

The Socio-Economic Development Achievements of Women In Nigeria

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Abstract

Women make up a considerable proportion of Nigeria's population. They are known around the world as the primary supporters of Nigeria's socioeconomic progress, yet they have long been sidelined in many aspects of life due to a lack of education, financial empowerment, and cultural standards. This is evidenced by the country's evident socioeconomic and political disparities. Although substantial progress has been made in the previous decade in efforts to address the persistent obstacles that women face in Nigeria's socioeconomic development, much more has to be done in the struggle for women's empowerment and inclusion in critical decision-making processes. This has frequently spurred interesting conversations across Nigeria, including several advocates for the engagement of more women in the country's socioeconomic development.

Keywords: Socio-economic, Development, Feminist Theory, Nigeria

1. Introduction

From the pre-colonial era until the early twenty-first century, Nigerian women's status and function have altered consistently. However, the repressed, marginalized, and insecure image of this group has remained chronically understudied, with little attention paid to the myriad vital responsibilities

that Nigerian women have performed throughout history. Women played important roles in society and the economy prior to the country's colonization. There was a division of labor based on gender, and Nigerian women managed vocations such as cooking, pottery making, fishing, mat weaving, farming, purchasing and selling, etc. Furthermore, there was communal living and women owned the property, which they had equal access to through their parents or spouses. In a patriarchal setting, a man was As the head of the household, older women oversaw the labor of younger members of the family. Women in Nigeria were also involved in buying and selling (petty trade).

Notably among many tribes, were the Tiv, the Igbo, and the Yoruba, who were the main figures in long-distance trade, with numerous opportunities for gathering and acquiring wealth and titles. The most successful and viable among them rose to the prestigious and enviable chieftaincy title of Tor-Kwase, Ahebi Ugbabe, and Iyalode, a position of great privilege, rights, and power. Politically, women were not as passive or powerless as portrayed by modern-day research and literature. The family was the basic unit of political organization which was usually led by women. This was a common and unique matrifocal arrangement that permitted women to have considerable authority over their children. They and their offspring formed a major deciding bloc in their households. Power, rights, and privileges in a household were also largely based on gender and age, thereby allowing most senior women to exercise their voices on several issues. As the public and private environments were interwoven, the women's ability to control people and resources in a household was similarly an exercise in public power. To gain respect and honor, the women could use the production of food as a major tool. They could control and influence their children and men through this power. Even the power of the gods or spirit could be evoked by the women to gain favor. Similarly, women could simply use their kitchen as an avenue for meetings and interactions with their children, friends, and colleagues.

The annual festivals in Nigeria such as the New Yam festivals, the Calabar festival, the Tiv Traditional Day (TTD), also provide an avenue for the women to meet and deliberate on socio-economic problems and make insightful decisions. However, power was generally dominated by men beyond the household level, but in many specific areas, titles were given to the women. The queen (mother), a well-respected and powerful title among the Tiv, Edo, and Yoruba, was bestowed upon the king's mother or an ordinary woman of substantial status. In her own palace, the queen (mother) oversaw meetings, with the support of her subordinate title holders. Also, the Yoruba and

Hausa legends have described eras when the women were either the actual heroines or kings. Famous among these legendary figures were the Queen Amina of Zaria, the Moremi of Ile-Ife, Princess Inikpi of Igala kingdom, who were the powerful queens in the Daura, Ondo, and the Igala histories.

However, the advent of the 20th century posed the most serious influence and challenges to the rights and privileges of Nigerian women. This was the period patriarchy met with the colonial transformation, as the British colonial masters collaborated with the Nigerian male chiefs in communal activities that had existed between the gender, such as tax collection and governance which brought a decline in the position and relevance of the female chiefs and the change in relationships with the duo. Thus, the Nigerian economy began to blossom towards cash crops production for exportation, the European enterprises and the Nigerian men dominated the distribution of such crops like palm oil, cocoa, rubber, groundnut, cotton, etc. This relegated the women to the background to the production of only subsistence crops, giving way to the commercialization of their lands favored by only those with money from the sale of cash crops, who could afford to acquire these. Similarly, the system of western education the colonial masters brought favored the boy child over the girl child. Hence, it excluded largely the women from various new occupations introduced by the British colonial masters.

Today, the most potent tool of change for contemporary women in Nigeria is the formal system of education which has enabled many elite women to emerge educated, intelligent, confident, and proactive on the socioeconomic stage. They are in many leading occupations within the country and overseas with the ability to question and challenge the patriarchic nature of the Nigerian system in aspects of culture, socio-economic, politics, and many other ways.

In this paper, we shall critically examine the socio-economic development achievements of women in Nigeria and identify the various socio-economic activities, challenges, and prospects of the women in Nigeria, using secondary data such as journals, books, the internet, etc. Furthermore, the paper underscores the lack of women inclusion in socio-economic pathways to enhance development in Nigeria. It explores the feminist theory that advocates for equality of the sexes in socio-economic involvement across boards to enhance growth in the country. The study concludes that 50% of women inclusion in socio-economic development policies and decision-making processes will achieve growth in Nigeria.

2. Theoretical Framework

The Feminist theory is known as a range of ideologies, social, and political movements that share a common objective too, establish and define in order to achieve the socio-economic and political rights for women that are the same as those of their male counterparts. This means various equal opportunities for women in sectors of education and employment. With its origin from the West in the late 14th- and early 15th-century by the first feminist philosopher, Christine de Pisan in France, feminism challenges the prevailing attitudes towards women with a bold call for the education of all women in the society. Throughout history, women have been confined to the domestic sphere of life, while public life is reserved for only men. Towards the end of the 19th century, women were compelled to cover their heads while in public places in France, and, in some parts of Germany, a husband could sell out his wife because he had the rights. Until recently, women could neither vote nor hold elective offices in Africa, Europe, and in most parts of the United States. Some parts of the world still uphold such restrictions on women, especially in the Middle East and Asia.

Hence, the feminist groups have continued to advocate for the rights of women, such as the right to vote, education, and opportunity to hold public positions, right to work, and earn fair wages or equal pay to their male counterparts, to own properties, to have equal rights within the matrimonial space, and to have access to maternity leave. Feminists have also advocated for the freedom and the integrity to protect women from sexual abuse, rape, and domestic violence. Generally, these are campaigns considered to be the main forces behind many historical societal changes in society regarding the rights of women's rights around the world. Today, feminism is represented globally by various philosophers and institutions committed to the rights of women and their interests. It is on this standpoint of the feminist theory that the Nigerian women are currently motivated, inspired, and encouraged to owe advocacy institutions and to embark on the appeal for the inclusion of more women in the socio-economic and political activities in order to boost development in Nigeria.

3. The Concept Of Development

There are various meanings associated with the term development. The concept is complex and usually debated by many in very elusive and ambiguous ways. However, development can be defined as bringing about social change that allows people to achieve their human

potential (soas.ac.uk). Others see development as an important political term. Development is viewed in different contexts and may also be used to showcase and justify a variety of agendas held by many organizations and people. The most significant point is that development is not an outcome, it is an ongoing process. It is dynamic, which means it involves a transformation from one condition to another. Development in international parlance, therefore, encompasses the need and how to provide better lives for people in poor countries. It is not limited to economic growth alone, but human capital development, the provision of healthcare, food and nutrition, access to quality education, and a clean environment (Globalization101.org).

Development is not simply the interactions between human beings; it involves the natural environment, which is the conversion of natural resources to cultural resources (soas.ac.uk). In this study, we shall examine development in two perspectives, social and economic. Social Development focuses on the need to “put people first” in development processes. Poverty is more than low income; it is also about vulnerability, exclusion, unaccountable institutions, powerlessness, and exposure to violence. Social Development promotes the social inclusion of the poor and vulnerable by empowering people, building cohesive and resilient societies, and making institutions accessible and accountable to citizens (World Bank, 2019). Social development also means working with governments, communities, civil society, the private sector, and the marginalized, including persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples, Social Development translates the complex relationship between societies and states into operations (World Bank, 2019).

Empirical evidence and operational experience show that Social Development promotes economic growth and leads to better interventions and a higher quality of life (World Bank, 2019). Similarly, development is seen as a multi-dimensional process to achieve a higher quality of life for all the people. Economic development, social development, and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development (United Nations, 2020). For these reasons, "The empowerment of women and their full participation on a basis of equality in all spheres of society is fundamental for development (United Nations, 2020).

4. Socio-Economic Activities Of Women In Nigeria

The women in Nigeria are the main reservoir of every human activity as they control the major socio-economic life wire of the country. These include agriculture, domestic labor, childbearing, petty trading, subsistence, etc. In ZakiBiam in Ukum local government area of Benue State, the women farm yams in large quantities for export. This agricultural engagement has created the biggest yam market in Nigeria. It has also employed many women, adding to the socio-economic development of the area and the country at large. They also play a significant role in entrepreneurial skills such as hair making, sewing, baking, and cooking. Women act as a key pillar of employment in Nigeria. They are regarded as the currency on which both socio-economic and political transactions and alliances are built.

The women in Nigeria have made some great impact on their support and contribution to the development of the nation, through the fierce resistance of various marginalization processes, starting from the British colonial era to forestall and include women in socio-economic engagements. This can be seen through the numerous protest by Nigerian women, such as the Abeokuta women uprising (the Egba Women's Tax protest) led by the Abeokuta Women Union (AWU) in the late 1940s, against the high imposition of undue taxes by the Nigerian colonial masters. Under the colonial rule, the women believed that their socio-economic roles were declining as their taxes increased. They debated that they should not be required to pay taxes different from men if they were not granted

representation in the local government authority. As a result of this, four women got representative seats at the local government authority and stopped the taxation of women.

In November 1929, the Aba Women's Riots popularly referred to as the Women's War, led by thousands of rural women of Calabar and Owerri provinces, all from the six ethnic groups (Igbo, Bonny, Ibibio, Ogoni, Opobo, and Andoni) in the eastern part of Nigeria, was a protest against the Warrant Chiefs who were accused of perpetual restriction of women in governance positions. From history, this action is the first in West Africa and has been considered the most strategic anti-colonial execution planned and organized by the Nigerian women to address socio-economic and political injustices in Nigeria. The events also forced the warrant Chiefs to resign while 16 native courts were

ambushed and most destroyed. In 1930 the system of Warrant Chiefs was abolished by the British colonial government, and women were appointed to the Native Court system.

These protests and reforms were set up by the Nigerian women and have been a preliminary measure to the advent of a multitude of Nigerian/ African anti-colonial nationalism. The active participation of many women in socio-economic activities is a great phenomenon that has come to stay. The Nigerian society has witnessed amazons such as Margaret Ekpo, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Kasevki Dunu Tiv (Mrs. Lubona), Madam Tinubu of Lagos and other few activists, women have generally been relegated to the background in political participation. But national and international debates on this scenario seem to be gaining momentum since the Beijing Conference in 2005. The Nigerian women have broken even such that they are currently a force to reckon with in the socio-economic developmental processes of the country. In 1979-1983, which was the second republic, Mrs. Franca Afegbua emerged as Nigeria's first female senator. From the fourth republic in 1999 – 2007), the first female speaker, Mrs. Margaret Icheen emerged from the Benue State house of assembly, making her the first in entire Africa at that time. Also, three women were elected to the house of the senate (upper chamber) while fifteen got elected to the House of Representatives (Lower chamber). The period of the fourth republic is believed by many as the reawakening for the Nigerian women in respect to political appointments and elected offices. President Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian government favored several women as they were adequately involved in visibly key areas with relevant and prominent portfolios. The Aviation and Transport ministries were led by women, the ministers of state for science and technology, and the sensitive ministry of finance was headed by a woman (Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala). The leadership of these women proved that they possess the desired quality, characters, and talents required both for domestic enhancement of human wellbeing and the international reputation of Nigeria.

5. Socio-Economic Challenges For Women In Nigeria

Socio-economic challenges are the various factors that have negative effects on the livelihood of individuals' socio-economic activities. These include but not limited to, lack of education, cultural norms, financial empowerment, etc. As socio-economic activities are known to affect and shape humanity, we shall discuss below three key challenges as the effect of the existence and development achievements of the women in Nigeria.

5.1. Lack of Education

Education is the process of acquiring skills, knowledge, beliefs, habits, and values through training, teaching, training, discussion, and directed research. This is usually done in formal and informal settings under the guidance of educators. It is largely a formative impact on how one thinks, acts, or feels. In 1948, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights recognized and adopted education as a basic human right. But all through history, this has remained unimplemented as the women in Nigeria refused this fundamental human right and have faced various obstacles to obtaining a certain level of formal education. In many other climes such as Europe and America, the quality of education represents a huge integral indicator in the development of human capital and investment. The rapid socio-economic development of many countries has been observed to rely majorly on the number and quality of educated women in the country. For instance, if the women in Nigeria are well equipped with the knowledge about the Covid-19 pandemic and understand the necessary precautions to indulge in, they will operate from an informed stand and in turn educate their families and the small communities they live in (Albert-Makyur,2020). Education bestows on the women a disposition of acceptance and inclusion for the competences and skills they have, and the ability to nurture ideas and to add value to the society. The National Policy on Education states that access to education is a right for all Nigerian children regardless of gender, religion, and disability to have equal access to education, (National Policy on Education,2004). This is far-fetched as many Nigerian girls and women remain out of school in the 21st century.

5.2. Financial Empowerment

Empowerment itself is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions. Financial empowerment, therefore, is the transfer of personal money power (financial independence) to an individual. It is a process of moving from financial instability to a position of financial stability through investment (Duncan, B.P & Harris, A, 2018). Financial empowerment is important to every individual, men, and women alike. A nation that has its population financially empowered is endowed as its citizens feel happy, and can exercise confidence, satisfaction, peace, and joy in all that they do, thus could be productive and live fulfilled lives. Studies show that citizens that are

empowered with finances have more positive experiences even within the range of low-income earners. This translates into growth in the nation. The women empowerment is an ongoing socio-economic process that involves empowering Nigerian women as a mechanism to reduce poverty in Nigeria. This means the development of women in socio-economic and political power. It also reduces the over-dependency and vulnerability of women in all aspects of life. It is argued that the major rate of growth in Nigeria is because of the little socio-economic, educational, health, political, and legal empowerment of women in Nigeria. Like many other women in African, Nigerian women play a subordinate role to their male counterparts. The women live majorly below the poverty line than men and take up fewer executive positions than men in Nigeria. This and various other challenges stand as an impediment to socio-economic development in the country.

5.3. Cultural Norms

These are things that bind people to move in a similar direction. The term 'culture' refers to attitudes and patterns of behavior in each group. 'Norm' refers to attitudes and behaviors that are approved as typical, normal, or average within a certain group. Every nation has cultural norms that influence every facet of the citizen's lives, including their attitudes, how they behave, what they value, even though most often unaware that they are been influenced at all. The women in Nigeria have faced socio-economic challenges in the quest to build a progressive nation since the pre-colonial periods. Traditionally, in Nigeria, the duties of women were revolved around the domestic care of the entire family and child-rearing, with roles clearly and rigidly defined, they automatically assumed the positions of washing, cooking, farming, etc. Even when they were married, they saw themselves as objects to be seen only and not to be heard. This scenario has created male supremacy and dominance culture with little attention or consideration given to the feelings and thoughts of women in many spheres of existence. Another key challenge is patriarchy, a system or an arrangement where the identification of generation is done through the male offspring, and the responsibility of continuity and preserving the status of the family tree clearly rests on the male children, with special attention and preparation for their adult duties. However, women are expected to conform to the dominance of men

and subjection, making them incapable of making sound decisions and unable to express themselves or contest for public offices. The undue discrimination, marginalization, and exploitation by male dominance through the implementation of cultural norms/beliefs, religions, and traditional prejudices placed the men folks as superior human beings above women, thereby inhibiting socio-economic and political participation and growth in Nigeria.

