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FROM THE EDITORS

The Journal is published annually and provides a forum for presentation of the latest research in various fields of African Studies. It promotes studies on African languages, literatures, and cultures. Scholars working in these areas are invited to submit the results of their work for publication. Preference is given to original research based on sources in African languages. The Journal comprises articles, monographs, and reviews, as well as lexicographic studies and other source materials. Occasionally, special issues are published devoted to particular topics. All papers are reviewed according to the Journal's criteria.

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OBITUARY

Philip J. Jaggar (1945–2023)¹



Philip J. Jaggar was an accomplished Hausaist and linguist. He spoke Hausa fluently, taught the language for many years and had a deep understanding of the linguistics of Hausa. Phil – as he was known to his friends and colleagues – died peacefully on February 13, 2023, with his sons Tom and Matt at his side.

Phil was born in Bradford England, June 14, 1945. He studied Hausa with F.W. (Freddie) Parsons at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. Having finished his BA in Hausa and social anthropology, he went to Kano, Nigeria in 1969 to undertake research on the life and work of the blacksmiths who lived there. He lived in the old city of Kano, in *Gwale* ward, where he was known as *Malam Bala*. From 1973-1976 he taught Hausa at Abdullahi Bayero College (now Bayero University). At a less formal level, he taught Hausa to British VSO (voluntary service overseas) and US Peace Corps members as well as to a few long-time British residents.

In 1976 he went to Hamburg to teach Hausa. There, the influence of his colleagues – particularly Ekkehard Wolff who was researching other Chadic languages – caused him to shift his focus from anthropology to linguistics. In 1978 he went to UCLA to write his doctorate on Hausa linguistics under the supervision of Russell Schuh; while there, he again taught Hausa. He finished his thesis at his old *alma mater*, SOAS, having taken a post where he stayed until he retired, as Professor of West African Linguistics.

¹ Photo by Jibril Shu'aibu Adamu.

Phil taught the Hausa language throughout his career. His work as a part-time producer for the BBC World Service Hausa Section provided the opportunity to write pedagogical works for his intermediate and advanced students. He was also proud of the work he did for and with his Nigerian PhD students. In their turn, Andrew Haruna, Muhammad Munkaila and Malami Buba all achieved the status of professor. Phil's interest in students was also visible in his work for the Erasmus Exchange Programme, furthering student exchanges between SOAS and e.g., Warsaw, Naples, Paris and Hamburg.

His many articles, reviews and monographs on Hausa linguistics covered a wide spectrum. Some of his most influential works focussed on the Hausa verb: mon-overbal imperatives (1982); pre-dative verbal forms (1992 and 1995 – the latter with Muhammed Munkaila). Concerning the Verbal Grades, he addressed the question of passivity in Hausa “Grade 7” verbs (1981), an issue he refined later, suggesting that these verbs expressed an “affected subject” (1988). As late as 2017 he published a major work in which he argued that most “Grade 5” verbs express causation.

His *magnum opus* was a 750-page reference grammar: *Hausa* (John Benjamins, 2001). His style of writing in this excellent book is typical of his many publications: he knew what he wanted to say, and he wrote with great clarity. The research which underlay his publications often included re-reading the articles of his teacher, Freddie Parsons. Phil proudly quoted those writings, and often pointed out how near Freddie had been to the solution – often in the footnotes.

Phil was a linguist both in the theoretical and practical sense. In Kano he deepened his knowledge of spoken Hausa; in Hamburg he learned some German. However, he was always proud of being a Yorkshireman and never lost his Bradford accent. This could be heard when he delivered papers at the many conferences he attended and in the musical evenings which followed the formal parts of the conferences.

On such evenings Phil sang British folksongs, the songs of Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers and the Beatles with his colleagues. Furthermore, he sang for many years with the Welwyn Garden City Male Voice Choir, a choir which was known well beyond Welwyn Garden City (which had become his home). On this ‘musical note’ one of Phil's most satisfying accomplishments was the tribute he organised in memory of the African American bass baritone, Paul Robeson, who had studied African languages at SOAS in the 1930s. The Welwyn Garden City Choir participated in this tribute.

Apart from his musical talent, Phil was a great sportsman: he played rugby in Kano and in Hamburg; he played cricket in Nigeria, once playing for Nigeria against the England second team. His physical ability served him in good stead in later life when he became ill with Parkinson's. Despite the long illness he never gave up; he continued to write on Hausa language and to attend conferences – both the formal and the informal parts: lecturing and singing.

Joseph McIntyre

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Pragmatic strategies in the crime narratives of accused rapists in Agodi Custodial Centre, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Abstract

Existing linguistic studies in Nigeria have focused on investigator's communicative acts in coercive investigative discourse, with little attention given to non-coercive investigative discourse involving accused rapists (ARs) in correctional centres. This study addresses this gap by analysing the pragmatic strategies ARs employ in crime narratives within Agodi Custodial Centre, Ibadan, Nigeria to offer insights into evidential cues that could impact justice administration. Using Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory as framework, the study adopts descriptive design and purposive sampling to select thirty-nine ARs for

interviews. Findings revealed that the ARs deployed identity-framing, identity-reframing, attention-seeking, information-controlling, crime-relabelling and attention diversion strategies to influence investigator's interpretation. The involvement of minors in the rape cases underscores the severity of the crime and the need for effective justice mechanisms. Additionally, cultural assumptions about intimacy and relationships, driven by patriarchal norms and misconceptions about consent, significantly influence crime narratives. Recognising these contexts is crucial to preventing justice perversion and enhancing forensic discourse in Nigeria.

Keywords: Agodi Custodial Centre, accused rapist, crime narratives, investigative discourse, pragmatic strategies

1. Introduction

Sexual violence against women and girls, particularly rape, is alarmingly prevalent and deadly in Nigeria (Ezeilo, 2020; Amnesty International, 2021), with minors often being victims. The violent rape and murder of Vera Omozuwa, Barakat Bello and Azeezat Shomuyiwa in 2020 sparked global outrage, demanding urgent action against sexual violence against women and girls (*Punch*, 2021). Recent statistics by Lagos State Government and UNICEF revealed that one in four Nigerian girls is sexually abused before the age of 18 (*Vanguard*, 2021). Also, in 2020, United Nations Women reported 11,200 rape cases, including those involving children (*Punch*, 2021). The culture of impunity due to stigmatisation and victim-blaming contributes to this surge (Ezeilo, 2020; Amnesty International, 2021), with inadequate investigations and flawed legal proceedings (*Premium Times*, 2016; Amnesty International, 2021; Joseph & Bamigboje, 2022), thus hindering justice. These statistics, especially those on the involvement of minors, as well as systemic issues, point to the urgency for combative intervention against sexual violence, in order to create a safe environment for women and girls in Nigeria.

Linguistic studies on crime narratives emerged from recognising the role of language in criminal investigation. Language is crucial in interpreting linguistic behaviour of participants during investigation. Scholars have examined power asymmetry, confessions, deception and credibility (Sadiq, 2011, after Kebbell & Daniel, 2006; Masip & Herrero, 2013; Sunday & Akinrinlola, 2017; 2021), providing a framework to understand the dynamics of the language employed in investigative interrogation and investigative interviewing discourses.

Investigative interrogation is adjudged coercive and risky for suspects, prompting some Western countries, like the UK, the Netherlands, Australia and Canada, to adopt investigative interviewing, a non-coercive and ethical technique

to enhance justice administration (Bull & Rachlew, 2020; Chung, Ng & Ding, 2022). However, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) continues to use interrogative techniques despite criticisms, the information so obtained is still admitted in courts, without any other substantial evidence (Maliki, 2009; Amnesty International, 2014). Investigative discourse studies, like Sadiq (2011, 2016), Farinde, Olajuyigbe and Adegbite (2015), and Sunday and Akinrinlola (2016; 2017; 2021), attest to this. These studies focused on investigator's communicative behaviour through the identification of power play, questioning, deception and negotiation strategies in police/suspects interrogation, with little attention paid to investigative interviewing of accused rapists (ARs) in correctional facilities.

This landscape emphasises the need to engage investigative interviewing with ARs to show it as a more effective alternative to interrogation utilised perpetually by the NPF. This is because interviewing techniques have the components to enhance the identification of suspects through crime narratives. Conversely, language manoeuvring poses a risk when engaging suspects like ARs with investigative interviewing, as ARs can use their crime narratives to achieve implicit selfish goals.

Societal stigma, limited witnesses, scant medical evidence and justice perversion are reasons that could propel ARs to strategically weave language to create divergence between their expressed intentions and their true motives. Therefore, this study applies Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory to ARs' crime narratives, with a view to determining the pragmatic strategies employed by ARs, including those involving minors, to influence investigator's perception and interpretation of the narratives. This endeavour will contribute significantly to the broader context of forensic discourse studies and justice administration in the fight against sexual violence against women and girls in Nigeria.

2. Literature review

Investigative discourse, particularly police-suspect interrogation, has garnered significant scholarly attention, resulting in diverse studies with varied goals and findings. For instance, Sadiq's (2011) study analyses communication strategies in criminal investigations, revealing patterns in discourse acts through question/answer sequences. These sequences control the flow of discourse, showcasing the power and control investigative police officers (IPOs) have over the suspects. Sadiq emphasises the significance of considering cultural and sociolinguistic factors in analysing language of interrogation. However, his study did not fully address the cultural diversity in Kano and how sociolinguistic factors influence

interrogative communication, suggesting a need for a more comprehensive analysis.

Farinde, Olajuyigbe and Adegbite (2015) examined discourse control strategies in police-suspect interrogations, highlighting the inherent power imbalance favouring IPOs. They argue that police interrogative discourse is a peculiar genre marked by power asymmetry and dominance. However, the study does not offer comparative analysis of different types of interrogations across various police departments, which could have provided deeper insights into how discourse-control strategies may differ based on crime severity.

Akinrinlola (2017) investigated deception in police-suspect interrogation in Ibadan, revealing how IPOs manipulate suspects to assert dominance. The study provides valuable insights but suggests that a larger sample size could reveal a wider spectrum of deceptive strategies used in various crime-related interrogations. This insight into deception as a tool of dominance calls for further examination of how different contexts and crime types influence deceptive tactics.

Negotiation tactics deployed during police-suspect interrogations in Ibadan were analysed by Sunday and Akinrinlola (2017). They identified communication strategies such as persuasion, threats, denial, deflection and justification. The study highlighted the complexity of negotiation in these interactions and the role of power dynamics. However, exploring negotiation tactics in interactions between police and suspects can vary, depending on the specific city or cultural context within the country.

In their study, Hartwig, Granhag, Stronwall & Kronkvist (2006) investigated the effectiveness of strategic disclosure in detecting deception. They argue that deceptive suspects respond differently to strategic disclosures than truthful ones. The study's reliance on controlled laboratory experiments and simulations might limit its applicability to real-world deception complexities. There is a need for real-world application and testing to better understand how strategic disclosure operates in practical forensic settings.

Leahy-Harland & Bull (2017) focused on real-life serious crime interviews, showing that rapport, empathy and open-ended questions increase the likelihood of confessions, while trauma descriptions and negative queries reduce it. The study revealed varied suspect responses, from denial to full confession. However, situational factors affecting these responses were not explored deeply. Investigating the reasons behind diverse response patterns, like resistance or compliance, could provide valuable insights into interview dynamics, highlighting the need for more situational analyses in future research.

Deception through student simulations was investigated by Colwell, Hiscock-Anisman, Memon, Woods & Michlik (2006). They differentiated between deceivers and truth-tellers. Deceivers relied on cooperation, excessive details and emotional expressions, while truth-tellers provided consistent, accurate information. The study assessed credibility through behavioural cues and verbal strategies, but its controlled setting limits capturing the nuances of real-life deceptive situations. Examining these strategies in actual forensic contexts would enhance practical implications.

Masip & Herrero (2013) examined how serious crime suspects might manipulate their behaviour to appear innocent during behaviour analysis interview. The study's findings revealed that guilty respondents used evasive tactics, while innocent ones provided detailed, consistent responses. However, the hypothetical scenario limits real-world applicability. Additionally, the study overlooked factors, like personality and culture, which may influence suspects' responses.

Selepe, Lindegger & Govender's (2020) study explored the toxic discourses of sex offenders in Limpopo Province, South Africa, by showing how sex offenders invoke cultural norms that erroneously equate relationship status with sexual entitlement. The results revealed that most of the offenders often believed in the right to have sex, particularly with women they were in relationships with; they considered themselves victims of wrongful arrest. They employed discursive strategies such as denial, justification, victim-blaming and minimising their responsibility. Cultural assumptions about intimacy and relationships significantly influence crime narratives. In many African societies, patriarchal norms and misconceptions about consent perpetuate sexual violence. Therefore, understanding these cultural contexts is vital for investigators to navigate the complex narratives presented by ARs and to challenge the harmful beliefs that underpin sexual violence.

The works reviewed underscore the significance of understanding the pragmatic strategies employed by ARs, the socio-cultural and religious contexts, and the influence of power dynamics on investigative discourse. Addressing these gaps is crucial for preventing justice perversion and enhancing forensic discourse in Nigeria.

3. Theoretical framework

Jacob Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory served as the theoretical anchor. Mey emphasises the vital role of situational context for effective speech acts. In this theory, a pragmatic act can be a speech act, but not all speech acts are pragmatic acts due to their multi-dimensional nature. Similarly, Mey's pragmatic

acts theory underscores the role of socio-cultural aspects in comprehension, prioritising interactional context over isolated words. The theory stresses starting from the outside in, focusing on the fit for situation to understand the intent of communication, which contrasts with an inside-out approach of word meaning deduction (Mey 2006; Sunday 2020).

In pragmatic acts theory, there are two parts to the realisation of a *pragmeme*. They are the activity and textual parts. They are both used to decode the contextual meaning of any communication. Their interplay yields “practs”. The activity part covers speech acts (direct and indirect), conversational (dialogue) acts, psychological acts (emotions), prosody (intonation, stress), physical acts, and offering speaker choices. The textual part helps in the realisation of the pragmatic function and intent in a communication event. It includes inference (INF), reference (REF), relevance (REL), voice (VCE), shared situational knowledge (SSK), shared cultural knowledge (SCK), metaphor (MPH) and metapragmatic joker (M). The activity part guides conversation options and the textual part situates the context. In communication, interlocutors combine activity and textual elements to enact pragmatic acts, jointly forming intended meaning (Mey 2001; Sunday & Adebayo 2019).

4. Methodology

The study employed the descriptive design. The purposive sampling technique was used to select Agodi Custodial Centre, Ibadan, one of the correctional facilities of the Nigerian Correctional Service. Selecting a correctional facility establishes an ethically controlled setting, serving to underscore the credibility of investigative interviewing as an ethically humane approach for eliciting non-coercive information from crime suspects, including ARs, in contrast to the prevailing coercive methods of interrogation often used by the Nigeria Police.

There are four custodial centres in Oyo State, south-western Nigeria: Agodi Custodial Centre Ibadan, Abolongo Custodial Centre Oyo, Ogbomosho Farm Centre and Olomi Maximum Correctional Centre Ibadan, currently under construction. Agodi Custodial Centre was purposively selected because it housed most of the command’s sex offenders. The selection was also subject to the approval given by the Controller of Corrections, Oyo State Command, which covered only ARs from Agodi Custodial Centre, Ibadan alone. An audio voice recorder was used for the interview session with 39 ARs.

Data collection for the study was conducted with care to uphold ethical standards, respecting the rights of the participants. The process began with a letter

of introduction from the Head of the Department of English, University of Ibadan, to the Controller of Corrections Oyo State Command. The Controller of Corrections ensured that the research purpose was understood before granting permission for data collection from only 50 voluntarily participating ARs, specifically those comfortable with voice recording.

Similarly, the Command's Research Officer and Psychologist communicated with about 100 ARs at the centre before the data collection stage and 50 willing participants were introduced to the researcher one by one. Clear explanations of the study's purpose, procedures, risks and benefits were provided, and the participants were given the chance to ask questions. It was also stressed that participation was voluntary and withdrawal was possible at any stage without repercussions. The participants were only willing to give verbal consent. Furthermore, privacy and confidentiality were stringently maintained, with unique identifiers, like AR1 to AR39, to ensure anonymity of the participants in the analysis.

The data collection took place on March 3rd and 4th, 2017 between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm, under the supervision of the Research Officer and Psychologist of Corrections, Oyo State, as approved by the Controller of Corrections, Oyo State Command. The study adhered to ethical guidelines and a letter of completion of data collection was given by the Nigerian Correctional Service, Oyo State Command.

Gail Jefferson's (1984) notation was utilised in transcribing the data collected. The analysis was guided by Jacob Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory.

5. Analysis

The analysis is done through the identification of the pragmatic strategies deployed by ARs in their crime narratives. Also, the constituents and implications of these strategies are described and interpreted based on Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts Theory. In the analysis, AR is used as an abbreviation for an accused rapist.

5.1 Identity-framing

Identity-framing draws on indirect referencing by association with generalised stereotypes, such as age group and social values. It is suggestive of the associated beliefs for maintenance of the supposed trustworthy identity, while invoking shared perspectives for a positive self-presentation. This strategy is a defence mechanism deployed by older ARs who aligned with the cultural stereotypes

of old age to positively represent themselves in four ways: (1) show self as capable of providing accurate and credible testimony, (2) prove self as people who have good intentions towards others, (3) demonstrate self as people who adhere to high moral standards in the society, and (4) counteract the negative perception associated with being accused of rape, implicating doubts about the genuineness of the allegation levied against them. This is exemplified in the excerpt below from AR5's crime narrative:

Excerpt 1:

Investigator: What offence were you accused of?

AR5: Rape(.)

Investigator: Did you commit it or not?

AR5: AH, I DIDN'T DO IT, WITH MY OLD AGE?

I CLOCKED 63 YEARS THIS YEAR, ON THE SECOND OF JANUARY WHICH MEANS THAT I WAS ABOUT 58 YEARS WHEN THE INCIDENT ACCUSED.

Investigator: How old is the child they said you raped?

AR5: IN FACT, I THOUGHT THE CHILD WAS BETWEEN 7/8 YEARS BUT THE FATHER SAID SHE 13 YEARS. She came to me. <What brought her to my place was because of what I was putting in my mouth>. The girl was sent out of school (.) I asked why?, <She said she stole her teacher's food>. <I asked her for the reason, she said her father and mother left the house this morning without giving her money for food before they left>. My wife was not around, I SAID AH! I DON'T KNOW YOU, she also said she doesn't know me, <Whenever children see me eating, they always shout> BABA, BABA. <When my father was alive, he gives little children things. Especially when he brings gifts for us his children. If he sees little children, he gives them out of it>

AR5 strategically utilises identity-framing to subvert the negative image attached to rapists by associating with the culturally stereotyped image of old age. This is referencing by aligning with cultural image. In most Nigerian cultures, it is generally assumed that older people are custodians and upholders of good moral values. Thus, his statement "AH, I DIDN'T DO IT, WITH MY OLD AGE? I CLOCKED 63 YEARS THIS YEAR", made in a loud voice, is strategic referencing of his old age. His adoption of a defensive tone of disbelief at the idea of committing such an act in his old age is relevant to accentuate his identity-framing intention. That statement aims to counter the allegation, emphasising the incongruity between his age and the crime. The statement is intended to encourage the investigative interviewer to make the inference that it is unlikely for someone of his age to commit rape.

Similarly, AR5 provides additional details to culturally contextualise his relationship with the victim. He describes a situation where the girl came to him because she saw him eating – “<*what brought her to my place was because of what I was putting in my mouth*>”; suggesting a casual and familiar interaction. It is further contextualised with the statement “<*whenever children see me eating, they always shout*> BABA, BABA”. This strong emphasis establishes a positive image, portraying him as a respected figure in the community.

Furthermore, the statement “<*when my father was alive, he gives little children things...*” is relevant to accentuate the image he is projecting. His references to his father possessing the same generosity characteristic makes it more grounded, showcasing giving children food or things as a moral value that is hereditary. The statements are relevant for AR5’s substantiation of his affinity to the positive characteristics of the culturally stereotyped old age. Therefore, AR5’s utilisation of identity framing is intended to influence the investigator to maintain the benign image/perception attributed to old age rather than the one attributed to a perpetrator. This implies that the goal behind this strategy is face-maintaining.

5.2 Identity-reframing

An identity reframing attempt is when an AR indirectly depends on crime admission to redefine self. The ARs involved engage this strategy by admitting guilt, giving explanations that mitigate the crime or giving justifiable excuses for the crime and making statements that express remorsefulness, in an attempt to repair their image positively. This implies that the goal of ARs in this category is face-repairing. They also make their narrative to show themselves as capable of providing adequate testimony, while subtly attributing their misbehaviour to external factors. This presupposes that these ARs are implicitly denying the crime while explicitly admitting to committing the crime. This strategy is to promote the elicitation of a lenient judgement. Excerpt 2 below illustrates this.

Excerpt 2:

Investigator: Did you commit it or not?

AR26: <I did it, my friend and I raped her>

Investigator: How old is the girl?

AR26: >She is 15 years old<

Investigator: Where did the two of you rape her?

AR26: <Where we were working as night guards>

Investigator: How did it happen?

- AR26: *Actually, the girl lives on that street and we have been speaking to her (.). <Sometimes, things happen due to the work of the devil>*
- Investigator: *Where did you see her? Was she walking alone?*
- AR26: *<A car came to drop her>. <We now spoke with her. When we finished speaking with her>, it seems I was the first to have sex with her (.). <and besides, it was when I finished having sex with her, that she became stubborn and it turned into trouble...> (Investigator interjects)*
- Investigator: *Did you deceive her to come inside?*
- AR26: *We deceived her to come inside (.). >It was where we work. It's just a public place. We did it inside a makeshift shop<.*
- Investigator: *Where was she coming from?*
- AR26: *>She said she was coming from her aunty's place; that her and her aunty quarrelled<. <We now asked her for money but she said she doesn't have>. <So my colleague now suggested that we should have sex with her>.*
- Investigator: *How were you now arrested?*
- AR26: *>She went to report to the street's chairman. When we returned to work the next day, the chairman brought the police to arrest us<.*
- Investigator: *If you are released, would you commit this type of crime again?*
- AR26: *ME! GOD WILL NOT ALLOW ME TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS AGAIN.*

In this excerpt, AR26 explicitly admitted his involvement in the crime “*<I did it, my friend and I raped her>*”. This straightforward admission strengthens his credibility and cooperation, indirectly showing his willingness to confront his actions. However, when he is asked to talk about how the incident happened, his response “*<Sometimes, things happen due to the work of the devil>*” attributes the crime to the devil. AR26 imports the religious context to implicitly deny and justify his involvement in the crime, implying that he was under the influence of the devil. Therefore, he is subtly setting up the investigator to make the inference that holds the devil as the criminal while he becomes the victim. Despite admitting to the crime explicitly, he is also denying the crime implicitly.

In the same vein, AR26's description of how he and his accomplice raped the victim makes his narrative seem like a truthful testimony just to show himself as capable of providing adequate account of the crime. However, there are some parts in the narrative, like “*<we now spoke with her. When we finished speaking with her>, it seems I was the first to have sex with her (.). <and besides, it was when I finished having sex with her, that she became stubborn and it turned into trouble...>*”, that show AR26's subtle attempts to prove to the investigator that they had some form of good rapport and agreement about having sexual

intercourse with the victim prior to the crime. The words “*stubborn*” and “*trouble*” in the statement are used intentionally to make reference to the devil’s involvement as earlier asserted in “<*Sometimes, things happen due to the work of the devil*>”. This is to propel the investigator to making the inference that the victim began to make “*trouble*” after their consensual sexual intercourse because of the devil’s involvement.

When AR26 was asked to talk about how they were able to lure the victim, he responds that “*we deceived her to come inside (.) >It was where we work. It’s just a public place. We did it inside a makeshift shop*<”. His response is more than what is required. Grice (1975) calls this violation of the maxim of quantity. However, the extra information given is necessitated by his desire to further substantiate the crime as “...*the work of the devil*>”, that is the crime was masterminded by the devil. Rape is usually committed in private; therefore, describing the place where the rape took place as a public place suggests it as a consensual sexual activity that they (the rapists and the victim) were comfortable enough to do inside a makeshift shop in a public place.

Similarly, when asked the question on where the victim was coming from, his response – “>*she said she was coming from her aunty’s place; that her aunty and her had a quarrel*<. <*We now asked her for money but she said she doesn’t have*>. <*So my colleague now suggested that we should have sex with her*>”, is an attempt to mitigate and justify the crime, and it has two implications. The first implication is intended to propel the investigator to making the inference that the victim’s refusal to give them money is the cause of the crime, which then goes with the popular saying “money is the root of all evil”. This is still a subtle reference to his claim that the crime is the “...*work of the devil*>”. The second implication is based on the latter part of the statement – “<*so my colleague now suggested that we should have sex with her*>”. It is intended for the investigator to also make the inference that AR26’s accomplice is the one who is directly responsible for being influenced by the devil, thereby making the devil and his colleague to become the crime perpetrators, while he remains the passive actor in the crime incidence.

Furthermore, his response “*ME! GOD WILL NOT ALLOW ME TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS AGAIN*” to the question “*If you are released, would you commit this type of crime again?*” shows his continuous invocation of religious beliefs (religious context). He pushes the idea of remorse and personal transformation, which can be interpreted as an assertion of a newfound moral conviction and a commitment to never engage in the crime in future. His emphasis on God’s role presents him as someone who has undergone spiritual cleansing, and is

now redeemed. Therefore, through admission of guilt, statements of mitigation and expressions of remorsefulness, AR26 indirectly attempts to reconstruct his identity positively for positive inference by the investigator.

5.3 Crime-relabelling

The ARs who used this strategy were young men between the age of 20 and 36 years old, accused of raping teenagers aged 14-17 years. The crime-relabelling strategy drew on stereotypic allusion to sexual relationship for crime redefinition, where the ARs present logical arguments to share same status – “the adult status” – with their underage victims, as if they were in a consensual relationship between two adults. The goal of this strategy is to minimise offence, corroborate the crime denial and project doubts about the authenticity of the crime, with the aim of getting a more favourable perception by the investigator. This type of rape, known as statutory rape (Iguh & Oti-Onyema 2020), revolves around narratives of mutual, consensual romantic relationships, negating the significance of age and consent in sexual intimacy. The perpetrators take the status they share as “boyfriend and girlfriend” as justification for sexual intercourse with minors. This strategy is an influential attempt to sway perception towards their offence-minimising goal. This is exemplified in Excerpt 3:

Excerpt 3:

Investigator: How old are you?

AR22: >22 years<

Investigator: How old is the girl you raped?

AR22: >15 years<

Investigator: Are you guilty or not guilty?

AR22: WALLALTAHI SUMOBILAH I AM NOT GUILTY

Investigator: Did you not have sex with the girl?

AR22: I AM NOT GUILTY, IN FACT ... (Investigator interjects)

Investigator: Kindly, answer my question, did you have sex with the girl or not?

AR22: I HAD SEX WITH HER, BUT I AM NOT GUILTY.

Investigator: Why did you say you are not guilty?

AR22: THE REASON I SAID I AM NOT GUILTY IS BECAUSE SHE IS MY GIRLFRIEND AND I DID NOT FORCE HER.

Investigator: How did you know the girl?

AR22: <She sells orange and we both had a discussion that I would marry her but not yet. I do tell her till I had sex with her>.

Investigator: Where did you have sex with her?

AR22: >My house<

Investigator: How were you arrested?

AR22: The reason I was arrested was because that night around 10(.) <I didn't see any one till the night of the fifth day. I didn't see anyone till the next morning. It was five days after that day that I saw like two men. They said they were looking for "this person, this person". I came out, they asked if I was the one dating their daughter, that they only want to see me at the police station>.

AR22 strategically deploys crime-relabelling through his responses. He starts with an assertive denial of guilt in his response to the investigator's question on whether he is guilty of the crime or not. He answers, "*WALAITALAH I SUMOBILAH I, I AM NOT GUILTY*". "*WALAITALAH I SUMOBILAH I*" is an Islamic expression common among Muslims in Nigeria to signify honesty and truthfulness, thereby implying innocence. This religious context is intended to reinforce his truthfulness while directly avoiding answering the investigator's question about the rape until the investigator implores him to answer the question. His admission "*I HAD SEX WITH HER, BUT I AM NOT GUILTY*" was intentionally made in a loud voice to establish delineation, particularly his use of the word "sex", not "rape". This is meant to establish a clear difference between what he did and what he did not do, that is he consciously attempts to separate the act of sex from the crime of rape, implying consensual sex rather than non-consensual sexual intercourse.

It is crucial to highlight the involvement of minors in these cases, as it significantly increases the gravity of the sexual violence. Minors, by legal and ethical standards, lack the ability to provide informed consent due to their age and developmental stage. This foundational principle underscores the coercive and abusive nature of any sexual interaction with minors. By re-labelling the crime as consensual sexual intercourse, perpetrators not only distort the truth but also disregard strict legal standards established to safeguard vulnerable minors.

Similarly, AR22 also establishes his intention to justify his action to avoid taking responsibility for it, despite the victim being a minor. This is evident in the statement made in a loud voice – "*THE REASON I SAID I AM NOT GUILTY IS BECAUSE SHE IS MY GIRLFRIEND AND I DID NOT FORCE HER*". By referring to the girl he allegedly raped as his girlfriend, AR22 strongly establishes mutual consent and shared romantic involvement, an attempt to downplay the criminal nature of the act. This reference serves as the cornerstone of his arguments, conveniently shifting the focus away from the victim's age. Reemphasising his innocence while admitting to having sex with the victim in the statement "*THE REASON*

I SAID I AM NOT GUILTY IS BECAUSE SHE IS MY GIRLFRIEND AND I DID NOT FORCE HER" is an attempt to normalise what legally constitutes statutory rape, as minors are deemed incapable of giving legal consent due to their age. He relies on shared cultural knowledge about romantic relationships to support his arguments. This socio-cultural understanding aims to influence the investigator's interpretation of the crime narrative.

Cultural assumptions about intimacy play a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions and responses to sexual violence involving minors. In many cultures, intimate relationships are viewed through the prism of mutual consent between adults. Applying these cultural norms uncritically to relationships involving minors overlooks inherent power imbalance and vulnerability. Perpetrators of rape frequently exploit these cultural assumptions to justify their actions, re-labelling their crime (statutory rape) as acceptable within the context of romantic relationships. This manipulation of cultural norms perpetuates harmful stereotypes and contributes to societal misconceptions about sexual violence against minors. This strategy encourages harmful stereotypes and complicates efforts to enforce legal safeguards and protect minors from exploitation.

Emphasising the involvement of minors and critically examining cultural assumptions about intimacy are crucial for addressing sexual violence effectively in Nigeria. Therefore, recognition of these cultural contexts is essential to preventing justice perversion and enhance forensic discourse. In view of this, investigators need to understand the socio-cultural underpinnings that allow such narratives to thrive in order to navigate the complexities of these cases effectively.

5.4 Attention-seeking

Attention-seeking strategy is relied on for emotional exploitation, in order to gain emotional support through personal stories shared for investigator's validation. The goals are allegation-refuting and face-maintaining for positive inferencing. This strategy was used by older ARs to deny the crime while indirectly complaining about, protesting and lamenting their situation in a way that may arouse sympathy. Some even shared deep emotional stories about their past lives, strengths, weaknesses or illnesses or even about the crime event, so as to generate some deep reactions from the investigator to feel sympathetic towards them and co-opt the investigator to believe them and share in their distress.

Excerpt: 4

AR11: <...When that incidence happened, there is a woman in that our house. The house is owned by sibilings>. <While the woman was talking to me, I WAS

COUGHING AND HAVING ASTHMA ATTACK>. <I couldn't go to work. I only go to my mechanic workshop sometimes>. <I always go to the hospital>. <That woman now said we should be in a relationship>. I SAID I CANNOT DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THIS HOUSE. <I told the woman that you can see that your husband always prostrates to great me and he calls me baba. Your husband and my children are friends>. I CANNOT DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THIS HOUSE.

In this excerpt, AR11 references his health condition, specifically his cough and asthma attack – “while the woman was talking to me, I WAS COUGHING AND HAVING ASTHMA ATTACK>”. His strong projection of physical ailment aims to evoke sympathy, presenting him as a vulnerable person. Also, his description of the asthma attack and coughing fit during the supposed incident indirectly serves as evidence of his physical inability to engage in such an act. The statements “<so, when the woman came again, that thing started affecting me again>.” and “<she said what about my cloth. I said at least you can see that this thing is affecting me>” emphasise his pathetic state, indirectly contextualising and accentuating his denial.

He also relies on shared cultural knowledge about societal expectations and moral boundaries through the statements “so, when the woman came again, that thing started affecting me again>. <I now decided to go and eat so that I can use the medication I bought>”, “<She said what about my cloth. I said at least you can see that this thing is affecting me>”, and “she now started putting the children on me(.) I now said what kind of thing is this?, PLEASE DON'T BE ANNOYED”. These statements imply that he assumes that the investigator understands and empathises with the challenges posed by his ill health. He uses this shared situational knowledge to garner sympathy and question the feasibility of his alleged involvement. Furthermore, he adopts a defensive and self-justifying voice to emphasise his refusal to engage in a relationship with “the woman” mentioned in the narrative. This statement – “<...your husband and my children are friends>. I CANNOT DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THIS HOUSE” expresses his resistance of having any inappropriate engagement with “the woman”. This voice conveys his innocence and portrays him as a victim of conspiracy due to unreciprocated sexual advances from “the woman”.

Besides, his focus on his poor health condition and the impact it had on his daily life is strategically relevant to substantiate his weak condition – “<I couldn't go to work. I only go to my mechanic workshop sometimes>”. By highlighting his vulnerability and the challenges he faced because of his poor health, he creates doubt about his involvement in any illicit activities. This could sway the investigator's perception by evoking sympathy and framing the accusation as unfounded.

5.5 Information-controlling

Some of the ARs deployed information-controlling strategy to intentionally conceal clear and concise information about the crime from the investigator so as to show innocence or feign ignorance. In any manipulative communicative exchange, whether offensive or defensive, the scope of vision of the manipulator is usually larger than the target's, that is the manipulator knows more than the listener(s), putting the listener in a disadvantaged position (de Saussure & Schulz 2005; van Dijk 2006; Al-Hindawi & Kamil 2017). The manipulator could decide to share more information than is needed, withhold the required information, and even provide distorted information, depending on the intention. Therefore, this strategy can be referred to as an implicit refusal to have a cooperative communication with the investigator. This is exemplified below.

Excerpt 5:

Investigator: What kind of offence were you accused of??

AR36: >Rape<

Investigator: Did you commit the crime?

AR36: NO, I DID NOT

Investigator: How did it happen?

AR36: *What happened was that when I was going to Quran class (.), <that girl, Sidikat is her name> <I have known her since when she was in SS1> <and we had an agreement that we would be in a relationship>. I AM AN ALFA, <so we don't see always because I was not always at home>. <So, in 2014, she visited me in my house and she slept over in my house>. <We had sex that midnight>. She already had someone she was in a relationship with before (.). <I now said since she has someone she is dating that she should allow me look for mine too so that I won't break their relationship; that was how we didn't see again>.*

In AR36's response to the question of whether he committed the crime, he firmly states "NO, I DID NOT", which establishes his stance. However, when asked to explain what happened, instead of directly addressing the specifics of the crime, he introduces extraneous information by referencing a girl named Sidikat and their previous agreement to be in a relationship. This reference creates a diversion from the main question and a contradictory narrative element is introduced by his reference to specific individuals and events, especially that of Sidikat, their prior relationship agreement when she was in senior secondary school 1 (SS1) – "<that girl, Sidikat is her name> <I have known her since when she was in SS1>".

Sidikat's visit to his house in 2014 and the sexual activity that occurred – “so, in 2014, she visited me in my house and she slept over in my house>. <We had sex that midnight>” are relevant to AR36's establishing a pre-existing relationship with the supposed victim. It also implies that the sexual activity they once had was consensual. He also mentions their joint decision to discontinue seeing each other. By introducing these details, AR36 attempts to describe the nature of his relationship with Sidikat. Besides, mentioning his status as an Alfa (an Islamic religious leader), his attendance at Qur'an classes and Islamic lectures is intended to establish him as a religious person. These references draw upon shared cultural knowledge to shape the narrative and influence the investigator's perception. The excerpt below is a continuation of AR36's narrative.

Excerpt 6:

Investigator: Why were you then arrested that you raped her?

AR36: <That's what I am trying to explain. Some months later, she saw me around as I was coming back from an Islamic lecture. We chatted and she told me she was no longer dating that man again>. I NOW SAID WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME. I NOW PUSHED HER AWAY. <She now said I embarrassed her; that was how she shouted and people came out. Since no one knows me amongst them, they asked what happened, she now said I wanted to rape her>.

Investigator: Were you seen inside the house or outside the house?

AR36: OUTSIDE. THOSE WHO SAW IT TESTIFIED TO IT; THAT WAS HOW THEY BROUGHT THE POLICE TO ARREST ME. <When we got to the station, she kept talking about the embarrassment>. <She now said I raped her younger sister>.

Investigator: How old is her younger sister?

AR36: >17 years<

Investigator: So, you are not guilty?

AR36: I AM NOT GUILTY. IT'S THE MOTHER I HAVE ISSUE WITH NOT THE CHILD.

Here, AR36 continues to deploy the information-controlling strategy (by sharing extraneous information to withhold the accurate information) in the response to the question regarding his arrest. He mentions a later encounter with Sidikat after an Islamic lecture, where she informed him that she was no longer in a relationship with the other man – “<...she saw me around as I was coming back from an Islamic lecture. We chatted and she told me she was no longer dating that man again>”. This information seems unrelated to the crime or even to the question asked by the investigator, but AR36 includes it to highlight his

confusion about the relevance of Sidikat's disclosure in their subsequent interaction – "*I NOW SAID WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME. I NOW PUSHED HER AWAY. <She now said I embarrassed her; that was how she shouted and people came out>*". With this new twist in the narrative, AR36 creates doubt about the genuineness of the rape accusation.

Furthermore, AR36 mentions pushing Sidikat away after she made the disclosure, leading to her accusation of embarrassment and attempted rape. These statements "...*I NOW SAID WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH ME. I NOW PUSHED HER AWAY*", "*<she now said I embarrassed her; that was how she shouted and people came out>*", and "*<since no one knows me amongst them, they asked what happened, she now said I wanted to rape her>*" are extraneous details aimed at propelling the investigator to arriving at an inference that sees him as a victim of false accusation. The statement "...*OUTSIDE, THOSE WHO SAW IT TESTIFIED TO IT. THAT WAS HOW THEY BROUGHT THE POLICE TO ARREST ME*" serves as evidence, to influence the investigator to form a perception that discredits the credibility of the allegation.

Also, AR36 brings in shared situational knowledge in the statement "*<OUTSIDE, THOSE WHO SAW IT TESTIFIED TO IT; THAT WAS HOW THEY BROUGHT THE POLICE TO ARREST ME*" by mentioning witnesses who testified to the incident happening outside the house. By referencing these witnesses, he seeks to bolster his defence and present a narrative that aligns with the testimonies of others, implying that his account is corroborated by multiple witnesses. This is a further challenge of the accusation.

However, AR36's introduction of a new participant into the crime narrative in his final response – "*<when we got to the station, she kept talking about the embarrassment. She said I raped her younger sister>*" contradicts his earlier submissions, making his narrative ambiguous. This is because, there has been no mention of a child all through the extraneous information he has given until the end. This new introduction implies that the child is relevant to the crime incident but he chose to leave it until the end. He intentionally makes reference to the ex-girlfriend many times, and not the victim, so that the investigator will make the inference that there is no connection between him and the victim, and that the allegation was out of anger from the ex-girlfriend whose exact relationship with the victim is made unclear based on the contradictory statement "*<...she said I raped her younger sister>*". However, when he was asked if he is guilty of the offence or not, he says "*I AM NOT GUILTY...*" This is an implication that the initiated past stories in the narrative are fabricated, based on his inability to stay true to one statement. Who the victim is exactly is not clear: is she

the daughter of his supposed ex-girlfriend or the younger sister?

The disjointed and contradictory stories within the narrative made the narrative difficult to understand. This is an intentional manipulative attempt to distract the investigator by hiding the true picture of the crime, so as to protect his image. However, this influencing tactic is not successful in distancing AR36 from the crime and even the victim. Rather, it has been able to expose the malicious intention of AR36 to influence the investigator's interpretation of the crime.

5.6 Attention diversion

The ARs who used this strategy, young men aged 25 to 38 years, were accused of raping teenagers aged 15 to 17 years. Their usage of attention diversion involves attacking the character and reputation of their underage victims to project them as willing participants and enablers of the alleged crimes. They paint a good or positive image of themselves, while presenting the victim in a negative light. This tactic serves to undermine the severity of the offence and evade personal responsibility by exploiting cultural and societal stereotypes, tendencies and misconception in Nigeria, which often stigmatise rape victims regardless of their age. There is the misconception that minors, particularly those aged 14 to 17, are teenagers mature enough to consent to sexual relations. Comments like "is she a child?", "she knows what she is doing," and "she is wayward, can't you see how she is dressed?" perpetuate these harmful stereotypes, tendencies and misconceptions, allowing rapists to manipulate societal beliefs to justify their actions and shift blame onto victims. That is why ARs involved are deliberately evasive in their responses to the questions asked, as shown below.

Excerpt 7:

Investigator: What now happened? Where you both in a relationship?

AR2: We are in a relationship and we are not in a relationship (.)

Investigator: What does that mean?

AR2: Because in the house that I went to work as a private driver, she lives in that house as a house help(.) <So, before the incident occurred>, THIS CHILD PLAYS WITH ME THE WAY A MAN RELATES WITH A WOMAN but as someone younger to me(.), I DO CAUTION HER. <Along the line, I reported it to one of my colleagues who also works in that house>. He then advised me to not allow the devil to use me. <At times, I might be sleeping and very tired, she would come to play with me>. <So, the girl would be removing my trouser, play with my manhood> and then begin to say that (.) <I don't have what the men she has slept with her>. So, I now said, WHY IS SHE DISTURBING ME SINCE I DON'T HAVE IN MY BODY WHAT OTHER MEN HAVE. <So,

she didn't let me be>. SO, ALONG THE LINE, SHE DID NOT LET ME BE. <I dodged her several times>, <that opened the door, I went out. When I entered again to carry my bag, she closed the door, she troubled me, pulled my cloth>. <Along the line, I realised that I lost control as a man when she told me that I will not be the first man to have sexual intercourse with her...>

In Excerpt 7 above, AR2 engages attention diversion by attempting to portray himself as the victim and an unwilling participant coerced by the underage girl, despite referring to himself as an adult, older than the victim, who is 16 years old, and he claims “*he cautions her*” whenever she started to misbehave. This is an indication that he knows and accepts that the victim is a minor. However, his influencing attempts end up working against him. He presents the picture of an underage victim as the seductress (the active actor) and he an adult as the victim and later as an adult who knows that sexual intercourse should be between two consenting adults. He says “*THIS CHILD PLAYS WITH ME THE WAY A MAN RELATES WITH A WOMAN but as someone younger to me(, I DO CAUTION HER.*”

Also, AR2 makes use of reference. His response “*we are in a relationship and we are not in a relationship (.)*” to the question about the relationship between him and the victim is a contradictory statement that creates confusion, that could mislead the investigator about the nature of their interaction. This might propel the investigator to forming an impression that would not be favourable to AR2. It implies that his intention to manipulatively influence the investigator’s interpretation about his involvement has failed.

AR2 describes instances where the victim allegedly initiated intimate contact, playing with him in ways that he claims he tried to resist. He states that, “*... THIS CHILD PLAYS WITH ME THE WAY A MAN RELATES WITH A WOMAN but as someone younger to me, I DO CAUTION HER.*” This reference of his role as an adult who cautioned the minor is also an acknowledgment of her underage status, but he simultaneously blames her for the situation. His statement “*<...I might be sleeping and very tired, she would come to play with me. So, the girl would be removing my trouser, play with my manhood...>*” recounts how the victim would taunt him about his sexual inadequacy and persistently pursue him, in order for the investigator to make the inference that his eventual action was a reluctant response to the victim’s provocations. By this, AR2 aims to shift the blame to the victim, so as to present himself as a victim of the supposed victim’s manipulation. All of AR2’s statements here are relevant towards a favourable perception by the investigator.

