how these texts challenge or reinforce power relations within the state.

Complementing Fairclough's approach, the discourse-historical perspective of Wodak and Meyer (2016) underscores the centrality of national identity and inclusion-exclusion strategies in political rhetoric.

This is particularly relevant in the Nigerian setting, where political communication often intertwines with ethnic, regional, and religious identities. Atiku's recurrent references to *Allah*, invocations of cultural solidarity, and linguistic gestures of inclusivity can thus be interpreted as strategic moves that negotiate belonging and legitimacy across diverse constituencies.

At the micro-analytical level, the framework integrates Pragmatics, Stylistics, and Syntax. Pragmatics, as formulated by Levinson (1983), provides the analytical tools for understanding how meaning is contextually constructed. Grice's (1975) concept of conversational implicature and Searle's (1976) taxonomy of speech acts are particularly instrumental in interpreting the indirect communicative strategies employed in Atiku's posts. A condolence message, for instance, operates not merely as an expression of sympathy but as an implicit assertion of leadership empathy, functioning both as a moral act and a political appeal. Similarly, directives such as "the government must act decisively" reveal underlying illocutionary force aimed at influencing public perception of governmental inertia.

Stylistics contributes an examination of how linguistic artistry enhances rhetorical effect. As proposed by Leech and Short (2007), stylistics bridges linguistic description and literary interpretation by focusing on the aesthetic and rhetorical texture of discourse. In Atiku's posts, stylistic features such as metaphor, repetition, and parallelism intensify persuasive force. His use of metaphorical framing, such as describing Nigeria as a "*giant moving on feet of clay*", compresses complex socio-political realities into vivid, culturally resonant imagery. The stylistic blending of solemn religious diction with assertive political critique creates a discourse that simultaneously consoles and provokes, harmonizing affect with critique.

The syntactic component of the analysis draws from the transformational framework of Chomsky (1981) and later functional elaborations by Radford (2009) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Syntax is treated here not as a neutral structural device but as a carrier of ideology. Through transitivity analysis, the study examines how

agency is assigned or obscured within clauses. Sentences such as “*the Tinubu administration has abandoned its people*” clearly identify the actor and assign moral blame, whereas passive constructions in condolence posts, like “*lives were lost*,” efface agency to foreground empathy over accountability. Modality also serves as a key syntactic marker of political positioning. Atiku’s frequent use of modal verbs such as “*must*,” “*should*,” and “*cannot*” signals epistemic certainty and moral authority, positioning him as a prescriptive voice within the national dialogue.

The convergence of CDA, Pragmatics, Stylistics, and Syntax yields a framework capable of explaining how political meaning is constructed across linguistic levels. CDA situates the text within power relations; Pragmatics elucidates communicative intent and implicature; Stylistics decodes the aesthetic and rhetorical dimensions of persuasion; and Syntax exposes the grammatical mechanisms through which ideology is encoded. Together, these perspectives enable a nuanced interpretation of how Atiku Abubakar’s *Facebook* discourse transforms language into an instrument of empathy, resistance, and leadership.

## Analysis and Discussion

### CDA Dimension: Power, Ideology, and Representation

To present and analyze the data in line with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it is important to note that Atiku Abubakar’s *Facebook* discourse provides an extensive corpus of posts that illuminate the interplay of language, power, and ideology in Nigerian political communication. The following data excerpts, drawn directly from his verified *Facebook* posts between 2023 and 2025, are representative of the ideological and moral dimensions that define his online rhetoric. These posts, condolence messages, political commentaries, and civic appeals, demonstrate how discourse becomes a site for both the reproduction and contestation of power.

At the height of the controversy surrounding alleged certificate forgery in the incumbent administration, Atiku published a post titled “*Forgery as State Policy: Tinubu, His Cabinet, and the DSS Must Be Held Accountable*.” In this post, he writes:

*“It is disturbing that our nation is now governed by an assembly of forgers, impostors, and morally bankrupt individuals who have turned deceit into a state policy.”*

This statement is lexically charged and ideologically saturated. The expression “assembly of forgers” employs both collective nominalization and hyperbolic generalization to present corruption as a systemic feature rather than an isolated case. The triadic repetition of “forgers, impostors, and morally bankrupt individuals” functions as a rhetorical intensifier that heightens emotional force and moral indignation. Following van Dijk’s (2006) ideological square, this linguistic construction foregrounds positive self-presentation (“we who uphold integrity”) and negative other-presentation (“they who embody deceit”). The post thus performs a dual act of moral self-legitimation and ideological resistance, portraying the opposition leader as the custodian of truth against an unethical establishment.

In another post addressing pervasive insecurity, Atiku laments:

*“It is heartbreaking that Nigerians now live in fear. Our people are being killed daily while those in power remain indifferent. Leadership should be about empathy, not self-indulgence.”*

Here, the syntactic structure juxtaposes human suffering (“our people are being killed”) with governmental apathy (“those in power remain indifferent”). The use of the possessive pronoun “our” establishes inclusion and solidarity, while the abstract noun “leadership” serves as an evaluative pivot around which the moral argument revolves. The CDA interpretation reveals that Atiku constructs legitimacy through the rhetoric of empathy, positioning himself as a moral corrective within a system perceived to have lost its ethical compass.

The ideological contrast becomes more pronounced in his posts that commemorate or mourn public figures. For example, in a condolence message following the death of a religious leader, he states:

*“I pray that Almighty Allah forgives his shortcomings and grants him Jannatul Firdaus. May his life of service continue to inspire us to build a just and compassionate nation.”*

This expression is deeply intertextual, drawing from Islamic religious discourse to foster a communal identity grounded in shared belief and moral obligation. The invocation of *Allah* and the reference to “Jannatul Firdaus” not only establish a spiritual register but also embed’s political rhetoric within a culturally resonant moral framework. This use of religious language aligns with Wodak and Meryer’s (2016) discourse-historical approach, in which intertextual and interdiscursive references evoke collective memory and social cohesion. Through such expressions, Atiku’s discourse transcends political critique and assumes the moral posture of elderstatesman offering spiritual consolation and ethical guidance.

Furthermore, Atiku’s posts addressing national occasions, such as Independence Day, reflect a blend of nationalism and ideological critique. In one such post, he writes: *“Nigeria at 63 should be a nation of hope, unity, and justice, not one defined by hunger, fear, and broken promises.”*

This antithetical construction, *“hope, unity, and justice”* versus *“hunger, fear, and broken promises”*, is a clear manifestation of moral dualism. It reinforces van Dijk’s (2006) model of ideological polarization, using syntactic parallelism to dramatize the gap between the ideal and the real. The repetition of “should be” encodes a normative stance, presenting his vision of Nigeria as a moral imperative. In CDA terms, this functions as what Fairclough (1992) calls *evaluative modality*, the linguistic mechanism by which speakers express value judgments and assert ideological authority.

Another significant post during the same period reads:

*“We must never lose faith in Nigeria. The failures of leadership are not the failures of the people. Together, we can rebuild our nation on the foundation of integrity and justice.”*

Here, the inclusive pronouns “we” and “our” function as cohesive devices that reinforce collective agency and shared responsibility. The syntactic contrast between “*failures of leadership*” and “*failures of the people*” exemplifies a reallocation of blame, central to ideological repositioning in political discourse. The clause “*Together, we can rebuild our nation*” uses both modal and verbal cohesion to instill optimism and solidarity, converting political speech into a call to moral and national renewal.

Across these data instances, Atiku’s discourse exhibits what may be described as *moral populism*, a mode of political communication that fuses ethical narrative with populist appeal. His language simultaneously critiques elite immorality and reaffirms the virtue of ordinary citizens. By alternating between condemnation of the ruling class and empathetic solidarity with the governed, he constructs an oppositional identity rooted in ethical legitimacy. This rhetorical pattern situates his *Facebook* discourse within the broader framework of ideological struggle in Nigeria, where digital communication functions as a terrain for negotiating truth, justice, and moral leadership.

In summary, the CDA analysis of Atiku Abubakar’s *Facebook* posts reveals a coherent ideological architecture sustained by moral dualism, religious intertextuality, and inclusive pronoun use. Through lexical intensification, syntactic emphasis, and thematic parallelism, he redefines political leadership as a moral vocation rather than a contest for power. Language, in this context, becomes both a weapon of resistance and a medium of redemption, an attempt to reclaim the moral center of Nigerian governance through the discursive performance of empathy, integrity, and truth.

### **Pragmatic Dimension: Speech Acts and Implicature**

Having established how ideology and representation are encoded in Atiku Abubakar’s discourse, attention now turns to the pragmatic dimension of meaning, how the communicative intentions, speech acts, and implied meanings (implicatures) function to construct political identity, maintain solidarity, and persuade audiences. The data, drawn

from Atiku's verified *Facebook* posts between 2023 and 2025, demonstrate a consistent use of pragmatic strategies that reveal an intentional and context-sensitive use of language. These strategies conform closely to Searle's (1976) taxonomy of speech acts, which distinguishes between expressives, directives, and commissives as major linguistic acts through which social action and relational identity are achieved.

In his numerous condolence messages, expressive acts dominate the communicative landscape. Posts such as "*I wish to express my deepest condolences to the families who lost loved ones in the Kaduna airstrike. May the Almighty Allah comfort them and grant the departed Jannatul Firdaus*" perform the dual function of empathy and moral positioning. The illocutionary force of this expressive act is to share sorrow, but its perlocutionary effect is to project Atiku as a compassionate leader whose empathy transcends political boundaries. This reinforces his ethos as a humane and religiously grounded statesman. The recurrent religious formula "*May Allah forgive his shortcomings and grant him eternal rest*" is a pragmatic marker of solidarity, inviting his largely Muslim audience into a shared moral and emotional universe. These expressives thus serve not merely to console but also to strengthen Atiku's relational capital and political image as a fatherly figure of national compassion.

In his political commentaries, directive acts assume prominence, functioning as vehicles for criticism and advocacy. For example, in a post titled "*Forgery as State Policy*," Atiku commands moral and administrative accountability by declaring, "*The government must move beyond rhetorics and propaganda to deliver genuine governance.*" The modal verb "*must*" here signals deontic necessity, transforming a critique into a prescriptive appeal. Similarly, in posts responding to insecurity, such as "*The government must protect the lives and property of citizens rather than trade blames,*" the directive act performs both an evaluative and an exhortative role. It imposes a moral duty on leadership while positioning Atiku as the moral voice of reason. In *Searlean* terms, such utterances exhibit a strong illocutionary



force, they are not suggestions but implicit imperatives grounded in moral obligation.

Commissive acts appear in posts that articulate long-term commitments or promises of continued engagement. In one statement following the conclusion of the 2023 election cycle, Atiku writes: *“We shall continue to support efforts that lead to genuine electoral reforms, for only through fairness can democracy thrive.”* The use of the inclusive “we shall” binds the speaker and the audience in a future-oriented commitment, projecting consistency and resolve. This commissive act transforms political participation into a shared journey, reinforcing his image as a leader invested in enduring principles rather than transient politics. The commissive dimension of his discourse thus bridges the gap between rhetorical promise and perceived authenticity, a vital feature of credibility in Nigeria’s politically polarized climate.

Pragmatic politeness, as theorized by Brown and Levinson (1987), further explains how Atiku manages potential face-threatening acts in his critique of the ruling government. Direct political criticism, if unmitigated, risks alienating neutral or undecided audiences. To manage this, Atiku strategically employs *inclusive politeness*, using collective pronouns such as “we,” “our,” and “us” to transform admonition into a shared moral reflection. For instance, in the statement *“We must rediscover our national conscience and stand together for justice,”* the collective “we” mitigates direct accusation by framing the responsibility for national reform as collective rather than confrontational. This creates an impression of unity rather than division, transforming political critique into civic solidarity.

Implicature, meaning implied but not explicitly stated, is a key pragmatic tool in Atiku’s communication. When he remarks that the President *“attended a political funeral rather than stood with the people,”* the implicature of moral neglect and misplaced priorities is immediately clear to the reader, though never directly stated. This strategy of indirectness, rooted in Grice’s (1975) cooperative principle, enhances rhetorical sophistication. By allowing the audience to infer the moral judgment themselves, Atiku avoids overt hostility while

amplifying persuasive impact. The implied accusation is more powerful than direct condemnation because it engages the audience's interpretive participation, creating what Levinson (1983) describes as *shared pragmatic inference*, the cooperative construction of meaning between a speaker and a hearer.

Further examples from his posts illustrate this use of implicature. In a statement reacting to the handling of the economy, Atiku writes: "*When a government celebrates statistics while citizens cannot afford a meal, the disconnect is tragic.*" Here, the implicature is one of hypocrisy and indifference, conveyed through contrast rather than explicit condemnation. Similarly, the statement "*We cannot continue on this path of pain and silence*" implies that silence is complicity, urging citizens to demand change without issuing a direct command. Such pragmatic strategies exemplify the tactful balance between assertiveness and decorum that defines effective political communication in highly polarized societies.

In summary, the pragmatic dimension of Atiku Abubakar's *Facebook* discourse reveals a deliberate orchestration of communicative acts that reinforce empathy, accountability, and solidarity. Expressives humanize his persona, directives assert moral leadership, and commissives sustain political credibility. His use of inclusive politeness and indirect implicature reflects a sophisticated awareness of audience expectations and face management in the Nigerian sociopolitical context. Through these pragmatic mechanisms, Atiku transforms *Facebook* from a platform of mere expression into a strategic site for political performance, where leadership is enacted through language, and persuasion is achieved through empathy, moral authority, and shared responsibility.

### **Stylistic Dimension: Tone, Imagery, and Lexical Cohesion**

To further illustrate how language performs both emotional and persuasive functions in Atiku Abubakar's *Facebook* discourse, it is necessary to examine the stylistic dimension of his posts. The stylistic analysis reveals that Atiku's online rhetoric operates through calculated tonal shifts, the deliberate use of imagery, and sustained lexical

cohesion, all of which enhance his communicative impact. Drawing from the uploaded corpus, it becomes evident that his linguistic style is both context-sensitive and ideologically purposeful, reflecting what Simpson (2004) terms the *aesthetic function of language*, its ability to embody shared values and evoke affective responses.

In his condolence messages, Atiku adopts a solemn, elegiac tone that conveys both empathy and cultural identification. Phrases such as “*I am deeply saddened by the death of our compatriots in the Plateau massacre*” and “*May Almighty Allah forgive his shortcomings and grant him Jannatul Firdaus*” exemplify the fusion of emotional sincerity with religious intertextuality. The lexical field of sadness and loss, “deeply saddened,” “irreparable loss,” “heartfelt condolences”, invokes collective mourning and potrayshim as a moral voice of comfort. This diction, steeped in religious and cultural resonance, constructs an ethos of sincerity and shared humanity. Through such stylistic choices, Atiku transforms individual tragedy into communal reflection, aligning his identity with values of faith, compassion, and solidarity. The inclusion of Islamic prayers and formulaic expressions such as “*Inna lillahi wainnailayhiraji’un*” provides intertextual legitimacy, reinforcing his connection to a largely Muslim audience while maintaining inclusivity through universal themes of empathy and moral concern.

Contrastingly, his political commentaries adopt a markedly assertive and declarative tone characterized by journalistic clarity, rhetorical balance, and emotional force. Sentences such as “*Hunger is killing Nigerians, bandits are massacring communities, yet President Tinubu and his cabinet stand by, unmoved and uncaring*” display both syntactic parallelism and antithesis. Repetition of noun phrases at the beginning of clauses, “*Hunger is killing Nigerians, bandits are massacring communities*”, creates rhythmic intensity, while the final contrasting clause reinforces governmental apathy. The structure of the sentence enhances its rhetorical power by balancing emotional urgency with logical sequencing. Similarly, evaluative adjectives such as “*tragic*,” “*unacceptable*,” and “*unconscionable*” serve as stylistic

amplifiers that heighten moral intensity and strengthen his stance as a critic of injustice.

Imagery and metaphor constitute another defining feature of Atiku's style. In the post describing Nigeria as "*a giant moving painfully slow on feet of clay*," metaphor compresses a complex socio-political diagnosis into a vivid cultural image. The metaphor of fragility evokes both national pride and disappointment, creating a cognitive dissonance that invites reflection. In another striking post, he accuses the President of preferring to "*feast rather than feel*." The tactile imagery in "*feast*" versus "*feel*" juxtaposes physical indulgence with emotional absence, capturing moral decadence through sensory contrast. These metaphors are not ornamental but functional, they dramatize abstract political failures through relatable imagery, allowing readers to visualize moral critique. Aligning with Leech and Short (2007), such figurative expressions constitute *rhetorical foregrounding*, a stylistic deviation that draws attention and enhances memorability.

Beyond tone and imagery, Atiku's stylistic cohesion is sustained through recurrent lexical patterns and grammatical consistency. His frequent use of modal verbs such as "*must*," "*should*," and "*cannot*" creates a sense of urgency and moral obligation, unifying his political and empathetic rhetoric under a single authoritative voice. The conjunction "*yet*" appears prominently in posts that express disillusionment, functioning as a textual hinge that introduces contrast and reinforces irony. Similarly, cohesive repetition of inclusive pronouns, "*we*," "*our*," "*us*," extends beyond pragmatic politeness; it also serves as a stylistic device that binds individual posts into a coherent narrative of collective identity. Through these lexical repetitions, Atiku's discourse acquires rhythm and continuity, allowing moral critique and national solidarity to coexist harmoniously.

The alternation between compassionate solemnity and assertive defiance creates a stylistic hybridity that enhances Atiku's credibility across audience divides. When expressing condolences, his language evokes the moral authority of faith and tradition; when condemning injustice, it reflects the analytical precision of a reformist intellectual. This dual tonality mirrors the dual role he performs as both moral

guardian and political challenger. The cohesive interplay of diction, imagery, and tone constructs a narrative persona that is simultaneously relatable and authoritative, a leader who feels the people's pain yet speaks truth to power with calculated precision.

In essence, Atiku Abubakar's stylistic choices demonstrate how language can serve as both an art and a strategy in digital political communication. His *Facebook* discourse exemplifies the power of stylistic design to translate ideology into emotion and emotion into persuasion. Through lexical coherence, metaphorical vividness, and tonal modulation, his posts transform everyday social media commentary into a crafted rhetoric of empathy, resistance, and moral leadership.

### **Syntactic Dimension: Structure, Foregrounding, and Cohesion**

The syntactic architecture of Atiku Abubakar's posts demonstrates a deliberate and strategic deployment of grammatical structures to shape meaning and emphasize ideological positions, consistent with formal political discourse (Radford, 2009). A notable feature is the frequent use of complex and compound-complex sentences, which allow a sophisticated interplay between factual reporting and moral evaluation. For instance, in the construction, "*While families in Plateau continue to bury their loved ones, President Tinubu chose to grace a political funeral rather than stand with the people,*" the initial subordinate clause establishes a poignant context of ongoing public suffering, while the main clause presents a starkly contrasting image of presidential action. This syntactic subordination foregrounds the administration's moral failure by juxtaposing the agony of the citizens against governmental inaction, thereby creating a powerful rhetorical effect.

Beyond subordination, Atiku employs thematic fronting and topicalization to direct informational focus and redistribute agency. In the declaration, "*Nigerians deserve more than promises; they deserve peace,*" positioning "*Nigerians*" at the thematic outset of both clauses syntactically elevates the citizenry, asserting their primacy and rights, while marginalizing the government as the entity failing its obligations. This deliberate manipulation of syntactic structure functions as a form

of empowerment, subtly inverting conventional power hierarchies. In contrast, passivization appears in contexts of tragedy, as in “*scores of lives are feared lost and scores of miners remain trapped*,” where suppressing the agent foregrounds the victims and the magnitude of the disaster, aligning with empathetic and consolatory communicative goals. Conversely, active voice dominates political critique, as in “*The government has abandoned its people*,” fixing agency squarely on the government to ensure clarity of responsibility.

Modality constitutes an additional critical syntactic resource. Atiku frequently employs high-value deontic modals such as “*must*,” “*cannot*,” and “*should*” to convey authority and a sense of inescapable obligation. For example, in “*The government must move beyond mere rhetorics*” and “*We cannot continue to lose our productive population*,” modality projects moral certainty and policy urgency, transforming prescriptions into imperatives. This use of modality reinforces his persona as a decisive leader capable of moral and political judgment. Complementing these strategies, the consistent terminal signature “–AA” functions as a cohesive device, acting as a digital autograph that signals authorial accountability, strengthens brand identity, and visually unites posts ranging from personal reflections to political commentary.

## Discussion

The findings from the integrated analysis demonstrate that Atiku Abubakar’s *Facebook* discourse constitutes a well-calibrated synthesis of digital populism and moral persuasion. His rhetorical approach reflects what can be termed *affective populism*, a communicative practice that fuses emotional connection with ideological critique to enhance credibility and political intimacy. The data reveal a systematic orchestration of empathy, critique, and self-legitimation, executed through interdependent linguistic resources across levels of discourse, pragmatics, style, and syntax.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, Atiku’s posts can be understood as discursive interventions in the struggle for representational power within Nigeria’s political space. They operate as

a narrative of opposition that contests official accounts by redefining agency, culpability, and moral responsibility. Consistent with van Dijk's (2006) ideological square, his discourse amplifies positive self-presentation and magnifies the negative traits of the ruling administration. This binary framing is linguistically realized through evaluative lexis such as "*corruption*," "*impunity*," and "*forgery*," juxtaposed against self-representations invoking "*integrity*," "*truth*," and "*justice*." These linguistic contrasts reinforce a moral dichotomy between the self as a reformer and the other as an oppressor, thus functioning as ideological resistance and moral reclamation.

The pragmatic dimension of the findings demonstrates that Atiku's communication adheres to Grice's (1975) cooperative principle in a politically charged context. Even when condemning governance failures, his discourse maintains the conversational maxims of relevance and quality, offering verifiable examples and aligning arguments with public experiences of insecurity, inflation, or corruption. This enhances persuasive credibility and situates his discourse within a framework of rational dissent rather than emotional outburst. His use of expressives, commissives, and directives, as classified by Searle (1976), illustrates a deliberate blending of emotional intelligence and performative commitment. Expressives humanize his leadership image, commissives build continuity with past promises, and directives articulate future expectations for collective reform. The pragmatic sequencing of these acts forms a coherent communicative script through which empathy and authority coexist.

Stylistically, Atiku's alternation between elegiac and assertive registers functions as a form of discursive modulation that mirrors the duality of his political role. The elegiac tone, marked by religious intertextuality and solemn diction, constructs a moral community bound by shared suffering and faith. Conversely, the assertive tone, typified by metaphor and parallelism, transforms moral reflection into political mobilization. This stylistic oscillation enables his posts to traverse emotional and rational terrains, sustaining engagement across diverse audience segments. The metaphoric images of "a nation on its knees" and "a government feasting while the people starve" evoke moral indignation,

functioning as what Fairclough (1992) terms *synthetic personalization*, the creation of affective closeness through textual address.

Syntactically, foregrounding of evaluative clauses, topicalization of the citizenry, and frequent use of modal verbs (“must,” “should,” “cannot”) reinforce the ethos of responsibility and urgency. These structures are not arbitrary but ideologically motivated: they assign moral agency to the people, culpability to the government, and reformist leadership to the speaker. The syntactic layering of subordination and coordination allows Atiku to juxtapose evidence and evaluation within the same utterance, creating cohesion between emotion and logic. Such syntactic hybridity exemplifies how grammatical architecture becomes a vehicle for ideological meaning, confirming Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014) view of grammar as a network of choices tied to social function.

Generally speaking, the findings reveal that Atiku’s *Facebook* discourse constitutes an emergent form of moral digital populism, an oppositional rhetoric that combines moral empathy, ideological critique, and strategic civility to construct legitimacy in an era where political trust is fragile. His discourse exemplifies how digital platforms have redefined the modalities of leadership representation, allowing opposition figures to articulate counter-hegemonic narratives that both contest and humanize power.

## **Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that integrating Critical Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Stylistics, and Syntax provides a nuanced and multidimensional framework for understanding how political actors employ digital discourse to shape ideology and identity. Through the empirical examination of forty-five posts drawn from Atiku Abubakar’s verified *Facebook* account, the research reveals a discourse that is both emotionally resonant and ideologically strategic. Atiku’s communication is not a spontaneous expression but a deliberate linguistic architecture designed to sustain moral authority, evoke empathy, and construct a coherent ideological alternative to the ruling administration.



Critical Discourse Analysis has illuminated the macro-level ideological patterns of opposition, showing how language serves as an instrument of moral polarization and resistance. Pragmatic analysis has revealed how his use of speech acts fosters trust, solidarity, and moral obligation, converting digital dialogue into an ongoing political performance. Stylistic analysis has shown how alternating registers of solemnity and critique enable rhetorical flexibility and emotional range, while syntactic analysis has uncovered the deeper structural mechanisms, such as transitivity and modality, through which agency, evaluation, and empathy are linguistically encoded.

Taken together, these findings underscore that Atiku Abubakar's *Facebook* discourse operates both as digital arena of political contestation and a site of moral restoration. His posts serve not merely as instruments of opposition but as acts of affective repair. They are linguistic attempts to restore national dignity amid perceptions of moral decay. Repetition of prayers, condolences, and appeals to unity indicates an implicit pastoral function: language becomes a means of collective healing as well as a critique.

The implications of this study extend beyond the Nigerian context. In an era when political communication increasingly unfolds in algorithmically mediated public spheres, understanding the discursive mechanics of empathy, legitimacy, and ideological construction becomes essential for scholars and citizens alike. Political discourse on social media is no longer confined to persuasion; it is a performative negotiation of moral authority. Thus, linguistic literacy in decoding these rhetorical strategies is vital for democratic accountability and civic discernment in fragile democracies.

Future studies could broaden the scope by examining audience interaction metrics such as comments and shares, comparative analysis with other political figures, or cross-platform variations to deepen understanding of how digital rhetoric translates into political influence. Nonetheless, this study establishes a foundational account of how one of Nigeria's leading political figures employs language not only to

contest power but to embody the moral conscience of a nation striving for justice and empathy in its political communication.

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## **A Study of the Influence of Nigerian English on Selected Nigerian Novels**

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### **Abstract**

*Although, English Language is not indigenous to any of the more than 500 ethnic groups in Nigeria, its usage has become invaluable within the country's sociolinguistic milieu. Following Nigeria's contact with the English Language, its functional roles and the subsequent development of Nigerian English, the language has become dominant and influential in the repertoire of the Nigerian language ecology as well as the Nigerian literature and Nigerian novel to be precise. Despite the linguistic choice between their indigenous languages and the English Language, Nigerian novelists prefer the use of English as the medium of literary communication in Nigerian novel and they have succeeded in producing world class literary works using the Nigerian variety of the English Language. Using Halliday's theory of 'systemic functional Grammar' as a framework, this study aimed at investigating the influence of Nigerian English on selected Nigerian novels to identify the factors that influence the use of English as a medium of literary communication in Nigerian novels. The study adopted a qualitative research method using content analysis as instrument for data collection. Three Nigerian novels: Trafficked, Hope in Anarchy and The Last Days at Forcados High School, were selected, studied and data related to NE usages in the texts were identified and collected. The data were presented using diagrammatic representation and analyzed using content analysis technique. From the collected data, the study identified the author, the settings, the theme, the characters, and the primary target audience as principal factors that influence and*

*guide the use of English in Nigerian novel. The study then concludes that the authors being Nigerians, the themes being Nigerian, the characters being Nigerians, the settings being Nigerians, and the primary target audience being Nigerians, Nigerian English definitely influences Nigerian novel in English as a medium of literary communication and that its usage does not degenerate the English Language rather, it breeds a variety of the language that could serve the linguistic needs in Nigeria and in Nigerian novel.*

**Keywords:** Nigerian English, Nigerian Novel, Language and Literature

## 1.0 Introduction

The last four hundred years or there about have witnessed an unprecedented development and spread of the English Language across the globe. From the Anglo-Saxon period to the modern English period, the language has experienced several contacts which had led to so many changes at all linguistic levels of the language. Just as Akindele and Adegbite (2005) observe, the spread started with the Celts, then England. It spread to cover Great Britain; it then grew to include North America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, part of Asia, and part of Africa. It is today virtually in the entire world performing different roles and functions. This might be the reason behind Kachru's (1991) concentric circles in which he creates three different world circles of the English Language to include the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle to accommodate the different functional roles of the English Language in different countries of the world. These circles were widened by Gunnel and Philip (2011) to accommodate more countries, perhaps, those countries that later contacted English in the last few decades. The fact, however, remains that virtually all the countries of the world are in one circle or another.

English Language has become an invaluable legacy of the British which provides Nigerians with yet another means of expressing their thoughts, feelings, ideas, cultures and traditions (Uzoezie 1992). Of the more than 500 languages in Nigeria, English is the most prominent

with high status and wider functional roles despite the fact that it originates from none of the Nigerian ethnic/tribal communities.

The diffusion of English Language across the world has generated different varieties of the language in different speech communities. It has generated the concept of ‘New Englishes’ in the world (Bamgbose et al., 1995), especially in second language situations and specifically Nigerian English in the Nigerian environment.

## **2.0 Background to the Study**

Nigerian English (henceforth, NE) ‘loosely refers to a variety of English used by Nigerians to communicate across socio-cultural boundaries which is distinct from that of the native English speaker but accommodates Nigeria’s socio-cultural and linguistic environment. Alo (2005) defines NE as ‘a term we use to designate the variety of English spoken and written in Nigeria’. This kind of English is largely influenced by the socio-cultural nuances of its new environment and such influence might span phonological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strata. It is therefore a Nigerian nativized form of English used as a medium of communication in Nigerian environment. Its usage cuts across standard, non-standard, tribal, gender, educational, occupational, contextual, idiosyncratic, and even literary usage, etc.

Following Nigeria’s contact with the English Language, its functional roles and the subsequent development of Nigerian English, the language has become dominant and influential in the repertoire of the Nigerian language ecology as well as the Nigerian literature and Nigerian novel to be precise. Although, the use of English was not originally meant for African/Nigerian literature but the prolonged colonial period, the global nature of the English Language and market orientation must have influenced its usage in Nigerian literature and Nigerian novel to be specific (Chibuike, 2017)

Nigerian novel loosely refers to a fictional prose narrative, not necessarily written by Nigerian but discusses Nigerian issues, has Nigerian background, features Nigerian characters, most importantly, produced in an indigenized or localized form of language.

However, since the arrival of the English Language in Nigeria and the subsequent conceptual development of NE, scholars have continued to research the nature, structure, function and development of NE (see Brosnaham 1957, Salami 1968, Adesanoye 1973, Vincent 1974, Odumuh 1987, Uzoezie (1992, Bamgbose et al. 1995, Ogunsiji 2004, Adeyanju 2004, Jowitt 1991, 2005, Banjo 1999, 2010, 2016, Sidi 2002) with little or no concern for the use of NE in Nigerian literature and Nigerian novel to be specific.

English in Nigeria has equally been developed and nativized through the novel genre. A study of the acculturation of English in Nigeria through the novel genre focuses on an examination of how novelists bring the cultural contexts and the communicative nuances of the Nigerian indigenous languages to bear on the English used in their works. This is necessary because while the Nigerian writers use English to achieve a wider reach, the English must be made to suit their purpose and their primary target audience by expressing their culture, thoughts and experiences, but without ‘mutilating’ the English Language to an incomprehensible extent.

This usage is guided or influenced by certain fundamental factors, a sociolinguistics vacuum of Nigerian English which this study attempts to bridge using Akachi Ezeigbo’s *Trafficked*, Adamu Kyuka’s *Hope in Anachy* and A. H. Mohammed’s *The Last Days at Forcados High School* as selected texts (a cross ethnic based selection).

### **3.0 Review of Related Literature**

The spread of the English Language beyond the British border and its contact with various languages, cultures and traditions has led to serious domestication of the language which bred diverse varieties of the English Language. It has produced the American variety, the Australian variety, the Canadian variety, the Jamaican variety, as well as the Nigerian variety of the English Language commonly known as ‘Nigerian English’. These diverse varieties have been the concern of scholars and linguists, especially among the users of English as Second Language (ESL) and the literature of these communities have testified to their creativity in the language. Besides, the correctness of the

English Language seems to have gone beyond the British linguistic philosophy.

African literature is one of the contact literatures as Kachru (1982, 1985) puts that, ‘the literatures in European Languages written by the users of a European Language as a second language to delineate contexts which generally do not form part of what may be termed the traditions of European Literature’. Such literatures result from the multilingual and multicultural situations. In most cases, several passages of modern/contemporary African writers in European Languages are typical adoption of the oral style of the written tradition. Igboanusi (2004) observes that ‘there is a preponderance of proverbs, figures of speech and idioms in direct translation from the African indigenous languages to the African Literature in English’. In order to reflect the African world-view in a Western language therefore, the language is often twisted and fashioned to suit the African experience.

Achebe (1966) thinks that the use of English language in Nigerian Literature is solely influenced by the creative power of the writer and most importantly, the competency of the writer in English language but a critical examination of the literary English (see Aboh and Uduk (2017) indicates that several other factors have significant influence in the choice of words and expressions in Nigerian literature in English. It is these factors this study seeks to investigate.

### **3.1 Language and Literature**

Language and literature could be two different fields of study but a close look shows that they are closely related and that there is an obvious symbiotic relationship between them. This relationship is obvious because from all indications, literature presupposes language as it is inconceivable to discuss literature without reference to language. This made scholars like Amase, et al. (2014) to describe this relationship as ‘two sides of the same coin such that it is hard to say which of the two takes precedence over the other’. This could be a result of their dependence on each other.

Welleck and Warren (1970) succinctly capture this relationship when they say, ‘Language is the material of literature as stone or bronze is of



sculpture, paints of picture, or sounds of music'. This implies that whereas language is a system of communication, literature is the content being communicated. Language is the fundamental unit of literature, in other words, it can be said that language makes literature while literature in turn enriches language. They are therefore complementary as they enrich and glorify each other.

Literature is produced by the creation of works in a particular language while language is a mode of expression of thought by means of articulated sounds (Amase et al., 2014). Therefore, language is the method of expression whereas literature is the collection of such expressions. Any literature can therefore be said to be rich or poor depending on the correctness of the language in which the literature is created. Ali (2019) observes that:

language is a set of words to express our ideas and thoughts to others while literature is the ideas and thoughts which is expressed with the help of language. --- without language, there is no existence of literature because without language we cannot express our thoughts'(pg. 162).

The fact also remains that without literature, language expression will be limited and creativity will be impossible. There are therefore lots of influences and effects of these two interrelated fields on each other.