6. **Socio-Economic Achievements of Women In Nigeria**

Even though Nigeria provides a good case-study for underdevelopment in the modern world, characterized by a range of major socio-economic challenges such as lack of education, unemployment, insecurity, diseases, etc. There are a few remarkable milestones achieved by the women in Nigeria in the 21st century. We shall identify a few sectors where many women have achieved and made a socio-economic impact in the country. The year 2018 has been great and remarkable for Nigerian women in the space of politics and governance. This period saw many women rise above numerous stereotypes by taking bold steps towards national engagement and development. Several notable women made progressive efforts and achievements in the sectors they were leading. Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili, was the former Minister of Education Minister. She performed excellently by making good education policies for the nation and encouraged women to go to school. She led the Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG), an advocacy group to demand from the federal government to release the remaining Chibok schoolgirls who were abducted by an insurgent group known as the Boko Haram in Chibok, north-east Nigeria, and many other Nigerians in captivity. As an active and patriotic citizen who is tired of the existing status quo, Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili took a bold step to join the race to lead Nigeria as a presidential flagbearer of the Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN). Although Obiageli stepped down at some point due to personal reasons, this great move encouraged more women in Nigeria to enroll in politics. Obiageli has continued to inspire many youths in Nigerian over the years, to believe that a new Nigeria is possible and achievable with the right, visionary, and committed leadership. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Dr.) is an expert in the economist and international development. she occupied the World Bank Group seat as the Managing Director from the year 2007-2011. She was the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2003-2006, and Minister for Finance and the Coordinating

Minister of the Economy during President Goodluck Jonathan's administration in 2011. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala served for two tenures because of her development and financial expertise and contribution to the socio-economic growth in Nigeria. Delivered on her mainstream job by saving the economy from recession, and through the dangerous fight against corruption in Nigeria. There are many prestigious awards and positions that accrue to this pursuit of development. Currently, Okonjo-Iweala is the Special Envoy to Mobilize International Economic Support for Continental Fight against the Covid-19 pandemic (African Union, 2020). Justice Adebukola Banjoko of the supreme court was the first-class justice to serve in that capacity. In 2018, Justice Banjoko convicted and sent two former governors, Jolly Nyame and Joshua Dariye, to jail. This restored the hope of many Nigerians in the country's judiciary system. It was a great achievement that encourages young female Nigeria to pursue a career in the legal profession. Kemi Adeosun led Nigeria's ministry of finance during the recession in 2016. Adeosun got the country out of recession through hard work, dedication, and commitment. Adeosun also initiated some policies such as the Whistle blowing policy which has led to the recovery of over N540 billion looted funds. Through the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS), thousands of ghost workers were discovered and removed from the government payroll. Another policy is the implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA), which saved billions of government funds and has been channeled towards the provision of infrastructure across Nigeria. These and many more are the socio-economic achievements by reputable women to enhance development in Nigeria. Amina Mohammed was the former Minister of Environment who led the Ogoni cleanup initiative. Presently, Amina heads the United Nations as a Deputy Secretary-General, with optimal track record of performance through the achievements of the project on millennium Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. Abike Dabiri Erewa is known as a seasoned journalist and lawmaker. Currently the Senior Special Assistant on Foreign and Diaspora Affairs to President Buhari's administration. Abike has worked very hard to discourage and protect many young Nigerians from illegally leaving the shores of the country. This major role has seen the repatriation of those trapped in Libya, Lebanon, and the killing of Nigerians in South Africa and many other foreign countries. Mosunmola Abudu, popularly known as Mo Abudu, is the first woman to own a pan-African TV channel in

Nigeria and the rest of the continent (Pulse,2019). Mo Abudu has employed many Nigerian women in the industry. This establishment has added value to the efforts of the government in Nigeria. Having more women at the core of planning and implementation will bring a gender approach which is called good governance (AlbertMakyur, 2020). Finally, women such as Sarah Jibril, Virginia Etiaba, General Aderonke Kale, and many others have contributed immensely to their various fields of life to the socio-economic development in Nigeria. The entertainment sector is also not left behind as Nigerian women have made laudable achievements. Notable among them are women like Agbani Darego -Model and Beauty Queen. The first woman from Nigeria and Africa to win the Miss World crown. With this title, Agbanihas encouraged and supported Nigerian women to embrace the beauty world and innovate cosmetics and body beauty products to earn a good living.

7. Findings

The women in Nigeria have been neglected from socio-economic activities since the pre-colonial era. This is a result of a lack of education, lack of financial empowerment, and cultural norms, thereby preventing Nigeria from the developmental objectives it desires. Women are known to nurture and add value. If included, there will be equal balance and stability in society. This has been witnessed globally in seven notable countries with feminist leadership such as Denmark, Germany, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Taiwan, and New Zealand. These leaders who are women have been recognized to have managed the Covid-19 crisis very well. However, in Nigeria, no woman is involved in the Presidential Task Force (PTF) or the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC).

8. Conclusion

The pre-historic era has overwhelming evidence from what has been examined in this study, that women are a productive and formidable force for all nations to reckon with. They are a store of incredibly human resources required for every society's development. Their huge contributions and value-adding mechanism cannot be underestimated in households and national socio-economic achievements. The present role of women in national development is astonishing towards the security, peace, and direction of the socio-economic activities in Nigeria. To identify and harness their incredible human resources to ensure the best performance in socio-economic

development, great attention should be made for holistic empowerment and development of women along the following lines.

- a. A financial policy from the Nigerian government through its central bank for women to acquire loans with no interest rate but redeemable within a year. This will boost businesses run by women and enable them to add socioeconomic value to society
- b. Establishment of Agricultural-business women cooperatives. This will encourage socio-economic network and development activities.
- c. A national education policy to encourage the participation and enlightenment campaigns in primary /secondary schools to emphasize the involvement of the young girls in choice of subjects like their counterparts. This will build a formidable structure for continuity in socio-economic developments in Nigeria.
- d. Basic and quality education for the women in Nigeria especially those in the rural areas. They should be given equal training and employment opportunities with their male counterparts. This will provide a multiplier effect on the education of young women in Nigeria.
- e. Political programs and parties should involve women in politics through vigorous campaigns of enlightenment and bring out procedures on incorporating them for elective positions both at local and national levels.
- f. The Nigeria nation needs to remove or abolish the responsibility of institutional, artificial, and cultural norms/barriers hinged on culture and religious considerations which have incapacitated the ability of Nigerian women to effectively and freely participate in local and national affairs particularly at the social, economic and political levels.

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**Ambiguïtés Lexicales dans la Traduction de « La Fuite de la Main Habile » dans *Tribaliques*
d'Henri Lopes**

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Résumé

La traduction d'un texte littéraire est une tâche complexe, car les mots qui, en apparence sont ceux de tous les jours, mais chargés de connotations variées acquièrent de nouveaux sens que le sens ordinaire et débouchent sur un nombre infini d'hypothèses. Dans ce travail, nous nous donnons pour tâche de relever les ambiguïtés lexicales dans la traduction de « La fuite de la main habile », une nouvelle tirée de *Tribaliques* d'Henri Lopez, en vue de sensibiliser les étudiants-traducteurs du français langue étrangère (FLE) à l'importance de choisir le mot qui sied au contexte dans le processus de traduction. En fait, l'ambiguïté lexicale est un phénomène qui risque de freiner l'étudiant-traducteur dans sa tâche s'il n'est pas muni d'un bagage intellectuel suffisant dans les deux langues de travail. Nous comptons analyser ce phénomène d'ambiguïté tout en mettant en exergue

le rôle fondamental que joue le mot ou le syntagme dans un énoncé. Ce faisant, nous soulevons le problème de la traduction littéraire, qui, de nature polysémique englobe une multitude de réalités. La théorie de sens de Seleskovitch et Lederer qui stipule que la traduction n'est ni un travail sur la langue, ni sur les mots, mais un travail sur le message, est utilisée pour élucider nos propos. Le travail conclut que c'est le contexte qui détermine la direction vers laquelle la traduction doit être orientée, il suffit de mettre la bonne cheville dans le bon trou, c'est-à-dire désambiguïser le mot ambigu en s'appuyant sur le contexte.

Mots clés : Ambiguïté, Traduction littéraire, Contexte ; Homonymie ; Polysémie

Abstract

Translating a literary text is a complex task. This is because words that appear like every day words, but loaded with varied connotations acquire new words than the ordinary meaning and lead to an infinite number of hypotheses. This work aims at identifying the lexical ambiguities in the translation of "La fuite de la main habile", a short story taken from *Tribaliques* of Henri Lopez, with the view to making students-translators of French as a French language aware of the importance of choosing the word that suits the context in the translation process. In fact, lexical ambiguity is a phenomenon which risks slowing down the student-translator in his task if he does not have sufficient intellectual background in the two working languages. We intend to analyze this phenomenon of ambiguity while highlighting the fundamental role that the word or phrase plays in a statement. In so doing, we bring up the problem of literary translation, which, of the polysemic nature, encompasses a multitude of realities. The theory of meaning of Seleskovitch and Lederer which states that translation is neither a work on the language nor on the words, but a work on the message is used to elucidate our points. The work concludes that it is the context that determines the direction towards which the translation will be oriented, it is just a matter of putting the right peg in the right hole, that is to say, to disambiguate the ambiguous word according to the context.

Key words: Ambiguity, Literary translation, Context, Homonymy, Polysemy

Introduction

L'ambiguïté lexicale provient de l'inhabilité d'un récepteur de comprendre un mot ou un énoncé parce qu'il présente une multiplicité de significations que seul le contexte peut résoudre. En d'autres termes, l'ambiguïté, « c'est la possibilité d'interpréter de plusieurs manières une phrase parlée ou écrite, ce qui complique la compréhension, voire la rend impossible en l'absence d'informations complémentaires » www-lemagit-fr.cdn.ampproject.org (25/03/2022).

En fait, l'ambiguïté peut donner la sensation d'indécision, d'hésitation, d'inexactitude et d'indétermination face à un mot dont le sens est peu maîtrisé ou inconnu. Par ambiguïté, nous entendons donc les cas où faute d'une maîtrise adéquate de la langue étrangère, le traducteur apprenant n'arrive pas à se décider du sens unique d'une expression ou d'un mot particulier. Cette hésitation peut provenir de son inhabilité à s'appuyer sur le contexte immédiat ou encore de l'indétermination causée par la ressemblance de la langue étrangère, (le français) avec la langue seconde (l'anglais) ; ce qui peut l'empêcher à accéder à la signification précise.

Trouver le sens exact d'un mot ou d'une expression est le souci premier de tout traducteur. Ainsi, pour les étudiants en traduction, les ambiguïtés lexicales particulièrement celles de l'homonymie et de la polysémie entre autres sont au centre de leur préoccupation. De ce fait si l'on postule que le texte est l'objet fondamental de la traduction, la phrase en est l'unité de base alors que le signe essentiel est le mot ou l'unité lexicale. Le mot est l'unité fondamentale de la langue et en principe, la traduction d'un mot dépend de son contexte. Le vocabulaire d'un texte chargé d'une signification particulière dépend du contexte et des circonstances de communication. Et puisque les opérations nécessaires à la traduction se font sur texte, il devient indispensable de se préoccuper du statut des mots qui constituent le lexique d'une langue.

Le lexique, selon Mounin (1972, p.103) est « le nombre de mots différents dont le locuteur dispose en puissance parce qu'il existe dans la langue qu'il emploie ». Le mot n'étant jamais isolé dans la langue, comprendre ce dont réfère un mot revient à le mettre en contexte. « L'idée est de le découvrir dans un contexte qui fait sens (une phrase, un texte), puis de le retravailler hors contexte pour accéder aux autres sens du mot (lors de séances spécifiques, décrochées) et enfin de le recontextualiser dans d'autres situations bien différenciées pour bien cerner une pluralité d'emplois » (<http://web40.ac-bordeaux.fr>) >... 29/03/2022).

Dans l'exercice du langage, l'essentiel pour l'utilisateur, c'est la transmission du sens au moyen de signes successifs. Le lexique... constitue (donc) le stock où les sujets parlants puisent les mots ; au rythme des besoins, affirme Slakto cité par Guilbert (1969, p.57).

Dans l'acte de traduction, la langue employée par l'auteur du texte de départ est un nœud que le traducteur s'évertue à dénouer. Un nœud parce que dans un texte à traduire, le vouloir dire dépend dans une large mesure de la mise en œuvre des ressources langagières de l'auteur. En effet, des choix syntaxiques et lexicaux de l'auteur sont en grande partie déterminés par les facteurs culturels et socio- psychologiques, et c'est pourquoi le traducteur doit non seulement bien maîtriser la langue de départ, mais aussi les cultures qui les emploient et notamment celle qui s'exprime dans le texte de départ. C'est dans cet ordre d'idées que Martinet et Walter (1969, p.200) déclarent que « le lexique est le niveau de langue qui émerge le plus facilement à la conscience des locuteurs puisqu'il est en relation directe avec la signification et est le plus étroitement lié à l'évolution culturelle ». Pour bien traduire donc, il convient d'avoir une excellente connaissance du lexique des langues concernées.

Cadre théorique : les réalités en traduction littéraire

La traduction littéraire concerne la traduction des œuvres littéraires comme le roman, la poésie, la nouvelle, le théâtre, le récit, et d'autres genres littéraires. Cette traduction est considérée comme complexe parce que les textes littéraires englobent toujours des valeurs culturelles, des expressions idiomatiques ou des tournures stylistiques, etc. qui exigent une grande maîtrise des langues et des cultures, et surtout une connaissance adéquate de la langue de traduction. Pour cela, Williams (2013, p.79) soutient que “ translators , just as localizers, need specialized knowledge, cultural competence, and a complete understanding of the context; they also need to know how to choose and work intelligently with particular tools”

En fait, le travail du traducteur ne se borne pas du tout à transporter les signifiés d'une langue à une autre, mais à exprimer d'une autre manière le même message dans une autre langue en tenant compte des nuances et des illusions de l'original, de l'effet affectif qu'il suscitait dans ses premiers lecteurs, des qualités esthétiques de l'expression. Ce qui revient à dire qu'entre l'original et l'objet traduit, il ne peut y avoir relation d'identité, mais plutôt équivalence de fonction et de message. Lyons (1970, p.333) observe à propos : « Quand on peut mettre en correspondance des unités lexicales de deux langues différentes en se fondant sur l'identification de caractéristiques et de situation communes dans les cultures où sont utilisées ces deux langues, on peut dire que ces unités ont la même application ». Cette assertion s'appuie sur la notion de la théorie linguistique qui préconise la maîtrise de la structure de la langue afin d'utiliser les règles pertinentes qui la gouvernent.