Additionally, AR2 intentionally attempts to propel the investigator to arriving at an inference that sees the victim as the aggressor, stating that “<...I might be sleeping and very tired, she would come to play with me. So, the girl would be removing my trouser, play with my manhood...>”. His portrayal of the victim’s actions as relentless and himself as a person who tried to resist but was overwhelmed is also relevant to shifting the blame to the victim. This tactic aims at minimising the perceived gravity of his actions and eliciting sympathy from the investigator.

AR2 highlights instances where he claims to have dodged the victim’s advances and even left the room to escape her harassment – “*but as someone younger to me(, I DO CAUTION HER*” and “<I dodged her several times>, <that opened the door, I went out. When I entered again to carry my bag, she closed the door, she troubled me, pulled my cloth>”. This selective inclusion of relevant information aims to depict him as a helpless individual who was coerced into engaging in sexual activities due to the victim’s relentless pursuit. Through the emphasis on his resistance, AR2 seeks to elicit sympathy and understanding from the investigator. Also, he adopts a tone of helplessness and vulnerability. The narrative portrays him as a person who got overwhelmed by the victim’s actions and gradually lost control. This implies that AR2’s presentation of himself as a victim aims to evoke compassion and minimise his own agency in the situation. This voice is employed strategically to elicit sympathy and deflect responsibility for his actions.

This analysis underscores how AR2 attempts to manipulate societal beliefs and cultural assumptions to justify his actions and evade accountability. His portrayal of the minor as a willing participant and himself as a helpless victim distorts the truth and perpetuates harmful stereotypes that blame the victim. This tactic is particularly effective in patriarchal societies, where such stereotypes and tendencies thrive and where victim-blaming is common. These cultural misconceptions often suggest that minors who are teenagers are capable of consenting to sexual activities and that their behaviour invites assault. AR2’s manipulation of these beliefs is to exonerate himself and reinforce damaging socio-cultural stereotypes, tendencies, misconceptions, stigmatising and victim blaming. There is the need to challenge and change these cultural assumptions to ensure justice and protection for vulnerable minors, emphasising that any sexual interaction with them is truly prohibited and attracts strict legal punishments.

6. Discussion and conclusion

This study examined the narratives of accused rapists in Agodi Custodial Centre, Ibadan, Nigeria. It identified six discourse strategies: identity-framing, identity-reframing, attention-seeking, information-controlling, crime-relabelling and attention diversion. These strategies guided the ARs towards making favourable inferences to achieve impression-controlling goals for face-saving and face-maintaining and allegation-refuting and offence-minimising goals. The study shed light on the manipulative influencing tactics and communication techniques of ARs deployed to shape the narrative in their favour so as to influence the investigator's perception and pragmatic interpretation of the crime narratives.

Previous linguistic studies on investigative discourse in Nigeria, such as those by Sadiq (2011), Farinde, Olajuyigbe & Adegbite (2015), Akinrinlola (2017) and Sunday & Akinrinlola (2017; 2021) share some common grounds with this study's findings on ARs' strategies. However, these studies explored linguistic strategies, power dynamics and the complexities of interactions within investigative discourse and primarily focused on the strategies of investigators and suspects of other crimes, not rape.

The breakdown of the strategies deployed by ARs in their crime narratives provides a rich view of how ARs adapt and manipulate linguistic resources to shape the investigative interviewer's perception and interpretation of their crime narratives. It considers the social, cultural and religious contexts in which these crime narratives unfold, adding a layer of contextual understanding that is crucial for interpreting the intricacies of ARs' communication behaviour within the Nigerian context.

The implications of these findings for investigative interviewing are significant. This study highlights the tactics employed by ARs and offers valuable insights for interviewers to recognise and counter these manipulative pragmatic strategies. Given the pressing issue of sexual violence against women and girls in Nigeria, this examination of how ARs shape their narratives has critical implications for legal proceedings. It contributes to curbing the rise of rape cases through better detection and more informed investigation. Therefore, investigative interviewers must understand that ARs, whose identity, dignity and freedom are at stake, will employ socio-cultural factors, tendencies and misconceptions to construct believable and logical crime narratives.

Importantly, the study emphasises the vulnerability of investigative interviewers to manipulation by ARs who possess more knowledge about the crime. It underscores the need for investigators to remain aware of these manipulative

tendencies and to avoid emotional entanglement while showing empathy. When investigators are capable of recognising the manipulative tactics employed by ARs, they can maintain a critical perspective and better analyse the narratives of ARs for evidential clues.

In conclusion, the crime narratives of ARs in Agodi Custodial Centre, Ibadan, exploit socio-cultural and religious factors to influence investigators' pragmatic interpretation. This study serves as a guide for investigative interviewers in recognising and navigating the complexities of such crime narratives, thereby enhancing their ability to gather accurate information and make informed judgments. This will aid the prosecution of accused rapists and strengthen the fight against sexual violence in Nigeria.

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From marginality to expansion: three polities on the East African central caravan route in the late pre-colonial era

Abstract

The article concerns the origins and political structures of three polities that emerged during the last decades of the pre-colonial era in the central part of present-day Tanzania. They are usually known under their leaders' names: Mirambo, Nyungu-ya-Mawe, and Mkwawa. The article pinpoints structural differences between the polities and accounts for them in the light of political anthropology, especially drawing on the concepts of chiefdom and the early state but also taking into account the views of their critics. In conclusion, questions about their shared features are addressed.

Keywords: East Africa, history, pre-colonial period, political anthropology, state formation

Introduction

The present article concerns the origins and political structures of three short-lived yet thought-provoking polities that emerged during the last decades of the pre-colonial era in the central part of present-day Tanzania, usually known under their leaders' names: Mirambo, Nyungu-ya-Mawe, and Mkwawa. The roots of the polities are embedded in the 1860s: Mirambo and Nyungu became known to the world at about the same time – in 1871 – when they challenged the Muslim merchants of the Unyanyembe region (Shorter 1972: 269); the father of the founder Mkwawa, Munyigumba, was first mentioned a few years later

(Elton 1879: 373-374). The simultaneous emergence of three polities that together covered over 300,000 sq km, in a region where no such polity had ever existed, could not have been a mere accident. Indeed, it is striking that their territory was nearly contiguous, as either Mirambo's or Mkwawa's domains bordered that of Nyungu-ya-Mawe.

Some common factors must be taken into account in order to explain the phenomena. Nevertheless, the ways all three polities transformed traditional political structures into those of much larger scale power were different, which was due to variations in local circumstances, the purposes of the rulers, and the limits of their choices. This article pinpoints these differences and accounts for them in the light of theories drawn from political anthropology, especially drawing on the concepts of chiefdom and the early state (Carneiro 1981; Claessen 1981; Earle 1997) but also taking into account the views of their critics (Graeber & Sahlins 2017).

The fact that historiography refers to all the polities by their charismatic rulers' names is significant, as there is only a short story to tell about the territories after their deaths. Mirambo's 'empire' collapsed soon after the death of its ruler in 1884, the same year Nyungu passed away. Nyungu-ya-Mawe's polity outlived him by a decade (Shorter). Though Mkwawa expanded the kingdom he had inherited from his less-heard-of father Munyigumba, it collapsed in 1894, even before his defeat and death by the German colonial forces (Redmayne 1964: 204). I will not discuss the longevity of the three polities in the context of the specific features of their political organisation due to the all-embracing, disturbing effect of the German colonial conquest, which makes any speculations futile.

Looking at the current state of research in the field of political anthropology, it is easy to identify the difficulties in developing coherent terminology regarding what is a state and what is not. In recent decades, the level of interest in an intermediate form of organisation has increased, namely the centralised chiefdom. However, due to its small scale or insufficient degree of complexity, it cannot be considered a state. Earlier definitions have emphasised the number of management levels, which in the case of a state would be at least three, i.e. that of the power centre, a unit corresponding to a simple chiefdom, and a village or hamlet cluster (Cohen & Service 1978: 2-5).

Carneiro defines chiefdom most concisely, writing that "a chiefdom is an autonomous political unit comprising a number of villages or communities under the permanent control of the paramount chief" (Carneiro 1981: 45). At the same time, he includes a wide-ranging scale for chiefdoms – the largest may have

had even hundreds of villages, comprising an 'almost' state (e.g. Hawaii, Tahiti). These polities, however, did not meet the conditions that apply to all states: monopoly and coercion of the judiciary, tax collection, and conscription to the army (Carneiro 1981: 47). Consequently, Carneiro admits that the border dividing the chieftainship and the state is fluid. In emphasising the above-mentioned elements in his definitions, he consciously ignores others – that is the redistributive function of the chiefdom (Carneiro 1981: 58) and the ideology of the early state (Claessen 1981: 79). This difference is due to his concept of a power centralisation mechanism for which warfare and territorial limitation are the most important.

In contrast, when defining a state, Cohen & Service (1978) stress the existence of a centre, not necessarily a territorial unit, differentiated from its peripheries in the following ways:

- Ideologically – there is court ritual, insignia, and historical tradition that addresses the supernatural powers of the ruler;
- Institutionally – a standing army of professional warriors is subjected to the ruler, and offices and councils exist that are not present at lower levels of power;
- Economically – the presence of an economic base consisting of state farms, slavery, or villages working directly for the needs of the court and the army; further, all subjected areas are obliged to submit a tribute or are forced into servitude (see: Cohen & Service 1978: 2-5).

Claessen, the leading proponent of the concept of the early state, ascribes to it the existence of at least “two basic strata, viz. the rulers and the ruled” and “a common ideology of which reciprocity is the basic principle” (Claessen 1981: 74).

Drawing upon research on the polities of the central route, the advantage of Carneiro's definitions is the focus on the process that undoubtedly led to their creation, i.e. warfare and the means of coercion, and not the development of features that would arise as a result of a long-term process. In light of the definitions of Cohen and Service, as well as Claessen, the mere change of scale, i.e. the rapid emergence of a tri-level political organisation with an extensive territorial range and strong demographic foundations, fails to meet the criteria necessary to define the creation of a state. This approach emphasises the long-term process of institutions emerging that were based on ideology and social classes rather than merely details regarding structural features. On the other hand, I argue that in the cases in question, in which the very scale of polities and the number of levels of governance correspond much more to the state than to the chiefdom, the process of state-like centres formation was underway in the sense proposed by Cohen and Service.

On the other hand, asking whether and at what point in history the polities under scrutiny can be called a state will certainly not touch on the most critical problem of different directions of development, particularly when applied to a political organisation in seemingly similar demographic and ecological conditions, with a comparable level of technology. In the pre-colonial Interlacustrine region, the two most developed societies, which grew from a common linguistic and cultural root, Buganda and Rwanda, created extremely different political systems, even if they seemed to share many similar institutions (see Chrétien 2005).

The analysis must go deeper, though I do not share the extreme scepticism of critics of state formation research, such as Graeber & Sahlins (2017: 22). Based on different assumptions than theirs, I contend that the concept of galactic mimesis (Graeber & Sahlins 2017: 13, 21) they formulate – emphasising the collective, imitative nature of social change processes rather than solely the development of individual societies – should be taken into account in the area surrounding the East African central caravan route. At this point, I am also inspired by the view of Carneiro, who notes that centralisation processes tend to accelerate, i.e. the reduction from 40 to 20 chiefdoms in a given area is much slower than the reduction from 20 to one chiefdom (Carneiro 1981: 66). This feature raises an important question about the role of the nearby caravan route in the state-building process. Further, this process does not only apply to its benefits for individual societies and elites living in this area but also to the overall political change that took place in the second half of the 19th century.

Another theoretical problem that should be noted is the historically confirmed ability of polities to reproduce their structures, which distinguishes not only the state but also the chieftainship from a “big man society”, in which “leadership is more tied to charisma and ability” (Chabal et al. 2004). However, the ephemeral polities of the central caravan route were not created in a political vacuum but were built from the typical raw material for state-building, i.e. a large number of simple chiefdoms that had the resources and mechanisms needed for reproduction. At first glance, a similar starting point and similar factors influencing centralisation do not mean that state formation processes took place in all the discussed cases. However, I believe that at this early stage of transformation, there are already obvious differences between the polities under scrutiny, both in leadership strategy and internal as well as external conditions, which, despite genetic similarities, could have led to the emergence of very different societies and political formations.

In conclusion, I will try to answer questions about their shared features and create a typology for the surveyed polities. Issues to be considered will include

the redistribution model and the place of traditional communities in post-transition politics. However, the starting point must be the production base of societies considered in the context of ecological conditions and centre–periphery relations. Similarly, I will address other potential sources of the surplus subject to redistribution and the redistribution model itself, which clearly varies across societies. In addition to the way the elites of power were recruited and the relationship between the centre and the periphery, it will be the basis for the classification of the surveyed polities.

2. The central caravan route

The three polities grew in the vicinity of the central caravan route that ran from Bagamoyo on the coast of the Indian Ocean, opposite Zanzibar to Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika. It was only during the 19th century that the caravan route network emerged in what is now Tanzania. It connected various points on the coast with those lying on the banks of the Great Lakes (Victoria, Tanganyika and Malawi) and hence further west and north. Before the end of the 18th century, only the southern routes running from Kilwa to Lake Malawi seem to have existed. Elsewhere, products that were looked for by foreign merchants were transported to the coast on a relay basis and the same may be said of the distribution of imports among the peoples of the interior. It was as recently as the end of the 18th century when the first caravans from the trading communities of the interior started to arrive at the East African coast north of Kilwa. There was practically no society that was not touched by the effects of long distance trade. Even if many of them did not engage directly in trade, they offered caravans their labour as well as looted them, which affected their economies, socio-political structures, and ethnic identities. Those leaders who monopolised trade in highly valued products, such as ivory, could collect prestige goods and firearms, which fundamentally changed their positions in the community (see: Koponen 1988).

The East African “central caravan route” was in fact a cluster of trails. It had developed not earlier than the end of the 18th century, presumably as a result of intensification of contacts between the coast and the Usagara region as well as regions between Usagara and Unyamwezi. As soon as the route became established by Nyamwezi traders, the coastal caravans set off towards the interior. As early as the 1820s, Muslims reached Lake Tanganyika and established a trade terminal at Ujiji. Tabora was founded only around 1845. Before the 1850s the central route had gone along a southern trail south of Uluguru and southern Ukimbu, and then turned north-west to Unyanyembe. Even when caravans started to pursue the Ugogo route, there were many local variants that allowed

for the avoidance of the highest toll-demanding or risky areas (Shorter 1972: 235, 241-2; Pawełczak 2010: 219-26; Rockel 2006: 99-102).

Each of the main caravan trail clusters had its own specifics. What distinguished the central route from the more northern "Maasai route" (Tanga and Pangani – Kilimanjaro area – Maasai Steppe to the west and north – Lake Victoria and Lake Turkana) and the southern routes (Kilwa, Lindi – Lake Malawi) were:

- compared with the northern route, relatively weak trade links between the societies of the interior. It was largely due to the lesser role of cattle herding by the societies that inhabited the central route (except Hehe) and relatively low density of their populations,
- greater volume and share of capital engaged in the form of trade and prestige goods on the central route, hence the stronger position of coastal merchants in relation to the inland societies,
- numerous colonies of coastal Muslims (Arabs and Swahili) along the central route, as opposed to fewer Swahili communities in the north, lack of them along the southern route within the region of Tanzania (Pawełczak 2010: 183-207).

3. The polities: ethnic composition and political surrounding

While the Sultanate of Zanzibar attempted to neutralize any powerful leader growing in strength on the route within the range of effective military action (although usually with peaceful methods (see: Pawełczak 2010)), it was not able to do so in the areas that were more distant from the coast. In contrast to the regions lying east of Usagara, about 200–250 km from the coast, the areas stretching to the west, along the central route, were less prone to Zanzibar's direct control (see: Pawełczak 2010). The polities in question shared the same political surrounding consisting of a diaspora whose impact defined the whole south and central region of Tanzania: Muslim trade settlers as well as the immigrant Ngoni and their offspring. It was political and economic activities of these two groups that disrupted communal life in present day central Tanzania.

By the time Mirambo inherited the petty Nyamwezi chiefdom of Uyowa in the early 1860s, the influence in Unyanyembe chiefdom had given Arabs control over the whole stretch of the caravan route that ran through Unyamwezi and most of the trail to Lake Victoria that branched off north in Tabora. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s these routes were gradually taken over by Mirambo whom some European explorers christened "the Bonaparte of Central Africa" (Bennett 1971: 56-7). One can estimate that by 1880 the territory controlled by the ruler

had expanded to over 200,000 sq. km (Southon 1963: 82). These were mostly agricultural lands of varied potential. The exception was predominantly pastoral Usukuma country. The Nyamwezi did not keep large herds until the 1850s, and afterwards cattle were concentrated mostly in Unyanyembe (Koponen 1988: 248). In some areas there were no cattle due to the presence of tsetse fly.

The first stage of Mirambo's expansion was directed to the chiefdoms of Unyamwezi and the ethnically closely related Usukuma areas. However, the term Nyamwezi is not univocal, e.g. it is difficult to delimit Unyamwezi and Ukimbu, as some of Ukimbu chiefdoms were ruled by Nyamwezi lineages and the opposite also holds true (Shorter 1972: 5-14). During the second half of the 1870s, Mirambo invaded Uvinza, Uha and the rest of Usukuma reaching Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria. The limits of Mirambo's conquest was partly determined by natural conditions, as the areas to the east and south of his domain, either swampy or too dry, excluded successful military operations or made them not worth the effort (Bennett 1971: 54-5).

Despite obvious language and cultural differences, for contemporary observers all countries subdued by the chief of Uyowa counted as parts of greater Unyamwezi. Such differences existed even within the core areas of Unyamwezi.¹ There were Nyamwezi chiefdoms where pastoral Tussi and Sumbwa populations (Usimba, Usange and Mali) outnumbered autochthons. These chiefdoms were the first to fall prey to Mirambo in the 1860s. Broyon believes that in other chiefdoms the new ruler drew on the Nyamwezi resentment against immigrants. He asserts that the Tussi, who herded cattle and did not participate in caravan trade, kept aloof from the Nyamwezi, did not intermarry with them, and refused to dress in clothes, but wore animal skins instead. The real problem was that these cattle herders were extending their domination in some new areas and it was only Mirambo who forbade them to build their huts within Nyamwezi villages. Henceforth they were obliged to build their enclosures outside villages (Broyon-Mirambo 1878: 30-1).

Nyungu-ya-Mawe, the man who united the Kimbu people was Nyamwezi by origin and a member of the royal lineage of the largest Nymawezi chiefdom – Unyanyembe. The Kimbu were a group closely related to the Nyamwezi. Its ethnic areas stretched south of Tabora as far as Lake Rukwa through scanty

¹ Tabora District Book (DB Tabora 1, r. 20/3) gives the list of Unyamwezi chiefdoms controlled by Mirambo: Uyoya, Bukungwe, Ussonga, Kirima, Kwande, Uyogo, Runsul, Buhinde, Ussange, Ussimba, Ukumbi.

populated, mostly arid areas infested with tsetse fly, which eliminated husbandry and seriously limited agriculture. Most inhabitants lived by gathering and hunting. Nyungu resided in Kiwele, the most strategically placed chiefdom which lay in the intersection of two, once crowded caravan trails (Southon 1963: 82; Stanley 1878: I, 85). His domain included parts of southern Unyamwezi. The whole covered not less than 40,000 sq. km. Nyungu transformed the segmentary political system of the Kimbu into one of the most advanced political organizations of pre-colonial central and western Tanzania region. He succeeded in gaining control over parts of the central caravan route east of Tabora. This did not collide with the ambitions of Mirambo who, until 1880, was Nyungu's ally (Shorter 1972: 272).

The third of the polities under scrutiny is associated with the Hehe ethnic group. However, it seems that before ca. 1830 groups known later as the Hehe, Bena, and Sangu constituted an ethnic complex without clear cut limits (Redmayne 1964: 37-58). The identity of the Hehe is a product of state formation processes, not only these of their own, but also those of the Sangu, and the so called Bena of the Rivers (see: Culwick 1935). The founder of the Hehe kingdom was Munyigumba (ruled ca. 1865-79) who unified a few chiefdoms and gained an upper hand over hitherto stronger neighbours such as the Sangu and Ngoni (Redmayne 1964: 141). Despite smashing triumphs that included raids over the Ngoni territory (he was the first leader to achieve it), at his death the name of the Hehe was less dreaded than those of the defeated. Munyigumba was murdered by his rival who forced Mkwawa, the young son of the deceased, to leave the country. After Mkwawa had returned to Uhehe in ca. 1880, he ruled until 1894 when the German forces destroyed his main stronghold – fort Kalenga. Until his death in 1898 he conducted guerrilla war against the colonial power (Redmayne 1964: 191).

The Hehe controlled an area of nearly 50,000 sq. km in total. Uhehe proper covered the territory of around 36,000 sq. km. Its limits were marked by the Njombe River on the west, the Great Ruaha on the north, and the Ulanga valley beneath the Udzungwe escarpment on the east (Redmayne 1964: 19). The southern border was never clearly defined. In the German time, the area of Uhehe proper was inhabited by around 50,000 people (Redmayne 1964: 33, 128). South of Uhehe proper, between the sources of the Little Ruaha and the Ulanga valley laid Ubena country. Further west, around the sources of the Great Ruaha it was bordered by the Sangu country. During the 1880s and 1890s the Hehe colonies were also founded in Ubena and Usange (Redmayne 1964: 179). The whole population living under Mkwawa may be estimated at not fewer

than 60-70,000 people. Under Mkwawa, the Hehe expanded to the north, setting colonies on the central route beyond the Great Ruaha. They traded with Arabs but also robbed caravans (Redmayne 1964: 48-9). Uhehe was rather an isolated area whose main body lay far from caravan routes (especially after the central route shifted north, leaving Ukimbu aside) on a plateau that was separated from the outside world. By contrast to Ukimbu, Uhehe was originally an agricultural region, with admixture of cattle herding. Hehe had advanced agriculture that used irrigation systems. Natural conditions allowed for cattle herding (Koponen 1988: 235).

As already mentioned, before the central route changed its course in the mid-1830s, Arabs had walked directly to Ukimbu and traded there in slaves and ivory. Before entering the country, they traversed the territory of the Sangu whose leader Munyigumba (not to be confused with the Hehe ruler with the same name), and his successor Merere Towala Mahamba, founded a strong, militarized polity that would threaten both Ukimbu and Uhehe. The Sangu territory did not only adjoin the nodal point of the Ukimbu route at Isanga, but also was not too far from much older, southern route that connected Kilwa with Lake Malawi where, as Shorter thinks, the Sangu might have traded with the Arabs as early as in the 18th century (Shorter 1972: 246). They gained access to firearms earlier than any group in the region, and, from 1830s on, managed to conquer some of its south eastern chiefdoms of Ukimbu. Many independent Kimbu chiefs were forced to pay Muslims tribute in ivory. Consequently, they started to annoy caravans which induced merchants to shift their route to the north. Since the late 1840s coastal merchants preferred to walk directly to Unyamwezi.

Thus, in a long run, the Sangu polity contributed to significant changes of both Ukimbu and Uhehe. In Ukimbu, the Sangu ascendancy overlapped with the results of the great famine of 1839. During the 1840s many people emigrated from the more and more off-the-beaten-track region (Shorter 1972: 248). The old trails were never abandoned altogether, but became much less frequented. In Uhehe, until the mid-1870s the Sangu incursions had caused no counter-attack. In 1875 the Hehe army defeated the forces of Merere which marked the beginning of his decline.² He fled to Ukimbu's capital Kiwele to find there protection of Nyunguya-Mawe who was vexed by the rising of the Hehe kingdom (Shorter 1972: 290). Two years later, the chief of the Sangu returned to his country and built a stronghold to withstand the attacks of Hehe (Elton 1879: 345-364).

² Early in the 1870s Mwingumba and Merere undertook combined attacks against Wakinamanga lineage who ruled Ubena of the rivers (Shorter 1972: 268-9).

Another factor that triggered state formation of both Ukimbu and Uhehe; the Ngoni raids, short-lived in a political and military sense, were more fundamental from the cultural perspective. The Ngoni were originally South African people who entered Tanzania just before 1850. They subjugated local communities in south-western Tanzania, founded strong, militarized polities and engaged in caravan trade. Initially, the local peoples were baffled against the superior weapons and tactic of the Ngoni, as well as their system of military training (Shorter 1972: 258-60). In accordance with Graeber's and Sahlins's concept of galactic mimesis (Graeber & Sahlins 2017: 374-376), many peoples, including the Nyamwezi, Sangu, and Hehe, borrowed elements of the Ngoni warfare which made them more effective in battlefield. This is especially true for the Hehe. Some other leaders, including Mirambo and Nyungu-ya-Mawe hired Ngoni mercenaries and modelled their *ruga-ruga* troops after the Ngoni military organization. The Ngoni raided the Hehe and Kimbu but did not meddle with their political structures and, unlike the Sangu, did not conquer their land. What really mattered is that the raided communities obtained an incentive to accept some form of centralized government even at the high price of being deprived of their freedom.

There were many Muslim colonies on the central route. Ujiji was founded in the 1820s on the shores of Lake Tanganyika and by the early 1840s Arabs had started to settle permanently in Unyamwezi. Merchants usually commanded substantial military forces and could count on the backing of allied local leaders. Easy access to firearms, ammunition, and especially powder, favoured them against their enemies. The largest and strongest of those colonies was Tabora that lay near the capital of Unyanyembe. It was one of the three colonies in the East African interior to which Zanzibar governor was nominated (alongside Kota Kota and Ujiji on the Great Lakes). It was founded around 1845 with the consent of the Unyanyembe chief (*ntemi*) Fundikiro. After he died in the end of the 1850s, the Arabs supported the candidature of Mnywa Sele. Once his demands on account of the passage and settlement fees became excessive, he was ousted and replaced with loyalist Mkasiwa. Mnywa Sele did not comply and started a guerrilla war which lasted many years at times hindering the caravan traffic (Shorter 1972: 264-6).

Arguably, a man who most likely was the future ruler of Ukimbu – Nyungu-ya-Mawe (“breaker of stones”) was seen by the rebel's side. He joined Mnywa Sele despite being a member of his rival chiefly lineage. Since the early 1870s Nyungu had built his empire in Ukimbu and parts of south Unyamwezi. After Mkasiwa's death in 1876, he claimed the throne of Unyanyembe to which, however, another

candidate, Isike, had been nominated (Shorter 1972: 293). Nyungu's advance on Tabora did not succeed but his efforts paralysed the trade on the central caravan route for a few years. Apart from attacking caravans, Nyungu-ya-Mawe had many skirmishes with the new Zanzibar governor of Tabora, Abdullah bin Nasib. His predecessor, Said bin Salim, was hosted and supported by Mirambo whose strategy included stirring up the situation in the Arab colony (Shorter 1972: 297-8).

Nyungu for some time occupied the Mdaburu fortress to block the central route on the western edge of the arid Mgunda Mkali plain east of Unyanyembe, but lost it in 1880 due to a clever action of Zanzibar agent Mwinyi Mtwana who used European support (Shorter 1972: 271, 306-7; Bennett 1963: 76-80). The blockade was finally lifted. Shorter contends that Nyungu, seeing that his dynastic plans failed, hoped to thwart the trade that went through Tabora and move it to the old Ukimbu track. Nyungu fought the Tabora Arabs on several occasions, yet he never defeated them in a pitched battle which he avoided as a rule. He also exploited Arab rivalries and successfully dominated one of the southern routes to Lake Tanganyika (Shorter 1972: 301).

Despite being on the defensive side, during the 1870s, with the help of Unyanyembe forces, Tabora Arabs attempted to conquer Usangu and Ukimbu. They gained support of a Muslim convert, chief Kilanga I of Ubungu, a western neighbour of Usangu. Their joined expedition in 1873 ended with failure and Kilanga's death (Shorter 1972: 286).

The greatest challenge to Unyanyembe Arabs was Mirambo. As opposed to Nyungu's polity and the Hehe, Mirambo dealt constantly with numerous Muslim settlers nearly at the core of his domain. In 1871 Arabs attacked Urambo with an army over 2,200 strong including 1,500 equipped with firearms. Mirambo's much worse equipped army counted 3,000 people including Ngoni mercenaries. After Mirambo inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy, defenceless Unyanyembe stood open to him. He did not use the opportunity to annihilate the Arab colony and did not even rob it completely (Bennett 1971: 55). The war continued for the during next four years. In 1872 and 1873 Mirambo was pushed on the defensive. However, he was able to evade the Sultan's ban on selling powder and ammunition to the non-Muslim leaders of the interior (Bennett 1971: 59). The largest Zanzibar expedition that was ever sent to East African interior in 1873 proved helpless against Mirambo's guerrilla tactics. In 1875 Sultan Barghash withdrew his soldiers from Unyanyembe (Bennett 1971: 63). This step prompted Tabora Arabs to transact provisional peace with the Uyowa warlord. Until his death, Mirambo recognized limits of his power and was reserved about destruction of the Muslim colony. He preferred diplomatic solutions, and even

attempted to win recognition from the Sultan of Zanzibar which brought him certain success (Bennett 1971: 64-6; Reid 2007: 189-90). At the same time, his purpose was to deprive Tabora of its commercial position and replace it with his own capital town (Bennett 1971: 131).

While Ukimbu and parts of Unyamwezi were exposed to slavers' raids from both north and south, the Hehe whose territory was slightly detached from the central caravan route were threatened only from the south. Arabs had no influence in Uhehe (DB, Iringa, r. 9/18). By contrast to Tabora, caravan bases north of Uhehe, such as Mwinyi Mtwana's, Kilosa, and Mpwapwa were markets for provisions rather than slaves and ivory. Bulwarked from the east by the steep Udzungwe Mountains, Uhehe constituted an area much less disturbed and exploited by Muslim traders than Ukimbu and Unyamwezi. It does not mean that the Hehe leaders grew in isolation and did not take heed on what chances and risks the Arab presence brought their people. This is true especially for Mkwawa who, after the death of his father, spent some time in exile in the country of Ugogo (1879-1880), i.e. on the central caravan route. When he came to power, unlike Mirambo and Nyungu who managed to gain control over parts of the central route and received toll money from caravan merchants, Mkwawa only set up some colonies there to trade and loot merchants (Redmayne 1964: 77, 121, 146, 264).

Arguably, Mirambo and Nyungu were much more versed in the subtleties of the caravan business and Muslim politics than the ruler of the Hehe. Nyungu's Unyanyembe origins and the years spent with Mnywa Sele gave him the necessary experience. Mirambo is said to have participated in a few caravans to the coast – a typical activity for a young Nyamwezi including those belonging to chiefly lineages. While each of the leaders understood the benefits offered by direct control of caravan trade, it was only Mirambo who managed to tap caravans on sizable stretches of the western part of the central route, and to a lesser degree, the Tabora–Lake Victoria route. He made it mandatory for every person travelling west of Tabora, under the death penalty sanction, to call at his capital village while on the road (DB Tabora 1, r. 20/1). After 1876 he collected tribute from Arab caravans (Shorter 1972: 271).

4. Geographic and social setting

Brown & Hutt (1935: 23) list twenty-nine Hehe chiefdoms existing before the reign of Munyigumba. Of those, 6 lay in Usagara and three in Udzungwe. Redmayne (1964) thinks this number is much too high. Without proposing any precise estimates, she seems to hint at cutting it by half. She argues that before

Munyigumba Uhehe consisted of "chiefdoms and less stable not-quite-chiefdoms" (Redmayne 1964: 120, 123). Estimating the population of Uhehe at 60,000, and the number of chiefdoms at 29, the average population of a chiefdom would slightly exceed two thousand which by and large corresponds to Carneiro's typical chiefdom (Carneiro 1981: 47). Accepting Redmayne's reservations about Brown and Hutt's list and cutting his number by half we would get 4,000 people per chiefdom, a number much closer to an average in Unyamwezi.

In the 19th century, Nyamwezi country (Unyamwezi) which lies in central Tanzania was divided into about 40 chiefdoms. The whole country was better populated than Ukimbu but rather poorly for regional standards. Thanks to the caravan trade boom many inhabitants kept slaves and accumulated large herds of cattle. At the turn of the colonial era, Unyamwezi percentage of slaves was comparable only to the coastal areas (Deutsch 2000: 70). Nevertheless, the majority of chiefdoms were far from political stability, and the very institution of chiefdom was weakening, particularly in the northern areas (Abrahams 1967: 42–3). The area and population of the Unyamwezi chiefdoms varied. The best known and largest of them was Unyanyembe with over 10,000 sq. km and perhaps more than 20,000 people (Abrahams 1967: 28). Owing to its large area and especially the three-tier administration it qualifies as a state according to the criteria formulated by Service and Cohen. Diarchy and excessive numbers of slaves made it unusual for the region. More typical was Uyowa, the chiefdom of Mirambo with its 4,000 people located in six villages (Rockel 2006: 95). As to Ukimbu, Shorter estimates that due to depopulation and the process of political segmentation before Nyungu's conquests the average population of chiefdom oscillated around one thousand people. This is a very low number. However, the existence of chiefdom associations acting as expanded political units can account for it.

5. State formation

Typically, a state emerges where a segmentary system of interrelated chiefdoms exists (Carneiro 1981: 66). Ruling a society from certain distance was easier when it had been coached in discipline, allegiance and accepting obligations towards the government. Even though a new administration had replaced the old structures of power, the local communities preserved their identities. Making local-minded subjects identify with state may require some institutional reforms, e.g. co-optation of local elites to the central governing class, creation of state religion of some sort, centred on the person of the ruler, harnessing the age system to military training and command. Of those reforms only the first was realized, to some degree, in all the three polities in question. As said, sources

do not mention any religious changes, and in the case of Mirambo, it may be contended that the missionary sources would have not been silent, had any taken place. Furthermore, early states often developed along the centre-periphery model in which the subjects of the central regions drew resources from peripheries. Whereas the centre could be governed peacefully, in the peripheries the state exercised its power more violently, be it through frontier military colonies or simply periodical raids. In this model the new identity based on state allegiance could be engrafted only in the centre while the peripheries preserve their own identifications (see: Tymowski 1999: 96-103). Applying the model to the Hehe polity one can see that peripheral, ethnically non-Hehe areas split in two. By contrast to Ukimbu, there was not a hierarchy of Hehe chiefdoms that differentiated between a true Hehe from a "less true" one (Redmayne 1964: 74). And while, despite dialectal and cultural differences, Udzungwe and Usagara chiefdoms became assimilated to the Hehe, other groups, including Bena and Sangu, remained peripheral (Brown & Hutt 1935: 27). Mkwawa attracted the sons of the leaders of the both Uhehe proper and assimilated areas nominating them to royal pages (*vigendo*), who were rewarded with wives and slaves (Nigmann 1908: 75).

On the other hand, elimination of local authorities, either abrupt or gradual, was a pre-requisite of successful unification. Redmayne thinks that the Hehe were prone to unification as they did not develop strong chiefly traditions based on myths of origin, did not even have chiefly regalia. She is also sceptic about supernatural powers being attributed to the pre-state chiefs. Although a chief (*mutwa* – pl. *vatwa*) was expected to possess mystic and spiritual power, particularly in rainmaking, he exercised them collectively with a certain category of elders. He was not much venerated, and respected mainly as clan head or territorial headman (Redmayne 1964: 191). This may be due to the fact that older traditions were obscured by the fresh memories of the reigns of Munyigumba and Mkwawa who were in a sense chief priests of their people and attempted to deprive their subordinate chiefs of their powers and forbade rainmaking except when they got their permission (Brown & Hutt 1935: 34).

Chiefs who surrendered to Mirambo at their own initiative continued to rule under Mirambo's protection. According to tradition, Mirambo used violent measures in his conquests. After his warriors entered a settlement, they killed the chief and most of adult men. Mirambo named the new headman from among the locals who became responsible for supplying his new lord with men and provisions for his next campaigns (Southon 1963: 85).

Repairing the wrongs committed by Muslim traders certainly added an ideological component to Mirambo's domination (Broyon-Mirambo 1878: 29-30; Reid 2007:

34), yet favourable treatment of the loyal elites as well as safety measures against those who would think of rebellion were vital to the ruler's strategy. Mirambo would often marry relatives of the subjugated headmen, and typically took young captives to be raised in his capital, Isara Magasi. A certain number of *ruga ruga* remained in place to monitor the loyalty of the new chief (Southon 1963: 85). In case of any insubordination penal expeditions were undertaken. According to the missionary Southon, however, the ruler used also softer methods of keeping his subjects loyal:

"Mirambo treated his new subjects in such a manner that they soon became his most enthusiastic admirers, and faithful followers. The new chiefs were praised, flattered and extolled to a surprising extent; presents of valuable kind were given and promises of future wealth held out to them (...). The commoners were treated in a similar manner; new rights and privileges were given which raised them far above their former degraded serfdom; the only return expected by Mirambo from them was, that each village accordingly to its capacity, should send him a number of youths to be trained by warriors" (Southon 1963: 85).

While Mirambo did not create any new administrative structure, which for some may even put in question the "state" status of his dominions, Nyungu initiated radical change in this respect even if he usually allowed chiefs to remain in their administrative units. Only those who resisted him were murdered or expelled. They, however, were not replaced. Unlike Mirambo, Nyungu did not need traditional chiefdoms for any administrative, military or economic functions (Shorter 1972: 305). He supplemented chiefs appointing military governors (*mutwaale*, pl. *vatwaale*) in the provinces, units much larger than original chiefdoms. They policed their area, settled disputes and helped the ruler exploit the country's resources in ivory (Shorter 1972: 288, 293). The office of *mutwaale* was purely lay, "bureaucratic", e.g. his competences did not involve rainmaking. Unlike traditional chiefs, they were not connected with their territory in any mystic way and were often transferred to other place, apparently in order to avoid creation of such bonds. It did not require good descent to become a *mutawaale*. They were not necessarily ethnic Kimbu since some political exiles from Ubungu and Hehe obtained the office (Shorter 1972: 305).

In Ukimbu, Nyungu's policy run counter to the traditional exclusiveness and ritual hierarchies. The ruler was an outsider himself. By contrast to Mirambo, Nyungu formed new administration whose task was to deprive traditional chiefs of their power. This administration was not rooted in the old elites, nor did it draw on their mode of dominance and the values they represented. Quite the contrary, Nyungu's governors depended exclusively on their ruler, vouchsafing their loyalty, which allowed him to disregard traditional chiefs (Shorter 1972: 296).

Likewise, Munyigumba and Mkwawa established new administration in their polity. Some of the conquered chiefs were restored to their former chiefdoms as subordinate chiefs, in other cases the ruling chief was driven out, and the country given to a younger brother (also sons-in-law and cousins), or to some collated branch of the family (strangely, children are not mentioned in this context). In other cases, outsiders were installed (Brown & Hutt 1935: 44-5). Both groups were recruited basing on merit and ability. Just as in Ukimbu, they did not claim any ritual position (Redmayne 1964: 192). Governors of the royal blood were addressed just the same as the traditional chiefs (*mutwa - vatwa*), and administered very extensive districts. Others who ruled over smaller areas (a few big villages) were called *vansagila* (sing: *mnzagila*). Thus an informal hierarchy of chiefs existed. However, Redmayne thinks there was not a consistent multi-level system of power (Redmayne 1964: 180, 183).

6. Economic base

A typical East African chiefdom of the era lived off several sources: warfare, tribute, court fees, compulsory work, and external trade. Natural conditions and economic setting marked out the potential of accumulation of wealth and tribute-taking. Tribute consisted of agricultural and husbandry products as well those of handicraft such as hoes, bark cloth, etc. At least some Nyamwezi chiefs had numerous slaves some of who tilled their land (Abrahams 1967: 95-6; see also Deutsch 2000: 63-71). This made them independent from tribute. Occasionally chiefs sold ivory and slaves. The latter were also hired out as porters to caravans (Deutsch 2000: 67).

The change that ensued after transition from chiefdom to state was one of scale. It is highly possible that the rulers of the three polities developed slave economy, yet sources are rather reticent on the subject. An indirect hint may flow from accumulating large numbers of slaves. For example, Mirambo drew on the judiciary system of the Nyamwezi chiefdoms that included selling people into slavery under trivial pretexts (Broyon-Mirambo 1878: 35). On the other hand, he redistributed most of the cattle and slaves among his warriors satisfying himself with only a small portion of the loot (Bennett 1971: 133-4). Whatever the amount of produce that was brought by Mirambo's slave economy, it was only for the court's needs, as the army was supplied, both in men and food, by the subject chiefdoms. Except for these extremely burdensome obligations (Reid 2007: 133), it seems that Mirambo did not introduce any special tribute or tax.

Sources do not mention selling people into slavery in the two other polities. However, the ruler of the Hehe was "the sole possessor of the country" and the only man who was entitled to be rich. Those subjects who accumulated too much wealth were robbed by king's men. Mkwawa owned houses, wives, and slaves that were dispersed across the country. He stored large quantities of ivory, guns, and imported trade goods, especially cloth. As the monopolist in trade he was able to pay bride-wealth for his favourite warriors. He rewarded his men irrespective of their descent. In the case of food shortage, the *vatwa* distributed grain and cattle among the needy. It was central to the system that the ruler was the sole buyer and distributor of imported goods and seller of ivory and slaves, both within the Hehe territory and abroad (Redmayne 1964: 191; Brown & Hutt 1935: 32). As early as in 1879, Joseph Thomson saw that cotton cloth and beads were widespread among Hehe men and women (Thomson 1881: I, 218). The Hehe polity mechanism of taking and giving was more all-embracing than in the two other cases. But it was not only the ruler's court that was its hub, as most wealth was transmitted by the *vatwa*, both in their administrative and military capacities. It seems that it was also their own courts that redistributed wealth. Its sources were confiscations, forced labour, tribute of communal land, and, as the recent did not work properly, in practice part of the harvest of the commoners' land. Village headmen were in charge of the tribute collection (Redmayne 1964: 173).

Monopoly on ivory was an important part of rulers' wealth, especially in Nyungu's polity. His subjects paid tribute in ivory which is exceptional although understandable given the vast resources of that precious product available in the country. Before Nyungu's era ivory found on unoccupied land belonged to the public. Normally, East African chiefs claimed only one tusk out of the two (Pawelczak 2000: 124). In Uhehe, the ruler's exclusive right to ivory was introduced by Munyigumba (DB, Iringa, r. 9/19; Brown & Hutt 1935: 31). It is not clear whether Mirambo attempted to introduce monopoly on international trade but even if he did, it was very difficult to implement. As for Mirambo, not only did he trade extensively in ivory, but also hired his subjects out as porters to caravans (Rockel 2006: 95, 158; Bennett 1971: 83, 87, 152). It may be contended that such men supplemented their income by trading on their own.

Inhabitants of the territories of the three polities, before they emerged, except for Sukuma, had not possessed large herds of cattle. Of the Unyamwezi, only Unyamembe held significant numbers, as cattle herding was not a part of the Unyamwezi culture, hence they entrusted their cattle to the Tussi (Broyon-Mirambo 1878: 30). Ukimbu and southern Unyamwezi did not hold cattle due to the presence

of tsetse fly. Burton who travelled in East African in the late 1850s wrote that the Hehe had plenty of cattle. In fact, he referred to the people living closely to the caravan route who did not belong to Uhehe proper (Burton 1860: I, 239-40). These territories were included in Mkwawa's polity only in the 1880s. In fact, the Hehe collected large herds of cattle as a result of successful raiding under Munyigumba and Mkwawa (DB, Iringa, r. 9/19). By the second half of the 1870s, Thomson referred to the Hehe as a "pure pastoral tribe" (Thomson 1881: I, 234). Despite of that, cattle never became substantial part of any social payments including bride-wealth. It remained at an extreme low level even if the Hehe were a patrilineal society (Ankermann 1929: 117; Brown & Hutt 1935: 36). This changed only during the colonial period (Redmayne 1964: 99). Under Munyigumba and Mkwawa, cattle, even if overseen by commoners, did not belong to them. The real owners were *vitwaale* and the ruler himself, who when necessary took it to war expeditions as a source of provisions for the army (Brown & Hutt 1935: 47).