### **3.2 The English Language and the Nigerian Novel**

Every Nigerian Literary writer has a choice of language between their indigenous languages and the English Language. The use of English Language in literature was originally meant for the Western world, but the prolonged colonial period in Africa and Nigeria to be specific laid a solid foundation for the use of English as a medium for ethnic and national literature. This might have led Killam (1985) to state that 'The African novel essentially grew out of western novel but modified the genre largely in the direction of themes, languages, setting and point of view'. But the fact remains that the use of English in Nigeria for the production of a variety of literary works of art is probably one of the significant contributions which Nigerians have made to the

development of English as a world language. Akere (2009) submits that:

Nigerian Literature in English is read in several English-speaking countries throughout the world. In quite a number of other countries, many Nigerian literary works in English have been translated into other languages. There is also available a large body of scholastic materials on literary criticism written by Nigerian literary critics and scholars and most of which are published in international literary journals and books. They all contribute to knowledge in the various genres of literature.

Nigerian Literary artists have produced works which not only portray the commonplace pattern of social life of Nigerians, their customs and traditions, their general cultural characteristics, but which also review the process of socio-cultural change engendered by the colonial experience and the consequent cultural contact. These, they have effectively done using the English Language (Igboanusi, 2002). They have been able to adapt this foreign language to the complex cultural, sociopsychological and linguistic situations over which the language was superimposed, and yet were able to produce excellent works of art.

An outstanding contribution of contemporary Nigerian novelists to Nigerian novel is their adaptive use of the English Language, which has been demonstrated to be an effective linguistic style. Chukwuma (1994: 63) rightly observes that 'these writers have no choice but to fashion the English language in a way to be able to carry the heavy burden of the African experiences'. They have carried out this task with rigour and freshness keeping within the English Language while capturing the idioms and nuances of Nigerian Languages. Many aspects of their texts are typical adoptions of the oral style of written tradition. There is, for instance, a preponderance of figurative language and idiomatic expressions with local colours in direct translation or transliteration from their mother tongues.

To examine the influence of language on literature is to assess the linguistic nature of literature. This could be done from different

perspectives: it could assess the nature of the language that creates different literary genre. In other words, it could assess the dramatic language which is discoursal in nature or the prose language which is narrative in nature or the poetic language which is rhythmical in nature. From a more succinct assessment which is paramount to this study, the use of language in literature could be greatly influenced by the author, the settings, the characters, the theme and the target audience (see Chan, 1999, Feuser and Aniebo, 2001, Yeibo 2011).

#### **4.0 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is anchored on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar Theory. The theory is basically designed to account for how language functions to convey meaning that language users want to communicate in a given society. The model seeks to interpret how different contexts and culture lead speakers to choose differently from the repertoire of the language they have at their disposal. Language evolves in response to the specific demands of the society in which it is used. Within this theory, therefore, language use is dependent on context of use and context of culture (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014).

The Systemic Functional Grammar Theory sees language as a system for making meanings. A system is a set of things of which one must be chosen (Halliday, 1973). When we use language, we make a choice from a set of available choice(s) and the choice is functionally determined. This implies that function influence forms, contexts and interpretation. The choice and use of NE in NNE is therefore functionally influenced which could account for its forms, its features, its contexts and its interpretations in NNE.

In Halliday's (1985) scheme, meaning comes from the function of language. Halliday asserts that language involves three generalized functions or Meta-functions: the ideational, interpersonal and textual meta-functions. The ideational meta-function, according to Halliday (1985) is concerned with the grammatical resources for construing our experiences of the world around us and outside us. The interpersonal

meta-function is concerned with the interaction between speaker and addressee, the grammatical resources for enacting social roles in general. In the textual meta-function, language is used to build up sequences of discourses and to organize thoughts into a comprehensive flow of meaning. Textual meta-function weaves together the other two functions to create a text. The ideational is related to the linguistic resources available to the literary author, the interpersonal is related to the shared linguistic resources between the author and the target audience and the textual meta-function is related to the produced text from the author's linguistic resources with consideration for the competency of the target audience and other significant factors. As Systemic Functional Grammar Theory approaches language analysis contextually, it therefore provides the framework for the description and explanation of the choice and use of English as the medium of literary communication in Nigerian novel.

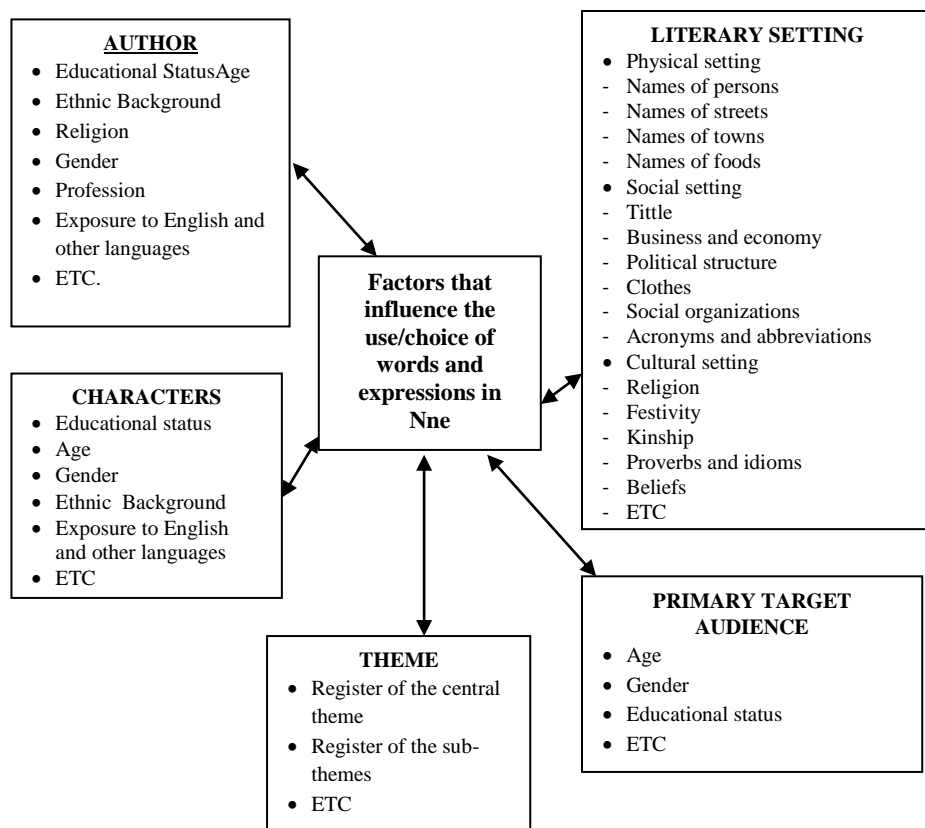
It is from this Sociolinguistics framework that this study investigates The Influence of Nigerian English on Nigerian Novel (in English).

In carrying out this investigation, the study adopts a qualitative research method using content analysis as instrument for data collection. The three selected Nigerian novels (*Trafficked*, *Hope in Anarchy* and *The Last Days at Forcados High School*) were selected, studied and data related to NE usages in the texts were identified and collected. The collected data were diagrammatically presented and analyzed using content analysis technique (an aspect of descriptive analysis method), from which findings were made and conclusion drawn.

## **5.0 Data Presentation**

Data identified and collected for this investigation are presented using diagrammatic representation. The diagram below shows the cumulative factors that influence the choice of words and expressions in Nigerian Novel in English.

## A Diagram Showing the Factors that Influence the Use/Choice of Words and Expressions in Nigerian Novel in English



From the diagram above, several factors are accounted for as the influencing factors of Nigerian English on Nigerian Novel in English, most importantly, the influence on the use/choice of words and expressions in NNE.

The authors or the writers greatly have significant influence on their piece of writing considering their educational background/status, age, ethnic background, religion, gender, profession, exposure to English and other languages, etc.

The literary settings of the novels also have great linguistic influence on the piece. The physical settings of the novels including names of persons, names of streets, names of towns, names of foods, etc., the social settings including titles, business and economy, political structure, clothes, social organizations, acronyms and abbreviations, etc. as well as the cultural settings of the novels including religion, festivity, kinship, proverbs and idioms, beliefs, etc. are accounted for as significant influencing factors.

Also, the primary target audience are believed to have great influence on Nigerian novels in English. Significant considerations here are the, age, gender, educational status, etc. of the primary target audience.

The educational status, age, gender, ethnic background, exposure to English and other languages, etc. of the characters of the NNE are also believed to be significant influencing factor on the use/choice of words and expressions in Nigerian novels.

In the same vein, the theme of a novel including both the register of the central theme and those of the sub-themes of a novel do have great influence on it.

Explicit discussion with evidences of these factors from the sample texts are done in the findings and discussion.

## **6.0 Discussion of Findings**

Besides the fact that different factors influence the choice of English as the medium of literary communication in Nigerian novel, different factors also influence the use or choice of words and expressions in Nigerian Novel in English. The choice of words and expressions in NNE are influenced or guided by different factors. This study identified five major influencing factors:

1. Prominent among these is the author of the novel. The author as the narrator of the story and the initiator of the discourse is always guided by his/her linguistic resources, that is, his/her level of proficiency/competency in English Language built on his/her educational status, age variation, ethnic background among other

things. This is evident as the two Professors (Akachi and Kyuka) employed more Victorian English, especially in their narrations, such as, ‘They saunted behind him like abject Shinto devotees (H. A. pg. 41)’, ‘The Great Lafimo went berserk with rage (H. A. pg. 56)’, ‘Misfortune had dogged them with horrendous cistency.’ (Trafficked, pg. 5), ‘His apparent equanimity infuriated Efe.’ (Trafficked, pg. 187), etc. While Hanif employed more School English in his narration. Besides, there are evidences of age variation in the use of NE in the selected texts. Kyuka and Akachi who are in there late 50s and early 60s respectively employed more proverbs (e.g. ‘When a bishop is found in the prison yard with inmates, he should not be rounded up together with the inmates to the prison farm’. (H. A. pg. 84), ‘It is said the monkey sweats in its own way but because of its hair, the sweat goes unnoticed’. (H. A. pg. 91), ‘A foolish chicken overlooked the knife that cut its throat and got angry with the pot cooking it’ (Trafficked, pg. 4), ‘After the winged termite has cruised in the air, it will fall down for a toad to eat’ (Trafficked, pg. 171), etc.) than Hanif who is in his late 30s. Whereas, Hanif employed more slangs (as in ‘Bro, stay cool’ (LDF pg. 3), ‘Hey, Ansaboy’ (LDF pg. 4), ‘Hey yo! (LDF pg. 18), ‘What’s up, baby doll?’ (LDF pg. 39), etc.) than both Akachi and Kyuka (a reflection of age variation in the use of language). Author’s ethnic background seems not to be a significant variable in the use of English in the selected novels (probably in the spirit of producing national novel in English). While *Hope in Anarchy* and *The Last Days at Forcados High School* did not reflect any element of the authors’ ethnic background in their use of English, *Trafficked* displays series of ‘Igboism’ (Igbo proverbs, culture, traditions, etc). But these are only displayed when the novel is directed to ‘Ihite-Agu’ - one of the major settings of the novel - whenever the novel is directed to other settings, the ethnic ‘Igboism’ background of the author seems insignificant.

At times, authors seem to be influenced by their profession, religion, and their exposure to the English Language and other languages. For instance, Akachi was very eloquent when *Trafficked* was directed to the University system (her professional abode) with careful choice of

words and expressions from the university circle such as – ‘The Senate Chamber, ‘Vice Chancellor’, ‘A luta continua!’, ‘Solidarity forever!’, etc. Her use of biblical quotations (such as – ‘How wonderful to ask and to receive’ (pg. 162), ‘Lo, children are heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward’ (pg. 247), etc.) as well as her mixing and switching between English and Igbo expressions (e.g. ‘Nsogbuadihi. There is no problem at all.’ (pg.38), ‘You are the odunwa’ (pg. 43), ‘... an unusually big eke-na- ogwurugwu appeared in the sky, ...’ (pg. 290), etc.) were superb. She seems to possess high linguistic resources in these which she adequately displayed in the novel. Kyuka was also eloquent when *Hope in Anarchy* was directed to the court (his professional home) and his use of biblical quotations and pidgin easily identified him, e.g, ‘Exhibit AA’ (pg. 133), ‘... the prosecuting state counsel announced his appearance’ (pg.134), ‘... two count charges’ (pg. 134), ‘The case was not one of pleading allocutus’ (pg. 134), ‘... he went on a trip of judicial eloquence lacing his words with poetic juices’ (pg. 134), ‘We are moving out of Sodom into our Canaan. To look back is to ask for the fate of Lot’s wife’ (pg. 194’, ‘And I say shut up Moses of Egypt! Who made you leader and king over us?’ (pg. 198), God, wetin your pikin do you wey you wanpunisham so, ehn? (pg. 20), Dis bobo don go banana finish’ (pg. 121), etc. Hanif was also eloquent when *The Last Days at Forcados High School* appeared in the Hospital (his professional arena) and his choice of medical register was apt, such as – ‘It’s called cardiopulmonary resuscitation.’ (pg. 34), ‘I have cancer. Ovarian cancer.’ (pg. 41), ‘... that they had done their best, but that the prognosis was very bad.’ (pg. 51), etc. - but he was very passive in using biblical quotations despite the fact that, all the characters and the settings seem to be Christendom. He seems not to have much resource in ‘Christendom’ to describe the religious setting of the novel. The implication here is that the authors’ use of language is influenced by their total self – their culture, profession, proficiency in English, their linguistic nature, to some extent, their religion, etc. so that one can easily identify author’s social and educational status, the languages he uses, his age range, probably his religion, his profession and his ethnic background after reading his or her text. This is what Halliday called



‘ideational metafunction’, the grammatical/linguistic resources available for the author to construe his/her experiences of the world around and outside him/her.

2. The literary environment also influences the use of English and the choice of words and expressions in a novel (this could be physical, social or cultural). The literary setting determines the choice of names (human, streets, towns, etc.), the choice of acronyms, the political, social, cultural and economic choice of words and expressions (including the choice of food, clothes, titles, etc.). It also determines the choice of places including streets, towns, cities, centres, etc. The loan words and expressions for food (Moin-Moin (LDF, pg. 2, Gbana, LDF, pg. 82, Bole, Trafficked, pg. 24, 282, Nsala, Trafficked, 35, Fufu, Trafficked, pg. 45, 254, Akara, Trafficked, 210, H. A. pg. 146, Agidi, H. A. pg. 146, Garri, H. A. pg. 44, 138, 146, etc.), clothes (Caftan, LDF, pg. 2, Trafficked, pg. 22, Iro and buba, LDF, pg. 9, Trafficked, pg. 66, 95, Adire, Trafficked, pg. 84, Hijab, Trafficked, pg. 84, Gele, LDF, pg. 9, etc.), currencies (kobo, LDF, pg 61, H. A. pg. 73, 128, naira, Trafficked, pg. 239, etc), places (Ibadan, LDF, pg. 8, Lagos, LDF, pg. 29, Ihite-Agu, Trafficked, pg. 29, Lagos and Ibadan, Trafficked, pg. 129, 239, 240, 265, Ama Etiti, Trafficked, pg. 112, 215, etc.), ‘Beku Island’ (H.A. pg, 7), ‘Tonka bridge’ (H.A. pg, 143), ‘Jaruwa prison’ (H.A. pg, 169), etc., titles (Mazi, Trafficked, pg. 13, Obi, Trafficked, pg. 113, Vice Chacellor, Trafficked, pg. 144, Professor, Trafficked, pg. 141, 147 & others, Chief, Trafficked, pg. 201, 231, Alhaji and Alhaja, Trafficked, pg. 265, Head boy, pg. 5, His Lordship, H.A. pg. 135, Inspector, H.A. pg. 78, Corporal, H.A. pg. 80, Great Lafimo, H.A. pg. 56, etc.) in the selected texts are instances of the influence of the literary environment on the use of English and choice of words in Nigerian Novel in English.

3. Besides, the literary characters also determine the linguistic constituents of a novel, they create a sort of linguistic or language colony in a novel. Characters determine the nature of language usage in a novel; the use of Victorian, School, Pidgin, Broken, etc. Englishes in Nigerian novel are influences of the literary characters (educational variation). The use of proverbs, idioms, slangs (age variation), mixing

and switching of codes, etc. are also influences of the literary characters. In the selected text, the Victorian English is a product of the Old educated characters (as in ‘... and go back to living under the bridge which is not quite a proper habitation for anybody with birth claims of homo sapiens’ (H. A. pg. 115), ‘Do you have to be vulgar?’ (H. A. pg. 81), ‘You have brought us disquieting news and we are shattered by the import of it. (Trafficked pg. 216), ‘I’m expressing my profound disappointment. I’m appalled.’ (LDF pg. 83), ‘... a malicious desire’ (LDF pg. 68), etc.) The School English is a product of the young educated characters (e.g. ‘I didn’t remove it even though it’s an eyesore. Everything’s just as you left it’ (LDF, pg. 1), ‘I want to tell you, Miss Novi, that what you did with the boy who fainted was absolutely brilliant’ (LDF, pg. 34), ‘I will strive to get you a job. Only that my old man is not disposed to charity, you would have been working tomorrow. But never worry, I will try on my own to get you a job, a good one for that matter. I know the strings to pull and the coins to slip in.’ (H. A. pg. 90 – 91), ‘Why is that important? We can be friends without prying into each other’s lives. I don’t know why you’re talking like this, but I think we should close this conversation’ (Trafficked, pg. 97), ‘Perhaps gratitude is a better expression. Edna is the appreciative type. I’ve given her and a few other needy students some money to help them pay their fees here. Not much really but they all have shown profound appreciation.’ (Trafficked, pg. 62), etc.). The Pidgin English is yet another product of slum dwellers and the uneducated characters (such as, ‘Abeg make una go sleep. Una dey look fight. Wetin dem dey fight for, sef? Na so sofight for dis country every time: ... Na so sowahala. Una wan bring de fight come for Oasis?’ (Trafficked, pg. 138), ‘Allah! You dey lucky.’ (Trafficked, pg. 191), ‘You think say I wan die like cockroach? I tell you say I don ask my oga many times say make him gif me his small automatic gun but oga no gree’, ... (H. A. pg. 3 – 6), ‘My friend, shebi you too don dey double duty? I no blame you. Republic don dey hard too much. To survive, monkey must not only sweat, e must bleed’ (H. A. pg. 108), ‘NAIJA 4 LIFE! WETIN DEY!’ (LDF, pg. 48), ‘... it’s because I no know book’ (LDF, pg. 60). While Broken English dominates the characters who probably have nothing doing with the English Language

in their corporate domains but forced by circumstances to use it (such as, Give am Sutout. Give you me Sutout. Sutout me wan Sutout ... (Trafficked, pg. 300). Also, while proverbs and idioms are products of the old characters (such as, 'A child who is carried on his mother's back does not feel the stress of a long walk.' (Trafficked, pg. 176), 'Your talk is cloaked but we want you to bare its body.' (Trafficked, pg. 216), 'The posturing peacock who panders to the gallery.' (LDF, pg. 38), 'He had forgotten about the butterflies in his stomach.' (LDF, pg. 84), 'For how can the baboon be happy at the funeral of the monkey?' (H. A. pg. 151), 'When a man falls into a well, do you go looking for the trousers he was wearing?' (H. A. pg. 153), etc. Slang on the other hand is a product of the young ones and specialized groups (such as, 'Cool it' (LDF, pg. 20), 'What's up, baby doll?' (LDF, pg. 36), 'Ok, no sweat.' (Trafficked, pg. 57), 'Yep, I remember' (Trafficked, pg. 31), 'You take this joint to bits while I give the broad society; get it?' (H. A. pg. 16), '... let the snail shell go burst I want the snail on my palms.' (H. A. pg. 81), etc.). While switching and mixing of codes are products of bi/multilingual characters (such as, 'How poor man go kill ogahcommot leave the house without taking even common needle?' H. A. pg. 105), 'I have not gone beyond Onitsha not to talk of Obodo Oyibo, the white man's land.' (Trafficked, pg. 40), 'Thieves! Ole! Barawo! Onye ori!' (Trafficked, pg. 191), 'Akinjimi, omo mi (my child).' (LDF, pg. 7), 'Maybe it's because I noknow book.' (LDF, pg. 60), etc.). The influence of the literary characters on the use of language and choice of words and expressions in Nigerian Novel in English is therefore highly invaluable.

4. The theme of a novel also influenced the use of English in the novel. The registers of the selected texts highly depend on their central themes. *Hope in Anarchy* for instance centres on social conflict or class conflict (between the few rich and the majority poor) and the diction tailored towards violence, hatred, betrayal, killing, stigmatization, poverty, fear, etc. (as in, 'you children of wretches! Can't you ever think of other places to ferret for your bottles other than this neighbourhood? I mean there are too many flies around here without you adding to them.' (pg.7), 'Where to bury her became his next

headache. The small cemetery between Beku Island and Voro was strictly for the rich. It was called ‘Monumental Ground of the Ruling spirits.’ (pg. 42), ‘You have a million and one mates to choose as friends within our divide, why go to the gutter stock? What have you to gain from such a scrounging society? (pg. 57), ‘As sharks and the President their friend get Club de Gallery, Human de Vampirists for inside Beku Island, na so we poor people come get Mermaid Shell for Riakere rock between Beku and Harkowa. And as sharks dey sit down dey plan how dem go continue dey suck poor man’s blood, na so men deytandadey learn how dem go swallow sharks and dem sea inside Mermaid Shell’ (pg. 139), ‘We start by releasing the dragon on all the sharks be they in Beku or wherever in the republic, a shark is a shark, voracious in character and oppressive in constitution.’ (pg.150), etc. On the other hand, *Trafficked* centres on human/women trade and trafficking and the diction tailored around violence, humiliation, rape, love, disappointment, sex, betrayal, abuse, etc. (e.g. ‘The horrors in Rome, the disorientation and savagery in the London flat, the humiliation of arrest and detention plagued her mind.’ (pg. 14), ‘Shame on you, go and join the rest of the scum who flew in from Rome a few minutes before you. Look at them, what a disgrace to the country.’ (pg. 17’), ‘she remember the times Baron had asked her to plait his thick, glossy hair. Each time she did it, he would have an erection. After she had completed the task, he would grab her and rape her.’ (pg. 94), ‘I was sold to a woman called Madam Gold, a Nigerian. She used us shamelessly, made us walk the streets every night’ (pg. 99), ‘Madam Gold sold me to a pimp – a white man – after four years of slaving for her. I worked for my new owner for two years before I escaped. Then I fled to Verona and teamed up with a prostitute I met there and worked independently for about another year ...’ (pg. 100), ‘In Italy I discover I am trafficked.’ (pg. 128), ‘She keeps us prisoner in her flat. Life is hell in Rome – we are always walking the night, selling sex to Italian men and foreigners. I hate Madam Dollar.’ (pg.128-129), ‘Madam raves at me, and Captain beats me up, but makes sure he does not disfigure me, for this will mean loss of revenue for Madam Dollar’ (pg. 129), ‘Baron sends the other girls to brothels and keeps me in his flat. Instead of putting me on the street, he brings men to the flat. He rapes

and beats me. I refuse when customers demand oral or anal sex and insist that they use condoms and I'm sometimes assaulted for this.' (pg. 132), etc). While *The Last Days at Forcados High School* centres on adolescence challenges and the register and diction of the text tailored towards love, secondary school jargons, jelous, slangs, drug, betrayal, etc (such as, 'A few teachers were waiting outside the hall, ready to punish latecomers by asking them to knee down.' (pg. 5), 'Morning assembly' (pg. 5), 'The National Anthem' (pg. 5), 'The alcohol, the stale smell of cigarette smoke, the strange coded conversation, the dim lighting and the continuos harsh beat of the loud music were starting to dull Jimi's brain.' (pg. 19), 'Oh, they were right! It's her now, isn't it?' (pg. 24), '... the boy in a school uniform jacket ...' (pg. 49), '...but his brother is – well we suspect he sometimes sells drugs.' (pg. 56), 'It's Efua. She's ill and unhappy and it's all my fault. I was jealous of her. She's so attractive and boys always become silly over her. ,, I just thought "What's so special about her". You know, I think that because I was jealous I showed Jimi the letter. Because I ... I think I wanted him to see her for what she was and like her much less. Maybe because I ... I wanted him just to look at me too.' (pg. 72), etc). The implication is that the register and diction of the selected texts and by extension, the Nigerian Novel in English are highly influenced by the theme of the novel.

5. The primary target audience also influence the use of English and choice of words and expressions in any art of writing, especially in the literary world; the selected texts are not exceptional. The primary target audience of these novels are Nigerians which actually forced the English to be 'Nigerianized' and gives the language a local flavor engendered by the socio-cultural reality of the Nigerian people and society. Specifically, the age and educational status of the target audience seems to have influence on the choice of words and expressions. *Trafficked* seems to target the post secondary school Nigerians with high hopes, energy and frustrations, who always think of searching abroad for greener pasture. This could explain the frustration, the quarrel, the disappointment, rape, sexual abuse, love, slangs, slogans, etc. words and expressions used in the novel (such

as, '... while I was on a visit to my cousin in Lagos. It asked young men and women who wished to work abroad to come to a certain address to be interviewed' (pg.98-99), 'Well, to cut a long story short, we were taken to Italy and ended up in Palermo. It was terrible. I was sold to a woman called Madam Gold ...' (pg. 99). 'We are six young women between the ages of seventeen and twenty. They tell us we will have plenty of time to pay back our debts to the agency when we start earning money' (pg. 129), 'Look at this cockroach, if my mind is sick, yours is warped' (pg. 131), 'Prostitute! I'm glad I was trafficked as a domestic servant and not a sex slave like you.' (pg. 137), 'Why will you not allow me to have sex with you, yet you continue to shelter in my house?' (pg.157), 'Who wants to stay in this stinkin place anyway? It has nothing for me, I'm a graduate with a good degree. If I had had a job I wouldn't have been trafficked, ...' (pg. 163), 'Doc, I love Nneoma with my whole heart.' (pg. 311), etc. *Hope in Anarchy* on the other hand seems to target Nigerian adults who are outside the school environment – workers, politicians, traders, etc. This could explain the use of 'strong' words and expressions (such as killing, arresting, imprison, terrorism, disappointment, armed robbery, raping, inequality, proverbs, idioms, etc.) in the novel, e.g. 'Okime sat on the floor with a bullet hole on his temple: his wife lay naked near their coffe-table with blood all over her body especially her thighs. From the look of things, she was raped before being shot. Their children lay spread-eagled inside the toilet with their throats slit.' (pg. 82), 'But even here in the republic, I have never been welcomed, not to talk of being given a chance. I have always felt like living among people worse than strangers: enemies ma. Ma, I hate the republic.' (pg. 116), 'You have been discriminated against because you have no money.' (pg. 116), 'Ahoka is hereby sentenced to ten years imprisonment with hard labour.'(pg.134), 'A situation where sharks and government functionaries go frolicking in posh cars and boosting foreign economies with fat accounts of money stolen from the republic's purse while the majority poor are left in a jimbo would only be seen in nightmares but never in real life in the kingdom.' (pg. 149), 'A tear, two tears fell off Okime's cheeks as he sat watching Rawka raping his wife.' (pg. 162), '... two soldiers guarding the house of a retired officer in the army shot

their master and his family dead to make it appear as the handiwork of exorcists, and made away with his property.’ (pg. 172), ‘the shark is evil: kill him; his property is rotten: don’t touch it.’ (pg. 174), etc. *The Last Days at Forcados High School* has the Nigerian adolescents as its primary target audience which probably limitates the diction of the novel to secondary school registers with words and expressions within the secondary school vocabulary. This could explain the use of prefects, principal, subject teachers, drugs, school clubs, inter-house sport events, jealous, love, etc. words and expressions in the novel, such as ‘prefects’ (pg. 3), ‘A few teachers were waiting outside the hall, ready to punish latecomers by asking them to kneel down’ (pg. 5), ‘the principal’ (pg. 6, 14), ‘... our final year students who have the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) examinations.’ (pg. 6), ‘SS3’ (pg. 7), ‘So tell me about your former school. Girls only, wasn’t it?’ (pg. 11), ‘... principal’s office.’ (pg. 13), ‘Jimi and Efua, there’s something fishy going on there. Jimi was always staring at her. He never looked at me like that.’ (pg.28), ‘... junior student ...’ (pg. 31), ‘Second term had started. The chemistry laboratory was filled with serious-faced students.’ (pg. 44), ‘This will be the ultimate experience. Heroine.’ (pg. 54), ‘Mid-Term Dinner’ (pg. 31), ‘The final day of the Inter-House Sport Tournament ... Students wearing the coloured vests of their respective houses...’ (pg. 38), ‘... the head boy, ...’ (pg. 5), ‘... the head girl ...’ (pg. 64), etc.

However, the use of men dominating discourse such as mansions, cars, conspiracy, killing, robbery, inequality, conflict, etc. in *Hope in Anarchy* suggest a male primary target audience while the use of female dominating discourse in *Trafficked* such as cooking, gossip, love, abuse, pretense, curse, trafficked, sex labour, women centres, etc. suggest female primary target audience. Whereas, *The Last Days at Forcados High School* seems to integrate both male and female adolescent Nigerians as its primary target audience as the novel balanced its discourse between both genders. The influence of the target audience (age, gender and educational status) seems to be a shared linguistic knowledge between the author and the primary target audience. This is what Halliday refers to as ‘interpersonal

metafunction'; the linguistic interaction between speaker and addressee. The diagram below shows the cumulative factors that influence the choice of words and expressions in Nigerian Novel in English.

## 7.0 Conclusion

The literary author being Nigerian, the literary environment being Nigerian, the characters being Nigerians, the theme being Nigerian, and the primary target audience being Nigerian, the language has no choice than to be Nigerian, though in English. Thus, the influence of Nigerian English on Nigerian Novel (in English). And this influence will continue as long as Nigeria remains an entity and English remains dominant in the repertoire of the country's language ecology. Writers will continue to use Nigerian English as a medium of literary communication in Nigerian Novel in English to accommodate the socio-cultural nuances of the Nigeria people and environment without mutilating or degenerating the English language rather it breeds a variety of the language that could serve the linguistic needs in Nigeria and in Nigerian Novel.

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# **I was Like, “You Got it Just Right”: The Diffusion of *be Like* in Manchester**

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## **Abstract**

*This study examines the mechanisms underlying the diffusion of be like and other quotative forms in the cosmopolitan city of Manchester, focusing on the intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic factors that constrain their usage. The study is based on a corpus of spontaneous speech compiled during fieldwork carried out by students in the M.A. English Language programme at the University of Manchester in the 2015-2016 academic year, with the researcher actively involved in the project. A total of 4,100 tokens of various quotative forms were collected from participants across Manchester. The analysis was conducted within the variationist paradigm (Labov 1963, 1966; Trudgill, 1974; Tagliamonte, 2012), employing a quantitative approach. A statistical program called Rbrul (Johnson, 2009) was used for multivariate analyses. The findings demonstrate that the diffusion of be like in British English provides it with functional versatility to maintain its influence in language change. This versatility is evident in both its meanings and in its role within discourse.*

**Keywords:** *Be like*, British English, Diffusion, Language Change, Manchester, Quotatives

## **1. Introduction**

Speakers create new words in their daily speech and often use existing words in different contexts. In the early 1980s, Ronald Butters observed the way speakers born after 1955 used the quotative *go* to introduce direct speech in narratives (Butters, 1980) and subsequently

observed how speakers quoted unuttered thoughts using *be like* (Butters, 1982). Since then, there has been research investigating how people re-create their speech and thoughts, as well as those of others, in narrative discourse. According to Tagliamonte and D'Arcy (2004), the quotative system is a good example of "language change in action", which was earlier described as a rapid language change phenomenon (Tagliamonte and Hudson, 1999).

In recent years, the quotative system has been studied by variationist sociolinguists across varieties of English (American English, Barbieri, 2007; British English, Buchstaller, 2006; Scottish English, Macaulay, 2001; New Zealand English, Buchstaller & D'Arcy, 2009; Australian English, Winter, 2002; and Canadian English, Tagliamonte & Hudson, 2009). As a clear example of rapid language change, *be like*, as illustrated in (1) and (2), has been the focus of research since it entered the quotative system in American English and then its diffusion into other varieties of English. Other quotative forms that have been investigated include *go*, *say*, *think*, *be all*, and *zero*, as in (3), (4), (5), and (6) respectively. In the case of *zero* quotative, the absence of an explicit quotative marker allows speakers to express attitudes serving some dramatic effect, which might be harder to achieve with an overt quotative form. Other variants of *be like* considered in this study are *be all* and *be all + like* as shown in (7) and (8).

- (1) He *was like*, "things are no longer the way they were."
- (2) And she *is like*, "I respect him so much."
- (3) And they *go*, "yeah, yeah..."
- (4) Then he *said*, "you made a mistake."
- (5) I was *thinking*, "oh, we must have met somewhere."
- (6) Ø "we don't need you here."
- (7) They *were all*, "we can't do it alone."
- (8) We *were all like*, "you can do it."

According to Romaine and Lange (1991), "the relatively bland *say* is said to report speech without the contribution of any particular pragmatic effect." Quotative *think* in most cases introduces inner dialogue. It is important to note that while most quotatives introduce thought or speech, quotative *be like* on the other hand performs both

functions as it allows speakers to express not only speech or thought but also gestures. This may suggest that it is also an option for non-lexicalised sounds. Most previous studies have focused on American English (Blyth et al., 1990; Romaine & Lange, 1991; Dailey-O'Cain, 2000; Barbieri, 2007), with less attention given to quotatives in other varieties. Thus, it is essential to know the extent to which similar linguistic processes may be occurring in other English-speaking areas outside the United States.

This study aims to develop an account of the acquisition of *be like* and other quotative forms in Manchester, United Kingdom, which will broaden our understanding of language change in British English. To achieve this goal, the study addresses the following questions: (1) What is the frequency distribution of various quotative forms used in Manchester? (2) Who are the principal users of *be like* in Manchester? (3) How do quotative forms function within British English? (4) Do different quotative forms share the same social associations? This study addresses these questions through statistical analyses of the following quotative forms: *be like*, *go*, *say*, *think*, *be all* and *be all + like*. However, it places particular emphasis on *be like* while exploring patterns of variation and change in British English.

## 2. Previous Research

*Be like* was first reported in America in 1985 when Tannen discovered that it constituted 8% of instances of quotative verbs (Romaine & Lange, 1991). Since then, it has diffused into other English-speaking areas. Romaine and Lange (1991) highlight that using *be like*, “the speaker invites the listener to infer that this is what the speaker was thinking or saying at this very moment.” They report that informants tend to perceive *be like* as a feature of female speech (Romaine and Lange, 1991). On the contrary, Blyth et al. (1990) discovered that this feature is more prevalent in male speech. However, according to Ferrara and Bell (1995), *be like* is losing its gender bias, though in their previous data of 1990, *be like* was favoured by women with equal usage of 29% versus 15% for men in 1992. They interpreted this result as, “a neutralization of the sex effect and an indication of increasing expansion of *be like*”.