Cette communication étant basée sur le lexique, il s'avère important de jeter un coup d'œil sur les deux grands courants qui ont engendré une polémique entre les théoriciens et praticiens de la traduction au cours des dernières décennies, notamment, l'approche linguistique et l'approche interprétative pour élucider nos propos.

En effet, pour les tenants de la théorie linguistique, la traduction est un fait de langue, c'est donc à travers la linguistique que les opérations traductives sont élucidées. Ces théoriciens, parmi lesquels Catford (1965, p.6) pensent que bien traduire, c'est remplacer des unités lexicales d'une langue de départ par des unités d'une langue d'arrivée. Il affirme que la traduction est « the replacement of any textual material by equivalent textual material ». Dans cet ordre d'idées, Newmark (1988, p.73) soutient vivement que « We do translate words because there is nothing else to translate ; there are only the words on the page ; there is nothing else there » [on traduit des mots parce qu'il n'y a rien d'autres à traduire ; il n'y a que des mots sur les pages ; il n'y a rien d'autres] (notre traduction).

Vue dans cette perspective, toute traduction est considérée à partir des unités fondamentales que sont le mot, le syntagme et la phrase qui d'ailleurs constituent l'objet de la linguistique. Le traducteur a donc pour tâche de traduire des mots ou des groupes de mots qui constituent le texte. Il est à la recherche perpétuelle des correspondances entre la langue de départ et la langue d'arrivée.

La conservation de la teneur informative de l'original est une exigence à la traduction. Chaque mot doit s'insérer logiquement dans la phrase. Pour arriver à ses fins, le traducteur doit pouvoir mobiliser ses connaissances linguistiques et extralinguistiques pour transmettre le vouloir-dire de l'auteur du texte original. Les mots du texte sont porteurs de sens de par leur agencement (lexique et syntaxe), leur place dans la phrase et l'idée qu'ils projettent. La notion d'ambiguïté met l'accent sur le contact de langues et la traduction fait appel à la maîtrise de la structure de la langue afin d'utiliser les règles pertinentes qui la gouvernent. C'est une théorie qui a d'ailleurs beaucoup influencé les approches didactiques de la traduction en enseignement/apprentissage des langues étrangères, étant une activité de correspondance entre deux langues ou plus. La traduction linguistique est bien illustrée dans *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* de Vinay et Darbelnet (1976) et dans *Syntaxe comparée du français et de l'anglais* de Guillemin-Flescher (1986).

Le traducteur a intérêt à s'emparer du texte original, à s'identifier avec lui pour que la reformulation lui soit malléable. Tarnoczi (1967, p.138) constate que si le traducteur « ...reste hostile à l'original, son cerveau refusera d'exécuter les opérations exigées de lui, ou bien les exécutera péniblement et la traduction en souffrira ». Il conviendra donc au traducteur de "s'approprier" le texte afin de pouvoir jouir d'une certaine marge de liberté au moment de la réexpression des idées.

Par ailleurs, à côté de la théorie linguistique qui ne s'intéresse qu'à la langue, se développe la théorie interprétative appelée aussi théorie du sens ou théorie de l'Ecole de Paris.

La théorie interprétative fondée par Danica Seleskovitch dans les années 70, avait pour but de contester l'opinion qui prévalait, selon laquelle la traduction n'était rien d'autre qu'une activité linguistique, et qu'il suffisait tout simplement de transcoder une langue en une autre. Seleskovitch a décrit la traduction comme un processus triangulaire à savoir : d'une langue au sens et du sens à l'autre langue. Avec cette théorie, le processus de traduction est constitué de trois étapes : la compréhension, la déverbalisation et la reformulation. Donc pour Seleskovitch, le processus de traduction n'est pas direct, il doit passer par une phase intermédiaire, celle du sens qu'il faut déverbaliser (interpréter et comprendre). Cela veut dire, décoder le texte source en analysant les relations sémantiques entre les mots. La phase de compréhension est la plus importante : c'est là

que le traducteur doit mobiliser ses connaissances linguistiques et extralinguistiques pour accomplir sa tâche. Aux dires de Lederer (1994, p.32), « comprendre un texte, c'est mobiliser à la fois une compétence linguistique et un savoir encyclopédique afin de faire correspondre à quelque chose le contenu véhiculé par le texte lui-même ». La déverbalisation consiste en une isolation mentale des idées ou des concepts impliqués dans un énoncé. C'est « le stade que connaît le processus de la traduction entre la compréhension d'un texte et la réexpression. Il s'agit d'un affranchissement des signes linguistiques concomitant à la saisie d'un sens cognitif et affectif » Lederer (op.cit., p.213). Durant cette étape de déverbalisation, le traducteur retient le sens de l'énoncé original, tandis que les signes (mots, phrases) passent dans l'oubli. Cela est néanmoins mieux appliqué à l'interprétation qu'à la traduction. Le concept du « sens » est de ce fait, central dans la traduction interprétative. Quant à la réexpression dans une autre langue, le traducteur doit réexprimer le sens déverbalisé dans la langue d'arrivée. C'est la phase de reverbération, c'est-à-dire qu'il faut respecter le génie de la langue, en créant des équivalences. Lederer (ibid, p.214) s'y réfère comme « des discours et des textes présentant une identité de sens, quelque soient les divergences de structures grammaticales ou de choix lexicaux ». Considérant ce qui précède, nous en convenons avec Herbulot (2004 en ligne) que la théorie interprétative « repose sur un principe essentiel : la traduction n'est pas un travail sur la langue, sur les mots, c'est un travail sur le message, sur le sens ».

La traduction interprétative est une traduction par équivalences, alors que la traduction linguistique est une traduction par correspondance. Ce sont les deux grandes directions auxquelles s'engagent les traducteurs lorsqu'on parle de traduction directe ou littérale ou de traduction indirecte ou d'équivalence. Donc, à l'instar de la traduction littérale qui s'effectue sans intervention de procédés stylistiques spéciaux, parce qu'à chaque segment parallèle correspond un raisonnement parallèle, ceci rejoint l'idée de la théorie linguistique, nous avons la traduction oblique qui se manifeste par les procédés d'équivalence, de transposition, de modulation, etc., qui peuvent se constituer en ambiguïté. Alors que la traduction linguistique se manifeste sur des énoncés hors contexte, la traduction interprétative, elle, n'est pas concevable sans le texte (Lederer 1994). Elle se révèle le plus souvent dans les textes littéraires.

Le traducteur doit savoir que le texte littéraire est l'espace de l'ambiguïté net et du non-dit,

et par conséquent, il doit faire appel à toutes ses facultés intellectuelles pour assurer une bonne traduction.

Le concept d'ambiguïté

Toutes les langues du monde sont parsemées de mots ambigus et ces ambiguïtés ne reflètent rien que la richesse linguistique de chaque langue. L'ambiguïté lexicale concerne les mots qui de nature polysémique, renferment la plupart du temps des significations diverses que seul le contexte peut clarifier. En fait, depuis les travaux de Ferdinand de Saussure, les linguistes s'accordent à considérer le mot communément appelé « signes » comme l'association conventionnelle d'un signifiant et d'un signifié, le signifiant étant la forme matérielle du mot (phonologique et orthographique) et le signifié, le contenu sémantique évoqué par ce signifiant. Dans ce contexte, un mot est considéré comme ambigu lorsqu'il a plusieurs signifiés.

Fuchs (1996, p.7) affirme qu'il y a ambiguïté «...lorsqu'à une forme unique correspondent plusieurs significations ». Dans tel cas, il peut s'agir d'homonymie ou de polysémie. Pergnier (1978, p.37) remarque que l'ambiguïté lexicale appartient au domaine de la linguistique de la parole, et non de la langue. Pour lui, « tout ce qui touche aux faits de langue est considéré comme polysémique, alors que tout ce qui touche aux faits de conscience relevant de l'acte discursif est ambigu ». Il propose de scinder le concept d'ambiguïté en deux notions : la polysémie et l'ambiguïté. Pergnier ajoute que l'ambiguïté « n'existe que par rapport à une conscience, une pensée, et suppose la volonté de transmettre une information équivoque »(p.38). Par ailleurs, Aquien (1996, p.10) déclare que « c'est une figure de toute poésie fondée sur les jeux de signifiants ». Fleury (1971, p.31) dit qu'« une phrase est ambiguë lexicalement quand un mot ou une séquence de mots donne deux significations distinctes, autrement dit si, dans son écriture, un même morphème lexical correspond à plusieurs termes racines. La phrase ne présente aucune différence aux niveaux de grammaire ». Jakobson (1963) cité par Hébert (2011) en ligne quant à lui, lie le concept d'ambiguïté à la notion de bruit. C'est tout ce qui peut gêner le succès de la communication, que ce soit physique, psychologique ou sociologique. Néanmoins, nous sommes de l'avis de Gradinaru (2017, p.24) qui remarque qu'« au sens large l'ambiguïté est la propriété d'un mot ou d'une suite de mots d'offrir deux ou plusieurs sens au lecteur ». On en convient donc qu'un mot peut avoir plusieurs significations et que c'est le contexte dans lequel il est utilisé qui

détermine sa signification intrinsèque.

Selon Brousseau et Roberge (2000) cités par Bédart et.al. (2011, p.80) « le contexte, c'est tout ce qui entoure un énoncé à savoir l'environnement réel de production, les personnes impliquées dans l'interaction et 'l'univers de référence' ». Pan et Felser (2010) cités aussi par Bédart et. al. (op.cit) ajoutent que le contexte « ...permet à l'interlocuteur de comprendre une phrase qui pourrait être ambiguë lorsqu'isolée ». On en déduit donc par ces définitions que ce sont les éléments linguistiques qui constituent un texte, qui déterminent son contexte par l'effet de leur influence mutuelle qu'ils exercent les uns sur les autres. Donc, pour confronter le problème d'ambiguïté, il est important de tout d'abord saisir le sens global du texte.

Il existe plusieurs types d'ambiguïtés à savoir l'ambiguïté lexicale qui repose sur un fait d'homonymie, l'ambiguïté syntaxique ou grammaticale qui traite/repose sur la construction de la phrase qui laisse indéterminée des relations entre les mots et l'ambiguïté pragmatique qui concerne les éléments du langage dont la signification ne peut être comprise qu'en connaissant le contexte de leur emploi. Néanmoins, notre point de mire dans ce travail, c'est l'ambiguïté lexicale.

Méthodologie

L'approche descriptive de type qualitatif a été utilisée pour notre analyse. Après la traduction de la nouvelle, « La fuite de la main habile » en anglais, nous avons relevé les termes qui paraissent ambigus, voire susceptibles d'enfreindre la traduction. Ainsi les avons-nous ensuite classifiés selon leur nature : homonymie, polysémie, paronyme, faux-amis et idiotisme. L'apprenant traducteur non-averti tomberait dans le piège tendu par ces expressions s'il n'est pas muni d'un bagage linguiste suffisant.

L'ambiguïté lexicale dans « La fuite de la main habile »

Comme dans tout texte littéraire, les principales sources d'ambiguïtés lexicales dans cette nouvelle sont les homonymies, les paronymes, les faux-amis, la polysémie, et les expressions idiomatiques.

Les homonymes : ce sont des mots qui s'écrivent de la même manière, mais qui ont des sens différents.

Exemples repérés de « La fuite de la main habile » :

Course/course – homonymes, homophones et homographes. Dans le contexte,

« *Il faut qu'en passant je fasse quelques courses* » (p.8). **Courses** (n.fém.) – faire des achats.//
courses (n. fém.) - action de courir, compétition.

Métier/métier – homonymes, homographes et homophones. Le contexte, « *Au pays avec mon métier je gagnerai 30 000 francs C.F.A.* » (p.9). **Métier** (n.m.) – Profession caractérisée par une spécificité exigeant un apprentissage del'expérience. // **Métier** (n.m.) – machine servant à la fabrication des textiles.

Solde/solde – homonymes, homophones, homographes. Le contexte, « *Toute masolde pour nourrir des neveux et nièces...* » (p.9). **Solde** (n.fém.) - salaire, paie. // **Solde** (n.m.) – marchandise vendue au rabais.

Les paronymes : Ce sont des mots qui se ressemblent fortement par leur forme, leur orthographe, mais qui ont des sens différents.

Exemples identifiés dans « *La fuite de la main habile* » :

Se résigner/ se rechigner : « *Elles devaient pour le moment se résigner à travailler...* » (p.5). **Se résigner** (v.t.) – se soumettre sans protestation à un sort, renoncer à lutter pour quelque chose //

Se rechigner (v.i.) – témoigner de la mauvaise volonté à faire quelque chose.

Ferveur/faveur : « *Les deux jeunes ne s'aimèrent jamais avec autant d'intensitéet de ferveur* »(pp.6-7). **Ferveur** (n.f.) – zèle, ardeur, enthousiasme. // **Faveur** (n.f.) – décision indulgente qui avantage quelqu'un.

Dessein / dessin : « *...il était toujours question d'un homme aimé par deux femmes et où la plus méchante finissait par dévoiler ses mauvais desseins,...*(p3).

Dessein (n.m.) – intention, idée précise. // **dessin** (n.m) – Représentation de la forme d'un objet, d'une figure, etc.

Les exemples que nous avons cités ci-dessus peuvent être source d'ambiguïté si le traducteur a une maîtrise insuffisante de la LD. Le choix d'un mot au lieu d'un autre peut fausser le sensdu message s'il n'arrive pas à se décider pour un sens unique d'un passage discursif ou d'un mot donné. Pour ce fait, nous en convenons avec Gradinaru (2017 ; p.22) pour dire qu' « au cas où le sujet parlant ne reconnaît pas la signification de deux mots à un phonétisme identique ou presque identique, il recourt à son imagination linguistique qui peut souvent induire en erreur

en utilisant un paronyme ou un homonyme à la place d'un autre ». Dans ce genre de situation, c'est le contexte ou la connaissance extralinguistique qui sert de palliatif sémantique. Un autre problème auquel le traducteur ne peut échapper est celui des faux-amis.

Les faux amis

Les faux-amis selon Maillot (1977 ; p.67) sont « des mots de langues différentes, de même forme ou de forme suffisamment voisine, compte tenu de la structure des langues considérées, pour être pris pour des équivalents alors qu'ils peuvent avoir des sens différents ».

En transposant de la LD à la LA, le traducteur peut rendre erronément ce qu'il a appris d'une façon incomplète, peu nuancée ou fautive, dans ce cas il court le danger de ne pas exprimer adéquatement ce qu'il a pourtant bien compris. Ces dangers sont inhérents à la traduction.

Exemples :

« *Il se demandait comment il annoncerait la nouvelle a Mba* » (p.1)

“*He was wondering how he would break the news to Mba*” « *annoncerait lanouvelle* » a été transposé par « *he would break the news*» qui sied mieux au message et non pas “*announce*”

« *Il se présenta à l'examen. Il fut admis* » (P.6), traduit par “*he took part in the examination, and he was successful*”. Et non « *he presented himself and was admitted* » qui, bien que correspondant à leur homonyme français au sens d'être conforme à la grammaire ou aux convenances, ne répondent pas aux tournures stylistiques voulues dans ce contexte.