7. Army and war

Mirambo and Nyungu relied on large standing armies whose backbone was *ruga ruga*. Their unusual outlook, including hair dress with attached trophies that were made of their enemies' bodies, as well as subtle methods of intimidation, sowed terror (Shorter 1972: 260). They were unmarried men of different ethnic origins who escaped surveillance of their lineages and made warfare their profession. Many groups of *ruga ruga* seem to have acted independently all along the central route, but strong rulers managed to attract most of them. Mirambo awarded the retired *ruga ruga* with slaves and land and allowed them to marry (Southon). According to Shorter, Nyungu's *ruga ruga* consisted of 16 battalions headed by *mutwaale* (lieutenant). Europeans occasionally met *ruga ruga* units numbering as many as 500 warriors. Nyungu personally distributed the booty among the warriors depending on their merits (Shorter 1972: 279).

While nothing is known of any Ngoni component of Nyungu's army (Shorter 1972: 130, 288), Mirambo's forces included mercenaries of that ethnic group. Mirambo is reported to have lived among the Ngoni and spoke their language which was instrumental in adopting their values and certain elements of the military strategy by the *ruga ruga* (Bennett 1971: 36). However, Ngoni groups were never subdued and waged war on Mirambo at times (Reid 2007: 188). The other, yet less seen doing so, alien group fighting for the ruler were the Maasai (Reid 2007: 134). Mirambo's standing military force was supplement by slave warriors. In Unyamwezi, military units consisting of slaves (*waniakuru*) were an old tradition,

perhaps modelled on the Arab pattern. Mirambo successfully included them into his forces, settling them in his frontier bases (Broyon-Mirambo 1878: 33).

In Mirambo's polity, the importance of *ruga ruga* may be attributed to the fact that many Nyamwezi young men spent long time in caravans and had tasks related to agriculture. Compulsory military service resulted in detachment from these activities and consequently disorganized economic life. This actually happened to Mirambo's polity in 1884, when its ruler fought multiple enemies. To free able-bodied men from social obligations he banned them from cultivation labours (Reid 2007: 131). It seems that during the 1870s the importance of levy in mass was more limited. Stanley's account of his conversation with Mirambo sheds some light on the problem. The ruler praised young men as the only effective warriors in the field, whereas grown-ups, in his opinion, were better in siege (Stanley 1878: I, 387). If the young men represent *ruga ruga* and adults levy in mass, it may be argued that the former were charged with operations against enemies who were capable of serious resistance. The older men were put to work in more "scheduled" actions.

As caravan going was not frequent among the Hehe, and men's role in agriculture was not so vital as that of women, the fact that every adult Hehe man was obliged to serve in the army had no such grave consequences as in Mirambo's polity (Nigmann 1908: 74). For Nyungu, the choice of *ruga ruga* might have been a remedy against scarcity of able-bodied men who were not engaged in caravan portage and elephant hunting.

Unlike in Mirambo's and Nyungu's, levy in mass was the backbone of the Hehe army. Governors who ruled provinces were responsible for the mobilization of men and cattle (used as provisions). They led their battalions to war. The term "levy in mass" may be confusing as the Hehe army was almost permanently active and in this respect might be called a standing army. Hehe warriors covered the cost of weapons and outfit (Redmayne 1964: 170), which accounts for the fact that by contrast to Mirambo's army as late as in 1877, the Hehe did not use firearms (Redmayne 1964: 192). Later, guns and ammunition were given to selected leaders and warriors (Brown & Hutt 1935: 32).

Just like Mirambo, Munyigumba organized a network of military stations on the frontiers, yet instead of slaves, they were manned with pages (*vigendo*), who were not only free men but often ones of rank. Mkwawa favoured centralization of army command and concentrated his forces in his main stronghold Fort Kalenga on the Little Ruaha. The place was inhabited by 2,000 to 3,000 warriors, members of capital battalions. It may be argued that in some way they fulfilled

the role of a standing army. While neither Munyigumba nor Mkwawa had units or even personal guard based on mercenaries, some Nyamwezi warriors, as well as members of other ethnic groups, voluntarily served in these battalions (Brown & Hutt 1935: 35-6; Nigmann 1908: 77). The huge fort was important to Mkwawa's system of defence against those who dared counterattack his raids. The structure was first seen in 1884, but the place of the same name that was destroyed by the German army in 1894 was more newly built (Redmayne 1964: 152).

The efficiency of the army transport was limited by the natural conditions of the East African interior. Except for human carriage, armies of the Hehe and Nyamwezi used some donkeys. In the Hehe polity the distance from the capital to the most remote territories amounted to a 7-day walk (Redmayne 1964: 169). In Mirambo's it was perhaps twice as much and in Nyungu's some place in between these numbers. One of the most important obstacles to African pre-colonial army was scarceness of provisions. Typically, a chiefdom was able to sustain the army for one week in one place, irrespective of whether it stationed on its own or foreign land. Mirambo used to solve the problem through fast marches and dispersion of troops when on the route. The army marched long distances (60 to 70 and even up to 100 km a day) and attacked selected targets by surprise, usually the villages that had not surrendered to Mirambo of their own will (Southon 1963: 85). Mirambo disregarded diplomatic rules that were commonly observed in the region, e.g. never proclaimed war (Reid 2007: 184). Sieges of population centres were central to his strategy, as Unyamwezi was sparsely populated except for stockaded villages that provided a degree of safety. A conquest of such a village resulted in taking control of the whole surrounding country (Reid 2007: 63-65).

Mirambo rarely pitched battles, even if he was able to succeed in an open skirmish with over a 2,200-strong Zanzibar expedition armed with artillery. While his people used firearms, it was rather fast marches and the unpredictability of their moves that gave them victories (Southon). Also, false rumours about the direction of the marches and the locations of camps added to the effectiveness of this strategy (Reid 2007: 218). Mirambo moved about with substantial forces, up to 7,000 people, but at some point he had to conduct his campaigns in various parts of his domain dealing with rebellions of the subjects and external threats. (Bennett 1971: 134). When planning expeditions, he was always concerned about the possible reaction of Unyamwezi. Sometimes the Arab threat frustrated his schemes against other neighbours (Reid 2007: 67). The ruler's 1882 letter to Colonel Miles, British vice consul at Zanzibar, shows that by that time Mirambo had a clear vision that his military efforts are detrimental to the whole

region and the only justification for them is the final peace and stabilization that should rule once the wars were over (Reid 2007: 98).

During peacetime, Mirambo's warriors had "the right to live off the country". They also had women, granted by the ruler, to cultivate for them. On the warpath they had to extract their food from the local people (Becker 1887: II, 507-8; Kabeya 1966: 43). Every new headman named by Mirambo became responsible for supplying the army with men and provisions (Southon 1963: 85). Stanley witnessed Mirambo and his 1,500-strong army visit Serombo, the capital of Urungwe. The cries of the chief of the place prompted his subjects to collect food for the warriors (Stanley 1878: I, 385).

As already mentioned, the Ngoni and Sangu pursued an aggressive policy which aimed at slave catching at the cost of all their neighbours: the Bena, Konongo, Hehe, and Kimbu (Shorter 1972: 239, 246-7). Initially, being divested of the benefits of the caravan trade and access to firearms, the Hehe accepted their inferior position and sent hostages to the Ngoni. Those in captivity had an insight into what made warfare effective. They learned well enough and soon were able to raid the Ngoni themselves (Redmayne 1964: 140-1; Redmond 1985: 53-5). Although the Hehe emulated the South African immigrants, they did not follow their organizational model with regiments based on age-classes, and made some innovations, e.g. introducing throwing spears (Pizzo 2007: 55-6). Among the three polities in question, only Mkwawa's strategy stipulated fighting regular battles, including those with the Ngoni and the German colonial army (Redmayne 1964: 170; Shorter 1972: 278).

While most other peoples fought only in the dry season, the Hehe went to war even during the rains (Redmayne 1964: 169). Nigmann published a list of major wars fought by Mkwawa. For the 1880s he mentions: Ugogo expedition who set up a permanent garrison there (1880), an attempt to conquer Ungoni (1882), Nyamwezi attack on Uhehe (1883), next Ugogo expedition (1885), a war with Merere of Usangu (1886), a war in Usagara (1887), another expedition to Usangu (1888). Beside those wars other sources note numerous attacks on Ugogo and Usagara. These were not necessarily organized by Mkwawa. Some of them could have been undertaken by groups of *ruga ruga* acting on their own, or by the Hehe colonies on the northern frontier (Redmayne 149-50). As seen, except 1884, Mkwawa sent raiding expeditions almost every year. In this respect he did not differ significantly from Mirambo and Nyungu.

8. Conclusions

In all the above-presented cases, an external factor – not technology, demographic pressure, or social differentiation – was essential to form and sustain political institutions. More specifically, the prime drive of political change was the international caravan trade. It created demand for slaves and ivory, offering some communities incentives for producing surplus food. It also brought into circulation manufactured products, including prestige goods, which was the key factor supporting power structures. It also brought surplus labour that helped build an economic base independent of tribute collection.

However, the caravan trade did not directly influence the transition of the polities in question into large, three-tier political organisations. While for Munyigumba, Mirambo, and Nyungu-ya-Mawe raiding their neighbours and tapping caravan trade preceded political expansion, other societies conducted such policies most effectively and did not necessarily expand (e.g. the Sangu).

In the three polities analysed here, the mobilisation of social forces ensued as a result of a particular victimhood experience. Initially, these societies were victims of oppression and exploitation that originated in the caravan trade, subsequent wars, slave-hunting, and migrations. The experience triggered an acceptance of both centralised government and the high cost of subjugating other communities. On the other hand, this mimetic behaviour had its limits. State formation required some degree of isolation from external political forces, especially the Sultanate of Zanzibar, coastal Muslim traders, compatriots who settled in the interior, and the Ngoni polities. Characteristically, the Mirambo polity emerged rather far from the main Muslim colony in the region, Nyungu-ya-Mawe, in a region that failed to attract the caravans, and the Hehe, in a country that caravans had never traversed.

As shown, the most critical differences in political organisation between the three polities were as follows:

- while the administrative cadres of the Hehe polity were recruited from among the ruler's agnates, Mirambo and Nyungu delegated power to persons who were not related to the dynasty – either members of local elites, as in the case of Mirambo, or, as in Nyungu's case, men selected by merit and distinguished by achievement.
- the Hehe army was more or less rooted in the old, pre-state communities, and each battalion mobilised was led by an administrative chief. In contrast, standing and mercenary armies dominated the polities of Mirambo and Nyungu. Even in the presence of compulsory recruitment, the warriors were no longer linked

to their local communities through commanders and fellow fighters. The polities of Mirambo and of the Hehe, but not that of Nyungu, practised military colonisation and stationed garrisons at their capitals.

– while the Hehe focused on external predatory raids and controlling their borders, Mirambo, having expanded the limits of his territory to the maximum available given the physical environment and the existing means of transport and communication, concentrated on disciplining subjects. His main external enemy was Unyanyembe Arabs, yet his approach towards his strongest neighbour was defensive, as the Arabs could not and perhaps, from Mirambo's point of view, should not have been ousted from Unyanyembe.

A mercenary army consisting of uprooted young men who were wholly dependent on the ruler was better suited to disciplining subjects than troops composed of men who were closely related and led by local leaders (even if the leaders were royal agnates). These *ruga ruga* were capable of quick reactions to quell outbursts of defiance. Anonymity and estrangement freed them of reservations against brutality, and they supported themselves via looting. The levy en masse of the Hehe, in turn, was an institution characteristic of a state that emerged from a segmentary system without destroying its components. The ruler relied on the loyalty of the subordinate chiefdoms. In such polities, local governors had vast powers and commanded troops, yet the only persons who qualified for such an office had to be of royal blood, as only this ensured loyalty. If such a solution was impractical, as in the cases of Mirambo and Nyungu-ya-Mawe, the ruler needed an army that could work along the *ruga ruga* lines.

By introducing state ownership of cattle herds, Munyigumba found a way to avoid looting his subjects. He primarily conducted planned expeditions. Even while on the defensive, he could easily predict subsequent moves since attacks were generally in response to the Hehe's incursion into enemy territory. It is impossible to judge what came first here: Did objectives determine the means, or did the means at hand delineate objectives, i.e. Mirambo's military policy was something that Mkwawa could not afford as he lacked the demographic and economic base of his Nyamwezi counterpart?

Should the fact that Nyungu sustained an army that was similarly organised to that of Mirambo be attributed to the affinity of priorities, i.e. disciplining one's own subjects instead of planning military campaigns against neighbours? Notably, Nyungu was an outsider in Ukimbu and favoured an administration that was external to the local structures of power. Consequently, one may presume that the ruler had to deal with many cases of insubordination, even if the evidence is scanty for answering this question. Nevertheless, Nyungu's territory was much

more susceptible to raids than Uhehe, and a levy en masse would not work against external intrusions from multiple directions.

Further, two models of interference in the economic life of the society emerge in the above cases. In the first, represented by the Hehe, cattle were excluded from social circulation, and subjects were banned from participating in the caravan trade. Foreign goods were redistributed at both the centre of power and the local level. This practice not only made subjects more dependent on the ruler, but it also tied local communities to governors. The Hehe rulers pushed the limits of state involvement in the economic life of individuals much further than anybody else in what is now Tanzania. This model seems characteristic of a smaller, culturally well-integrated political community where aggression is directed towards neighbours rather than one's own territory.

In the less restrictive model embodied here by the polities of Mirambo and Nyungu-ya-Mawe, despite onerous economic burdens, each chiefdom, village, and household preserved a greater degree of autonomy. While subjects' futures among the Hehe depended on the ruler's gratitude alone, in Mirambo and Nyungu's polities, subjects produced surpluses and accumulated wealth for social payments. Some were even capable of buying slaves. That was possible due to the benefits of tolling, looting caravans, and direct participation in international trade that exceeded that of the Hehe. Mkwawa's choice in that respect was limited. He did some looting and traded, at least partly, through brokers. Being better endowed with fertile soil and pastures, Uhehe gave its rulers a chance to control the surplus. Furthermore, Mirambo and Nyungu benefited from the effectiveness of their armies, the existence of some sort of slave economy, and the state monopoly over the trade of ivory and slaves. Here redistribution was used to reward loyal subjects but also to uproot them from the local communities, most of which were far from eager to bear the high cost of government.

The links among ecology, population, and the mode of political dominance in the two polities are as follows. Nyungu, as a ruler of an ivory-yielding country, relied on his monopoly of elephant tusks. Dealing with sparsely inhabited arid lands with the help of outsiders was comparatively easy, especially since they did not have to oversee production and taxation. Mirambo's situation was similar, but his country was less abundant in ivory; thus, his rule was based on war and the caravan trade. His main concern was provisioning his army, which operated across a vast area. This area was too extensive and the local communities too numerous and too many to engraft the ruler's kin. Soliciting loyalty based on fear and reward seemed an ideal solution.

The above conclusions shed a little light on the possible directions of development of emerging ideologies of the polities under scrutiny, or at least their relation to the ideology of simple chiefdoms. The latter was based on the redistributive functions of the ruler, their obligation to ensure the general well-being of the subjects, e.g. through control over rain-making, and the role of the ruling lineage in the cult of ancestors. The Hehe, with the army firmly embedded in the community, probably drew on the ideology of simple chiefdom and its redistributive and protective role; however, in this case, such practices transferred to a higher level of government. At the same time though, it is likely that the weakly developed simple chieftainship of the Hehe did not provide a developed language and set of symbols associated with monarchical power, which very likely required their creation from scratch by Munyigumba and his son. By contrast, Mirambo and Nyungu-ya-Mawe created political, economic and military centres outside and, to some extent, against the local communities they ruled. By creating a power source external to traditional communities, they theoretically operated independently of traditional ideologies. However, it is not very likely that they were interested in replacing them at a fundamental level. In the case of Mirambo, this is suggested by the ruler's marriages to the daughters of locally ruling lineages.

There are also no grounds for formulating judgements about the *ruga ruga* ideology and its connection with the rule of either Mirambo or Nuyungu. Instead, the existing literature indicates the subversive and anti-traditional nature of the symbolism they used, indicated by bizarre costumes reminiscent of the West African rebel armies known from the late 20th century. However, we do not have detailed information or images of *ruga ruga* from any period earlier than the mid-1880s.

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Ghanaian language as a national language: perspectives of Ghanaian university students

Abstract

This article was propelled by some calls for the enactment of a language policy on an indigenous national language for Ghana. It explores the perspectives of Ghanaian university students on the choice of a Ghanaian language as a national one, using descriptive statistics from a questionnaire survey conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences, KNUST. The analysis of the survey results on key questions on the subject revealed that there is a place for indigenous language(s), such as Asante Twi, as the national language. However, respondents hold a slightly more positive attitude towards the English language than Ghanaian language(s) in national communication.

Keywords: Ghanaian languages, national language, Asante Twi, KNUST, language policy

1. Introduction

Ghana is a West African state bordering Burkina Faso on the north, the Gulf of Guinea on the south, Togo on the east and Côte d'Ivoire on the west. It is a multilingual country with about thirty (30) to eighty (80) indigenous or native languages. This discrepancy in the number of languages emanates from the lack of consensus that exists amongst scholars on the subject (Hall 1993; Dakubu 1988; Dakubu 2006). Dakubu (2006) acknowledges the difficulty in quantifying the existent languages in Ghana and attributes this to the method of counting and the difference(s) between language and dialect. Dakubu (1988: 10), therefore, remarks that "there are instances where speech forms that could be regarded as dialects of one language on purely linguistic criteria, are more conveniently treated as separate languages because that is how the speakers feel about them." Notwithstanding, Eberhard, Simons & Fennig (2022) estimate that there are seventy-three (73) living languages in Ghana.

According to the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL), out of the many indigenous languages in Ghana, nine are sponsored by the government: Akan, Ewe, Ga, Dangme, Nzema, Dagbani, Dagaare, Gonja, and Kasem; of which Akan has three dialects including Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi and Fante. This means that these languages are supported by the BGL, established in 1951, through publishing and promoting materials in these languages for education, mass communication and other national interests. Out of these languages, Akan is the most spoken language in Ghana with over 40% of the national population using it. Out of the three Akan dialects, Asante Twi is said to be the most spoken by most Ghanaians, as either their first or second language, across the country (Osam 2003; Dolphyne 2006; Sasu 2022).

The English language was introduced to the shores of the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) by the British colonizers through means such as trade, religion, and education (Morris 1998). After its introduction, it was principally used in all government businesses and given so much prominence in the lives of the Ghanaian people. There was a need to choose a language for government operations when Ghana became independent. For Sey (1973), because of the prominence which was accorded the English language in colonial times, it became a historical accident that it was selected – probably, Ghanaians would have wanted to choose an indigenous language for such a purpose. Morris (1998: 16)

opines that the selection process was a difficult task for the government at the time because it was perceived that “to choose one language would infer a hierarchy among the people and their languages”. Hence, the English language became the language of government business or official language of Ghana (Huber & Dako 2004). It has become an important language, together with Akan and Hausa¹, for people from different linguacultural backgrounds in Ghana (Obeng 1997). The English language abounds as the major language in areas such as education, business and institutional administration, and governance in Ghana.

Notwithstanding the supposed tranquillity in communication that the English language has given Ghanaians, there have been some calls by some Ghanaians for the adoption of a Ghanaian language to be used for national communication (Ampratwum-Mensah 1998; Morris 1998; Prempeh 2004; Adu-Gyamfi 2014; Aboagye-Dacosta & Adade-Yeboah 2019). What such calls seek to achieve is the enactment of a language policy that will give prominence to an indigenous language to be identified as the language of the nation, Ghana. Proponents of this are of the view that giving a Ghanaian language the recognizable status as the language of the nation – i.e. the national language, per this article – will proffer unity and a higher sense of identity and belongingness among Ghanaians. Thus, it will serve as a propelling force for the integration of all Ghanaians into a wider Ghanaian society and for the international community to recognize Ghana and its people through the enacted Ghanaian language of the nation. Aboagye-Dacosta & Adade-Yeboah (2019: 142) assert that the projection of the English language for official purposes and most government businesses has “left a significant percentage of Ghanaians marginalized” as a majority of the adult populace are not proficient users of the language of the colonizers. They, therefore, suggest the promulgation of a national language policy which will incorporate an indigenous Ghanaian language by noting thus:

“The multicultural and multi-ethnic state of Ghana makes it pertinent to play it safe by choosing a neutral language as a national language, however, the Akan language (with all its variants [Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi, and Fante]) would not be difficult to adopt in this regard... it is spoken by both indigenes and non-indigenes alike”, (Aboagye-Dacosta & Adade-Yeboah 2019: 147).

¹ Hausa plays an important role in Ghana’s sociolinguistic landscape although it is not an indigenous Ghanaian language. It is predominantly used by many people living in communities mostly occupied by Muslims, known as the *zongos* (see Sadat 2023). In standard Hausa singular form is *zango*.

It must also be noted that one of the main criticisms levelled against the adoption of indigenous national languages in multilingual countries, such as Ghana, is the subjugation of the other local languages which were not selected as the national ones (Stephens 2005). Morris (1998) even dares to state that this subjugation may transcend to the people – i.e. those whose language was selected may feel superior to the others. With both the upsides and downsides in mind, many believe that the selection of a Ghanaian language as a national language should be preceded by a thorough education of the citizenry (Kwesi 2011; Sadat & Kuwornu 2017; Aboagye-Dacosta & Adade-Yeboah 2019). Dzameshie (1988) acknowledges that the subject of enacting a policy on a Ghanaian national language has been on the table for discussion after the independence of the country. However, such a policy has not been enacted because of the differences in opinions on its advantages or disadvantages. This article was precipitated by the various calls by some Ghanaians (Ampratwum-Mensah 1998; Morris 1998; Prempeh 2004; Adu-Gyamfi 2014; Aboagye-Dacosta & Adade-Yeboah 2019) for the adoption of a language policy that will give a Ghanaian language the status as the national language. Consequently, this article defines a national language as an indigenous language that is given a recognizable status as the language of a nation through the enactment of a language policy (Fathi 2023). For Fasold (1987), this language may serve to unite a nation and as a national symbol through its usage. Following from the above, this article explores the views of Ghanaian university students on the choice of a Ghanaian language as a national language for Ghana.

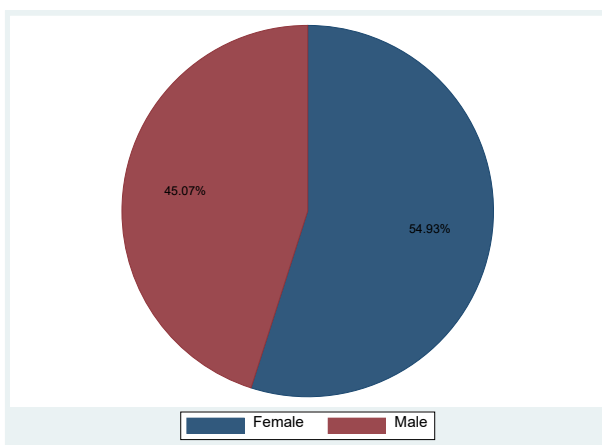
2. Data and methods

The population for the present study is Ghanaian university students. The university community presents a multilingual and multicultural society, with people from various linguacultural backgrounds of the country (as demonstrated in Table 1), which is necessary for a study of this kind. Further, the researchers believe that university students may present candid judgement on questions for such a study. Considering the huge number of members in this group, it was necessary to pick a relevant sample for the study. With this, students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, (KNUST), Kumasi – Ghana, were used as participants. This faculty presents, to the researchers, students who may keep abreast with trends and issues related to language and nation building as it gathers students taking courses in languages (English, Akan, and French), Media and

Communication Studies, Political Studies, Sociology, History, and other social science related programmes.

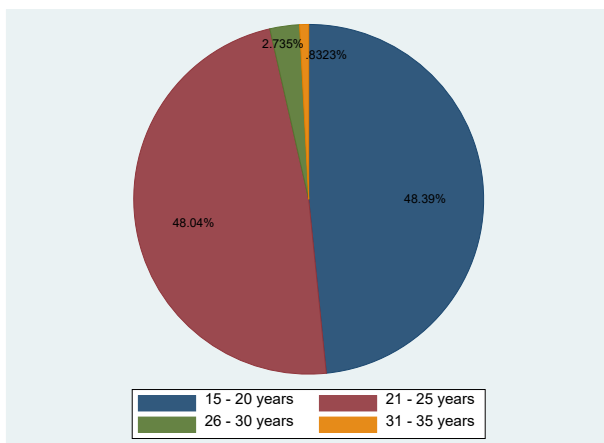
A questionnaire survey was carried out using Google Forms, an online survey platform, to gather information from the said students on their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and their views on specific questions towards an indigenous national language of Ghana. The data collection took place in the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. A total of 841 random students from the said faculty responded to the online survey. Although the responses from these students may not provide generalizable data, the responses provide insights into the students' views on the choice of a Ghanaian language as a national language for Ghana. This will inform future research on the subject of the present study and contribute to the growing debate in the Ghanaian community on an indigenous national language for Ghana. The figures and tables below show the respondents' demographics.

Figure 1: Sex of the respondents



Note: 462 respondents, representing 54.93% of the total of 841 respondents for the study were female, whereas 379, representing 45.07% of the respondents were male.

Figure 2: Age of the respondents



Note: The percentages on the pie chart show that respondents were predominantly within the age range of 15 – 20 years old (48.39% of 841 respondents) and 21 – 25 years old (48.04% of 841 respondents). The 26 – 30 and 31 – 35 age groups years were the least populous representing 2.735% and 0.8323%, respectively. These suggest that most of the respondents were between the ages of 15 – 25, which represents 96.43% of the total respondents.

TABLE 1: Native or ethnic languages of the respondents

3. What is your native or ethnic language?	Freq.	%	Cum.
Ahanta	1	0.12	0.12
Akuapem Twi	62	7.37	7.49
Akyem	1	0.12	7.61
Asante Twi	432	51.37	58.98
Banda	1	0.12	59.10
Basaare	1	0.12	59.22
Basare	1	0.12	59.33
Bimoba	4	0.48	59.81
Bimoba	1	0.12	59.93

3. What is your native or ethnic language?	Freq.	%	Cum.
Bissa	2	0.24	60.17
Bissa	1	0.12	60.29
Bono	7	0.83	61.12
Bono	3	0.36	61.47
Bono twi	1	0.12	61.59
Buem	1	0.12	61.71
Buli	1	0.12	61.83
Bulisa	1	0.12	61.95
Dagaare	18	2.14	64.09
Dagbani	7	0.83	64.92
Dangme	17	2.02	66.94
Ewe	63	7.49	74.44
Fante	106	12.60	87.04
Frafra	7	0.83	87.87
Frafra	1	0.12	87.99
Fula	1	0.12	88.11
Ga	31	3.69	91.80
Gonja	7	0.83	92.63
Grusi	1	0.12	92.75
Grusi	1	0.12	92.87
Guan	6	0.71	93.58
Gurma	1	0.12	93.70
Gurune	1	0.12	93.82
Gurusi	1	0.12	93.94
Hausa	1	0.12	94.05
Hausa	1	0.12	94.17

3. What is your native or ethnic language?	Freq.	%	Cum.
Kasem	15	1.78	95.96
Konkomba	3	0.36	96.31
Konkomba	1	0.12	96.43
Kosaal	1	0.12	96.55
Kotokoli	1	0.12	96.67
Krobo	1	0.12	96.79
Kusaal	2	0.24	97.03
Kusaase	1	0.12	97.15
Kusaasi	1	0.12	97.27
Kusal	1	0.12	97.38
Kusasi	2	0.24	97.62
Kyerepon (Guan)	1	0.12	97.74
Mamprusi	1	0.12	97.86
Moshie	1	0.12	97.98
Nzema	7	0.83	98.81
Sefwi	1	0.12	98.93
Sefwi	2	0.24	99.17
Sissale	1	0.12	99.29
Talensi	1	0.12	99.41
Tchambar/Chambar	1	0.12	99.52
Wala	1	0.12	99.64
Walee	1	0.12	99.76
Wasa	2	0.24	100.00
Total	841	100.00	

Note: Table 1 shows the multi-linguacultural status of the university community for a study of this kind. The table captures about fifty (50) ethnic or native languages of the respondents. The ethnic languages with most respondents out

of the total of 841 are: Asante Twi (432), Fante (106), Ewe (63), Akuapem Twi (62), Ga (31), Dagaare (18), Dangme (17), Kasem (15), Bono (11), Frafra (8), Nzema (7), Gonja (7), Dagbani (7), Guan (6) and Bimoba (5). The remaining languages listed in the table have fewer than 5 respondents each.

3. Findings and discussion

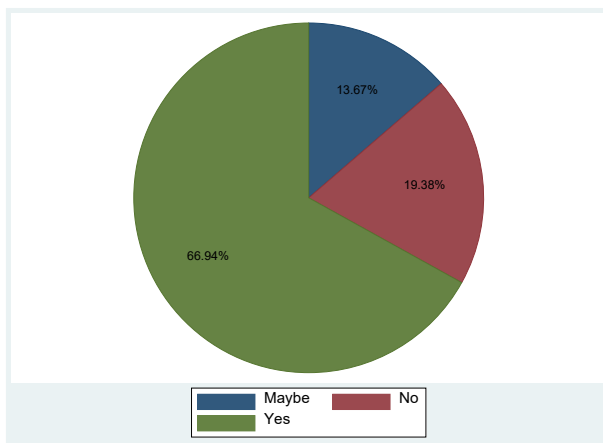
This section presents the results of the questionnaire survey on the perspectives of Ghanaian students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, KNUST, on an indigenous national language for Ghana. Aside from the demographics presented above, the survey solicited views on whether Ghana needs an indigenous national language, the widely spoken Ghanaian language, whether the widely spoken Ghanaian language should be used as a national language, why Ghana needs a Ghanaian language as a national language, which of the government sponsored Ghanaian languages should be used as a national language, and the descriptions of respondents' attitudes towards the use of Ghanaian languages and the English language in national communication. In the survey, the three dialects of Akan are presented independently due to their status as widely used dialects and they are equally taught as separate subjects in schools.

3.1 Does Ghana need a Ghanaian language as a national language?

The 841 respondents expressed their view on whether Ghana needs a Ghanaian language to be used as a national language. 563 of the respondents (66.94%) responded in the affirmative, 163 (19.38%) responded in the negative and 115 (13.67%) were uncertain.

A total of 302 out of 462 female respondents believe that Ghana should have a local language as a national one, 64 are uncertain, whilst the remaining 96 do not believe a Ghanaian language should be used for national purposes. When it comes to males, 261 of the total 379 respondents chose "Yes" on the afore-stated question, 67 decided on "No" and 51 selected "Maybe". From these, 68.9% of the total male respondents selected "Yes" whilst 65.4% of the total female respondents selected "Yes". It can be posited that although both the male and female respondents see the need for a Ghanaian national language, the males are of a stronger conviction on the subject than their female counterparts. Table 2 shows the correlation between the sex of the respondents and the choice of the answer referred to above.

Figure 3: Does Ghana need a Ghanaian language as a national language?

**TABLE 2:** Correlation between the sex of the respondents and their opinions on whether Ghana needs a Ghanaian language as a national language

What is your sex?	Does Ghana need a Ghanaian language to be used as a national language?			
	Maybe	No	Yes	Total
Female	64	96	302	462
Male	51	67	261	379
Total	115	163	563	841

Further, the following are the percentages of “Yes” responses in different age ranges: 65.1% (265 out of 407) for 15 – 20-year olds; 67.8% (274 out of 404) for 21 – 25-year-olds; 73.9% (17 out of 23) for 26 – 30-year-olds; 100% (7 out of 7) for 31 – 35-year-olds. Percentagewise, respondents within the 31 – 35 age range feel stronger about the need for a native national language for Ghana (see Table 3).

TABLE 3: Correlation between the age of the respondents and their opinions on whether Ghana needs a Ghanaian language as a national language

What is your age?	Does Ghana need a Ghanaian language to be used as a national language?			
	Maybe	No	Yes	Total
15 - 20	55	87	265	407
21 - 25	58	72	274	404
26 - 30	2	4	17	23
31 - 35	0	0	7	7
Total	115	163	563	841

3.2 Should the Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in Ghana be used as the national language?

There have been some discussions, especially in the Ghanaian media landscape, on whether a widely spoken Ghanaian language should be considered as an indigenous national language (Ampratwum-Mensah 1998; Prempeh, 2004; Adu-Gyamfi 2014; Aboagye-Dacosta & Adade-Yeboah 2019). Therefore, the researchers found it necessary to solicit responses on the above question. Various research works have shown that Asante Twi has the most speakers in Ghana, both as L1 and L2 (Obeng 1997; Osam 2003). In order to affirm respondents' awareness of the Ghanaian language widely spoken in Ghana, they were asked to express their opinion on it. 774 (92.03%) of the total respondents selected Asante Twi as the dominant language used in Ghana (see Table 4), which is consistent with findings of Obeng (1997), Osam (2003), Dolphyne (2006) and others.

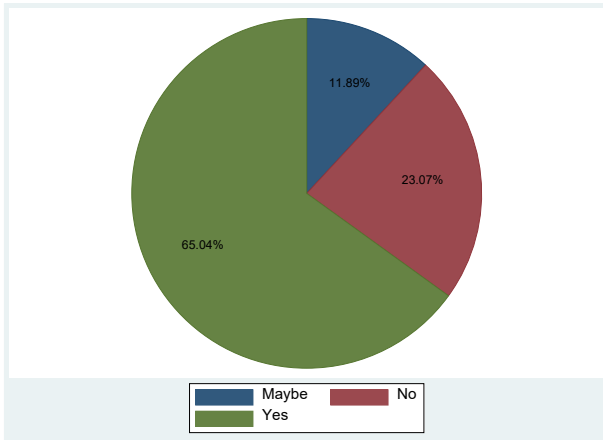
TABLE 4: Ghanaian language widely spoken in Ghana

In your estimation, which Ghanaian language is widely spoken in Ghana?	Freq.	%	Cum.
Akuapem Twi	38	4.52	4.52
Asante Twi	774	92.03	96.55
Dagaare	2	0.24	96.79
Dagbani	2	0.24	97.03
Dangme	1	0.12	97.15

In your estimation, which Ghanaian language is widely spoken in Ghana?	Freq.	%	Cum.
Ewe	1	0.12	97.27
Fante	15	1.78	99.05
Ga	4	0.48	99.52
Gonja	1	0.12	99.64
Hausa	1	0.12	99.76
Kyerepon(Guan)	1	0.12	99.88
Nkonya	1	0.12	100.00
Total	841	100.00	

When the respondents were asked whether the Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in Ghana should be used as the national language, 65% of the total respondents (547 out of 841) responded with an affirmative, “yes”, and the remaining 23% (194 out of 841) and 12% (100 out of 841) responding with “No” and “Maybe”, respectively (see Figure 4). Out of the 547 “yes” responses, 286 were from female respondents, whereas 261 came from male participants (see Table 5). However, it can be said that male respondents are more inclined for the popular Ghanaian language, in terms of usage, to be used as the national

Figure 4: Should the Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in Ghana be used as the national language?



language, considering their respective percentages for the number of respondents and yes responses – 69% of males as against 62% of females. In terms of age, the following are the “Yes” responses: 262 of the 407 respondents aged 15 -20; 262 out of 404 aged 21 – 25; 16 out of 23 aged 26 – 30; and 7 out of 7 within the 31 – 35 group (see Table 6).

TABLE 5: Correlation between the sex of the respondents and their belief whether the widely spoken Ghanaian language should be used as the national language in Ghana.

What is your sex?	Should a Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in Ghana be used as the national language?			
	Maybe	No	Yes	Total
Female	55	121	286	462
Male	45	73	261	379
Total	100	194	547	841

TABLE 6: Correlation between the age of the respondents and their opinions on whether the widely spoken Ghanaian language should be used as the national language

What is your age?	Should a Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in Ghana be used as the national language?			
	Maybe	No	Yes	Total
15 - 20	49	96	262	407
21 - 25	50	92	262	404
26 - 30	1	6	16	23
31 - 35	0	0	7	7
Total	100	194	547	841

A correlation between the respondents' native languages and their opinions on whether the widely spoken Ghanaian language should be used as the national language was established. Asante Twi was in general believed to be the widely spoken Ghanaian language. Here are the percentages of various L1 groups that believed that the widely spoken Ghanaian language should be

used as the national tongue. 320 out of the 432 native speakers of Asante Twi (74%) agreed to the use of a widely spoken Ghanaian language as the national language, followed by 37 out of 62 Akuapem Twi native speakers (60%); 7 out of 18 Dagaare speakers (39%); 5 out of 7 Dagbani speakers (71%); 8 out of 17 Dangme users (47%); 32 out of 63 Ewe native speakers (51%); 63 out of 106 Fante native speakers (59%), and 15 out of 31 Ga speakers (48%) (Table 7). Considering the correlational percentages presented for the top eight ethnic languages of the respondents, it can be seen that Dagaare-speaking respondents (39%) gave the least support to the widely spoken Ghanaian language – which the respondents believe to be Asante Twi – to be used as the national language, as seen above.

TABLE 7: Correlation between respondents' ethnic language and their opinions on whether the widely spoken Ghanaian language in Ghana should be used as the national language

What is your native or ethnic language?	Should a Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in Ghana be used as the national language?			
	Maybe	No	Yes	Total
Akuapem Twi	7	18	37	62
Asante Twi	45	67	320	432
Dagaare	1	10	7	18
Dagbani	0	2	5	7
Dangme	4	5	8	17
Ewe	5	26	32	63
Fante	16	27	63	106
Ga	7	9	15	31

Interestingly, out of the 774 respondents who selected Asante Twi as the widely spoken Ghanaian language, 517 said that it should be used as the national language, while the remainder, 168 and 89, responded with a “No” and “Maybe”, respectively. This means that although the respondents showed stronger support for this language as the widely used tongue, their support for the use of it as a national language was not so great any more – a difference in 257 responses (see Table 8). This reduction in confidence was also seen in the number

of native speakers of Asante Twi who supported its use as the national language (320 out of 432 natives) – a difference in 112 responses. It appears that although Asante Twi had a lot of native speakers and more responses for it as the widely spoken Ghanaian language as against other tongues, some respondents, even some native speakers, cast some doubts on its candidature as the national language. It could be argued that the respondents were not influenced by their ethnic backgrounds in their responses.

TABLE 8: Correlation between the widely spoken Ghanaian language in Ghana and whether it should be used as the national language

In your estimation, which Ghanaian language is widely spoken in Ghana?	Should the Ghanaian language that is widely spoken in Ghana be used as the national language?			
	Maybe	No	Yes	Total
Akuapem Twi	7	15	16	38
Asante Twi	89	168	517	774
Dagaare	0	2	0	2
Dagbani	0	2	0	2
Dangme	0	0	1	1
Ewe	0	1	0	1
Fante	4	4	7	15
Ga	0	0	4	4
Gonja	0	1	0	1
Hausa	0	1	0	1
Guan	0	0	1	1
Nkonya	0	0	1	1
Total	100	194	547	841

3.3 Which of the government-sponsored languages will you select as a national language?

As stated earlier, out of the 73 living Ghanaian languages, nine (Akan – i.e. Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi and Fante – Ewe, Ga, Dangme, Nzema, Dagbani, Dagaare, Gonja, and Kasem) are sponsored by the government through the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL). Therefore, it can be argued that these languages already have some level of prominence in terms of their speakers and acceptance from Ghanaians and the government. They have a clear written standard and are used through the support of the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL). It was therefore reasonable to establish which one of these sponsored languages should be chosen as a national language.

On this, the respondents decided as follows: 84.9% of the respondents (714 out of 841) selected Asante Twi, 5.2% (44 out of 841) selected Akuapem Twi, 4.8% (41 out of 841) selected Fante, with the remaining 5.1% (42 out of 841) votes distributed amongst the remaining government-sponsored languages, except Dangme – Dangme was not picked once (see Figure 5 for the breakdown). 385 out of the 462 female respondents (representing 83%) chose Asante Twi as their preferred national language, whilst 329 out of the 379 male respondents (representing 87%) chose the same (see Table 9 for the remaining details). Again, these percentages prove that the male respondents showed a firm choice of Asante Twi as compared to their female counterparts.

Table 10 details the distribution of the responses to the aforementioned question against respondents' age. The following are the percentages of study participants that supported Asante Twi: 100% for those aged 31 – 35; 85% for those aged 21 – 25; 84% for those between 15 – 20 years of age; and 83% for those aged 26 – 30. With this, all respondents within the 31 – 35 age bracket believed without a doubt in the suitability of Asante Twi in this race. Considering the numbers presented on the ethnic languages of respondents in Table 1 above and the language to be chosen out of the sponsored languages as the national language, it can be said that respondents made clear decisions without any prejudice. Although Asante Twi native speakers constituted only 432 respondents, this language received 714 responses for it to be selected as the national language; Fante with 106 native speakers had 42 responses, whereas Akuapem Twi with 62 L1 speakers got 44 picks.

Figure 5: Which of the government-sponsored languages will you select as the national language?

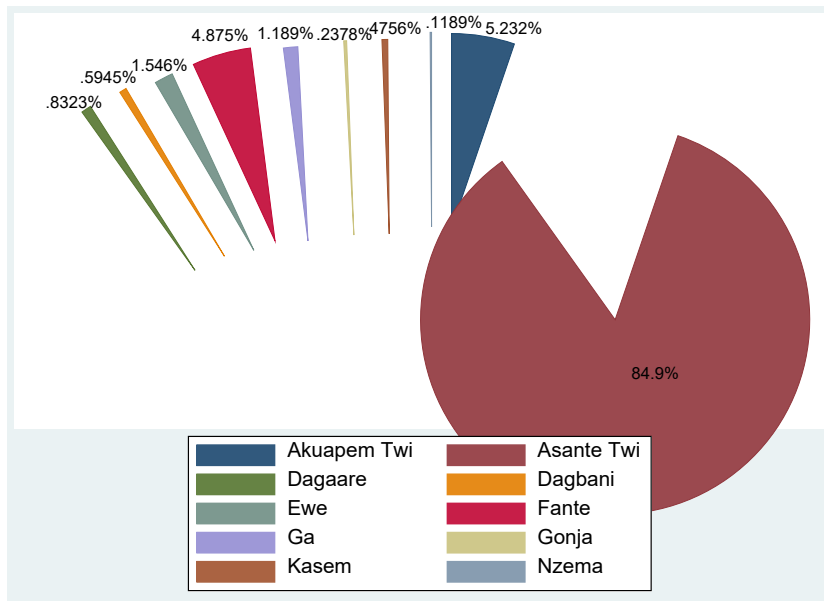


TABLE 9: Correlation between the sex of the respondents and the government-sponsored language to be used as the national language

What is your sex?		Female	Male	Total
Which of the government-sponsored languages will you select as the national language?	Akuapem Twi	27	17	44
	Asante Twi	385	329	714
	Dagaare	2	5	7
	Dagbani	2	3	5
	Ewe	10	3	13
	Fante	25	16	41
	Ga	7	3	10
	Gonja	0	2	2
	Kasem	4	0	4
	Nzema	0	1	1
	Total	462	379	841

TABLE 10: Correlation between the age of the respondents and the government-sponsored language to be used as the national language

What is your age? (in years)		15 - 20	21 - 25	26 - 30	31 - 35	Total
Which of the government-sponsored languages will you select as the national language?	Akuapem Twi	23	20	1	0	44
	Asante Twi	343	345	19	7	714
	Dagaare	2	5	0	0	7
	Dagbani	3	2	0	0	5
	Ewe	6	6	1	0	13
	Fante	21	20	0	0	41
	Ga	6	3	1	0	10
	Gonja	1	1	0	0	2
	Kasem	2	1	1	0	4
	Nzema	0	1	0	0	1
	Total	407	404	23	7	841

A total of 774 respondents selected Asante Twi as the widely spoken Ghanaian language in Ghana. Out of this, 703 decided that it should be made the national language out of the government-sponsored languages. This means that although Asante Twi was very popular amongst majority of the respondents as the most used language, the same number of people do not show faith in it as the national language – 71 respondents who believe that it is the widely used tongue do not believe that it should be used as the national language (see Table 11). However, Akuapem Twi and Fante, with 38 and 15 responses, respectively, calling them widely spoken languages, received 44 and 41 votes, respectively, to be national languages. While 85% of respondents (714 out of 841) are in favour of Asante Twi as the national language against other government-sponsored tongues, 15% (127 out of 841) of study participants are in favour of other languages.