Ferrara and Bell (1995) report that *go* is stereotypically associated with the speech style of lower-class males, “blue-collar feature”. This suggests that previous research from America indicates that *be like* and *go* trigger strong and almost diametrically opposite perceptions among informants (Buchstaller, 2006). While previous research shows a consensus that *go* and *be like* are often used by teenagers, *say*, in contrast, is favoured by speakers born before the 1950s (Cukor-Avila, 2002). On the effect of grammatical person, *be like* was restricted to first-person while the use of *say* and *go* was favoured for third-person subjects (Blyth et al., 1990; Romaine and Lange, 1991). Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) observe that first-person subjects favour *think* while full NPs and third-person favour *say* in British English, which is in contrast with Canadian English where first-person subjects favour *say* while full NPs and pronouns are evenly distributed between *say* and *go*. The grammatical status of *be like* as a rising viable English quotative “upsets the balance amongst the more traditional dialogue introducers” (Ferrara and Bell, 1995).

Looking at tense, *be like* is favoured in present tense contexts (Blyth et al., 1990, Romaine & Lange 1991, Singler 2001, D’Arcy 2004), while past tense favours other quotative forms. Macaulay (2001) reports a higher use of *be like* in the past tense in his Glasgow data, at 58%. Other studies have also investigated the effect that historical present has on *be like*. Tagliamonte and D’Arcy’s (2007) study in Toronto demonstrates that *be like* is used in historical present at higher rates than present tense and past tense, with past tense being the least favoured. Buchstaller and D’Arcy (2009) report similar results for American English and New Zealand English, whereas in their British English sample, past tense is favoured.

Taken together, variationist research has extensively documented the intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic constraints that influence different quotative forms in various communities and English dialects, including British English (Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999; Buchstaller, 2006). However, a study focusing on quotatives in the cosmopolitan city of Manchester is necessary, as this region within the United Kingdom has not yet been explored. This study will contribute to the existing

literature and enable comparisons with findings reported in previous research.

### **3. Fieldwork and Methodology**

The data for this study were collected through a series of fieldwork activities involving conversations at various locations across Manchester. Students in the M.A. English Language programme at the University of Manchester conducted this fieldwork during the 2015-2016 academic year, with the researcher actively involved in the project. A total of 4,100 tokens of various quotative forms were compiled in Excel spreadsheets, with 2,394 collected from males and 1,706 from females. The study was framed within the variationist paradigm (Labov 1963, 1966; Trudgill, 1974; Tagliamonte, 2012) and explored how speakers' choices of quotatives are conditioned by intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.

The intra-linguistic factors here refer to the variables such as tense (present tense and past tense), verb number (singular and plural), grammatical person (first-person singular, first-person plural, second-person, third-person singular, and third-person plural), and content of the quote (thought, gesture, and speech or something said). The extra-linguistic factors encompass social variables such as age, gender, regional origin, and social class. Consistent with previous research, age was categorised into three groups: young speakers (below 30), middle-aged speakers (30-45), and old speakers (46 and above). The other social factors are gender (male and female), regional origin (north and south), and social class (middle class, lower middle class, and working-class).

The statistical procedure primarily relied on a quantitative approach as the data sets were converted into numbers, figures, and graphs, which enabled the researcher to investigate the frequency of various variables. This analysis was conducted using Rbrul (Johnson, 2009), a specialised programme designed for data analysis in sociolinguistic research, particularly for multivariate analysis. This version of the software was accessible from <http://cran.r-project.org/> and was compatible with both Macintosh and Windows operating systems. For the analysis, a set of

coding systems was designed to categorise the tokens according to their most salient function, with *be like*, *say*, *go*, *think*, *be all* and *be all + like* as the dependent variables. The independent variables were coded to include both the intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic constraints.

**4. Results and Discussion**

**4.1 Distributional Analysis**

Table 1 and Figure 1 present the percentage rates of the overall distribution of quotatives collected for this study. The quotative *be like* accounts for 46 percent of the total number of quotatives in the corpus. *Say* makes up 29 percent of the total number of tokens. The quotative *go* constitutes 18 percent of the total tokens while *think* represents only 1 percent. The quotatives *be all* and *be all + like* account for 2 and 4 percent, respectively. This distribution demonstrates that speakers of British English in Manchester use the quotative *be like* more frequently than other quotative forms.

**Table 1: Overall Distribution of the Quotatives**

QUOTATIVES	PERCENTAGE (%)	NUMBER
<i>Be like</i>	46	1906
<i>Say</i>	29	1182
<i>Go</i>	18	746
<i>Think</i>	1	18
<i>Be all</i>	2	80
<i>Be all + like</i>	4	168
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4100</b>



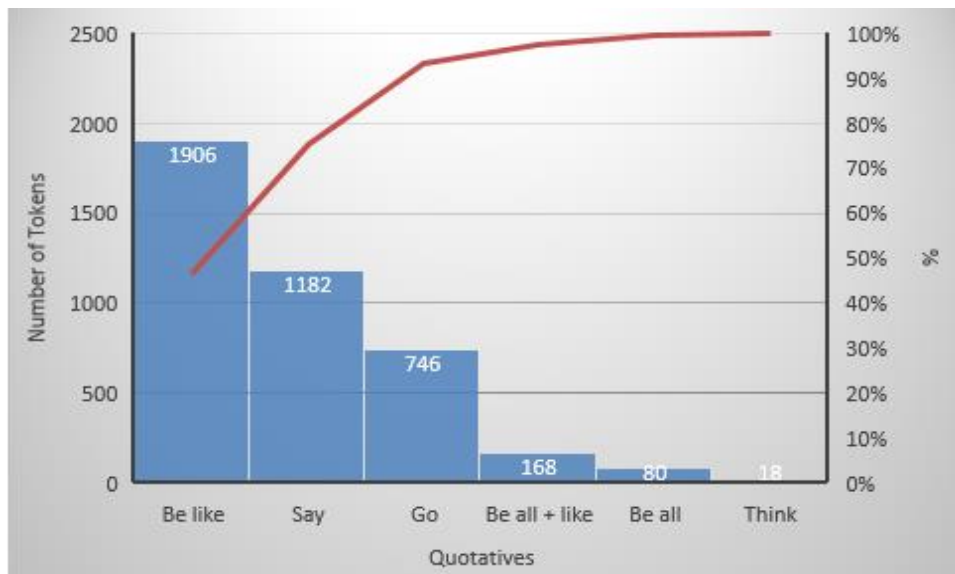


Figure 1: Overall Distribution of the Quotatives

As reported in previous research (Blyth et al. 1990:219), *say* is the most frequently used quotative, consistent with its universal semantic function. In the present study, *be like* emerges as the most frequently used quotative form. While *say* remains robust, *go* is also notable and significant in frequency. Other quotatives such as *think*, *be all* and *be all + like* have a lower frequency in British English. However, these patterns do not reveal the underlying factors that may constrain the use of quotatives. Therefore, we now run statistical analyses of these quotatives, focusing specifically on various factors such as age, gender, regional origin, social class, tense, subject, verb number, and content of the quote.

## 4.2 Multivariate Analysis

This section reports the factors that contribute to the use of *be like* in Manchester, using a multivariate analysis program called Rbrul (Johnson, 2009) for the analysis. Rbrul reports a wealth of information, but I focus on what is crucial for interpreting the results. Rbrul reports deviance, which reflects how well a model fits the data, or how the data deviates from the model's predictions (the smaller the deviance, the

better the fit). It reports degrees of freedom (DF), which indicate the number of parameters in the model, as well as a Grand Mean. Rbrul provides the strength of each factor group, referred to as factor weights. Factor weights above 0.5 favour the application value, while weights below 0.5 disfavour the application value.

Rbrul also reports logodds, which are the raw coefficients for the regression model that measure the effect of size. These logodds indicate the strength of the relationship between a factor and the dependent variable. If logodds are above 0, it indicates a positive correlation between the variables, which is favourable for the application value. Conversely, if the logodds are negative, it indicates a negative correlation, which disfavours the application value. The larger the logodds value, the bigger the effect size. Rbrul further reports percentages for each variant within its cell. Higher factor weights reflect a greater percentage for the corresponding variant. The program also reports likelihood-ratio chi-square tests to assess the significance of each independent variable.

Table 2 summarises the result obtained by running a one-level regression analysis in Rbrul for all the relevant predictors in order to determine the factors that contribute to the use of *be like*. However, all the factors entered for the analysis turned out to be significant at  $p < 0.001$ , with *be like* as the application value. The Table also shows the proportion of the application value for the different intra-linguistic and extra-linguistic factors that are analysed in this study, the number of tokens for each factor with the distribution, the logodds, and the result for centred factor weights. The deviance for this analysis is 4705.092, the Grand Mean is 0.465, while the degree of freedom for all the relevant factors is 17. The P. Value for this analysis is, however, shown in parenthesis by each factor accordingly.

**Table 2: Contribution of Various Factors on the use of *Be like* in British English**

Deviance				4705.092
Df				17
Grand mean				0.465
Factors	Logodds	Tokens	Proportion of Application Value	Centered Factor Weight
GENDER (1.98e-05)				
Male	0.155	2394	0.505	0.539
Female	-0.155	1706	0.410	0.461
AGE (4.463-41)				
Young	0.846	3274	0.523	0.7
Middle	0.090	426	0.308	0.522
Old	-0.935	400	0.158	0.282
SOCIAL CLASS (6.98e-05)				
MC	0.266	3191	0.500	0.566
LMC	-0.118	407	0.359	0.471
WC	-0.149	502	0.331	0.463
REGION (0.549)				
North	0.024	3050	0.465	0.506
South	-0.024	1050	0.465	0.494
IE STATE (2.23e-44)				
T (Thought)	0.840	730	0.779	0.698
G (Gesture)	-0.242	341	0.507	0.44
Q (Said)	-0.598	3029	0.385	0.355

SUBJECT (1.26e-49)				Vif
1 (First Singular)	0.582	1454	0.671	0.642 >2.5
2 (Second)	-0.918	120	0.308	0.285 >2.5
3 (Third Singular)	-0.549	2197	0.358	0.366 >2.5
4 (First Plural)	0.376	98	0.490	0.593 >2.5
5 (Third Plural)	-0.605	231	0.251	0.353 >2.5
VERB NUMBER (0.000773)				
Singular	0.328	3719	0.481	0.581
Plural	-0.328	381	0.310	0.419
TENSE (1.48e-05)				
N (Present)	0.838	1738	0.503	0.698
P (Past)	0.546	2353	0.438	0.633

#### 4.2.1 The Use of *Be like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Gender

There has been a disagreement in the existing literature about whether quotatives are used more frequently by men or women in introducing direct speech. Romaine and Lange (1991) reported that the use of *be like* was more prevalent in females' speech different from what Blyth et.al., (1990) earlier reported that *be like* was more frequent in the speech of males. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) found out that in British English, females use *be like* than males while males, on the other hand, prefer the use of *say* and *go*. They also testified a different effect in the Canadian English reporting *be like* as being barely sensitive to the gender of the speaker while *say* and *go* are confirmed as the quotatives that are gender-sensitive, with males favoured by *go* and females favoured by *say*. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, this study reveals that *be like* is favoured by females with a percentage rate of 51 while the males have 41 percent. Males, on the other hand, prefer *say* and *go* having percentage rates of 32 and 22, with females having 27 percent and 16 percent, respectively. However, this confirms that

females have a high rate of *be like* while males are favoured by *say* and *go* in British English.

Table 3: Percentage Rates of *Be like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Gender

	Be like	Say	Go
Male	41% (698/1703)	32% (541/1703)	22% (364/2392)
Female	51% (1205/2392)	27% (641/2392)	16% (380/2392)

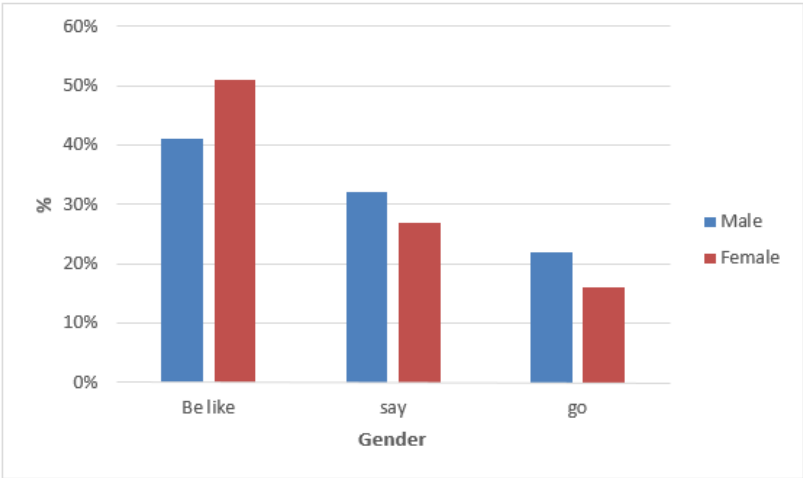


Figure 2: Percentage Rates of *Be like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Gender

4.2.2 The Use of *Be Like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Age

Existing literature reports that speakers from different age groups demonstrate the use of *be like*, *say*, and *go* at very different rates. Blyth et al. (1990) reported that *be like* and *go* are much more frequent in the speech of teenagers and college-age speakers than in the speech of older age groups, who on the other hand are most likely favoured by *say*. Table 4 and Figure 3 display the results of the analysis of rates of *be like*, *say*, and *go* by age. This study confirms that young speakers lead in the use of *be like*, with 52 percent. Middle-aged speakers have 31 percent while old speakers have only 16 percent. For the

quotatives *say*, the reverse is the case where *say*, is favoured by old speakers, with 64 percent. Middle-aged speakers have 42 percent for *say* while young speakers have 23 percent. The quotative *go*, however, is favoured by middle-aged speakers, with 20 percent, followed by older speakers who have 18 percent. Only 17 percent of young speakers use *go*. These results seem intuitively accurate and uncontroversial.

Table 4: Percentage Rates of *Be like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Age

	Be like	Say	Go
Young	52% (1712/3274)	23% (750/3274)	17% (579/3274)
Middle	31% (131/426)	42% (176/426)	22% (93/426)
Old	16% (63/400)	64% (256/400)	18% (74/400)

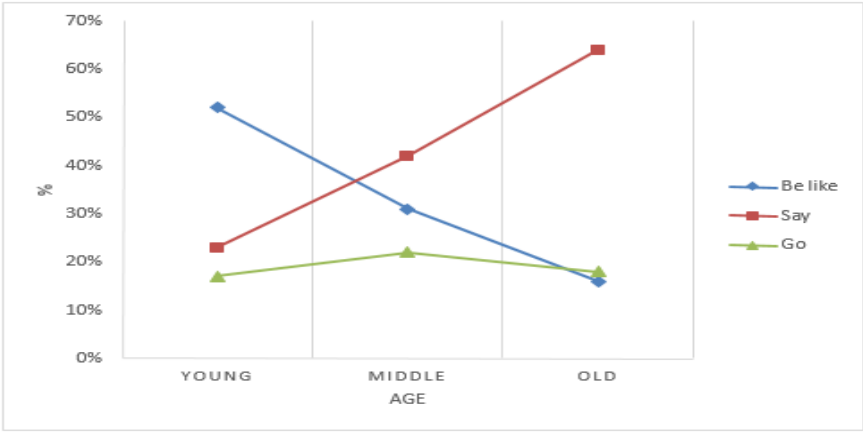


Figure 3: Percentage Rates of *Be like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Age

4.2.3 The Use of *Be Like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Subject (Person and Number)  
 Romaine and Lange (1991) found out that *be like* was restricted to the first-person while the use of *say* and *go* was in favour of the third-person. Ferrara and Bell (1995) have a similar finding with *be like*

favoured in the first-person, while *say* and *go* are in favour of the third-person. They added that there was a dramatic change from the previous sample when nearly half of all tokens of *be like* were used with the third-person subject, which they interpreted as “another indication of increasing grammaticalisation”. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) discovered that in British English, the third-person is favoured by *say*, which is in contrast with what was obtained in Canadian English where the first-person subjects favour *say*. In Table 5 and Figure 4, we found out that both first-person singular and plural are in favour of *be like*, with 67 and 49 percent while *say* has 19 percent in both. The quotative *go* has only 9 (singular) and 14 (Plural) percent. The second-person subject is in favour of *say*, with 38 percent while *be like* and *go* have 31 and 23 percent respectively. For the third-person singular subject, *be like* and *say* have the same result of 36 percent each with *go* having 23 percent. However, the third-person plural is favoured by *go* (34 percent) leaving *be like* and *say* with 26 and 25 percent.

Table 5: Percentage Rates of *Be like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Subject (Person & Number)

	Be like	Say	Go
1 <sup>st</sup> Person Singular	67% (976/1454)	19% (280/1454)	9% (138/1454)
1 <sup>st</sup> Person Plural	49% (48/98)	19% (19/98)	14% (14/98)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Person (You)	31% (37/120)	38% (46/120)	23% (27/120)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Singular	36% (786/2197)	36% (780/2197)	23% (489/2197)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Plural	26% (59/231)	25% (57/231)	34% (78/231)

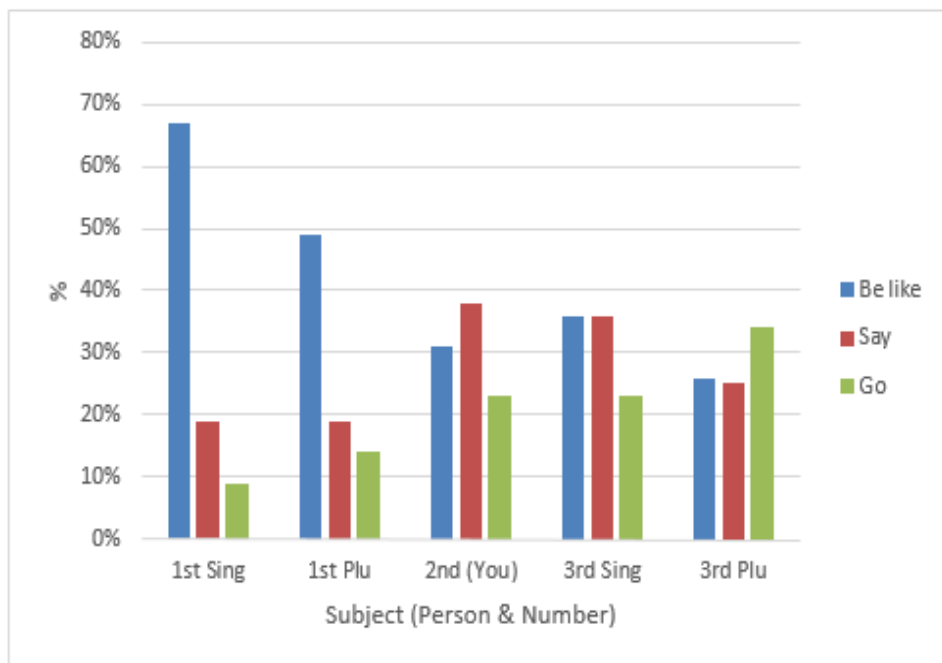


Figure 4: Percentage Rates of *Be like*, *Say*, and *Go* by Subject (Person & Number)

#### 4.2.4 Effect of Gender and Age on the Use of *Be like*

Although not all studies agree as to whether males or females use the *be like* more frequently, in determining what quotative a speaker will use, gender often interacts with other sociolinguistic variables, particularly age. Barbieri (2007) reported that males between the ages of 27 and 40 use *be like* more often than females of the same age, while females between the ages of 16 and 26 use *be like* more than their male peers. Tagliamonte and D'Arcy (2004) discovered that females between the ages of 17 and 19 use the variant more frequently. Table 6 and Figure 5 show the results of the interaction test between gender and age for *be like*. Young females (56 percent) use the variant more frequently than their male peers (46 percent), but this is reversed for the middle-aged female speakers where the male speakers (33 percent) use *be like* more frequently than females (29 percent) the same age group. The old female speakers (16 percent) use the variant slightly more than their male peers (15 percent). This suggests that speakers change their



frequency of use of *be like* according to age since females use it more at a young age while males use it more frequently when they grow older. In old age, the frequency changes as females seem to favour the use of *be like* more than males of the same age group. In sum, gender and age interact significantly to affect speakers’ use of *be like*.

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of Gender and Age on the Use of *Be like*

	Male	Female
Young	46% (595/1280)	56% (1114/1990)
Middle	33% (74/229)	29% (57/197)
Old	15% (29/194)	16% (34/205)

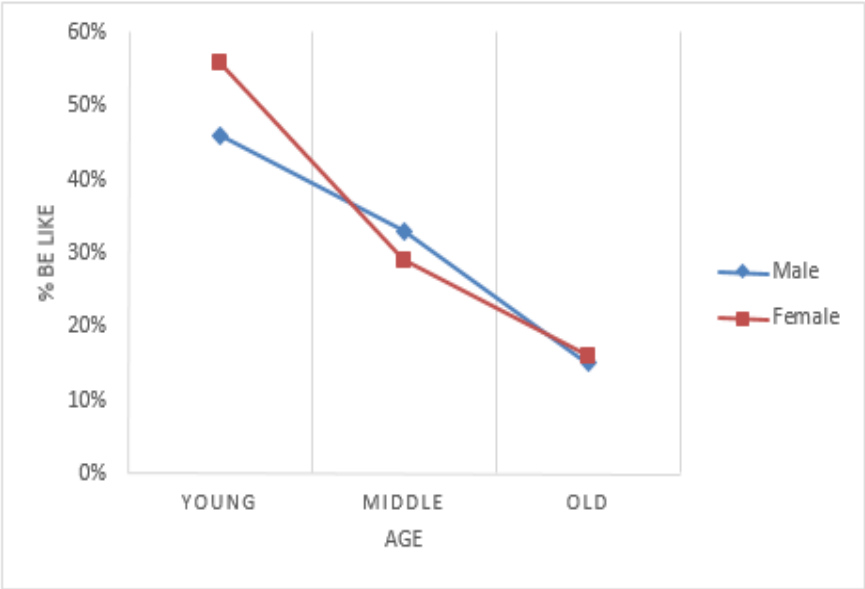


Figure 5: Interaction between Gender and Age on the Use of *Be like*

#### 4.2.5 Effect of Age and Social Class on the Use of *Be like*

Most of the existing literature agreed that young speakers are found to be the most frequent users of *be like*. This we see in the studies by Blyth et al. (1990), Romaine and Lange (1991) Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999), Buchstaller (2006), Buchstaller and D’Arcy (2009), and Buchstaller (2011). The results in Buchstaller and D’Arcy (2009) show that non-professionals tend to use *be like* more frequently in both American and British English, but in New Zealand, it is the opposite. Macaulay (2001) discovered that *be like* is a middle-class form in Scottish English. Table 7 and Figure 6 report that middle-class speakers (54 percent) use *be like* more frequently than lower middle-class (44 percent) and working-class (40 percent) at a younger age. In middle age, the reverse is the case: working-class (36 percent) use the variant more frequently than the lower middle-class (31 percent) and middle-class (21 percent). In old age, middle-class speakers (17 percent) use *be like* more frequently than lower middle-class (14 percent) and working-class speakers (14 percent). In sum, age and social class interact significantly to affect speakers’ use of *be like*.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of Age and Social Class on the Use of *Be like*

	MC	LMC	WC
Young	54% (1498/2764)	44% (107/243)	40% (107/267)
Middle	28% (59/212)	31% (28/91)	36% (44/123)
Old	17% (38/215)	14% (10/73)	14% (15/112)

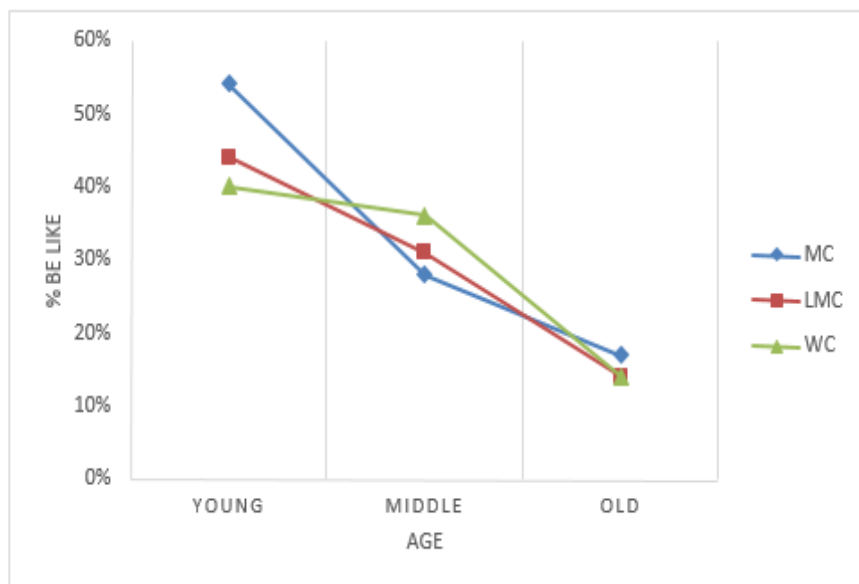


Figure 6: Interaction between Age and Social Class on the Use of *Be like*

#### 4.2.6 Effect of Gender and IE State (Type of Quote) on the Use of *Be like*

The effect of gender has been studied thoroughly in the existing literature. However, it is also clear that gender is insufficient for accounting for the internal/external state of the speaker on the use of sociolinguistic variables like *be like*. Tagliamonte and Hudson (1999) reported that in both British and Canadian English *be like* is favoured by non-lexicalised sound and internal dialogue, though likely to be used for direct speech. Table 8 and Figure 7 here show the results of statistical analysis of the interaction test between gender and the IE state (type of quote) for *be like*. Female speakers (42 percent) are more frequently in use of *be like* when saying something clearly and aloud than male speakers (34 percent). Female speakers maintain the lead in expressing a gesture or non-lexicalised sound with 58 percent while male speakers have 45 percent. However, both females and males appear to have the same frequency of 78 percent in using the variant to express something thought but not said. In sum, there is no significant

interaction between gender and age as females seem to maintain the lead and so there is no effect on the use of the *be like*.

Table 8: Cross-tabulation of Gender and IE State (Type of Quote) on the Use of *Be like*

	Thought	Gesture	Said
Male	78% (207/265)	41% (60/149)	34% (431/1286)
Female	78% (359/462)	58% (112/191)	42% (728/1731)

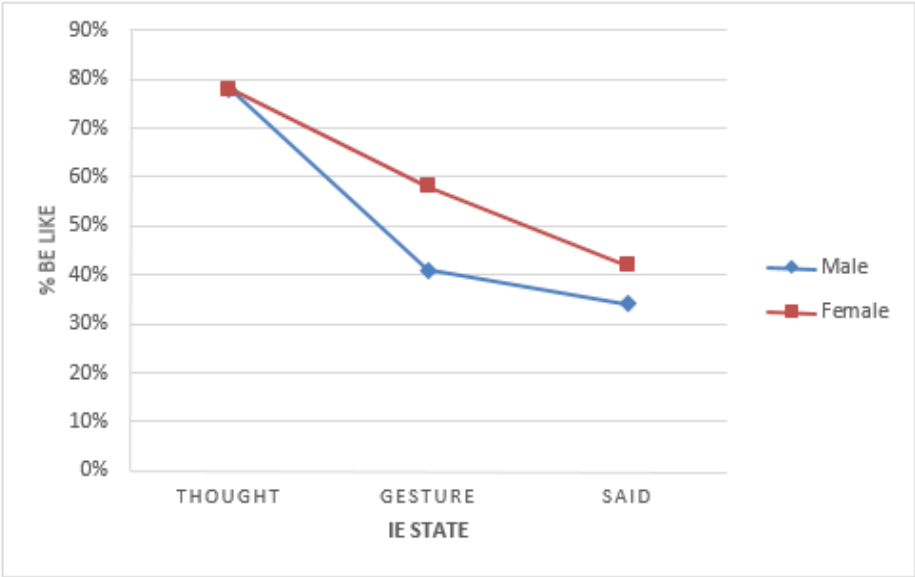


Figure 7: Interaction between Gender and IE State (Type of Quote) on the Use of *Be like*

### 5. Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The major findings of this study demonstrate that the quotative *be like* is the most widely used quotative among speakers of British English

and this quotative form performs the discourse functions of introducing thoughts, non-lexicalised sounds or gestures, and inner monologue or thoughts. Quotatives are associated with very different categories of speakers. For instance, the use of *be like* is associated with middle-class teenage girls. The use of *say* is indicative of old lower middle-class males while *go* is a marker of uneducated working-class males. The use of *be like* is favoured by the first-person (singular and plural) while the use of *say* is found to be favoured by the second-person (you). The use of *go* is favoured by the third-person plural while *be like* is preferred in the third-person singular. Female users of *be like* use it more in expressing gestures or non-lexicalised sounds and in saying something aloud than the male users, but both male and female users prefer using *be like* to express thought. The findings further reveal a significant interaction in the use of *be like* between gender and age; and between age and social class, but there is no significant interaction between gender and IE state (type of quote) in the use of *be like*.

Overall, this study has reported on *be like*, *say*, *go*, *think*, *be all* and *be all + like* in British English, with emphasis on *be like* as it diffuses further into the quotative system. It is necessary to point out that *be like* is undergoing an advanced stage of grammaticalization, taking on new functions as it develops (Tagliamonte & Hudson, 1999). The statistical analyses have answered the key questions earlier asked in this study. The diffusion of *be like* is giving it a functional versatility to maintain its influence in language change. This versatility is evident in both its meanings and in its role within discourse. The findings of this study suggest that further studies on the quotative system will be uniquely fascinating when they investigate the new trend of language change beyond British English, particularly in the area of grammaticalization or when they explore the perceptual reality of different quotative forms.

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## **Scope of Intelligibility in Pronunciation of English Vowel and Stress for Teaching Purposes**

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### **Abstract**

*The easiest way to identify the gap between a native speaker and non-native speaker of a language is through the pattern of pronouncing the language. Unlike any other languages in the world, English language is a special language that places an emphasis on stress. This stress is the key to actualize English Received Pronunciation (RP). Understanding the concept of stress is practically impossible without a thorough understanding of English vowels. This is a missing link in our pattern of learning the language. And that is why it is very difficult for many Nigerians to pronounce some English words perfectly with the middle vowels. This paper x-rays the need to expand the teaching of vowel sounds which would help the learners to appreciate the meaning of stress and how it guarantees correct pronunciation. The paper examines the weak and strong forms of the vowels and guides the readers on how function words are pronounced in rapid speech. To raise the consciousness of how stress changes pronunciation patterns, some words are grouped to correct common mistakes in pronouncing English words. The analysis of this paper therefore shows that the environment of a vowel and the number of syllables in a word determine its actualization. Also, the sheer understanding of weak and strong forms helps to appreciate how to teach students to read in rapid speech.*



**Keywords:** stress, vowel, weak and strong form, native and non-native speakers, intelligibility,

## Introduction

Apart from the fact that British power colonized Nigeria, the country's diversity in culture and ethnicity deepens the need for the users of English language to use it specially especially in the aspects of pronunciation. English language is a compulsory subject from primary school education system to the tertiary institution in Nigeria, and experts keep working on the curriculum of the language to ensure that the language is well taught.

However, our efforts to use the language are ruined by poor pronunciation. Modern private schools step up the game by employing language experts to teach their learners diction, yet all to no avail. Though this effort helps to some levels, Aitchison (2008) relates that Noam Chomsky has established that, language learning or acquisition in its originality is not achieved through imitation (1957). If a diction master pronounces 'enter' as /entə/ with the vowel of the first syllable as /e/, the learners should not be blamed if they pronounce the word 'encounter' by realising the vowel of the first syllable as /e/, thus /eŋ'kauntə/ when the correct pronunciation is /ɪŋ'kauntə/.

Furthermore, classroom experience has helped to know that Nigerian curriculum and English textbooks from primary school to tertiary levels do not markedly place an emphasis on why a concept like the central vowels /ʌ/, /ɜ:/ and schwa /ə/ should be deeply studied before flipping to the page of English stress (and accidentally, the central vowels are not found in Nigerian major languages). The direction of our English books is examination focus. The contents, arrangement and focus of the textbooks of English on vowels and stress deny learners the chance of attaining pronunciation intelligibility of English sounds. A student can simply memorise the rule that states that multi-syllabic words ending in '-ion' will be stressed on the penultimate syllable, but surprisingly that student will still pronounce the word 'recitation' by realising the vowel of the second syllable as /aɪ/ thus voicing /risaɪteɪʃn/ which is wrong.

Therefore, this paper comes up with a model to call the attention of the language experts and teachers of English language to the need to improve the teaching of the central vowels of the English language as well as the weak and the strong forms so as to systematically teach English stress (not by coded exam focus stress placement rules). And that is the only way English words can be pronounced with Received Pronunciation (RP). This paper x-rays the need to study deeply so as to understand that function words pronounce in isolation will change to weak forms when used in rapid speeches. It is for instance a mistake to realise the glottal /h/ in 'him' when used in the middle of a rapid speech such as *He told him a story* hɪ təʊld ɪm ə stɔːri. Also, the concept of reduced vowels is clearly explained to detect the place of the primary stress.

### **Pronunciation Intelligibility**

Some people are naturally blessed with the skill of using a language to write effectively. However, ability to write perfectly in English language as a non-native speaker does not translate to mean that one can pronounce the language better. Then what is meant by having a language pronunciation intelligibility. Kenworthy (1987, p. 13) views intelligibility as 'being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation. She further explains that, intelligibility is not different from understandability. According to Munro and Derwing (1995), intelligibility is defined as the degree or extent to which listeners decipher the intended message of a speaker.

From these definitions, it is safe to draw a conclusion that a non-native speaker's intelligibility of English language pronunciation is determined by the feedback listeners give to what is said. This also paves the way to establish that before a speech can be understood clearly by the listeners, it must be produced exactly or approximately as the phonetic and phonological structure of the language demands. Then as a non-native speaker, the chances to attain English pronunciation intelligibility are two folds: having the privilege of being trained by language experts and to live in environment where people speak correct form of the target language. Therefore, a standard training of how

English vowels behave and their relationship with stress from language experts is a parameter to achieve language intelligibility.

### The Weak and the Strong Syllable

The quest to understand how to pronounce English words better does not start and end with *stress*. Rather, the journey starts from the clear understanding of English vowels which determine the syllable of English words that will be strong and weak. And interestingly, nobody understands what syllable means without a sheer knowledge of English vowels. English language has twenty vowels. Twelve of them are known as pure vowels. That is, the sound is one. The remaining eight are called diphthongs. That is, two sounds glide together as one.