«*Tu comprends, je suis obligé de faire une partie du marché* » (p.8). “*You understand, I have to do part of the shopping*”, et non “*obliged*”.

La polysémie : La polysémie caractérise un mot ou une expression qui a plusieurs significations différentes. C'est un phénomène présent dans toutes les langues, c'est même le fort d'une langue. La polysémie est la source constante de confusion et d'ambiguïté lexicale en traduction littéraire. La polysémie selon Dubois (1994, p.369) est « la propriété d'un signelinguistique qui a plusieurs sens. L'unité linguistique est alors dite polysémique ». La polysémie peut provoquer une ambiguïté lexicale qui peut ensuite entraîner une distorsion du message à transmettre au cours de la traduction si le mot dont on réfère donne une suite successive de significations dans le dictionnaire.

Prenons cet exemple : « il...mit de côté un **paquet** qu'Elo lui avait justement remis pour Mbâ »

(p.1) ». Dans un dictionnaire français-anglais, le mot « paquet » est rendu par cette suite polysémique : *parcel, packet, package, bundle*, etc. Dans la traduction, « paquet » est transposé par « parcel » et non « packet » qui pourrait induire en erreur à cause de leur ressemblance lexicale.

Soit l'exemple du mot « aimer » : dans le dictionnaire, ce terme renvoie à différents contextes un à savoir, *like, care for, prefer, to be fond of*, etc.

Il importe au traducteur de faire un choix dans la liste qu'offre le dictionnaire en se référant au contexte. Il faut partir avant tout d'une situation donnée et d'un contexte bien déterminé pour trouver des synonymes des mots dans le dictionnaire, sinon l'abondance des mots qu'il offrira pour un seul mot peut mettre la confusion dans les idées du traducteur et obscurcir le sens des mots. Ainsi, on ne cherchera pas seulement la signification du verbe 'aimer' en anglais, mais on cherchera comment exprimer l'idée exactement dans un contexte. Voyons ces exemples :

« j'aime Alger » 'I like Algiers '

« j'aime mieux rester ici » "I'd rather stay here"

« il aimait trop les femmes » 'He was too fond of women'

Dans ces expressions, le même verbe « aimer » est traduit différemment selon le contexte de situation. L'ambiguïté lexicale dérive de l'incapacité du traducteur à trouver le terme exact qui sied au contexte. Ainsi, dans « la fuite de la main habile », on ne cherchera pas seulement la signification du mot « aimer » nous retiendrons ces quelques exemples :

« Mbâ **aimait** également Elo et Mbouloukoué, comme s'ils avaient été ses frères » (p.2) traduit par "Mbâ **liked** equally both Elo and Mbouloukoué as if they were her brothers"

« Les deux jeunes gens ne s'**aimèrent** jamais avec autant d'intensité et de ferveur » (p.6), traduit par "Both had never **loved** themselves with such intensity and devotion".

La connaissance étymologie des termes est aussi très utile dans la connaissance de la langue et en traduction. Il faut connaître aussi des tournures idiomatiques propres à chacune des langues, des proverbes et rendre les métaphores de l'auteur du texte source par des tournures similaires.

Les expressions idiomatiques

L'idiotisme est le propre d'une langue particulière. Il réfère aux dictons, proverbes, et aux tournures stylistiques particulières.

Le principal problème du traducteur se situe au niveau du choix de l'équivalence. Comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, la tâche du traducteur ne consiste pas seulement à transposer les mots de la langue du départ (LD) à la langue d'arrivée (LA), mais à chercher des équivalences approximatives ou parfaites entre une idée et sa formulation. Le traducteur doit donc de tout son possible d'essayer non pas rendre compte des mots ni de mettre à point un instrument de connaissance, mais de recréer la magie qui se dégage de toutes les composantes affectives, esthétiques et notionnelles du texte. Il ne suffit pas de comprendre une partie du texte, mais de comprendre le sens global du texte et de l'extraire. A cet effet, Delisle (1990 ; p.61) déclare que « Préserver l'intégrité à la fois du sens du message et de la langue d'arrivée est l'idéal vers lequel tend le traducteur consciencieux ».

Postuler que le sens est l'objet à saisir et à transférer suppose une reformation structurale. Il existe en fait des moments où le traducteur doit libérer le message original de son joug linguistique pour se rapprocher de plus près du sens et respecter les expressions idiomatiques de la (LA). Mais les équivalences recherchées ne sont pas toujours repérables dans la LA, le traducteur devra alors procéder à "une récréation contextuelle" selon l'expression de Jean Delisle qu'il ne faut pourtant pas confondre avec une paraphrase. Ainsi les messages ci-dessous ne peuvent être traduits que par une récréation contextuelle :

Exemples tirés de « la fuite de la main habile » :

« *Leur mari leur demanderait des comptes le soir* » (p.4) a pour équivalence "Their husbands would have an axe to grind with them in the evening"

Il est vrai que la méthode conventionnelle pour comparer le lexique de deux langues, c'est le dictionnaire bilingue : équivalence par traduction c'est-à-dire comparaison contextuelle. Notons néanmoins que recourir au dictionnaire pour la traduction de cet énoncé n'est pas indispensable. L'important est de situer ces expressions dans le texte de départ afin de savoir le sens dont elles sont porteuses dans le contexte et les transporter en les adaptant aux ressources langagières de la culture du texte d'arrivée. Le traducteur ne doit pas être esclave des mots de l'original et il doit éviter autant qu'il le peut le mot à mot qui détourne le plus souvent le message du texte. Essayer de faire une traduction littérale de cette expression aurait faussé le message.

Les cas où le traducteur doit libérer le message original de sa langue sont si nombreux

qu'on ne peut les énumérer tous. En fait, dans beaucoup de cas, le traducteur ne saurait se contenter de traduire en conservant d'une langue à l'autre les mêmes catégories lexicales, grammaticales, les mêmes parties du discours. Il devra donc transposer pour lever l'ambigüité.

La transposition est un autre "procédé de traduction qui consiste à remplacer une partie du discours par une autre sans changer le sens du message". La transposition permet souvent d'obtenir une amélioration par rapport à la traduction directe. Soit les exemples suivants ;

"*collier en or*" (p.7) devient "*golden necklace*"; transposition d'un nom enadjectif.

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“*collier en or*” (p.7) devient “*golden necklace*” ; transposition d’un nom en adjectif.

“*Il lui décrivait tout ce qu’il découvrait en France*” (p.7) traduit par “*He wrote about all his discoveries in France*”, transposition d’une locutionverbale en un groupe nominal.

Nous avons la modulation lexicale qui intervient lorsqu’on constate que la traduction littérale ou même transposer se heurte au génie de la LA bien que grammaticalement correcte.

Exemples :

“*Il défit ses bagages*” (p1) “*He unpacked*”

“*La fuite de la main habile*”(p.1) “*Exodus of skilled labour*”

Remarquons ici que le titre de la nouvelle qui est notre point de référence dans ce travail est aussi sujet d’une ambiguïté lexicale. “*La fuite de la main habile*” traduit par “*Exodus of skilled labour*” fait appel à une création nouvelle de la part du traducteur ; il est à noter que cette acception n’est pas indiquée dans le dictionnaire.

Conclusion

Notre tâche tout au long de cet exposé a été de soulever les ambiguïtés lexicales qui sont susceptibles de freiner le travail de l’étudiant-traducteur. Les ambiguïtés lexicales se manifestent à travers les homonymies (le traducteur devant distinguer le sens des formes identiques d’un mot) et les polysémies (le traducteur devant sélectionner parmi plusieurs options de significations). Dans un texte surtout littéraire, le lexique est chargé de connotations variables. Tout énoncé se compose de certains éléments du lexique disposé dans un certain ordre qu’il faut respecter. L’équivalence de traduction est une équivalence de sens et non des éléments linguistiques du texte. La signification d’un mot ne dépend pas seulement de sa définition, mais de sa place à l’intérieur de la chaîne sémantiquement et la structure du texte se fait en fonction bien définie des règles structurales de la langue. Puisque le traducteur opère sur une certaine modification exigée par le contexte ou la situation, il se doit de comparer la sensibilité des deux langues en se méfiant des ressemblances superficielles. Le traducteur doit aussi évaluer la différence mentale des deux

langues afin d'adapter le texte à l'esprit de la langue d'arrivée, il doit être capable de désambiguïser le texte pour qu'il soit accessible/compréhensif aux lecteurs de la langue cible. C'est en effet, le contexte qui facilite la désambiguïisation, car selon Albert (en ligne), «...si dans le dictionnaire, les unités lexicales sont dépourvues de tout contexte (sont décontextualisées), dans un texte concret les mots apparaissent toujours entourés d'un contexte discursif, référentiel, situationnel etc. qui facilite leur compréhension et interprétation».

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Gender Role Schemas: Emasculation as Men's Nightmare in Barclay's *Dance on His Grave*

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Abstract

The paper examines gender role schemas and the plight of men as socially constructed by the socio-cultural environment that makes him a real man. Man is a product of his social milieu because the society where he grows up to become a man has carved out for him roles he is expected to perform even before he is conceived in his mother's womb. In the schemas are social conventions and orientation that dictates to him the expectations of his society of him in order to fit into the social construction that guarantees for him a place in the social strata of his society as a real man. With Psychoanalysis and Bem's Gender Role schemas as a frameworks, the study employs a literary text analysis of Barclay's *Dance on His Grave* to reveal the plight of heterosexual men who become effeminate as a result of their inability to enact the roles constructed for them as men. It was therefore discovered that male characters become frustrated and feel less of men because of their failure to enact the roles of providers and caring fathers in their homes. Again, the study discovered that men who occupied honourable positions became effeminate when challenged by strong women who were determined to alter the status quo ante in a society supposedly dominated by men. Finding also revealed the indispensability of women in the scheme of things as dependable stakeholders in growth and developmental effort of the society. It was therefore suggested that social construction for men where traditional roles are spelt out should be deemphasized. Rather, profeminist orientation should be encouraged in parenting such that the line of divide between the boy and the girl child is deliberately blurred to relieve the boy child of the pressure to measure up to his traditional sex role.

Keywords: Gender role schemas, Masculinity, Sex roles, Social Construction, Profeminist

Introduction

The study of gender has increased tremendously in recent decades and it has robbed off on gender issues about men, manhood and masculinities. Some scholars according to Connell, Hearn and Kimmel (2005) have referred to this field of study as “Men’s studies and tagged as a reaction to ‘women’s studies’” because of its preoccupation with “practical or cultural issues about men, boys and gender”(2). The field of study has interrogated issues of women as championed by women scholars who have made women oppression and patriarchy as the central ideas in gender discourse. All these are captured in the concept and principles of feminism of various shades and colors. According to Oshoke (2019), “The concept tends to object the popular notion that men are superior to women and should enjoy preferential treatment” (434).

Women researchers have focused so much of their works of dismantling patriarchal stronghold the believe has put women under undue oppression for too long, and some of their position have been about women liberation, repositioning and empowerment. Even women creative artists have over the years echoed these feminists’ positions portraying men as bullies, oppressors and usurpers of political power. So, literary work according to Ruth (2019) “becomes a clinical laboratory to examine the complex fate of man and the truth of man’s life that is focused on by the artist; hence the work presents a segment on of life in strict compliance to facts of societal truths, which constitutes of human attitudes, emotions and reactions” (294). Therefore, most feminist scholars claim to engage in research aimed at setting women free from the control of men who are believed by virtue of patriarchy to have superior social relations over women. The base of this superior social relations is not “religious or cultural but lies on all social structures that create interdependence and solidarity among men in order to continually subordinate, oppress, and dominate women over labour power” (296). Looking at power relation between men and women in African context, Sotunsa and Nyameke (2024) believe that portrayal of power relations in the continent has been largely imbalanced and this has constituted the most palpable critiqued issue in gender studies in the continent (5). Some female scholars believe that men have to put women down to have firm control of power in order to enjoy patriarchal privileges. For instance, Bamidele-Nelly and Sotunsa (2024) argue that some social norms and cultural expectations, put

women down and extols male control of situations and people and bestows men the entitlement to use violence to maintain power, control and possession “(19).

The world being conjectured from feminists’ perspective to be under the control of men, his plight as a castrated being and the reality of his true identity pale into insignificance when placed side by side his description as a privileged gender. No one bothers to know that there are men who are subordinated in the enactment of their gender roles as providers and caring fathers. In gender discourse, sex roles are sometimes confused with gender role. While sex roles are the roles conferred on a particular biological sex identity, gender roles are the roles constructed for a particular gender by the society where they are socialized as either man or woman as against male or female. Ukamaka (2022) says “sexuality may be different at different times over the course of our lives. Sexuality is also not controlled by our biological decor by the way in which our culture translates biological sex into gender roles” (338).

As a product of a social environment where he is socialized, the society confers on him certain values, beliefs and roles. There is, therefore, a form of natural bond between the man and the society that produces him. He grows and develops according to the social dictates of the particular society in which he is socialized such that man is said to be made not born (Kimmel xxi). In traditional African and Afro-American societies, men are already allotted some roles with certain privileges as incentives that place them above the womenfolk both in public and private spheres. He is conscious of his manhood, which is the feeling that resides deep in the heart of every man according to the definition given to it in any social cultural environment. Kimmel (1994) says manhood

Does not bubble up to consciousness from our biological make up. It is created in culture. Manhood means different things at different times to different people. We come to know what it means to be a man in our culture by setting our definitions in opposition to a set of “Others” – racial minorities, sexual minorities, and above all, women” (120).

Having, internalized the cultural definition(s) of what it means to be a man in his socio-cultural environment, man therefore becomes anxious and under intense pressure to meet up with the

societal expectations. His understanding of his manhood and the masculinity constructed for him in his cultural milieu forms the gender-role schemas in which a man is socialized. Gender schemas bother on how individual perceives maleness and femaleness on the one hand, and individual perception of masculinity and femininity based on sex on the other hand. Gender-role schemas also come handy in an individual's attempt to make judgment or draw conclusion that will direct his thought and behavior (Cross & Markus, 1993 & Koss 1994).

It is, however, when a man's gender- role schema is distorted that he begins to experience fear of femininity and emasculation.

This happens when a man fears to be called weak or a weakling, a sissy or considered effeminate. This kind of anxiety makes Okonkwo strike Ikemefume to death in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* because of the fear of being called weak. or lazy like his father, Unoka. Before the fear set in, the man must have lost his masculine identity as contained in the gender-roles constructed for him in his socio-cultural environment. Such a man is known to have been emasculated. "Emasculation is the fear of losing masculine status and power in the eyes of others (James and Nadeau 98). A man may experience emasculation through crude comments, demeaning words, failures, sexual dysfunction or when he feels he has lost power and control. According to James and Nadeau,

To be emasculated means to be deprived of virility or procreative powers; to be castrated; to be deprived of masculinity energy, vigor or spirit; to be weakened; to be unnerved by others in terms of your masculine gender-role identity (98).