TABLE 11: Correlation between a widely spoken Ghanaian language and a government-sponsored tongue to be used as the national language

In your estimation, which Ghanaian language is widely spoken in Ghana?	Which of the government sponsored languages will you select as the national language?										
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total
Akuapem Twi	26	5	0	0	4	1	2	0	0	0	38
Asante Twi	17	703	5	3	9	28	6	0	3	0	774
Dagaare	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Dagbani	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Dangme	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ewe	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Fante	0	1	0	0	0	12	0	1	0	1	15
Ga	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
Gonja	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hausa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Guan	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Nkonya	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	44	714	7	5	13	41	10	2	4	1	841

NB: A = Akuapem Twi; B = Asante Twi; C = Dagaare; D = Dagbani; E = Ewe; F = Fante; G = Ga; H = Gonja; I = Kasem; J = Nzema

3.4 Why does Ghana need a Ghanaian language as the national language?

Based on the above, it has been established that the majority of respondents (85%) are of the view that Asante Twi, a dialect of the Akan language, should be used as the national language. Now, it is crucial to inquire about the importance of such a language as a national one. For most respondents, an indigenous national language is important for national interactions, national identity, national unity and cultural integration, language-in-education, and to propel national development. For others, the use of an indigenous national language is necessary because: it will afford competent Ghanaians who are not literate in the English language to participate in national politics; developed countries use their native

languages; it will make our independence meaningful. However, a handful of respondents who do not support this course shared comments as shown below:

Comment 1: *Ghana does not need a Ghanaian national language. This will just bring about conflicts and jealousy [amongst its citizens]*

Comment 2: *Ghana is a strong multicultural and multi-ethnic country, as such, she [Ghana] cannot have one Ghanaian language as the national language.*

Comment 3: *I would not advise [that] we use a Ghanaian language as the national language even though it serves as a means of national identity.*

One respondent believes that an indigenous national language will reduce western influences and also catapult interest in national issues on the part of Ghanaians. However, this respondent adds that:

Comment 4: *We should only consider this [indigenous national language] after our political systems have proven themselves worthy, if not this could be very slippery [could bring about some chaos]*

Table 12 below shows some responses on the importance of an indigenous national language for Ghana. A total of 88% of the respondents (737 out of 841) acknowledge various reasons for an indigenous national language. The remaining 12% (104 out of 841) share opinions such as the ones summarised above.

TABLE 12: Importance of an indigenous national language for Ghana

Why does Ghana need a Ghanaian language as a national language?	No of responses
To assume a new identity To help illiterates to participate in politics at the national level Most developed countries use their own language	1
As a language used in education	21
As a means of national identity	295
As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration	22
As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration As a language used in education	2
As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration As a language used in education For national development	6

Why does Ghana need a Ghanaian language as a national language?	No of responses
As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration For national development	3
For national development	41
For national interactions	91
For national interactions As a language used in education	1
For national interactions As a language used in education For national development	1
For national interactions As a means of national identity	15
For national interactions As a means of national identity As a language used in education	2
For national interactions As a means of national identity For national development	3
For national interactions As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration	14
For national interactions As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration As a language used in education	7
For national interactions As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration As a language used in education For national development	16
For national interactions As a means of national identity For national unity and cultural integration For national development	5
For national interactions For national development	2

Why does Ghana need a Ghanaian language as a national language?	No of responses
For national interactions For national unity and cultural integration	1
For national interactions For national unity and cultural integration As a language used in education	2
For national interactions For national unity and cultural integration For national development	3
For national unity and cultural integration	176
For national unity and cultural integration As a language used in education	1
For national unity and cultural integration For national development	3
Not applicable	104
So that a lot of people who cannot speak or understand the English language (regarded as the official language) but have common sense and knowledge can also participate in national decision making and ensure development	1
To control the rate of western influence; this would also foster increased interest in national matters. We should only consider this after our political systems have proven themselves worthy otherwise this could be very slippery.	1
Total	841

Culture is the way a group of individuals live in a given society. It is said to encompass their beliefs, symbols or artefacts, customs, language, and generally acceptable behaviours (White 2022; Hofstede 1997). Table 12 shows that the majority of respondents opine that choosing an indigenous national language will serve as a cohesive strategy to integrate the distinctive cultures of the people and catapult a sense of oneness among Ghanaians. As a result, all Ghanaians will have some sense of attachment or bond to this language and be noted as Ghanaians through this language across the globe.

3.5 Attitude towards the use of Ghanaian languages and the English language in Ghana

Notwithstanding the fact that English has been the language of wider communication in Ghana, some Ghanaians have promoted Ghanaian languages through their use in government and private businesses, education, broadcasting and other areas of language use. It is surprising to note that some of these persons are sometimes looked down upon or perceived to be people of low social status or with poor academic achievements. On the other hand, those who use the English language are perceived to be of higher social status or having greater academic achievements and receive some respect in the Ghanaian society. With this, many Ghanaians have resorted to the use of the English language at home with their children, family and friends to the detriment of Ghanaian languages (Afrifa, Anderson & Ansah 2019; Morris 1998). An alarming prediction is that if such a trend continues, it may lead to a dire situation where the proficiency of many young Ghanaians in Ghanaian languages will be very poor. This is being observed in urban centres like Accra, where several factors including one's economic status, age, inter-ethnic marriage and educational background are identified as the main factors influencing the choice of English as a home language, in addition to other factors, such as the media, the language in education policies, and the use of the internet (Afrifa, Anderson & Ansah 2019).

The selection of an indigenous national language will require a positive outlook on that language from the citizens. It was important, therefore, to inquire about the respondents' attitudes towards the use of Ghanaian languages and the English language in national communication. Exploring these comparatively may give insights into the feasibility of the promulgation of an indigenous national language, and this article seeks to contribute to its debate. For Main (2004), attitude is an individual's reaction or behaviour towards an entity. This behaviour or reaction emanates from the various opinions, views, and beliefs that are formed on the said entity by the individual (Abidin, Mohammadi & Alzwar 2012). The respondents described their attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian languages and the English language on a five-point Likert scale from very positive, positive, uncertain, negative and very negative.

When it comes to the use of Ghanaian languages, the attitudes of the respondents were as follows: 36.86% (310 out of 841) have very positive attitudes; 35.67% (300 out of 841) have positive attitudes; 16.53% (139 out of 841) are uncertain about their attitudes; 8.08% (68 out of 841) have negative attitudes; and the remaining 2.85% (24 out of 841) describe their attitudes as very negative (see Figure 6). The overall numbers show that a majority of the respondents,

610 out of 841, representing 72.53% of the study population, have (very) positive feelings, perceptions, or behaviours towards the use of Ghanaian languages for the aforementioned purposes. Breaking these statistics down by the sex of the respondents, we see that 77% of the male respondents have (very) positive attitudes compared to 70% of the females (see Table 13). In terms of the age of the respondents, 100% of the respondents aged between 31 – 35 have (very) positive attitudes towards the use of Ghanaian languages, with the remaining numbers looking as follows: 76.2% for those aged 21 – 25; 68.7% for persons aged 15 – 20 and 65.1% for persons aged 26 – 30 (see Table 14 for the numbers).

Figure 6: Descriptions of attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian languages in national communication

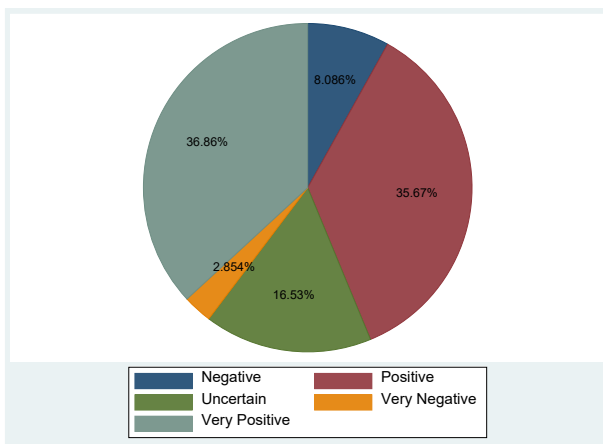


TABLE 13: Correlation between the sex of the respondents and their attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian languages in national communication

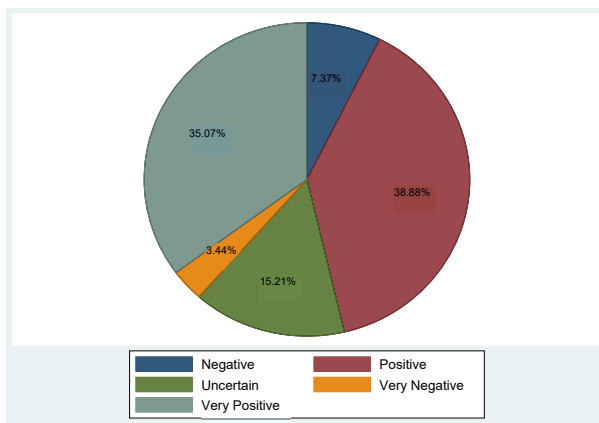
What is your sex?	How would you describe your attitude towards the use of Ghanaian languages in national communication?					
	Negative	Positive	Uncertain	Very negative	Very positive	Total
Female	41	183	86	15	137	462
Male	27	117	53	9	173	379
Total	68	300	139	24	310	841

TABLE 14: Correlation between the age of the respondents and their attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian languages in national communication

What is your age?	How would you describe your attitude towards the use of Ghanaian languages in national communications?					
	Negative	Positive	Uncertain	Very Negative	Very Positive	Total
15 - 20	30	154	88	9	126	407
21 - 25	36	137	45	15	171	404
26 - 30	2	7	6	0	8	23
31 - 35	0	2	0	0	5	7
Total	68	300	139	24	310	841

Respondents also described their attitudes toward the use of the English language in national communication. The breakdown of the responses looks as follows: 35.07% (295 out of 841) have very positive attitudes; 38.88% (327 out of 841) have positive attitudes; 15.21% (128 out of 841) are uncertain about their attitudes; 7.37% (62 out of 841) have negative attitudes, whilst 3.44% (29 out of 841) have very negative attitudes (see Figure 7). It can be seen that 622 out of 841, representing 73.95% of the study population, display (very) positive feelings and behaviours towards the use of English for national communication. 76.2% of the female respondents have (very) positive attitudes, compared

Figure 7: Descriptions of attitudes towards the use of English in national communication



to 71% of males (see Table 15). In terms of the age of the respondents, percentages of the (very) positive attitudes are as follows: 74.2% for 15 – 20-year-olds; 74.3% for 21 – 25-year-olds; 78.3% for 26 – 30-year-olds; 28.5% for 31 – 35-year-olds (see Table 16).

TABLE 15: Correlation between the sex of the respondents and their attitudes toward the use of English in national communication

What is your sex?	How would you describe your attitude towards the use of the English language in national communication?					
	Negative	Positive	Uncertain	Very negative	Very positive	Total
Female	38	197	62	10	155	462
Male	24	130	66	19	140	379
Total	62	327	128	29	295	841

TABLE 16: Correlation between the age of the respondents and their attitudes toward the use of English in national communication

What is your age?	How would you describe your attitude towards the use of the English language in national communication?					
	Negative	Positive	Uncertain	Very negative	Very positive	Total
15 - 20	27	162	67	11	140	407
21 - 25	32	151	56	16	149	404
26 - 30	2	13	2	1	5	23
31 - 35	1	1	3	1	1	7
Total	62	327	128	29	295	840

Comparisons can be drawn from the numbers and percentages presented on the descriptions of attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian languages and English language in national communication. In all, the respondents have a slightly better attitude towards the use of English in national communication than Ghanaian languages – i.e. 73.95% responses for (very) positive attitudes towards English as against 72.53% for Ghanaian languages. The male respondents have

a better attitude towards the use of Ghanaian languages (77% of responses for a (very) positive attitude) than their female counterparts (70%), whereas the female respondents have a better attitude towards the use of English (76.2% of responses for a (very) positive attitude) than the male respondents (71%).

Further, 12% of the females have a (very) negative attitude towards Ghanaian languages, compared with 9% of males thinking the same. Also, 11.4% of male respondents have a (very) negative attitude towards English, against 10.4% of female respondents thinking the same. Additionally, respondents between 15 – 20 years of age have a positive attitude towards English (74.2% responses for (very) positive attitude) than Ghanaian languages (68.7% responses for a (very) positive attitude). Respondents aged between 21 – 25 expressed more interest towards Ghanaian languages (76.2%) compared with their interest in English (74.3%). Again, respondents aged between 26 – 30 are more inclined to support the use of English for national purposes (78.3%) than the use of Ghanaian languages (65.1%). 100% of respondents aged between 31 – 35 back the use of Ghanaian languages, compared with 28.5% of them backing English. The overall percentages are as follows – 72.53% for (very) positive attitudes toward Ghanaian languages and 73.95% of such attitudes toward English; 10.93% (very) negative attitudes toward Ghanaian languages and 10.81% of such attitudes toward English; 16.53% of uncertain attitudes toward Ghanaian languages and 15.21% of uncertain attitudes toward English. This may suggest that although the respondents may have some good perceptions and behaviours about the use of Ghanaian languages in national communication, they are more certain about the suitability of English for this purpose.

4. Conclusion

This study set out to ascertain, and so to say to “test the waters”, on the views of Ghanaian university students on which Ghanaian language should be selected as a national language for Ghana. This, the researchers believe, will serve as a foundation for a larger project which may seek to address the calls for an indigenous national language as an emblem for Ghanaians. The data for the questionnaire survey was analysed to determine the widely spoken Ghanaian language in Ghana, whether Ghana needs a national language, whether the widely spoken Ghanaian language should be used as the national language, which of the nine government-sponsored Ghanaian languages (Akan with its three dialects – Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi and Fante) should be used as the national language, why Ghana needs an indigenous national language and the attitudes toward the use of Ghanaian languages and English in national communication.

It has been found out that Asante Twi is the widely spoken Ghanaian language in Ghana with an overwhelming 92.03% of the respondents selecting it. It also prevailed in responses across all the demographic groups among study participants. This corroborates the findings of scholars such as Obeng (1997) and Osam (2003) that Asante Twi is the widely spoken Ghanaian language in Ghana. Furthermore, the majority of respondents are convinced that Ghana needs an indigenous national language, thereby principally noting its relevance as a means of national identity, national unity, and cultural integration.

Also, it was evident that the majority of respondents are of the view that the Ghanaian language which is widely spoken by Ghanaians should be used as the national language. Male respondents showed greater support for this stance than their female counterparts. Interestingly, 92.03% of respondents picked Asante Twi as the widely spoken Ghanaian language, yet only 66.79% of them believed that the widely spoken language should be used as the national language. This suggests a certain weakening of their confidence. The researchers thought it necessary to establish which of the nine government-sponsored Ghanaian languages (considering Akan has three dialects – Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi and Fante) should be used as the national language. Asante Twi received 84.9% of responses. This does not correlate with respondents' ethnic languages. Hence, it can be said that the study participants made this decision without prejudice. It was also important to find out the feelings, perceptions and behaviours of the respondents toward the use of Ghanaian languages and English in national communication. The investigators observed that the respondents have slightly higher positive attitudes toward English than toward Ghanaian languages in national communication. There was a clear division amongst the sexes on this subject – males expressed positive attitudes toward Ghanaian languages whereas females expressed more positive attitudes toward English.

In conclusion, it has been established that Ghanaian university students – in this study, undergraduate students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, KNUST – acknowledge the need for an indigenous national language for Ghana, thereby selecting Asante Twi, the widely spoken Ghanaian language in Ghana and the respondents' choice amongst the sponsored languages, as the possible candidate for this purpose. That notwithstanding, the participants have a somewhat better preference for, or certainty towards, the use of the English in national communication over Ghanaian languages. This implies that in order to achieve the goal of promulgating the proposed indigenous language, Asante Twi, as the national language of Ghana, a thorough sensitization exercise on developing positive perceptions of and behaviours towards Ghanaian languages and people who use

them across the Ghanaian communication landscape would have to be carried out. More so, it would be extremely necessary for the citizens to be fully educated on the reasons for the selection of the proposed language out of the many, and on the importance of an indigenous national language. In all these, the unflinching support, expertise, and guidance of the National Commission on Culture (NCC), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL), the National House of Chiefs and other government institutions and representatives would be paramount and necessary. The findings from this research, therefore, reveal that there is a place for indigenous languages such as Asante Twi to be used at the national level but the country is not yet in the position to choose one language as a national language as there are preferences for English to be used for national communication.

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The acquisitive *-pata* in Swahili

Abstract

This study examines the usage of the Swahili verb *-pata* 'get' as an auxiliary, shedding light on its multifaceted roles. The examination of its structural variation and functional extensions is based on data from different Swahili varieties. Drawing from a broad and versatile body of previous research on Swahili, this study posits the development of *-pata* from an erstwhile lexical verb to a light verb used in lexicalized constructions and further to an auxiliary. Combined with an infinitive verb, the auxiliary *-pata* is shown to convey three different yet interrelated functional concepts: modal possibility, an inchoative aspect and an experiential aspect. In addition, it demonstrates correlations with purpose clauses and (negative) phasal polarity. The description and analysis of the formal, functional and historical characteristics of the acquisitive *-pata* in Swahili serves as the first study dedicated to this type of linguistic construction in Swahili and in Bantu languages more generally.

Keywords: Swahili, Bantu "get" verbs, modality, auxiliary

1. Introduction

This study explores the functional uses of the acquisitive verb *-pata* 'get, obtain' as it occurs in Swahili (G40-G43; ISO 639-3 swa; Glottolog swah1254). Swahili is a Bantu language, genealogically categorized as belonging to the Sabaki subgroup of the Northeast Coast Bantu branch of Eastern Bantu (Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993; Nurse 1999). It is far from being a monolithic entity but comprises a multitude of varieties spoken throughout East Africa, from the traditional dialects

(or regiolects) on the coast of the Indian Ocean to the “koinés” spoken in Eastern Congo, encompassing a spectrum from pidgins to a standardized language form. In the examination of *-pata*, this article draws on a comprehensive survey of linguistic work covering various Swahili varieties (see Table 1 in the Appendix)¹. Based on a source-oriented approach, the etymology of this verb and its structural variation is examined, as well as the polyfunctional patterns it is involved in. The focus is on the modal uses of this verb and its status as an auxiliary verb.

The functions associated with acquisitive verbs have received quite an extensive amount of attention cross-linguistically, with most studies being confined to two broad regions of the world, viz. Northern Europe, and more specifically the Circum-Baltic area (see *inter alia* van der Auwera et al. 2009; Viberg 2006, 2012; Daugavet 2015), and Southeast Asia (see especially Enfield 2003; Van der Auwera et al. 2009). Typologically informed discussions on the trajectories of change that lead erstwhile lexical ‘get’ verbs to gain grammatical functions also exist in works such as Bybee et al. (1994: ch. 6), van der Auwera & Plungian (1998), Narrog (2012: 202-205, 276-278), and Kuteva et al. (2019: 186-192).

However, there appear to be no dedicated studies on the acquisitive in Bantu in general nor specifically for Swahili, although *-pata* is clearly a part of the modal system of this language and, as will be shown, also carries concomitant grammatical functions. Apart from Swahili, there are also attestations of acquisitive verbs used for marking modality in other (Eastern) Bantu languages such as Yao (Sanderson 1922: 109-110), Fuliuro, and perhaps also Kamba² (see Bernander et al. 2022). In all these instances, and, as will be seen, also in Swahili, the modal function is restricted to situational, i.e. non-epistemic possibility.

With the caveat that modal auxiliary constructions have not been well-described in the Bantu literature, and hence that potential acquisitives “out there” might have passed under the radar, the relatively low level and scattered attestations of ‘get, obtain’-based auxiliaries in the region, paired with the relatively modest grammatical maturation both in formal and functional terms exposed in this article, would suggest that: a) the auxiliary *-pata* is a relatively recent, language-internal, innovation in Swahili, and that b) it has not spread to other languages of the re-

¹ Examples cited in this text are provided with references to the works from which they are taken. If taken from an explicit Swahili variety, this is also indicated. The examples have been interlinearized and an extra row of glosses for morphemic analysis has been added. The translations and the orthographic conventions of the original work have been kept intact.

² The etymology of the Kamba modal verb in question remains slightly unclear.

gion; this is in contrast to the fate of several other Swahili modal markers (see Bernander et al. 2022, Bernander forthcoming a, b).

This study is limited in scope in two important manners. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, it only pays close attention to where the verb *-pata* is used in constructions where it is combined with another verb – a lexical verb which serves to depict the main event of the proposition – to which *-pata* contributes some functional quality. This limitation is intentionally set to correspond to the (broad) definition of an auxiliary, as provided by Anderson (2006, 2011; see also Heine 1993).

Another limitation of this study is that only the active, non-derived verb *-pata* is considered in the analysis. This means exclusion of an analysis of the modal uses of the verb form *-pata* when it is derived in the causative extension, where it is realized as either *-pasha* or *-pasa* (see Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 590 for details on the phonemic variation). In these derivations, the first participant, originally associated with an agentive subject, undergoes demotion through various strategies, including passivization of the verb and a shift from subject to object (indexation). This is a modal construction that was already discussed by Krapf & Rebmann (1850: 74-75) in the first grammatical description of Swahili.

Fascinating a topic as it is, the description of this additional modal verb type and its relation to the “plain” *-pata* will have to be reserved for another study. See, however, Bernander et al. (2022) for a brief treatment of the modal functions and peculiarities of the formal configurations of constructions with the derived Swahili *-pata*, where it is also shown that these types of constructions are ubiquitous throughout East African Bantu.

To reach the goals presented above, the remainder of this article is organized as follows. In section 2, the semasiological background of the lexical source verb *-pata* is mapped out, while in section 3 its status as an auxiliary is discussed. Section 4 centers on the various functional uses of the auxiliary *-pata* in Swahili. This section sequentially presents three broad functions associated with it, namely its modal (possibility), aspectual inchoative, and (negative) experiential functions. Section 5 contains a summary and some final conclusions, as well as directions for further research.

2. Etymology of source verb *-pata*

The acquisitive verb *-pata* is linked to the verb root **-pát* ‘hold’ reconstructed for Proto-Bantu (Bastin et al. 2002). In their reconstruction of the Proto-Sabaki and Proto-Swahili lexicons, Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993: 590) reconstruct the verb

stem as **-j-pata* for Proto-Sabaki, i.e., with an initial high /i/. It would seem that this posited extra /i/, which differs from the reconstructed form and all the reflexes of this verb provided, hinges on the phonological reason that some varieties – particularly the non-Swahili, Comorian varieties – with otherwise weakened variants of /p/ preserve /p/ after /i/ (ibid: 63).

Formally, a verb is realized differently according to the different sound laws characteristic to the various dialects (and other varieties) of Swahili. Thus, *-pata* becomes *-vata* in Makunduchi (Polomé 1967: 24) through the general process of lenition where root-initial /p/ goes to [β], <v> (or to the plain /v/; see the footnote in Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 63). Other realizations include the weakening of the second consonant /t/, as with *pacha* in Kitikuu and *-para* in the Comorian varieties (Stigand 1915: passim; Eastman 1969; Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 590).³

Semantically, lexical *-pata* is connected to several interrelated senses. All works consulted seem to agree on the basic acquisitive senses of this verb – and thus on the type of meaning structure that can be paraphrased as encompassing the inceptive stage of possession. Thus, Sacleux (1939: 735) lists the translational equivalents 'earn, acquire, obtain (*gagner, acquérir, obtenir*)', whereas TUKI (2001: 260) gives 'obtain, get'. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the concrete possessive use of *-pata*, i.e. the 'receipt of something concrete' (Viberg 2006: 120), in both cases money, described as the prototypical meaning of acquisitives (Viberg 2012).

(1) Ashton (1947: 273)

<i>na-ju-a</i>	<i>tu-ta-pat-a</i>	<i>fedha</i>
SM1SG.IPFV-know-FV	SM1PL-FUT-get-FV	10.money
'I know we will get some money'		

(2) Drolc (1999: 81; Ma'a Swahili)

<i>basi na-pat-a</i>	<i>pesa</i>
well SM1.PRS-get-FV	10.money
'Well, I (will) get money.'	

Other works mention additional lexical senses, arguably more closely associated with the modal functions of *-pata*. For example, Madan & Steere (1890: 190, 194, 202, 207) mention 'overtake', 'reach', 'succeed', and 'win', and Burt (1910: 217)

³ Stigand (1915: 54) reports a synonymous verb *-poa* as being used instead of a reflex of *-pata* in Kiamu (but see Eastman 1969). It has not been possible to investigate this verb further or to corroborate whether it may be used with similar functions to those described in this article.

'procure, succeed, 'be able.' In addition to 'obtain' and 'get', TUKI interestingly also mentions 'happen to' as a third sense associated with *-pata*.

The regular verb *-pata* can be derived in various ways through the use of different verbal suffixes, commonly referred to as extensions within Bantuistics (see Schadeberg & Bostoen 2019 for a comparative exposé of these various suffixes and details of their semantic and formal characteristics). The causative, and incidentally also, its passive derivations, rendering *-pasa* ~ *-pasha* and *-paswa* ~ *-pashwa* have already been mentioned. There are also examples of common Swahili terms where *-pata* combined with other extensions has gained slightly lexicalized meanings, such as *-patikana* 'be available' (TUKI 2001: 261), *patana* 'agree together', and *-patanisha* 'mediate' (Knappert 1999: 111).

On the topic of lexicalization, *-pata* is also frequently employed as a light verb in Swahili, in lexicalized constructions with non-compositional meanings such as the examples in (3)a and (3)b-c (only a sample of the wide selection of such uses provided by Sacleux). In these instances, *-pata* operates on a nominal and not a verbal element, with meanings ranging from concrete to abstract notions.⁴

(3) Sacleux (1939: 736)

a.

-pata moto 'get warm'

-pata moyo 'take courage (lit. to gain heart), find time, leisure, space'

-pata furaha, raha, haya 'experience pleasure, well-being, shame'

b.

<i>si-pat-i</i>	<i>ma-ana</i>	<i>y-a</i>	<i>ma-neno</i>	<i>ha-yo</i>
SM1.NEG-get-NEG	6-meaning	6-CONN	6-words	6-DEM

'I don't understand the meaning (the motive) of these words.'

c.

ha-i-pat-i *mw-aka*

NEG-SM9-get-NEG 3-year

'It has not been a year.'

(4) and (5) serve as additional examples of the versatile use of such constructions across the spectrum of Swahili varieties.

⁴ There are also examples of lexicalized constructions with *-pata* without a nominal object, such as *kisu hiki chapata, hiki hakipati* 'This knife cuts, this one doesn't', mentioned in (Ashton 1947: 115). This seems to be an elided variant of *kisu hiki chapata ukali* 'this knife is sharp' [7-knife DEM7 SP7-PRS-cut-FV 14-sharpness] (cf. Sacleux 1939: 736).

- (4) Nassenstein (2017: 209; Bunia Swahili)

ye-na-tumika-tumika basi ye-pa-li-pat-a ki-tu
 3SG-PRS-work-work-FV however 3SG-NEG-PST-get-FV 7-thing
 'He worked intensively/so hard but did not earn anything.'

- (5) Reuster-Jahn & Kießling (2006: 165; Lugha ya mtaani / Urban Youth language)

a-me-pat-a bongwe l-a noma
 SM1-PFV-get-FV 5.big_thing 5-CONN 9.trouble
 'He has got a lot of problems.'

3. The auxiliary status of *-pata*

As pointed out by Narrog (2012: 276), acquisitive verbs can be characterized as semantically fairly general or basic, a fact which concurs with the light verb uses illustrated for *-pata* in section 2. This characteristic makes *-pata* susceptible to developing procedural rather than referential functions, aligning with a similar pattern noted for other “basic” or “light” verbs in Bantu, such as copula verbs, quotative verbs, and motion verbs (see, e.g., Bernander et al. 2023 and further references therein). Crucially, this development must have been instigated once *-pata* was used to select an event as expressed by a de-verbal noun (~ infinitive), rather than a proper noun phrase, subsequently leading to the reanalysis of this erstwhile complement verb into the main predicate and of *-pata* into an ancillary functional marker. Thus, compare the elementary construction of this sort in (6) with the examples given in section 2. Note also the various translations of this sentence, of interest for the discussions on functions in section 4.

- (6) Johnson (1939: 369)

ni-me-pat-a ku-fany-a
 SM1SG-PFV-get-FV INF-do-FV
 'I have succeeded in doing it, I have done it.'

The basic semantics of *-pata* and its light verb uses might also have made its grammatical(ized) auxiliary uses less significant. This might potentially explain its neglect in some prominent Swahili grammars, such as Polomé (1967) and Loogman (1965). In other grammars, however, *-pata* is included as a member of the group of auxiliary verbs. Sometimes it is assigned more specifically to a subcategory of auxiliary constructions, which Schadeberg (1992: 26) – who does mention *-pata* as auxiliary, albeit without offering any explicit examples of its usage – terms “compound constructions”. Here, the full verb, i.e. the verb that depicts the main event of the proposition, is inflected in the infinitive / de-verbal noun form. Significantly, the infinitive prefix of the second verb may often

be omitted in these types of constructions, including with *-pata*, as seen in (7) and (8). This may be taken to signal ongoing formal grammaticalization, i.e. the state of (ongoing) de-categorialization and erosion, which is significant for auxiliaries in general (Heine & Narrog 2012), and for Swahili auxiliaries in particular (see Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 457-458). As a member of a relatively small, functionally and formally homogeneous and coherent set of grammatical(ized) auxiliary verb constructions, it can be argued that *-pata* has been subject to paradigmaticization (see Lehmann 2015: 141-146).

(7) Knappert (1999: 115; Literary Swahili)

ni-pat-e *ngi-a* *mu-yi=ni*
 SM1SG-get-SBJV go_into-FV 3-town=LOC
 '[S]o that I may get into the town.'

(8) Lambert (1958a: 79; Chifundi)

s-ali-var-a *meo-egw-a* *chi-twa* *jana*
 SM1SG.NEG-PST-get-FV shave-PASS-FV 7-head yesterday
 'I did not manage to get my head shaved yesterday.'

In (9), there is not only the dropping of the infinitive, but here *-pata* operates on its own etymon, a feature occasionally also taken as an indication of auxiliary-hood (see Heine 1993: 60–61; Heine 2002).

(9) Lambert (1957: 71; Vumba)

ni-shik-e *moo* *Ki-zungu* *taibu, ni-var-e* *var-a* *amani kwa Bobo*
 SM1SG-hold-SBJV 3-foot 7-European good SM1SG-get-SBJV get-FV peace with B.
 '[S]how her fine courtesy in the European style and so manage to make my peace with Bobo.'

In the closely related Comorian Maore, the cognate *-para* (see §2) has instantiated a further step of formal grammaticalization, as the auxiliary and full verb have fused and undergone morphologization into a monorhematic construction. In this case, however, the vowel of the infinitive must have been retained and has coalesced with the final vowel of *-para*.

(10) Rombi (1983: 163; Maore)

mw-a-paro-mu-on-a *mu-tu* *unu?*
 SM2PL?-(< get-INF)-OM1-see-FV 1-man DEM1
 'Have you (ever) seen that man?'
 ('Avez-vous déjà vu cet homme-là?')

This being said, there are also indications that *-pata* is still quite loosely grammaticalized, as it violates typical restrictions presented as being indicative of the auxiliary status of verbs in Bantu. For example, the question clitic =*je* in (11) is attached to *-pata* rather than to the second verb, as would have been expected in a construction signaling ongoing fusion towards a one-word construction (see Devos 2008).

(11) Whiteley (1956: 29; Mtang'ata)

<i>u-ta-pat-a=je</i>	<i>ku-zi-ng'o-a</i>	<i>n-devu</i>	<i>z-angu?</i>
SM2SG-FUT-get-FV=Q	INF-OM10-pull_out-FV	9-beard	10-POSS
'How will you manage to pull out my beard?'			

4. Functions of auxiliary *-pata*

The literature on the grammar of Swahili suggests that the auxiliary *-pata* serves a versatile set of functions, which, nonetheless, are arguably closely related from a conceptual perspective. In some instances, only one or some of these functionalities have been attested for a given Swahili variety. Unfortunately, the data available is too sporadic to enable us to draw any firm conclusions about potential isoglosses in the functional range of *-pata*, since the absence of a sense in the sources consulted may definitely not be taken as entailing a lack in actual usage.

Some authors have tried to provide an overarching definition, encompassing all of the various functional uses of *-pata*. Thus, Ashton (1947: 276-277) claims that auxiliary *-pata* "implies ability or opportunity to accomplish something". Curiously, Mohamed (2001: 82) provides a similar definition, while adding that auxiliary *-pata* may also mean the opposite, i.e. "suffers a stroke of misfortune by the occurrence of the action denoted by the main verb". Mpiranya (2015: 104) provides the sense 'have a chance (to)', and, as noted above, TUKI gives 'happened (to)'. As far as is known, no authors have gone into further detail than this about the auxiliary uses of *-pata* in Swahili. Three different functionalities that deemed to be distinct for the auxiliary construction with *-pata* will be discussed in this article. These functionalities span the linguistic domains of both modality and aspectuality, while also demonstrating affinities with the closely interrelated concepts of phasal polarity and negation. It has been argued that the focus on different components of the inherited semantic structure of lexical *-pata* has resulted in the development of these different functions.

The functional niches discussed are semantically distinct enough to make it worthwhile to treat them separately. However, there is still overlap in their uses

and their functions are arguably conceptually interconnected. That being said, it is not clear from the meager data at disposal, whether these different functionalities are chronologically related, one having extended from the other, or whether they have arisen separately, as a case of poly-grammaticalization (cf. Craig 1991). On the one hand, as noted, *-pata* and other acquisitive verbs are semantically light. Cross-linguistic data show that such verbs easily and recurrently lend themselves to different types of grammatical functionalities, based on separate grammaticalization trajectories (see Kuteva et al. 2019: 186-192). On the other hand, the constructional make-up of all these functional expressions is the same, i.e. with *-pata* and a second infinitive verb. There are also typological studies connecting different aspectual and modal uses of the acquisitive as originating from the same source construction (see, e.g., Gronemeyer 1999; Enfield 2003; Narrog 2012: 276-277).

4.1 Modal possibility marker

For the purposes of this study, the understanding of modality follows the conceptualization found in van der Auwera & Plungian (1998), van der Auwera & Ammann (2005/2013), and van der Auwera et al. (2009). It is thus seen as a semantic domain delimited to the notions of necessity and possibility, further intersected by the following subcategories: a) participant-internal modality, referring to the inherent properties of the 1st participant of a proposition; b) participant-external modality, referring instead to external circumstances that befall the 1st participant; c) epistemic modality, referring to the speaker's subjective judgements or estimations of the relative certainty of the truth of the conditions encompassed in the proposition. In this framework, deontic modality is seen as a special instance of participant-external modality where the external circumstances are imposed on the 1st participant by the speaker or by some social/ethical instance or norm.

Applying this framework to *-pata* in Swahili, it may be agreed that it is confined to the possibility domain alone, and within there – only to the realm of situational (i.e., non-epistemic) possibility (cf. van der Auwera & Ammann 2005/2013). As discussed at the outset in section 1, however, the source stem *-pata* may also be used to express modality in a derived form. In this case, it expresses (participant-external) necessity.

As with all auxiliary developments, the expansion of *-pata* into a modal marker must have involved a shift from selecting a referential entity coded in nominals to a more abstract activity or event coded in the infinitive verb. Narrog (2012: 276) further specifies the semantic route of change as conventionalization of the fact

that “if someone gets something done, this easily implies that this person is able to do so, and circumstances allow it”.

The use of *-pata* with a modal function has been noted. It is presented as one of the modal (auxiliary) verbs in Swahili by Schicho (1995: 140), the hitherto only extensive work on Swahili modality in existence and which also provides illustrations of this use, as in (12).

(12) Schicho (1995: 143)

a-li-furahi sana kuwa a-ta-pat-a kw-end-a katika
SM1-PST-be_very happy very that SM1-FUT-get-FV INF-go-FV into

mi-ji mi-ngine mi-kubwa zaidi
4-city 4-other 4-big more

‘He was very happy that he could now travel to other larger cities’

(‘*Er war sehr froh, dass er jetzt in andere grössere Städte reisen konnte.*’)

Madan & Steere (1890: 369) comment that *-pata* is “often used with other verbs where we use may/might”. However, as hinted in the previous section, auxiliary constructions with *-pata* tend to be translated with alternative periphrases such as ‘have the opportunity’ or ‘get the chance’, as illustrated in examples (13) and (14). Nonetheless, it is arguably the case that these sentences convey the modal force of participant-external possibility, albeit often with additional overtones of unusuality (cf. Enfield 2003: 143).⁵

(13) Ashton (1947: 276)

na w-enyeji wa-ka-pat-a ku-elimik-a kwa kazi z-a mi-kono
COM 2-natives SM2-NARR-get-FV INF-become_skilled-FV in 10.work 10-CONN 4-hand
‘(And) the natives had opportunity to become skilled in handicrafts.’

(14) Mpiranya (2015: 104)

rudi nyuma, tu-pat-e (ku-)onge-a
return.IMP back SM1PL-get-SBJV (INF-)-talk-FV
‘Come back, so we get a chance to talk.’

Examples such as (15) and (16) further corroborate the claim that modal auxiliary *-pata* is essentially a possibility marker, and more specifically with a marker of par-

⁵ In relation to this discussion, it is interesting to note that the concepts of ‘chance’ and ‘happen’, which *-pata* tends to be conceived as conveying, are very common sources for possibility, although in the form of adverbs expressing epistemic possibility (Ramat & Ricca 1998: 237-238).

participant-external possibility. As incidentally shown in these examples, the modal auxiliary *-pata* may be used to operate on both intransitive and transitive verbs. Based on the discussion in van der Auwera et al. (2009), this fact may be taken as a further corroboration of the status of *-pata* as a more mature or *bona fide* acquisitive modal verb.

(15) Mohamed (2001: 82)

si-pat-i *ku-j-a* *nyumba-ni* *kw-ako* *kesho*
 SM1.NEG-get-SBJV INF-come-FV 9.house-LOC 17-POSS2SG tomorrow
 'I won't be able to come to your home tomorrow.'

(16) Burt (1910: 21, 133)

jee, *u-ta-pat-a* *ku-let-a* *ma-ji?*
 Q SM2SG-FUT-get-FV INF-bring-FV 6-water
 'Can you bring (some) water?'

Examples like (17) arguably show that *-pata* may also be used with a permissive reading, conveying the particular participant-external reading of deontic possibility.

(17) Schicho (1995: 143)

wa-li-po-reje-a *baada y-a saa* *chache,* *wa-li-pat-a* *ku-ingi-a ndani*
 SM2-PST-REL16-return-FV after 9-CONN 10.hours few SM2-PST-get-FV INF-go_in-FV
 inside
 'When they returned after a few hours, they could/were allowed to enter'
 ('Als sie nach wenigen Stunden zurückkehrten, durften sie eintreten.')

The preference for participant-external uses of acquisitive verbs can be linked to the original lexical semantics of marking "the receipt of something" (see section 2) a type of non-agentive possession where the 1st participant is not active but acts as a receiver, whether of an item, as in the lexical use, or a proposition, as in its modal use (cf. van der Auwera et al. 2009).

However, for some languages there are examples where the acquisitive denotes situations where the 1st participant arguably plays a more active role, similar to 'manage', thus being more reminiscent of marking participant-internal possibility. Given the common translation of *-pata* as 'manage' or 'succeed', Swahili would also seem to have this possibility available. Indeed, some of the example sentences examined are at least vague between a participant-external and a participant-internal reading. Consider examples (18) and (19).

(18) Lambert (1958a: 68; Ngare⁶)

ku-p-a si-pat-i ku-ku-p-a wala si-to-ku-kopesh-a
 INF-give-FV SM1SG.NEG-get-NEG INF-OM2SG-give-FV nor SM1SG.NEG-FUT-OM2SG-lend-FV
 'As for giving I can't manage to give it you, nor will I lend it you.
 [Those from whom you borrow you do not pay].'

(19) Sacleux (1939: 736)

a-me-pat-a ku-maliz-a kazi
 SM1-PFV-get-FV INF-finish-FV 9.work
 'He managed to finish the task.'

Example (18) can be taken as referring to the innate (in)ability of the first participant, and thus as an example of participant internal possibility. At the same time, the rest of the verse (provided in parentheses) shows that there are external circumstances contributing to the prevailing situation. Next, given the lack of further context in example (19), it is not possible to conclude that the potentiality resides in the 1st participant only, or whether there are any external factors in the context that have enabled the 1st participant's achievement. In sum, it remains uncertain whether this illustrates a dedicated function or merely an implication, where external circumstances may also encompass the disposition of the 1st participant (cf. Narrog 2012: 216).

If these examples discussed in the previous paragraph are taken as marking participant-internal possibility, *-pata* can be said to have developed into conveying that the 1st participant "secures himself/herself" of the opportunity to perform the event (van der Auwera et al. 2009: 284). This function is also reminiscent of the so called conative (or, occasionally, frustrative) function discussed in Vincent (2013), or rather, its opposite, since the (more) conventionalized function associated with the term "conative" is that it refers to trying *without* succeeding.⁷ An alternative term for this function, discussed in a recent thread on Linguist List (May 2023), would be "victive". Crucially, it relies on the fact, noted by Bybee et al. (1994: 190-191), that the notion of successful attainment or completion inevitably also demonstrates ability (i.e., participant-internal possibility); see also Enfield (2003: 197-200) on the notion of "attainment".

⁶ Lambert ascribes this verse to a poet of Manda Island.

⁷ Interestingly, Vincent (2013), and also Cinque (1999: 105), refers to a Bantu language when illustrating dedicated grammatical markers with this function, namely the *capacitatif* discussed for Mongo (with further reference to Larochette (1980), a source unfortunately not accessible to me).

The behavior of the development of acquisitive modal verbs forced van der Auwera et al. (2009) to revise the universalist hypothesis of the directionality of change within the realm of modality originally outlined in Van der Auwera & Plungian (1998). In the original model, the direction of change progresses from participant-internal to participant-external modality. However, the findings on acquisitives in van der Auwera et al. (2009) challenge this direction of change, as they are shown to develop into participant-external before participant-internal uses. The necessary historical data to disentangle this delicate developmental pathway for Swahili is lacking for this study, but the evidence available does clearly point to a situation where readings of participant-external possibility prevail.

Finally, as already seen in some of the examples, *-pata* often appears in dependent purpose clauses, in which case it is inflected in the subjunctive verb form. This is further illustrated in (20) and (21). (Example (20) is also originally provided without an explicit main clause).

(20) Madan & Steere (1890: 369)

a-pat-e *ku-j-a*
SM1-get-SBJV INF-come-FV
'so that he might come'

(21) Velten (1905: 160)

sem-a *marra*⁸ *y-a* *pili,* *ni-pat-e* *ku-siki-a*
say-IMP 9.moment 9-CONN second SM1SG-get-SBJV INF-hear-FV
'Say it again so I can understand.'
(*'Sage es noch einmal, damit ich es verstehen kann.'*)

Examples like these do not constitute a different type of construction, but merely a shift from an independent to a dependent conjugation, which essentially bears no difference from the shifting of tense or aspect forms in main clause constructions. Notice, however, the occasional "doubling effect", where it seems that both the subjunctive itself and *-pata* each provides a modal modification to the proposition, e.g. "may manage", as in (22). This is tied up with the fact that the subjunctive may be used alone in forming purpose clauses and hence in expressing participant-external possibility.