List of English Vowels and their categorization

**Table 1.0 English Pure Vowels (Monophthongs)**

Symbol	Example	Tongue Position	Height	Lip Rounding
/i:/	read/ri:l/, feel /fi:l/	Front	High	Unrounded
/ɪ/	sit /sɪt/baby/'beɪ.bi/	Front	Near-high	Unrounded
/e/	beg/beg/any/'eni/	Front	Mid	Unrounded
/æ/	at/kæt/fat/fæt/	Front	Low	Unrounded
/ɑ:/	part/pɑ:t/palm/pɑ:m	Back	Low	Unrounded
/ɒ/	pot/pɒt/swallow/'swɒ.ləʊ/	Back	Low	Rounded
/ɔ:/	court/kɔ:t/law /lɔ:/	Back	Mid-low	Rounded
/ʊ/	cook /kʊk/should/fʊd/	Back	Near-high	Rounded
/u:/	goose /gu:s/blue/blu:/	Back	High	Rounded
/ʌ/	but/bʌt/won /wʌn/	Central	Mid	Unrounded
/ɜ:/	girl/gɜ:l/person/'pɜ:.sən/	Central	Mid	Unrounded
/ə/ (schwa)	about/ə'baʊt/father/'fɑ:.ðə/	Central	Mid	Unrounded

## English Diphthongs

Table 1.1 Closing Diphthongs (move toward a closer vowel)

Symbol	Example Word	Glide Movement
/eɪ/	face/feɪs/, day /deɪ/	/e/ → /ɪ/
/aɪ/	price/prɑɪs/, high /haɪ/	/a/ → /ɪ/
/ɔɪ/	choice/tʃɔɪs/, boy /bɔɪ/	/ɔ/ → /ɪ/
/əʊ/	goat, /ɡəʊt/, show/ʃəʊ/	/ə/ → /ʊ/
/oʊ/	goat, /ɡəʊt/	/o/ → /ʊ/
/aʊ/	mouth/maʊθ/, now/naʊ/	/a/ → /ʊ/

Table 1.2 Centering Diphthongs (move toward /ə/)

Symbol	Example Word	Glide Movement
/ɪə/	near, /nɪə/, here /hɪə/	/ɪ/ → /ə/
/eə/	square, /skweə/, hear /heə/	/e/ → /ə/
/ʊə/	cure, /kjʊə/, tour /tʊə/	/ʊ/ → /ə/

These vowels are categorised by their phonetic features. It is however markedly importance to mention that without a vowel (or syllabic consonant) the concept 'syllable' is practically Impossible. This implies that English vowels need be thoroughly studied to help attain Pronunciation intelligibility. Then, what are the strong and weak forms?

According to Skandera and Burleigh (2005, p. 72), all English vowels have their full and original sound quality except the central weak vowel /ə/ (schwa). Therefore, any vowel that has its full original sound, except schwa, is referred to as a strong vowel. Putting it in a clearer perspective, some phonological transformations (reduction or weakening) can make a strong vowel to become weak. For example,

the /e/ in 'red' is strong but the same /e/ is reduced in the word 'repeat' to /ɪ/ /rɪpi:t/. Also, the 'o' /əʊ/ in 'told' is strong, but it is reduced to /ə/ in the first syllable of 'potato' /pə'tætəʊ/.

Roach (2009, p.64) further explained that weak vowels are known with:

- i. The schwa /ə/;
- ii. The close front unrounded vowel /ɪ/ back;
- iii. Close back rounded vowel /ʊ/

A clearer explanation to this is that since in English words, by rules, two strong syllables cannot exist in a single word, the above vowels will be regarded as weak if they occur in words of two or more syllables. Example is:

- i. father /fæ'ðə/ = fæ is stressed, ðə is unstressed
- ii. baby /'beɪbɪ/ = beɪ is stressed, bɪ is unstressed

Apart from the aforementioned vowels, syllabic consonants also cause a syllable to be weak. Some English syllables contain no natural vowels, but the consonant l, r, or the nasals behave the vowels of this variant of syllable.

### Syllabic consonant l

Whenever l occurs a consonant and follows up by /e/ at the end of a word, that is syllabic consonant. Examples include:

bottle /'bɒtl/bɒ (stressed)                      tl (unstressed as syllabic consonant)

trouble /trʌbl/ trʌ (stressed)                      bl (unstressed as syllabic consonant)

### Syllabic n

Out of the three nasals, the alveolar n is very common in forming a syllabic consonant. The general rule is that when n ends a word and preceded by letter 'e' or 'o' it is a syllabic consonant, e.g.

threaten /'θretn/, The normal pronunciation is /'θretən/

person /pɜːsn/

There is an exception to the above rule as pointed out by Roach (2009, p. 69) that *n* is not usually found after consonant *l*, *tʃ*, *dʒ*. With this, the 'e' in the word 'sullen' should be reduced to /ə/ and thereby not a syllabic consonant, sullen /sʌlən/. The same rule is applicable to:

kitchen /kɪtʃən/ pigeon /pɪdʒən/

With this above rule, it becomes clear that the vowel that produces a natural weak syllable is the schwa sound /ə/ (explanation on what make other vowels to be weak will come up later). Apart from this, syllabic consonants also cause a syllable to be weak.

## The English Stress

In term of stress position, languages of the world are broadly categorized into fixed-stress languages and free-stress languages (McMahon 2002, p. 119). English language is an example of a fixed-stressed language where the primary stress always falls on a particular syllable of a given word. This could be in at the initial, middle and last syllable. The Yoruba language in Nigeria is a perfect example of a non-fixed-stressed language because it tonal in nature (Akinlabi, 2004). With three level of tones, (high, mid and low) a single word can produce more than three meanings, e.g. the word 'ogun' can produce meanings such as:

- i. Ògún" (Low-High tones) – This means "medicine" or "charm". Ò (low tone) + gún (high tone)
- ii. "Ògùn" (Low-Low tones) – This refers to "Ogun," the god of iron and war in Yoruba traditional religion.
- iii. Ògún (high-low tones)—This can mean perspiration (sweat) and so on

## Then, what is Stress?

Simply put, Yule (2010), defined stress is the emphasis placed on a certain syllable within certain words or certain words within certain sentences. In every word, a particular syllable must be high, loud or

prominent than others. Roach (2009) pointed out that understanding the two levels of stress is key to correct pronunciation. The stressed syllable is called the primary stress while the unstressed is secondary. For example, in the word ‘restriction’ /rɪˈstrɪkʃən/ the primary stress is on the middle syllable /-strɪk-/ while the first syllable /rɪ-/ takes the secondary stress because it is a bit weak. But we need to account for the last syllable /-ʃən/. What is its name? What is its level in stress?

A simple answer to this question is what extends the level of stress to three (unstressed syllable). Thus, the /-ʃən/ in /rɪˈstrɪkʃən/ is called the tertiary level. (ibid, 2009, p. 75). It is crucial to note that the vowels that help to identify unstressed syllable as mentioned earlier are ə,ɪ,ʊ or the syllabic consonants. Thus, the unstressed syllables belong to the secondary and tertiary. The tertiary level is weaker than the secondary level. The illustration below explains better:

Table 1.3 Constitution /kɒstiˈtjuːʃ(ə)n/

Syllable 1	Syllable 2	Syllable 3	Syllable 4
kɒ	sti	tjuː	ʃ(ə)n or ʃn
Weak (secondary)	Weaker (tertiary)	Strong (primary)	Weaker (tertiary)

A sheer understanding of the above analysis goes a long way to master how to pronounce English words. According to Ladefoged and Johnson (2015), stress has several different functions in English but the key functions are:

- iv. to give special emphasis to a word or contrast one word with another in sentence. An example in *anemphasis* is:

*Mr Adam SAW it* (emphasis is on the action word SAW)

An example in contrastis:

*My sister reFUSE to dump the REfuse there.* (contrast between verb and noun)

This also covers the function of syntactic category of a word such as noun, verb and adjective.

In addition, stress markedly helps to know the phonological difference between function words and words that carry meanings. Nouns, lexical verbs and adjectives carry meaning while prepositions, auxiliary verbs and some pronouns are function words. For example, function words become weak or reduce in the middle of a sentence, e.g.

*His father beat his mother.* hɪz fæðə bi:t ɪz mʌðə

The /h/ of the *his* at the beginning is realised because it starts the sentence while the second one is deleted because it appears at the middle of the sentence.

### **Between Stress Placement Rules and Correct Pronunciation**

The key challenge this paper tends to proffer some solutions to is how to determine the English syllable that will carry a primary stress in a word of two or more syllables so as to ascertain the correct pronunciation. In French language, the stress is very easy to predict as it usually falls on the last syllable. In Polish, the penultimate syllable often takes the stress while the first syllable often takes the stress in Czech (Roach, 2009, p.76). English language is not like this, and this is the sole reason why non-native speakers of English often find it difficult to determine the appropriate syllable to stress.

#### **a. Stress on two syllabic words**

In a single syllabic word, the vowel is considered strong, and thereby stressed. The actual phonotactics start from two-syllable words. According to Roach (2009, p. 88), ‘In the case of simple two-syllable words, either the first or the second syllable will be stressed—not the both.’ The general tendency, as Roach put it, is that verbs of two syllables are stressed nearer the end while the stress falls at the beginning for nouns. From this position, this paper shall expand it by referring to the general tendency as the General Rule (GR). Meanwhile, certain situations can affect the GR and



thereby change the position of the stress. This will be referred to as a Situational Rule (SR). The following general phonology rules, according to Roach (2009, p. 88), are the principles to explain how the SR can influence the GR:

- v. The vowels ə,ɪ,ʊ are considered weak and the syllable that embodies them becomes weak either.
- vi. The diphthong /əʊ/ becomes unstressed at the final syllable and even at the beginning when a stronger vowel exists therein, e.g. hotel /həʊ'tel/.

Starting with verbs of two syllables, the GR is that the final syllable should be stressed, e.g.

- (i) repeat /rɪ'pi:t/      (ii) apply /ə'plai/      (iii) swallow /'swɒləʊ/
- (ii) copy /'kɒpi/

In (i) repeat /rɪ'pi:t/, the GR and SR rules work together. The vowel of the first syllable makes the syllable to be weak and while the second one is strong. Besides, the word is a verb. The same thing applies in (ii). But that is not the case in (iii) swallow /'swɒləʊ/ as the SR dominates the GR. The first syllable is stressed because the diphthong /əʊ/ does not take a stress at the end of a word. The same thing happens in (iv).

However, it is possible to have the same vowel in two syllables of a word. If this happens, the GR must be adhered to, e.g. maintain /meɪn'teɪn/.

In the case of noun with two syllables, the GR is that the stress often falls on the first syllable, but the position of SR can simply change the GR, e.g.

Examples of two-syllable nouns stressed at the initial syllables

- seller /'selə/      father /'fæðə/      pocket /'pɒkɪt/

Above examples are controlled by the general GR because all the vowels at the initial syllable are strong.

Examples of two-syllable nouns stressed at the final syllables

hotel /həʊ'tel/ police /pə'li:s/ resort /rɪ'zɔ:t/ design /dɪ'zain/

saloon /sə'lun/ and balloon /bə'lu:n/guitar /gɪ'tɑ:/

Adjectives and nouns share the same rule. In two-syllable adjectives, the first syllable is stressed except otherwise, e.g.

Adjectives stressed on the first syllables

better /'betə/noble /'nəʊbəl/happy /'hæpi/clever /'klevə/simple /'sɪmpəl/

Adjectives stressed on the final syllables

afraid /ə'freɪd/correct /kə'rekt/ polite /pə'laɪt/divine /dɪ'vaɪn/

However, what is applicable to verbs is applicable to adjectives whereby the GR will be adhered to if the verbs of the two syllables are both strong, e.g.

stingy /'stɪndʒi/honest /'ɒnɪst/

## b. Three Syllabic Words

This is where the understanding of studentson weak and strong vowels in English syllable can be tested. The focus here is not whether a word is a noun or a verb or an adjective, but the focus is that in the three syllables, which one has primary, secondary and probably tertiary level of stress. Note also that the three syllabic words here are for root words and not words with affixation. Let us examine the words below (capital letters shall be used here to indicate the syllable with the primary stress):

comPUter /kəm'pju:tə/ poTAto /pə'teɪ təʊ /enterTAIN /entə'teɪn/

CAmera /'kæməɹə/QUAlity /'kwɒlɪtɪ/

From *computer* to *quality*, the understanding of the weak vowels and the strong ones is the easiest formula to know the primary stress of the

above words. It is important to note that the primary stress is pronounced louder than secondary which will be a bit louder than the tertiary stress.

### How Stress Affects Pronunciation of Poly-syllabic words

Some English words are more than three syllables. Morphological processes of affixation expand words and affect the placement of stress which affects the pronunciation of the words. The illustration below defines affixation simply:

Table 1.4 MISCALCULATION

mis	calculate	tion
prefix	root	suffix

The suffix affects stress placement and pronunciation of English language. For instance, in the word *conVERSE*/kən'vɜ:s/, the stress is on the second syllable, but when it is extended to the noun form, *converSation* /kən.və'seɪ.ʃn/ two things happen that change the pronunciation pattern. The first is that the suffix *-ion* shifts the stress to the second but the last syllable (penultimate) while the second effect is that the vowel in *-ver-* is reduced to schwa sound. With this, it will be wrong to pronounce *-ver-* louder in *conversation*. Other suffixes that affect stress and pronunciation include:

*-ive, -ty, -ious, -eous, -ic, -ial, -graphy.*

There are numbers of suffixes that do not affect stress such as *-ment, -ness, -al, -able*(ibid.) and so on. It is crucial to note for the sake of awareness that compound words affect stress and change pronunciation. For instance, in the word *break*/breɪk/, the vowel 'ea' are realised as a diphthong /eɪ/ but when combined with *fast*, the diphthong /eɪ/ changes to /e/, thus *breakfast* /brekfəst/. The General Rule here is that, often, the first word takes the stress if two words are combined as a compound word. There are plenty of examples in the

English dictionaries and a lot from literatures of phonetics and phonology.

Generally, vowels cause stress to fall and this fall reduces another vowel to schwa; delete another vowel or consonant or change [e] to /ɪ/ or [a] to /ɪ/. Below are some groups of words adopted from Eyisi (2004) collection of mispronounced words to show how stress determines the behaviour of some vowels in some words.

- (a) Words with reduced vowels: The underlined vowels are reduced or changed from [e] and [a] to the pronunciation of /ɪ/ sound:

knowledge – /'nɒlɪdʒ/ exhausted – /ɪg'zɔːstɪd/ example – /ɪg'zɑːmpəl/ challenge – /'tʃælɪndʒ/ dishonest – /dɪs'ɒnɪst/ edition – /ɪ'dɪʃən/

emeritus – /ɪ'merɪtəs/ erroneous – /ɪ'rəʊniəs/ integral – /'ɪntɪgrəl/ necessitate – /nɪ'sesɪteɪt/ palace – /'pælɪs/ preface – /'prefɪs/

sedition – /sɪ'dɪʃən/ seduce – /sɪ'djuːs/ target – /'tɑːɡɪt/

- (b) Words with deleted vowel sounds

dialogue – /'daɪəlɒg/ prologue – /'prəʊlɒg/ synagogue – /'sɪnəɡɒɡ/

guarantee – /,gærən'tiː/ colleague – /'kɒliːɡ/ guinea – /'ɡɪni/

sovereign – /'sɒvrɪn/ inseparable – /ɪn'seprəbəl/ vegetable – /'vedʒtəbəl/

comfortable – /'kʌmfətəbəl/ interesting – /'ɪntrəstɪŋ/ chocolate – /'tʃɒklət/

- (c) Words with vowels reduced to schwa /ə/: The fact is that many words contain vowels reduced to schwa sound but some are necessary to be highlighted for many non-native speakers pronounce them as the primary stress.

category – /'kætəɡəri/

cupboard – /'kʌbɔːrd/

favourite – /'feɪvərɪt/

laudable – /'lə:dəbəl/  
 tortoise – /'tɔ:təs/

mosquito – /mə'ski:tʊ/

chocolate – /'tʃɒklət/

(d) Words with deleted consonant sounds

chassis – /'ʃæsi/ mortgage – /'mɔ:ɡɪdʒ/ sachet –  
 /'sæʃet/ buffet (meal) – /'bʊfeɪ/

## Weak and Strong Forms

In English language, prepositions, conjunctions, some pronouns, articles and primary auxiliary verbs are referred to as function words because they don't have a specific meaning like nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. When function words are in isolation, they are strong but when used within sentences in a rapid speech, they become weak. An example is the word *his*; when it starts a sentence, it is strong but turns weak in the middle, e.g.

Strong form: His bag is good hiz bæɡ ɪz ɡʊd

Weak form: The bag is for his brother ðə bæɡ ɪz fɔ:r ɪz'brʌðə

The above example is evidence that the glottal sound /h/ is not realised at the middle of sentence with function words. Meanwhile, some function words have special rules to be used as weak or strong. For example, *the* is always weak when a consonant appears in front, e.g. *The bag* ðə bæɡ but it is strong when used with a vowel sound like *The egg* ði eg. The same thing is applicable to the indefinite article *a* and *an*, e.g. *a cap* ə kæp (weak), *an egg* ən eg.

## Conclusion

The secret of English pronunciation intelligibility is not only on papers. It rather requires constant practice of speaking the language; listen to people who speak it better; listen to broadcast stations that broadcast news with standard English presentation and study myriads of words in good dictionaries. The knowledge of English vowels and how they determine the place of stress in English words is a complete guide to

standard pronunciation. The paper exhumes the behaviour of English vowels with stress place placement rules which determine how English words are pronounced. Pedagogically, it is a guide for teachers of English language to improve the pronunciation know-how of their learners.

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## **Book Review: An Introduction to English Morphology by Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy**

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### **Abstract**

*In this review, Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy's An Introduction to English Morphology a fundamental textbook with 10 chapters that methodically introduce the study of word production and structure in the English language is critically evaluated. The book addresses historical impacts and cross-linguistic comparisons while examining fundamental morphological processes like as inflection, derivation, compounding, and neologism. A focus on the systematic aspect of word production and the useful role of morphemes in communicating grammatical and semantic meaning are among the book's main contributions that are highlighted in the review. Clarity, logical organization, reader-friendly language, exercises, and suggested readings that support learning are some of the book's strong points. Nevertheless, the assessment also identifies some drawbacks, including the scant attention paid to the link between morphology and phonology and the tiny amount of discussion of alternative morphological theories. The book is regarded as a useful tool for undergraduate students, teachers, self-learners, and linguistic aficionados looking for an understandable and approachable introduction to English morphology in spite of these shortcomings. Although more seasoned researchers might need further readings, the assessment indicates that Carstairs-McCarthy's work is still a vital starting point for those new to the topic.*

**Keyword:** English morphology, word formation, morphemes, linguistic structure, Carstairs-McCarthy.

## 1.0 Introduction

Understanding the structure and development of words, or morphology, is essential to comprehending the English language (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2011). Words follow systematic patterns that dictate their structure and meaning rather than being merely haphazard pairings of letters or sounds (Bauer, 2003). The study of morphology looks at these patterns, examining the formation, modification, and relationships between words (Katamba, 1993). Knowledge of morphology offers important insights into word usage, grammar, and language development (Lieber, 2010). Learners can better understand how words work in a language by studying morphology, which also improves their capacity to evaluate and comprehend linguistic structures (Plag, 2003).

Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy's *An Introduction to English Morphology: Words and Their Structure* (2002) provides a concise and organized overview of this subject. This book, which is part of the Edinburgh Textbooks on the English Language series, is intended primarily for undergraduate students studying English language and linguistics. It is a perfect resource for those who are new to the subject because it clearly explains complicated morphological ideas. Carstairs-McCarthy makes sure that students may interact with morphology without feeling overpowered by technical jargon or abstract ideas by simplifying complex linguistic processes into understandable explanations.

By providing an organized and understandable explanation of important morphological concepts including morphemes, inflection, derivation, and compounding, Carstairs-McCarthy seeks to demystify the complexity of word construction. After providing precise definitions, each topic is illustrated with examples that show how it is used in everyday language usage. The book looks at how words change shape to express multiple grammatical meanings and how morphemes, the smallest meaningful elements of language, combine to make words. It also looks at the methods used to produce new words, demonstrating



how morphology aids in the growth and development of the English language's lexicon.

The book offers hands-on activities that supplement theoretical discussions and assist students in applying morphological concepts to language analysis in real-world contexts. These activities make the study of word creation more participatory and significant by promoting critical thinking and practical application of morphological structures. Through the integration of theory and practice, Carstairs-McCarthy guarantees that readers acquire the analytical abilities necessary for linguistic inquiry and study in addition to understanding morphological principles.

Therefore, for students, teachers, and linguistic aficionados interested in the mechanics of English word development, this book is a vital resource. An Introduction to English Morphology offers insightful information and a solid foundation in the field, regardless of whether one is studying morphology for academic credit or only want to strengthen their grasp of language. It is an essential tool for anyone wishing to understand the complexities of English word production and linguistic structure because of its methodical approach, concise explanations, and useful activities.

## **2.0 Summary of the Book**

The book is structured into ten chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of English morphology.

In the first chapter, the study of morphology is introduced, along with the definition of a "word" and the significance of morphological analysis in comprehending language structure. Moreover, it investigates several classification and analysis methods for words. In the second chapter, words and lexical items are distinguished, and their functions in sentence formulation and dictionaries' arrangement are covered. It also investigates the process by which words are given meanings. The third chapter explores the internal structure of words, presenting important morphological components including morphemes, roots, and affixes (prefixes and suffixes). It also explains how affixation alters the

meaning of words. Inflectional morphology, which distinguishes between regular and irregular inflection patterns in English, is the subject of the fourth chapter. It explains how words change form to indicate grammatical properties like tense, number, and case.

Derivational morphology is examined in the fifth chapter, which explains how new words are created and differentiates it from inflection. It sheds light on how affixes function in word construction. The sixth chapter discusses blends, acronyms, and phrasal words in addition to examining compounding as a word-formation process, in which two or more words come together to generate new meanings. Affixes and the hierarchical arrangement of word components are highlighted in the seventh chapter, which explores the internal structure of words. Morphological productivity is examined in the eighth chapter, which examines the relative productivity of several word-formation processes. Neologisms and the development of language through new word formations are also covered.

The ninth chapter charts the evolution of English morphology across time, emphasizing how Latin, Greek, and Germanic languages influenced the creation of English words. The book's main conclusions are finally summed up in the tenth chapter, which also considers the wider connection between English morphology and linguistic patterns in other languages. Exercises and suggested readings are included in every chapter to improve comprehension and promote more research into the subjects covered.

### **3.0 Results/Key Findings**

With its methodical presentation of word formation, modification, and classification, the book skillfully introduces morphology as a foundational component of language studies. One of its main conclusions is that morphology is a structural element of language, demonstrating that words are developed according to certain patterns like compounding, derivation, and inflection rather than randomly. The way that words change form to convey grammatical relationships and produce new lexical items is governed by these processes.

The function of morphemes as word building blocks is another important discovery. The significance of roots, affixes, and combining forms in forming word structure and meaning is emphasized throughout the text. It illustrates the systematic aspect of language development by explaining how these morphological elements interact to cause variations in word formation. The book also highlights the productivity of word construction, pointing out that morphological laws are dynamic and change throughout time. This evolution demonstrates the dynamic nature of language development by enabling the ongoing formation of new words.

By showing how Latin, Greek, and Germanic languages have greatly influenced English word development, the book also sheds light on the historical impacts on English morphology. This historical viewpoint emphasizes the ways in which language interaction and borrowing have enhanced the complexity and diversity of English morphology. The book also examines the connection between morphology, syntax, and semantics, showing how morphological processes affect word interpretation and sentence structure. It emphasizes how various linguistic elements are interrelated, supporting the notion that morphology interacts with other facets of language to influence meaning and communication rather than operating independently.

## **4.0 Strengths and Weaknesses**

A book review is a critical assessment of a literary work, providing insights into its content, themes, style, and overall impact. This section will examine both the strengths and weaknesses of the book, beginning with its strengths, followed by its weaknesses. Each aspect will be discussed in a separate paragraph, covering the following points:

### **4.1 Strengths**

The book's accessibility and clarity are among its best features. It is a great resource for those who are new to studying morphology since Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy makes difficult linguistic ideas simple and interesting. This book carefully introduces technical vocabulary and clarifies them in plain language, preventing readers from feeling

overwhelmed, in contrast to certain linguistic textbooks that presume prior knowledge. In order to strengthen comprehension, the explanations are also supported with examples that provide real-world illustrations of each idea. Even for people without a solid foundation in linguistics, the author makes the study of morphology more comprehensible by taking a reader-friendly approach.

The book's logical and well-structured format enables readers to gradually increase their morphological knowledge. A seamless learning development is ensured by the introduction of basic ideas in each chapter before going on to more complicated subjects. For instance, before going into more complex topics like word creation and morphological productivity, the book starts with an overview of fundamental morphological units like morphemes and affixes. Readers will find it easier to follow the debate and understand the links between various morphological characteristics thanks to this logical sequencing. Students can concentrate on certain areas of interest without losing coherence because the structured approach also permits selective study and linear reading.

The book provides a thorough and comprehensive exploration of morphology, making it an invaluable resource for both scholars and students. Carstairs-McCarthy delves into both theoretical and practical aspects of word formation, not just basic concepts. He thoroughly explains key morphological phenomena like inflection, derivation, compounding, and productivity, giving readers a comprehensive understanding of how words are formed and modified in English. Additionally, the book discusses the ways in which morphological structures interact with syntax and semantics, giving readers insight into the broader linguistic significance of morphology. This comprehensive approach guarantees that students acquire a deep and holistic understanding of the subject rather than merely memorizing isolated concepts.

Each chapter contains tasks intended to strengthen the ideas discussed in order to improve learning. Students are encouraged to actively interact with the content, assess their comprehension, and apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world linguistic analysis through these

exercises. Exercises are very helpful for self-learners since they provide them a chance to practice on their own. At the conclusion of each chapter, the book also provides suggested readings to help students delve deeper into morphology. The book turns theoretical learning into an interesting and useful experience by adding these interactive and supplemental components.

Carstairs-McCarthy enhances his presentation by citing morphological structures in other languages, even though the book's main focus is English morphology. By offering a comparative viewpoint, these cross-linguistic insights enable readers to observe how various languages handle word generation and alteration. The book promotes a more comprehensive understanding of morphology beyond a single language by pointing out the parallels and discrepancies between English and other languages. In addition to improving the reader's understanding of English morphology, this comparative method piques their curiosity about linguistic variation and typology.

All things considered, *An Introduction to English Morphology* is a clear, easy-to-use, and thorough resource for linguistics students. It is a useful resource for comprehending English word creation and morphological structures because of its comprehensive coverage, logical arrangement, comparative insights, interactive exercises, and clear explanations. Carstairs-McCarthy makes sure that readers acquire both fundamental information and critical thinking abilities by striking a balance between theory and real-world application, which makes this book an excellent introduction to the study of morphology.

## **4.2 Weaknesses**

A primary drawback of the work is its limited discussion of various morphological theoretical stances. Although Carstairs-McCarthy offers a strong grounding in conventional linguistic theories, he skips over detailed examinations of opposing or alternative frameworks. Without going into great detail about other significant methods like Optimality Theory, Construction Morphology, or Distributed Morphology, the book mostly uses a typical generative approach to present morphology. Therefore, the theoretical discussion may be a little simplistic for

researchers or students looking for a comparative analysis of various morphological models. Due to this constraint, the book is more suited as an introduction than as a thorough theoretical resource for sophisticated linguistic research.

The book's scant examination of the connection between morphology and phonology is another flaw. Although the author does a good job of explaining morphological processes like compounding, inflection, and affixation, he does not fully discuss how phonological limitations affect these processes. There is a knowledge gap about the relationship between phonology and word creation since subjects like prosodic morphology, morphophonemic alternations, and the phonological conditioning of morpheme selection are only briefly discussed. Additional readings from more specialist works in morphophonology may be required to augment the book's content for students who are interested in the intersection of morphology and phonology.

An Introduction to English Morphology does not address the needs of advanced academics or researchers looking for in-depth theoretical arguments because its main target consists of undergraduate students. For those who are unfamiliar with morphology, the book is a great place to start because it emphasizes fundamental ideas and real-world applications. It is devoid of in-depth discussion of recent arguments, methodological advancements, and empirical research in morphological studies, nevertheless. Scholars seeking to delve deeper into typological distinctions, morphological diversity, or the latest advancements in the area will probably need to refer to more specialized texts and journal articles.

The book is nonetheless a very helpful tool for students just starting to study morphology in spite of these flaws. Its merits in clarity, structure, and comprehensiveness make it a useful beginning text, despite its fairly restricted theoretical depth and incomplete exploration of the phonological aspects of morphology. More specialized morphological studies can be added to this book to enable advanced readers fill in the gaps in phonological interaction and theoretical engagement.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

*An Introduction to English Morphology* by Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy is a well-structured and accessible textbook that serves as an excellent introduction to the study of word formation. Given its strengths in clarity, logical organization, and comprehensive coverage of fundamental morphological concepts, the book is highly recommended for various audiences.

### **5.1 Undergraduate students in linguistics and English language studies, and related fields.**

Undergraduate students studying linguistics, English, and related subjects will find the book useful. It is a useful tool for understanding the fundamentals of morphology because of its concise explanations, well-structured chapters, and useful activities. Its methodical approach, which systematically presents important ideas like morphemes, inflection, derivation, and compounding, can help students. Furthermore, the tasks in the book enable students to apply and evaluate their own learning.

### **5.2 Educators Teaching Morphology**

This book is a great teaching tool for teachers who are searching for a well-organized and easily understandable morphology textbook. While the clear language guarantees that students can easily understand complex concepts, the logical topic sequencing makes it simple to build course modules. Additionally, each chapter concludes with tasks and suggested readings that give teachers useful resources for class discussions, homework, and evaluations. The book is a well-rounded option for teaching college morphology courses because it emphasizes both theoretical justifications and real-world applications.

### **5.3 Self-learners seeking a Basic Understanding of Morphology**

This book provides an easy-to-use introduction to morphology for those who want to study it on their own. It is appropriate for self-learners without a formal background in linguistics because of its clear explanations and approachable writing style. Each chapter concludes

with exercises that let readers evaluate their understanding and put what they've learned into practice. Self-learners who want to become more knowledgeable in morphology, however, might need to add other readings on different morphological theories and cross-linguistic viewpoints to this book.

### **5.4 Linguistic Enthusiasts Interested in Word Formation**

Readers with a general interest in linguistics will also benefit from the book, especially those who are interested in the structure and formation of English words. The book offers valuable insights that can improve one's understanding of language by addressing fundamental subjects including affixation, compounding, and historical impacts on English morphology. Even if its primary purpose is scholarly, it is nonetheless understandable to non-specialists who like to delve into the complexities of word construction.

### **5.6 Concluding Comments**

A useful tool that successfully introduces the science of morphology to a broad audience is *An Introduction to English Morphology*. It is especially helpful for teachers and undergraduate students, although self-learners and language aficionados can also use it as a reference. Advanced scholars and students may need to add more specialist materials that examine other theoretical frameworks and the relationship between phonology and morphology in order to overcome its shortcomings. Still, this book is a great place to start for anyone looking for a concise and organized introduction to the topic.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

Overall, *An Introduction to English Morphology* by Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy is an excellent introductory text that simplifies the complexities of word structure in English. The book's clarity, organization, and pedagogical approach make it a useful resource for students beginning their study of linguistics. While it may not be sufficient for advanced research, it serves as a strong foundational text for understanding morphology.



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## **The Novelist as a Social Critic: A New Historicist Reading of Selected Works of Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and "The Novelist as a Teacher" (1988), alongside Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and "Writers in Politics" (1981), to analyze their roles as social critics in Nigerian and Kenyan contexts. Using a New Historicist approach, this paper explores how these works critique colonial and postcolonial power structures. Through a comparative methodology, this paper contrasts Achebe's and Ngugi's strategies to highlight their distinct yet complementary critiques. Achebe's works emphasize British colonialism's cultural erosion, using language and oral tradition as resistance tools, while positioning the writer as an educator. Ngugi's works address colonial violence and postcolonial betrayal, urging political activism through collective consciousness. This comparison reveals their shared commitment to African agency. New Historicism grounds these critiques in their historical moments, highlighting challenges to dominant narratives. The findings underscore the texts' relevance to decolonization debates and propose further postcolonial research. This analysis enriches postcolonial scholarship by showing how narrative engages historical realities to foster societal change.*

**Keywords:** Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, New Historicism, Postcolonial Critique

## **Introduction**

African literary works serve as critical tools for analyzing the continent's historical and social dynamics, particularly colonialism and postcolonial nation-building. Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o stand as central figures whose works scrutinize power structures and advocate for cultural and social equity. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and "The Novelist as a Teacher" (1988), alongside Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and "Writers in Politics" (1981), offer critical perspectives on Nigerian and Kenyan experiences of colonial disruption and postcolonial challenges. Drawing on New Historicism, as developed by scholars like Greenblatt (2000), this paper examines how these authors engage with societal issues, situating their works within their historical settings. New Historicism views texts as products of and contributors to their socio-historical environments, emphasizing power relations and marginalized voices, making it apt for analyzing Achebe and Ngugi's responses to colonial and postcolonial dynamics. While focusing on the select texts, the study acknowledges their broader contributions. It argues that Achebe and Ngugi act as social critics by challenging colonial and postcolonial power structures, affirming cultural identities, and promoting equitable change, with New Historicism illuminating their historical specificity. The paper proceeds as follows: it outlines the New Historicist framework, examines Achebe's and Ngugi's works, compares their approaches, and evaluates their impact.

## **Theoretical Framework: New Historicism and Social Critique**

To analyze the works of Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o as social critiques, this study employs New Historicism. It is a critical approach that situates texts within their socio-historical contexts to uncover the interplay of power, ideology and cultural dynamics. Developed in the 1980s by scholars like Stephen Greenblatt, New Historicism rejects the notion of texts being autonomous artifacts, instead, it views them as embedded in the political, social, and cultural

forces of their time. This framework is particularly suited to examining Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and "*The Novelist as a Teacher*" (1988), as well as Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and "*Writers in Politics*" (1981), which engage directly with the historical realities of colonialism and postcolonial state formation in Nigeria and Kenya.

New Historicism operates on several core principles that guide this analysis. First, it emphasizes the interconnectedness of textual production and historical context. It posits that works reflect and shape the power structures of their era (Gikandi, 2000). For Achebe and Ngugi, this means their texts are not merely narratives but active responses to colonial domination and postcolonial disillusionment. *Things Fall Apart* critiques the disruption of Igbo society under British rule, while *A Grain of Wheat* interrogates the unfulfilled promises of Kenyan independence. By situating these works within their respective periods (late 19th-century Nigeria and mid-20th-century Kenya) New Historicism illuminates how they contest colonial narratives and advocate for indigenous agency.