Emasculation is one of the by-products of distorted gender- role schema; It threatens gender–role identity which ultimately results in violence as a man attempts to restore his masculinity through aggressive words or action. The reality is that it is not only the woman that suffers spousal abuse in a relationship. It must be noted that men also suffer spousal abuse which more often than not do not draw the attention of scholars. As a matter of fact, Singleton affirms that both men and women are exposed to spousal abuse which can be transmitted from one generation to the other. It is obvious that anywhere there is a relationship between men and women, conflict is inevitable. This explains the preponderance of conflicts mostly in heterosexual relationship. Igbekele says

“Humans as social beings must interact, and from this interaction may be generated harmony or disharmony (267). For instance, King Olotu runs after his wife with a sword when the woman queries the paternity of Beke, their daughter in Barclay’s *A Dance on His Grave*. This underscores the fact that conflict is inevitable in a heterosexual relationship and that both the men and the women could be a victim of spousal abuse in such a relationship.

Framework for the Study

This paper relies so much on Freudian psycho-analysis and Bem’s Gender-role Schema theory of masculinity as tools of analysis. The aspect of the Freudian psycho-analytic theory relevant to this study is the unconscious dynamics of *id*, *ego* and the *superego* otherwise known as the Tripartite Psyche and their relevance in sexuality discourse in literature. Freud “recognized that it is during childhood that the *id* is formed, shaping the behavior of the adult to come” (54). Freud was of the opinion that the period of serious sexual experience are the infancy and childhood during which it becomes necessary to go through three phases of development that will help “serve specific” physical needs, that will later provide pleasure if the child must become a healthy and functioning adult. According to Freud in Dobie,

The first phase is called the oral phase, because it is characterized by sucking – first to be fed from our mother’s breast, then to enjoy our thumb or later, even kissing. The second is the anal stage, a period that recognized not only the need for elimination but also the presence of another erogenous zone, a part of the body thus provides sexual pleasure. In the final phase, the phallic stage, the child discovers the pleasure of genital stimulation, connected, of course, to reproduction (54).

The three stages above overlap and must be negotiated successfully for the adult personality to emerge “sound and intact”. In traditional African setting, only then can such a man be considered a “real man,” and this, more often than not, defines his manhood in the cultural setting. Of course, these three phases of development provide the ground for the effectiveness of sexual denial as a weapon against the men of Toru-Ama, in Barclay’s *Dance on His Grave*. Chief Atuaba narrates his ordeals to King Olotu and other Council of Chiefs thus

ATUABA: My wives have been giving me hell since they returned
from that gathering of hens. What I have been going through
is terrible. Come here ..

APODI: *Uhm Uhm!*

ATUABA: That is it e! You can't imagine that. Your Highness,
All of them refused to sleep with me e! (*The others agree
with him*) Tension all the night (57).

The "tension" created by the women's refusal to sleep with their husbands produces the desired result because the three stages of development is complete in them. According to Freud, if these childhood "needs are not met, the adult is likely to suffer arrested development" (Dobie 54). This would have made the sexual denial by Toru-Ama women ineffective because the men would have been impotent, or transsexual (having sexual image that contradicts the physical gender one is born with).

To complement psycho-analysis as framework for the study is Bem's Gender -role schema theory in masculinity discourse. Masculinity as a gender framework is a broad theory that encapsulates gender-role schema in men's discourse. To understand Bem's gender -role schema theory, an expose on masculinity will not be out of place. Chris and Mac an Ghail see masculinity as ways of being and becoming male.

Masculinity has a lot to do with the way a man is socialized in a particular social environment. This explains the very transient nature of the concept which will confer manhood on a man in a particular social space and do otherwise in another. For instance, a man who washes a woman's cloth to earn a living, is presumed to have lost his masculinity values, but gains it when he gets home to provide for his wife as a breadwinner. No wonder Kimmel (1994) opines that "I view masculinity as a constantly changing meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our world" (20).

Hatty says masculinity is more of "socially acceptable behavior learned through observation and imitation of significant role models such as parents" (15). According to her, "Role theory proposes that masculinity can be regarded as a set of social scripts, the substance of which is acquired in early childhood" (115).

To Horrocks, because masculinity is ambivalent and uncertain, " It makes sense to see (it) as heterogeneous, contextually sensitive, inter-relational" (115).

Bem's gender -role schema theory is furtherance to Suzanne Hatty's role theory that views masculinity as a set of social scripts acquired in early childhood. Bem's schema theory, according to James and Nadeau (97) proposes that:

1. Individuals learn cultural definitions of femaleness and maleness
2. Schemas include networks or associations that organize and guide an individual's perception of masculinity and femininity based on sex
3. Schemas become part of the self-concept and are used to evaluate one's personal adequacy as a male or female

Gender schemas have so much to do with one's interpersonal relationship with others of the same gender or opposite gender. The individual tends to think of femininity and masculinity from the perspective of his own personal perception of gender-role attributes and identities (James and Nadeau 97). However, when gender-role schema is distorted, it results to gender-role conflict, a psychological state in which the way a man's gender-role is socialized begins to have negative consequences. The authors see distorted gender-role schema as "exaggerated thought and feelings about the role of masculinity and femininity in a person's life" (97).

Masculine Gender–Role Identify as Predisposing Factor for Emasculation in Barclays' *Dance on His Grave*.

Masculine gender- role identity, a corollary of Gender-Role Schema presupposes how an individual man perceives his roles, values and status within a cultural environment. It bothers so much on how the individual man is socialized in his social milieu which eventually defines his relationship with women and other men. Masculine gender -role identity is,

An individual man's total perception of his masculine roles, values, functions, expectations, and belief systems. This includes how biological Sex and the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity shape the man's sense of self over the life span. Masculine gender – role identity is everything that the man says and does that communicates his masculine and feminine dimension (James and Nadeau 95-96).

Men's lives no doubt consist of both the conscious and unconscious aspects of their masculine gender- role identity which ultimately shapes their perception and others'. This explains Alaere's abhorrence of Toru-Ama men's treatment of their women compared to the white man that came

to the village who treated his wife with respect and honour. According to her: in *Dance on His Grave*

ALAERE You are all witnesses to what has been happening in this Land. Women are relegated to the background in the affairs of the Land. The last time the big women by his side. He even waited until she had sat down before he sat down. You all saw it. After talking to his book men, he always consulted her before addressing our people. He respected her and treated her like an egg that should not be allowed to fall on the ground. But what do we have in this Land? We are no better than Slaves! (23)

The above comparison set the tone for women agitation sarcastically referred to as the “‘gathering of the hens” which creates in men, fear of possible emasculation by women. Toru-Ama women’s decision to confront men in a silent family battle can be termed successful because even King Olotu resorted to violence when his wife countered him with superior argument about the sense in the proposed war with Angiama people

Alaere, the queen, at whose instance the women’s meeting was convened, is convinced that women should be involved in the affairs of the community. The meeting is seen by men as a form of confrontation and challenge meant to prepare the grounds for their social and psychological castration. To Toru-Ama’s men, women are encroaching on their masculine gender-roles, a move considered not only daring but scary. This is because it has the potential to dislodge them and their masculine privileges in the society. These masculine gender-roles are sufficiently queried by Queen, Alaere in the following posers:

ALAERE: ...I am not thinking of ruling the land: but the question is: Should we not be consulted even in matters concerning our children and us? Are we only to raise children and prepare meals for our husbands? Wash their clothes and not argue? (24).

The queen feels that women do not only suppose to have a say in the way the society is run, but that they seem to be more reasonable than men. This is a challenge to men's hegemony—men considered to be more rational and intelligent by virtue of their socialization as rulers, breadwinners and fathers. She, therefore, emphasizes the need for women to speak with one voice to challenge male dominance and some wrong-headed decisions made by men.

She says

ALAERE: Recently, there was a war between Toru-Ama and Angiama, a senseless war, as you all know. Just because a son of Angiama eloped with a chief's daughter, Toru-Ama opted for war even when we women felt it was a none-issue. A girl has to marry whom she likes nowadays. Our sons were sent to go and die! (*There are mixed reactions from the gathering*) Now, the time has come for us to speak in one voice! They say they are men. Who gave birth to them? (24).

In one voice, therefore, the women role out protest manifestoes which they insist must guide their relationship with their husbands including the king of the land. It is a decision to take their rightful place in the affairs of the land. It must be noted that there are some irreconcilable decisions expected to be jointly carried out by all women. For instance, the fact that no woman should allow her husband to marry two wives generates a row among the women especially when there are some women who have mates. Those who do not have mates jubilate.

ALAERE: From now on, no woman shall allow her husband to marry a second wife! (*Mixed reaction from the gathering. Those who do not have mates really jubilate*) For those of us who are unlucky already, we shall carry on with our burden. They want us to be married to one man at a time while they spread their tentacles (25).

The queen spells out what she terms serious measures to force men to grant their requests. Every issue raised in the content of the decision aims at putting men in check by extension emasculating

them. The decisions are directed at the men's prerogative to control and power, which is the essence of their manhood. For instance, without mincing words, Queen Alaere states that:

ALAERE: We are going to adopt serious measures to force men to grant our request to have a say in the affairs of the land. From today, no woman should clear the compound alone! (*Reaction from the gathering*) It should be a joint affair. If there is a fine at all for dirtiness of the compound, it is the husband's affair. There is no reason for the woman to suffer when the man is the owner of the compound (25).

However, in the relationship between men and women especially on issues that bother on power and control, any call for the usurpation of men's control and dominance usually triggers conflict of multiple proportions. For instance, the King becomes the first to have a taste of the acid test as the queen acts to the letter every decision made in the women's meeting. The queen claims to be more capable to rule the land than King Olotu. She says "What gives you the impression that you are ruling this land better than what I can do?" (39). As if testing the troubled water with the two feet together, the queen refuses to cook for the king. This generates very serious reaction from the king who barks order to the queen for challenging his masculine gender-role as the head and lord of the land. By refusing to cook for the king, Alaere has rubbished Olotu's masculine power and control over his wife as a man.

OLOTU: *Ya ya ya!* Enough of this foul talk! *They say if you play with a puppy, it shows your nakedness to the world.* Now, if I hear any more rubbish from you, I will tell you that I married you in this house! And until I take you back to your father's house, you will act as my wife and do what I say! I repeat! You will do what I say in this palace! And before the hens go to roost, which will not be long, I want to have my meal (*Turns to go*)

ALAERE: Yes! If you want to eat, go and prepare your meal! (39).

Olotu sees Alaere's insistence that he should go into the kitchen to prepare food for himself as a threat to his masculine gender-role identity because of the way he is socialized as a man whose food must be cooked by his wife. It is indeed, a rude shock and an attempt to emasculate him. The fear of losing his masculine gender-role identity compels Olotu to consult his ancestors, wielders

of cosmic power and control, and his allies in his ascendancy to the throne of his forefathers. Speechless and pensive he says:

OLOTU: My people, women are taking over the world, but why? Why in my time? (*Going to the shrine*) My ancestors, I have not failed in my obligations to you. Why allow me to see this clucking of hens when I am not ready to join you?.....(*Decisively*) Well, I am a man! If I can control a whole kingdom, there is no reason why I cannot handle a single woman, my own wife! Yes! We shall know who is who in this house (40-41).

He feels emasculated by the loss of his masculine gender-role identity and this triggers an aggressive reaction by the king to restore his masculine values and status. Of course, violence becomes inevitable in the face of verbal assault and comments meant to demean his manhood. Therefore when the queen warns the king that “The battle line is now drawn” p. 46. The king thundered...

OLOTU: (*Visibly angry*) Now woman, remember that there cannot be two leaders in this house! You tempt my patience! (*Grabbing her*) Do you know that I can crush you in my grip? Let me tell you; two rams cannot drink from one pot at the same time! They will surely lock horns! *Her defiance stuns him, and his anger swells. He raises his hand to strike her* (47).

Olotu's experience is just a test case as all the other chiefs suffer one form of emasculation or the other. Chief Apodi says “I am finished!” (55) while chief Biri informs the Council of Chiefs “My house has been on fire!” (55). The gender-role reversal that forms the kernel of the women's protest tightens the noose around men's jugular as confirmed by Apodi who says ‘I have not taken any food since yesterday evening!..Come here...uhm uhm! Give me water to drink...uhm uhm! (55).

Masculine gender-role presupposes that culturally, every man knows the societal expectations from him as a male member of the society, and deviation from or shortcoming of these expectations physically and psychologically emasculate him. Since the crisis seems to be a general experience for all men, Chief Biri suspects a conspiracy. According to him:

BIRI: This must be a plot! It is the same in my house. Can you beat that?

Even my youngest wife refused to sleep with me. She made the thing to stand all night. Now, I'm feeling some muscle pains down there. (*There is general laughter*) We cannot allow this to continue (55).

Scholars believe that the state of being effeminate is a painful experience for men and has the potential to prompt some aggressive tendencies in them so much so that it can create conflicts and crises. This explains Toru-Ama men's decision to flog sense into the women. The king himself has commanded Odibo to distribute canes to the men with the mandate to beat their wives to submission. According to the king,

OLOTU: A man must have some pride. When a man ceases to be a man, he develops hunchback. We are going to tell our wives that we are men. (*ODIBO comes in with the bundles of canes...*) Yes.. they are canes. I am giving one to each one of you. This night, we are all going to sleep with our wives by the first cockcrow. If they refuse us entry, the canes will do their works. If we break their will, their unity is broken. Do not stop until they plead for mercy (79).

The instruction for the men to go and fight the war in the families with canes is, to say the least, a manifest sign of weakness and a result of psychological castration. Men resort to this crude approach ostensibly to cover up for their inadequacies as men because they have reached their wits end. As a matter of fact, they have not only lost control, they have also lost power to the women because as men, they are socialized to take women as personal possessions who answer to their whims only. The hunter now becomes the hunted. Like a castrated bull, King Olotu eventually poisoned himself having discovered that the paternity of his daughter, Beke is in doubt. Queen Alaere bent on breaking the king and indeed, all Toru-Ama's men, insists it is only the woman who can tell the father of a child. Alaere refuses to accept defeat and so reveals to Olotu the morbid fear he has entertained with sleepless night. He crumbles under the Queen's feet weeping and asking that the true paternity of his only child be revealed to him. He says

OLOTU: (*Almost in tears*) I am a king, but am I worth it? I am no longer a man. When a man ceases to be a man, he pays homage to women. Alaere, hear the words of a broken heart. Give me back my pride. Save me from this self-torture.

ALAERE If your mother were alive, I would have called her to breastfeed you. Look at a man, a king, crying like a child (84).

No doubt, Olotu's masculine gender-role identity as a man and a ruler has been distorted *ab initio* through the socialization process that constructs him to be strong and macho, unemotional and powerful, productive and rational, masculine and superior to the womenfolk. This construction is at the heart of his emotional wreckage when he realizes that he is not the father of his only child, Beke. As a king, his emasculation comes full circle in the face of Queen Alaere's determination to strip him naked of what is left of his manhood. His volt face and claim that he is just like any man who feels pain misses the point and further confirms his helplessness. "Yes. I am crying. Am I not a human being? Why should it make news if I do what humans do?" (84).

He crawls before Alaere asking that he might be free from the psychological trauma the paternity of Beke has inflicted on him. "Have you no heart? Can't you free me of this heavy suspicion?" p.84. In an interview conducted on men who have never biologically fathered a child and are the sole cause of infertility in their marriages, Webb and Daniluk reveal that men suffered "tremendous blow to their masculine identity" (21), Sabo adds that such men undergo "profound grief and loss, loss of control, personal inadequacy, isolation, a sense of foreboding, and desire to overcome and survive" (337). Of course, these are the experiences of King Olotu who employed every available strategy to survive the psychological pain of rejection especially when Beke joins her mother to say he is not her father.