⁸ The geminate sequence <rr> here represents a common pronunciation of this word in Swahili, corresponding to the original structure of the Arabic etymon (cf. Knappert 1999: 8-9).

(22) Lambert (1957:71; Vumba)

n-ambi-a mw-ana=ngu, ni-var-e vi-ju-a namna=ye
 OM1SG-tell-IMP 1-son=POSS1SG SM1SG-get-SBJV OM8-know-FV 9.manner=POSS9
 'Tell me, son, so that I may manage to understand how it was.'

The formal interconnection between the main clause situational possibility and purpose clauses in Bantu is mentioned by Devos (2008), who notes the fact that the actualization of the event described in the purpose clause, which is dependent on the event depicted in the main clause, resembles the way possibility is brought about by external circumstances in main clauses.

4.2 Inchoative

Another function associated with the acquisitive in Swahili is the inchoative or change-of-state function. This can be seen as a function inherited in the source semantics, as acquisitives lexically function as marking an inceptive stage of possession, i.e. 'come to possess' or 'come to have' (Enfield 2003), and thus the "onset of possession" (Daugavet 2015). It is arguably this inceptive component that has become foregrounded in this type of functional use of auxiliary *-pata* (see also Kuteva et al. 2019: 186).

Similar to what has been described for Baltic languages in Daugavet (2015), it would seem that the inchoative function of acquisitive *-pata* arises when used with stative verbs. In such an instance it puts the focus on the onset or inceptive stage of the situation described in such verbs, i.e. the entry into a state.

This use is apparent in the examples from Ngwana Swahili in Whitehead & Whitehead (1928: 36, 41, 44, 164-165), where *-pata* is exclusively discussed as an inchoative marker. It is telling that, in their listing of examples of the inchoative use of "auxiliary" *-pata* from which the examples in (23) are taken, they include a nominal complement *afya* '(literally) health'. This points toward the close relation and overlap with light verb uses described in section 2, and thus the natural extension from nominals to deverbal nouns.

(23) Whitehead & Whitehead (1928: 44; Ngwana)

a. *a-me-pat-a ku-potel-a*
 SM1-PFV-get-FV INF-be_lost-FV
 'He is become lost.'

b. *a-ta-pat-a ku-ki-on-a*
 SM1-FUT-get-FV INF-OM7-see-FV
 'He will come to see it.'

Example (24) illustrates the inchoative use in more elaborate sentences.

(24) Ngwana (Whitehead & Whitehead 1928: 44, 41)

- a. *li-ka-pat-a kuwa a-li-wa-on-a wa-ki-komban-a*
 SM5-NARR-get-FV that SM1-PST-OM2-see-FV SM2-SIT-quarrel-FV
 'And it came to be that he saw them quarrelling'.
- b. *ni-li-po-fik-a ni-li-pat-a ku-yuw-a a-li-kuw-a*
 SM1SG-PST-REL16-arrive-FV SM1SG-PST-get-FV INF-know-FV SM1-PST-be-FV
a-ta-kuy-a siku m-bili
 SM1-FUT-come-FV 10.days 10-two
 'When I arrived I came to know he would come in two days.'

This function is also attested in other Swahili varieties, including Standard Swahili, e.g., Johnson (1939: 369) who provides the example *-pata kujua* 'get to know, find out'.

Arguably, it is also this inchoative function, characterized as being able to carry concomitant overtones of vividness or suddenness (Viberg 2012), that is at work in example (25).⁹ This is the example employed by Mohamed (2001) to illustrate his conceptualization of "suffers a stroke of misfortune" reading of *-pata* presented in the introductory section 4 above.

(25) Mohamed (2001: 82)

- wa-le vi-pofu wa-li-pat-a ku-gong-w-a na basi*
 2-DEM 7-blind SM2-PST-get-FV INF-hit-PASS-FV COM 5.bus
 'The blind people were knocked down by the bus.'

4.3 Experiential

A third functional niche associated with Swahili *-pata* has also been discerned. Following the cross-linguistically induced categorization in Dahl (1985: 141), it is here chosen to be labelled as an experiential, that is, as marking that an event took place "at least once during a certain period up to a certain point in time". Dahl (1985: 141) also notes a general preference for experientials in "non-assertive contexts" (e.g. negated clauses and interrogatives). This is a function that does not tend to be explicitly associated with acquisitive verbs (but see Enfield's 2003 discussion on what he refers to as "attainment"). However, it is easy to see how

⁹ Note that the full verb is derived with the passive, which makes the idea of a passive use of the acquisitive, known from English (Gronemeyer 1999), less likely here.

such a semantic extension may have developed from the 'opportunity' or 'chance' readings associated with *-pata*.

The experiential is also quite an overlooked category in Bantu studies – probably since it is often an inherent subcategory of the perfect(ive) in these languages (see Botne 2010 for a discussion; see also Bertrand et al. 2022 for analysis of the perfect(ive) verb prefix *me-* in in Swahili).

Standard Swahili, however, arguably has a dedicated experiential, expressed through an auxiliary construction with the (Arabic loan) verb *-wahi* (although this fact is seldom properly noted). Nevertheless, in some Swahili varieties examined, the experiential function seems to be expressed with *-pata* rather than with *-wahi*. Examples like (26) given in Mpiranya (2015) seem to suggest that there is a functional overlap even in Standard Swahili between *-wahi* and *-pata*.

(26) Mpiranya (2015: 104)

u-me-wahi / u-me-pat-a (ku-)fany-a kazi kama hii?
 SM2SG-PFV-venture SM2SG-PFV-get-FV (INF-)-do-FV 9.work like DEM9
 'Have you had a chance to do work like this?'

Note, in line with the preference for the experiential to be used in non-assertive contexts, that example (26) is contextually marked as a non-declarative interrogative clausal construction. In fact, most other examples at disposal consist of negative sentences such as (27) and (28). Using the experiential in a polarized, negative context entails the denial that an event took place even once. Naturally, such a composite meaning triggers overtones associated with the reinforcement or emphasis of negation.

(27) Ashton (1947: 277)

ma-neno ma-tupu ha-ya-ja-pat-a ku-jeng-a m-ji
 6-words 6-only NEG-SM6-not_yet-get-FV INF-build-FV 3-town
 'Words only have never yet built a city.'

(28) Mohamed (2001: 82)

ki-jana h-a-ta-pat-a ku-som-a shule=ni tena
 7-youth NEG-SM1-FUT-get-FV INF-read-FV 9.school=LOC again
 'That youth will never study in a school again.'

Interestingly, the examples available both from Standard Swahili, as illustrated in (27) and (28) above, and from other Swahili varieties, as seen in (29) and (30) below, suggest a preference for using the auxiliary verb *-pata* with the experiential

reading in phasal polarity constructions. In fact, this is the only function associated with *-pata* mentioned for Mtang'ata.¹⁰

(29) Whiteley (1956: 29; Mtang'ata)

si-tasa-pat-a *on-a*
SM1SG.NEG-not_yet-get-FV see-FV
'I have never seen.'

(30) Lambert (1958b: 50; Chifundi (a) / Mwita (b)¹¹)

a. *si-jambwa* *var-a* *ku-veg-w-a* *ch'itu bure*
SM1SG.NEG-not_yet get-FV INF-give-PASS-FV 7-thing vain
b. *si-ja-pat-a* *ku-pa-w-a* *k'itu bure*
SM1SG.NEG-not_yet-get-FV INF-give-PASS-FV 7-thing vain
'I have never yet been given something for nothing.'

Phasal polarity markers function to express temporally and sequentially related phases, often also associated with pragmatic and (inter-)subjective notions of counter-factuality or counter-expectations (cf. Van Baar 1997; Kramer 2021). It is specifically the two phasal polarity markers expressing negative polarity, viz. 'not yet' as in (27), (29), and (30) and 'no longer' as in (28), seem to exhibit a predilection for using *-pata*. This preference may stem from the wish to emphasize the negative situation, i.e. the non-occurrence of the realization of the event associated with both these phasal polarity markers (cf. Veselinova & Devos 2021).

As mentioned already in section 3, and as illustrated in example (10), Comorian Maore makes use of a more mature construction with the acquisitive to express the experiential. Example (31) shows the use of this construction in a negative context.

(31) Rombi (1983: 162-163; Maore)

k-a-paro-l-a *puruku*
NEG-SM1-(< get-INF)-eat-FV pork
'He never eats pork.'
(*'Il ne mange jamais le cochon'*)

¹⁰ See also Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993: 556) and Veselinova & Devos (2021) on the curious etymology of this verb prefix.

¹¹ Lambert provides this example sentence from both dialects. He also notes that the translation here may be 'never before' rather than 'never yet'. This adheres to a common polysemous relationship in Bantu, where 'before' is an extension of 'not yet' (see Veselinova & Devos 2021).

5. Summary and conclusions including an outlook for further research

This study has explored the auxiliary uses of the acquisitive verb *-pata* in the many varieties of Swahili. Three broad functional niches in which *-pata* operates have been revealed. Firstly, *-pata* may be used as a modal verb, specifically to mark situational (non-epistemic) flavors of possibility. Secondly, *-pata* is used to mark inchoative aspect, particularly on stative verbs. Thirdly, and less commonly acknowledged in the typological literature, *-pata* has also been shown to be used to convey experiential functions, particularly the negative ‘never’, often in morpho-syntactic contexts associated with phasal polarity.

The expansion of *-pata* from a lexical to a grammatical(ized) auxiliary verb has been disentangled. As argued, the auxiliary status associated with *-pata* can be seen as a natural progression from its basic semantic structure manifested in its use as a light verb.

Many questions have also been left unanswered, thus serving as interesting topics for further research. Firstly, it would be desirable to disentangle whether the route of expansion within the auxiliary is due to separate processes of grammaticalization or whether the different functionalities have developed out of each other. To this end, a usage-based study based on a diachronically geared corpus of Swahili could hopefully follow the rise and the directions of expansion of the different functions more carefully. Such a study would also allow the formal developments of auxiliary *-pata* (e.g. the putative increase in the dropping of the infinitive) to be followed. Furthermore, it could flesh out the paradigmatic relationship between *-pata* and other auxiliary verbs, especially the auxiliary *-weza*, with which *-pata* shows a functional overlap in the modal domain, as well as *-wahi*, with which *-pata* shows a functional overlap in the experiential domain. Both *-weza* and *-wahi* are posited as Arabic loans (Sacleux 1939: 1012-1013, 1022; Nurse & Hinnebusch 1993: 294, 317), and a historically oriented study could answer whether these came to replace functions previously expressed by *-pata*. Similarly, the uses of *-pata* need to be compared with the uses of its morphologically modified version, which conveys modal necessity.

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations used generally follow the standard of the Leipzig Glossing Rules, with the following amendments:

1, 2, 3, etc. noun classes (where class 1 & 2 = 3sg. / 3pl.)

CONN connective

FV final vowel

NARR narrative

OM object marker

SIT situative

SM subject marker

Appendix

TABLE 1. List of consulted Swahili linguistic descriptions

Source type	Variety	Source
Dictionaries		Johnson (1939); Sacleux (1939); TUKI (2001); Krapf & Rebmann (1850)
Various grammatical descriptions		Madan & Steere (1890); Velten (1905); Burt (1910); Ashton (1947); Loogman (1965); Polomé (1967); Schicho (1995); Mohamed (2001); Mpiranya (2015)
Western (Congolese) regiolect descriptions	Ngwana G40G	Whitehead & Whitehead (1928)
	Bunia Swahili	Nassenstein (2017)
Eastern (Coastal) regiolect descriptions	Mvita, Jomvu (G42b)	Lambert (1958a)

Source type	Variety	Source
	Mtang'ata (G42c)	Whiteley (1956)
	Fundi (G42F)	Lambert (1958b)
	Vumba (G42H)	Lambert (1957)
Descriptions of other types of Swahili varieties	Lugha ya Mtaani	Reuster-Jahn & Kießling (2006)
	Maa Swahili	Droic (1999)
	Literary Swahili	Knappert (1999)

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Negative transfer in the L2 acquisition of passive constructions among French learners in Burkina Faso

Abstract

This study examines the acquisition of French passives by L1 Burkinabè native language learners. It investigates the negative L1 transfer from languages that do not overtly mark passive constructions. The analysis also includes other factors that are strongly associated with successful acquisition of French passives. The results confirm that L1 Burkinabè native language users have difficulty in acquiring L2 French passive constructions. Furthermore, the data obtained from a survey and a language test showed that learners' living environment was the most influential factor in successful acquisition of passive constructions, with onset age of study and number of years studying being much less influential.

Keywords: second language acquisition, French passives, passive constructions in L2, Burkinabè native languages, effect of language learning

1. Introduction

Many studies have examined the acquisition of passive constructions in both an L1 and L2 (e.g. Borer & Wexler 1992; Crawford 2012; Christensen 1991; Deen 2011; Demuth 1989; Estrela 2015; Sugisaki 1999). Many of these studies suggest that passive constructions are generally more difficult to acquire than other grammatical structures, as evidenced by the fact that children's ability to produce passive constructions in their own L1 only becomes available later in their lives. This difficulty often carries over into L2 acquisition, albeit in different ways. Because passive constructions have sometimes been argued to be more difficult to acquire, it has been suggested that L2 learners rely heavily on previously constructed knowledge when attempting to acquire them via positive transfer (e.g. Bruhn de Garavito 2009; Bruhn de Garavito & Valenzuela 2008; Cenoz 2001; Ellis 1997; Izumi & Lackshmanan 1998; Kim & Kim 2013). However, it is still unclear how much L2 learners rely on positive transfer, as most languages in the previous literature work with L1s and L2s that exhibit overt passive marking, as most European and Asian languages do. This study seeks to examine to what degree L1 transfer plays a role in the L2 acquisition of passive constructions by studying a group of learners whose L2 exhibits overt passive marking (French), but whose L1 (Burkinabè languages) does not. More specifically, we ask 167 junior high school students in Burkina Faso to perform two tasks: a survey and a test of French passive constructions (see section 4 for details). The study also simultaneously aims to show if there are any other factors that might influence their L2 passive construction acquisition¹.

2. Previous studies

2.1. The acquisition of passive constructions

L1 acquisition of passive constructions is said to be delayed in comparison to other grammatical constructions (Borer & Wexler 1992; Estrela 2015; Sugisaki 1999, among others), which can be explained by the gradual process of the acquisition of syntax in language acquisition, i.e. learners first acquire simple

¹ The following abbreviations are used in this article: L1= first language, L2 = second language, vP= light verb phrase, VP= verb phrase, CP= complementizer phrase, NP= noun phrase Det= determiner, Pst= past tense, Aff= affirmative marker, Perf= perfective, Imperf= Imperfective, CPH= critical period hypothesis, SD= standard deviation, M= the mean value, Pro= pronoun, Part = Particle.

syntactic aspects before more complex ones (Friedmann et al. 2009; Shetreet & Friedmann 2014). The delay in the acquisition of passives is often attributed to the fact that children do not have NP-movement rules in their grammars. For example, according to authors such as Borer and Wexler (1992), and Sugisaki (1999), young children experience A-chain deficit until the age of six or eight, which prevents them from producing and comprehending sentences that involve movement. The Universal Phase Requirement theory (Deen, 2011; Wexler 2004) arose from this line of thought, which suggests that passive sentences are difficult for children because they cannot move the object argument out of a verb phrase (VP), a phase domain². While this theory has been debated as there is evidence that it does not hold for certain types of verbs in certain languages (e.g. Demuth 1989; Sano 2000), most studies do seem to agree that passive constructions tend to be more difficult for L1 learners, appearing later in life in general, although how much later seems to depend on the language (e.g. Christensen 1991; Estrela 2015; Sugisaki 1999).

With regards to L2 acquisition of passive constructions, many studies suggest that adult L2 learners do not have trouble producing passive constructions themselves, but rather have difficulties with the intricacies of them due to L1 transfer. Here, it should be noted that there are few studies that look only specifically at the acquisition of passive constructions for learners whose L1 and L2 are both European, likely because it does not cause as many problems for such learners (Bruhn de Garavito 2009; Bruhn de Garavito & Valenzuela 2008). Furthermore, majority of studies of learners with Asian L1s and European L2s that look at the acquisition of passive constructions tend to focus only on certain types of passive constructions, not whether or not passive constructions can themselves be created in the L2. For example, though L1 Japanese learners of L2 English seem to be able to create basic passive constructions in their L2 without too much trouble, Izumi and Lakshmanan (1998) have shown that they have trouble realizing that English only allows “direct passives” whereas Japanese has both direct and indirect passives. Similar problems have also been noted for L1 Korean learners of English who do not exhibit much trouble creating passive construction forms in L2 English, but do have problems related to which verb types allow passive meanings in the two languages (Kim & Kim 2013). Thus, learners can indeed have trouble acquiring passive constructions,

² According to Chomsky (1995), categories such as light verbs (v) and complementizers are phase heads. When phrases headed by a phase head is constructed (i.e. vP or CP), the complements of those heads become opaque and invisible for further computation.

but their difficulties seem to begin when L1 transfer is impeded due to differences in the specifics of passives in the L2. However, the aforementioned studies all deal with languages that exhibit overt passive marking, so it is unclear whether or not the creation of passive constructions will be impeded for learners whose L1 does not allow true passive constructions, such as some African languages spoken in Burkina Faso (we will refer to them as Burkinabè native languages). For these learners, it can be surmised that even the act of creating a passive construction could be difficult because (1) the passive construction is considered more difficult to acquire, even in an L1, (2) passive construction knowledge seems to be heavily transferred from the L1 in L2 acquisition, and (3) such knowledge may not be available for transfer in Burkinabè native languages.

2.2. Overview of Burkinabè native languages

Burkinabè native languages are classified into four families: the Niger-Congo family, to which most of the languages belong, the Afro-Asiatic family, the Nilo-Saharan family, and a mixed language family. The Niger-Congo languages are also subdivided into five branches: the branch of Gur languages (recently called Mabia languages), the branch of the Mande languages, the branch of the Kru languages, the branch the Dogon languages, and the branch of Senegambian languages. The Afro-Asiatic languages are composed of 2 languages (Hausa and Tamasheq Kidal), the Nilo-Saharan languages spoken in the country are Songlay and Zarma and mixed language groups consisting of N'Kro and American Sign Language (see Eberhard et al. 2019; Hien 2020).

Although these languages belong to different families and show morphosyntactic differences, they also show some similarities which are not hitherto well-documented. According to Delplanque (2009) and Some (2013), these languages exhibit several common characteristics among which one can mention the absence of voice in verbal morphology, meaning that passive constructions are not overtly marked and instead are formed through the use of intransitively transitive verbs. Fulfude stands out from the other languages in having suffixes used to mark passive voice³. Note that the way it is assumed to be marked in Fulfude is different from the way it is marked in languages such as French and English (see McIntosh 1982). Other shared properties of African languages spoken in Burkina Faso include the presence of a noun class system and the fact that the distinction between tense and aspect categories seems opaque (see Delplanque 2009 for Gur languages and McIntosh 1982 for Fulfude).

³ We would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

2.3. Passive constructions in Burkinabè native languages and French

Positive L1 transfer will likely not be available for L1 Burkinabè native language speakers' acquisition of L2 French passive constructions because French exhibits an overt syntactic marking of passive constructions (i.e. the syntactic structure is different from the structure of the active counterpart) as exemplified by the active sentences (1a, 2a) and their passive counterparts (1b, 2b), while Burkinabè native languages do not. Instead, Burkinabè native languages relay such information through an intransitive use of a transitive verb and the deletion of the agent (Delplanque 2009 and Some 2013) as in (3) and (4), which are examples from Dagara and Mooré, respectively.

- (1) a. *Tom frappe la balle.* (French)
 Tom hit Det ball
 'Tom hit the ball'.
 b. *La balle fut frappée par Tom.*
 Det ball Pst hit by Tom
 'The ball was hit by Tom.'
- (2) a. *Les enfants mangèrent du riz que Marie avait cuisiné.*
 Det children ate some rice that Mary had cooked
 'The children ate some rice that Mary had cooked'.
 b. *Du riz que Marie avait cuisiné fut mangé par les enfants.*
 Det rice that Mary had cooked was eaten by Det children
 'The rice that Mary had cooked was eaten by the children.'
- (3) a. *Tom ημε na djil.* (Dagara)
 Tom hit.Perf Aff xylophone.
 'Tom played a xylophone.'
 b. *A djil ημε na.*
 Det xylophone hit.Perf Aff.
 'The xylophone was played.'
- (4) a. *kamba di-ta mvin.* (Mooré)
 children eat-Imperf. rice
 'The children are eating the rice.'
 b. *mvin di-ta me.*
 rice eat-Imperf Part
 'The rice is being eaten.'

There are three basic properties that must be fulfilled for the construction of a passive sentence in French. First, the verb in the active sentence should be able to select two arguments (a subject noun phrase and an object noun phrase). Second, the object of the active sentence must be promoted to the subject in the passive sentence. Finally, the subject of the active sentence must become an adjunct in the passive sentence. As such, in (1a) and (2a), the verbs *frapper* 'hit' and *manger* 'eat' are transitive and then passivizable, and the objects *la balle* 'the ball' and *du riz* 'the rice' become the subjects of the sentences in the passive constructions in (1b) and (2b), respectively. The demoted subjects are made adjuncts by combining them to the preposition *par* 'by.' There are some recent works, such as Hamma (2015), that argue that phrasal segments marked by *par* do not always behave as adjuncts in authentic productions, *par* is often syntactically necessary and essential both semantically and pragmatically, and is thought to be so for the linguistic tests in this article; this is why we have included it as part of the structure here. Furthermore, though *par* may be dropped in some productions, it is generally included, and thus it is more useful to include it when making analyses based on comparative grammar, as in this study. The verb is also turned into its past participle in the passive sentence and must be preceded by the auxiliary be-verb (*fut* and *est*) (Riegel et al. 1994; Rowlett 2007). Accordingly, in most cases, a passive sentence in French should have a structure as follows:

NP+ auxiliary be-verb + Past Participle of the verb + Adjunct NP (the *par*-phrase).

While the passive structure in French is different from the structure of active sentences, and thus can be considered to be overtly marked, most Burkinabè native languages use the same structure for both active sentences and their passive counterparts. (3a) and (4a) are active sentences in two representative Burkinabè native languages, and (3b) and (4b) can be considered to be their passive counterparts. As shown in (3b) and (4b), there is no change in the verbal morphology of the passive sentences. In these sentences, the agent *by*-phrases cannot be expressed (the same phenomenon is observed in Fulfulde which is assumed to have a passive morpheme). Since the agent (*by*-phrase) cannot be expressed overtly, passive constructions in those languages can be considered to be similar to middle voice constructions from a syntactic perspective. Note that though middle voice can be used to describe current events or situations in progress in many Burkinabè native languages, it is generally used to express generalities in French. Therefore, (3b) and (4b) exhibit similar syntactic structure to (3a) and (4a) and thus there is no overt passive marking. Following this, it can be argued that though passivity can be expressed in both Burkinabè native

languages and French, the systems for doing so vary greatly. Though there are differences in Burkinabè native Languages, their grammatical structures all share this feature in their passive constructions and operate as introduced above (Hien & Spring 2018; Delplanque 2009; Some 2013). As such, this linguistic typological difference between French and these African languages makes it unlikely that speakers of Burkinabè native languages can positively transfer from their L1 to French when learning to construct passive sentences in their L2.

2.4. Other factors affecting second language acquisition

While L1 transfer can be a highly influential in L2 acquisition, several other factors have also been identified as being particularly influential, some of the strongest of which include: the length of time spent studying a language, the onset age of L2 exposure and the amount of such exposure and the surrounding learning environment. While there are other factors that can also be influential (e.g. learning strategies, socio-economic background, etc.), the most easily identifiable and influential for L1 Burkinabè language learners of L2 French, outside of linguistic differences, are likely to be the aforementioned three factors, as argued below.

The onset age of exposure to an L2 has been given as a factor that influences the success a learner will have in properly acquiring some more difficult aspects of grammar where positive transfer is unavailable. Specifically, the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) suggests that the younger a learner is when beginning to acquire an L2, the more success he or she will have (Penfield & Roberts 1959). Though the CPH is widely debated, a number of recent studies have suggested that the tendency for learners who acquire an L2 at a younger age to do better than later-onset learners is persistent for more complex syntax, including the passive construction (e.g. Ellis 1997; Johnson & Newport 1989; Newport et al. 2001; Singleton 2005). These studies suggest that earlier exposure to a language helps develop learners' intuition about the grammatical rules of that language, which enables them to manipulate more complex grammatical structures within sentences in different ways.

However, some researchers reject the CPH and instead suggest that the length of time spent studying an L2 is more influential on successful acquisition than onset. One reason for this is also one of the strongest arguments against the CPH - the fact that often times, early-onset learners have also spent longer studying the L2, and thus, it is unclear whether early-onset or simply length of time studying an L2 is more influential in successful acquisition (Marinova-Todd 2003; White & Genesee 1996). Furthermore, other studies such as White & Genesee (1996) and Birdsong & Molis (2001) point to the fact that late-onset learners

can successfully acquire complex syntactic structures and exhibit high levels of proficiency. According to the CPH in its strongest sense, late-onset learners should not be able to obtain high proficiency with such structures, so the mere existence of such learners is evidence that onset age is not the only factor that influences successful L2 acquisition. However, less rigid interpretations of the CPH simply imply that earlier onset age will aid learners in quicker, more successful acquisition. However, because the learners in most data sets who have the earliest onset ages have also spent the longest learning the L2 (Marinova-Todd 2003; White & Genesee 1996), it is still unclear whether time spent studying a language or onset age of learning is more influential.

The question of how much onset age and length of time studying affects L2 acquisition is further muddled in the case of passive constructions because of the Maturation of A-chain Hypothesis (Borer & Wexler 1992; Sugisaki 1999), which argues that learners generally acquire passive constructions later in their lives. Therefore, late-onset learners might be aided more in the acquisition of L2 passive constructions simply because they are older and more able to process and learn more complex syntactic structures. Thus, it is increasingly unclear whether onset age or length of exposure will affect the learning of the passive construction in L2 French for L1 Burkinabè language learners.

Finally, the environment in which an L2 learner lives has been noted to be greatly influential on their success in acquiring a number of linguistic features, including grammatical constructions (Ellis 1985; Marinova-Todd 2003; Scarcella & Oxford 1992; *etc.*). For example, according to studies such as Marinova-Todd (2003), who looked at a number of factors that could possibly affect L2 acquisition, the learning environment of the learner and the quality of the target language input were among the best predictors of acquiring the morpho-syntax of their target language. While it may seem obvious that learning a language in a second language environment, where the language is spoken as the lingua-franca, versus as a foreign language, where the language is not generally spoken outside of the classroom, it is still unclear how influential this factor is when looked at simultaneously with both onset age and length of time spent learning. Furthermore, it is unclear if all second language learning environments are truly equal, as some learners may naturally be more or less exposed to the language depending on their own individual circumstances.

3. Research questions

As suggested above, L1 Burkinabè native language learners of L2 French are likely to have difficulty in acquiring the passive construction in their L2 due to linguistic differences which will impede positive transfer, but there are a number of other factors that might also influence their acquisition. Thus, this study focuses, first and foremost on the degree to which the lack of overt passive marking in an L1 affects learners' ability to create passive constructions in an L2 with overt passive constructions, and then looks to see if any other factors may also influence their acquisition, affecting the results of this study. To this end, we pose the following research questions:

- (1) Does the fact that L1 Burkinabè native languages lack an overt passive construction affect learners' L2 acquisition of the French passive construction?
- (2) If so, what other factors (onset age of L2 exposure, number of years studying the L2, and learning environment) are most closely associated with high levels of acquisition of the passive construction?

4. Materials and methods

4.1. Participants

167 junior high school students between the ages of 11 and 17 years ($M= 13.94$, $SD= 1.44$) who were studying in Burkina Faso participated in this study. Of them, 75 were living and studying in villages and 92 were in Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso. The participants all claimed a Burkinabè native language (Mooré, Dioula, Dagara, Fulfulde, Gourounsi⁴, Bissa, Nakanna, Dafi, or Gourmantchema) as their first language, as verified through a survey. Note that these languages belong to different language families. The onset age of French learners ranged from 2 to 10 years ($M= 5.72$, $SD= 1.62$), and the number of years they had spent studying French ranged from 5 to 13 ($M=7.73$, $SD=1.73$).

⁴ Following the reviewer's remark, it is worth noting that Gourounsi is not a single language but a group of languages. In Burkina Faso, the term is generally used to refer to speakers of languages such as Nuni, Lyele, Kasena, etc.). The term Gourounsi is used here since we are reporting the participants' answers as obtained.

4.2. Procedures

All participants were asked to perform two tasks: a survey (see Appendix 1) and a test on French passive constructions (see Appendix 2). These tasks were performed separately with a five minutes break between them. The survey asked participants to provide information regarding their linguistic background, including their age, gender, which languages they considered themselves to be proficient in, which they felt were first or secondary languages, their onset age for learning these languages, the number of years they had spent studying French, as well as the frequency with which they used French in their daily lives. It was designed to first ensure that their L1 was a Burkinabè native language, and then to identify other possible factors which may affect their L2 passive constructions acquisition. The survey also asked participants about their learning environment, but the clearest indicator of how much French they used outside of the classroom was the area where they lived (in the capital or in a rural village). In general, citizens of Burkina Faso living in cities tend to use French as a lingua-franca for daily activities, whereas in villages, they tend to use their own Burkinabè L1s for daily communication.

After the survey, participants took a French passive construction test, which consisted of a sentence formation task in which participants were shown six French active sentences and asked to re-write the sentences in such a way that they would have the same meaning, starting with a word(s) that was/were provided. The word(s) provided was/were the object from the active sentence shown, as exemplified in (5a-b). Six dummy sentences, exemplified in (6a-b) below, were also provided to prevent participants from determining what exactly was being tested in the task. A list of the test sentences (including dummy sentences) and representative correct answers can be found in Appendix 2. Here, it should be noted that the test sentences used were designed for children living in Burkina Faso. Accordingly, all the sentences were taken from examples of daily conversations in Burkina Faso, and may vary from other variations of French, as the French spoken in Africa has been noted to have several differences (see Ahouzi 2014; Bassole-Ouedraogo 2004; Féral 2010; Manessy 1994; Steien & Avenne 2019, among others). Thus, though the sentences used in this survey are well accepted in Burkina Faso, some speakers of the French spoken in France may find some of them, such as (7), a bit strange (see discussion for more details).

- (5) a. *Les enfants ont mangé du riz.*
 Det children have eaten some rice
 'The children have eaten some rice.'

- b. *Le riz...*
 Det rice...
- (6) a. *Je m' en vais à l' école.*
 I Pro Pro go to Det school
 'I am going to school.'
- b. *L' école...*
 DET school....
- (7) a. *Jean enseigne les enfants tous les jours.*
 John teach Det children all Det days
 'John teaches the children every day.'
- b. *Les enfants...*
 Det children

Tests were given scores between 0 and 6 based on how many of the sentences were correctly expressed in the passive voice. Sentences were considered to be correctly expressed if the syntactic structure of the passive sentence was correct (i.e. NP + auxiliary be-verb + Past Participle of the verb + Adjunct NP (the *par*-phrase)). We did not consider mistakes unrelated to the passive construction such as spelling or subject-verb agreement.

5. Analysis

In order to determine to what degree learners had difficulty acquiring the passive construction, we looked both at the percentage to which participants could give correct answers, and used the answers that they provided as qualitative data to learn what types of mistakes they were typically making.

In order to check which factors influenced participants' scores and to what degree, we used the F statistic method, in particular Mizumoto's (2023) method of regression analysis with relative weights based on dominance analysis to determine the amount of impact and the random forest algorithm to make decisions on whether or not factors had discernible impact on the scores. A regression analysis with dominance analysis allows us to determine how well independent variables (i.e. onset age of L2 exposure, number of years studying the L2, and learning environment) predict a dependent variable (i.e. scores on the passive construction test). Following Mizumoto (2023) and Spring (2022) we report the *F* value and *p* value that are relevant for the regression model. If the *p* value is lower than 0.05, it is generally considered that the combination of the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable.

The F value is provided so that others can verify our model and the associated p value (Spring 2022). Furthermore, the R^2 value is also provided, as it indicates the degree to which the model predicts the dependent variable and how much of the variance in the data can be explained by the independent variables (Mizumoto 2023). Furthermore, we report the predictive power of each independent variable according to statistical reporting norms (Mizumoto 2023; Spring 2022). Specifically, we report the B value, (i.e. raw predictive power), the $Beta$ (i.e. standardized predictive power), the t value (i.e. the statistical measure that is used to calculate statistical predictive significance) and the VIF (i.e. variance inflation factor, with scores less than 2 indicating there is low enough covariance between the independent variables to be included in the statistical model).

Furthermore, following Mizumoto (2023), we report the relative weight and random forest predictions of each independent variable as the most important pieces of evidence to answer the second research question. The relative weight refers to the percentage of the regression model that is explained by each variable. Since the relative weight of all independent variables adds to 100%, it is easy for non-experts to see how important each variable is in predicting the dependent variable. Finally, according to Mizumoto (2023) and the American Statistical Association (Wasserstein & Lazar 2016), random forests work better than p values for determining whether or not an independent variable significantly predicts a dependent variable, and we therefore report this result for deciding whether or not each independent variable predicts passive construction test scores.

6. Results

6.1. Acquisition of the passive construction

The results indicate that the L2 French passive construction is difficult for many participants, as approximately two-thirds of responses contained errors resulting in an average score of $M= 2.05$ (on a scale of 0 to 6). This is striking, as the test was not designed to be particularly difficult, the majority of participants had been learning French for several years (over 5 years on average), and residents of Burkina Faso generally acquire native level French ability by adulthood. In examining the types of mistakes that learners made, it also becomes clear that negative L1 transfer (or lack of positive L1 transfer) was likely the cause of their difficulty. For example, consider some of the representative examples of mistakes taken from the data, repeated as (8b-d) and (9b-d).

- (8) a. *La pollution a détruit la terre.*
 the pollution has destroyed the earth
 'Pollution has destroyed the earth.'
- b. *La terre a détruit la pollution.*
 the earth has destroyed the pollution
- c. *La terre a détruit.*
 the earth has destroyed
- d. *La terre détruit la terre la pollution.*
 the earth destroy the earth the pollution
- (9) a. *Les femmes balayent la route.*
 the women clean the road
 'The women have cleaned the road.'
- b. *La route balaye les femmes.*
 the road clean the women
- c. *La route les femmes balayent.*
 the road the women clean
- d. *Les route les femmes balayeront.*
 the road the women clean

(8a) and (9a) are active sentences which were given for the test. Most of the learners that made mistakes with the passive construction in these questions topicalized the object of the active sentences, as shown in (9c-d). This type of mistake, along with the fact that some learners permuted only the subject noun phrase with the object noun phrase without inserting the auxiliary *to be*, as in (8b-c) or (9b), suggests that they are thinking of their L1 when creating L2 sentences. Recall that what can be considered to be a passive construction in Burkinabè languages does not involve any verb morphological change, that is, an active sentence and its passive counterpart would have the same syntactic structure. The fact that most of the passive sentences made by learners have almost the same structure as their active counterparts (i.e. they do not involve verbal morphology changes) suggests that learners are using knowledge of passivization from their L1s to construct passives in their L2. Since the passive construction of French involves a change of the verb form, transferring the strategy that derives "passives" of the Burkinabè languages to French results in mistakes that are likely due to negative transfer. Further evidence that L1 knowledge is being applied to passive constructions in the L2 can be found in the fact that many of the incorrect sentences also omit the other overt marking of passive voice in the L2, i.e. the word *par*. Thus, it is highly likely that L1 transfer may then be the cause of learners' failure to correctly produce passive sentences in French.

It should be noted here that there were also other minor mistakes, especially gender and tense related mistakes as in examples repeated as (10a-b). The tense in (10a) is what is called *passé composé*, similar to the English present perfect. Here, the auxiliary “to be” needed to be in *passé composé* in the passive sentence (*a été* ‘has been’) as well. Furthermore, the verb, introduced by the auxiliary “to be”, needed to agree in number and gender (singular and feminine) with the subject noun phrase (a singular and feminine noun phrase), which is not the case in (10b). These mistakes could possibly be due to the lack of overt passivization in combination with the lack of an overt agreement system in their L1, but it is difficult to discern which causes more of a problem in these examples. However, the mistakes represented by (8-9) were far more common than those exemplified in (10). Thus, while learners might have had several different problems when creating accurate passive constructions, it seems that negative transfer from the L1 (or at the very least, lack of positive L1 transfer) creates much difficulty for L1 Burkinabè language learners of L2 French in that the lack of overt passive marking in their L1 seems to be carried over, incorrectly, into the L2.

- (10) a. *La pollution a détruit la terre.*
 the pollution has destroyed the earth
 ‘Pollution has destroyed the earth.’
- b. *La terre est détruit par la pollution.*
 the earth is destroyed by the pollution

6.2. Factors affecting acquisition

The descriptive statistics for the data are given below.

	M	SD	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Score	2.07	2.17	0-6	0.59	-1.15
Vil/Town	1.46	0.50	1-2	0.17	-1.98
OnsetAge	1.62	0.49	1-2	-0.48	-1.78
YearsStudy	1.60	0.49	1-2	-0.43	-1.83

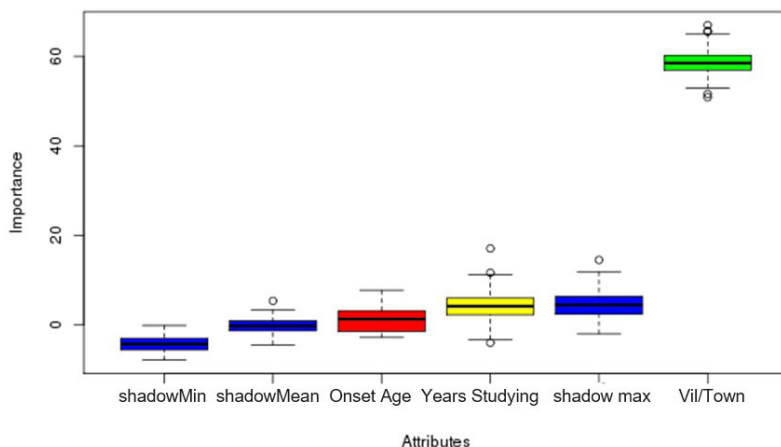
The regression analysis was found to be statistically significant and to explain 49.71% of the variance; $F = 54.04$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = 0.4971$. This means that the combination of the independent variables were clearly predictive of around half of the passive construction test scores. The detailed statistics for the predic-

tors in the model and a visual representation of the relative weights and random forest are given in Table 2 and Figure 1.

TABLE 2

	B	Beta	t	p	VIF	Rel. Weight	RF Decision
Vil/Town	-3.16	-0.725	-12.64	<.01	1.053	97.77%	Confirmed
OnsetAge	-0.31	-0.70	-1.15	.25	1.163	1.19%	Rejected
YearsStudy	0.39	0.089	1.50	.14	1.119	1.03%	Tentative

Figure 1



According to Table 2, the VIF scores suggest that each independent variable (i.e. living area, onset age, and years of study) were appropriate for the model. Furthermore, the relative weight scores in Table 2 and the visualization of their importance in Figure 1 show that whether the participants lived in villages or towns was by far the most influential factor. Furthermore, the number of years of study seemed to have some effect on their scores, albeit much less so than where they lived. This is evidenced by the fact that it had a small piece of the relative weight, and was determined to be tentatively predictive by the random forest, although it failed to produce a *p* value in Table 2 of less than 0.05. Finally, the onset age of study did not seem to have much impact as it produced little relative weight, and was rejected both by the random forest and by the *p* value in Table 2, not being less than 0.05.

7. Discussion

The purpose of this article is to examine to what extent the lack of overt passivization in Burkinabè languages affects the acquisition of L2 French passive constructions, and to subsequently check if other factors also influence their acquisition. As presented in the previous sections of this article, it has been argued that L1 transfer can play a large role in learners' acquisition of complex morpho-syntax such as passive constructions. Since the learners' L1s in this study are typologically different from their L2 with respect to whether or not passive constructions were overtly marked, it was surmised that learners would have great difficulty creating correct passive constructions in L2 French. The results reported above suggest that L1 Burkinabè language learners of L2 French do indeed have great difficulty in this particular area, as confirmed by their average scores ($M = 2.05$ on a scale of 0 to 6), despite an overall high command of the French language and having studied it for a long period of time. Furthermore, the learners' responses suggest that they were likely relying on their L1 knowledge when attempting to create passive constructions in their L2, as evidenced by the types of mistakes that they typically made, i.e. a lack of morphological changes to the verb, use of the same basic structure in their passive constructions, and a lack of other passive marking such as *par*, as shown in (8-10). This agrees with previous studies that suggest that L2 learners tend to rely on their L1 when learning a grammatical feature or a construction (e.g. Hien & Spring 2018; Bruhn de Garavito 2009; Bruhn de Garavito & Valenzuela 2008; Cenoz 2001; Ellis 1997) and with the comparative linguistic evidence given in section 2. It is also congruent with works such as Izumi and Lakshmanan's (1998) who found that L1 knowledge is often transferred to the L2 acquisition of passive constructions, specifically.

It should also be noted that learners' awareness of the typological similarities and differences is also argued to play a key role in the success of transfer (Hien & Spring 2018; Cenoz 2001). Being aware of what aspects are different or similar between an L1 and a target language aids to reducing chances of negative transfer. Accordingly, Cenoz (2001) argues that learners' age plays a key role in positive/negative transfer. Thus, L1 Burkinabè language adult learners of French, who generally achieve native level L2 mastery, might be more successful in learning French passives than young L2 learners because adults can more easily detect what features are not transferable to the target language. However, this is impossible to tell from only our data, as a number of studies also suggest that passive constructions are simply more difficult for younger learners in general, even in their L1, as per the Universal Phase Requirement (Borer & Wexler 1992; Deen 2011; Sugisaki 1999; Wexler 2004).

As for the second research question of whether other factors such as onset age of L2 exposure, number of years studying the L2, and learning environment were associated with higher levels of acquisition of the passive construction of French, we found that the area where participants lived was found to be, by far, the most influential factor. We also found that there was some association for both onset age and years studied, but when added to our regression analysis it seems that years studying might have some effect together with living area, but that the onset age was not a major factor in determining acquisition of the passive construction. The effect of the living place on the production of passive sentences in the present study can be partially attributed to the fact that French is used less frequently in villages than in the cities in Burkina Faso, and thus learners in the capital likely had far more target language-rich learning environments.

One implication from these results of the regression analysis could be that for aspects of L2 acquisition affected by negative transfer, onset age and years spent studying have a significant impact on learners who live in environments with less target language usage, but not on those who live in high-usage areas. This could help explain some of the discrepancies in previous studies that have argued about whether or not onset age or years spent studying a language will affect their L2 acquisition (e.g. Hien & Spring 2018; Birdsong & Molis 2001; Johnson & Newport 1989; Marinova-Todd 2003). Perhaps many of the studies that view it as a more influential factor (e.g. Johnson & Newport 1989; Newport et al. 2001; Singleton 2005) are looking at lower-usage learning environments, for example foreign-language learners, and studies that view other factors as more critical (e.g. Hien & Spring 2018; Marinova-Todd 2003; Strid 2017) are looking at learners in high-usage language environments. It could also be that the CPH has an effect on learners, but only up to a certain point, at which the number of years spent studying and the amount of L2 input will cause the difference in onset age to become more negligible. Regardless, the other implication of the results of our study is that enough immersion or exposure can help learners of an L2 to overcome any negative effects that learning later in life or having less time to study might have on them. This finding is in line with Marinova-Todd's (2003) claim that the environment where a target language is being learned can determine how successfully its acquisition will be and mimics calls from second and foreign language instructors such as Scarcella and Oxford (1992) and Ellis (1985). This is a rather hopeful result for L2 learners, as it suggests that one can still be a successful learner if they overcome poverty of stimulus or exposure in their L2, even if they begin studying later in life or have less time to study. It would seem that having enough contact with a target language can

facilitate its acquisition regardless of the learner's age of onset or the number of years he or she is learning it, with regards to aspects of the L2 more difficult to acquire, such as complex structures that are impeded by negative L1 transfer.