Additionally, New Historicism decenters the text, treating literary and non-literary sources as equally valid for understanding historical dynamics. This approach allows for a broader examination of Achebe and Ngugi's contexts, incorporating colonial records, oral histories and their own essays alongside their novels (Veese, 1989). For instance, Achebe's essay articulates the novelist's role in countering cultural erasure, complementing the historical critique in *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe, 1988). Similarly, Ngugi's essay calls for political engagement, particularly reinforcing *A Grain of Wheat*'s examination of resistance and betrayal (Thiong'o, 1981). This juxtaposition reveals how their texts participate in a wider cultural discourse, challenging hegemonic ideologies imposed by colonial powers.

Furthermore, New Historicism focuses on power dynamics and the subversion of dominant narratives, drawing on influences like Michel Foucault's theories of discourse and power (Foucault, 1972). Colonialism often constructed narratives that justified exploitation while silencing indigenous voices (Ashcroft et al., 1995). Achebe and Ngugi counter these by foregrounding African perspectives—through

Igbo oral traditions in Achebe's novel or Mau Mau resistance in Ngugi's—exposing the injustices of colonial and postcolonial systems. New Historicism enables this study to analyze how their works dismantle myths of colonial benevolence, such as the “civilizing mission,” and highlight struggles for cultural and political sovereignty.

The relevance of New Historicism to social critique lies in its capacity to uncover marginalized voices and interrogate societal inequities. Achebe and Ngugi's masterpieces serve as platforms for social commentary. Their texts address issues like cultural loss, political corruption and the quest for justice. By applying New Historicism, this analysis reveals how their novels and essays function as interventions in their historical moments, offering alternative narratives that empower African identities. While New Historicism prioritizes context, it complements other postcolonial lenses, advocating for transformative change in postcolonial African societies.

### **Chinua Achebe: Critiquing Colonialism and Cultural Erosion**

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and essay "*The Novelist as a Teacher*" (1988) serve as critical interventions in the historical narrative of British colonialism's impact on Igbo society in Nigeria. Employing a New Historicist approach, this section analyzes how these texts critique the socio-cultural disruptions caused by colonial intervention and assert the value of indigenous identity. By situating Achebe's works within their historical context, examining his use of language and oral tradition, and exploring his conception of the novelist's role, this analysis reveals his function as a social critic who challenges colonial hegemony and advocates for cultural reclamation.

#### **A. Historical Context of *Things Fall Apart***

*Things Fall Apart* is set in the late 19th century, a period marked by the incursion of British colonial administration into Igbo society in southeastern Nigeria. This historical backdrop is central to understanding Achebe's critique of colonialism's destabilizing effects on indigenous social structures, religion, and economic systems. New Historicism emphasizes the text's engagement with its historical

moment. It views a text as both a reflection of and a response to the power dynamics of the era (Greenblatt, 2000). Achebe portrays the precolonial Igbo community of Umuofia as a complex society with established norms, as evidenced by the communal decision-making at the village assembly: “The elders, or *ndichie*, met to hear the case” (Achebe, 1958, p. 12). This depiction counters colonial stereotypes of African societies as chaotic, highlighting their organized governance.

The arrival of British missionaries and administrators disrupts this order, introducing new power structures that undermine traditional authority. Achebe illustrates this through the conversion of individuals like Nwoye to Christianity, which fractures familial and communal ties: “Nwoye’s callow mind was greatly puzzled” by the new religion, leading to his estrangement from his father, Okonkwo (Achebe, 1958, p. 147). This shift reflects the historical imposition of Western ideologies, which eroded Igbo cultural cohesion. The novel’s depiction of colonial courts further underscores this disruption, as they override indigenous justice systems, exemplified when Okonkwo’s clan is powerless against the District Commissioner’s authority: “The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers” (Achebe, 1958, p. 176). Through these portrayals, Achebe critiques the historical processes that marginalized Igbo agency, aligning with New Historicism’s focus on power relations.

## **B. Language and Oral Tradition as Resistance**

Achebe’s strategic use of language in *Things Fall Apart* serves as a form of resistance against colonial cultural domination, a key concern in postcolonial studies. Rather than adopting a purely Western narrative style, he integrates Igbo linguistic elements into English, creating a hybrid discourse that asserts cultural legitimacy. This is evident in the novel’s use of proverbs, which encapsulate Igbo wisdom and worldview: “When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk” (Achebe, 1958, p. 10). Such expressions embed indigenous knowledge within the text, challenging colonial representations of African societies as primitive (Ashcroft et al., 1995).

Moreover, Achebe employs oral tradition to preserve and transmit Igbo cultural heritage, countering the historical erasure wrought by colonialism. Storytelling, a vital component of Igbo social life, appears in scenes like Ekwefi's tale of the tortoise, which entertains while reinforcing communal values: "Once upon a time, all the birds were invited to a feast in the sky..." (Achebe, 1958, p. 96). These narratives serve as a repository of collective memory, resisting the imposition of Western historical frameworks. New Historicism illuminates this strategy by recognizing oral tradition as a non-literary discourse that contests colonial hegemony. This aligns with Achebe's aim to present an authentic Igbo perspective. By foregrounding these elements, Achebe critiques the cultural dislocation caused by colonial education and missionary activities, which sought to supplant indigenous knowledge systems (Gikandi, 2000).

### C. The Novelist as a Teacher

In his essay "*The Novelist as a Teacher*", Achebe articulates the writer's responsibility to educate and restore cultural confidence in postcolonial African societies. He argues that African writers must counter the distortions of colonial narratives:

I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past—with all its imperfections—was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them (Achebe, 1988, p. 45).

This statement reflects his response to the historical misrepresentation of Africa in works like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, positioning *Things Fall Apart* as a corrective narrative.

Achebe's conception of the novelist as a teacher extends to fostering a sense of identity and agency among his readers. He emphasizes the need to affirm African humanity: "The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done" (Achebe, 1988, p. 44). This aligns with the novel's portrayal of

Igbo society's complexity, which educates readers about a vibrant cultural heritage disrupted by colonialism. For instance, the detailed depiction of rituals like the New Yam Festival "The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath" (Achebe, 1958, p. 37), serves to reassert cultural pride against historical denigration.

New Historicism enhances this analysis by situating Achebe's essay within the postcolonial Nigerian context of the 1960s, a period marked by efforts to redefine national identity amid political instability. The essay complements *Things Fall Apart* by explicitly articulating the novel's implicit critique of colonial cultural destruction, reinforcing Achebe's role as a social critic who engages with historical realities to advocate for cultural restoration (Gikandi, 2000). Together, these texts challenge the power structures that devalued African societies, offering a vision of intellectual and social empowerment.

### **Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: Navigating Postcolonial Disillusionment**

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and essay "*Writers in Politics*" (1981) critically engage with the historical realities of colonial oppression and postcolonial disillusionment in Kenya, positioning Ngugi as a social critic who challenges enduring power structures. Through a New Historicist lens, this section examines how these texts address the legacy of the Mau Mau rebellion, critique the failures of postcolonial leadership and articulate the writer's role in fostering social change. By analyzing the historical context of *A Grain of Wheat*, its portrayal of disillusionment and the political imperatives outlined in Ngugi's essay, this study highlights his contribution to postcolonial discourse and the assertion of African agency.

#### **A. Historical Context of *A Grain of Wheat***

Set during the Mau Mau rebellion (1952–1960) and culminating in Kenya's independence celebrations in 1963, *A Grain of Wheat* captures a pivotal moment in Kenyan history marked by resistance to British colonialism and the complexities of nation-building. New Historicism emphasizes the text's embeddedness in its historical moment. It views it as a site of negotiation between colonial power and indigenous aspirations (Greenblatt, 2000). Ngugi portrays the rebellion's toll on



rural communities, as seen in the detention camps' impact on characters like Gikonyo: "The camp had taken away his youth, his vitality, leaving him a broken man" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 98). This depiction reflects the historical reality of colonial violence, including mass detentions and economic disruption, which fractured social cohesion.

The novel also situates itself within the colonial land policies that fueled resistance. The alienation of Kikuyu land by British settlers is a recurring motif, encapsulated in Kihika's revolutionary rhetoric: "We want a government of our own soil. This land belongs to the black man" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 87). This statement mirrors historical demands for land restitution central to the Mau Mau movement, illustrating how Ngugi engages with documented grievances (Elkins, 2005). New Historicism illuminates the text's role in reconstructing this history, presenting the rebellion not as mere insurgency but as a struggle for cultural and economic sovereignty. By grounding his narrative in these events, Ngugi critiques the colonial system's exploitation and sets the stage for examining postcolonial outcomes.

## **B. Disillusionment and Leadership Critique**

*A Grain of Wheat* extends its critique beyond colonialism to address the disillusionment that followed Kenyan independence, highlighting the betrayal of revolutionary ideals by the new elite. New Historicism's focus on power dynamics reveals how Ngugi interrogates the continuity of oppression in postcolonial society (Veese, 1989). The character of Mugo, initially perceived as a hero, embodies the community's fractured hopes, his confession exposing personal and collective failures: "I am not a hero. I killed Kihika" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 247). This revelation underscores the novel's theme of betrayal, reflecting historical tensions within the Mau Mau movement and the broader postcolonial project.

Ngugi further critiques the postcolonial leadership through figures like John Thompson and Karanja, who replicate colonial hierarchies. Karanja's collaboration with colonial authorities and subsequent alignment with the new government illustrate the persistence of self-interest: "Karanja had always moved with the wind" (Thiong'o, 1967,

p. 163). This characterization aligns with historical accounts of Kenyan elites who prioritized personal gain over collective welfare, undermining the liberation struggle's goals. Similarly, Thompson's lingering colonial mindset - "Africa could only be ruled by force" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 45) — highlights the enduring influence of imperialist ideologies in the postcolonial era. Ngugi's portrayal critiques the failure to dismantle colonial structures, a concern echoed in postcolonial scholarship (Gikandi, 2000). Through these narratives, the novel exposes the historical continuity of power imbalances, positioning Ngugi as a critic of both colonial and postcolonial governance.

### **C. Writers in Politics**

In "*Writers in Politics*", Ngugi articulates the writer's responsibility to engage actively with societal issues, framing artistic production as a form of political activism. He argues that writers must align with the collective struggles of their people: "A writer responds, with his total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time" (Thiong'o, 1981, p. 47). This perspective responds to the postcolonial Kenyan context of the 1970s, marked by political repression and economic inequality, thereby urging writers to challenge neocolonial systems.

Ngugi's essay critiques the individualism fostered by colonial education, advocating for a communal ethos rooted in African values: "The writer in Africa has to participate in shaping the content and direction of national consciousness" (Thiong'o, 1981, p. 71). This stance complements *A Grain of Wheat*'s portrayal of collective resistance, as seen in Mumbi's resilience despite personal loss: "She would not let sorrow break her spirit" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 205). By linking the novel's themes to his essay, Ngugi underscores the writer's role in fostering a national identity that resists external domination. New Historicism enhances this analysis by situating the essay within Kenya's post-independence struggles, where intellectuals faced pressure to align with or critique the state (Gikandi, 2000).

The essay's call for political engagement directly informs *A Grain of Wheat*'s critique of betrayal and its vision of renewal. Ngugi's emphasis on collective action parallels the novel's depiction of communal efforts to rebuild post-independence, as seen in the Uhuru celebrations tempered by reflection: "The new Kenya would be built on the sacrifices of many" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 259). This connection reinforces Ngugi's role as a social critic who uses his texts to advocate for systemic change, challenging both colonial legacies and postcolonial failures. Together, these works position the writer as an agent of historical and social transformation, committed to amplifying marginalized voices.

### **Comparative Analysis: Achebe and Ngugi as Social Critics**

By comparing their critiques of colonialism, approaches to language, conceptions of the writer's role, and historical engagements, this analysis highlights shared commitments to challenging power structures and asserting African agency, as well as distinct strategies shaped by their Nigerian and Kenyan contexts. New Historicism illuminates how these texts reflect and respond to their historical moments, underscoring their enduring relevance in postcolonial discourse.

#### **A. Critiques of Colonialism and Postcolonial Challenges**

Both Achebe and Ngugi critique the devastating effects of colonialism, though their focuses differ due to historical contexts. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* examines the cultural erosion of Igbo society under British rule in late 19th-century Nigeria, portraying the disruption of communal harmony: "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers" (Achebe, 1958, p. 176). This quote reflects the historical imposition of Christianity and colonial governance, which fractured Igbo social structures. Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, set during the Mau Mau rebellion and Kenya's 1963 independence, shifts focus to active resistance and its aftermath, capturing the struggle for land and dignity: "We want a government of our own soil. This land belongs to the black man" (Thiong'o, 1967, p.

87). This emphasis aligns with the historical centrality of land alienation in Kenyan anticolonial movements.

While Achebe concentrates on colonialism's initial impact, Ngugi extends his critique to postcolonial disillusionment, highlighting the betrayal of revolutionary ideals. In *A Grain of Wheat*, characters like Karanja illustrate the persistence of colonial hierarchies: "Karanja had always moved with the wind" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 163), reflecting historical accounts of elites who perpetuated inequity post-independence. Achebe's novel, written before Nigeria's 1960 independence, does not address postcolonial governance directly, but his essay foreshadows such concerns by advocating cultural restoration to counter colonial legacies. New Historicism reveals how these critiques are grounded in their respective histories—Achebe's precolonial-colonial transition versus Ngugi's colonial-postcolonial shift—yet both challenge the power dynamics that marginalized African societies (Gikandi, 2000).

## **B. Language as a Tool of Resistance**

Achebe and Ngugi employ language strategically to resist colonial domination, but their methods diverge. Achebe integrates Igbo linguistic elements into English, creating a hybrid discourse that asserts cultural legitimacy in *Things Fall Apart*: "When the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk" (Achebe, 1958, p. 10). "A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches" (46) "A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm" (47) "... when mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth" (49)

This use of proverbs embeds Igbo worldview, countering colonial stereotypes. Ngugi, in *A Grain of Wheat*, initially writes in English but foreshadows his later shift to Gikuyu, emphasizing linguistic decolonization, as articulated in his essay: "The writer in Africa has to participate in shaping the content and direction of national consciousness" (Thiong'o, 1981, p. 71). This reflects his critique of English as a tool of cultural alienation, advocating for indigenous languages to reclaim identity.

New Historicism highlights how these linguistic choices respond to historical contexts. Achebe's hybridity suits Nigeria's early postcolonial need to communicate African realities globally, while Ngugi's eventual rejection of English aligns with Kenya's post-independence push for cultural sovereignty amid neocolonial influences (Ashcroft et al., 1995). Despite these differences, both use language to subvert colonial narratives, affirming African voices in their texts.

### C. The Writer's Role in Society

Achebe and Ngugi articulate distinct yet complementary visions of the writer's societal role, reflecting their historical moments. In *"The Novelist as a Teacher"*, Achebe positions the writer as an educator who restores cultural confidence: "I would be quite satisfied if my novels... did no more than teach my readers that their past—with all its imperfections—was not one long night of savagery" (Achebe, 1988, p. 45). This focus on re-education addresses Nigeria's post-independence need to counter colonial misrepresentations. Ngugi, in *"Writers in Politics"*, frames the writer as a political activist: "A writer responds, with his total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time" (Thiong'o, 1981, p. 47). This stance responds to Kenya's 1970s political repression, urging writers to confront neocolonial injustices.

New Historicism situates these roles within their contexts—Achebe's cultural restoration in a newly independent Nigeria versus Ngugi's political activism amid postcolonial betrayal. Yet, both view writing as a tool for social change, whether through affirming identity (Achebe) or mobilizing resistance (Ngugi). Their novels reflect these priorities: *Things Fall Apart* educates about Igbo heritage, while *A Grain of Wheat* critiques betrayal to inspire renewal.

### D. Shared Commitment and Contemporary Relevance

Despite their differences, Achebe and Ngugi share a commitment to challenging power structures and advocating for social justice, as evidenced by their texts' engagement with historical injustices. Both expose colonialism's cultural and economic toll—seen in Umuofia's collapse (Achebe, 1958) and Thabai's struggles (Thiong'o, 1967)—and

propose visions of resilience, whether through cultural pride or collective action. New Historicism underscores their texts as interventions in historical discourse, amplifying marginalized voices against colonial and postcolonial hegemony (Greenblatt, 2000).

Their works remain relevant to contemporary debates on decolonization and equity. Achebe's emphasis on cultural identity informs efforts to preserve indigenous heritage, while Ngugi's focus on systemic change resonates with ongoing struggles against global inequalities (Gikandi, 2000). Together, their critiques highlight the writer's capacity to shape societal consciousness, offering insights into the enduring legacy of African literary engagement with history.

## Conclusion

This study has examined Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and "The Novelist as a Teacher" (1988), alongside Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) and "Writers in Politics" (1981), to demonstrate their roles as social critics who challenge colonial and postcolonial power structures. Employing a New Historicist framework, the analysis has revealed how these texts engage with their historical contexts—British colonialism in Nigeria and the Mau Mau rebellion and postcolonial Kenya—to critique cultural erosion, political betrayal, and systemic inequities, while advocating for African agency and social justice.

The analysis of Achebe's works illustrates his critique of colonialism's disruption of Igbo society, emphasizing cultural reclamation through language and oral tradition. His depiction of Umuofia's collapse, "The white man... has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart" (Achebe, 1958, p. 176), grounds his call for re-education: "The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration" (Achebe, 1988, p. 44). Ngugi's texts, conversely, address colonial violence and postcolonial disillusionment, as seen in Mugo's confession: "I am not a hero. I killed Kihika" (Thiong'o, 1967, p. 247), which reflects betrayed ideals, and his essay's advocacy for activism: "A writer responds... to a social environment which changes all the time" (Thiong'o, 1981, p. 47). New Historicism

has illuminated these critiques by situating them within their respective histories, highlighting how Achebe and Ngugi contest dominant narratives and amplify marginalized voices (Greenblatt, 2000).

Comparatively, Achebe's focus on cultural restoration complements Ngugi's emphasis on political engagement, yet both share a commitment to dismantling oppressive structures. New Historicism enabled this comparison by revealing how Nigeria's colonial cultural losses shaped Achebe's restorative approach, while Kenya's Mau Mau resistance and postcolonial struggles informed Ngugi's political critique. Their use of language, Achebe's hybrid English and Ngugi's eventual shift to Gikuyu, underscores resistance to cultural alienation, while their conceptions of the writer's role converge on fostering societal change. These findings highlight the capacity of narrative texts to engage with historical injustices, offering alternative perspectives that challenge colonial and neocolonial hegemonies (Gikandi, 2000). Ultimately, Achebe and Ngugi demonstrate the transformative potential of narrative to confront historical realities and envision equitable futures, reinforcing the writer's role as a catalyst for social consciousness in African and global contexts.

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## **The Relevance of Folkloric Values in Curbing Security Challenges in Zamfara State**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the role of folkloric values in addressing security challenges in Zamfara state (North-west Nigeria). It examines the cultural narratives and traditional practices that shape community cohesion and conflict resolution. By incorporating the intersection of folklore and security, the study highlights the potential of folkloric values to promote peace building, social cohesion and community resilience. A unique focus of this paper delves into folkloric values of Hausa and Fulani oral forms particularly proverbs and songs as employed by the people especially in terms of social pressure within the society for social control to ensure peace prevailed. The paper uses Functionalists as theoretical framework. The findings suggest that folkloric values are powerful weapons that can be used counter*

*banditry and other security threats. Thus, the study contributes to a deeper meaning of the oral forms in context and understanding of the complex relationships between culture, security and community development in Zamfara State, and Nigeria at large.*

**Keywords:** Folkloric values, songs, proverbs Peace building, security challenges.

## **Introduction**

Zamfara State of Nigeria is a focal point to socio-cultural, religious, historical as well as political values. The people of this zone are predominantly Hausa and Fulani who in most cases have unique way of transmitting such values to the growing members of the society. While transiting into adolescence, the society strives to ensure strong compliance to the standard norms and values by each growing member. This unique way of socializing members shows its attitude towards inculcating peaceful coexistence in youth who are part of moral and cultural training. It is on this basis that Hausa/Fulani society derives its inspirations from folklore being a springboard of all societal values, in order to shape their youth to realize the crucial role peaceful coexistence plays in the growth and development of every human society. Therefore, peace may be defined as the nonexistence of any real tension that could pave way to disharmony among individuals, groups or nations leading to instability, violence, confrontation or war.

Rummel, (1981), attempts to define peace as:

‘Peace may be opposed to or an opposite of antagonistic conflict, violence, or war. It may refer to an internal state (of mind or of nations) or to external relations. Or it may be narrow in conception, referring to specific relations in a particular situation (like a peace treaty), or overarching, covering a whole society (as in a world peace). Peace may be a dichotomy (it exists or it does not) or continuous, passive or active, empirical or abstract, descriptive or normative, or positive or negative’.

Looking at the above definition provided by Rummel, one may perceive that, even in the animal kingdom the certainty of living depends largely on animals' ability to coexist peacefully. That is why animals of the same species constantly move in hundreds, live and intermingle with their fellows while searching for food and in self-protection in case of attack from enemies. Thus, safety and security of their lives depend largely on their ability to live in peace. This justifies the necessity of embracing peace in human society for growth and development.

Akin to any other tribe, the people of North-West Zone who are predominantly Hausa/Fulani have unique pattern of behaviours and social relations and it is through such pattern of behaviour that they express and transmit to their youth the fundamental of peace for continuous existence of the society. The pattern of behaviours that are embedded in Hausa and Fulani cultural values and that are transmitted through folklore play fundamental roles in paving way for every member of the society to understand such fundamental of peace in the development of every human society. In fact, no society is liable to develop and to even continue to exist if they fail to embrace peace. Thus, peace is the most important factor behind the development and progress of every human society.

By incorporating folklore however, Hausa and Fulani society strengthens its peaceful coexistence within the society to a greater high, as the youth who are behind the development of the society and or who are liable to create chaos and confusion within the society are always in control to the understanding that their progress relies heavily on their ability to permit peace and harmony to reign within the society. Thus, elders in the community always try to make them better by enabling them cultivate and embrace harmonious society in respect of their day today affairs. They even facilitate the growing children develop interest in having a harmonious and peaceful society.

Therefore, in an effort to address the menace of insecurity across the North-West Zone, particularly the Zamfara Hausa and Fulani youths into involvement of so many unscrupulous acts as banditry, insurgency,

terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery among others. Hausa/Fulani society must return to root to derive its inspirations and wisdoms from their ancestors with regards to their practical experiences of everyday affairs in their folkloric values. Thus, there is needful effort on the part of Hausa and Fulani society to embrace the best way their ancestors trained and equipped their youth through folklore. Thus, promoting peaceful coexistence is at the centre of Hausa and Fulani traditional societies.

Folklore and people are inseparable and the understanding of the meaning of folklore depends largely on what folk group does within a given period of time and or within a specific condition. In many societies, folklore and traditional cultural practices are integral components of social identity, shaping community values, beliefs, and norms. These folkloric values often include oral traditions, myths, legends, proverbs songs, dances, and rituals that are passed down through generations. Despite their significance in the cultural fabric of societies, the potential of folkloric values in promoting peace and social cohesion has been underexplored, particularly in the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

The problem at hand is the limited understanding and utilization of folkloric values as tools for peacebuilding in regions experiencing tension. Consequently, the modern peacebuilding focuses on legal, political and economic interventions and the role of indigenous cultural practices and values in fostering reconciliation, healing and long-term peace, remain marginalized. There is a gap in both academic research and practical applications regarding how these folkloric elements can contribute to social harmony, conflict resolution and rebuilding of trust among the divided communities.

This study, attempts to capture the fundamental of folkloric values in facilitating peace to reign in the North-West Zone of the country with particular reference to Zamfara State. A unique focus of this study would investigate how ancestors deploy folkloric values in training and grooming their youth to embrace peaceful coexistence within the society.

## Objectives of the Study

- i. To find out the impact of songs on peace building in Zamfara State, Nigeria.
- ii. To find out the impact of proverbs on peace building in Zamfara State, Nigeria.

## Review of Related Literature

Folklore has guided people in their social interactions for thousands of years throughout the world. Tahir and Bernard (2013) have made a significant effort in tracing the origin of banditry in Nigeria, in order correlation with the current Nigeria's security dilemma caused by armed banditry. They however, maintain that banditry emanated in Nigeria for the past four decades as a result of unresolved or failed disputes settlement between farmers and herdsmen that wandered across North-west in rearing their cattle. They also take a glance at the drivers of armed banditry in Nigeria and opine that, banditry is a driven force behind Nigeria's underdevelopment, as countless lives and properties of citizenry are lost, as a result of the prevailing insecurity in the region (p.4).

Sibanda (2015) conducts a significant research based on the fundamental role African proverbs and myths play in ensuring peaceful coexistence within the society. The research captures the use of African traditions of peace and justice which are preserved in African proverbs and myths. Citing reference with African proverbs and myths from the Ndebele, Shona and Tonga tribes in Zimbabwe and the Igbo from Nigeria, as portrayed in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Sibanda justifies the vital role proverbs and myths play in ensuring peaceful coexistence within the African societies.

Osasona(2023) in an article titled; *The Question of Definition: Armed Banditry in Nigeria's North-West in the context of International Humanitarian Law* classifies banditry as the gravest organized crime threat to national security Nigeria faces currently. He believes that although there are various perspectives and contest with regard to origin, nature and perpetrators of banditry, economic motive must have

been a driven force that made criminal groups resort to violence and get involved into the organized crime against humanity. He maintains that criminal groups resort to crimes such as cattle theft, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, sexual assault, which exemplifies the nature of armed conflicts, West Africa faces.

Consequently, Achebe portrays in the novel how Umuafia clan settles dispute, maintains law and order and, as such ensures social control within the society. He underscores how the Umuofia clan ensures that disputes are settled amicably. They fear that war is liable to cause the loss of lives and properties. They maintain the popular adage that says “a pen is mightier than a sword”. That is to say, maintaining peaceful coexistence is at the heart of Umuafia society, and as such is prioritized and even better than to go war.

It is at this juncture, that this research justifies the existence of African civilization that is enshrined in their folkloric traditions as opposed to the white man stereotype to African as savage and primitive as represented in their early literary writings. It however, shows the power of folkloric traditions in conveying African unique civilization before its contact with the West and the fundamental role such folkloric traditions play in promoting peaceful coexistence and resolving conflicts within the society.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In an attempt to examine and analyze how important the oral, customary and material texts of folk group are, folklorists developed various theories that will interpret folklore. This research focuses its attention on functionalism as it is concerned with the meanings, purposes and roles of folklore in the society. William R. Bascom, the leading proponent of this theory provides us with the idea through which we can have deeper understanding of what folklore means to a group and also lets us understand the philosophy behind people's communication through folklore.

Therefore, this research will critically appraise the impact of folkloric values on peace building in Zamfara State from the perspective of functionalism. This is due to the belief that, with functionalist theory

the interpretation and analysis of folklore in peace building is feasible as it is concerned with how people use folklore to express their own cultural beliefs, cultural identity, and validating the existing values. It is also relevant for this research as it is concerned with the meanings, purposes, performances and mode of presentation of folklore in a particular situation and in a specific folk group within the society.

## **Methodology**

This research adopts qualitative research design. This entails collecting data through oral narratives from the respondents under study. It focuses on gathering, analyzing and interpreting proverbs and songs. Qualitative research allows for a nuanced examination of individual experiences and narratives, providing rich insights into complexities of cultural formation. It is characterized by its focus on exploring subjective experiences and understanding the meaning individuals ascribe to their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Method of Data Collection**

The data collection method utilized in this study in oral songs and proverbs involve gathering spoken accounts, or testimonies from individuals or communities. Audio recordings as a fundamental component, uncover layers of meaning and insights into the ideas under investigation, capturing spoken narratives through recording devices to ensure accuracy and preservation. Transcription and note-taking serve as a complementary approach to the analysis enabling the researcher to identify recurring patterns and ideas, converting oral forms into written form for further analysis and documentation. Additionally, this study drew upon secondary sources such as consulting existing oral history collections, folklore archives, or previously recorded narratives, to offer valuable insights and perspectives on the play by enriching the analysis and providing a broader context for interpretation.

### 3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data analysis method employed in this research was thematic analysis. It is a method of analyzing qualitative data such as interviews and transcripts. This is done through carefully examining the data to identify common themes, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. It involves systematic interpretation of spoken accounts through data familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing, defining and naming themes, and then write up (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The data for this research was collected through fieldwork. The respondents were purposively selected from old folk men and women. The justification behind this selection was based on the fact that, these groups of people are the custodian of culture from time immemorial. Others are extracted from documented books by various authors. A total of 12 oral forms of Hausa and Fulfulde languages were collected. There are 10 proverbs and two songs for both Hausa and Fulfulde languages. The data was transcribed and organized according to the research objectives. The analysis was conducted through inductive, latent approach. This entails allowing the data to determine the themes as well as what the data reveals about the main ideas and its effect on social context.

#### Analysis of Hausa Proverbs

Proverbs are deployed to warn people for going contrary to the standard norms and values of the society. For instance, they convey the consequences of stealing, lies, cowardice, rebelliousness, laziness among others to ensure the conformity of the standard norms and values of the society. Chagas boys are also initiated into various rituals and ceremonies through proverb.

##### 1. *Bakinka Kanin Kafarka* – Whoever is witty in tongue saves self.

This is a powerful proverb used by Hausa people to warn children about reckless speeches that may instigate violence within a group or even the larger society. Thus, Hausa people do control children in every juncture of human interaction about the necessity of witty



expression to avoid used of foul and unsavory language, that may offend others.

2. ***Mai Hakuri yana dafa dutse har ya sha romon*** – A patient dog eats the fattest bone.

This is of course a very paramount proverb used by Hausa society to maintain peaceful co-existence within the society. This is for the fact it teaches one the value of patience when one is offended by others.

3. ***Mai karambani yana rigan mai kararrin kwana mutuwa*** – An uninvited man sinks earlier than the one that the death searches on reaching time.

This proverb warns children to desist from going into things that does not concern them. That is to say, going into something that does not concern one may instigate misunderstanding and even violence among the people.

4. ***Kwadayi Mabudin Wahala*** – Greed opens several doors of adversity.

This opens several ways of human predicaments. Elderly people employ this proverb to warn children while transiting into adolescent to play sound game of life, slowly and steady, otherwise they may fall victims of greediness.

5. ***Sai baki ya ci ido ke jin kunya*** – whoever accepts incentive must be ashamed of the benefactor.

This Hausa proverb admonishes people from accepting bribe or any illegal incentive from other people, as it prevents one from supporting the truth whatever it may pay.

6. ***In kunne ya ji jiki ya tsira*** – A listening ear saves the whole body.

A proverb employed by Hausa people to admonish children while transiting into adolescent to have listening ears whenever elderly

people throw words of wisdom to them, in order not fall into trap of satanic web.

7. ***Wanda bai ji bari ba zai ji hoho*** – whoever discards sound advice is liable to regret.

Elderly people in the Hausa society are known to possess wisdom and any attempt by a child to discard their advice may bear the consequences.

8. ***Sa'a ba ta ga raggo*** – One is lucky, if one is found diligent.

It is about instilling hope to industrious children to keep on hard-working in life struggle to acquire legitimate wealth.

9. ***Mutumci madara ne idan ya zube shikenan*** – Personality is like a milk when it drops, it sinks.

This can be applied to the children while transiting into adulthood to keep on complying with the standard norms and values of the society in order not destroy their images and personality.

10. ***Mai hakuri shi ke da riba*** – A patient person always earns profit.

A proverb that teaches the important of patience in the course of interaction with fellows and the benefit of return when one exercise it. Elderly people employ it to ensure social control within the society, especially in critical moment.

## **Analysis of Fulfulde Proverbs**

### **1. *Colli nan' ndudī, pirdata***

Translation : Birds of a feather, flock together

The proverb suggests a natural tendency to seek like-minded people can have both positive and negative implications in different social contexts. In Northern Nigeria, particularly in Zamfara state, the proverb reflects the ways in which individuals facing similar insecurities or threats come together for mutual support. People who experience similar forms of oppression or insecurity seek safety and solidarity with

others who share their experiences, forming groups that offer protection or a sense of belonging.

**2. *No tuggereenebirinderNdiyamfuuwartataNooda***

Translation: No matter how lengthy a wooden peg remains in the water, could not be a crocodile.

This proverb is very relevant to the complex insecurity issues such as banditry, kidnapping and farmer-herder conflicts in Zamfara state. It suggests that time, proximity, or circumstances alone cannot change the true nature of a thing. Some individuals or groups may pretend to align with peace initiatives but retain hidden agendas. This brings about distrust of insiders and pretenders.

**3. *Nattudumotasunohanunjippotatasa to anda***

Translation: Greed leads to hardship and trouble.

The proverb prioritizes integrity and cooperation over short time gains. It highlights consequences of allowing greed to guide one's action. This requires a shift away from selfish pursuit towards more equitable and secure future.

**4. *Luggagiteejohaandifuddalawaboji***

Translation (Hausa): Better safe than sorry

The proverb is about making choices that prioritize safety and prevention over recklessness or haste. The saying encourages thinking ahead and acting cautiously to prevent negative outcomes.

**5. *Mo Allah wujjofurdata***

Translation: *The one whom God stands by will not be defeated.*

The proverb expresses a strong belief that divine support ensures success, safety, and victory, no matter how difficult the situation seems.

### **Hausa Song: *Wakar Dan Gurgu***

Bismillamaigyarawa  
HalikumaigabasmaiYamma,  
Sarki mai kudu, da arewa  
Allah mafi jinkan ka  
Ba don ina gurgu ba,  
Da na mai kalangun kai nai,  
Na tafi kasuwa na ba tai,  
In ga uban da za ya hana ni.  
Shige rakuwa dan Hafsu,  
Dan Sutura na goyon da ni.  
Wace kasuwa yad'aukan  
Yar masara da ni-nnoma  
Bana dukyabitaya debe ta,  
Dankalin da ni-nnoma  
Bana, duk ya bi shi ya debe shi  
Ya dauke ka na gyara mana Rabbunjalla mai ikonai'  
Wace kasuwa nid dosa  
Shege ya kuwa dan dani  
Dan Sutura na goyon Hafsu  
Dan dan da ba kunya ba,  
Ya kai ni ya zub da ni  
Don haka nit tafo wakar ga

Source: Fieldwork Song by Yarsanda Kasuwar Daji, Kaura-Namoda,  
LGA Zamfara State on 25/11/2024, 8:30pm

### **English Translation of the song**

O Bismillah, the One who makes things right,  
The Creator of the East and the West,  
The King of the South and the North.

If not for my disability,  
I would have lifted my burdens and gone to the market,  
And seen the man who would dare stop me.

Hold me, son of Hafsu,  
Son of Sutura, you are my support.

Which market has taken my maize?  
The one I planted, but someone else came and harvested it.  
The sweet potatoes I cultivated,  
Someone else came and took them all.

O Allah, Most Merciful, take away our suffering,  
And mend our affairs, O Lord, the Almighty.