However, the fact of his castration, humiliation and loss of power dawned on him as a king, when Queen Alaere promises to remove him from the throne and install her own daughter. She says "You can cry blood if you like, but if you are not careful, I'll hasten your removal from the throne" (84). Not only that "I will rally round the women to make my daughter the custodian of the throne

as the Queen.” (85). This, of course, triggers violent reaction from the king who attempts to strangle her but for the quick intervention of the chiefs.

Olotu realizes too late that he has fought a battle he could not win. He gets consumed in the inferno he fuels. He confesses “I started a war in my family and now I know that it will be my ruin....Now, I realize that women are our mothers and it is our duty to obey and respect them. I have nothing to live for now”(87). Obviously, this is the voice of an emasculated and humiliated man who has lost his masculine gender-role identity. Olotu both as a man and a powerful king, otherwise known as Akpobirisi (a tree believed to possess strong supernatural powers which kill birds that fly over it) has not been socialized to ‘obey’ or ‘respect’ women or see women as ‘mothers.’ This is a result of the humiliating defeat he suffers alongside his fellow men which ultimately leads to self-violation as the king poisons himself to end it all.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Men’s orientation in the process of internalising their social construction is at the root of the gender schemas that dictate their acceptance of certain social norms and sex roles which ultimately define their relationship with women. They feel fulfilled as men when prevailing social conditions favour their statuses and sex roles enactment as strong, macho, emotionally stable men and as providers and caring fathers. This explains why male characters become frustrated and feel less of men because of their failure to enact the roles of providers and caring fathers in their homes. Again, because of the patriarchal privileges bestowed on men in their social environment, those who occupied honourable positions became effeminate when challenged by strong women who were determined to alter the status quo ante in a society supposedly dominated by men. All these masculine reactions point to the indispensability of women in the scheme of things as dependable stakeholders in growth and developmental effort in the society. The study, therefore, suggested that social construction for men where traditional roles are spelt out should be deemphasized. Rather, profeminist orientation should be encouraged in parenting such that the line of divide between the boy and the girl child is deliberately blurred to relieve the boy child of the pressure to measure up to his traditional sex role. This will further help to project the issue of the role of men

in achieving gender equality that came out from Program for Action of the 1995 Beijing conference on women.

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A Social Semiotic Study of Institutional Corruption in Editorial Cartoons of Nigeria's *Vanguard* Online News Outlet

ABSTRACT

Editorial cartoon is a medium of socio-political critique and has received intellectual patronage. However, extant studies are yet to access the utilisation of semiotic resources for transmitting contextual meanings in editorial cartoons published within the Nigerian socio-cultural milieu. This article extends the frontiers of the existing literature by exploring the effect of context in the selection and appropriation of semiotic resources in selected editorial cartoons of *Vanguard* Online news outlet. The data include ten purposively-selected *Cartoon Sarge* editorial cartoons obtained from (www.vanguardngr.com). The recurring themes in the cartoons were identified and discussed via content description while

Kress and van Leeuwen's *Visual Grammar* and insights from Mey's *Pragmatic Acts* served as theoretical underpinnings for the data analysis. The analysis reveals that the processes of meaning making in the editorial cartoons is facilitated by semiotic resources appropriated in the editorial cartoons and extralinguistic variables such as shared background knowledge of word choices, referents, references and analogies included in the editorial cartoons also add as meaning making strategies. Also, the result of the analysis indicated that editorial cartoons published within the Nigerian

clime is a viable medium through which sociopolitical satire can be hurled in the direction of defaulting government agencies.

KEYWORDS: Editorial cartoons; satire; semiotic resources; speech acts; context; vanguard newspaper

Introduction

Cartoons feature analogous representations of socio-political realities. They are single panel graphics that contain characters, objects and setting which serve as pointers to the messages projected in them. Diverse definitions of the editorial cartoon have been provided in the literature, however, these definitions seem to agree on the fact that the editorial cartoon is a drawing or painting in which persons, actions and situation are represented, caricatured or symbolised in a particular manner' (Chikaipa, 2019). Functionally, the editorial cartoon is a tool utilised within mass media to tell, add, support or oppose issues going around our lives (Zakaria & Mahamood, 2018, p. 384). Editorial cartoons often dwell on current events, and they reflect the editorial cartoonists' take on public opinion as well. Hence, the analysis of visual and verbal semiotic resources utilised to educate readers on certain issues within the country.

The Editorial cartoonist is a journalist that draws and publishes cartoons in an editorial column set aside for cartoon publication. The cartoon production of editorial cartoonists imply that they often assume the role of judge, jury and executioner in the way public figures, social groups and institutions of government are constantly satirised on the basis of perceived misconduct that falls outside the set moral standards of their socio-political climes (Chikaipa, 2019). As a social critic, the editorial cartoonist is both an artist and activist that sets sociopolitical agenda by bringing his or her rich awareness of the progress of society and current issues to bear on cartoon publication (Zakaria & Mahamood, 2018). In fact, there have been scenarios where editorial cartoonists are apprehended by government security agencies on the basis of satiric contents they publish regularly. Despite this threat by the government, the editorial cartoon has continued to

flourish as a veritable tool for educating and shaping public opinion through vivid representations that reflect existing social practices.

In the Nigerian socio-political climate, the editorial cartoon has served diverse purposes since the country gained independence in 1960. As the Nigerian nation navigated the doldrums of military dictatorship, the civil war and the civilian regimes till date, editorial cartoonists have contributed their quota to nation building by providing commentaries that are analogous to the socio-political situations of the country. In each of these periods, cartoonists have often served the purpose(s) of observers and reporters by following the trend of government (in) actions and major occurrences of national interest. They then use the information derived as the basis for drawing caricatures, commentaries, analogies and conclusions on what is normative or otherwise. Aside criticising the government, editorial cartoonists also satirise arms, institutions of government and agencies charged with social responsibility.

The Nigerian Police Force is one of the various paramilitary security agencies that are viciously satirised by editorial cartoonists in mainstream Nigerian media. Alongside other security bodies like the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and the Mobile Police (MOPOL), the NPF are derided based on engagements in all sorts of unwholesome practices. The institution of the NPF is both historic and constitutional. Historically, Oluwaniyi (2011) avers that the institution of the police force in Nigeria dates back to colonial times, and was occasioned by the emergence of the state alongside the need to protect the colonial administrators of the state. Constitutionally, the NPF is recognised as the primary security agency that is charged with the responsibility of safeguarding lives and property, maintaining law and order and establishing social control. To this end, Oluwaniyi (2011) avers that Section 4 of the Nigeria Police Act provides details about the social responsibility of the NPF as follows:

The police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with

which they are charged, and shall perform such military duties within or without Nigeria as may be required....

(p. 71)

Strict conformity to the postulations of the Police Act is the Achilles heel of the NPF that has led the public to form diverse opinions about the security agency. The (in) activities of police officers have caused sections of the society to pass comments, and raise eyebrows at the NPF and academic scholarship is not an exemption. Existing studies on police corruption in Nigeria has touched on the emergence and development of the NPF (Otu, 2015; Alemika, 1993; and Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003), systemic failures in the NPF (Olusegun, 2016; Enweremadu, 2017; and Aborishade, 2018), human rights violation by the NPF (Salihu & Fawole, 2020), image crisis in the NPF (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2014); the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on police corruption (Aremu, Pakes & Johnston, 2011), and public perception of the NPF (Oluwaniyi, 2011; Afon & Badiora, 2016). However, media representations of police corruption have been largely unaddressed. The present study makes up for this lapse in empirical studies by examining how Nigeria's *Vanguard* online news outlet utilise the *Cartoon Sarge* editorial cartoon column as a medium to satirise the Nigerian Police Force. The present study therefore contends that the semiotic resources appropriated in the editorial cartoons convey the satiric essence of the cartoon messages.

Editorial cartoons are replete with a variety of visual and verbal resources. One of the resources is the use of caricatures. These are stereotypical drawings of public figures, archetypal characters, objects and settings that are both conspicuous and representative. In the same vein, speech balloons or bubbles (indicating verbal processes), dressing, facial expressions, colour and gestural expressions are the other visual resources utilised for conveying meanings in the editorial cartoons. Editorial cartoonists make use of calligraphy via the emboldening of lexical items that are significant in the context of the messages. Also, speech acts and punctuation marks are equally utilised to ensure that the cartoon is a combination of clear drawing and good writing.

Cartoon Sarge

Cartoon Sarge is an editorial cartoon column in Nigeria's Vanguard Online Newspaper that addresses current issues bothering on institutional corruption by the Nigerian Police Force (NPF, henceforth). Hence, the analogies drawn in the editorial cartoons are more of a social criticism hurled in the direction of the of the NPF and its personnel. The editorial cartoonist leverages on the wide readership of the newspaper to educate and sensitise the readership about the vile perpetrations of the NPF. Turns out the analogies expressed in the editorial cartoons emerge from shared knowledge, and experiences of the average Nigerian who is, or has been in contact with the NPF at one time or the other. The cartoonist depicts NPF personnel in the editorial cartoons as extortionate, violent and power drunk while archetypes of members of the society are depicted at the receiving end of various unethical actions by the NPF.

Institutional corruption is harped on by means of caricatures and analogies that depict NPF personnel in the act of demanding bribe (popularly referenced by various monikers such as 'roja', 'egunje', 'riba' etc.), violating human rights, wilfully extorting money from motorists and members of the society, and misappropriating funds. Also, NPF personnel are equally depicted in the editorial cartoons to engage in power abuse. Power abuse manifests in the form of acts of violence and ferocity that is meant coerce members of the public to part with monetary inducements in exchange for their freedom from possible detention. Finally, image crisis is depicted in the editorial cartoons as another dimension of corruption in the NPF that bother on total committal to ethical conducts, moral ideals and professional courtesy. In reaction to the topical themes expressed in the editorial cartoons, the present study will provide an understanding of how public's shared background knowledge and opinion about the NPF influence the editorial cartoonist's choice of verbal and visual resources.

Review of some Relevant Earlier Studies on Editorial Cartoon

Chikaipa (2019) analysed editorial cartoon representation of Malawi's Joyce Banda. The author applied theories of feminism and representation to the analysis of *Point of Order* and *Puludzu* editorial cartoons collected from *The Nation* and *The Daily Times* newspapers. Chikaipa realised that the editorial cartoons presented an opportunity for deep pondering on attitudes and disposition concerning female presidency. Chikaipa argues that Malawian editorial cartoonists are well absorbed in the ideology that sees women as tailor-made for domestic roles. The cartoonists were portrayed to legitimise misogynistic perceptions and gender stereotypes about female leadership.

Similarly, Kelley-Romano and Westgate (2007) applied the taxonomy of Medhurst and DeSousa (1981) to the analysis of cartoons aimed at satirising the former U.S President, George W. Bush. The catalyst for the satire bothered on the ex-President's policy decisions and handling of

Hurricane Katrina's devastation on affected Americans. The results of the analysis suggest that the choices of verbal and visual resources utilised in the cartoons were geared towards constructing a negative image of the policy decisions of George Bush as well as to lunge a satirical attack in the direction of the political figure.

Benoit *et al.* (2001) study indicates that the reiterative use of metaphor and allusion created the leeway for multiple interpretations to be ascribed to the editorial cartoons in the impeachment and trial of former U.S president, Bill Clinton following allegations of infidelity and gross misconduct. The study further shows the opinion about editorial cartoons as instruments that convey nail-biting issues and make moral judgments on eminent public figures. In a similar vein, Prendergast (2017) examines the hypothesis that stems from the perception of editorial cartoons as one of the few forms of social critique. The scholar examines the hypothesis using political editorial cartoons collected from the fortnightly publication *Humor Registrado* during

Argentina's last dictatorship (1982-1983). Kress and van Leeuwen's *Visual Grammar* and Barthes' *Semiotics* formed the theoretical underpinning for the study. The analysis of the key social actors caricatured in the cartoons created a leeway for the appraisal of the role

of the magazine in challenging the pitfalls of the military regime and institutions of government.

Al-Masri (2016) investigates Jordanian editorial cartoons drawn by Emad Hajjaj, a foremost

Jordanian editorial cartoonist using van Dijk's theory of context models. The author finds that verbal, visual and socio-cultural models are taken into full consideration by Hajjaj in the way and manner in which visually stimulating images and relevant socio-cultural issues are presented in the cartoons. Also, the study presented an inventory of lexical devices and novel techniques deployed by Hajjaj in the editorial cartoons. In a similar vein, Zakaria and Mahamood (2018) conduct a critical analysis of salient political themes in Rossem's editorial cartoons. The findings of the study suggest that various contextual factors such as war, current political issues and daily social problems encountered in the Malaysian nation influence Rossem's production of the cartoons. The authors also argued that the cartoonist plays a pivotal role in disseminating and interpreting messages to the general public regarding socio-political issues.

Zainuddin and Mahamood (2018) examine the construction of national identity in Malaysian editorial cartoons. The aim of the study is to identify and examine how national identity that has been demonstrated in the editorial cartoons of Lat; a prominent Malaysian cartoonist. The findings of the study indicate that unity, preservation of national heritage, goodwill features of the Malaysian society and the Malaysian culture are extolled in the editorial cartoons. The findings further show that Lat's editorial cartoons were not aimed at criticising specific persons but merely serve promotional purposes by presenting unbiased, neutral depictions of the social, economic and political systems in the country.

Olowu, Kayode and Egbuwalo (2014) examine mass media representation of the NPF using cartoons collected from the 2012 editions of *TELL* magazines. The findings of the study indicated the semiotic resources enhance the semantic quality of the cartoons. The scholars go further to quip that the visual resources conveyed meanings independently of the accompanying verbal components. Similarly, Ogbo and Nuhu (2016) conduct a

critical discourse analysis of editorial cartoons aimed at satirising political-themed issues in Nigerian national dailies. The authors observed that the dominant concerns of the cartoons dwelled on corrupt practices, political and institutional failure, official irresponsibility, and acts of brutality.

Some other studies have interrogated the portrayal of dissident groups in editorial cartoons published in the Nigerian print media. For instance, Alimi and Fajuyigbe (2016) conduct a contextual analysis of editorial cartoons lampooning the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria. Through the analysis of cartoons published in the Nation newspaper, the study reached the conclusion that newspapers convey information about the socio-political reality by presenting vivid representation of Boko Haram's activities. The study demonstrated the effectiveness of newspaper cartoons as a visual artefact for transmitting crucial information to the newspaper readers. In the same Nigerian context, Brown et al. (2017) assessed the resourcefulness of editorial cartoons bothering on the Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) campaign in Nigeria. The responses retrieved from respondents indicated that the cartoon served its intended purpose(s) by galvanising social acceptance for the campaign. Also, the findings reinforced the prevailing perception of editorial cartoon as a tool for setting social agenda. In the section that follows, the contextual basis for the study is discussed.