Though the present study presents evidence that it is difficult for learners whose L1s do not exhibit overt passive construction marking to acquire the passive construction in an L2 that does, it still leaves some questions unanswered. For example, it is still unclear whether learner age will help reduce the effects of negative L1 transfer or if there is any sort of universal order to acquiring parts of the passive construction (e.g. learning to change the morphology of the verb or using *par*). Since the learners in our study were similar in age, it is difficult to discern any answers in these areas. Furthermore, studies on learners with other L1s may also be considered if they have a similar lack of overt passive constructions to see if the same sorts of difficulties are seen for all L1/L2 pairs that differ in whether or not there is overt passive marking, or if this is unique to L1 Burkinabè language learners of French. Also, it would be helpful to know whether raising learners' awareness of the linguistic typological differences between Burkinabè languages and French can reduce negative transfer and increase acquisition. According to Izumi and Lakshmanan (1998), when L2 learners face a learnability problem, providing negative evidence (i.e. pointing out learners' mistakes) may lead to better acquisition. However, this is entirely outside the scope of the current study.

As mentioned earlier, there are differences between Burkinabè French and the French spoken in France (often referred to as standard French), which might cause some French speakers, especially those from France, to find some of our questions strange (see Appendix 2). According to a number of studies (e.g. Ahouzi 2014; Feral 2010; Manessy & Wald 1984), the differences between Burkinabè French and the French spoken in France is attributed to the fact that Burkinabès transfer some aspects of the Burkinabè languages to French when speaking it. For example, the phrase "to live in poverty" is translated into *vivre dans la pauvreté* in standard French. However, in Burkina Faso and most African countries, "to live in poverty" is frequently translated as *vivre dans la galère*. Likewise, while the French translate "to welcome guests" as *accueillir des invités*, Burkinabè can express that by *donner de l'eau aux invités* (literally to give water to the guests). Thus, there may be some room for improvement in repeating such a study with speakers of French in African countries in the future by making sure that the sentences or examples selected will be better accepted by all speakers of French. However, we think that even these sentences can still help us to observe learners' implicit knowledge of passive constructions and

a general trend of negative transfer was still be clearly seen in our data with or without the inclusion of these potentially problematic examples. Therefore, while we acknowledge that there may potentially be problems with the naturalness of some of the questions from which the data was taken, we do think it is still sufficient to draw some basic initial conclusions.

8. Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that L1 Burkinabè language learners of L2 French do indeed have great difficulty with the proper usage of L2 passive constructions, which is likely due to either negative L1 transfer or lack of positive L1 transfer. This suggests that the creation of passive constructions may be difficult for learners if their L1 does not contain overt passive marking. Furthermore, our study also suggested that the language environment has the greatest impact on the acquisition of the passive construction by L1 Burkinabè learners of L2 French and that while the number of years spent studying French also seems to be associated with greater acquisition, the onset age of learning French does not. However, this study also clearly showed that both earlier onset age and a greater number of years spent studying French are associated with increased acquisition for learners who were not living in target language-rich environments. This suggests that L2 acquisition difficulties related to negative transfer might be overcome by higher levels of target language contact, and that onset age and the number of years studying become more important for learners with low levels of target language contact when the L1 and L2 vary greatly. Finally, although we were able to show a clear indication of difficulty for the learners in our experiment, it could be aided by choosing question sentences that are more generally accepted by the overall French community and not just in African French, so we hope that future researchers will take this into consideration when conducting similar investigations of African learners of L2 French.

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Appendix 1: Survey used in experiment (translated from French)

- 1- How old are you ?
- 2- Indicate your gender.
a-Male b-Female
- 3- Where do you live?
a-village b-town
- 4- How many languages do you speak? Please list them:
- 5- Rank the languages you speak by competence preference.
- 6- How many foreign languages do you speak/learn?
a-1 b-2 c-3 d-4
- 7- Indicate them.
- 8- Have you ever taken any foreign language tests (such as TFI, TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, etc.)? If so, please list them and your scores. If not, please leave blank:
- 9- Have you ever been to a foreign country for more than a year where you learned or spoke the language? Please list any countries and how long you were there:
- 10- How long have you been studying French?
- 11- How old were you when you started learning/speaking French?
- 12- Where do you use French? (Select as many as apply)
a-home b-school c-home and school d- playground e-everywhere
- 13- How often do you use French?
a-every day b-2-3 days per week c- 1 day per week
d-less than 1 day per week
- 14- Do your parents frequently speak French with you?
a-yes b-no
- 15- What language(s) do your parents usually use at home?

Appendix 2: Some questions used in the French passive test

Écrivez des phrases ayant le même sens que celles données, en commençant par les mots fournis.

- 1) *Les chaises sont brisées.
Les chaises _____.
- 2) Les hommes consomment les fruits de mer.
Les fruits de mer _____.
- 3) Beaucoup de personnes suivent le match de football à la maison.
Le match de football _____.
- 4) *Les hommes aiment mentir.
Mentir _____.
- 5) *Je m'en vais à l'école.
L'école _____.
- 6) Les femmes balayent la route.
La route _____.
- 7) *L'eau est importante pour la vie.
La vie _____.
- 8) La pollution a détruit la terre.
La terre _____.
- 9) *Nous avons besoin d'un traitement particulier.
Un traitement particulier _____.
- 10) Papa et maman regardent des films Japonais.
Des films Japonais _____.
- 11) *Je suis content aujourd'hui.
Aujourd'hui _____.
- 12) Jean enseigne les enfants tous les jours.
Les enfants _____.

The dummy questions are marked by asterisks above. We did not expect any particular response for dummy questions. Examples of acceptable responses for each non-dummy question are:

- 2) Les fruits de mer sont consommés (par les hommes).
- 3) Le match de football est suivi (par beaucoup de personnes à la maison).
- 6) La route est balayée (par les femmes).
- 8) La terre est détruite (par la pollution).
- 10) Des films Japonais sont regardés (par Papa et maman).

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the acquisition of the passive construction (i.e. the acquisition of the syntactic structure of the passive sentences), we did not take into account mistakes related to tense and gender in our statistical model.

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Variation in Èdó personal pronouns: a case of allomorphy?

Abstract

This article re-examines pronouns in Èdó, a Niger Congo language indigenous to Nigeria. Previous researches ascribed the large personal pronoun inventory of the language to structural case (Omoregie 1983) and deletion rules (Omoruyi 1986), paying little attention to the internal structure of these words. Thus, this study revisits the issue from the perspective of morphology. Data for the study was obtained from primary and secondary sources. The analysis reveals that the multiplicity of personal pronouns is motivated by different processes. These processes give rise to four sub-types of allomorphy: phonological, suppletive, morpho-syntactically conditioned and lexically conditioned allomorphy.

Keywords: allomorphy, Èdó language, personal pronouns, structural case, suppletive allomorphs

1. Introduction

This article focuses on personal pronouns in Èdó, a Niger-Congo language that is native to southern Nigeria. Data¹ shows that this language has more than thirty personal pronouns; yet, it only differentiates participant roles (1st, 2nd and 3rd person) and number. Extant analyses ascribe this phenomenon to deletion rules and the need for simplicity (Omoruyi 1986:82). Although morphophonemic conditioning is a plausible reason, it does not provide an adequate account of the problem. To proffer a holistic explanation, we re-examined pronoun multiplicity from the perspective of allomorphy.

The aim is to determine conditions under which each combination of participant role and number is realised with distinct exponents. Identifying these conditions advances knowledge of Èdó, eases the scarcity of literature on its grammar and improves the prospects of teaching and learning the language. Further, the discussions in this article will prove invaluable to comparative studies and future research on pronouns in other African languages.

2. Literature review

Èdó distinguishes personal pronouns using three features: *inu* (number), *urho* (person), and *oru* (case). As shown in (Omoregie 1983), these features yield a binary number distinction (singular and plural), three categories of discourse participants (first, second and third) and four types of structural case (nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive). Another description of Èdó personal pronouns can be found in Omoruyi (1986), a paper which investigates four sub-categories of definite pronouns: personal, possessive, relative and reflexive.

On the subject of personal pronouns, the paper states that “case roles largely determine the distribution of Èdó personal pronouns in sentences (Omoruyi 1986: 83-84).” The paper classifies personal pronouns into two types: “subjective” and “objective” case pronouns. When the constituents of a sentence

¹ The data for this study was collected primarily from fieldwork in three locales (Egor, Ovia North-East and Oredo); these communities were purposively selected because they have large population of native speakers. Notes from the interviews and participant observation were complemented with data from a corpus of textual and audio-visual materials. The secondary sources of data include Agheyisi (1986), (Agoba and Ikpomwosa (2009), Edionwe (2016), Omoregie (1983), Omoruyi (1986 and 1989) and Imasuen (1993, 1996 and 1998). Data analysis did not employ any theoretical framework. We simply discussed using concepts which are common knowledge in language studies.

split into two main parts, subjective case pronouns are those which function as subject of the sentence while the objective case pronouns are forms which occur anywhere in the predicate. This article also points out that the person and number pairs have identical underlying forms (long pronouns) and variants (short pronouns) which are subject to strict distributional rules. The following examples illustrate this strict distribution.

(1) *irẹ̀òṅ/ò táàà ìmẹ̀mwẹ̀/* mẹ̀*

3SG tell 1SG

'He/She tells me.'

(2) *irẹ̀òṅ/ rẹ̀n tiẹ̀ ùwà/*wá*

3SG call 2PL

'He/She calls you.'

The unacceptability of *irẹ̀òṅ/ò táàà * mẹ̀* and *irẹ̀òṅ/ rẹ̀n tiẹ̀ *wá* is due to the fact that *mẹ̀* and *wá* cannot occur in the predicate of a sentence. Omoruyi (1986: 85) remarks that "if we are right in proposing *ìmẹ̀mwẹ̀* and *ùwà* as the underlying forms for *mẹ̀* and *wá* respectively, we shall either need powerful constraints to block the occurrence of *mẹ̀* and *wá* in objective case or in the alternative propose some morphophonemic rules that will account for the surface realisations". Observation of the language in use and other texts suggest that the aberrant pronoun in (1) can occur in subject and predicate positions.

(3) (a) *Mẹ̀ yà-òsà-yí*

1SG believe-God-believe

'I believe in God.'

(b) *Mẹ̀ yó né*

1SG go already

'I have gone (already).'

(Agheyisi 1986:95)

(c) *Wẹ̀ẹ̀ ẹ̀mwá hiá dòó mẹ̀*

Say people all hello me

'Say hello to everyone for me.'

(Imasuen 1996:111)

(d) *Rhiẹ̀ nọ̀hírhí yẹ̀ẹ̀ rùẹ̀ mẹ̀*

Give whichever please you me

'Give me whichever (one) pleases you.'

(Omoriegbe 1983:88)

As shown in examples (3a) – (3d), restricting pronouns to subject or predicate positions does not fully explain variation in the forms of Èdó personal pronouns. Furthermore, other textbooks (Imasuen 1993, 1996, 1998) discuss pronoun

forms that were not included in Omoruyi's study. They include *à* – first person plural; *rùén, wùén, á* and *ó* – second person singular; as well as *óré* and *ónrèn* variants for third person singular. If these variants and others from our field notes are added to those previously documented in the literature, the language would have over thirty forms of personal pronouns as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Complete table of Èdó personal pronouns

Person	Number	Underlying forms	Pronoun variants	Quantity of forms
1 st	Singular	<i>ìmẹmwẹ</i>	<i>ì, ìmẹ, mwẹ, mẹmwẹ, mẹ</i>	6
	Plural	<i>ìmàmwà</i>	<i>à, ìmà, mwà, màmwà, mà</i>	6
2 nd	Singular	<i>ùwẹ</i>	<i>ù, wẹ, rùé, rùén/wùén, ùé, á, ó</i>	9
	Plural	<i>ùwà</i>	<i>wà, rùá, ùá</i>	4
3 rd	Singular	<i>ìrèn</i>	<i>ò, ìrèn, rèn, éré, óré, ónrèn, énrèn, én, è</i>	10
	Plural	<i>ìrà</i>	<i>ìrà</i>	1

There are two existent explanations for the pronouns labelled variants on table. The first is that pronouns are used for different grammatical functions (Omoregie 1983). This explanation is based on the notion of structural case; as shown in examples (1)-(3), case cannot differentiate all variants. The second explanation is that pronoun variants are surface representations derived via deletion from the underlying forms (Omoruyi 1986). There are no details on the manner in which deletion applies, but the idea fits the subtractive morphological process known as clipping. It is a process which shortens a word without changing its meaning or part of speech; frequently, clipping changes the word's stylistic value (Bauer 2003: 40). Clipped forms may be identical to the full form of the word (e.g. zoo << zoological garden); they may also be mutated (e.g. varsity << university). Identical clipping works aptly for first person pronoun variants. However, differences in the composition of the underlying forms and their respective variants make clipping a less accurate explanation for second and third person pronouns.

3. Èdó personal pronouns: a re-examination

Personal pronouns refer to specific persons or things. They serve as substitutes for nouns; and can be differentiated using features. Unlike nouns, "languages

disallow personal pronouns from taking definite or indefinite articles whose function is identifying their referents” (Bhat 2004: 35). A second distinction between nouns and pronouns is their morphological forms. Usually, nouns are independent word forms, while pronouns may be independent or bound. In Èdó language, personal pronouns are realised as both independent and bound forms; table 2 shows their morpho-syntactic feature distinctions. Morpho-syntactic features manifest in the internal structure of a word and apply to the well-formedness of constructions where such a word occurs. Kibort and Corbett (2008) identify two kinds of morpho-syntactic features: inherent and contextual. Inherent morpho-syntactic features have their values in the word; contextual features get their values from syntax.

TABLE 2: Morpho-syntactic features of Èdó personal pronouns

Inherent features		Contextual features	
Number		Case	
Singular	✓	Nominative	✓
Plural	✓	Accusative	✓
Gender		Dative	✓
Masculine	✗	Oblique	✓
Feminine	✗	Genitive	✓
Neutral	✗	Affective	✓
Person			
First	✓		
Second	✓		
Third	✓		

Èdó personal pronouns have both inherent and contextual features. Inherent features are *number* and *person*; *gender* is non-distinctive in the language. The number distinction is between singular and plural, while person distinguishes discourse participants (first and second person) from non-participants (third person). The only contextual feature is *case*. Case is a relation between an argument and its syntactic surrounding (Sigurdsson 2003: 226). The Èdó language has a structural, nominative-accusative case system. The feature is only evident in pronouns, so one can say that the language is not case rich. Notwithstanding, earlier studies (Omoriegbe 1983, Omoruyi 1986, and Imasuen 1996) suggest that the form of a pronoun was dependent on its grammatical function. Those stud-

ies distinguish personal pronouns in terms of six kinds of case illustrated with first person singular in example 4 (a) *nominative* (i.e. subject of a sentence), (b) *accusative* (the direct object), (c) *dative* (the indirect object), (d) *oblique* (object of a preposition), (e) *genitive* (possessor) and (f) *affective* (experiencer).

- (4) (a) *ì ghàá rré èstó*
 1SG PERF be_at shop
 'I was at the shop.'
- (b) *Òzó gbé mwè*
 Ozo beat 1SG
 'Ozo beats me.'
- (c) *Wè rá dèé, dè èmwí mè*
 2SG INC come buy thing 1SG
 'When you are coming, buy me something.'
- (d) *Wè rá dèé, dè èmwí gù mwè*
 2SG INC come buy thing for 1SG
 'When you are coming, buy something for me.'
- (e) *ì rhié-∅ èbé mwè nè ètísà*
 1SG give-PST book 1SG to teacher
 'I gave my book to the teacher.'
- (f) *òvbé hún mwè*
 Sleep be_sleepy 1SG
 'I feel sleepy.'

Example (4) shows three forms of the first person singular in mutually exclusive positions. These sentences support the idea that there is a relation between the form and function of personal pronouns. However, as shown in Table 1, Èdó has six forms of first person singular: *ìmwè*, *ì*, *imè*, *mwè*, *mèmwè*, *mè*. The three forms not shown in example (4) are equally acceptable as subject, object, possessor and experience. The only exception is the indirect object in 4(c); that form is the only one acceptable in double object constructions. A more recent study (Usenbo 2023) outlines the many-to-many correspondence between pronouns and case positions. The work urges further studies to proffer other explanations for the realisation of personal pronouns. This article explores processes related to allomorphy.

3.1. Allomorphy in Èdó personal pronouns

Allomorphy refers to the situation where a given morpheme is spelled-out as different forms, occurring in different environments. The allomorphs have the same

feature specification and core meaning as the morpheme, and each one can be related to others through some change in phonological shape (Fabregas & Scalise 2012: 15-16). Some other definitions of allomorphy allow forms which have unrelated phonological realizations. An example is Paster (2016: 93) who considers it as any instance where a single set of semantic and morphosyntactic features have two or more context-dependent realisations.

There are two main types of allomorphy: phonologically predictable (or non-suppletive) and suppletive (or contextual allomorphy). Non-suppletive allomorphy involves one underlying representation and several surface forms, which can be explained using productive phonological rules. Suppletive allomorphy also involves association of a given underlying representation with several allomorphs. However, unlike predictable allomorphy, suppletive surface forms arise from three conditions: phonological, lexical and morpho-syntactic.

Beyond the types and conditions, another prominent issue related to the subject of allomorphy is the kind of alternations: affixes versus stems (bound vs. free morphemes). In the following sub-section, we streamline the discussion of these issues by addressing two research questions. One, which alternations can one find in Èdó personal pronouns and what is their motivation? Two, what types of allomorphy can account for the representation of these pronouns?

3.2. Phonologically predictable allomorphy

Èdó personal pronouns can be realised as clitics and independent words. In terms of allomorphy, alternations lie within and between both morphological forms. Consider second person singular in these examples.

- (5) (a) Èmwá nẹ́ í rrẹ̀ẹ̀ nọ́ọ́ ẹ̀mwẹ̀ rùẹ̀n?²
 People REL RP came ask word 2SG
 'The people that came asked after you.'
- (b) Vbẹ̀ ọ́á tíé rùé
 QM 1PL call 2SG
 'What is your name?'

² Another representation of this pronoun is *wùẹ̀n*. However, some authors claim that *wùẹ̀n* is one of the pseudo pronoun forms documented in early grammar books. We have left it out of this paper for two reasons. One is to enable readers gradually follow the discussion of pronouns in this language. Two, which is more important, is that the pseudo forms have no consequences on the analyses. Ormozuwa (p.c) explains that the "w" in *wùẹ̀n* is actually the u which experienced glide formation, following deletion of the initial consonant in "rùẹ̀n".

- (6) (a) *Té ọ̀ lòghọ̀ rùé* → *lògh=ùé*
 QM 3SG be_difficult 2SG
 'Is it difficult for you?'
- (b) *Ògbèíwí í gbèè³ rùé* → *gb=ùé*
 Ogbèiwí NEG hit 2SG
 'Ogbèiwí is not hitting you.'
- (c) *Ọ̀ ghá mù rùé yó èsùkú* → *m=ùé*
 3SG will carry 2SG go school
 'He/She will take you to school.'
- (d) *Ògbèíwí í rẹ̀rẹ̀ rùé* → *rẹ̀rẹ̀=ùé*
 Ogbèiwí NEG deceive 2SG
 'Ogbèiwí is not deceiving you.'
- (e) *Té ọ̀ lòghọ̀ rùé* → *lògh=ọ̀*
 QM 3SG be_difficult 2SG
 'Is it difficult for you?'
- (f) *Ògbèíwí í rẹ̀rẹ̀ rùé* → *rẹ̀r=ọ̀*
 Ogbèiwí NEG deceive 2SG
 'Ogbèiwí is not deceiving you.'

The sentences in (5a) and (5b) illustrate phonological allomorphy in free forms. The alternation is driven by nasal assimilation. Imasuen (1996: 102) explains that “*rùé* is realised as *rùén* after a word which ends in a nasal sound”. Example (6) shows allomorphy within clitic forms. The second person singular in those sentences is *rùé* but in each example, it fuses to the preceding word as shown in word forms at the pointed ends of the arrows. Also observe that the pronoun is realised as two clitics: *ùé* in (6a) – (6d) and *ọ̀* in (6e) – (6f). One can explain the clitic realisation of second person singular using attested phonological rules of the language. The applicable rules are shown as I and II below.

I. Predictable phonological conditions may be formulated as follows

- (a) r-deletion rule: [ɹ] → Ø / [(VC)₀ V_V (CV)₀]_{Formative} (Omozuwa 1989: 322)
- | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------|----------------|
| <i>lòghọ̀ rùé</i> | → | <i>lòghọ̀</i> | # __ <i>ùé</i> |
| <i>gbé rùé</i> | → | <i>gbé</i> | # __ <i>ùé</i> |
| <i>mú rùé</i> | → | <i>mú</i> | # __ <i>ùé</i> |
| <i>rẹ̀rẹ̀ rùé</i> | → | <i>rẹ̀rẹ̀</i> | # __ <i>ùé</i> |
| <i>bàbà rùé</i> | → | <i>bàbà</i> | # __ <i>ùé</i> |

³ The citation form of this verb has a low tone. The environment in example (b) allows assimilation of the high tone on the negative marker; thus, “*gbèè*” is realised with a Falling tone. In writing, this is represented as “*gbèè*”.

- (b) vowel elision rule:
- $V \rightarrow \emptyset / ____ \# V$
- (Omozuwa 1997:119)

<i>lòghó</i>	# __ùé	→	<i>lògh∅</i>	# __ùé
<i>gbé</i>	# __ùé	→	<i>gb∅</i>	# __ùé
<i>mú</i>	# __ùé	→	<i>m∅</i>	# __ùé
<i>rèré</i>	# __ùé	→	<i>rèr{é, ∅}</i>	# __ùé

- (c) glide formation rule:
- $(V) \# VV \rightarrow (V) \# GV$

<i>lògh∅</i>	# __ùé	→	[lòɣwè]
<i>gb∅</i>	# __ùé	→	[gbwè]
<i>m∅</i>	# __ùé	→	[mwè]
<i>rèré</i>	# __ùé	→	[rèr{é,wè}]

- (d) tongue height assimilation:

+ syll		+ syll		+ syll
1 height		3 height	/	3 height
+ back	→	+ back	—	- back
+ round		+ round		- round

<i>lògh∅</i>	# __ùé	→	<i>lògh∅</i>	# __ǒé
<i>rèr∅</i>	# __ùé	→	<i>rèr∅</i>	# __ǒé

- (e) total assimilation:
- $[- \text{back}, - \text{round}] \rightarrow [+ \text{back}, + \text{round}] / [+ \text{back}, + \text{round}] ____$

<i>lògh∅</i>	# __ǒé	→	<i>lògh∅</i>	# __ǒǒ	→ [lòɣòó]
<i>rèr∅</i>	# __ǒé	→	<i>rèr∅</i>	# __ǒǒ	→ [rèròó]

The rules above explain the alternate realisations of second person singular *rùé* as different clitic forms. These rules apply in the order in which they are specified, beginning with r-deletion. Next, there is vowel elision and glide formation. As shown in rule I (b), vowel elision is optional for co-occurring words which end with the vowel /ɛ/. When elision applies, it precedes glide formation and assimilation. For assimilation, there are two kinds: tongue height reduction and lip roundness. To get the correct output, the initial vowel of the pronoun is reduced to the same height as the second one. Then, there is total assimilation of their remaining features. These explanations work for the clitics *ùé* and *ǒé* illustrated in example (5). Besides those two, the language has another clitic pronoun – the *á* variant in example (7).

- (7)
- Otamere bàbà rùé*
-
- bàbà=á*

Otamere watch.IT 2SG

'Otamere is watching you.'

II. Phonological conditions for the *á* clitic pronoun may be formulated as follows.

<i>bàbà</i>	# <i>rùé</i>	→	<i>bàbà</i>	# __ùé	(r-deletion)
<i>bàbà</i>	# __ùé	→	<i>bàbà</i>	# __ǒé	(tongue height 1 to 3)
<i>bàbà</i>	# __ǒé	→	<i>bàbà</i>	# __èé	(total assimilation)
<i>bàbà</i>	# __èé	→	<i>bàbà</i>	# __àá	→ [bàbàá] (height 3 to 4)

For the clitic form in example (7), the first rule to apply is r-deletion. Tongue height assimilation follows, then total assimilation and another instance of height assimilation. The same rules apply to the clitics illustrated in examples (6) and (7), but there is a difference in the direction of assimilation and the ordering of the rules.

3.3. Phonologically conditioned suppletive allomorphy (PCSA)

This type of allomorphy expresses “the same set of features with two or more underlying forms in complementary distribution (Paster 2015: 7). Unlike the phonologically predictable type of allomorphy where a single underlying representation corresponds to different surface forms following the operation of a given rule, suppletive allomorphs are conditioned in terms of their distribution rather than changes in the phonological form of an underlying representation. One can observe this type of allomorphy in third person pronouns, as shown in the following examples from Omoregie (1983: 45 – 47) and Imasuen (1993: 22 – 25).

(8a) after oral vowels

- | | | | | |
|-------|------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| (i) | <i>ùsì</i> | <i>é r è</i> | <i>ìfí</i> | <i>é r è</i> |
| | fame | 3SG | trap | 3SG |
| | 'his/her fame' | | 'his/her trap' | |
| (ii) | <i>ìvìé</i> | <i>é r è</i> | <i>ìtìé</i> | <i>é r è</i> |
| | bead | 3SG | calling | 3SG |
| | 'his/her bead' | | 'his/her calling' | |
| (iii) | <i>òwè</i> | <i>ó r è</i> | <i>òd é</i> | <i>ó r è</i> |
| | leg | 3SG | way | 3SG |
| | 'his/her/its leg' | | 'his/her way' | |
| (iv) | <i>dèbàá</i> | <i>é r è</i> | <i>hàá</i> | <i>é r è</i> |
| | join | 3SG | scare | 3SG |
| | 'join him/her' | | 'scare him/her' | |
| (v) | <i>é wù</i> | <i>é r è</i> | <i>ùdù</i> | <i>é r è</i> |
| | cloth | 3SG | heart | 3SG |
| | 'his cloth''his heart' | | | |
| (vi) | <i>ódó</i> | <i>é r è</i> | <i>òkò</i> | <i>é r è</i> |
| | mortar | 3SG | gift | 3SG |
| | 'his/her mortar' | | 'his/her gift' | |
| (vii) | <i>òbó</i> | <i>ó r è</i> | <i>òtò</i> | <i>ó r è</i> |
| | hand | 3SG | land | 3SG |
| | 'his hand' | | 'his land' | |

(8b) after nasal vowels

- | | | | | |
|-------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| (i) | <i>é̃sín</i> | <i>énrèn</i> | <i>ètín</i> | <i>énrèn</i> |
| | horse | 3SG | strength | 3SG |
| | 'his/her horse' | | 'his/her strength' | |
| (ii) | <i>rèḗn</i> | <i>ónrèn</i> | <i>èfèn</i> | <i>ónrèn</i> |
| | know | 3SG | rib | 3SG |
| | 'know him/her/it' | | 'his/her/its rib' | |
| (iii) | <i>fàn</i> | <i>énrèn</i> | <i>òhán</i> | <i>énrèn</i> |
| | release | 3SG | fear | 3SG |
| | 'release him/her/it' | | 'fear of him/her/it' | |
| (iv) | <i>kùún</i> | <i>énrèn</i> | <i>ùhúm̀ẁùn</i> | <i>énrèn</i> |
| | pack | 3SG | head | 3SG |
| | 'pack it' | | 'his/her/its head' | |
| (v) | <i>íg̀b̀ón</i> | <i>ónrèn</i> | <i>ù̀kp̀òn</i> | <i>ónrèn</i> |
| | knee | 3SG | cloth | 3SG |
| | 'his/her knee' | | 'his/her cloth' | |

The phrases in example (8) show four forms of the third person singular: *é̃rè*, *òrè*, *énrèn* and *ónrèn*; each one can be replaced with *ìrèn* which previous studies consider the underlying form. The idea of a single underlying form is understandable, because such forms are not influenced by the features in their environments. Other third person forms have different restrictions on their distribution. As shown in these examples, the *é̃rè* and *òrè* forms follow words which end with oral vowels while acceptable use of *énrèn* and *ónrèn* depends on the nasal feature of the preceding word. The alternations in (8a) and (8b) are considered suppletive because the form of the pronoun changes in the environment of two phonological features i.e. [\pm tense] and [+ low]. Where the preceding vowel is [- tense, + low] or [+ tense], the pronoun is realised as *é̃rè*. If the vowel is [- tense], the form of the pronoun is *òrè*. These features also motivate the alternation between *énrèn* and *ónrèn*. The contextual change driven by /a/ and other lax or tense vowels are non-productive phonological rules in this language. In the next sub-section, the article looks at some examples that are exceptions to these rules.

3.4. Lexically conditioned allomorphy

Lexically conditioned allomorphy can be described as the type of variation which is motivated by lexical features such as the (sub)category of adjacent morphemes or the semantics of such morphemes. For example, in English, there is the alternate use of the quantifiers *few* and *little* for count and mass nouns

respectively. Although lexical allomorphy can be motivated by non-phonological factors, some cases are accidental. Bauer (2003: 20) points out that for such arbitrary instances “it is far less clear that there is ‘conditioning’ involved in lexical conditioning”. For example, the plural in English is realised productively as –s or an alternant, but in words like child-ren, sheep-Ø and ox-en plural marking is unpredictable.

This article considers both the triggered and the accidental kind as lexically conditioned, because the alternation is determined on a word-by-word basis. Èdó personal pronouns provide few examples.

(9) Lexically conditioned allomorphy

(a)	<i>ùsì</i>	<i>é̀rè</i>	<i>ìfí</i>	<i>é̀rè</i>	<i>rrí</i>	<i>é̀rè</i>	<i>rrí</i>	<i>òrè</i>
	fame	3SG	trap	3SG	tie	3SG	eat	3SG
	'his/her fame'		'his/her trap'		'tie it'		'eat it'	
(b)	<i>ìvié</i>	<i>é̀rè</i>	<i>tíé</i>	<i>é̀rè</i>	<i>èfè</i>	<i>é̀rè</i>	<i>àsè</i>	<i>òrè</i>
	bead	3SG	call	3SG	riches	3SG	friend	3SG
	'his/her bead'		'call him/her'		'his/her riches'		'his/her friend'	
(c)	<i>ésín</i>	<i>énrèn</i>	<i>símwí</i>	<i>énrèn</i>	<i>vín</i>	<i>énrèn / ónrèn</i>		
	horse	3SG	save	3SG	mark	3SG		
	'his/her horse'		'save him/her'		'mark it'			
(d)	<i>rèḗn</i>	<i>ónrèn</i>	<i>vén</i>	<i>ónrèn</i>	<i>sién</i>	<i>énrèn / ónrèn</i>		
	know	3SG	swear	3SG	deny	3SG		
	'know him/her/it'		'swear it'		'deny it'			
(e)	<i>ìgàn</i>	<i>énrèn / ónrèn</i>		<i>mwàmwá</i>	<i>énrèn / ónrèn</i>			
	feather	3SG		arrange	3SG			
	'its feather'		'arrange it'					
(f)	<i>ùsún</i>	<i>énrèn / ónrèn</i>		<i>ìfún</i>	<i>énrèn / ónrèn</i>			
	part	3SG		flesh	3SG			
	'part of it'		'his/her/its flesh'					

In example (9a) - (9d) and (9f), one finds the pronoun forms *òrè* and *ónrèn* following words which end with [+ tense] vowels. Example (9e) shows that the low vowel can precede *ónrèn*. So, lexically-conditioned allomorphy contradicts the distributional statements established earlier. This observation resonates with the idea that “lexical conditioning results in a very small and always unproductive set of examples, which are parallel to other kinds of allomorphy” (Dressler 2005: 509).

Observe that the oral/nasal distinction is maintained. However, when one compares third person singular pronouns in example (8a) with examples (9a) and (9b),

one would observe a difference in the environments where *é*rè and *ó*rè occur. For some specific words in (9a) and (9b), the acceptable realization of the pronoun is unexpectedly *ó*rè. The last four examples show another difference in the occurrence of these pronouns. Unlike the complementary distribution in example (8b), we find free variation between *é*nrèn and *ó*nrèn in examples (9c) – (9f). The alternation between the third person singular forms in example (9) cannot be ascribed to the semantics, phonological or lexical features of adjacent morphemes. In each example, the choice is arbitrary.

3.5. Morpho-syntactically conditioned allomorphy

This type of allomorphy is triggered by the presence of specific morphemes or the use of a given pronoun in particular syntactic contexts. These contexts refer to grammatical functions such as subject, object and indirect object. Other studies have addressed the role of grammatical functions in determining the realisation of personal pronouns. We have summarised their positions in the literature review; so, this sub-section will focus on aspects which are yet to be described. There are three of them: negation, focus construction, and temporal distinctions.

In the Èdó language, negation is achieved phonologically or morphologically. Phonological strategies involve tongue height reduction, vowel elision and a floating high tone. The morphological strategy places one of three negative markers before the first verbal element of a clause (Omoruyi 1989). The markers are *ì*, which is used for sentences in present tense, *má*, which is used for past tense and *ghé*, which is used for imperative sentences. Look at examples (10) and (11).

(10) Sentence negation

(a)	Ò	<i>kpè</i>	<i>ókpán</i>	È	<i>é</i>	<i>kpè</i>	<i>ókpán</i>		
	3SG	wash	plate	3SG	NEG	wash	plate		
	'He/she is washing plate.'			'He/she is not washing plate.'					
(b)	Ò	<i>kpé</i>	<i>ókpán</i>	Ò	<i>má</i>	<i>kpé</i>	<i>ókpán</i>		
	3SG	wash.PST	plate	3SG	NEG	wash.PST	plate		
	'He/she washed plate.'			'He/she did not wash plate.'					
(c)	Ò	<i>ghá</i>	<i>kpè</i>	<i>ókpán</i>	È	<i>é</i>	<i>khián</i>	<i>kpè</i>	<i>ókpán</i>
	3SG	FUT	wash	plate	3SG	NEG	FUT	wash	plate
	'He/she will sweep the house.'				'He/she will not sweep the house.'				

Example (10) shows the third person singular *ò* and *è* variants. Extant research works (Omogegie (1983); Agheyisi (1986); Omoruyi (1989) and Imasuen (1996)) differentiate them in terms of their function as subjects of declarative and negative

sentences respectively. This study presents another distinction. From (10a) – (10c), one would observe that *è* occurs as a subject, where there is a negative marker and the event is happening at the time of utterance or in the future. If the event happened in the past, *ò* is the acceptable form. This shows that the realisation of 3SG as *ò* or *è* stems from an interaction between tense and negation. Interestingly, when negation targets constituents, neither form is acceptable irrespective of tense.

(11) Constituent negation

- (a) (i) *È í irèn / *è èré ò kpè ókpán*
 3SG NEG 3SG FOC RP wash plate
 'It is not he/she that is washing plate.'
- (ii) *È í irèn / *ò èré ò má kpé ókpán*
 3SG NEG 3SG FOC RP NEG wash plate
 'It is not he/she that did not wash plate.'
- (iii) *È í irèn / *è èré ò khián kpé ókpán*
 3SG NEG` 3SG FOC RP FUT wash plate
 'It is not he/she that will wash plate.'
- (b) (i) *Ọmọyẹmwe lé èvbàré nè éré*
 Ọmọyẹmwe cook food for 3SG
 'Ọmọyẹmwe cooks for him/her.'
- (ii) *È í irèn / * éré èré Ọmọyẹmwe lé èvbàré ná*
 3SG NEG 3SG FOC Ọmọyẹmwe cook food for
 'It is not he/she Ọmọyẹmwe cooks for.'
- c) (i) *Ò vìọ èbé mè or gù mwè or giè ìmè*
 3SG give.IT book 1SG to 1SG to 1SG
 'He gives books to me.'
- (ii) *È í *mè / *mwè / ìmè èré ò vìọ èbé giè*
 3SG NEG 1SG FOC RP give.IT book to
 'It is not me he gives books to.'

Example (11) shows constituent negation. Unlike the type in example (10), constituent negation requires focus construction. This type of construction requires movement and usually contains an overt marker – *éré* or *òré*. The marker may be omitted, depending on the grammatical function of the constituent which is focalised. In example (11a), there is negation of third person singular pronoun serving as subject of the previous examples. In example (11b), negation targets *éré*; this is another 3SG form which serves as an object of a preposition.

Observe that the acceptable form for both negated subject and object is *irèn*. The difference between this variant and all other 3SG pronouns is structural and interpretational. Structurally, *irèn* has the widest distribution; it can occur in any syntactic position accessible to pronouns. In terms of interpretation, it is used for emphasis. Hence, it is the only form that can linearly precede the focus marker. These differences also apply to first person pronouns. As shown in (11c), one can use different variants interchangeably. However, only *imèmwè*, *imàmwà* and their clipped forms *imè* and *imà* undergo constituent negation.

4. Conclusions

This article re-examined personal pronouns in the Èdó language. Extant studies observed that these pronouns have long and short variants. They suggest the long ones are underlying forms and short ones are surface realisations derived via deletion. Those studies also suggest the difference between them is case distinction. The present study differs from others in that it attempts to explain the multiplicity of personal pronouns from the perspective of morphology. The aim is to determine the conditions under which each pronoun feature bundle is realised with distinct exponents. The paper addressed two research questions. One, which alternations can one find in Èdó personal pronouns? Two, what types of allomorphy can account for the representation of these pronouns? There are two morphological types of personal pronouns in the language; free forms which can be used independently and clitics which attach to words from other categories, typically verbs, prepositions and nouns. This article found alternations between and within both types of pronouns. In terms of the types of allomorphy, the study identified four kinds: nonsuppletive allomorphy, phonologically conditioned suppletive allomorphy, lexically conditioned allomorphy and morpho-syntactically conditioned allomorphy. The major difference between our analysis and those in extant studies is the identification of a wider range of factors responsible for the proliferation of personal pronouns in the language. Previous studies mentioned deletion and structural case. We have shown that phonological rules which condition the shape of pronouns include deletion, elision glide formation, nasal and tongue height assimilation. This article also demonstrates that the variation in pronoun representation extends beyond the structural case. Our analysis shows that adjacency to focus markers, types of constructions and temporal distinctions also condition the realisation of personal pronouns.

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Going superstitious and blaming the invisible “other”: a linguistic appraisal of social media posts on “village people”

Abstract

In this study, we explore how superstitions and blame are weaved in the linguistic constructions and representations of “village people”, the infamous mystic villains. Using Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA), we examine selected social media tweets and posts in which netizens deployed a mix of linguistic humour, the traditional African belief system, and quasi-religious sensibilities to project the irrational belief in supernatural influences of village people. We show how discursive conceptualisations such as evilification, enemification, remote controlling and monitoring are used superstitiously to blame the imaginary “village people” for individual and personal adversities of the unfortunates. This article underscores how peculiar Nigerian socio-religiosity and shared socio-cultural background shape the instantiations of fear and the institution of potency of vicious supernatural powers.

Keywords: superstition, village people, social media, discursive conceptualization, linguistic humour, traditional African belief system

1. Introduction

On June 6, 2021, Niji Akinmolayan's hit comedy "My Village People" premiered with the theme "mystic black". The premiere was attended by Nigerian celebrities who wore dark clothes and robes symbolising evil, devil, death, darkness and mysticism (Parikh 2011) associated with "village people". Though a comedy, the film which grossed over 100-million-naira mark in the Nigerian box office in just 12 weeks after the release (Shamsudeen 2021), tells a typical African story about a prince whose life turned upside down after visiting his village for his sister's wedding. His subsequent tales of woes – from his lust for women to the loss of his job, to the loss of his sanity and the threats to his life – are linked to spiritual attacks from the supposed "village" witches, marine spirits and dark forces. The portrayal is that a series of supernatural and unfortunate events in the life of the prince is as a result of his contact with his "village people" who are presented as monitoring (evil) spirits. In this wise, the so-called evil people in the village are blamed for seemingly every misfortune that befalls one who resides in the city, after visiting his/her village (Agazue 2013: 98).

The plot and the theme of the movie connect with the widespread notion and everyday usage of the term "village people" in Nigeria to depict invisible spirits that monitor and control people's destinies, especially with regard to causing their misfortunes. Although the term "village people" initially portrayed poor villagers who constantly request financial assistance from their rich relatives in the cities, its conception has been expanded to include evil mechanisms from village relatives and friends to deter progresses of their city counterparts (Agazue 2013). Since most Nigerian villages are usually underdeveloped with poor dwellers, the popular misconception is that villagers are afflicted by evil, and therefore, exude evil. They are framed as devising *juju* (magical powers) against their perceived rivals or successful relatives and a contact with "village people" portends ill luck. According to Agazue (2013: 97), "when one comes back from visiting his/her native village and coincidentally falls sick, then the villagers might be blamed".

Such unfounded or superstitious belief that sicknesses and misfortunes are caused by invisible forces, especially witchcraft, thrives more in the digital space (Broedel 2018). Discourses about witchcraft are shaped by globalised imaginaries and spread through modern means of communication (Bonhomme 2012: 210). Renser and Tiidenberg (2020) have argued that Facebook in particular has

enabled easy mediatisation and dissemination of contents and folk belief related to neo-Paganism and witchcraft. This in turn reflects the ability of internet-enabled media to facilitate the instantaneous and ever-increasing amount of information on neo-Paganism (Strmiska 2005). Social media aid in reshaping religious beliefs, identities, practices and communities (Campbell 2012) and the propagation of fear-based narratives on “village people”. In this wise, “village people” are reconstructed as e-witches or modern witches possessing supernatural powers to “monitor” relatives’ success and disrupt their progress. Such a construction on social media is akin to WitchTok, a digital subculture of self-identified Witches from various backgrounds (Miller 2022). In the digital spaces, lines between pagan traditions and practices and other groups are often blurry (Miller 2022: 1). When superstition becomes mediatised and commonplace by conjecturing blame for a supposedly invisible socio-cultural persona, it can be argued that, it is an instance of discursive construction of blame, where blame “conveys mitigations and extenuations which diminish the extent of their responsibility” (Archer and Parry 2019: 591). Thus, in this study, the broad tactics of going superstitious and blaming the invisible “other” in socio-cultural online posts is examined, with a particular emphasis on the construction of negative identities of “village people”, the infamous invisible mystic villains in Nigeria. In addition, the study also discusses the link between superstition and blame in showing peculiar Nigerian socio-religiosity thoughts.

2. “Village people” in the context of witchcraft and religion in Africa

The concept of “village people” is relatively new but the belief in it is rooted in the traditional African belief system. Traditional African religious societies hold a “belief that good and bad spirits do exist and that these spirits are what make communication with the Supreme Being possible” (Idang 2015: 104). While the good spirits bring fortunes, the bad or evil spirits, including the demonic spirit, the witchcraft spirit, and the spirit of sorcery, cause misfortunes, hence, sacrifices are sometimes made in the shrine to cleanse the afflicted family of the misfortune (Ndemanu 2018). Kohnert (1996: 1348) states that in Africa, witchcraft or magic may be applied for good or bad ends (therefore “white magic” and “black magic”). However, a belief that “black magic”, or witchcraft, is used to harm other people for selfish purposes, is the most problematic aspect of this belief. Poverty, for instance, is perceived as unnatural and human-induced and is, therefore, attributed to invisible evil forces. The harsh economic situation of the developing continent has worsened the situation to the extent

that blame is also directed to unseen spiritual enemies and e-witchcraft from the neighbourhood (Ephirim-Donkor 2021).