Which market should I go to?  
A worthless man betrayed me,  
Son of Sutura, you are my support,  
A shameless man took me and cast me aside.

That is why I sing this song.

### **Analysis and Relevance**

This song reflects deep themes of suffering, exploitation, and helplessness all of which are relevant to the insecurity and banditry crisis in Zamfara State. The singer laments how his crops are stolen, much like how bandits attack farmers, take their harvests, and displace communities. This, however amounts to exploitation of the weak. Therefore, the singer calls upon Allah to mend their affairs, highlighting how many affected by banditry rely on faith for hope in a system that has failed them.

The reference to a "worthless man" who cast him aside symbolizes the corrupt individuals who exploit vulnerable people for their own gain, much like some leaders, informants, and criminals do today. The singer has lost stability, he cannot find a market to sell his goods, many in Zamfara State have lost their livelihoods due to insecurity, as markets shut down and farms remain unsafe.

This song serves as a powerful lamentation for those suffering due to banditry and injustice, echoing the voices of countless displaced and oppressed people in the region.

Fulani Song Dabi'en'BurdeFulbe e JammajiDow

Gyattaretabiti/jomizaumotagidanigo l ko wonder duniyakuma  
kankotagifulbe I habe.

Kuma kankuhatutikogalhakkudefulbe in kabeillahinajoni, kowa I,  
andifulloiyarsa I andugoyakamata I duniyafulbe.

San banda, bendirbaleresainedonwatanabebindirbalerihakudir  
mabehaledirdanrenanabewalhurehakudirmabetetugojoudir  
banderememebe.

Hedikaniajande kano waggoaiki / majjunwattibehadanoo, watti  
bedanitarbiyaislama I Al, adashugabajomodibbo Shehu Usman Fodio  
dan uwaddani der lanidihabe.

Ko hanijoni I fulbe dun hakka be Jandeboko I jandedina I kumatarbiya  
getunganduncetobe I hallaka I kanbe I hora no duniya.

*Source: Fieldwork [Song by BanoRiskuwaMareri, Gusau LGA Zamfara  
State on 14/11/2024, 2:30pm]*

### **Translation**

All praises be to Almighty Allah

Who created the Hausa, the Fulani, and other ethnic groups.

He established intermarriage between the Hausa and the Fulani,  
Long before today—bringing modesty and dignity to the Fulani.

Except for the evil in some hearts,  
Which causes conflict, hostility, and transgression among them,  
Leading to killings and the seizure of one another's livestock.

The lack of knowledge and its application has destroyed some among the Fulani,

Causing them to abandon the teachings of Islam and the traditions emphasized

By the leader Shehu Usman Dan Fodio in Hausa land and to other tribes.

The solution is to provide them with both Western and Arabic education,

Alongside moral upbringing, in order to save them and other tribes from destruction.

### **Analysis and Relevance**

The prevailing socially unacceptable behaviors in the context of Fulani society due to the negligence of cultural, spiritual, moral as well as educational values, which are enshrined in Fulani folkloric values, is the reason behind the emergence of this song. The song is nothing but a quiet rendition to the prevalent moral decadence engulfing the Fulani society and the northern part of the country in general. It is a protest against Fulani youth involvement into prevailing crimes, the reason behind their involvement, and a strong admonition against going into such unscrupulous acts as banditry, kidnapping, armed robbery among others for avaricious desire.

Consequence upon the facts showcases in the song hail Fulani tribe standard norms and values, and as such showcase drastic change Fulani society witnesses in these contemporary times, which go against such values. This is for the fact that, not every tribe possesses such sound attitude of self-reliance, shyness, generosity, and as such humanitarian feelings, enshrined in the Fulani culture. In spite of these sound attitudes of Fulani tribes, their today youth behave and act contrary to the standard norms and values of their society. Subsequently, the song blames ignorance engulfing the Fulani tribe, as the reason behind their involvement into such unscrupulous acts.

In the last stanza, the song attempts to suggest how such obstacles could be resolved. It asserts the needful commitment on the part of

Fulani societies to declare state of emergence on educating Fulani children and youth to acquire cultural, spiritual and traditional knowledge of their society, through which they will be inculcated with the crucial role peace and harmonious relationship in the development of every human society to escape from the shackle of ignorance, thereby developing attitude of peaceful co-existence within the society.

## **Conclusion**

The research however, finds out the negligence of ancestral values in training African children while transiting into adolescents by the modern Hausa/Fulani communities in the name of modern civilization, one of the factors responsible for its security dilemma. This negligence of folkloric values in training children facilitates them to imbibe Western values to the extent that, they recognize the way of the ancestors as a relic of the past. This negligence of local values on the part of modern Hausa and Fulani society in Zamfara State leads their youth to forget their heritage values, which are entrenched in their folkloric values, and even substitute them with satellite viewing, film watching, and other social media apparatuses that have adverse effects on the cultural, spiritual and moral training on the younger generation, there by paving way for them to go into unscrupulous acts as banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, drugs abuse, armed robbery among others. The crucial role folkloric traditions play in the life of every human society could not be over-emphasized. As the reservoir of people's histories, cultural experiences and traditional values, folkloric traditions provide the combination of values, thoughts, philosophy and ideas for literary creativity.

On the final note, one may perceive that, this research focuses on the fundamental role African folkloric traditions could play in ensuring peaceful coexistence within Zamfara state (the North-west Zone) of Nigeria. It captures the use of African traditions of peace which are preserved in African folklore.



## Recommendation

To minimize the effects of Western values on the younger generation across the North-West Zone and Nigeria at large, that leads to its security challenges and moral decadence in general, Hausa and Fulani modern society must return to root in training its younger generation while transiting into adolescents to acquire the basic knowledge of cultural, spiritual and moral values, which are embedded in their folkloric values.

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## **Migrants' Experiences and the Notions of Home: A Study of Tendai Huchu's *The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician***

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### **Abstract**

*Today, millions of people live in countries other than their homeland, a phenomenon driven by globalisation. As migrants settle in the new country, they strive to build new homes. Over time, through their experiences away from their native country, migrants often discover the fluidity and multi-faceted nature of the meaning of home. This paper examines how the experiences of the three major characters shape their understanding of home in Tendai Huchu's *The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician*. The paper draws from the postcolonial concepts such as 'otherness,' 'belonging,' 'marginality,' and 'luminality' to examine the experiences of the three migrant characters in the West and how it impacted their notion of home. The paper not only reveals the experiences of three African migrants in Edinburgh but it also examines the fluid and multifaceted notions of home, highlighting how its meaning varies across individuals. The paper concludes that migrants' experiences in transnational spaces profoundly shape their understanding of home.*

**Keywords:** Migration, African migrants, Home, Belonging, Post-colonialism.

### **Introduction**

More than at any period in the history of the world, millions of people are living in countries other than their natal homeland. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is indeed the age of migration, as millions of people have moved from

one place to another due to the increasing interconnectedness of the world as a result of globalisation. Millions of people in Africa have migrated outside the continent for socio-economic and political reasons. These individuals from Africa often encounter challenges as they try to make a home as a result of the societal and immigration policies of their new country of abode.

Aside from the news media, African writers such as Tahar Ben Jelloun, Brian Chikwava, NoViolet Bulawayo, DinawMengestu, ImboloMbue, ChimamandaNgoziAdichie, Chika Unigwe and many others have captured in their novels the experiences of African migrants outside of Africa. The migrant, a term adopted for this study according to Porumbescu, is “whoever lives, temporarily or permanently, in another country, different from the one where he was born and has established significant social links with this latter country” (4). Pfalzgraf notes that the “past two decades have seen the publication of a remarkable number of works which center on the experiences of African migrants in Europe or North Africa” (3). The writers reflect in their works as Higgins notes, “the painful dislocation the immigrants experience as they live removed from home in a place that treats them as “others” (24). The designation of the African migrant as “other” create not just an awareness of difference but also an acknowledgement of societal and institutionalised barriers in the African migrant’s effort at building a new home in the new country.

The notion of home in transnational discourse is fluid rather than static. Home is a contested notion for many migrants in transnational space. In the view of Bhabha, the “borders between home and world become confused” (13) in transnational space to the effect that the notion of home is fluid rather than static. To Kalra et al., home is both the place where the migrant resides in the host country and the place where the migrant migrated from (3). On the other hand, Brahasserts that home is the “site of everyday lived experience” (4) of a diasporic individual. According to her, the notion of home in diasporic intercourse can be “double, triple or multi-placedness” (191). For some migrants, the notion of home as a fixed locality has become increasingly complicated in an age of unparalleled mobility, yet the desire to belong somewhere

remains strong. Fathi and Laoire assert that “home is a significant source of identification for migrants. Mobility does not erode processes of identifying with or attaching to place” (1). They further state that:

Migration highlights the complexities inherent in the idea of home as a place or space of belonging in contexts of mobility and border crossing, where home can be a place that is lost or mourned, that is constantly being made, that is imagined, or that is found in the in-between spaces of here and there. (2)

This paper examines how personal experiences shape migrants’ perceptions of home, particularly for those who have traversed international borders. This position aligns with Fathi’s and Laoire’s assertion that home is “integrally tied up with the personal and intimate lived experience of relationality, emotion and materiality” (13) of migrants. The thrust of this paper is that the experience of migrants in transnational space often shapes their understanding of home.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Postcolonial theory is appropriate for this study as it offers insight into the experiences of African migrants far away from their homeland. Postcolonial theory influences the way we interpret and understand transnational texts such as Huchu’s *The Maestro*, *The Magistrate* and *The Mathematician*. Migration and migrants’ experiences form the sub-branches of postcolonial literature in the recent evolution of the term since it interrogates issues such as place, displacement, and the experiences of displaced individuals. Postcolonial concepts such as other/otherness, belonging, marginality and liminality are central to the analysis of the content of Huchu’s novel.

Other/Otherness is when a group of people perceives another group to be different from them on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion and nationality. This postcolonial concept is relevant to the analysis of Huchu’s novel because a character like the Magistrate is unable to get a job befitting of his qualifications and status in Edinburgh as a result of the dissimilarity in race and nationality.

Belonging is an important concept in migration discourse because of the difficulties migrants often encounter in their bid to settle in a new environment. Belonging and otherness highlight the issues in postcolonial societies that promote group-based marginalisation. The twin concepts place migrants on the fringes of their new society and they act as a barrier to inclusion.

In colonial and postcolonial discourse, marginality is the situation where a group of individual find themselves at the margin of a given society. African migrants often find themselves at the margin of their new society in the West as a result of differences in race, skin colour and nationality.

The concept, liminality, is the transitional phase of a migrant leaving his or her homeland and trying to settle into a new environment. Bhabha views liminality as an “interstitial passage” (5) in the migrant’s quest to settle in the adopted society. Stoller notes that “no matter their legal status, professional standing or educational level, most immigrants never fully escape their liminality” (15). Until the migrant resolves the conflict of ‘inbetweenness,’ he or she, like the Maestro, remains static between two phases of existence.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Several research studies have been done on migration and the predicaments of Huchu’s characters in *The Maestro*, *The Magistrate* and *The Mathematician*. Molla’s (2018) paper interrogates the dialectics in which the national home, for migrants and is often unhomely, while host spaces yield to various dimensions of the struggle to build new homes and to be part of the new society.

Pfalzgraf (2021), in her book, explores the concept of mobility and the link to bad policies of the government in Zimbabwe. Pfalzgraf, through the works of some Zimbabwean writers, demonstrates that transnational movement has a long history in Zimbabwean writings. In the chapter close to the focus of this paper, she examines transcontinental migration from Zimbabwe to the West, but not on migrants’ experiences and their notion of home.

Alonso (2022) in his paper, addresses the main characters' common struggle to reevaluate their identity in the new neoliberal capitalist context of Edinburgh in which they find themselves. The paper also explores the potential of walking, running and driving by the three main characters as a mechanism to reconcile their identity conflict.

There is little in the different works that address how the experiences of the migrant characters in Scotland help shape their notion of home. None of the studies done examined issues similar to the concern of this study. This study, therefore, examines the socio-cultural and economic factors that tend to shape migrants' notion of home in the West.

### **African Migrants Experiences in Europe in Huchu's Novel**

*The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician* (2016) is the second novel by the Zimbabwean writer, Tendai Huchu. The story revolves around three protagonists, *The Maestro, the Magistrate and the Mathematician*. Moolla's observation of Huchu's second novel is that the "host spaces yield to various forms of place making and belonging" (1). The subtext of this is that the three eponymous characters are Zimbabwean immigrants in Edinburgh, and their different experiences help to shape their notion of what constitutes home.

The Magistrate's experience away from his home country is a far cry from his former life, and he realises that what he misses most is the maid. He is reduced to doing the work of a maid largely because, unlike in Zimbabwe, he is not in a financial position to hire one in Edinburgh, Scotland. In Edinburgh, the Magistrate finds himself, "bent over, brush in hand, cleaning the toilet bowl. In his entire life, he'd never imagined himself carrying out such a humiliating task" (8). There is a reversal of roles between the Magistrate and his wife, Mai Chenai in Scotland. The wife becomes the breadwinner, while the Magistrate practically turns into a maid in the house. A situation he considers humiliating because, unlike in Zimbabwe, in Scotland, "He hardly had a penny to his name" (13). The Magistrate's financial incapacitation to provide for his wife and daughter resulted in him experiencing psychological pain as he muses that "It was not meant to be like this. The shame sat somewhere

in his gut, looping round his intestines, a dull ache that was with him every minute of every day. In the time of his father, whom he'd known, a man's role was clearly defined. He was the provider" (13). The Magistrate's jobless situation strains the relationship between him and his wife. His wife gives the order in the house and yells at him to "Turn that stupid music off. Some of us have work, you know" (41). The Magistrate takes a walk after such an encounter with his wife as a therapy to clear his mind and to make meaning of his new situation in Edinburgh.

The Magistrate's migration with his family to Scotland is involuntary. He leaves with his family due to political victimisation because of his incorrigible stance on the dispensation of justice in Zimbabwe. He mutters angrily that "I never wanted to come here in the first place" (41). His migration is triggered because of an unfavourable political climate at home. Getting a job and providing for his family will reassert his position as the head of the family. The Magistrate realises that he cannot practice law in Scotland because of his position as the *other*. One of the characters, Alfonso, a fellow Zimbabwean migrant who runs an employment agency, cautions the Magistrate about the futility of applying for posh jobs in the newspaper because they are not for African migrants. This shows how the migrant's other is marginalised in the West. Finding work that is appropriate to the Magistrate's qualifications becomes very difficult in Scotland. Alfonso paints a picture of the situation that confronts the African migrant in search of a dignified job in Scotland. He tells the Magistrate:

There was an electrician from Bulawayo, you know, Mdala Phiri... he thought he was going to get an electrician's job. I told him, 'Phiri, this is the Civilised World, forget it,' but he didn't listen. So, he went for an interview, and do you know what the man said to him? He said, 'Look here, why are you bothering us? Can't you see that the electricity we use is different from the electricity in your country? It is even worse with the law, Magistrate.... They think we come from the jungle. They think we have kangaroo courts. They will say. 'How can



you practice law here when you couldn't even preserve the rule of law in your own country? I knew your application would come to nothing. They didn't even reply to you, did they? (44 -45)

Reality eventually dawns on the Magistrate and he settles for a position as a caregiver for elderly citizens, a far cry from his position as a respectable Magistrate in Zimbabwe. The Magistrate's fortune in Edinburgh buttresses Brah's argument that the process of migration often brings about "a major change in social position" (42). So, instead of experiencing upward social mobility, which is usually the dream of many African migrants when they leave for Europe, the Magistrate's experience is the reverse. He experiences a vertical social mobility, and he is unable for a while to come to terms with the reality that in Edinburgh, he cannot practice as a judge. He has to adapt to the new situation in a foreign land by starting a new profession. Just like many African migrants in the West, the Magistrate faces the problem of survival, and he tries to erase from his brain his elevated position as a magistrate in Zimbabwe in place of the lowly job as a caregiver in an old people's home.

The Magistrate also experiences a kind of cultural shock. He is amazed how in a rich country, people could dump their close relatives in a place he likens to a Gulag, rotting away and waiting for death. He fears that might be his fate if he decides to permanently stay in Scotland since his daughter, a second-generation migrant, is becoming more Westernised. To the Magistrate, he sees the same fate possibly awaits him in Scotland, unlike in Zimbabwe, where there is an extended family support system. He is disconcerted when he finds Brian, a young and intelligent fellow Zimbabwean, working in such a place. Demeaning jobs seem to be the reserve of African migrants in the novel. Farai, the Mathematician who has visited many clubs all over the country, observes that "the toilet attendant is always an African immigrant" (320).

The Maestro is a white Zimbabwean in his late twenties. Huchu's position is that despite the Maestro being white, he is nonetheless an

African since he is a descendant of white settlers in Zimbabwe or as Appiah argues, that “National identity doesn’t require that we all be already the same” (102). He is not as educated as his other two black countrymen. The name ‘Maestro’ is not his real name but a sobriquet he acquired in the supermarket where he works. His real name is David Mercer. He is no way a lover of music, but unlike the Magistrate and the Mathematician, who question the relevance of literature, the Maestro turns to literature and philosophy to make meaning of his disintegrating life in Edinburgh. He reads a book:

To try to make sense of life, the side of the equation that was at least known. And so he hopped and hoped from one to the next, searching, trying to unlock the secrets of Kafka, Sartre, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, hoping that one of them had peered behind the veil, into the unknown, so that a sliver of the unknowable was captured and contained in the words on a page. (61)

The Maestro is haunted by something in the past, something he is unable to let go of. He is described as a ‘migratory bird’ that is unable to fit into Zimbabwean society and even as a white man in Edinburgh; he is equally struggling to find his place. Pfalzgraf notes that the Maestro conveys the idea that “he is grounded nowhere, an ephemeral white existence who has left no traces” (230). He is alienated in several ways and even with the only person with whom he is connected, Tatyana, his Polish girlfriend. His past in Zimbabwe, his family and everything about him remain a mystery. Because the Maestro lives a lonely life in Edinburgh and he does not interact very much with others, he does not experience what the Magistrate and the Mathematician go through as African migrants, possibly because he is white but he is most affected negatively as a migrant in Scotland. The plight of the Maestro is in tandem with Inyama’s (200) position that “the journey to the West ... is in fact a destructive and traumatic experience” (49) to some Africans.

The story alternates among the three protagonists, and when it gets to the Mathematician, Huchu uses the present tense because this character lives in the now. He is a young black Zimbabwean migrant from upper

upper-middle-class family, and unlike the two other characters, he can afford a life of luxury as a student in Edinburgh. Farai, the Mathematician, is not a mathematician but a PhD student in economics. He is cavalier about certain aspects of life, but he takes his research work seriously. His migration to Scotland is voluntary, spurred by the need for higher education in a Western country.

In Scotland, Farai experiences a mild cultural shock when grown-ups are addressed by their first names, something that is rare in Zimbabwe. The Mathematician also experiences alternative realities about life between Zimbabwe and Scotland and he tells to his friends that, “The thing is, every time I go back, I feel more and more like a stranger. The lingo’s changed, the bearer notes have more zeros, the whole vibe, the way people do things is completely different” (106). This reiterates Said’s position that when migrants leave their cultural home, it is easy for them to judge it from a distance (259).

A white woman’s reference to the Mathematician as a ‘monkey’ highlights the racist treatment that many African migrants often experience in the West. He suffers emotional distress and he “worries about the education system that’s producing *these* people. *Perhaps I should write to Holyrood*” (242). Holyrood is the home of the Scottish Parliament.

### **African Migrants and the Notions of Home in Huchu’s *The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician***

To make meaning of his new environment, the Magistrate begins to notice the cultural differences between his home country of Zimbabwe and Scotland. Some of these cultural differences weigh heavily on the African migrant, as in the case of the Magistrate. He notices some practices in Scotland that he frowns at, and he suffers what Said refers to as “the sense of estrangement experienced by Orientalists as they dealt with or lived in a culture so profoundly different from their own” (260). The Magistrate views Scottish culture through the eyes of his Zimbabwean Shona culture, which he tries to instill in his westernised daughter, Chenai. His attempt to teach Chenai Shona cultural ties to the soil through farming yields very little fruit and that bothers him greatly.

Chenai refers to Alfonso, who is old enough to be her father, as ‘pal’, and this does not sit well with her father. He reprimands her, “Show some courtesy, he is our guest. And, don’t call him ‘pal,’ call him Babamudiki Alfonso. Okay?” The Magistrate felt his daughter had been here too long. Already her speech had a slight Scottish inflexion, those rolling Rs, the coarse tongue, guttural Gs” (4). Chenai, as a second-generation immigrant, does not find it hard to acculturate into the Scottish society, unlike her parents, because she arrived in Scotland as a child. There is no issue of cultural change with her.

This cultural change and the loneliness that comes when an individual settles down in another country bring about nostalgic feelings in the Magistrate so that many things in Edinburgh remind him of home. The Magistrate evokes the memory of home through Zimbabwean music that he listens to as he walks around where he stays in Edinburgh. Pfalzgraf notes that the Magistrate listening to Zimbabwean music is an attempt by him to “overcome his sense of unbelonging” (201). He is in constant touch with events in Zimbabwe. He longs for home but he is aware that there is no respite there and so the Magistrate “sighed, feeling tired and exasperated as he did whenever he thought of home” (165). So just like the other two characters, the Magistrate is unable to get his home country out of his mind. When his daughter Chenai has a child with a Scottish boy, Liam, and the *rukuvhute*, the Shona word for umbilical cord of the baby, Ruvarashe, is buried in the garden, the Magistrate and his family begin to bind themselves to Scotland. According to Pfalzgraf, the birth of the Magistrate’s grandchild “enables him to fully embrace Edinburgh as home and accept that the family’s future will be in Scotland” (221). The Magistrate discovers that the notion of home is never static and that home can be in more than one place. He admits that they have to “create a future for a fifteen-year-old and a baby in a country where he was fit for nothing but menial work” (269). From that point, the Magistrate begins to “see things from a different perspective” (277), and that home can be where you bury the *rukuvhute* of a grandchild and where you have extended family. The Magistrate embracing Edinburgh as home because of his daughter and his grandchild strengthens the argument of Fathi and Laoire that “for many older migrants, home is

simply where their children and grandchildren are” (45). The notion of home to the Magistrate is both Zimbabwe and Scotland.

To the Maestro, the notion of home is complicated, just as his past life is shrouded in mystery. He fits into Bhabha’s concept of unhomeliness, which is driven, according to Bhabha (1994), by “the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present” (18). It is a Freudian concept that Bhabha used to examine the colonial and postcolonial experience of displaced people. So, ‘unhomeliness’ as Tyson views it is not the same as being homeless. To be ‘unhomed’ according to her, is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself” (368). The Maestro finds himself in this situation as he refers to where he stays as “a base, a place to rest from home” (204). So to him, where he stays is anything but home. The Maestro is not rooted in Zimbabwe, where he is seen as an oppressive white settler and he is also not rooted in Scotland because, even though he is white, he is a migrant from Africa.

There is an envelope that the Maestro picks up many times with the intention of mailing, but he drops it each time. When he dies, the content of the envelope turns out to be an application to get British citizenship because he has ancestral ties to Britain, but the fact that he never sent the envelope reveals that he hovers in the liminal space between abandoning Zimbabwe and embracing Britain. He is unable to settle the issue of where he belongs and where home is. Molla observes that the Maestro is unable to “establish any meaningful social connections ... to belong to or any community” (140). So to the Maestro, home vacillates between Zimbabwe and Scotland.

The Mathematician’s Afropolitan disposition suggests that he is at home in multiple locations; however, his responsibility to manage a family business at home ultimately situates his notion of home in Zimbabwe. Pfalzgraf argues that the Mathematician, unlike the “Magistrate ... has no deeper reverence for Shona culture or sentimental attachment to home. He sees Zimbabwe primarily as an undervalued economy he wishes to tap” (221). He tells Scot his friend:

“The difference between you and me is, I’m going home after my PhD to run a business. You, on the other hand, are stuck here working your dead-end job in a call center, so forgive me if I don’t agree with you on sanctions and bullshit that might harm my ability to run a business, employ people, and make a real difference on the ground.” (177)

The Magistrate meets the Mathematician when the Zimbabwean community in Edinburgh comes together to bury the Maestro, a white Zimbabwean. So in Scotland, the Zimbabwean migrants, irrespective of colour and class, stick together as a community which is synonymous with African migrants’ experience outside of the continent. Again, it affirms Appiah’s position that people “can hang together without a common religion or even delusions of common ancestry” (103). Tendai Huchu in *The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician*, depicts the different experiences of African migrants in Edinburgh and how it shapes the notion of home by the three protagonists.

## Conclusion

This paper explored the experiences of Zimbabwean migrants in Scotland in Huchu’s *The Maestro, The Magistrate and The Mathematician*. This study revealed the different experiences of African migrants in the West as they navigate the complexities of establishing a new home. The diverse experiences of the three main characters in Huchu’s novel inform their decisions regarding where they consider home.

From the analysis of the lived experiences of the characters in the novel, the paper has demonstrated that home for a migrant can be conceptualised as both the homeland and the host country, existing in a fixed location or the liminal space between them. This study highlighted the profound impact of migration experiences on individuals’ perception of home. This paper concludes that the experiences of migrants often shape their notions of home across international borders.

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## **Cultural Globalisation and Literature: Foreign Influences and their Adaptations in Aliyu Kamal's *Hausa Girl***

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the impact of foreign cultures in Aliyu Kamal's **Hausa Girl** from the perspective of New Historicism. New Historicism is a literary theory that analyses a text by deeply examining its historical context, including social, political, and economic conditions of the time it was written. By placing the text under study within its historical context, this paper argues that the social problems portrayed in the novel *Hausa Girl* are simply a reflection of the time of its production. Thus, the study analyses the text by examining its social, and economic conditions of the time it was written. And in its attempt to provide broader cultural conversation happening at the time, the study researched and cited non-literary texts such as news papers, interviews, political speeches alongside literary works. The study concludes that the interpretation of a literary text would be more appreciated when the text is placed and analysed in its historical context as sampled by this study.*

**Keywords:** New Historicism, cultures, text, historical context, reflection

## Introduction

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1948), popularly known as T. S. Eliot, defines “culture” as simply the way of life of a particular people living together in one place. Thus, culture for him, is the whole complex of a society’s art, manners, religion and ideas. This seems to be simple and straightforward from the surface but Eliot’s writings on culture, as Terry Eagleton observes in his 2005 famous book, *The Idea of Culture*, superbly illustrate the constant sliding of the concept as not only way of life but “the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep” (113). Eagleton further explains that this later sense of culture for Eliot is that the culture is far more unconscious than conscious. A culture, he stresses, can never be wholly conscious for there is always more to it than we are conscious of, and it cannot be planned because it is always the unconscious background of our planning. As such, culture cannot altogether be brought to consciousness; and the culture of which we are wholly conscious of is never the whole of culture. It is important to note that this issue of domestication of what culture means, had been the major preoccupation in many prominent literary figures’ works. Beginning with Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* first published in 1869. Arnold defines “culture” as “the best that has been thought and said in the world” (39). Here, Arnold places emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge, critical thinking, and refinement. He critiques both the prevailing materialism of his time and the narrowness of religious dogma of his time, the Victorian era. But Arnold was equally criticised for setting up a binary opposition between culture \_ which for Arnold implies coherence and order \_ on the one hand, and chaos and lawlessness, on the other, as the title implies, *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold simply contrasts culture, which he defines as “the study of perfection”, with anarchy, the prevalent mood of England’s then new democracy, which lacks a sense of direction. The foregoing is an exploration of Arnold’s argument that culture is a powerful agent for societal improvement, capable of elevating human spirit and mitigating the harshness of industrial society. His submission on culture marks the beginning of the polemic (of high culture \_the culture of a specific elite, and the lower-class or mass culture).

It is the publications of critics Richard Hoggart and Raymond William that radically expanded the field of study for literary criticism, or what Bertens describes “as an older intellectual dispensation...cultural studies” (175). Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments*, published in 1957, offers a warm, autobiographical account of Yorkshire working-class culture of the 1930s and 1940s combined with a close reading of popular magazines of the period. While William’s *Culture and Society, 1780-1930*, published in 1958, traces the idea of culture as it developed in England from the late eighteenth century to (almost) the time of writing. Both Hoggart and William were literary academics, with Hoggart representing the humanist perspective and Williams the Marxist one, and both emphasised the valuable and life-enhancing qualities of cultures, in particular working-class culture, that from the perspective of high culture had generally been condemned and ignored. One important thing to note here is how the two skilfully step across the barrier dividing literary and non-literary of their time. No wonder William, in the concluding chapter of his work, suggests that “we need a common culture because we shall not survive without it” (304). Paradoxically, as Bertens points out, William is fully aware that in any given society we will find more than one single culture (174). This marks the beginning of serious cultural studies because since the early 1970s, critics have come to cast their net much wider and have moved far beyond the relations between literature and society that Hoggart’s title refers to.

Thus, cultural studies have undergone fundamental changes since the days of Hoggart and Williams. During the 1980s and 1990s most practitioners of cultural studies have accepted the post-structuralist repudiation of origin, presence, and coherence and have turned away from approaches that see culture as in authentic and organic terms to embrace views that are strongly influenced by Jacques Derrida and, more in particular, Michel Foucault. And culture, for structuralists is seen as artificial in the sense that it is always manufactured, always rather arbitrary \_ and provisional \_ and end product of an endless series of interactions and exchanges. It is this last point of culture being the

“end product of interactions and exchanges” that shifts the focus of this study to the next, but related segment cultural globalisation.

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of countries and economies worldwide, driven by factors like trade, technology, and cultural exchange. The fact that people move from one place to another for different reasons and intentions makes transmission of cultures, or cultural globalisation, possible. This can be further supported by Dilip Gaonka and Benjamin Lee’s argument (qtd, in Adamu) that, “we are living in a world where the local, national, and transnational cultures are increasingly intertwined, whether it be the production of commodities, social movements, or ideas and values” (8). They view these networks as agents of producing global classes of symbolic analysts and information professionals that link culture of one extreme end to another. The forces behind this internationalisation, as Adamu further explains, are increasingly outside the direct state control, and yet they form the dynamic edge for changes all over the world (38).

The fact that this interplay between the local, national, and transnational is producing a world in which dealing with local and domestic issues requires placing them in cross-national contexts, makes it impossible for one to understand contemporary changes both here and abroad without seeing how they are intertwined with other perspectives, as new historicist would argue. It is against this aforementioned point that the present study aspires to discuss the foreign influences and their adaptation to Hausa culture as they relate to Aliyu Kamal’s *Hausa Girl* through the lens of New Historicism.

### **Kamal and his Writing Style**

Professor Aliyu Kamal, “a writer from Northern Nigeria” (Shehu and Muhammad 417); “[a] writer with considerable experiences of the Hausa and Fulani cultures” (Tanko et al 253); “one of the recent but prominent writers...[w]ho explores and thematises the pervading predominant problems facing the Nigerian nation” (Saje et al 1-3); “One of the most prolific writers of fiction in Nigeria for having churned out twelve works in the span of a decade” (Jaji 166), was born

in 1958 in the ancient city of Kano. He had his primary and secondary school education in Kano. He obtained his B. A. and M.A. (English Language) from Bayero University in 1982 and 1987, respectively. He had had his M.Sc. in Applied Linguistics from Edinburgh University in 1990 before he got his PhD in Applied Linguistics from the same Bayero university, Kano. Kamal wrote sixteen novels in English which include *Hausaland* (2001), *Fire in My Backyard* (2004), *Silence and a Smile* (2005), *The Blaming Soul* (2005), *Portrait of a Patron* (2006), *A Possible World* (2008), *Hausa Girl* (2010), *Women Without Borders* (2010), *Hausa Boy* (2011), *Life Afresh* (2012), *No Sweat* (2013), *King of the Boys* (2015), *Someone Somewhere* (2018), *Somewhere Somehow* (2019), *The Upper Level* (2021), and *The Imam of the Corner Mosque* (2021). *Fire in My Backyard* won the ANA/Chevron Prize in 2005. Subsequently, Kamal translated all his novels into Hausa language.

Kamal's art, as summarised from the observations of his reviewers and critics, could be said to be concerned with the depiction of socio-cultural and religious sensibilities of the Hausa-Muslim North (Abdullahi 250). His desire to lament, in his works, on the influences of the foreign cultures and their adaptation to Hausa-Muslim society, particularly Northern Nigeria, is also one of the salient features of his works. This will not be too hard to prove by any critic taking the route of analysing his works, especially from the style of his books titles, hence *Hausaland*, *Hausa Girl*, *Hausa Boy*, *The Imam of the Corner Mosque*. Apart from the style of his titles, the choice of his characters' names (typically Hausa by nature) is also significant in this regard – hence Kado, in the *Hausaland* means “gift”; “Goshi, in *The Portrait of a Patron* means “wealth” (a child born in the time of abundance); “Tanko”, in *Fire in my Backyard* means a boy born after several successive girls; Azumi, in *King of the Boys* means a girl child born during the month of Ramadan, to mention but a few. This distinctive style of Kamal is what, perhaps, makes some critics refer to him as a “contemporary writer who explores the heart of contemporary realities by bringing to the fore, in most instances, what is morally tolerable and what is not” (Shehu and Muhammad 417). His style simplifies, among many issues, the subject matter of his works – for it gives even a new

reader of his works hints of what the book he is reading is all about. Thus, Stephen perceives style as the collective impression left by the way an author writes, for him, “an author’s style is usually individual, his literary fingerprint” (41). However, every writer has one, or more, role models that inspired him, and Kamal is not an exception because he emphasises on the contributions of being familiar with the works of a great American writer, Henry James, hence, “My favourite writer is an American novelist, Henry James. I still read his novels. I like his style very well.” (Kamal 7:58). He believes that reading James has been very beneficial in designing his works especially the style of concentrating on a single character to build the story. The reflection of how reading James’ seminal “The Art of Fiction” has shaped his perception of narrative style could be found in the description of his central characters. This issue of imitating Western writers is not limited to Kamal alone, because writing style of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pounds, W.B. Yeats, and Gerald Manley Hopkins, among others, are found in the writings of Christopher Okigbo and Wole Soyinka (Ojaide 5). This could be further corroborated by Eliot’s (qtd. in Nnolim) declaration that “no writer is completely original” (11). Thus, the black writer of today owes much to the European literary tradition \_ he is a product of two worlds: his African background and the European intellectual, historical and cultural experience (Nnolim 11).