However, the existing studies on editorial cartoons have not examined to a large extent the role of context in shaping and legitimising the cartoonist's portrayal of the NPF. The study intends to make up for this lapse in the empirical literature by examining the editorial cartoonist's appropriation of semiotic resources as tool for criticising the NPF.

The study attempts an analysis of the editorial cartoons to uncover the prevailing sociopolitical perception of both cartoonist and the readership about the NPF. This study therefore adopts Mey's *Pragmatic Acts* and the social semiotic theory of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) for the analysis of selected editorial cartoons in *Vanguard* Newspaper. The study shows an understanding of how linguistic and visual resources are appropriated by the editorial cartoonist in representing the NPF with a view to examining, discussing and interpreting the semiotic resources deployed in representing the NPF.

In the literature on editorial cartoons, there is a burgeoning body of research examining the portrayal of institutions of government such as the NPF in Nigeria. These studies have observed the resources and mechanisms through which cartoonists represent and construct different identities for the NPF. For instance, Olowu, Kayode and Egbuwalo (2014) examine mass media representation of the NPF using cartoons collected from the 2012 editions of *TELL* magazines. The findings of the study indicated the semiotic resources enhance the semantic quality of the cartoons. The scholars go further to quip that the visual resources conveyed meanings independently of the accompanying verbal components. Similarly, Ogbo and Nuhu (2016) conduct a critical discourse analysis of editorial cartoons aimed at satirising political-themed issues in Nigerian national dailies. The authors observed that the dominant concerns of the cartoons dwelled on corrupt practices, political and institutional failure, official irresponsibility, and acts of brutality.

Some other studies have interrogated the portrayal of dissident groups in editorial cartoons published in the Nigerian print media. For instance, Alimi and Fajuyigbe (2016) conduct a contextual analysis of editorial cartoons lampooning the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria. Through the analysis of cartoons published in the Nation newspaper, the study reached the conclusion that newspapers convey information about the socio-political reality by presenting vivid representation of Boko Haram's activities. The study demonstrated the effectiveness of newspaper cartoons as a visual artefact for transmitting crucial information to the newspaper readers. In the same Nigerian context, Brown et al. (2017) assessed the resourcefulness of editorial cartoons bothering on the Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) campaign in Nigeria. The responses retrieved from respondents indicated that the cartoon served its intended purpose(s) by galvanising social acceptance for the campaign. Also, the findings reinforced the prevailing perception of editorial cartoon as a tool for setting social agenda. In the section that follows, the contextual basis for the study is discussed.

Methodology

The data analysis is both descriptive and qualitative. The data for the study consists of 10 purposively selected editorial cartoons from the pool of editorial cartoons that were

downloaded from the *Cartoon Sarge* archives of *Vanguard* Newspaper (located at www.vanguardngr.com).

The 10 sampled editorial cartoons will be treated as representative of the others in the archive by examining the editorial cartoonists' commentary on the NPF as legitimised by public opinion. The Vanguard newspaper was chosen due to its popularity as a national tabloid, robust readership and the current issues addressed in the editorial cartoons.

The content analysis was carried out via contextual description of the recurrent themes in the editorial cartoons while two approaches in modern linguistics: socio-pragmatics and social semiotics were employed for the data interpretation. The pragmatic interface of the analysis is executed by applying the main theoretical concepts outlined in Mey's *Pragmatic Acts* to the verbal components of the editorial cartoons, while Kress and van Leeuwen's *Visual Grammar* was used for the socio-semiotic analysis of the visual resources. This method was utilised as a viable instrument for analysing composite texts such as the editorial cartoons.

Kecskes (2010) avers that Mey's *Pragmatic Acts* belongs to the socio-cultural interactional interface of pragmatics that prioritises socio-cultural and social factors in meaning construction and comprehension. It adopts a socio-centric approach to the study of speech acts by accessing how utterances are used by people, for their own purposes and within their own respective limitations and affordances (Mey, 2001, p. 207). Mey (2006, p. 57), in his *Pragmatic Acts* theory posits that for a speech act to be considered licit, it has to originate and conform with the situation in which it is executed, and be acknowledged by the hearer as legitimate (Kecskes, 2010, p. 2890). This 'legitimacy', in Mey's (2006, p. 58) opinion is not proffered by the mere act of speaking or uttering words and expressions, rather it comes with the hearers' mastery of the situation that warrants the utterance of words. In essence, the author is of the opinion that speech acts analysis should not be executed independently of the 'situational conditions' behind their use. In the author's words,

“In order for a speech act to be properly executed, it has to be properly situated. This condition comprises not just the words

spoken, but the presuppositions that are inherent in a situation, such as a nationally and culturally-oriented understanding of proper linguistic behaviour; a familiarity with conditions leading up to, as well as away from, a situated speech act; an understanding of the individual utterer's personal and social self-image; a correct interpretation of the accompanying body language and gestures; and so on and so forth."Mey (2006, p. 58)

In a nutshell, Kecskes (2010, p. 2896) notes that Mey's approach to pragmatic study addresses conversation as activity or action. In this regard, a high premium is placed on the situational context that facilitates meaning than the linguistic units that specify their conventional use. Mey's theory focuses on the environment in which speakers and hearers find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as on what is actually being said (Mey, 2001, p. 221).

The term 'participants' in social semiotics is what 'interlocutors' is to conversation analysis. Social semioticians hold the idea that visual communication occurs on different level; relationships between the participants within the picture frame, relationships between the producers of the representation and the represented participants in the picture frame, and relationship between the interactive participants who engage the representation and the participants within the picture frame. The term participant is not restricted to images of persons, but also include symbols, logos, or graphological texts included in the picture frame.

In a bid to provide understanding of the social semiotic approach adopted for this study, a quick delve into the intricacies of Kress and van Leeuwen's theoretical assumption would suffice. The tripartite visual metafunctions possesses distinct system networks that work simultaneously in visual artefacts. The representational metafunction is concerned with the way participants in the layout showcase narrative or conceptual relationships among themselves. Narrative representations are images that present actions and qualities in visual representations (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 84). They present sequence of unfolding actions and events via vectors (line of gaze or direction of movement) that relate

them to one another. Conceptual representations do not show participants to look at, or relate with one another rather they deemed 'analytical' because they show abstract, comparative or generalised categories (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 86).

The interactive metafunction possesses three system networks: contact, social distance and attitude. The system of contact is particular about the way participants represented in a text establish relationships with the viewer by looking directly or avoiding the viewers' direct gaze (Bateman, 2008, p. 41). In this regard, dichotomy is made between demand and offer images that act by demanding reactions from the viewers or offer clues or information. In imagistic representations, participants negotiate interpersonal relationship at the level of social distance through gaze direction, image size and camera shot angle. Camera shot angle are frame choices that can either be close-up, medium or long shot where the close-up indicates intimate social distance, the medium indicates an impersonal social distance and the long shot indicates a detached social distance between the representation and viewers (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 41; and Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 97). Image size is facilitated by camera shot angle that render images as fullhead shot, upper body shot and full body shot (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 96). The three image size possibilities are intricately linked to the intimate, impersonal and detached social distance that exists between people in real life situations.

Finally, attitude is used to establish the truth value of visual representations. In *Visual Grammar*, the system of attitude alludes to 'the degree of veracity, authenticity, or naturalness of image when juxtaposed with its likeness in real life' (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 100). Attitude is represented in pictorial representation via modality markers that serve as means 'to express meanings of truth and falsehood, certainty or doubt, credibility and unreliability, fact and fiction' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 154). In the authors' interest, the authenticity of messages expressed via modality markers is dependent on the values, beliefs and practices of the culture under whose auspice the representation is produced and dissemination.

The compositional metafunction entails how visual properties in a picture frame coalesce through the systems of visual cohesion: salience, framing and information value. Framing occurs in picture layout in the mould of frame lines and devices that align or demarcate aspects of the composition by highlighting similarities or differences between textual elements (van Leeuwen, 2006, p.143). Salience comes to play in visual artefacts via semiotic resources and visual properties that foreground key elements that are significant while backgrounding those ones that are less significant. Information value relates to placement of images, text, symbols or logo at specific parts of the picture layout. The placement of visual properties at the right, left, top, bottom, centre or margin imbues them information value as either given or new. The present study is primarily concerned with the inter-relationships between the participants represented in the editorial cartoons and the interactive participants (the newspaper readership). This exercise would provide insight into how the readers deduce meanings from both representation and interaction.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis focused on the editorial cartoonist's portrayal of the NPF with recourse to public opinion of the security agency. The study revealed that the editorial cartoonist use of different linguistic and visual resources is strategic to the intent of shaping and legitimising public opinion of the NPF. In the analysis presented below, representative samples of editorial cartoons which represent the various thematic interest of the cartoonist are examined. The thematic concerns identified include: graft, power abuse, and image crisis. The table below presents an overview of linguistic and visual resources deployed by the cartoonists to represent and portray the NPF and its personnel.

Table 1: Social Semiotic Representations of the NPF in the Selected Data

Figure 1, 2 & 3	Graft	Semiotic Resources:
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		uniform, police officer(s), motorist, vehicle, assault rifle(s). Setting: Police station
Figure 4, 5 6 & 7	Power Abuse	Semiotic Resources: uniform, dressing, police officer(s), rifle(s), motorist(s), complainant, accused person. Setting: police checkpoint, police station
Figure 8, 9 & 10	Image Crisis	Semiotic Resources: uniform,police officer(s). Setting: police station, Divisional Police Officer’s office and properties.

Graft

A unifying definition for corruption has proved elusive due to the different perspectives from which it has been approached overtime. Oluwaniyi (2011, p. 74) approaches the phenomenon of corruption from the standpoint of corrupt practices that manifests via devised methods and strategies of attaining personal enrichment. To the Transparency International (2004), corruption encompass ‘the capacity to secure wealth or power through illegal means, private gain at public expense, or misuse of public power for private benefits’

(as cited in Oluwaniyi, 2011, p. 69). In the context of this definition, police corruption will include acts of malfeasance in the police force such as bribery, extortion, money laundering, collaboration with politicians and criminals and so on. These acts have far-reaching effects for the achievement of the vision and mission statement of the NPF which centres on the safeguarding of public lives, properties. Enweremadu (2019) highlight the effect of police corruption on the society to include loss of lives through extrajudicial killings; illegal arrest justice subversion and illegal detention of citizens. In the selected data, figure 1, 2 and 3 present analogies about corrupt motives and activities of NPF personnel.

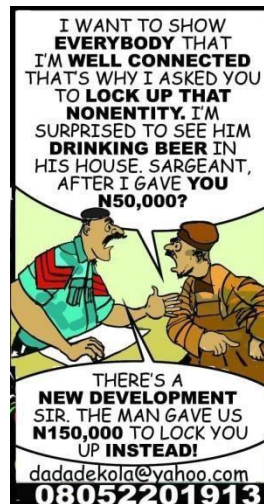


Figure 1. Bribery

The act of bribery as represented in figure 1 alludes to Punch's (1985, p. 14) definition of police corruption as a police personnel's act of receiving significant reward for doing something that he or she is under duty not to do. In the editorial cartoon, the police man's subversion of justice as a result of monetary inducements from the highest bidder to the amount of ₦150,000 as against the initially received bribe of ₦50,000 shows the extent of moral decadence and unprofessionalism in the NPF. Furthermore, the direct gaze maintained by the police officer and the complainant suggest that the ongoing action

in the editorial cartoons is a heated argument. The police officer's description of the recent bribe as 'new development' that warrants subversion of justice highlights the extent of rot in the NPF. Bribes are received from defaulting motorists, criminals and erring members of the public who wield influence and wealth in exchange for freedom from prosecution and other disciplinary measures. The editorial cartoon in all its intent and purposes legitimises public opinion of the NPF as morally bankrupt.

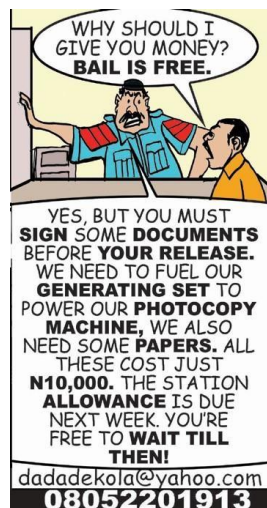


Figure 2 Wilful Extortion of Monetary Value

In figure 2, wilful extortion of monetary value is depicted as another dimension of institutional corruption in the NPF. The police officer represented seems hell-bent on extorting money from the detained suspect represented to the right of the layout. In the editorial cartoon, the representation of the police officer on an elevated plane implies that he possesses symbolic power over the detained suspect. Also, the policeman's low gaze in the direction of the detained suspect shows that there is unequal power relation between both participants. Wilful extortion of monetary value is thematised in the police officer's intent to use his privilege of office to hold the detained suspect to ransom. As prerequisite for his bail, the police officer's mention of the salient need to purchase fuel so as to finalise the suspect's bail is ironic in the context of the popular police slogan: 'BAIL IS FREE'

Formalising bail applications ought to be the sole responsibility of the police force since they are often allocated police station allowances, however, the analogy presented in the cartoon offers insight into the past and present experiences of some members of the society who have reported all sort of complications in bail applications. In the editorial cartoon, the declarative statement: 'YOU'RE FREE TO WAIT TILL THEN!' is a situated speech act that is understood

within the Nigerian context as 'threat' of continued incarceration in police custody contrary to its overt outlook as 'suggestion.' Despite the criticisms levelled against the NPF on account of monetary extortion as is depicted in figure 2, some scholars have identified with the plight of the NPF personnel with regard to provision of welfare packages and proper funding. For instance, Aborishade (2018) notes that the states of underfunding in the police force have far-reaching ramifications for the NPF's motivation, job satisfaction and preparedness to combat crime and violence. Underfunding implies that the police are put at great disadvantage and are often left with no other option than to utilise their priviledge of office for personal gains. Oluwaniyi (2011, p. 79) also cited poverty and bad leadership, or governance occasioned by successive government's nonchalant attitude towards the logistics, facilities and funds required to propel police proficiency as precipitating factors for NPF's indulgence in corrupt practices.

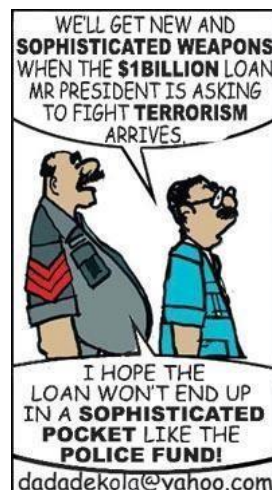


Figure 3. Fund Embezzlement

In the data samples, figure 3 offers analogy for power abuse by top hierarchies of the NPF who launder funds allocated to the NPF. In the data sample, visual possessive attributes: 'eye glass' and 'dressing' are utilised to differentiate the ranks of the represented police officers. The blue uniform of the police officer represented to the right of the cartoon layout is understood in the Nigerian socio-political context as that of a superior officer while the police officer represented on the left appears to belong to a junior rank. Like the analogy presented in figure 2, the utilisation of privilege of office for financial gains is harped on via fund embezzlement. In the text, the prospect of acquiring new and improved fire arms to combat crime and terrorism is received with mixed feelings and reservations by a police officer who is in doubt about the sincere intentions of those in charge of putting said funds to good use. The junior officer buttresses his doubt by citing a similar scenario whereby funds meant to give the NPF a face-lift is embezzled.