Just like the pervasive and powerful superstitious belief that an “evil eye” gaze can cause misfortune or even death (Ghilzai and Kanwal 2016, Dundes 1992), there is also a belief that “village people” can alter people’s destinies (Ugagbe 2021). Both beliefs are rooted in envy, thus, there is always conscious effort for protection against the two. The belief in “village people’s envy” or witchcraft is dominant in the Nigerian society, especially, among the Pentecostal Christians, who are indoctrinated to pray, often, against such evil monitoring eyes or forces from one’s father’s or mother’s house (Agazue 2013). Hence, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Revivalist churches see being financially successful as overcoming the “devil” and his agents (Uwem 2012). In this view, Effiong (2016) opines that religion, especially Christian Pentecostal movement plays a significant role in the stigmatisation of “village people” as evil. In some Pentecostal churches, misfortune including “disability is linked to evil spirits or the devil, while ‘cure’ of disability is linked to virtue and prosperity” (Groce and McGeown 2013:3). Thus, situations such as poverty and misfortunes are spiritualised and attributed a metaphysical cause. In particular, economic misfortunes that befall city dwellers are attributed to unsuccessful relations in the villages. According to Lewis and Russell (2024), in Africa, witches are regularly credited with causing all manner of disease, disaster and even death. They explain that, sometimes, as in the Christian tradition, their malevolent power is believed to derive from a special relationship with an evil spirit with whom they have a “pact,” or they exercise it through “animal familiars” (assistants or agents) such as dogs, cats, hyenas, owls, or baboons. Therefore, Christianity in Nigeria, as anywhere else in Africa, was motivated by the will to evangelise and extricate the people from the devil’s jaws including witchcraft, ghosts, hobgoblins, charms, superstitions, evil omens and magic (Okwuosa et al. 2017). Revivals and vigils are organised to pray against forces from one’s father’s house or deliverance from family bondages. Intense prayers are offered to destroy evil machinations of the “village people” who are seen by some Christians as being in the same category as the principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places that Apostle Paul refers to in Ephesians 6:12 (in the Holy Bible).

2.1 Superstition in the Nigerian belief system and digital subculture

The idea of “village people” relies heavily on superstition as it projects the view of supernatural control of people’s fate. Superstitions exist in every culture and

they affect people's thoughts and actions. According to Sandoiu (2019), billions of people in the United States and across the world are superstitious. For instance, in the US, some people panic if they accidentally walk under a ladder or see a black cat cross their path. Also, many tall buildings do not label their 13th floors as such because of that number's association with bad luck (Markovsky 2021). In the same vein, Nigerians have many superstitions such as crossing over a pregnant woman's outstretched legs. It is believed among the people that doing so makes the baby to resemble the person crossing over her legs. Other superstitions are: hitting one's left leg against a stone, believed to portend bad omen; whistling at night, believed to attract evil spirits; and fetching water at night and killing of wall gecko which are believed to bring bad luck. It is also believed among Nigerians that revealing one's successes ahead of time attracts the ills of “village people”.

Nigerians are indubitably a set of superstitious people (Usman 2019) as there is no community which does not hold belief in one mystical power or another. Such superstitious beliefs transcend social strata, political and religious affiliations. At the highest political office, Dr Rueben Abati, the special adviser on media and publicity to the former Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan corroborated the superstitious belief of witchcraft by stating that witches in the presidential villa hindered good governance as well as caused poor performance during their administration (Abati 2016). Deeply held superstitions are fundamental to the belief in witches (Valletta 2000), thus, in Nigeria, pervasive potency of “village people” influencing destinies is linked to previously held superstitions. Erstwhile witchcraft-themed beliefs such as stories of penis snatchers, of deadly alms, and of killer mobile phone numbers generated unprecedented fears in Nigeria and some other African countries (Valletta 2000).

Fear and innate caution are often commonplace reactions as people are scared of contact with unseen forces disrupting their good fortune. In particular, Nigerians are enshrined in the fears not to reveal their proposed plans of actions, especially the plan to travel out of Nigeria by those who have got opportunities to do so. It is a common saying that “Nobody is more secretive than a Nigerian travelling abroad for the first time for the fear of “village people””. In the same vein, pregnant women also hide their good fortunes to avoid the interference of “village people”. Owonikoko, Tijani, Bajowa and Atanda (2017) reveal that many pregnant women move about with a safety pin pinned under their garment in order to prevent evil spirits and “village people” from exchanging their foetus. Consequently, every failure and misfortune that befalls one, including lateness to work, careless burning of clothes while ironing and mistakenly hitting one's foot against a stone are sometimes attributed to “village people” (Videochuks 2020).

“Village people” have thus become the significant negative “other” responsible for every misfortune. This triggers and blurs the difference between superstition and reality. Interplay between superstition and reality dominates the social media which is mainly visited by youths. Though a good number of adults are superstitious, recent trends reveal that younger people are more superstitious than older adults (Moore 2000). Used actively by 33 million people, mainly the youth in Nigeria (Statista 2022a), the social media play an important role in cultural communication of superstitions. On a daily basis, netizens express their experiences along with all their personal cultural nuances and beliefs, and are able to transfer such belief trends across their social networks. The discourse which could be best described as Internet spirituality presents “village people” as possessing evil penetrating eyes that travel miles to locate their prey. Thus, the label “monitoring spirit” has become a popular synonym for “village people” who are believed to be able to travel freely through different means, including mystically and electronically. Figure 1 presents the logo of the Association of Village People.



Figure 1. Source: Twitter: Association of Village People
(https://twitter.com/avp_naija)

The logo of the Association of Village People of Nigeria is recreated from the popular Western image of a witch flying on a broomstick (Kors and Peters 2001). Though the origin of the original image of the witch centres on the myth on fertility ritual and rites (Skelton 1995), this picture depicts a mysterious image of a “village person” who travels freely in the air. It is commonly speculated among Nigerians that witches travel that way to attend their meetings and go to their markets where they buy and sell human blood. It is similar to the idea

of astral travels which Western occult activities are usually associated with. Though the character (witch) on the emblem which is most likely a white man contradicts the locality of the Africa local witch, the recreation has connected to the universality of witches' mystical powers. According to Eboiyehi (2017), witches are believed to possess magical powers to fly at night and travel far and wide to cause misfortunes including sudden death. The underlying presupposition of the picture in the Nigerian socio-cultural context is monitoring as well as free access to victims. “Village people” are everywhere and ever-present and not necessarily residing in the villages. There is, therefore, the underlying superstition that such e-witches are responsible for adversities of unfortunate individuals. In addition to such bizarre pictures of witches, the social media have other different witches-themed pictures and profiles such as *My Village people*, *My Village people1*, *My Village peopling*, *My Village ppl*, *Your Village People*, etc. in which humorous superstitions are shared.

3. Methodological and theoretical framework

The present article is a linguistic exploration of how Nigerian online users deploy language for expressing superstition and blame on “village people” on their Facebook and Twitter updates. This is with the aim of describing the declarative force with which the term “village people” has been reconstructed to portray institutional certainty. In this case, the term enjoys general acceptance of evidence of visible evil plotting. This description is achieved against the backdrop of the full range of semantic implications that go with the use of the term in a specific linguistic context. Specifically, data for the study were collected through the use of keyword searches (Nigeria + village people + evil) between January 2020 and February 2022. The search terms helped to delimit posts and tweets in terms of topic (village people) and location (Nigeria). In addition, our knowledge of the social context of Nigeria and our experience of the Nigerian social media engagements were useful in identifying posts and tweets that were indeed Nigerian and in distinguishing them from other posts such as posts from *Village People*, a popular American disco group. The identified posts and tweets were assembled through manual selection as the primary data collection technique.

Specifically, the study uses qualitative approach of data analysis. Out of 80 “village people” posts (expressions and memes) collected, 20 posts were sampled from two main Nigerian social media platforms, comprising 10 each from Facebook and Twitter. It is important to state that some of the posts were shared across the platforms while some featured in just one of the two. The “village people” posts were purposively selected based on their underlying humorous

superstitious thematic preoccupation and the number of likes and shares they generated. The posts were categorised based on their sources and sub-thematic preoccupations. A content analysis of the discursive (linguistic) features was done to classify the posts according to their specific strategies. This is followed by a qualitative analysis of the form and functions of each of the strategies therein using the cultural discourse approach.

The principles of Cultural Discourse Analysis (CuDA) were applied in the analysis and in the discussion of the data. CuDA combines theoretical orientations from cultural studies and interactional sociolinguistics to explore culturally distinctive communication practices which occur in everyday contexts as well as the meanings language users activate in those everyday practices (Carbaugh and Cerulli 2017). It is based on the assumption that communication involves localised means of expression which houses a rich process of meaning-making. As a theory used by scholars of language and social interaction, CuDA primarily investigates processes of meaning-making via five discursive hubs of identity, action, relations, feeling, and dwelling in nature. Its research methodology is not rigid as it involves four distinct yet complementary modes of analysis: descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical study. To analyse the data as culturally-specific means of communication in the Nigerian peculiar context, we direct our scrutiny to two particular discursive hubs: identity and action. This would throw more light on understanding how netizens construct specific cultural meanings through talk (or posts). "Village people" as a cultural concept is best understood through Carbaugh's (1988: 40) statement that:

"The culture concept is used best in our empirical studies when it describes communication patterns of action and meaning that are deeply felt, commonly intelligible, and widely accessible, and when it explores situated contexts of use through conceptual frames, treats cultural terms as focal concerns, and exploits the benefits of comparative study."

4. Discursive strategies to conceptualize "village people" in social media tweets and posts

Based on the adopted methodological assumptions, the analysis of the collected material allowed us to distinguish four main discursive constructions that are deployed in social media tweets and posts on "village people". These are: evilification, enemification, remote controlling and monitoring.

4.1 Evilification

“Village people” are conceptualised as evil. This judgement stems from the institutionalised force and focus of the descriptive terms and implied sense associated with the mystical “village people”. An underlying assumption is that “village people” are architects of bad things and suffering for people whom they target. The view that “village people” are evil is summarised by Kkay as:

Envy + greed + wickedness = “village people”.

(Bellanaija.com: Kkay, September 12, 2018. 4: 20pm)

The illustration depicts a graduation of the negative traits of “village people”, moving from envy, greed and then, wickedness. The force of these descriptive terms rises to a climax where it equals “village people”. The inscribed terms used in the text: envy, greed and wickedness are all subsets of the semantic field of “evil”, sharing meaning properties which put them in the same negative affective category. Post 1 categorically attributes the cancellation of Alexx Eku-bo’s (a popular Nollywood actor) wedding to the nefarious activities of “village people” as seen in the use of the declaration, “Village pple don end am...”.¹

Post 1:

“Rumors have it that the guy is bi.sexual. whar of if it’s true? Maybe she found out or maybe he actually slept with her bestfrnd as alleged. Wedding wey be November, them don announce am since April. Village pple don end am even before the wedding...” (Facebook: Vivian Chizoba, August 26, 2021, 10:36pm)

The raised force of this declaration institutionalises certainty that no other than “village people” are responsible for the actor’s woes especially since the proposed wedding was announced eight months ahead of the event, giving “village people” ample time to thwart the wedding plan. The “village people” conceptualisation also affords individuals an escape route from taking responsibility

¹ Posts and tweets use words, phrases and even entire messages in Nigerian Pidgin English. Some of them are highly conventionalized in spelling, e.g. “pple” is the short form of “people” as frequently used by netizens. This expression means that “village people” have wrecked his marriage plan even before the actual wedding. This is based on the assumption that the supposed “village people” are privy to the plan that was expected to be private until after the wedding.

for repercussions of their actions. In this case, alleged bisexuality or infidelity of the actor is secondary as the main source of woes is blamed on the “evil” “village people”. This plays out in Post 2 which was made by a poster after his YouTube account was disabled as a result of infringement on copyright by posting UEFA live matches. Thus:

Post 2:

“Account Disabled, My village people are now happy. 🤔🤔🤔🤔 What is Next????? After losing 25K subs ❤️ Koji Agudah I need work someone should employ me before I go back to my farming (Blog). 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔” (Facebook: Dennis Gh, July 11, 2021. 11: 22pm)

Post 2 shifts the focus from the poster’s wrongdoing to his “village people”. Consequently, he is able to elicit responses of solidarity from his readers since everyone appears to be under the torment of same “village people”. This is evident in some of his readers’ comments, such as

“Nah so I loose my 10.2k subscribers without copyright strike my village people works with YouTube creators team now 🤔🤔🤔🤔” (Kalil Kalid Khd, July 12, 2021. 01: 57am)”

and

“yes you’re right... They even blocked me with no copyright strike... And all my video are with no copyright claim... I thought they warn before permanently blocking account?” (Angel Clement, July 12, 2021. 05:03am).

That is, his loss of account which he had built up to 25,000 subscribers is linked to the evil machination of the “village people” whose mission is to send him out of the thriving digital marketing social media platform back to blogging, a lesser one. This is in line with Martin and White (2005) who argue that people reflect their value system and that of their community when they express their opinions. The expression “My village people are happy now” underscores the joy expressed by “village people” after sabotaging his success.

In the same vein, “village people” are also conceptualised as evil in Post 3 below:

Post 3:

“I don't blame malaria it was her village ppl that covered her eyes b4 but now that they have succeeded with their aim in getting her out of the house her eye don clear waa. Fear village ppl oh.” (Facebook: Chimdindu Shedrack Anikwe, August 31, 2021: 9.49am)

Post 3 is directed to the eviction of Maria (Malaria, as used in the post), a popular housemate from the Big Brother Nigeria 2021 show. Before her eviction,

Maria was unruly and angry with another housemate, White Money (the eventual winner of the game), for nominating her for eviction. However, immediately after her eviction, she realised that White Money did not actually nominate her. Thus, she stated during her first interview that “I feel stupid now knowing the truth. I hope White Money forgives me”. In responding to the interview, Post 3 blames the “village people” for spiritually covering Malaria’s (Maria) eyes and preventing her from seeing White Money as a friend until she was evicted from the house. The expression “Fear village ppl. Oh” underscores the evil tendencies of “village people” who deter success while the blame is encapsulated in the view that “village people” kept her in deceitful bondage until after her failure before granting her freedom. This evilification is also evident in Post 4 below.

Post 4:

““I want to go Home, I’m from Akwa Ibom, Akwa Ibom ayaya...” Those where the lyrics from Artist: “Mish” Since He went Home, we never heard frm Him..! After God, fear your village People!” (Facebook: Halilu Raymond Stephen. August 11, 2021. 8:11am)

In 2011, Michael Aniekeme Meshach, a Nigerian artiste with the stage name “Mish”, released a song “Akwa Ibom Ayaya” which brought him to global lime-light as well as recognition from the then governor of his state for projecting the image of the state to the world. In the hit song, Mish praises the beauty of his country home as well as expresses nostalgia and longing to go back home. Few years after the song, reports have it that the singer is homeless and struggling to make a living from the music industry². In line with this, Post 4, blames “village people” for the singer’s ordeals. In addition, the supposed wish of the singer, as expressed in his song, to visit his country home, a place domiciled by “village people”, is linked to his present difficulties in his efforts to make a living from music. That is, the expression “Since He went Home, we never heard frm Him” mocks the singer as the one who willingly had contact with the supposed evil “village people”, hence, his inability to release another hit song after the one released in 2011.

4.2 Enemification

“Village people” are also adjudged and constructed as enemies who would do everything possible to bring one down. Posts 5 and 6 project “village people” as enemies who should not be aware of the successes of people, otherwise, they could cause havoc.

² <https://www.nairaland.com/1247813/akwa-ibom-ayaiya-singer-mish>.

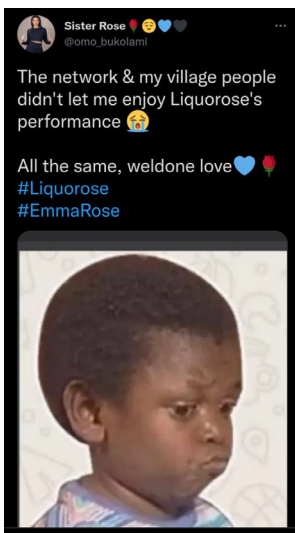
Post 5:

"No one keeps secret like a Nigeria travelling abroad for the first time. The fear of village people is the beginning of wisdom." (Twitter: Duru Monday @mondayduru4real, 1:12 PM · Oct 31, 2020)

Post 6:

"You're still in the airport and you're already posting "goodbye Nigeria". You no dey fear village people? What if your plane turn back?" (Twitter: She's a Black Girl @Azee_zatou, 11:57 PM · Jan 3, 2021)

While Post 5 links the fear of "village people" to the beginning of wisdom, Post 6 is a rebuke of one who "carelessly" reveals success ahead of time. Since "village people" have been conceptualised as combining old magic with modern technology including travelling across space, the popular advice is to always "keep one's plans to oneself" and trust no one. Post 6 implies this by alleging that "village people" have the powers to disrupt onward journey outside Nigeria. This is reflected in the two rhetorical questions in Post 6. Enemification of e-village people also resonates in Posts 7 and 8 below:

Post 7.

Post 7: Twitter: Sister Rose @omo_bukolami, 10:29 pm · 26 Nov 2021.

Post 8.

Post 8: Twitter: A War @QunJenny, 6:13 pm · 27 Nov 2021.

“Village people” as an enemy is synonymous with a foe and an adversary whose goal is to foil one’s optimum joy, so he tenaciously uses every means to ensure that his victim is never happy. This plays out in Post 7 where the supposed poster’s internet access was blocked by “e-village people” preventing him from watching the Big Brother Naija show where his favorite housemate, Liquorose, was slated to perform. Thus, “village people” are not limited by technological advancement, rather, they are advanced in their attack strategies alongside other global innovations. Post 8 is a reaction to a viral story and video in which a Nigerian Air force personnel was bitten to death by a snake hidden inside her toilet bowl while she was sitting on the toilet. The horrible incident raised a lot of debates on how a snake as big as the one shown in the video could hide in the toilet without being noticed by the victim. This incident generated a lot of reactions from Nigerians who tagged the snake as spiritual enemy sent by “village people”. In like manner, Post 8 evokes the belief that the unfortunate “snake-in-the-toilet” incident is the activity of “village people” hence, alongside the written text, Post 8 shows pictures of weapons strategically set in place to prevent and attack any of such “village-people-sent” snakes. Among the weapons of defense are a pair of scissors, different types of knives, a screw-driver and a big log of wood. The poster is, therefore, protected against the enemy who will “nor see me 4 house” and whose adversaries will not manifest unnoticed. It suffices, therefore, to infer that Nigerians attribute almost all misfortunes to the activities of “village people”.

4.3 Remote controlling

Remote controlling is another overt negative affective judgement by which Nigerians construct “village people”. It entails going beyond the physical to exact disruptive supernatural influences on supposed victims. In this case, “village people” are appraised as demonic or manipulative suggesting that their victims do not usually understand what hit them until the deed is done. This plays out in Posts 9 and 10.

Post 9:

“I started respecting my village people after i wear an mtn promo cloth to a glo interview... fada lawd save ya son 🧑🏾🧑🏾🤪” (Facebook: Philip Yoon, August 23, 2021, 3:50 pm)

Post 10:

“my village people are attacking me through my phone... How can I been typing school and my phone is showing me suicide 🧑🏾🧑🏾🧑🏾🧑🏾🧑🏾” (Facebook: OG Somzy, August 29, 2021, 12: 13pm)

Remote controlling is implied in Post 9 in which the poster is almost positively astonished by his “village people’s” ability to make him dress out of context. The logical norm when going for an interview in Globacom (glo for short) organisation should be to wear a Glo branded cloth but he wore an MTN (a strong Globacom competitor)-branded attire which would present him as someone loyal to a competitor thereby automatically disqualify him from the interview. Bewildered as he is at his “village people” for making him commit such blunder, the poster, nevertheless, admires their tenacity in the effort to frustrate his career goal. Post 10 also depicts bewilderment over the supernatural power of “village people” whereby the poster typed “school” on the keyboard but it showed as “suicide”. The words “school” and “suicide” are a kind of relational antonyms which may presuppose “life” and “death”. However, rather than the error being the handiwork of autocorrect, the writer attributes it to an attack by his “village people”, probably because of the extremity of “death”. Such remote controlling that would lead to death is explicitly presented in Post 11 below.

Post 11. Twitter: Enbaz Media @enbazmedia, 10:35 · Nov. 30, 2021.

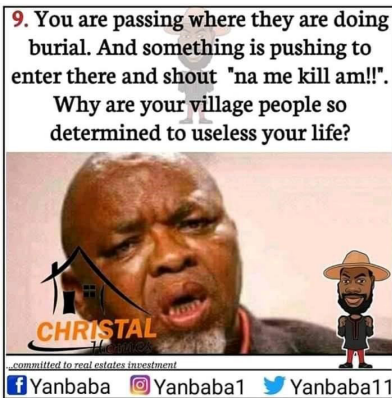


The act of attempting to cut the tail of a lion with a pair of scissors as depicted in Post 11 is unusual and has been ascribed to one of the devices of the “village people”. Hence, the expression, “when village people are on your matter” suggests being detached from reality including having no control of one’s

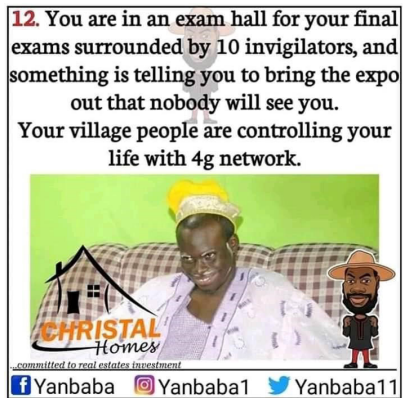
senses. There is, therefore, subtle control as “village people” have taken over the poster’s “affairs”.

In addition, “village people” is also represented as a tiny inner voice (or something) manipulating the actions of humans. For instance, it is not unusual for seemingly daring thoughts to cross people’s minds as this is what has often resulted in great inventions and commendable achievements. However, the thought of going into a burial ceremony to shout *na me kill am* (‘I am the one that killed the dead person’), as suggested in Post 12, can only be attributed to “village people” since such admission would spell doom for a person.

Post 12.



Post 13



Post 12: Facebook: All Funny yanbaba Memes and Jokes. August 5, 2019, 5:45 pm

Post 13: Facebook: All Funny yanbaba Memes and Jokes. August 5, 2019, 5:45 pm

The thought of confessing to a murder that one did not commit during a burial ceremony as reflected in Post 12 shows the controlling powers of “village people”. The rhetorical question “Why are your “village people” so determined to useless your life?” blames “village people” for controlling and triggering such absurd thought and act. In the Nigerian school context, an “expo”, (short for exposition), is a situation where an examination candidate secretly and illegally sees the examination questions and possibly their answers before the examination and then takes the written answers into the examination hall. To expose such prohibited material when surrounded by many invigilators in a final year examination not only depicts an act of stupidity but also the strong

influence of “village people” who use a stronger and faster 4G network in their controlling mechanism.

4.4 Monitoring

“Village people” are constantly described as monitoring spirits. In this case, “village people” are conceptualised as being in constant search for their victim’s success. Implicit monitoring tendencies of “village people” are depicted in Posts 14 and 15 below.

Post 14:

“Never post your achievement. Post alcohol and jokes so they’ll think u have no future. Your village people hate progress o.” (Twitter: Omashola Kola Oburoh, @sholzy23, August 30, 2021. 8:13 am)

Post 15.

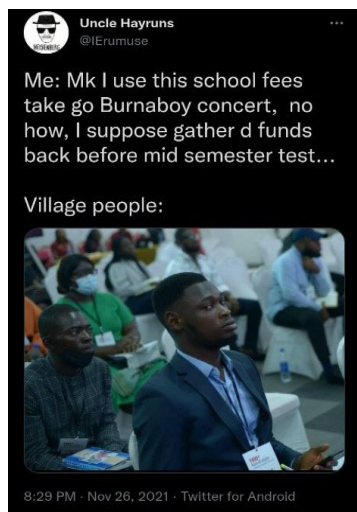


Grafixnuel, <https://images.app.goo.gl/mJmAHxF7n8ZyPKyD7>

While Post 14 presents tips on how to prevent being tracked by “village people”, Post 15 is on how “village people” congregate to disrupt an ongoing study session. The most important safety tip is to hide one’s achievement from public sphere since “your village people hate progress o”. Thus, focusing on irrelevant things is a way of confusing “village people” and directing their attention away from one’s achievements. Post 15 shows “village people” who have assembled

to monitor progress. The location of the “village people’s” meeting which is possibly a village or market square as depicted by the setting in the post, the red clothing worn by the human participants in the post and the weird-looking images depict the mysticism associated with “village people”. Monitoring resonates with the thought flow in Post 16 which amplifies the moral battle many young people undergo once their parents send in their school fees – to squander it or to judiciously use it for the purpose it was sent. The post attributes this battle to the machinations of “village people”. In order words, evil thoughts and considerations are also, implicitly, part of the schemes of these evil village forces to derail one’s future.

Post 16.



Post 16: Uncle Hayruns @IErumuse , 8:29 pm · 26 Nov 2021.

Post 17.



Post 17: Facebook: Yung Alhaji. October 18, 2019, 8:06 pm.

In the same vein, monitoring is implicit in Post 17 whereby “village people” are ‘waiting patiently to see how the poster will achieve the hinted intentions. Posts 17 presents a pictorial version of “village people” where monitoring is foregrounded by the facial expression, especially eye gaze and posture. There is, therefore, the implicit belief that if any of the plans are not achieved, it is “village people” who disrupted the scheme or who manipulated the student to squander his school fees.

5. Conclusion

This article has explored the manner in which Nigerian netizens use their tweets and posts to project their superstitious belief in witchcraft. From the analysis, it is clear that within the context of Nigerian social media practices, superstitions and blame are weaved in the construction and representation of “village people”. The fear of “village people” and its implicit effect on people’s daily lives are too strong to be ignored. Despite the fact that people do not openly acknowledge being superstitious, religious ideas about the devil and beliefs in ghosts and witches affect cognitive reasoning and social realities. Invariably, people are vulnerable as certain challenges and ill luck especially sudden death are considered mysterious and orchestrated by witches or “village people” The social media has aided digitalisation of the belief in witchcraft. That is, superstitious belief in witchcraft has received new impulses in the digital space whereby netizens resort to imagery drawn from beliefs about the devil and witches (Bonhomme 2012). In fact, the preponderance of allusions to “village people” as the sources of misfortunes in both online and offline communication attests to the existence of innate awareness of witchcraft. The submission is that ideas about witchcraft and magical powers are no longer domiciled in the folklore but are inherently replicated in the modern digital sphere. There is, therefore, the intriguing integration of a traditional philosophy into the contemporary world. Religiosity is also implicit in this realisations. This is particularly interesting because Nigeria is a religious country having about 99.4% of its over 200 million people as either Christians or Muslims (Statista 2022b). Through their posts, the Nigerian online community seems to humorously display their inner religious consciousness vis-à-vis their socio-realities. In addition, they try to co-opt others who share similar socio-cultural background into accepting such superstitious beliefs. Thus, they appropriate social media platforms to instantaneously reconstruct and project the views of e-witchcraft.

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Unmasking racial struggles in postcolonial South Africa in Peter Mtuze's *The Way to Madam*

Abstract

This article aims to unmask racial struggles in postcolonial South Africa relying on Peter Mtuze's *The Way to Madam* (2004). To achieve this aim, postcolonial literary theory is applied to the discussions. This article reveals covert dimensions of racial struggles in South Africa that go far beyond the cosmetic level of this short story. Research interest is directed at specific expressions the characters use with references to historical and contemporary lexical contexts. The analysis confirms that while colonialism and apartheid officially ended in 1994 with the establishment of a democratic government in South Africa, their enduring effects continue to configure the intellectual, social, economic, and political terrain of the country. Racial struggles with roots dating back to colonialism and apartheid in South Africa are multifaceted and profoundly interwoven in various dimensions of society. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing multi-collaborative efforts in policy reform, social transformation, and a commitment to building a more just society.

Keywords: racial struggles, postcolonialism, South Africa, Peter Mtuze, postcolonial literary theory

1. Contextual background and introduction

South Africa's history is a multifaceted tapestry interwoven with threads of colonisation, apartheid, and the subsequent struggle for liberation. To truly grasp

the racial struggles depicted in Peter Mtuze's *The Way to Madam* (2004), which was published in 1990 and appears in Chapman's (2004) anthology or collection of short stories, one ought to delve into the historical layers that have shaped South Africa. The roots of South Africa's troubles could be traced back to the 16th century when European powers, predominantly the Dutch and later the British, began colonising the country (Hall 1993: 179). The beginning of the Dutch East India Company's (DEIC, henceforth) settlement at Cape of Good Hope in 1652 marked the commencement of a prolonged period of European influence. As the colonisers expanded their territories, building on the DEIC, indigenous communities faced land dispossession, displacement, and the erosion of their traditional ways of life that were already in natural operation (Diko 2023: 603). The mid-20th century witnessed the formalisation of institutionalised racism with the official implementation of apartheid, an oppressive policy that formally imposed racial segregation and discrimination in 1948. Under apartheid, discriminatory legal frameworks and practices restricted access to employment, land ownership, and economic opportunities for the majority black population (Horne 2018: 17). This economic subjugation not only advanced socioeconomic disparities but profoundly entrenched a cycle of poverty and limited upward mobility for black communities. In the process, South Africa's apartheid sought not only to segregate communities based on race but also to suppress and control the ethnological expression of different black populations. In support of these claims, Heleta and Chasi (2023: 268) underline that the apartheid government in South Africa imposed the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which restricted educational opportunities for black students and aimed at promoting cultural assimilation. For example, the apartheid government allocated disproportionately fewer resources to black or underprivileged schools compared to their white counterparts. In addition to this reality, forced removals and the creation of homelands disrupted established communities, leading to the displacement of millions of black people, especially those of the lower class. This cultural suppression and displacement were fundamental components of apartheid's attempt to assert hegemony and control over every dimension of non-white lives. This is the reason Gebremedhin and Joshi (2016: 173) put forward that:

"Nelson Mandela criticised the Bantu Education Act of 1953 as a tool of apartheid designed to limit the educational opportunities of black South Africans. He argued that the Act aimed to indoctrinate African children with a belief in their own inferiority and to prepare them for lives of servitude. Mandela condemned the legislation for entrenching racial inequalities and perpetuating the subjugation of black people. He viewed the Act as a means to sustain white supremacy by ensuring that black South Africans remained undereducated and incapable of challenging the oppressive system of apartheid."

Over and above this reality, this era was marked by the infamous pass laws, forced removals, and the brutal suppression of anti-apartheid movements (Savage 1986: 187). With special reference to pass laws, they not only restricted personal liberation but also promoted the segregation of public spaces. The consequences of apartheid systems extended far beyond racial segregation, permeating every facet of South African society. This suggests that these systems entrenched economic disparities, creating a system where the minority white population held disproportionate power and wealth. Socially, the apartheid policies propagated deep-seated racial prejudices, leaving scars that persist even today. In other words, the scars left by apartheid on the social fabric of South Africa continue to reverberate in contemporary contexts. Despite the dismantling of apartheid legal frameworks, the legacy of racial prejudice persists, affecting interpersonal relationships, community undercurrents, and access to opportunities (Abel 2019: 916). The trauma inflicted by decades of discrimination and segregation created enduring challenges in fostering genuine reconciliation, consciousness, and social cohesion¹.

These apartheid legal frameworks or policies implemented in South Africa had outrageous and devastating implications for subjugated individuals and communities, with special reference to black people. The forced displacement of millions of black South Africans from their homes and their restriction to underdeveloped areas fractured communities and entrenched racial segregation. These relocations cluttered social networks and support systems, leading to significant social and psychological distress. For example, economically, these apartheid policies resulted in widespread poverty and repression, as black South Africans were systematically denied access to fertile land and economic opportunities. The discriminative policies across educational systems intensified this prejudice by providing a subordinate education designed to limit the socio-economic mobility of black South Africans, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment. By the same token, socially and politically, the implications of apartheid policies were equally severe. For instance, the restrictive legal frameworks circumscribed the movement of black South Africans, criminalising their existence and leading to frequent arrests and imprisonments, further dest-

¹ Other apartheid legal frameworks or policies in South Africa that detrimentally impacted the subjugated individuals and communities, especially black people, include: Group Areas Act of 1950 which segregated communities by race, forcing black South Africans to live in designated areas (Maharaj 1997: 137), Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and Immorality Act of 1950 (Moutinho 2023: 133), Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 (Moutinho 2023: 133) and Suppression of Communism Act of 1954 (Kuan 2023).

abilising families and communities (Paret 2018: 480). The prohibition of mixed marriages and immoral legal frameworks dictated racial purity by criminalising interracial relationships, perpetuating social divisions and racial prejudices. It is for these reasons I underscored earlier that institutionalised racial segregation in public spaces denied black South Africans equal access to resources and services, buttressing a sense of subjection. In the end, this systemic discrimination established profound societal partitions and preserved the notion of racial hierarchy; a system of stratification that ranks and categorises individuals and groups based on perceived racial differences, leading to factional treatment and access to resources, opportunities, and rights. Above all, the government was able to annihilate political opposition and dissent, leading to human rights transgressions such as arbitrary detentions and exiles, thereupon stifling the fight against apartheid. These actions created a climate of agitation and intimidation, preventing meaningful resistance and silencing many anti-apartheid activists. Collectively, these apartheid policies well-established systemic racism and inequality, creating unfathomable social, economic, and political scars that continue to destructively affect South African society in contemporary contexts. As previously outlined, politically, these apartheid legal frameworks or policies stifled dissent and activism, creating an environment of fear and repression (Chapman 2004). The turning point came in 1994 with the *official* end of colonialism and apartheid, and the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president. Bearing this assertion in mind, I must indicate that while these regimes officially ended in 1994 with the democratic transition and Mandela's presidency, the adverse impact of these historical injustices continues to cast a long shadow over the nation. The legal end of these oppressive systems marked a monumental moment in South African history, signalling a commitment to impartiality, justice, and reconciliation. Nevertheless, it does not suggest that the deeply established challenges and legacies of apartheid and colonialism were eradicated overnight. This view denotes that the official end of legal divisions did not automatically dismantle the socioeconomic disparities, racial prejudices, and historical traumas ingrained over decades of systemic subjugation. The scars of apartheid persist in various dimensions of South African society, influencing patterns of wealth distribution, access to education, and social cohesion. The spatial, economic, and cultural consequences of apartheid are still evident in many communities, propagating cycles of imbalance (Tshishonga 2019: 171). In addition to this declaration, the legacy of apartheid remains alive in the collective memory and consciousness of the nation. Historical injustices, coupled with the intricacies of the truth and reconciliation process, have created ongoing setbacks in building a unified and inclusive South African identity (Ross 2003: 325). The postapartheid

era is, therefore, a continuous journey of addressing historical wounds, advancing harmony, and navigating the complexities of nation-building. In fact, this era is crucial for comprehending the ongoing efforts to heal historical injustices and atrocities and promote reconciliation, which is essential for creating a cohesive and inclusive society. Along with this process, this period entails negotiating deep-seated socioeconomic disparities and implementing policies that facilitate equitable nation-building, inevitably shaping the future trajectory of the nation.

With this contextual background in mind, the primary aim of this scholarly discourse is to meticulously examine and unmask the intricate racial struggles depicted in Peter Mtuze's *The Way to Madam* (2004) by applying key tenets of post-colonial literary theory. As previously mentioned, *The Way to Madam* (2004), which is a short story, appears in Chapman's (2004) collection of South African short stories. The process of unmasking racial struggles as depicted in this particular short story entails delving into the literary text to uncover how racial identities are (re)constructed, contested, and negotiated within the postcolonial South African contexts. Through a meticulous exploration of characters, narrative devices, and thematic elements, this scholarly discourse seeks to expose the multifaceted ways in which *The Way to Madam* (2004) engages with and critiques the racial scenery configured by the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. By the same token, this article aims to go beyond the textual examination of *The Way to Madam* (2004) to illuminate the broader sociopolitical implications of the old regime. This denotes that by employing postcolonial literary theory (to be explained later) as a critical perspective, this scholarly discourse investigates how Peter Mtuze's literary narrative mirrors and comments on the sociopolitical climate of post-colonial and postapartheid South Africa. This involves exploring connections between the fictional text and historical realities, unravelling the ways in which racial challenges manifest in societal structures, and assessing the transformative potential of South African literature in buttressing a profound understanding of post-regime challenges. In any event, it is perceptive for this article to begin by presenting an overview of postcolonial literature in an attempt to contextualise the phenomenon of interest herein. This is presented in the next section.

2. Postcolonial literature: navigating literary terrains beyond empire

Postcolonial literature refers to a body of literary texts produced by authors from regions that were once subjected to colonial and apartheid rules. Emerging predominantly in the latter half of the 20th century, this literature engages with

the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid, exploring the complexities of identity, culture, power dynamic forces, and the lasting impact of imperial domination (Bertacco 2022: 13). At its core, postcolonial literature transcends geographic boundaries, encompassing writings from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and other regions directly or indirectly impacted by colonisation and apartheid. Postcolonial literature is a literary discourse that seeks to dismantle and interrogate the legacies of colonial oppression, offering voices to those who were historically subjugated and silenced (Bertacco 2022: 15). Furthermore, postcolonial literature revolves around themes of decolonisation and opposition. This implies that it primarily concentrates on the former, which involves the undoing or nullification of imperialist rule and its legacies, as well as the defiance against regime-imposing power structures and ideologies. It explores the struggles of formerly colonised peoples to reclaim their cultural identities and assert their independence and autonomy (De Kock 2005; Samuelson 2008). Above all, literary authors who are consumed by postcolonial literature grapple with the struggle for independence and the challenges of asserting cultural and national identities in the aftermath of colonial rule (Diko 2023). A recurring motif in postcolonial literature is the exploration of hybrid identities (Aegerter 1997: 143). This is on account that the collision of cultures during the colonial period often results in characters and societies grappling with the amalgamation of traditional and foreign influences. With special reference to the South African milieu, postcolonial literature is enormously established in the resistance against colonialism and apartheid. Literary writers such as Nadine Gordimer, John Maxwell Coetzee, Ncedile Saule, Samuel Mqhayi, Witness Tamsanqa, Bessie Head, and many others have used their literary voices as an invaluable tool for activism, documenting the pungent realities of the apartheid era and challenging oppressive systems. Their literary narratives serve as a testament to the resilience of individuals and communities in the face of adversity.

Beside this claim, this literature in South Africa explores the intricacies of identity in a society characterised by cultural heterogeneity and historical fragmentation. On the grounds of this reality, literary writers delve into the hybridity of identities, confronting the intersections of race, ethnicity, and cultural heritage. This exploration serves to reclaim and celebrate diverse identities that were historically marginalised or suppressed. This is the reason Chapman (2011) underlines that through literature, South African authors articulate the experiences of various communities, giving voice to those who were silenced or downplayed. This celebration of multiplicity becomes a means of advancing a more inclusive and unprejudiced understanding of South African identity. By the same token, literary authors confront historical injustices, elucidating untold stories, and contesting

prevailing narratives that may have been shaped by colonial powers. By so doing, they challenge the hegemonic, often Eurocentric, perspectives that have been perpetuated by these powers and institutions. Therefore, this act of challenging prevailing narratives is a form of opposition and a means of reclaiming the agency of those who have been historically muted. With these scholarly assertions in mind, I must add that regenerating African identities and comprehensively and effectively participating in decolonial pursuits is significant in contemporary contexts given that it highlights the progressing efforts to acknowledge and celebrate the variegated identities within South Africa, which is essential for advancing a more embracing and just society. Thus, by exploring and giving voice to sidelined identities, South African literature contributes to a broader understanding of the nation's complex cultural fabric, promoting empathy, social cohesion, and consciousness. Importantly, by confronting and contesting historical injustices and colonial ideologies, contemporary South African literature plays a central role in decolonising minds and spaces, thereupon reclaiming the agency of historically silenced communities and ensuring their experiences are recognised and valued in the national narrative or agenda (Etieyibo 2021, Matasci 2022, Temin 2023).

In contrast to the aforementioned discourses, I suggest that the choice of language becomes a significant component of postcolonial literature. This is based on the premise that literary artists may use indigenous languages, blend dialects, or employ the language of the coloniser to subvert and reclaim narratives. On the grounds of this assertion, it stands to reason to contend that this literature negotiates challenges of representation, denouncing disproportionate stereotypes imposed by colonial powers and their legal frameworks. As a matter of fact, I insist that the use of indigenous languages or the homogenisation of dialects allows literary writers to draw on cultural affluence and legitimacy, providing a space for the authentic expression of variegated identities. This linguistic choice is not merely a means of communication but a deliberate act of defiance against the linguistic impositions of imperialist powers and ideologies. It becomes a way to regenerate ancestral pedigree, affirm identity, and resist the erasure or distortion of indigenous languages and ways of expression. Over and above this assertion, employing the language of the coloniser—English, in the South African context—could be a strategic choice within postcolonial literature. This implies that literary writers may use the coloniser's language as a tool for subversion, destabilising the power underlying forces embedded in linguistic hierarchies. This subversion involves appropriating the language and bending it to convey alternative perspectives, counter-narratives, and aversion to imperialist ideologies. Nevertheless, it is insightful to recognise that this article contributes an

additional layer of discourse to postcolonial literature. This is realised through the application of postcolonial literary theory, which is detailed in the next section.

3. Postcolonial literary theory

Postcolonial literary theory is a critical framework that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century, primarily in response to the legacies of colonialism. At its core, it seeks to critique and understand literature produced in colonised countries or by literary authors who have directly or indirectly experienced this system (Ahmad 1995: 7). This theory encompasses a diverse range of perspectives, examining the impact and implications of imperialist history on cultural identity, power subtleties, and the representation of marginalised voices. In explaining this theory, Hafez (2023: 722) underlines that it entails the analysis of colonial discourse—the ways in which these authorities represented and justified their sovereignty through literature, language, and cultural narratives. This process aims to uncover the power dynamic forces inherent in these narratives and challenge the Eurocentric perspectives that have historically dominated literary canons. Adding to this explanation, Pradella (2017: 574) proclaims that this theory explores the concept of hybridity, where cultures homogenise and negotiate with each other. It emphasises the ways in which colonised societies adapt and transform, creating unique cultural expressions that denounce imposed ethical codes. This theory acknowledges that cultural identities are fluid and dynamic rather than fixed. It stands to reason, therefore, to regard this theory within sub-altern discourses, giving voice to ostracised and inferiorly treated groups—those who were historically subjugated and excluded from mainstream narratives. This involves examining literature from the perspective of the colonised, corroborating their experiences, resistance, and agency.