Kamal's art could also be seen to be concerned with the portrayal of contemporary societal ills usually as being grounded by recurring negligence on Islamic principles. Kamal laments seriously in almost all his works on this issue of nonchalant attitudes of some Hausa Muslims toward Islamic principles. He attributes all the societal ills in the North to violation of Islamic teachings. Kamal’s philosophy and literary ideology could be deduced when he says: “every great novel must first of all be based on a profound sense of moral values” (Shehu and Muhammad 417). He does not support creative writers who do the opposite, hence: “In my own novels, I chose themes from my observation of how people of Kano (it is 99.9 percent Muslim) lead their lives in issues concerning, say, gender relations or how native culture alongside religious precepts affects their lives” (Ibrahim)

On the use of language, Kamal's art could be seen to be presented using simple and unique language. The novelist "domesticated" English language to express the cultural values of the Hausa people. Thus, the flowery narrative style and eloquent descriptive technique make his art to be more entertaining and exciting which, for Shehu and Muhammad, "give the desired impression and information on the part of the readers about the Hausa cultural richness" (417). It is important, at this juncture, to stress that this issue of simplicity of language does not apply to all his works. This is because Kamal was accused of being too harsh on diction in his early novels, particularly in *Fire in my Backyard*, as he testifies in an interview:

When *Fire in my Backyard* was published, we used it here in BUK and other universities, so many students complained of the book being very difficult: big vocabulary, long sentences and long paragraphs. So, after that I changed my style \_ I now write in simple, accessible English so that somebody in SS1/2 or 3 can read and understand me. (Kamal 7:20).

It is important to stress that writing in English had existed in Northern Nigeria well before Kamal came to the scene. For example, writers such as Mohammed Tukur Garba, Ibrahim Tahir, Labo Yari, Zaynab Alkali and Abubakar Gimba had written works on Northern Nigerian social issues. These Northern intellectuals were united by the awareness of the importance of writing in English, and "One common thematic strand which links the works of most of these writers is the attempt to correct fallacies about northern Nigeria's seemingly conservative outlook" (Sani et al. 47). And Kamal is not unaware of this since he also seems to be inspired by same fallacies hence "when you compare Northern Nigeria with Southern Nigeria, they have more established writers than us. So I said since one knows English language, and somebody has a story to tell, why not start writing. So I started writing." (Kamal 5:52). This is how Kamal, a Hausa Muslim Kano-born, joined the crop of northern intellectuals with the ability to write and converse in English.

Kamal points out that the major concern of his novels is with Muslim life in the Nigerian context which is elaborately explained in his 2016 professorial inaugural lecture titled “The Islamic Novel: Style and Structure” (168). This issue is more evident in his interview with *Daily Trust* after his inaugural lecture presentation:

*Daily Trust*: “Most of the novels cited were written by you. Is this aimed at creating a new genre of literature, especially one that is not popular in Nigeria yet?”

Kamal: “A genre isn’t created out of a vacuum. The idea of the Islamic novel germinated with my first novel, ‘Hausaland’ (2004), and came to fruition with the 12th, ‘King of the Boys’ (2015) after which I wrote down the principles and practice of the genre. It remains for fair-minded critics to read the seminal paper first and the novels afterwards and contribute with journal articles or books criticism”.

Kamal’s works, like any other literary works, are not exempt from critics’ confrontations. For example, some critical studies on his works “tend to over-flog the often repeated refrain of being concerned more with the ‘dispensable aspects of Hausa culture’, which infringes on rights of men rather than religious precepts, which neutralises the opposition between sexes” (Jaji 166). Jaji further sees this as one of the major drawbacks in Kamal’s novels that by implication affects their limits and scope as well as their literary significance. While Saje and Mahmud argue that Kamal “has used most of his writings to depict how women are subjugated to various forms of oppression. Thus, he creates awareness of their rights and how such rights are denied to them in their Hausa Muslim patriarchal society” (233-234).

However, Jibril (qtd. in Sani et al.) observed that “northern Nigeria is, in fact, a changing society. National integration is progressing at a tremendous speed and not least of its agents are mass media” (47). One of such changes in recent times came with the rise of Hausa film industry popularity known as “Kannywood”. And this became the main subject matter of Kamal’s *Hausa Girl*, the primary text for this study.



### Brief on the Text: *Hausa Girl*

*Hausa Girl* (2010), Aliyu Kamal's seventh novel, tells a story of a secondary school girl who has sentimental attachment to Hausa romance novels, and can endure any type of punishment or fatigue to have her way into the world of romance in the novels in question. Thus, she can:

bear the lashes often furiously inflicted by teachers or angrily by the principal whenever she was caught with a smuggled romance, which she often hid between book covers and read even as the teachers ranted on the facts of Biology, Mathematics, History or Islamic Religious Knowledge. (1)

No wonder, "she had completed her secondary school with F9" (1). Even at the completion of her secondary school with this poor result, Hajjo Gano has nothing to lose, instead, she feels very much happy since "she had no mind for scholarship" (1). She had a dream which she vows to pursue \_ becoming an actress, a celebrity. That is why she later develops the same addictive habit for watching Hausa films on CDs from their neighbours since her uncle, Ilu whom Hajjo stays with, disapproves of watching such movies. In her attempt to achieve her dreams, Hajjo defies all the threats of her uncle and warnings of her surrogate mother and, instead pushes herself toward the world of fantasy which she passionately adores till when she meets Sonkowa (SK), the Hausa filmmaker\_ the director.

Hajjo's mother dies at her birth, and nobody cares much about the situation of the new born baby since the conception of the pregnancy goes contrary to the normal norm of the society: she was born out of wedlock. That is why she is being referred to as a "bastard" throughout the text by the author. Hajjo's father, Bala Gano, is seen as a disgrace to the society for his refusal to marry and his nonchalant attitude toward the society's norms and values. He is always busy having fun from one entertainment centre (cinema) to another and visiting wayward young girls at the Sabongari red-light district where he first meets Hajjo's mother. No wonder he gives Hajjo the go ahead to start

shooting films when she meets Sankowa (SK), the Hausa film director, since when Hajjo tells him about it, “her father let out an appreciative laugh” (189). And lucky for her, “the film SK shot with Hajjo Gano was an instant hit.” The film magazines have commended her efforts. The movie has sold many copies and SK and Hajjo benefit handsomely from the sell.

Hajjo’s later music video, “Hausa Girl”, becomes a calamity for her because “the CD scandalises Kano City and the members of her family. They summarily disown her.” (The blurb). She is criticised for being amoral in the CD – wearing tight and mini skirt that expose the paraphernalia of her body that goes against her culture and the teachings of Islam. And with the disastrous deaths of her father and SK, Hajjo decides to go back to Kabiru Badayi (KB), her first lover, who is portrayed, unlike SK, as a Hausa film director with moral vision, but he outrightly rejects her for not heeding his warnings against shooting film with SK whom he accuses of “whetting the appetites of the audience by producing very sensual films of little value...and yet...say they are promoting Hausa culture.” (207).

The novel has been perceived by Kamal’s reviewers and critics as a critique of the Hausa filmmakers (Kannywood) and Hausa romance novels. For instance, in their analyses of Kamal’s novels, after thorough analysis on how Kannywood came about and its impact on Hausa culture, Saje et al argue that “Aliyu Kamal wrote *Hausa Girl* to reflect what happens in his immediate society in order to *state his position on issues of social concern*” (105). For Abdullahi, “the novel raises its baleful finger at the Northern Nigerian movie industry, accusing it of portraying Hausa culture in an improper way and instilling bad morals, particularly in the minds of susceptible youth, all as a result of aping the Indian movie culture” (249). These sampled how the critics perceive the novel.

In *Hausa Girl*, like in his other novels, Kamal’s lamentation over what he sees as moral decadence is evident. But the only difference here is that his accusing finger points directly at Kannywood and Hausa romance novels whose activities, for him, are “most likely having harmful effects on youth morality” (233). Thus in his attempt to show

his disapproval of their activities, anyone wishing to aspire for foreign ways of life is denounced in the novel as either illegitimate or bastard, as in Hajjo's case, or as disowned and wayward, as in the case of her father, or even as "satan" and "non-Hausa", as in SK's case. No wonder, SK and Hajjo's father are killed towards the end of the novel, perhaps in order to punish Hajjo hence as she cries out: "No father. No SK. Where do I turn now?" Kamal's central message in the novel, can be gleaned from the answer which KB provides to her in relation to this question:

"Where do I turn to now?" She wailed afresh.

"Go back to Allah and beseech Him for absolution. Satan in the guise of SK whispered in your ears and led you astray...fear Allah and cultivate impeccable manners. Whether you abandon films or choose to remain in the film business hearken to that and to what the wise among the Hausa people say: Borrowed clothing doesn't cover your thighs" (249-250).

Despite this disapproval, Kamal contrarily justifies that "Films are part of commerce" (215). Thus, Hajjo Gano is later seen as the provider of all that is needed in her father's house because with the:

multiple sums of money she collected...after her film debut, Hajjo had given the house a lick of paint and bought new sets of doors and windows, a pre-paid electrical metre, a new and more reliable water pipeline, a new fridge, an A/C and cooker, as well as a new cement flooring for the entryway and family compound. Thereafter, her father always found plentiful food in the fridge whenever he went back home (227-228).

These contradictions are, for post structuralists, unavoidable, since a text always "divides against itself"; and the excessive signification of language, as they argue, leads a writer to say "more than, less than, or other than" he wishes to say.

Kamal, just like the Kano state government of that time that created Hisbah and Censorship Boards in its attempt to limit the foreign influences, seems to be conscious of the dilemma embedded in the banning of Kannywood since there are other foreign films industries that preceded them that people would turn to like Hollywood, Bollywood and Nollywood whose films, as Saje's et al observed, "are more immoral as far as Hausa culture and religion were concerned" (105). That is why Hajjo is, perhaps, allowed to remain alive in the novel.

The foregoing discussions, as new historicists would argue, justify the nature of culture and globalisation as the "end product of an endless series of interactions and exchanges", that are out of control of the state.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory chosen for this study is New Historicism which is also called Cultural materialism. New historicism, which was American in origin and has remained largely American, while cultural materialism was, and is mainly British. The two can be discussed simultaneously by highlighting their shared focus on analysing literary text within its historical context, examining power dynamics within a text, and considering how literary works both reflect and shape the social and political ideologies of their time. More so, both new historicism and cultural materialism incorporate non-literary texts like historical documents, political speeches, and social commentary to fully understand the cultural context surrounding a literary work. The term New Historicism was coined by the American critic Stephen Greenblatt in his 1980 book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* while Raymond Williams championed the coinage of cultural materialism in his 1977 *Marxism and Literature* at the time of the traditional study of Renaissance literature, in particular the work of Shakespeare via a mixture of Marxist and post structuralist orientations\_ especially post structuralist notions of the self, of discourse, and of power. Thus, New Historicism describes the work of a group of theories (Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, Catherine Gallagher, Jane Marcus, Jerome McGann, Gerald Graff, among others)

who share the view that literature is inherently historical, and thus cannot be separated from its social and political context.

The theory of New Historicism was partly inspired by Michel Foucault, Jacques Jacques Derrida and Marxist thinkers (specifically, Raymond Williams and Louis Althusser). For example, Foucault's thought of power as not just residing in a centralised authority but operating through social institutions and discourses allows New Historicists to analyse how power permeates all aspects of society, including literature. Foucault's idea of discourse as a system of knowledge production also enables New Historicists to examine how dominant ideologies are constructed and perpetuated through language and cultural practices (Culler 130). Likewise Derrida's method of deconstruction which exposes the inherent contradictions and instability within texts and his emphasis on the power of language and its ability to create meaning, even while undermining it, allow New Historicists to critically analyse literary works by revealing the underlying power dynamics and equally focus on how language constructs historical understanding. William's focus on the materiality of culture and Althusser's analysis of ideology as a system of power relations provide New Historicism with the tools to examine literature as an active participant in the social and political landscape of a particular historical period.

By implication, based on the foregoing discussion, New Historicism can be seen as a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period\_ in that it refuses to privilege the literary text: instead of a literary 'foreground' and a historical 'background' it envisages and practises a mode of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform or interrogate each other. This 'equal weighting' is suggested in the definition of new historicism offered by the American critic Louis Montrose who defines it as a combined interest in 'the textuality' of history, and the "historicity of texts". The textuality of history here, means that historical texts have the characteristics of literary narratives, while the historicity of texts means that literary texts participate in the construction of history which by implication means

that history and text are interdependent and intertextual. When it is said that new historicism involves the parallel study of literary and non-literary texts, the word “parallel” encapsulates the essential difference between this and earlier approaches to literature which had made some use of historical data. These earlier approaches made it hierarchical separation between the literary text, which was the object of value, the jewel, as it were, and the historical background, which was merely the setting, and by definition of lesser worth. Thus, it essentially rejects the traditional idea of Historicism “which examines the work of literature within the context of historical setting by elevating the historical perspective of a work to a central position in its understanding” (Stephen 366), by arguing that history is not a fixed, objective backdrop to literature, but rather a dynamic, power-laden force that actively shapes and is shaped by literary texts. It is also different from theories like formalism that focus mainly on form simply because unlike the formalist approaches that emphasise on textual features, New Historicism incorporates external factors such as political, social, cultural influences, hence, “our task as clever New Historicists is to show how the social world influences the language that writers use” (Greenblatt 13)

However, like any other theory, New Historicism is not without its own shortcomings, for example, it neglects the literary merit and artistic value of a text, as formalists and new critics would argue. Thus, it is criticised for potentially reducing literature to a mere reflection of its historical context, neglecting the unique literary qualities of a text, overemphasising power dynamics, and risking a deterministic view where the historical moment dictates the text, potentially diminishing the agency of the author and the text’s internal complexity. Critics also argue that it can lead to selective use of historical evidence and a tendency to impose contemporary values onto historical texts, creating anachronistic interpretations. Despite these limitations, the literary sensibilities of New Historicism to the study of literature can not be ignored hence, “[i]t has been particularly successful in studying Romantic literature and the literature of the Renaissance” (Stephen 366). Another factor lies in its ability to provide a deeper understanding of a literary text by analysing it within its historical and cultural

context, considering not just the text itself but also the broader social, political and economic forces at play during the time of its creation, as sampled by this study.

### **Foreign Influences and their Adaptation in Aliyu Kamal's *Hausa Girl***

For one to understand the foreign influences and their adaptation to the Hausa culture, or specifically Northern Nigeria, one has to go back to the colonial era. This is because when the British colonised Northern Nigeria in 1903, they inherited a vast population of literate citizenry, with thousands of Qur'anic scholars who were later forced to adopt the Roman script so that the scholars of the future would thus be drawn to the endless storehouse of Western literature rather than just Muslim literature. Another responsible factor lies behind the Establishment of Translation Bureau in 1929 which later became Literature Bureau in 1935 with the sole aim of translating non-Hausa books and materials (especially Arabic and English). Books translated under the close supervision of Rupert East include *Ruwan Bagaja* (The Healing Waters), *Shehu Umar*, *Jiki Magayi*, *Idon Matambayi*, *Magana Jarice*, among others. And the books were recommended for schools since they were written in classical Hausa. This is how, as Adamu argued, "the colonial masters had, in effect, planted a Trojan Horse within the entertainment mindset of the Hausa" (51). And this can be seen as a good noticeable point of departure from the dominant Muslim literature into secular one. Another factor that deserves special mention here is the introduction of cinema in Kano by Lebanese merchants. As a result, the 1960s experienced an increased influx of media into Hausa society, transitioning from printed materials to visual formats. Therefore, as Furniss (qtd. in Adamu) noted "the most remarkable cultural transitions in recent years have been this move from books into video film" (76).

In an attempt to place the text under study within its historical context, the reflection of the above social problems can be viewed through the character of Bala Gano, the heroine's father who, after being:

fed up by his friends's persistent teasing and being called squeamish, Bala Gano had given in and followed

them to the Sabongari red-light district. It was after they had watched a double feature film at the El Dorado Cinema one night \_ a Western and an Indian. He had been titillated by the erotic scenes in *Once Upon a Time in the West* and the lascivious dancing and singing in *Sanyashi*, which had fired hormonal urges that he agreed with his friends could best be blunted by way of illicit sex (3-4).

This issue of cinema as one medium of cultural transmission as depicted in the novel, remained one of the “increasing entrapment of the Hausa to entertainment ethos of Western Europe” (Adamu 60). Bala Gano is a direct victim because he has completely adopted and adapted to the Western way of life, thus, as depicted in the novel, he becomes “a black European by vowing to keep his love for his dead wife pure and by not marrying ever again. Only a white man would behave that way” (160). Not only this, “he was the most unusual, the uncultured member of their extended family” (156). This media exposure via cinema did not only entrap men alone, women were equally later entrapped by bringing home-cinema like devices to their doorstep in form of CD/DVD player. This is because the cinema, as pointed out by Adamu, “was supplemented by radio [and television] broadcasts of Hindi music, especially during strategic times of the day aimed at women...therefore women became targets for entertainment within the confines of their private space” (60). This issue of women entrapment is also captured in the novel through the relationship between Hajjo and Fatahiyya, the newly married young lady living in Hajjo’s neighbourhood. Hajjo’s addictive behaviour centres around Hausa romance novels at the beginning, but this suddenly changes when she starts paying visits to Fatahiyyat’s house, hence “On a visit to Fatahiyya’s house to borrow one such novella, Hajjo had found the housewife watching a Hausa film”(50). This marks Hajjo’s transition from the avid reader of Hausa romance novels to Hausa film avid viewer, hence “Hajjo turned to be a more avid viewer than the housewife” (51). Another factor responsible for this is the sudden development in turning the romance novels into films. Hajjo has fallen seriously into this entrapment for she “felt no feelings of remorse for



staying away at Fatahiyya's house until sunset" (51). And this has further fuelled Hajjo's passion for filmmaking hence:

identifying with the actors and actresses easily led to fantasy. Hajjo put herself in the position of the actresses. The glamour, the brazenness of behaviour, the deliberate act of a chameleon orchestrating a sudden change of colour...all that afforded the keen viewer the fervent wish to see Hajjo Gano on the screen acting alongside a dashing leading prancing man, as they tried to bring a story alive, so alive as to seem real after all (53).

The influence of this one on Hajjo is seen in the novel when she indulges in a fantasy-like game rehearsal with Fatahiyya's husband in their bedroom while Fatahiyya is busy in the kitchen. Hajjo comes back to her senses when Fatahiyya shouts at her: "What are you doing in my husband's bedroom?" (99). This marks the end of their friendship. The issue of sex scandal became rampant in Kano for many sex videos of popular actresses leaked which lead to the suspension and arrests of many filmmakers, while some sought recourse by relocating to the neighbouring states.

Bala Gano, unlike his daughter that represents new generation (Kannywood generation), is a typical representation of early cinema entrapment. Because, as the novel depicts, Bala Gano is prompted by the two Western films he has watched at the cinema that leads to his meeting with Hajjo's mother, "a runaway girl [w]ho had arrived earlier in the day to escape an arranged marriage to an old landowner she abhorred" (5), at Sabongari red-light district.

Still at examining the novel through its historical context, the book is set in the ancient city of Kano, a Northern Nigerian state where 99.9 of the population are Hausa Muslims. The setting coincides with the time when the culture of the region was in turmoil and seriously threatened by the foreign influences which people see as amoral and alien to Muslim Hausa culture. It is also the time when the Hausa romance novels and Hausa films are seen as the major medium for importing

foreign cultures that have great impact in changing the way people, especially the youth, behave. The book in question was written in 2010, during the tenure of Malam Ibrahim Shekarau (2003-2011) “who was elected...on a promise that his regime would be based on Islamic moral...principles” (Ibrahim 2). One of the major challenges which Shekarau’s government faced is how to deal and set precedence for the filmmakers, popularly known as Kannywood. The activities of Kannywood are perceived as unislamic and amoral. The creation of Hisbah and censorship boards is one of the steps taken to tackle what the government sees as moral decadence. This is because while the Hisbah police public morality and stops amoral behaviour, the censorship board has created rules and regulations that govern the conduct of any film industry and Hausa romance authors. It is around this time that the Kano state government launched a campaign for the burning down of Hausa romance novels in boarding secondary schools, as Premium Times reports: “In 2007 Shekarau as Governor of Kano State in Northern Nigeria publicly burned Hausa romance novels and materials he described as pornographic and immoral to the customs and traditions of Northern Nigerian society.” (Premium Times).

Thus, this period witnessed serious clashes between the then Kano state government, along side the Muslim scholars and the Hausa filmmakers (as well as Hausa romance authors). Kamal is not left behind in this campaign against these issues of immoral acts hence, like his other African writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, has devised his own way of addressing the issue via writing.

Different means were devised by the government to put a stop to these cultural foreign influences arising from the burning down of romance novels, creation of Hisbah and censorship boards to the arrests and detaining of filmmakers and authors, but all these did not succeed in stopping the act of imitating the Western ways of life in the region in question. It did not also stop the industry from becoming one of the modern and lucrative means of making money. This is as a result of, as Blakely (qtd. in Adamu) points out, “new communication technologies [t]hat enable developing countries to imitate the West in a process of modernisation” (39). Although Kamal does not explicitly dwell on this

development in the novel, his awareness of this can be seen through KB's mission. This is reflected in the novel when Hajjo explains how KB, in contrast to SK, intends to first of all write down the story (script) and follow it while shooting, Hajjo's father appreciates, thus, "Aha, you see! That is the way to make films \_ like the Western I enjoy watching" (189). This scenario, in the novel, justifies Westernisation of Hausa video film. Subsequently, Kannywood justifies Westernisation of their films on the grounds of development through modernity. This is reflected in the interview with Ali Nuhu, one of the pioneers and successful Hausa filmmakers, in Niger Republic in 2005, and it is worth quoting in full:

The political systems in Nigeria and Niger Republic are based on Western models. Why didn't these countries create their own unique political systems? The Western society is the most progressive in the world, and everyone is trying to copy them. Even Arabs, who are strongly attached to their religion and culture, are now aping Americans, in their mode of dress and other things. It is modernity, and you must go with the times, or you will be left behind (Adamu 40).

This interview summarises, by reflecting on, the major issues raised in this research from the issue of cultural globalisation down to the impact of Western cultures and their adaptation to the Hausa filmmakers in particular, and by extension, to the Northern Nigerian Hausa societies.

In summary, all the foregoing discussions in this research are, by implication, geared toward the justification of Montrose's "textuality of history" and "historicity of the text". A Film, just like literature, mirrors the culture that produces it \_ Kannywood, as such, is not an exception since it mirrors the adopted cultures that have come to stay in the guise of modernisation as insisted by Ali Nuhu in the above quoted interview. In this sense, Kannywood functions as literature\_ propagating what Arnold calls "the best that has been thought and said in the world" (39). But the extent at which the Kannywood can withstand the scorn and curse of the society that has 99.9 per cent

populace as Muslims, is another topic of special debate. Subsequently, the government's attitudes toward the activities of Kannywood took a political dimension because Kannywood became one of the attacking weapons used by the succeeding government to topple the then government and give special slots to Kannywood members (e.g. both the past and the present chairmen of censorship board are filmmakers from Kannywood). Concerning the novel, the historicity of the text, lies in the text's ability to recount historical places and events that happened at the time. One of such events is the students' encounter with "Sambuqa, the witch" in the middle of the night while celebrating their final exams. The school is GGSS Dala, even though the name of the school is not revealed in the novel. The mention of "El Dorado" cinema which still stands (as at the time of writing this research) and functions in Kano is another one. Likewise, the "Sabongari" red-light district area and the brothels as well as the freedom of 'do as you like' activities in the area, are truly described in the novel as "south-eastern settler enclave" (4).

## **Conclusion**

Having placed the text heavily on its historical context, the study has succeeded in providing broader cultural conversations occurring at the time via researching and citing non-literary texts such as news papers, interviews, political speeches alongside literary works all in an effort to arrive at the possible interpretation that the text is really the product of its own time, and as such, would be most appropriated when linked to other historical sources of its time. Thus exploration of the intertextuality of both the historical and literary texts has become one of the major objectives of the study. Having problematised the concept of culture, the study has also demonstrated how the taken-for-granted nature of culture can lead to an open ended discussions of culture since it provides space for any cultural discourse to "play without security", as Derrida would put it. Moreover, by adopting New Historicist models of reading, the study has shown that both the historical and textual sources are inadequate in defining and domesticating culture \_ simply because there is no one single culture in any society, as highlighted and discussed in the research.

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## **Functionality of Rituals for Social Transformation in Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed***

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### **Abstract**

*This qualitative study investigates the functionality of rituals for social transformation in Femi Osofisan's No More the Wasted Breed. Employing textual analysis grounded in performance theory, functionalist theory, and insights from African dramaturgy, the research explores how Osofisan redefines ritual as a dynamic vehicle for resistance, critique, and communal renewal. Traditionally, rituals reinforce social order and cultural continuity; however, in Osofisan's play, rituals are contested spaces where oppressive practices such as virgin sacrifice and patriarchal domination are challenged and reimagined. Characters like Elusu, who embodies destructive tradition, and Olokun, the voice of reform, dramatize this conflict, highlighting the potential of ritual to either sustain or transform society. Performance theory frames ritual as a liminal and performative space enabling reflection and social change, while functionalist theory contextualizes the evolving social roles of rituals. Insights from African dramaturgy further illuminate how ritual performance is used as a tool for political and ethical critique within African theatre. The study concludes that rituals in Osofisan's play serve as powerful catalysts for resistance, renewal, and societal transformation. This study contributes to knowledge by expanding the understanding of rituals not merely as cultural relics but as potent instruments for social critique, gender equity, and regeneration in postcolonial contexts. The findings suggest*



*that theatre practitioners should actively engage ritual elements to advocate justice and transformation rather than mere preservation. The study recommends future research conduct comparative analyses of ritual across African drama to deepen insight into its evolving functionality in contemporary society.*

**Keywords:** Ritual, Social regeneration, drama, rebirth, functionality.

## Introduction

Femi Osofisan is a renowned Nigerian playwright whose works frequently draw on African traditional elements, particularly ritual, as tools for social critique and transformation. In many of his plays, Osofisan employs ritual not merely as a theatrical device but as a potent cultural mechanism for interrogating societal injustices and envisioning renewal (Ogunba, 1994). In *No More the Wasted Breed*, ritual becomes a symbolic and performative medium through which characters confront historical burdens, societal decay, and the possibility of communal rebirth (Osofisan, 1984). Osofisan's integration of ritual aligns with African performance traditions where theatre serves communal, spiritual, and political purposes. As noted by Soyinka (1976), ritual in African drama often embodies a metaphysical dimension, bridging the past with the present to provoke transformation.

In *No More the Wasted Breed*, rituals are not static reenactments but dynamic acts of resistance and reimagining. They function as performative spaces in which characters, particularly women, challenge oppressive norms and seek liberation (Adeoti, 2009). This reflects Osofisan's broader commitment to gender equity and social justice. Drawing on Performance Theory (Turner, 1982) and insights from African dramaturgy, this study explores how ritual in the play operates as both a cultural memory and a site of potential change. It argues that Osofisan redefines ritual as an active force capable of inspiring hope, healing trauma, and mobilizing collective action. In doing so, he aligns

traditional practices with modern struggles, offering a vision of regeneration rooted in African epistemologies.

Although Femi Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed* draws heavily on ritual and traditional performance, there is limited scholarly focus on how these elements function as tools for social transformation rather than mere cultural symbols. The play uses ritual to interrogate political failure, gender inequality, and societal decay, yet its deeper performative and transformative roles are often overlooked. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining how Osofisan employs ritual through the lens of African dramaturgy and performance theory to inspire resistance, healing, and communal renewal, revealing the active power of ritual in contemporary African theatre. The aim of the study is to examine how Femi Osofisan uses ritual in *No More the Wasted Breed* as a tool for social transformation by analysing the dramatic and symbolic roles of ritual in the play, exploring how ritual addresses societal issues, and assessing its transformative impact.

## **Review of Related Literature**

This study shall briefly review some scholarly work under these three sub-headings: studies on Osofisan's dramaturgy, ritual in African theatre, and functionality of rituals in Nigerian cultural society

### **Studies on Osofisan's Dramaturgy**

African dramaturgy refers to the structure, aesthetics, and philosophy underlying African theatrical forms, particularly those rooted in oral traditions, ritual, music, dance, and communal participation. This is, however, not a singular codified theory, but rather a framework through which African drama can be understood in its cultural and performative contexts. Unlike Western dramaturgy which often centers on individualism and linear narratives, African dramaturgy emphasizes collective experience, cyclical time, and the interplay between the sacred and the secular (Banham, 2004). It is deeply influenced by indigenous performance practices where storytelling, song, and ritual are not separated from daily life but are integral to social and spiritual expression (Ogunba, 1978).

Playwrights like Femi Osofisan draw heavily on African dramaturgy to challenge colonial aesthetics and reassert African identity through performance. In his plays, ritual and myth are reimagined not just as cultural artifacts but as tools for political resistance and social transformation (Adeoti, 2009). This approach aligns with the broader goals of postcolonial African theatre, which seeks to recover suppressed histories and affirm indigenous knowledge systems. As such, African dramaturgy offers both a method of artistic creation and a lens of critical analysis that privileges African worldviews and communal ethics (Barber, 2000).

A distinctive feature of Osofisan's work is his use of Brechtian techniques, such as alienation effects and direct audience engagement, to foster critical consciousness. He employs these methods to disrupt passive consumption of theatre, encouraging audiences to question and analyze the socio-political structures depicted on stage (Osofisan, 2001). This approach aligns with his commitment to theatre as a tool for social transformation. Banham (2004) posits that Osofisan's plays often incorporate elements of traditional African performance, including music, dance, and ritual, not merely for aesthetic purposes but as integral components of the narrative structure. These elements serve to bridge the gap between the past and present, reinforcing cultural identity and continuity (Banham, 2004).

In *No More the Wasted Breed*, Osofisan utilizes ritual as a central motif to critique societal decay and advocate for regeneration. The play's structure and content reflect his broader dramaturgical approach, wherein traditional forms are harnessed to address contemporary issues, emphasizing the potential of theatre as a catalyst for change.

### **Ritual in African Theatre**

Thus ritual is a set of actions performed mainly for its symbolic values. This may be according to what the tradition of the community demands. It usually refers to what the actions which are chosen arbitrarily by the performers. Ogunba (1978) sees ritual as not just an act for nothing sake, but as a communication directed to a particular spirit, god or goddess. The crop materials for ritual vary from one god

to another. Ritual occupies a central place in African theatre, serving as both a performative and spiritual practice that reinforces communal values and addresses societal concerns. African theatrical traditions often blur the lines between ritual and performance, creating a dynamic interplay that engages audiences on multiple levels.

Traditional African performances are deeply rooted in communal rituals that encompass music, dance, and storytelling. These performances are not merely entertainment but are imbued with spiritual significance, often serving as conduits for ancestral communication and societal cohesion (Nwanaju, 2013). The integration of ritual into theatre reflects a holistic worldview where art, spirituality, and daily life are interconnected. Among these ritual materials are kolanut, yam, plantain, sugarcane, cock, pigeon, ram and host of others. However, ritual gets to its climax when ordinary ritual materials are not enough to divert the evil of a particular community and in some cases a human being is needed to address the situation, as a ritual sacrifice for the purgation of evil and cleansing. This person now serves as a “scapegoat” who bears the burden of evil of others on himself.

In the context of African theatre, ritual functions as a means of enacting and reinforcing cultural narratives. Performances often draw upon historical events, myths, and communal experiences, utilizing ritualistic elements to convey messages and provoke reflection. This approach fosters a participatory environment where audiences are not passive observers but active participants in the theatrical experience (Chinyowa, 2000). Moreover, ritual in African theatre serves as a mechanism for social critique and transformation. By reenacting traditional ceremonies and incorporating symbolic actions, theatre becomes a space for examining contemporary issues and envisioning alternative futures. This performative use of ritual enables communities to confront challenges and explore solutions within a familiar cultural framework (Rapoo, 2010). In Osofisan's *No More the Wasted Breed*, ritual is employed to highlight societal failures and the potential for renewal. The play's use of ritual underscores its significance in African theatre as a tool for both cultural preservation and progressive discourse.

## **Functionality of Rituals in Nigerian Cultural Society**

Every ritual material has distinct properties that are beyond human comprehension. They are given up for unique communication in relaying people's messages to the supernatural forces. The benevolent ones are the good ones while the malevolent ones are the destructive and evil supernatural powers. Ritual has been divided into Imitative, Positive and Negative ritual, Rite of passage and sacrificial ritual respectively based on resemblance in identity across cultures. Imitative rituals are those that originate and are copied from myth. Ogunba (1978) believes that some African ritual ceremonies reveal instances of imitation, either of an experience in like or of the behaviour-patterns of some powers. Myth or an aspect of myth is repeated in this type of ritual, so, it is called imitative ritual. They patterned after the myth of ancestor involved. Positive and negative rituals are concerned with preservation of culture and orderliness in the community. They celebrate morality and values in the custom of a community.

Positive ritual deals with renewal of individual while negative ritual spells avoidance of what is described as taboo and things that are to be avoided. Nigerians see morality as the positive command of the gods and ancestors while taboo is a negative command which is prohibited. The rituals that deal with discipline and morality is applauded while the branch of forbidden things attracts a heavy penalty on the person who commits the offence and even largely on the whole community (Bell, 2007).

The ritual of rite of passage is also called the passage of life. It is based on separation- one leaves a kind of life for another as development takes place. In Yoruba land of the South – Western part of Nigeria, the rite of passage starts from one stage of life to another. The separation that features in the transition process is characterized by liminality. Liminality is derived from the Latin word 'Limen' which means 'a threshold'. This is at the middle stage of ritual when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status which will be held of transition, the rite of separation comes first as the child's separateshimself and leave childhood. The

child assessed to prove that he is capable of the next stage. The third stage in liminality is called ‘incorporation’. The child is now celebrated and welcomed to the new world – new birth in the new society. This rite of passage accords the initiate and or participant a new social role as a new being.

In sacrificial ritual, there is a victim that is sacrificed. This victim could be animate in form of human or animal or inanimate in form of objects such as kolanut, bitter cola, coconut, sugar cane and much more. The sacrificial materials are taken to the place assigned for this ritual so as to achieve its purpose. The victim carries the sins and evils of the person or community. The victim may also want to serve the purpose of an ambassador carrying a message from the World of the living to the spirit World. In the olden days human beings were used in sacrificial ritual, but today such has been replaced with animals or other objects. The victims may be adorned and celebrated for the duty as in the case of Elesin in Wole Soyinka’s *Death and the King Horseman*, while in some areas, the victim is treated with no mercy as in the case of Eman in Soyinka’s *The Strong Breed*.

Ritual suicide is classified under sacrificial ritual, the act of voluntarily and decisively committing death, as the case with Yoruba King (Obas) forced to open the ‘box of character’ for being unpopular and when votes of no confidence is passed on him. Opening the box of character (Apoti Iwa) means the king must commit suicide to avoid unpleasant consequences in the community. This way the Oba or King in this situation is a sacrificial or ritual victim of the tradition or cultural practice of the people to check excess behaviour, autocratic dictatorship of any king. Ritual has functioned as check and balance device to control authorities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study uses Performance Theory (Turner, 1982) and insights from African dramaturgy to explore how ritual in the play operates as both a cultural memory and a site of potential change.