Furthermore, lexical reiteration of the word choice: SOPHISTICATED in the adjectival phrases: SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS and SOPHISTICATED POCKET captures the satire in the editorial cartoon. The latter phrase is in fact a metaphor that describes the complex maze through which monetary votes meant for the smooth running of the NPF are subverted into personal accounts. Oluwaniyi (2011, p. 75) echoes this assertion thus: 'The case with senior officers can be seen as internal corruption where official contracts are inflated for the benefit of the senior echelon, and funds allocated to specific police welfare programmes are transferred into private accounts to yield enormous interest.' Hence, the word choices are utilised within the context of the editorial cartoon to deride police authorities concerned with fund utilisation as corrupt and self-centred.

Power Abuse

Abuse of power is portrayed in the editorial cartoons as a dimension of police misconduct where NPF personnel are depicted to utilise the privilege of office bequeathed by the state

for personal interests or gains. In scenarios where this is expressed, archetypal or stereotypical characters that represent sections of the wider society are portrayed to suffer unjustly under the ‘jackboots’ of NPF personnel. The representations mirror the lived experiences of members of the Nigerian society who have alleged to have had their human rights violated via threats of unwarranted detention, arrest and confiscation of properties (Akpunonu-Ogu, 2014). Indeed, in some scenarios, brutality, physical assaults and extra-judicial killings have been meted on

‘uncooperative’ citizens. In figure 4, the analogy presented in the editorial cartoon bores on an ensuing conversation between a police officer and a commercial bus driver in a setting that appears to be a police checkpoint.



Figure 4. Indecent Arrest

The posture, and visual positioning of the police officer at the front of the yellow-coloured commercial bus (popularly referenced as ‘molue’ in Lagos metropolis) indicates that he wields symbolic power over the commercial bus driver. In the editorial cartoon, the motorists’ attempt to cite current socio-economic turbulence in the Nation as the causative factor for the ₦20 gratuity on offer is met with strong opposition. The police officer’s discontent with the amount is conveyed in the interrogative statement: ‘SO WHY ARE YOU GIVING ME ₦20.’ The speech act appears to be situated in the way it is used by the police officer to lunge criticism in the direction of the motorist as against ‘eliciting

response' like an interrogative statement would ordinarily do. In the overall context of the cartoon analogy, the statement is equally a rhetorical question that shows the unsatisfied and discontent emotional stance of the police officer.

The satiric thrust in the editorial cartoon is etched on the allegation of fraud levelled against the motorist as occasioned by the ₦20 gratuity on offer. Power abuse as perpetrated by NPF personnel is echoed in the imperative statement: 'PARK PROPERLY' which oozes power and authority. Furthermore, the declarative statement: 'YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR

TRYING TO CHEAT A POLICE OFFICER!' shows commitment to bully the motorist into 'cooperation.' In this regard, it can be observed that indecent arrest equally finds expression in scenarios where NPF personnel insist on apprehending law-abiding citizens that they deem 'uncooperative.' In scenarios such as the analogy presented in figure 5, police officers appear to be unimpressed with citizens who fulfil all obligations to the extent that there are no valid grounds to have them arrested.



Figure 5. Indecent Arrest

In the editorial cartoon, an altercation between a police officer and an archetype of lawabiding citizens reaches a climax when the citizen refuses to succumb to the police

officer's antics by parting with money. The declarative statement: "I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU A

KOBO!" indicates the resolve of the accused person who appears intent on rebuffing the NPF personnel. The Kobo itself is the least monetary unit in the Nigerian currency that is redundant for monetary transaction and no longer in circulation. Hence, reference to the currency unit shows absolute resolve to decline the NPF personnel. In the editorial cartoon, the fire arm strapped to the police officer's shoulder is a visual possessive attribute that is symbolic of extra-judicial killings, brutality and ferocity suffered by 'uncooperative' members of the society who have lost their lives or suffered series of bodily injuries in the hands of NPF personnel. The satiric essence of the cartoon analogy is expressed in the declarative statement: "YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR MISLEADING THE PUBLIC!" Apprehending a motorist based on a car sticker caption that reads: "I'M [A] CHEERFUL GIVER" creates the impression that the police officer is exercising his constitutional powers negatively by 'witch-hunting' rather than performing his civic duties.

Police ferocity is another dimension of power abuse by the NPF that is represented in the editorial cartoons. Public harassment as perpetrated by violent NPF personnel have been attributed to low emotional intelligence by scholars such as Oluwaniyi (2011, p. 76) who aver that the psychological state is a causative factor for police ferocity and the institution of corruption in the NPF. The scholar notes that 'in Nigeria, most police officers lack professional training; they also lack education in core ethics including the principle of beneficence, respect for persons,

and justice in dealing with people.' In another study conducted by Afon and Badiora (2016, p. 243), the authors note that the report of a national study on the Nigerian criminal justice system indicates that out of the 882 respondents with experience as suspects in custody that were interviewed, approximately half of the total respondents (48.7%) offered insights into police ferocity. The respondents also stated that their arrests involved abuse or insult by the police. Another 35.9% admitted that they were slapped or rough handled; 7.4% admitted to being assaulted with police baton, while 1% stated that they were threatened with police fire arms. In figure 5, the represented participant represented to the left of the

cartoon layout is an archetype of respondents who stated that their arrest involves abuse or insult by the police.

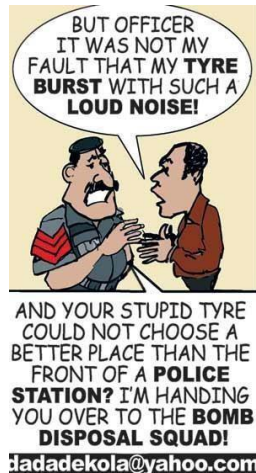


Figure 5. Police Harassment

In the editorial cartoon, an unforeseen incident of noise pollution as occasioned by a motorist's burst tyre is blown out of proportion by a police officer who seems resolved to make an example of him. In the editorial cartoon, police harassment find expression in the lexical choices utilised by the police officer. The use of swear expression: "STUPID" is a derisive linguistic item that show hatred, contempt and lack of professional courtesy. The ideal situation would imply that the police officer offer kind and soothing words that would make the motorist feel at ease given that he just suffered a loss however, the reverse is the case.

In the editorial cartoon, the rhetorical question: "AND YOUR STUPID TYRE COULD NOT CHOOSE A BETTER PLACE THAN THE FRONT OF A POLICE STATION?" is a situated speech act that perform the act of 'criticizing', rather than 'interrogating.' Furthermore, the declarative statement: "I'M HANDING YOU OVER TO THE BOMB DISPOSAL SQUAD!" embody the satiric thrust of the editorial cartoon. The use of abusive words and intent to hand the unfortunate motorist over to the Bomb disposal squad shows

that power abuse in the NPF is intricately linked to low emotional intelligence among NPF personnel. More so, it shows that the popular police mantra: “POLICE IS YOUR FRIEND” is mere hear-say.



Figure 6. Police Harassment

Police harassment equally finds expression in figure 6. In the editorial cartoon, a conversation between a police officer and a motorist ensues on a setting that appears to be a police checkpoint. In the editorial cartoon, goodwill pleasantries offered by a motorist is rebuffed by a police officer whose interest seem to lie elsewhere. The interest of the police officer is indicated by means of conditional statements. Interestingly, the conditional statement: “IF NOT, THE BALL IS IN YOUR POCKET” is an alteration of the popular saying: “THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT.” In the parallel structures, the substitution of the lexical choice: ‘Court’ for ‘Pocket’ show the motivation behind the harassment as monetary reward. The will to extort money, and receive bribe in the aftermath that the motorist’s vehicle particulars are incomplete or expired reveals the depth of rot in the NPF. NPF personnel are expected to subject erring road users to appropriate sanctions under the law rather than approach such incidents as an opportunity for personal enrichment.

On a general note, power abuse in the NPF is propelled by the will to seize every opportunity to amass wealth in exchange for leaving erring members of the public off the

hook. For those officers in the higher echelon of the police force, power abuse manifests in the way privilege of office is utilised for personal enrichment. As unethical as the unprofessional acts of abusing power for personal interest and gains appear, the blame has not been laid solely at the feet of the NPF and its personnel. Scholars have cited inadequacy of social amenities such as incommensurate or irregular welfare packages, low level of professionalism within the force and political class interference in the operations of the police as stumbling blocks hindering the police from acting within existing moral standards.

Image Crisis

Image crisis is thematised in the editorial cartoons by means of analogies that allude to unprofessionalism, and lack of total commitment to the ethics of proper policing. The battered image of the NPF is intricately linked to the public's awareness of systemic failures in the NPF and illicit engagements involving the police. For instance, figure 8 features an ensuing conversation involving two NPF personnel bother on the eradication of corrupt practices perpetuated by the NPF. Both police officers with different cadres are represented in a setting that is labelled by the verbal text: 'DPO's office.' On closer look at the images represented, some visual features serve as clues to overtly differentiate between the represented police officers' cadres. The visual possessive attributes of the officer in the left which includes eyeglasses and bald head suggest that he is much older and probably more experienced. Hence, he can easily pass as the Divisional Police Officer (DPO). Also, the chair on which he sits suggests that the setting is his office.

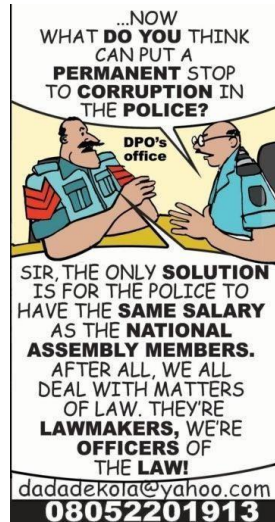


Figure 8.

The similar image sizes of the represented police officers on a horizontal plane relative to one another indicate equal power relations between the officers irrespective of their different ranks. Bar the address of the senior officer represented to the right as 'Sir', the DPO seems to descend from his lofty rank as superior officer to entertain suggestions from his subordinate. The

utilisation of the interrogative speech act '...NOW WHAT DO YOU THINK CAN PUT A

PERMANENT STOP TO CORRUPTION IN THE POLICE?' shows an intimate social distance, and familiarity between the represented police officers. In equal measure, the speech act denotes willingness to entertain suggestions that can alleviate the NPF's image crisis. The suggestion proffered by the junior officer speaks volumes about the NPF's struggles in the quest to change public perception of the security agency. Stating equal pay alongside lawmakers as the sole solution to the eradication of corruption appears to be a defence mechanism that arises from the intent to deflect attention from attitudinal incongruities and low emotional intelligence displayed by NPF Personnel. In addition, the posture of the junior officer (arms akimbo) imply that his flimsy response resonates with his emotional commitment to the question asked.

In some other data samples, police personnel are depicted to state certain discomforts and threat to their own lives as an excuse to decline distress calls. In light of

this, Aborishade (2018) opined that the Nigerian Police Force have failed to live up to expectations regarding the discharge of their primary responsibility which includes mitigating the spate of violence and crime (p. 4). Unwavering commitment to the safety of public lives and properties should be the hallmarks of policing in any context. It is in this spirit that the police force devises the popular mantra: ‘To Serve and Protect’ as a guiding philosophy. This is however not the impression illustrated in figure 9.

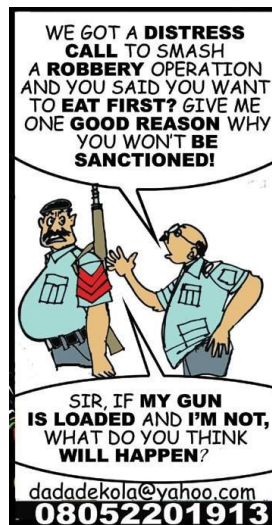


Figure 9.

In the editorial cartoon, failure to respond swiftly to an armed robbery attack is criticised by a superior officer who obviously seems incensed judging from the tone of the statement and posture represented. The response of the subordinate officer captures the theme of image crisis harped on in the cartoon. The interrogative statement: ‘SIR, IF MY GUN IS LOADED AND I’M NOT, WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN?’ is a situated speech act that performs the act of ‘justifying’ rather than ‘requesting.’ Furthermore, shared knowledge of the word choice:

‘loaded’ situates the target audience of the cartoon as exclusively Nigerians considering the contextual implications of the word. The lexeme ‘loaded’ is understood as the act of ingesting food or any other forms of sustenance. The comparison between ‘combat readiness’ and ‘food ingestion’ as expressed in the conditional statement: ‘IF MY GUN IS

LOADED AND I'M NOT...' shows the depth of unprofessionalism that has become endemic in the NPF. Police officers now regard personal interests above public interests whereas the reverse ought to be the case. The endemic status of unprofessionalism within the NPF is equally reference in the editorial cartoon below.



Figure 10.

Figure 10 alludes to the social perception of the NPF as irresponsible to the security of lives and properties in the aftermath that monetary reward is not forthcoming. The analogy made in the editorial cartoon is in sync with Oluwaniyi's (2011, p. 78) aversion about the image crisis of the NPF. The author notes that 'In an ideal situation, police stations should be the first place of contact for victimised citizens, however, it is the worst place to seek justice, especially for the poor victims. Money determines how a case is handled by police officers.' In the text, a formal complaint bothering on armed robbery is lodged to NPF personnel. The ideal reaction would imply that an anti-robbery squad is dispatched to the robbery scene. However, the response of the police officer paints the current reality of police insensitivity to the safety of public lives and properties.

Aside the verbal text, the posture of the police officer fits the description of NPF personnel as insensitive since the act of putting hands in pockets is understood within the Nigerian context as a sign of indifference or carefree disposition. The interrogative

statement: ‘AND YOU THINK THE RIGHT PLACE TO COME IS THE POLICE STATION?’ is a situated speech act that does not perform the act of ‘questioning’ per se rather, it resembles a ‘warning’ that indicates that the police officer finds both the robbery alert and complainant repugnant. It is in fact more of a thought-provoking rhetorical question that is well understood within the Nigerian context as a threat of possible arrest or detention. Cartoon analogies such as this legitimise the public perception of the NPF as inept.

Conclusion

This article presents a social semiotic analysis of editorial cartoons drawn from the *Cartoon Sarge* archives of Nigeria’s Vanguard Online Newspaper. This was done with a view to uncover the cartoonists ideological (re)production of the Nigerian public’s perception of the NPF. This article was able to substantiate the popular claim about editorial cartoons as a viable medium through which satire can be hurled in the direction of defaulting government agencies. The analysis also revealed that semiotic resources such as caricatures, lexical choices, situated speech acts, sentence constructions, rhetorical questions, analogy, metaphor, visual framing, and placement, possessive attributes, facial expressions, postures and gestures, are used by cartoonist to portray prevailing perceptions of, stereotypes and prejudices bothering on police activities and engagements in Nigeria.

The findings of the analysis further reveal that in addition to the semiotic resources, the processes of meaning making in the editorial cartoons is facilitated by extra-linguistic variables such as shared background knowledge of word choices, referents, references and analogies utilised in the editorial cartoons. From the standpoint of the analysis and discussions, this article suggests that the Nigerian mass media should intensify efforts to set socio-political agendas by exposing social ills, malaises and unprofessional acts perpetrated by institutions of government in their publications.

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