## Performance Theory

Performance Theory offers a multidimensional framework for analyzing human behavior, cultural expression, and theatrical practice. Rooted in anthropology and theatre studies, performance theory explores how performance, whether on stage, in rituals, or everyday life, functions as a medium for identity construction, social negotiation, and cultural transformation (Schechner, 2003). Richard Schechner, a key figure in the field, argues that performance is not confined to traditional theatre but is a broad spectrum of activities, including rituals, ceremonies, play, and even political protests. These “restored behaviors,” as he calls them, are repeated actions that carry meaning beyond their immediate context (Schechner, 2002).

Victor Turner (1982), another foundational theorist, emphasizes the ritual aspect of performance, particularly its transitional state where individuals or groups, through symbolic actions, temporarily step outside normative social roles to undergo transformation. In this state, performance becomes a space of reflection, resistance, and potential change. Turner’s concept of “communitas,” a sense of unity and collective identity that emerges during liminal phases, is particularly relevant to political theatre and African drama, where performance often fosters communal awareness and social critique. In African contexts, performance theory is especially useful because traditional performances such as rituals, festivals and storytelling are not merely artistic but socially embedded practices that serve religious, historical, and political functions (Barber, 2000).

By applying performance theory to works like Femi Osofisan’s, scholars can examine how dramatic forms engage with real social processes, blurring the line between stage and life. Thus, performance theory enables a deeper understanding of how theatre operates not only as entertainment but as a powerful tool for cultural memory, resistance, and transformation.

## **Functionalist Theory**

Functionalist theory is a sociological perspective that views society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote stability, order, and cohesion. Originating from the work of thinkers like Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, the theory emphasizes how various social institutions (e.g., family, religion, education) and practices contribute to the overall functioning and maintenance of society.

The functionalist theory as projected in this paper is considered to one of the sociological outlooks that are concerned with the interpretation of large-scale societal structures and the society. Functionalists attempt to explain why certain conditions exist in society by trying to ascertain their purpose- their function, examining how to meet people's needs and to promote social consensus. They presuppose that for something to be existent, it must possess a justification within the society. In this position Ritzer (1992) says:

Given this focus, the major functional issue is how a society motivates and places people in their "proper." positions in the stratification system... Proper social placement in society is a problem for three basic reasons. First, some positions are more pleasant to occupy than others. Second, some positions are more important to the survival of society than others. Third, different social positions require different abilities and talents (p.235).

Considering the above therefore, there is no possibility for any society to develop without recognising all the components of the society. Thus, all the parts of the social system have a function and connect in the whole. Like any art form, this paper holds that, ritual is a representation of human emotion, conflict, representation of itself and overall life. And like the rest of the art world, it is accessible to almost all humanity in Africa. Thus, conceptualizing rituals in this paper from the functionalist purview is wide in scope because there are many cultures in Africa with various kinds of cultural and folk ritual. Rituals as cultural practice teach social patterns and values and helps people to



ward off evil, cleanse and sanitize the society or communities. Meaningful social change usually begins with individuals in the community identifying the need for, and indeed, accepting to embrace changes for social transformation to take place.

## **Research Methodology**

The study adopts a qualitative approach to analyse how Femi Osofisan uses ritual in *No More the Wasted Breed* as a tool for social transformation. This methodology will be apt in analysing the dramatic and symbolic roles of ritual in the play by exploring how and why ritual addresses societal issues.

## **Discussion and Findings**

### *Rituals in No More the Wasted Breed*

Elusu: So what has happened to the age long injunction that they must honour my beauty and not fresh in me. And against her vow of destruction, Olokun, her moralistic husband, warns Elusu.

Olokun: We cannot be worshipped by corpses. If I don't intervene, You'll wipe out the entire race (p.91).

This extract from *No More the Wasted Breed* captures a critical moment of ritual and ideological tension between Elusu, the goddess of beauty and destruction, and Olokun, her more compassionate, moral counterpart. It highlights the functionality of rituals as well as the dangers of rigid, destructive ritualism and sets the stage for transformation. Elusu's line reflects the expectation of worship through ritual sacrifice: "They must honour my beauty and not fresh in me." She demands obedience through fear and violence, representing tyrannical tradition that justifies human sacrifice. Olokun's response provides a moral counterpoint: "We cannot be worshipped by corpses." This reflects a critique of rituals that destroy life rather than preserve it, aligning with Osofisan's theme of questioning blind tradition.

This dialogue dramatizes the internal conflict within traditional belief systems – between dogmatic enforcement and ethical evolution.

Osofisan uses the gods as allegorical figures to question ritualistic practices that no longer serve human dignity or communal wellbeing. Olokun's plea, "If I don't intervene, you'll wipe out the entire race," signals the need for ritual reform – shifting from sacrifice to preservation, from destruction to rebirth. This moment critiques ritual as a tool of oppression, especially against women, while suggesting that tradition must evolve. It supports the play's broader vision of regenerative change through questioning, not blind obedience.

Biokun and Saluga (both fishermen), represent the duality and ambivalence of contemporary human society towards such godheads. The oppositional attitudes of reverence and irreverence, piety and blasphemy are in play here, for Biokun is ready to sacrifice, fervent for a lease of life for his son through the goddess. He surges at thought of his son's incurable disease. "I just want him to live that's all. I want him" (p.84). This is the only son he bears after waiting for 'ten seasons', now being made as one of the victims of Elusu's vengeance. Thus, Biokun has to put aside his radicalism and succumb to offering a sacrifice to the goddess as demanded by the priest but unknown to him he is the needed sacrifice because he is from the line of the 'carriers; he bears the mark of the foredoomed.

Saluga:

What do you mean? The town has done nothing but to make sacrifices to Olokun in the past few weeks. The people have fed him to surfeit. They've given him so much that our stores are empty and we face the threat of starvation.

Togun:

Not enough... she longs to meet her carrier again like before at the appointed place.

Saluga:

What are you saying? That Biokun should take out a canoe on these waters in this bitter weather?

Elusu:

Let her carrier go, and all will be restored. The water will be withdrawn and the fishes return...

Saluga:

He is going nowhere! It's a trap, Biokun. (p. 103)

The extracts above explore themes of ritual sacrifice and the community's desperation to appease the goddess Elusu to prevent further calamities. In the text, the community grapples with the consequences of neglecting traditional rituals, leading to natural disasters and societal unrest. The community believes in the functionality of rituals and is ready to carry out rituals whenever necessary. Saluga on the other hand, abhors the retrieval and contamination of old sacrifices which have yielded nothing but sickness, famine and overflow swamp of crops.

Saluga:

What do you mean? The town has done nothing but make sacrifices to Olokun in the past few weeks. The people have fed him to surfeit. They've given him so much that our stores are empty and we face the threat of starvation. (p.91).

Vehemently opposed to the carrier myth, Saluga believes that the consensual recognition of chest moles as the sign of the chosen ones in the likes of Osoosi, Biokun and the infant Erindo is illogical and more of a ploy to put a particular section of humanity to extinction as depicted in the following excerpt.

Saluga:

Yes, except that you have mesmerised him with your fairy tale. Tell me, why is it always us who give our lives? Why is it always the poor who are called upon to sacrifice? Why is it always the wretched never a wealthy man, never the son of a king, who is suddenly discovered to bear the mark of destiny at difficult moments, and pushed on to fulfill himself in suicidal tasks? Why? (p.94).

Saluga speaks on behalf of Biokun that the mission of the carrier is impossible, adding that the only thing the gods know how to do is to collect from humans use them as sacrifices and give them nothing but woes in return. He tells Biokun not to carry anything that will only be used as a sacrificial lamb like his father, who was used as a carrier and never returned. Even in his hour of heroic confrontation with and domination by goddess Elusu, Saluga denounces “gods who feeds on their worshippers”. The point of recognition for obsequious Biokun comes when Saluga is put to a momentary death. His eyes are now opened to the reality of what is really happening. He does that what his friend has said is true that the gods are only concerned with their bellies and not about the way humans live and fare. He does decline to be a carrier, even at the expense of his son’s life. He further pronounces an ideological judgment on the godheads in precise terms as shown in the next excerpt.

Biokun:

The people, goddess, they abandoned your cult  
because you failed us. Because you take and give  
nothing back except betrayal, except a great betrayal!  
They did not kill you; you killed yourself (p.97).

While Olokun sees all that has happened, he decides to do justice because he realizes that it is Elusu who is at fault; because the people have been in the dark for a long time and have not been catered for. The extracts above underscore the community's belief in ritual sacrifice as a means to restore balance, reflecting the play's critical examination of traditional practices and their implications. The extracts also dramatize a strong resistance to ritualism through both human and divine voices, challenging destructive traditional practices. The extract involving Elusu and Olokun reveals a moral conflict at the heart of ritual worship. Elusu demands worship through beauty and sacrifice, while Olokun warns that such practices risk annihilating humanity. Osofisan uses these moments to critique oppressive customs, particularly those targeting women, and to advocate for a break from rituals that no longer serve the people. Instead, he promotes a re-evaluation of tradition that aligns with justice, life, and progress.

In *No More the Wasted Breed*, Femi Osofisan reimagines ritual not just as a cultural performance but as a tool for social transformation. Rather than reinforcing oppressive traditions, ritual in the play becomes a space for challenging outdated beliefs and proposing progressive alternatives. Osofisan critiques harmful ritual practices such as human sacrifice through characters who begin to question and resist them, signaling a shift in communal consciousness. Through the conflicts among the characters, Osofisan transforms ritual from a tool of fear into a site of moral questioning and renewal. He aligns with performance theorists like Victor Turner, who view ritual as a liminal space where societal roles and structures can be reimagined. In this way, Osofisan uses ritual not to preserve the status quo but to provoke change, awaken consciousness, and inspire collective rebirth.

The dramatist's resourceful diction in the play reflects a society beleaguered by forces of decadence and death. Evidently, the social reference is the chaotic and diseased contemporary Nigeria brought about by activities of neo-colonialism. The situation as Saluga constantly articulate calls for revolutionary action if the society is to rid itself of spiritual vacuity as well as economic morass as well as political aridity that retard his growth.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, *No More the Wasted Breed* presents ritual as a complex, dual-faced force capable of both sustaining oppressive systems and enabling social transformation. Femi Osofisan critiques the blind adherence to destructive rituals, particularly those involving sacrifice and gender-based subjugation, exposing how such practices threaten individual freedom and societal progress. Through the conflicting voices of characters like Elusu, Olokun, and Saluga, the play illustrates a tension between tradition and reform. Osofisan does not reject ritual outright but calls for its redefinition – a movement from rigid, harmful customs toward life-affirming practices rooted in justice and communal well-being. By embedding ritual within the framework of performance theory and African dramaturgy, Osofisan transforms it into a space of resistance, reflection, and potential renewal. Ultimately, *No More the*

*Wasted Breed* urges African societies to critically examine their traditions, retaining only those that uplift and empower.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study highlights how Osofisan redefines ritual as a vehicle for resistance and renewal, expanding understanding of African dramaturgy and performance as tools for social critique.

### **Recommendations**

Future studies should explore ritual in other African plays comparatively, and theatre practitioners should harness ritual elements not just for cultural preservation, but for advocating justice and transformation.

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## **The Interface of Literature and Science: An Exploration of Selected Science Fiction and Feminist Narratives**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the intersection of literature and science in four selected prose fictions. The focus is on the synergies, differences and meeting points. Thus, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary approach which is essentially complementary in research and in understanding the human condition. Literature, narrative practice such as storytelling and by extension narrative medicine enhances the art of doctoring. This way a robust doctor-patient relationship can be engendered. Likewise, science can in a great measure contribute to deep insights and perceptions in literature. The study aims to examine the synergies and differences of literature and science. The Objectives are: to identify the interface of literature and science, analyze how literary works forecast scientific advancement among others. The research methodology is essentially, qualitative one which combines literary analysis of science fiction (Sci-fi) and feminine narratives. Two African prose fictions, and two others: one American and one English prose fictions are considered for the purpose of analysis. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory is the framework of this research. Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory emphasizes that complex systems including literary and scientific systems are composed of interconnected components that interact with and influence each other. Hence, literature and science function in synergy. The paper discovers among other things that literature and science are not mutually exclusive but complementary ways in understanding the human condition. They can be said to be two sides of the same coin. The novels delve into themes of empathy, humanity, and what it means to be innovative, humane and be impactful. They*



*share a kind of commonality, themes and concerns about humanity as they all explore the human condition. These works encourage readers to reflect on technological advancements, interpersonal relationships, human values, such as family relationship, identity and the impact of technology on society, etc.*

**Keywords:** Literature and Science, Family values, Empathy, African Medicine, Nexus-6 Androids.

## Introduction

The division of science and arts as mentioned by C.P Snows in his 1959 Rede lecture, still persists. White Jessica et-al rightly say, “The division between science and the humanities...still remains, it was famously referenced by C.P Snow in his influential 1959 Rede lecture on the ‘two cultures’...” (Australian Humanities np). The bifurcation are the two cultures referred to as the divisions between science and the arts. This is traceable to the Enlightenment era which was a fallout of the scientific revolution (Solomon The Guardian np). Thus, in terms of research, interdisciplinary approach, comparative literature and the likes are being advocated to engender the synergy of science and the arts. Solomon Andrew asserts that, “Medicine can contribute to literature; narrative practice can strengthen medicine” (*The Guardian*). Collaboration is vital to enhance the sphere of knowledge and research. Hence, White et-al observes that “The interface is the meeting place which allows translation to occur” (Australian Humanities np). In other words, research can be enhanced through an interdisciplinary approach as the landscape of knowledge is shifting rapidly to a synergetic one which is becoming the new currency, the new knowledge and the new norm. Gillian Beer and George Levine are two prominent scholars who have made significant contribution to the field of literature and scientific cultures, particularly in the Victorian era. Beer’s work: “Darwin’s Evolutionary Narrative in George Eliot and Nineteen century fiction” (12), has been pivotal to understand the interface of literature and science. They advocated prominently an interdisciplinary approach to enhance knowledge (Hayles 12). Cartwright John et-al observe that one problem with some recent writing on science and literature has been a tendency of scholars to adapt a narrow chronological focus or to specialize in one or two authors (24). A

broader outlook to research should be established. It is in this regard that this paper aims to explore the synergies and differences between literature and science. The objectives are: To identify the symbiotic relationship between literature and science, to analyze how literary works forecast scientific advancement and their implications; to explore the meeting points and departure between literature and science. How the four writers examine the human condition and shared values in their texts are considered. The focus include: E.M Forster's *The Machine Stops* (1928), Asabe Usman's *Destinies of Life* (2014), Philip K. Dick's *Do Android Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) and Bilkisu Abubakar's *The Woman in Me* (2008). The research methodology is qualitative one which combines literary analysis and science studies. This paper employs Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory (GST) which is identified as common features across fields of knowledge (Science Direct). It is applied to "various scientific fields...to understand complex system and relationships" (40-50). It can also be deployed to "understand the...interaction between characters, plot and setting in literature" (110). Also, the theory encompasses research in literature and science which also cut across cultures and various spheres of knowledge.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The interface of literature and science has been a subject of interests for scholars across disciplines; spanning several decades. They share some common concerns and methods, such as observations, experimentation and narrative. Levine argues that, "Victorian novelists, ...incorporated scientific concepts and theories into their works" (10). These were instances of robust synergy between seemingly distinct fields. Furthermore, C.P Snow argues that "the scientific community and the literary community have distinct languages, values and methods of inquiry"(05). Although, they are distinct, they pursue common goal of development of the society. Corroborating this, BrunorLatour argues that "science and literature are both forms of narrative that shape our understanding of the world" (15). Latour explores the synergy of literature and science through the lens of science studies. Specifically, his work brings to the fore, the importance of considering the social and

cultural contexts in which scientific knowledge is produced and disseminated. Furthermore, Feminist scholars like Donna Haraway have critiqued the dominant narratives of science and technology, arguing that they often reflect and reinforce patriarchal and colonialist structures. Haraway opines that “science is not neutral or objective pursuit of knowledge, but rather a socially and culturally constructed practice that reflects the interest and values of dominant groups”(65). In essence, he believes that dominant field at one point or the other takes the centre stage in the scheme of things, especially in academic research and studies. In addition, the intersection of literature and science is being explained through the lens of eco-criticism. As Timothy Morton asserts, “ecocriticism is not just about analyzing the environmental themes and imagery in literary works, but also, about considering the material and ecological contexts in which these works were written” (25). So, the setting of a literary work is vital in terms of analysis of the text. In this wise the environment in which a work of art is written can go a long way to give insight in to the perspective or view point of the author. Also, for Katherine Hayles, "science and literature are not separate enterprises but intertwined aspects of a larger cultural web"(12). This is now the trend as emphasis on educational development is tilted towards interdisciplinary engagement. Both fields can be conceptualized through Narrative, Epistemology, Interdisciplinary approach and Cultural studies. Literature and science combines insights from both fields to understand the complex relationships between them (Klein 23). For instance, literature and medicine can be an avenue to gain insight about physician/patients relationship. Knowledge should not be based on discoveries but constructed through a networking process of social and material factors (Latour 57). A symbiotic relationship between science and literature should be encouraged in this regard, as it will be of mutual benefit to scholars in both fields. For instance, Phillip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, a science fiction have been shown to inspire scientific advancements and their implications (Savin 45). Furthermore, literary analysis of scientific texts or artistic texts have revealed the narrative structures and rhetorical devices used to convey scientific knowledge (Bazerman 67). In other words, Bazerman believes

knowledge acquisition can be enhanced in a collaborative setting. In essence, “the relationship between literature and science is complex and multifaceted...They may be different field but there are several ways in which they intersect and influence each other” (Studocu). Literature and science function in symbiotic relationship. It is in this regard that Ann Thresher observes that, “There is an outdated idea that science and art are polar opposites. That science associated with the left brain hemisphere, is logical, structured, whereas art, the domain of the right hemisphere is soft, intuitive, creative, guided by practiced judgement and innate skill” (The Divide np). In fact, personal motivation by reading literary texts, for instance, can be immense pathway to enhance development of the society. For instance, Leyman Gbowee through her book and action mobilized Liberian women to stop the second civil war of 2003. Literary works can be motivational factors that can engender positive change, just as Gbowee mobilized women in Liberia (Gbowee Nobel prize np). So, in emphasizing the synergy of literature and science, Thresher further observes that “Neuro-scientist will tell you that the distinction between ‘right and left brain thinking’ is a myth, that both sides are equally important in thinking through a math problem and painting a picture” (The Divide np). In essence, the synergy between artists and scientists can be of mutual benefits. So, it is vital that the myth associated with the left and right brain thinking should be disabused as both sides are important in solving problems.

### **An Exploration of Philip Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Bilkisu Abubakar’s *The Woman in Me*.**

Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Bilkisu Abubakar’s *The Woman in Me* are genres of fiction albeit of different settings. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is of American setting of San Francisco whereas Abubakar’s *The Woman in Me* is set in Kurmin Dusa of Northern Nigeria. These works are examined to establish the interface of literature and science. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is a science fiction that explores the intersection of humanity and technology. Bilkisu Abubakar’s *The Woman in Me* wells on gender relation about family life and betrayal

of trust. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is set in a post-apocalyptic world where a nuclear global war has devastated the earth. Rick Deckard was mobilized to go after the robotic Nexus-6 and kill them. Furthermore, BilkisuAbubakar's *The Woman in Me* follows the story of Ibrahim Babangida who schooled abroad on scholarship. He becomes involved with Rosamond whom he later married. Events come to a head when Babangida relocates with his family to Nigeria. He returns home, one day to break the news of his marriage to his wife and this sets the pace that leads to the family's ruin. "I...am getting married. Sorry...I just got married... 'I don't understand what you're saying'... 'I mean that I have taken another wife, Rosie'. 'What? How and when?' She yelled and pushed him off her. 'It happened this afternoon at the Central Masjid'" (99). Rosamond feels betrayed by this disclosure, loses her mind and is eventually hospitalized (115). In the same vein, as observed, earlier, Dick's *Do Android Dream of Electric Sheep?*, focuses on technological crisis as a result of scientific innovation. It centres on apocalyptic world replete with innovative nuclear war heads that ultimately leaves the earth in ruins. The story follows the journey of Rick Deckard, a bounty hunter tasked with the duty of "retiring"(14), six Nexus-6 androids hiding on earth. Humankind, over centuries and thousands of years have been exploring to conquer the environment and make it a better place to live. So, scientists and literary artists have been researching the human condition as observed in Deckard's conversation with his wife which sets the stage of what should be expected in terms of technological innovations in the novel as a classic, scientific fiction( sci-fi) . "You 'll be glad you 're awake. At setting C it overcomes the threshold...'Get your crude cop's hand away'. 'I'm not a cop', although he hadn't dialed for it"(03). Deckard instructs his wife Iran on how to set the machine in their room, albeit she is not comfortable with him, probably due to disagreement about setting it and for discovering that her husband is a "murderer" of Nexus-6 Androids. The study of science and literature invariably is also a pathway to examine how knowledge is produced. Insight can be gained through epistemological underpinnings of both literature and science (Puustinen 20). Iran calls out her husband as a murderer as they both blur the line between real humans and android.

“You’re worse, his wife said, her eyes still shut. You’re a murderer hired by the cops...I’ve never killed a human being in my life. His irritability had risen, now; had become outright hostility” (3). Over time, the familiarity of humans with androids make Iran and her husband not to differentiate between the two. Hence, Deckard’s task to demobilize the Nexus-6 androids is seen by Iran in a different light by addressing her husband as a murderer. Deckard responds by saying he has never killed a human being (3). In this wise, by calling out her husband as a murderer she sees him as a betrayer. Likewise, Rosamond sees her husband, Babangida as a betrayer by marrying a second, third and the fourth wife. Abubakar’s *The Woman in Me* is hinged on the domination of the feminine gender in a largely patriarchal society. The couple’s romance and marriage in London later experiences trouble waters in Nigeria. “The couple rarely disagree ... They were an item, as someone puts it. Rosamond couldn’t have wished for a better partner” (10). The great time the family enjoyed, over the years experiences crisis when Babangida relocated to Nigeria. This leads to Rosamond’s health challenge. “Rosamond spends most of the time away from home...also a way of avoiding any close contact with the new wife or Ibrahim’s family”(122). Eventually, she lost her mind and is hospitalized. This challenge has a toll on her family as the once bustling home becomes a shadow and in ruins. Likewise, in Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, crisis ensued when the Nexus-6 Androids, invented by scientists, endanger human lives and Deckard was tasked to eliminate them. Both novels invariably, explore the human condition with the aim of making the world a better place, either at family level as seen in Abubakar’s work or at societal or global level as espoused in Dick’s literary piece.

Literature is thus a tool to critique the society in order to set it on the path of development. Both novels emphasize societal crises. *The Woman in Me* is about family crisis and disintegration whereas *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* focuses on technological crisis in the whole of planet earth. *The Woman in Me* encompasses the crisis at the family level which can potentially snowball into full blown challenge in the society. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* entails universal crisis which can potentially engulf different societies and

homes. Hence, the crisis either on planet earth or at family level can ruin the earth in its entirety. In the same vein, the Nexus-6androids are supposed to be “companions” to enhance human activities, unfortunately they become risky to human lives and have to be eliminated (14). Two crises situation are notable in the texts. In Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, the crisis about the Nexus-6 androids put humans at risk. Also, in Abubakar’s *The Woman in Me*, a family is at risk. Invariably, the crises at family level and universal level put the whole of human race at risk. The two authors deploy their works to explore human condition in order to bring about positive change. This goes along way to show how decision one takes can make or mar a society. “Rosamond...makes no pretense about her dislike for multiple marriages”(142). As she faces challenges in her marital life with Babangida, she yearns to find her family. “The quest to trace her lost family left her traumatized. Her world appears desolate like a thatched hut razed down by harmattan fire” (171). Family members decide to take her to a herbal home for proper treatment, as she does not seem to be recovering in hospital. Ibrahim hardly visits her and Zarau summons courage and confronts him one day. “Zarah refused to be repressed...There are a number of good herbal homes we can take her to for treatment. ‘Are you trying to suggest to me, a medical doctor, how best to handle my wife’s situation?’” (182). The altercation with Zarah leads to her packing out of her matrimonial home, as Ibrahim vows never to set his eyes on her again. Also, the idea of a polygamous home does not receive the blessing of Rosamond and she makes her mind bare in her discussion with her mother-in-law. “I can accept every other thing besides other women...’ what does it matter now that you’ve discovered who he is?’, ‘Everything is wrong. The whole idea is sickening” (152). Rosamond’s outburst in this regard, clearly shows how she feels betrayed by Babangida’s love exploits with other women. To Rosamond, she is facing the crisis of her life, whereas Babangida and his mother Inna think nothing is wrong with that decision. They in fact hinged their stance on societal expectations instead of personal decision. As Inna responds, “...Not as long as it is acceptable within the society...call it whatever you want. The people certainly aren’t complaining” (152). No matter how emotionally traumatic is that

decision to Rosamond, as long as the society sanctions it, Inna and Babangida are comfortable with it. Inna's statement here is the yardstick by which some people measure success and pain of individuals in a society. To her, whether an individual is experiencing trauma or emotional pain, as long as the situation on ground is acceptable by the society, it is right. This should not always be the case. It is in this regard that Rosamond queried, "When did taking another wife became a priority to you...so fate made you betray me? I can't believe you can look at me and attribute this to some fate?" (99-100). Rosamond's family members decide to take her home for herbal treatment. "The best thing to do is to bring her home for proper attention...maybe we should take her to the village where she can be treated with local herbs"(207-8). No doubt, Rosamond and Iran are bent on having their ways in the two texts but these do not see the light of day as Deckard and Babangida insist on taking the final decision about their families, unchallenged. This indicates patriarchy is not limited to a particular society but a global phenomenon. It is in this wise that Virginia Woolf talks about the "the historical and systemic silencing of women's voices, limiting their opportunities for self expression and participation"(78). Rosamond's insanity makes her family members to take her to a herbal home. This is a pointer that African traditional medicine can be well developed. It is in this regard that Ajele Joseph et-al opines that, "African Traditional Medicine (ATM) has been practiced for centuries across the continent, offering holistic approaches to healthcare" (130). The humanities and medical practitioners should collaboratively continue to explore emerging spheres of knowledge in medical humanities and test it's applicability. Also, In Deckard's conversation with Miss Marsten, one can rightly infer that Deckard is on a mission. "You missed the vidcall this morning. Miss Wild told me it came through the switchboard exactly at nine. A call out by Mr Bryant to the WPO in Russia" (13). This reveals the call was made to World Police Organization in Russia and indicates a global effort to address issue of the Nexus-6 androids which pose great dangers to humankind. Although the Nexus-6 functioned well in the past, there seems to be some noticeable defects about the androids' capabilities and potential threats to humanity. Invariably, this is a call



to be conscious of extreme scientific research, especially, one that may pose life threatening challenge to humankind. The character of Rick Deckard as a bounty hunter is revealed as he strives to test the advanced androids (Nexus-6) by using the Voight-Kamff apparatus. He is not a "peace maker but rather a bounty hunter"(22). This establishes his personality as a detective. Deckard's action by assembling the Voight-Kamff clearly shows his professionalism and detachment from the emotional aspects of his work. The Voight-Kamff is a fictional method used to detect advanced android as espoused in Dick's *Do Androids think of Electric Sheep?*(34). The apparatus is deployed to test empathy, designed to measure the emotional responses of subjects and used to identify replicants. This is typical to test-instruments in hospitals. The Voight-Kamff works by asking subjects a series of questions and monitoring their physiological responses, such as heart rate and respiration (35-7). It is essentially meant to determine whether a subject is human or replicants, based on their emotional responses (38). Dick's works often explore the intricate human nature, this include empathy, emotions, and the human condition. "How many androids escaped...Presently, he said, eight originally. Two have already been retired by someone else. You get how much for each android?" (26). This provides insight into the world of bounty hunting and treatment of advanced androids (Nexus-6). Racheal is a representative of the Rosen Association which manufactures the advanced androids. As Deckard continues his search, along the line, fear of the humanoids grips him, invariably this maybe as a result of stress. "Standing there, he realized all at once, that he had acquired an overt, incontestable fear directed towards the principal android" (26). According to KrishanGupta, "psychological stress is considered to be a cause of great concern, since it plays a significant role in causing many life style diseases"(68-9). Literary works can be medium of creating awareness about the dangers of psychological disorders and traumatic condition. Furthermore, Gupta observes that "people living in a closely protected environment with a strong family support system have been noted to have less hypertension" (68-9). The plan to take Rosamond to a herbal home is a pointer of the synergy of literature and science. In other words, Abubakar advocates for a strong family ties and

collaboration between the humanities and science to promote wellbeing. Raino Puustinen, harps on “the importance of incorporating humanities and social sciences into medicine”(12). This can go a long way to deepen the interface of literature and science. Puustinen also observes that the humanities are seen as the tool by which the physician is able to enlarge his or her understanding of the human condition. Dick’s works to a greater extent, focus on the burning issue in the society. As a social commentator the debate about the Nexus-6 Androids raise fundamental questions of creating and controlling advanced artificial intelligence, and the potential consequences for humanity. In the same vein, the burning issues about patriarchy in Abubakar’s *The Woman in Meis* also a daunting challenge for humankind.

### **Areflective View of E.M. Forster’s *The Machine Stops* and Asabe Kabir Usman’s *Destinies of Life***

Forster’s *The Machine Stops* was published in 1928 whereas Usman’s *Destinies of Life* in 2014. Both works have different settings. The authors explore the burning issues in their societies with the view to creating awareness about the human condition. While *Destinies of Life* focuses on female domination and subtle theme of synergy of literature and science, *The Machine Stops* delves into science fiction by portraying a future world where humans live underground. *The Machine Stops* is a dystopian novella that explores a future where humans live underground and rely entirely on a complex machine for virtually all aspects of their lives. The story follows Vashti an ardent admirer of the Machine and her son Kuno who tries to break free and have a new lease of life by questioning the machine’s authority. “I have called you before, mother, but you were always busy or isolated. I have something particular to say” (2). This conversation stirs the hornet’s nest as he tries to break free from the Machine. “Why could you not send it by pneumatic post? ‘Because I prefer saying such a thing’, ‘I want...well? ‘I want you to come and see me” (2). Kuno is no longer comfortable with the Machine but the mother does not sanction that decision. “...I want to speak to you not through the wearisome Machine... ‘Oh hush! ‘You must not say a thing against the Machine”(2). The son’s desire to

see the world above ground leads to a confrontation with the Machine and ultimately, a tragic outcome. "The Machine, feed us and cloth us and houses us...through it we see one another, in it we have our being" (19). This highlights the all-encompassing role of technology in the lives of the characters. This echoes the impact of technological advancement on human relationship. "Through it we see one another...In it we have our being" (19). This suggests that the Machine mediate all human interactions, raising questions about the nature of reality and human connection in a technologically driven world. This is the reality in today's world as humans seems to entirely rely on the Machine for their existence. Furthermore, Kuno decides to take his destiny in his own hands. "I did not get an Egression-permit. Then how did you get out? I found out a way of my own...A way of your own?... but that would be wrong, why?" (11). Vashti was surprised by her son's rebellious tendency towards the Machine and fears that he may be harmed. Kuno observes, "You are beginning to worship the Machine, he said coldly"(11). This critiques a society that is overtly inclined to technology as if it's an object of worship. Kuno's discovery of an escape route represents a desire for autonomy and individuality, which is at odds with the Machine's emphasis on conformity which discourages independent thought. "Year by year, it was served with increased efficiency and decreased intelligence" (20). The ability of humans to critique, seems to dwindle as emphasis shifts to the use of machines. There is focus on increased specialization in narrow areas which suggests a trade-off between technological progress and human cognitive abilities. Eventually, confrontation ensues and Kuno rebels against the Machine. In the same vein, feminist writers have over the years, dwelt extensively on the issue of gender inequality as showcased by Asabe Kabir Usman in *Destinies of Life*. Aisha, the protagonist in *Destinies of Life* presents her argument in the text. Beginning from her father, Auwal's marriage to her mother, Maryam which the author describes as "doomed from the beginning" (11), she seems to have given up hope. She agrees with her father about the choice of her marriage partner. Unfortunately, Umar betrays her. Earlier, she prepares to marry Muktar who dies tragically. However, after fifteen years of marriage, Umar betrays her by seeing his Secretary, Faridah and

subsequently Nafisah his cousin. Aisha's estrangement from Umar, the termination of his appointment and court case, aggravates his health condition. Despite Aisha's emotional pain, she still visits him in hospital. "Ever since she had been summoned to his bedside four days earlier..., though conscious. He could hardly change his position in bed" (5-6). Umar's condition is likely to be a case of high blood pressure or stress which is one of the major causes of death today. "The risk of developing complications related to it in 'the next 5 to 10 years is likely one which can even be stroke'. Experts over the years emphasize the high cost of treating stroke" (Gupta 10-11). *Destinies of Life* is invariably an insight into Umar's condition and awareness about the risk associated with high blood pressure. In the same vein, issues pertaining to Aisha's prenatal care are worth mention. She and Umar agree that she stays with Baba until she gives birth (46-7). The high rate of maternal mortality especially in developing countries raises major public health concern (WHO 24). So, *Destinies of Life*, besides focusing on theme of gender imbalance, also points to the interface of literature and science and the need for synergy between African and western medicine. This is the reason Aisha stays with her father before she gives birth (46-7).

## Conclusion

Literature and science explore human experiences through different perspectives such as science fiction, bioethics, empathy and emotional response, etc. Abubakar's *The Woman in Me* points to the efficacy of traditional herbal homes and Usman's *Destinies of Life*, delves into the intersection of literature and science by portraying hospital settings, maternity and the importance of empathy in maternal and child care. Forster's *The Machine Stops* and Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* explore technological innovations, the nature of humanity and the human condition. The stories examine technological impact on human relationship, society and individuality. Literature and science have distinct goals. Literature focuses on the exploration of human emotions, experiences, and imagination, whereas science deals with understanding natural phenomenon. Thus, science fiction, feminine narratives, empathy, ethics and human emotion among

others serve as points of convergence of Literature and science which are viewed from different perspective of epistemological foundation. Literature often explores subjective experiences and science seeks objective truths (Kuhn 45). Both literature and science grapple with the issue of ethical considerations such as the responsible use of technology and the impact of scientific discoveries on human society (Jonas 34). In essence, “the right and left brain thinking” is a myth, hence, both sides are equally important in thinking through a math problem and painting a picture” (Thresher The Divide np). As such, literature and science are not mutually exclusive but they complement each other in understanding the human condition.

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