Keeping these deliberations in mind, I propose that postcolonial theory scrutinises how literature becomes a site of resistance against oppression. With special reference to South African literature, literary authors use their works to interrogate and subvert imperialist ideologies, offering counter-narratives that empower and assert the agency of subjugated individuals. Inevitably, this theory should be accepted as one that probes how cultural imperialism operates, exploring how the hegemonic culture imposes its value systems, language, and ethical codes on colonised societies. This includes an examination of how language itself could be a tool of colonisation and how authors of literature may defy or reclaim linguistic control. What is also important to note is that the prefix “post-” in postcolonial literary theory does not necessarily denote a rigid chronological sequence, as in “after” colonialism. Rather, it signals a critical engagement with

the legacies, consequences, and progressing effects of colonialism. In the same vein, the term “postcolonial” does not imply that colonialism is a thing of the past, but rather that it has had enduring effects that persist into the contemporary period. On account of this reality, while the regime-imposing powers have officially withdrawn, postcolonial literary theory recognises that many structures of power and asymmetry established during this rule persist. These include economic disparities, cultural imbalances, and unequal power dynamic forces that continue to influence societies. Additionally, this theory acknowledges that the imposition of imperialist rule has left a lasting impact on the cultural, social, and psychological dimensions of subjugated communities. For this reason, postcolonial literature explores the intricacies of identity in the aftermath of this system. In this article, it must be observed that this theory involves examining how *The Way to Madam* (2004) engages with and responds to the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, and the enduring racial struggles in South Africa, and possibly, elsewhere in the global village. Nonetheless, the next section concentrates on the findings and discussions concerning the phenomenon of interest herein.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. Authoritarian Power Structures

The Way to Madam by Peter Mtuze (2004) is a poignant exploration of the unfair treatment of black workers on the farms during the colonial and apartheid periods, edifying the systemic injustices and oppressive conditions they faced. In particular, South African farms became symbolic battlegrounds for racial persecution during the apartheid era, a period that officially spanned from 1948 to 1994 although I remain optimistic that it was long in operation before 1948 (see Breckenridge 1998, Stasiulis 1980). Apartheid policies institutionalised racial hierarchies, reinforcing well-anchored prejudices and power disparities. This systemic discrimination extended its tentacles into various facets of society, including the agricultural sector. On these farms, racial persecution manifested through exploitative labour practices. Black farmworkers faced abysmal working conditions, low wages, and limited legal protections (Devereux 2020: 387). The notorious system of labour tenancy, known as the “dop” system, tied workers to the farms through debt, ensuring a cycle of economic dependency and vulnerability. In the process, South African farms epitomised—and still do—racial segregation with distinct living quarters for white landowners and black labourers. The living conditions for the former black farmworkers were substandard, lacking

basic amenities and reflecting the wider racial disparities enforced by colonial and apartheid policies. The racial persecution extended to acts of violence and brutality. This is on account that black farmworkers were subjected to physical and psychological abuse, with little recourse to justice (Burnett 2024: 7, Block 2014: 127). Instances of police brutality and the utilisation of private security forces on farms further underscored the pervasive atmosphere of agitation and oppression. To understand these racial intricacies, one must observe the following piece of textual evidence from *The Way to Madam* (2004):

"There was, however, one particular farmer who refused to leave his farm. He was Rooi Willem Poggenpoel, a man known for his strict discipline. He was notorious and even the police would not take chances with him. He was a man of few words but was quick to jump heavily on anyone who opposed him.

Poggenpoel was short and stout. His character was accurately described by the nickname Madangaty (one who spits fire) given to him by his workers, who did not stay long in his employment. At four o'clock each morning he would ring a bell to start the day's work. Any latecomer would be punished, then paid off, and would have to leave the farm by eleven o'clock that very morning. If any worker took the matter to court, Madangaty would lay counter-charges of lost property and the case would simply end.

Among the labourers who worked for him, there was only one who stayed with him for more than ten years. This was Jackson, who had started working for his master at a very young age, had grown up on the farm, and never married." (Mtuzze 2004: 195)

This fragment underlines Poggenpoel's strict discipline and notorious reputation highlighting the authoritarian power structures that persisted towards the formal end of colonial and apartheid rule in South Africa. This aligns with postcolonial literary theory's exploration of how imperialist legacies manifest in the power dynamic forces of today's societies. The portrayal of Poggenpoel as an authoritarian figure could be regarded as a continuation of these legacies, where oppressive structures persist even after the formal end of the past order. Poggenpoel's actions mirror the autocratic methodologies employed by colonial rulers, illustrating how certain power dynamic forces endure and are perpetuated by those who benefited from or internalised such practices. By the same token, the depiction of Poggenpoel's employment tactics mirrors the broader societal power imbalances. The rigid rules, quick retribution, and lack of recourse for black farmworkers illustrate a microcosm of the exploitative labour standards perpetuated during and after colonialism. The workers' nickname "Madangaty" (one who spits fire) suggests the intense and oppressive nature of Poggenpoel's authority. In fact, this nickname serves as a powerful cultural expression within the context of postcolonial literature. This choice of name suggests a nuanced

and vivid way in which the workers articulate and resist the subjugative nature of Rooi Willem Poggenpoel's style. Having said that, I additionally argue that the contemporary implications of these employment policies include the persistence of dictatorial power structures and exploitative labour practices that originated during colonial and apartheid eras, continuing to negatively affect societal dynamic forces in South Africa today. This is on account that the depiction of Poggenpoel's despotic methodologies highlights how these legacies remain well-rooted, prolonging inequalities and influencing the ways marginalised communities resist and articulate their experiences.

In addition to these claims, the use of the phrase "spits fire" implies a fiery and intense temperament. One would recall that fire is recurrently associated with destruction, fierceness, and uncontrollable power. Bearing this in mind, by employing this imagery, the farmworkers convey a sense of the overwhelming force and harshness of Poggenpoel's authority in a postcolonial context. The metaphorical use of fire evokes a sense of danger and unpredictability. Similarly, naming practices are significant in postcolonial literature as they provide a platform for resistance and cultural expression. The workers, by giving Poggenpoel the nickname "Madangatye", engage in a form of linguistic opposition. This naming mirrors an attempt to assert agency and describe, in their own indigenous terms, the hegemonic and heavy-handed characteristics they perceive in Poggenpoel. The choice of Madangatye as a nickname not only captures the subjugative nature of his rule but also serves as an ethnological expression interwoven in imagery. This means that the use of emotive and ethnologically resonant symbolism is a powerful mechanism in literature of his kind to convey complex emotions and experiences that may not be easily articulated through conventional language. Beyond this declaration, I must add that the use of culturally specific nicknames serves to preserve indigenous identity and linguistic heritage, which are crucial for resisting cultural erasure or distortion. It demonstrates how oppressed communities retain their cultural practices and perspectives despite oppressive peripheral forces. Likewise, such nicknaming creates a group sense of solidarity and resistance among the oppressed, advancing a collective identity that stands in opposition to the hegemonic power structures.

In contrast to these assertions, the nickname "Madangatye" could be regarded as a subversion of Poggenpoel's power and authority. While he may be known for his strict discipline and the agitation he indoctrinates, his employees, through this name given to him, regenerate a degree of control over the narrative. It is a way of subtly resisting Poggenpoel's attempt to dictate the terms of their interactions and experiences on the farm. In fact, in postcolonial literature, the use of

nicknames carries cultural memory and reflects oral traditions². On the grounds of this reality, by doing so these farmworkers contribute to a shared cultural memory and consciousness, passing down narratives and experiences through oral traditions. This spoken dimension is a crucial component of postcolonial storytelling, preserving and transmitting histories that may be suppressed in written records. No wonder, therefore, Sweeney (2016: 505) strongly argues that the act of naming within these literary and social contexts could be viewed as a form of linguistic resistance, where the subjugated reclaim agency over their oppressors through language. This means that by creating and disseminating nicknames that undermine authority figures, the farmworkers are engaging in a form of cultural battle that maintains their identity and resilience against the dominant power structures. Ultimately, this practice not only empowers the community but also guarantees that their lived realities and opposition are remembered and honoured through generations.

What is also critical to observe is that the daily bell-ringing and strict punitive measures for latecomers underscore an authoritarian power structure reminiscent of colonial control. The postcolonial literary theory examines how this dynamic persist during and after formal imperialist rule, and Madangatye's actions exemplify the very essence of the perpetuation of authoritative practices. For the same reason, the threat of punishment and immediate dismissal creates a climate of fear among workers, but it also provides an opportunity to explore resistance. Beyond this view, the mention of Madangatye countering legal challenges with counter-charges exposes a legal system that perpetuates injustice. This aligns with postcolonial literary theory's exploration of how legal orders continue to serve postcolonial interests. Analysing these intricacies provides insights into the broader sociopolitical landscape. In fact, the act of laying counter-charges underlines a manipulation of legal mechanisms for oppressive ends. In postcolonial literary theory, the investigation of such manipulative tactics becomes a lens through which the resilience of such governance is unmasked. This is in line with a broader critique of how legal infrastructure may potentially act as tools of subjugation rather than justice. Therefore, I contend that the implications of these observations in contemporary contexts are significant, as they pinpoint the enduring influence of colonial-era authoritarian power structures and their propagation

² For example, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (2006) features characters with significant nicknames, such as Okonkwo being called "Roaring Flame", symbolising his fierce personality and eventual downfall. Similarly, in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* (1965), characters like Waiyaki are given names that mirror their roles and qualities, reinforcing cultural identity and defiance against colonial rule.

in postcolonial societies. The farm rules described above reflect ongoing dictatorial protocols, creating a climate of agitation that stifles worker autonomy and defiance. Along with this, the manipulation of law to counter legal concerns with counter-charges underscores how these systems perpetuate injustice, serving postcolonial interests rather than ensuring legitimate fairness. In other words, this exposition provides perspectives into the wider sociopolitical scenery, uncovering how legal and authoritative practices continue to oppress sidelined communities and highlighting the necessity for systemic reform to achieve genuine equity and justice. As the short story progresses, the following piece of textual evidence becomes observable and worthy of literary evaluation:

"Only once did a black worker show no fear of Madangatye. That was Ngxamfinya, a very muscular Mpondo man who had strong arms and a broad chest. After an argument, he laid Madangatye on the ground with one hand and told him he did not want to hurt him, but was only teaching him a lesson. Madangatye did not argue but paid him his wages and told him to leave the farm lest the other workers should learn from him not to respect white people. The Mpondo man took his time in leaving, while Poggenpoel, obviously shaken, took no chances and kept his distance." (Mtuzze 2004: 196)

Several key themes and considerations come into play in the discussion of this excerpt. This passage highlights power subtleties between the black worker, Ngxamfinya, and Madangatye, a figure representing the colonial or white authority. Ngxamfinya's physical strength becomes a source of opposition against the oppressive powers, challenging the typical power relations between black workers and white employers. Ngxamfinya's use of physical might as an etymology of struggle is significant. In a context where black workers were subjected to oppressive authority, this physical prowess becomes a means of challenging the established status quo. On the contrary, postcolonial literary theory explores various forms of resistance, and Ngxamfinya's strength serves as a tangible and corporeal defiance. Similarly, Ngxamfinya's actions subvert the perception of the passive and submissive black worker, defying the narrative advanced by white powers. This suggests that the muscularity of Ngxamfinya contests racial hierarchies that were prevalent during those old times, where bodily might was continually associated with whiteness (Moss 2021). In the process, Ngxamfinya's refusal to be intimidated and his act of teaching Madangatye a lesson demonstrate empowerment and rejection of the rule. This agency contributes to the unmasking of racial struggles, underlining that not all black workers passively accept mistreatment, but instead actively resist and assert their dignity. In the same way, by showcasing Ngxamfinya's physical strength as a source of defiance, this piece of textual evidence challenges the assumed authority

of white figures, illustrating that power dynamic subtleties are not one-dimensional and may be subverted by actions of marginalised individuals. In addition to this, the emphasis on Ngxamfinya's toughness opens avenues for critiquing the intersection of physicality and identity. Postcolonial literary theory engages with how bodies are racialised and how physical attributes become symbolic in the struggle for identity and agency. In other words, this discourse scrutinises how the colonial past continues hierarchies based on physical appearance, upholding stereotypes and marginalising certain circles. Nevertheless, I must stress that this is highly problematic as it advances prejudice and discriminatory practices that essentialise identities based on physical characteristics, reinforcing oppressive hierarchies and obstructing individuals' self-determination. It also undermines concerted efforts towards societal equity and inclusivity by validating and institutionalising biases that have historically sidelined and discriminated against certain groups, especially black people (Stasiulis 1980).

Ultimately, Madangatye's reaction, paying Ngxamfinya and instructing him to leave, (re)produces the economic exploitation inherent in the employer-employee relationship during the postcolonial era. This is on account that Madangatye's concern about other workers learning from Ngxamfinya accentuates the racial positioning and the maintenance of white control and hegemony. As a result of this score, I argue that this dynamic between Ngxamfinya and Madangatye serves as a historical and social commentary on the enduring effects of colonialism. This narrative not only (re)produces the immediate power struggles on the farm but also speaks to larger concerns of resistance and resilience in the face of well-established policies. Ngxamfinya's act of teaching Madangatye a lesson could also be regarded as symbolic of a larger movement in postcolonial literary discourse where characters from subjugated communities throw a book at those who uphold those ideologies or mentalities. Furthermore, I contend that the act of paying Ngxamfinya is an attempt to resolve the immediate challenge to authority through economic means. This underscores the unfair power webs in the postcolonial era, where the economic system is manipulated to maintain control. It is also significant to observe that payment is not a fair exchange for the physical and emotional labour expended, emphasising the systemic economic injustice. In any event, Madangatye attempts to justify and maintain his authoritative stance as follows:

"After that Madangatye tried to convince his workers that he was not really a cruel man, but soon he simply went back to his old cruel ways. One day Madangatye called Jackson to him, the only servant who never gave him any problems. He was not afraid to say that if all the Xhosa [black] people were like Jackson, this whole world would be a wonderful

place to live in. Jackson used to appreciate being called 'good kaffir'. To him there was absolutely nothing wrong with that, because it showed that he was unlike the other 'kaffirs'." (Mtuzze 2004: 196)

Madangatyé's attempt to convince his employees of his benevolence reflects the power dynamic subtleties inherited from the colonial past. The hierarchical structure, where the white employer feels the necessity to assert his kindness, mirrors the historical power imbalances between colonisers and the colonised. In this context, Madangatyé's oscillation between cruelty and attempts to convince his workers of his consideration reveals the performative nature of benevolence. This performative nature is an attempt to maintain control and justify the existing power structures. This denotes that Madangatyé's actions demonstrate the performative nature of decency, where he alternates between cruelty and acts of kindness. This performativity suggests that good nature is not a genuine concern but rather a strategic tool used to manipulate perceptions and control the narrative. In the process, the performative benevolence may potentially be viewed as a justification for oppressive actions. Madangatyé uses acts of apparent kindness to create a facade of a harmonious relationship between the workers and himself. This narrative serves to legitimise the existing hierarchical structure, even though it is underpinned by cruelty. With this in mind, I argue that postcolonial literary theory probes how those in power use narratives to configure how they are perceived, diverting attention from racially oppressive actions and presenting a more favourable image. In other words, this manipulation of narratives serves to legitimise and maintain their hegemony, obscuring the realities of systemic disparity and injustice. Additionally, it highlights how cultural productions and media could be employed as instruments of the above, forming public perception and reinforcing the status quo by marginalising dissenting voices and alternative perspectives.

In contrast to these discourses, Madangatyé's praise of Jackson and the use of the phrase "good kaffir" highlight the racial hierarchies deeply ingrained in the postcolonial context. Jackson's acceptance and even appreciation of being labelled as a "good kaffir" points to a form of internalised racism, where individuals internalise the derogatory terms imposed by the colonisers. One would recall that the term "Kaffir" has a complex and historically charged significance in South Africa (Diko 2024: 43, Mosyakin 2022: 251). Historically, this term was used pejoratively to refer to black South Africans, particularly those of Bantu-speaking ethnic groups (Diko 2024: 45). It is considered highly offensive and carries a profound remnant of racism and discrimination. It originated from the Arabic languages and cultures, and was used to refer to non-Muslims in various

contexts (Maistry & Le Grange 2023: 427). However, in the South African context, it evolved into a racial slur that was employed to demean and dehumanise black people. Due to its offensive nature and association with colonial and apartheid-era racism, its usage is widely castigated and considered inappropriate. In explaining this expression, Tylden (1959) indicates that its perennial use propagates detrimental stereotypes and supports historical injustices, contributing to ongoing social tensions. During the course of its usage, the term's offensiveness underscores the demand for sensitive and deferential language that acknowledges and rectifies past wrongs, promoting a more inclusive and equitable society.

Nevertheless, it is consequential to observe that this extract reflects the construction of an "Other" within the literary narrative, with Jackson being singled out as different from the rest of the amaXhosa people³. This shows how postcolonial societies advance divisions among different racial or ethnic groups, emphasising the need for certain individuals to distance themselves from the prejudicial stereotypes associated with their community. In parallel to this pronouncement, the use of racial epithets like "kaffir" and the distinction between a "good kaffir" and other "kaffirs" highlights the role of language in advancing and upholding power disparities. In consideration of this reality, I contend that language, with special reference to racist language, is a tool through which racial hierarchies are maintained and certain individuals are granted conditional acceptance based on their perceived conformity to the hegemonic narrative or white supremacy. This being the case, Jackson's acceptance of being called a "good kaffir" may be read as a form of resistance, a strategy for survival within a system that reinforces racial set-ups. Over and above this fact, it also introduces an element of ambiguity, inducing literary critics to question the complexities of identity and resistance within the postcolonial context. As this short story progresses, it becomes apparent that those who conform to imperialist ideologies tend to be recognised by the colonisers. However, this may potentially remain a bone of contention because it pinpoints the tension between collaboration and resistance within subjugated communities. This recognition by colonisers could create divisions,

³ The amaXhosa people are an ethnic group that is naturally found in South Africa and other parts of the global village. This group of people speaks the isiXhosa language. The amaXhosa people are notable for their opulent cultural heritage, which includes distinct traditional systems, customs, and social structures. They are renowned for their vibrant oral storytelling, music, dance, and beadwork. Above all, the isiXhosa language is unique for its use of click consonants. By the same token, the amaXhosa have a significant historical legacy in South Africa, having played a crucial role in the country's history, including resistance against colonialism and apartheid. Their cultural practices and communal way of life continue to be an integral part of South Africa's diverse cultural landscape.

as some could view conformists as betraying their cultural identity and values for personal gain, while others might view it as a pragmatic strategy for holding on to life and progress. The resulting conflict could expand societal rifts and complicate the collective struggle against this oppression. Bearing this in mind, it is perceptive to meticulously observe the following excerpt:

“Jackson, I am very grateful for all you have done for this place all these years. I say again that you are the best of all the people I have ever employed, including the ones I now have on this farm. Maybe it is because your grandmother was a coloured person.”

This beginning to the conversation obviously pleased Jackson.

“Therefore I have decided to make you an offer, Madangatye continued. Ask for anything your heart desires and I will give it to you. Don't be worried, just say what you want. I am doing this in appreciation of your support, especially during this time of drought. You have always been on my side. If you had left me, like those fools Ngxamfinya and the others who left, I would have been made a laughing stock. They wanted to see my farm perish just like that of Baas Koos Lategan. Baas Koos Lategan is not a cruel person, isn't that so, Jackson? he asked with a grin on his face. Jackson made little noises of compliance, and rubbing his hands he said, 'I agree with you, Baas Rooi.' (Mtuzo 2004: 196)

This passage begins with Madangatye expressing gratitude and appreciation to Jackson for his contribution to the farm. The language used, particularly the reference to Jackson being “the best of all the people I have ever employed” hints at a power dynamic established in the history of colonialism and apartheid. As a matter of fact, white farmers cunningly created a “better black(s)” identity illusion which sought to blind some farm workers to the actual realities and atrocities of their people (black people). This is indicative of the reality that white farmers strategically manipulated perceptions to create an illusion of a better black identity, aiming to deceive some farmworkers about the true miseries and injustices faced by black people. This tactic was intended to foster a sense of false superiority and compliance among certain black workers, diverting their attention from the broader systemic oppression and exploitation inflicted upon their community. By doing so, the white farmers aimed to maintain control and mitigate resistance against their authority. On the grounds of this, postcolonial literary theory induces an examination of how such expressions of gratitude are intertwined with historical hierarchies, where the coloniser acknowledges the efforts of the colonised but within a framework that still maintains a power imbalance. Thus, Madangatye's acknowledgement of Jackson's grandmother being a coloured person adds a layer of complexity. This denotes that the men-

tion of racial heritage becomes significant in a postcolonial context, where racial classifications are continually imposed during the then rule. The term "coloured" itself carries historical weight, denoting individuals of mixed race in South Africa, and has roots in the orders established during the past regime. It denotes apartheid's efforts to categorise and segregate people based on racial hierarchies, which aimed to maintain white supremacy by creating divisions among non-white populations. Consequently, this term is not just a neutral descriptor but a reminder of a history of discrimination, social stratification, and systemic oppression. For this reason, Jackson's racial heritage is a focal point in understanding his identity within the postcolonial framework. Beside this fact, this acknowledgement is an attempt to sustain a perceived connection or familiarity, but it also reflects the long-lasting impact of racial categorisations on individuals' identities in postcolonial South Africa.

With this assertion in mind, I argue that racial categorisations have profound and multifaceted implications on individuals' identities in postcolonial South Africa. These implications, are acutely entrenched in the historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid, and they continue to shape social, economic, and cultural dynamics in the postcolonial era. These racial categorisations are problematic owing to the reality that they place certain racial groups in positions of privilege and power while marginalising others. They also influence people's perceptions of themselves and others. In addition to this, identity formation is recurrently configured by historical racial classifications, negatively affecting how people are positioned within society. Historical racial categorisations have played a significant role in economic disparities in postcolonial South Africa since certain racial groups were systemically disadvantaged, and economic opportunities were unevenly distributed. Keeping this in mind, individuals' economic identities and opportunities are interweaved with their racial categorisations, impacting access to education, employment, and economic resources. Along with this declaration, the psychological impact of such divisions is significant. Individuals may internalise societal perceptions associated with their racial identity, leading to challenges such as identity conflicts, low self-credence, or a sense of exclusion. While this is the case, it is prudent to accept that postcolonial South Africa has witnessed ongoing efforts to challenge and dismantle the lingering effects of historical racial hierarchies. This is based on the premise that activism and advocacy centres on addressing racial imbalances, cultivating inclusivity, and dismantling systemic discrimination based on historical racial categorisations. Furthermore, Madangatye's offer to give Jackson anything he desires is another component that is worth uncovering through a postcolonial literary theory. This act of generosity is an attempt to maintain control and gratitude, reflecting

a paternalistic relationship reminiscent of colonial dynamic forces. The power to grant wishes is symbolic, and postcolonial literary theory underscores how such gestures perpetuate or challenge existing power structures. This means that Madangatye's offer could be seen as an expression of patronisation, a relationship where those in positions of authority assert a protective and controlling role over those considered subordinate. This resonates with historical colonial dynamic where colonial authorities continually assumed a paternalistic stance towards the oppressed population. In contemporary contexts, this kind of paternalism could drive dependency and obstruct genuine or concrete empowerment, as the subordinated individuals may feel indebted and less likely to assert their autonomy. Beyond this fact, such gestures could mask underlying inequalities and prevent meaningful systemic changes by creating an illusion of benevolence and fairness, thereupon sustaining the status quo. It stands to reason, therefore, to accept that this dynamic contributes to internalised subjugation, where those on the receiving end of such paternalistic acts potentially internalise a sense of subservience and believe that their welfare is inherently tied to the goodwill of those in power, further solidifying the power imbalance. As the short story's climax intensifies, another striking incident occurs and warrants scholarly examination. This is patent in the next piece of textual evidence:

"What I do not want is a loafer on my farm", said Madangatye, and again insisted that Jackson should ask for anything he wanted. Jackson did not know what to say. There were many things on his mind. He would love a car, but he could not drive, and he once saw a man killed because he could not drive. Then something else he badly wanted came to mind: a wife - a white girl who would help him get his own farm." (Mtuzze 2004: 196)

In this passage, Madangatye's assertion about not wanting a loafer on the farm (re)produces power dynamic forces established in the colonial legacy. The term "loafer" carries racial and socioeconomic connotations, indicating a perspective configured by historical imbalances (Boswell 2014: 11). In a postcolonial context, such terms inherit historical meanings, linking back to the old era classifications and prejudices. Owing to this fact, this term is a reflection of acutely ingrained prejudices shaped by historical disparities. For this reason, the term "loafer" is part of an ideology that advances discrimination against certain groups, whether based on race or socioeconomic status. In this context, discriminatory language can potentially be a tool used to ostracise and sideline individuals, reinforcing historical injustices. In reality, Jackson's desire for a car and a farm, as reflected in this piece of textual evidence, mirrors economic struggles within the postcolonial context. However, the inability to drive, potentially due to historical constraints, adds a layer of complexity to Jackson's

aspirations. The mention of witnessing someone killed for not being able to drive suggests the high stakes involved and the potential dangers associated with economic obstructions. This scenario underlines the inexorable ramifications that emerge from systemic inequalities, illustrating how profoundly the disparities lead to life-threatening consequences. Similarly, it highlights the persistence of socio-economic obstructions that continue to limit opportunities for marginalised individuals, echoing the past regime in contemporary contexts. In addition to this reality, Jackson's ambition for economic independence through acquiring a car and a farm symbolises a broader desire for self-determination and autonomy among marginalised communities in postcolonial contexts. This pursuit mirrors not only economic ambitions but also a quest for social mobility and agency, contesting narratives of passivity and subordination imposed by historical and ongoing power dynamic forces.

In parallel to these scholarly discourses, the desire for a white wife introduces racial dynamic forces and reflects the pervasive influence of colonial-era ideologies that linked social status and success to whiteness. This desire evinces an aspiration for social mobility, but it also points to the interlaced and problematic nature of racial relationships. Individuals may seek to navigate and transcend historical inequalities by aligning themselves with perceived markers of privilege. This means that this aspiration reflects an intricate interplay between personal desires and societal expectations in the pursuit of upward mobility. During the course, the desire for a white wife brings forth the intersection of love and social dynamics. Postcolonial literary theory underlines how personal relationships intersect with broader societal structures. In this case, the desire for a white wife reflects the impact of societal expectations on individual romantic choices. The desire for a white wife could be regarded as a strategy for assimilation into societal ethical codes associated with privilege. On account of this, this theory critiques assimilation strategies that individuals employ to navigate systems of power, illuminating the challenges and compromises involved in such pursuits. In essence, Madangatye's statement and Jackson's internal struggles unmask the progressing racial challenges in postcolonial South Africa. The negotiation of desires, the fear of reprisals, and the internal conflicts all point to the complexities of identity and agency within a society dealing with the legacies of old regimes.

4.2. Race, power, and the consequences of colonialism

Bearing the aforementioned scholarly views in mind, the following episodes unfold in the short story; and they all point to challenges of race, power, and the consequences of colonialism:

“Say something, Jackson. What would you like me to do for you?” insisted the white man, becoming impatient at Jackson’s delay.

“Baas, I am not sure whether my request will be acceptable. I want to ask you to give me your little daughter Emmarentia to be my wife”, said Jackson, surprised at how the white man’s face instantly reddened. He had hardly finished speaking before he found himself lying flat on the ground with his master on top of him.

“You ungrateful servant! What a disgraceful thing to say! You have shown your true self today. I have always suspected that you wanted to be the master on this farm”, said Madangatye, shaking him like a cat playing with a mouse. He was so tightly gripped that he could only move his legs. The other workers, now aware that the friendly conversation had turned violent, looked on, amused at the spectacle. Some incited the boss by saying, “He’s got what he deserves!” There were a few who sympathised with Jackson but could do nothing to save the situation.

Rooi’s next move shocked all of them. He shouted: “Throw him into the oven! I am going to watch from the top of that hill. If he escapes, I’ll fix him!” The servants went for Jackson without giving him a chance. In the meantime, the white man went to fetch his rifle. It was the rifle with which he hunted game. Then he walked slowly to the hilltop.

Jackson pleaded in vain. He was tied very securely. The white woman, Madangatye’s wife, could not bear to see such punishment. She cried hysterically and fainted.

This gave the servants an opportunity to save Jackson. They grabbed a dog and threw it into the oven instead of the man. They told Jackson to run away as fast as he could. The smoke from the oven rose slowly into the sky and convinced the servants that they had got the better of Madangatye who was lying watching from the hill.

After many years the event became a legend. In time, Madangatye’s daughter died and so did her mother, while Madangatye remained a lonely old man on the farm.

One day Madangatye heard a knock on the door. To his surprise it was Jackson. He had a broad smile on his face as he entered.

“Jackson, didn’t you die a long time ago? Where have you been?” asked the astonished old man.” (Mtuzze 2004: 197)

In this excerpt, the undercurrents of race, power, and the consequences of colonialism are evident in the interactions between the white man, Madangatye, and the black servant, Jackson. This dialogue unravels the persisting power imbalance inherited from the colonial past. The white man, referred to as “Baas” delineates the authority historically associated with the master. Jackson, in addressing him as “Baas” exemplifies the old hierarchy, highlighting the lingering effects of past social norms and language. In the South African context, the term Baas is derived from the Afrikaans language, one of the official languages of South Africa, which developed from Dutch (Bezuidenhout & Buhlungu 2011: 243). This term translates to “boss” or “master” in the English language. However, its usage and connotations in South Africa carry historical and cultural significance, especially in the context of the country’s past. During the colonial

and apartheid eras, “Baas” was commonly used by black individuals to address white employers or authority figures, emphasising a hierarchical and subservient relationship. This term became emblematic of the deeply rooted imbalances and racial ladders that characterised the social structure during those periods. The use of “Baas” reflected not only the linguistic influence of Afrikaans but also symbolised an unequal order, with white individuals occupying positions of authority and black individuals occupying subordinate roles. For this reason, this term carried with it a complex mix of deference, social norms, and, at times, a survival strategy for black individuals navigating a racially stratified society. In postapartheid South Africa, the use of “Baas” has evolved, and its connotations are viewed critically as a reminder of the historical injustices and inequalities associated with the country’s bitter history.

Over and above this, Jackson’s request for the white master’s daughter as his wife challenges the racial norms and expectations of the time. It exposes the deep-seated racial stratification and the audacity of a black servant aspiring to marry into the white family. Ultimately, the violent reaction of Madangatye, both physically and through the threat of the oven, emphasises the extreme consequences of challenging racial boundaries. The collective structure, rooted in past racial hierarchies, prescribed specific roles and relationships based on race. Considering this, Jackson’s aspiration disrupts these norms, questioning the established order and highlighting the desire for change and transformation. In a context marked by rigid racial boundaries, this represents a bold and daring move that challenges the assumed limitations placed on individuals based on their identity and social status. Jackson’s request itself could potentially be seen as an act of subversion, contesting the established ethical codes that dictate subservience based on ethnicity, particularly in the context of blackness and whiteness. In any case, his attempt is met with violent opposition, illustrating the resistance faced by those who contest the established order. In the end, the act of substituting a dog for Jackson in the oven represents a cunning form of resistance by the other servants, allowing Jackson to escape the harsh punishment intended for him. This turn of events not only provides a dramatic twist to the narrative but also encapsulates a multifaceted response to the oppressive dynamics within the postcolonial South African setting depicted in *The Way to Madam* (2004). In this context, where individuals encounter systemic injustices, collective actions become a potent force for contesting and undermining the fixed norms. The servants, by working together to spare Jackson, demonstrate the power of communal resistance, commonly known as *Ubuntu* (humanity) in the South African and/or African milieu. The substitution serves as a symbolic reversal of injustice. Rather than succumbing to the intended punishment for

Jackson, the servants ingeniously shift the narrative, turning the tables on those who wield power oppressively. This symbolic act defies the notion that racial boundaries and punishments should go unchallenged. In the same vein, by substituting a dog, the narrative implicitly critiques the dehumanisation inherent in the threat of the oven. It accentuates the inhumanity of subjecting individuals to such harsh punishments based on their race. This substitution forces a reconsideration of the dehumanising consequences of racial prejudices. With these findings and discussions in mind, it is imperative to now focus on the concluding remarks of this scholarly discourse. These are presented in the next final section.

5. Conclusion

In Peter Mtuzé's *The Way to Madam* (2004), the narrative intricately unravels the layers of racial struggles in postcolonial South Africa, offering a profound exploration of the complexities, audacities, and consequences of contesting established ethical codes. Employing the viewpoint of postcolonial literary theory, the short story becomes a vivid canvas upon which the legacy of colonialism and apartheid is unmasked, revealing the enduring impact on individual lives and societal structures. The short story, set against the backdrop of post-apartheid South Africa, exposes the deep-seated racial hierarchies that persist despite the official end of the authoritarian rule in 1994. Through characters like Jackson, the audacious black servant who challenges racial norms by aspiring to marry into the white family, the narrative confronts the literary critic with the palpable tension between societal expectations and the desire for individual agency. Having said that, Jackson's request becomes a symbolic act of defiance, a challenge to the racial boundaries that have long-defined relationships and power dynamic forces. Additionally, Peter Mtuzé's literary narrative underscores the intricacy of racial identity in postcolonial contexts, where individuals navigate the intersections of race, class, and power. For instance, Jackson's aspiration to marry into the white family not only challenges racial hierarchies but also interrogates the complexities of intimacy and belonging in a society gravely divided by historical injustices. This exploration invites literary scholars and non-literary scholars to critically probe how racial identity shapes personal aspirations and relationships in the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid. Furthermore, *The Way to Madam* (2004) offers perspectives into the fortitude and agency of marginalised communities in confronting and subverting hegemonic narratives. This is the reason I pointed out earlier that Jackson's audacious act stresses the capacity of individuals to withstand and reshape societal expectations, despite well-grounded structural disparities. Thus, this narrative thread

encourages reflection on the transformative potential of personal acts of defiance in advancing social change and dismantling enduring forms of oppression in contemporary South Africa and beyond.

The postcolonial literary theory provides a powerful framework for understanding the intricate dynamics at play. It uncovers the linguistic and cultural legacies of colonialism, as seen in the characters' use of terms like "Baas" and "Kaffir" and the persistence of racial classifications. The desire for a white wife, Jackson's bold proposition, becomes a narrative thread that interweaves through the fabric of postcolonial identity, addressing challenges of love, societal expectations, and the negotiation of identity in a landscape configured by historical disparities. Madangatye's violent reaction to Jackson's proposal serves as a stark reminder of the extreme consequences faced by those who challenge racial norms. This denotes that the threatened incident of the oven becomes a symbol of the oppressive measures deployed to maintain control and buttress divisions. It underscores the tension between personal aspirations and the systemic forces that seek to uphold the status quo. In closing, *The Way to Madam* (2004) by Peter Mtuze stands as a poignant testament to the unending racial struggles in today's South Africa. Through the perspective of postcolonial literary theory, this literary text invites critics to confront the lingering shadows of colonialism, unmask the complexities of racial subtleties, and contemplate the enduring journey towards a more unprejudiced and just society. This literary narrative not only (re)produces the characters' struggles but also becomes a mirror reflecting the broader societal challenges of a postcolonial nation dealing with its past and striving for a more inclusive future.

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The character of Chi in Obioma's *An orchestra of minorities* in the context of Igbo cosmology

Abstract

With the growing concern for revisiting the cultural roots in contemporary African literature, this article explores the concept of *chi* in the Igbo belief system as manifested in literary sources. Specific emphasis is put on the Chi character in Chigozie Obioma's novel *An orchestra of minorities*. The article focuses on exploring Chi's role as narrator, guiding spirit, and orator who transcends all spatial-temporal boundaries. Being a representative of an individual human being in the spirit realm, he is an active companion and guide of his host. The study aims to showcase the metaphysics of being and existence in the Igbo world through the journey of reincarnating spirit chi who transcends the conventional narrative techniques and presents his host's testimony in the eternal land.

Keywords: Igbo cosmology, *chi*, guiding spirit, reincarnation, Chigozie Obioma

1. Introduction

Contemporary African Literature has taken a global turn from Eurocentric narratives towards Afrocentric narratives, pushing African literature towards Afrocentricity. According to Asante and Mazama (2003), Afrocentricity is a way to deconstruct Western stereotypes and look at things from an African point of view or a black perspective and to answer the questions of culture, economy, politics, and society related to native people from a centred position. It was Achebe who first gave African literature a turn from Eurocentric literature to Afrocentric literature with an affirmation of cultural values. "It is in this sense that Achebe can be said to have invented, or reinvented, the idea of African culture" (Gikandi 2001: 8).

Chinua Achebe, famously known for his *African trilogy*¹ and blunt criticism against Eurocentric literature, emphasized on African novel to be African in nature. In his works, Achebe has preserved the Igbo culture through the narrative concerning their oral language with the use of Igbo phrases and proverbs that directly connect to his indigenous people and serve as the power to the colonial subject who lacks it. It is clear that "Achebe, through a complex system of narrative and linguistic forms, preserves Igbo speech which suggests the timelessness of orality amid the emergence of print, nation, and even empire" (Watts 2010: 74). Achebe set the standard for African novelists for narratives on Africa, as he states that:

"[...] the African novel has to be about Africa. A pretty severe restriction, I am told. But Africa is not only a geographical expression, it is also a metaphysical landscape-it is, in fact, a view of the world and of the whole cosmos perceived from a particular position" (Achebe 1975: 66).

African literature has a strong connection with culture and oral tradition, excluding it altogether would be just a body without life, it is said "to isolate the literature wholly from its cultural milieu, would rob the literature of its vitality" (Iyasere 1975: 108- 109). Contemporary African literature "has been profoundly influenced by orality" (Gunner 2007: 69). African orality in the new millennium is not the residual of the past or any nostalgic source but it has become an interactive medium that was prevalent in the "past been finely honed to fit a myriad of different social, ideological, and aesthetic needs in many different societies..." (Gunner 2007: 69). Writers like Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka, and Chima-

¹ *The African Trilogy* — comprised of *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, and *No longer at ease* is Chinua Achebe's magnum opus. Individual novels were also published as separate works.

manda Ngozi Adichie have incorporated African culture and tradition into their literary creations portraying the lives of native people and societies embedded in cultural beliefs and customs. In *Things fall apart* (1958), Achebe showcased the Igbo culture and the significance of yam farming, traditional ceremonies, oracles, and rituals highlighting the complexities and metaphysics of the Igbo world through the tragic story of protagonist Okonkwo who struggles against his fate. In *The river between* (1965), Ngugi wa Thiong'o portrayed the conflict between traditional Gikuyu society and the intruding influence of colonialism and Christianity. Waiyaki, the protagonist of the novel, struggles to unite his community people and to preserve their cultural identity. Ngugi emphasized the importance and exigency of indigenous languages and their inseparability with cultural identity by writing the novel in Gikuyu. In a play *Death and the king's horseman* (1975) Soyinka depicted the tension between Yoruba culture and British colonial regime. The play is based on a real incident that took place in Nigeria during colonial rule where the horseman of Yoruba King Elesin was prevented from committing ritual suicide by the British colonial officer leading to a tragic consequence. In Yoruba tradition, the death of a king ought to be followed by the death of king's a horseman, dog and horse as their spirit will help king's spirit to ascend the afterlife. Else, king's spirit will wonder on earth harming people and disrupting the community balance. Soyinka deciphered the interconnectedness of physical and metaphysical world through Yoruba cosmology showcasing the complexities of African traditions and cultures. African culture and tradition also become a vital source in contemporary African fiction for the portrayal and celebration of cultural heritage. The revamping of culture and traditions in African novels can be seen as "a working toward the Africanization of the novel form and evolving a poetics of the African novel" (Sackey 1991: 390). There is a famous Igbo proverb "If the prey do not produce their version of a tale, the predators will always be the heroes in the stories of the hunt" (Obioma 2019), which emphasizes the need for native stories, stories based on African native cultures.

Along the line of Achebe and early African writers' concern about the imagination of the national community and recovering their culture, contemporary African writers also started vocalizing their cultural values that got submerged due to prevailing inherent issues and themes like identity, emancipation, migration, and diaspora. The growing concern of traditional and cultural values in contemporary African literature, instead of a linear progression in the literary canon, gives something resembling a cycle as they are going back to their roots emphasizing their cultural values in their works. It can be said that "Achebe offered a way of writing Africa that would prove influential, not to say path-breaking, a paradigm shift, for African literature subsequently" (Boehmer 2009: 141-142).

In contemporary Igbo literature, similarly to other African literary works, culture and traditions “have often adapted in many different forms to become a vehicle for the expression of the fears and hopes of the new generation of Africans” (Gunner 2007: 70). Writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (often called as the daughter of Chinua Achebe), Akwaeke Emezi, and Chigozie Obioma have sourced cultural beliefs and practices in their novels as a way out to the affirmation of one’s self, “the re-discovery of one’s past, one’s culture, one’s ancestors, and one’s language” (Shelton 1968: 171). The works of these writers highlight the Igbo indigeneity having a colour of native culture and tradition. It is observed that “the African writer has found in the sources of the African oral heritage a new enrichment, a new revitalization of contemporary African writing” (Sackey 1991: 389).

Contemporary African writers are returning back in a sense to rewrite the past, both literary and culturally with newer perspectives and techniques to showcase the cultural heritage of the precolonial era. They are revisiting their past culture to comment on the present, thus bridging their cultural and traditional values with the contemporary world as “the present is perpetually shot through with the ubiquity of the past” (Ogede 2023: 6). Even T. S. Eliot in his essay *Tradition and individual talent* (1919) said that there is a sense of connectivity between tradition or history to the present narratives as “no artist has his complete meaning alone” (as quoted in Atkins 2010: 82), the present artists cannot be valued alone unless compared with the past artists. Thus, in order to appreciate any work of contemporary African writer, “we must recognise the ‘pastness’ of their works, even though they are ‘eternally present’” (Iyasere 1975: 110).

Following the footprints of Achebe and his ideology, contemporary writers have addressed this too. Eloghosa Osunde wrote *Vagabonds* (2022), where the story of patriarchy, corruption, and LGBTQ life in Nigeria is presented to the readers with a spirit guide named Tatafo. Akwaeke Emezi’s debut novel *Freshwater* (2018) is a novel about the perception of multiple Ọgbanje (spirit children) dwelling in a single host. In the Igbo world, “the ọgbanje becomes an unwelcome deviation that lives in between two different worlds” (Magaqa 2021: 25). The host in *Freshwater* is not able to figure out her sexual orientation in the Igbo culture and invites the reader to think critically about the spirited body, especially about those “whose one foot is on the side which particularly highlights liminality and the thin line between the physical and the spiritual realms” (Cobo-Piñero 2023: 288). Chigozie Obioma, another Nigerian writer, wrote *An orchestra of minorities* (2019), which he considers a cosmological novel, a novel depicting African traditions and its metaphysics of being and existence. It maps the Igbo civilization

bridging it with contemporary realism, like the way Achebe has portrayed the pre-colonial Igbo land through the picture of the village Umuofia constructed in the Igbo cosmos (Odamtten 2009: 163). *An orchestra of minorities* (2019) is not a Western conventional novel but a novel imbibed in African tradition; it may also be said that it is an "African Novel" as per Achebe's notion. Obioma believes that an African novel is incomplete without the African cosmos just like the way "the African ontology is incomplete without the transcendental and metaphysical domain" (Ukwamedua & Edogiaweri 2017: 317). His novel depicts the complex question of predestination through the lens of Igbo cosmology where Chi, a reincarnating spirit, is the narrator.

This article analyses the character of Chi in *An orchestra of minorities* (2019). It aims to consider how Obioma symbolizes *chi* as a centred belief in Igbo cosmology by making Chi a narrator with crafty elevation from a set convention of narratives and spatial-temporal boundaries in the novel; thus, taking agency from the character and making the character incapable of taking logical decisions to meet particular desires just to imbibe it into the Igbo cosmos. In the Igbo belief system, *chi* is involved as a third authority for the realization of desires maintaining the dialectic between fate and free will (Quadri 2019: 2).

1.1 *Chi* in Igbo cosmology

Igbo cosmology is a complex system of beliefs and traditions having a transcendental and metaphysical world. Igbo cosmology is made up of the spiritual realm with God being the head, and physical realm where man has domination. As per the notion of C.C. Ekwealor (1990: 30), the Igbo universe is made of three encircled levels called "Elu-Igwe or sky, Alammadu or the world of the living, and Alammuo or the land of the spirits". Achebe called the "Igbo world, an arena for the interplay of forces. It is a dynamic world of movement and of flux" (Ekwealor 1990: 62) which means that there is an interaction between spiritual and physical realms with some vital force or spirit, making Igbo world an interactive universe (Kanu 2013: 535). The people of Igbo land have a strong belief in the existence of spirits and they have personified spirits with their daily chorus of life.

Chi is an intermediate who conducts the relationship of an Igbo man with God. In Igbo cosmology, *chi* is considered as a personal guardian spirit of an individual human being having a spiritual double or counterpart identity in a spiritual land. Chi as a spiritual ally is a link between human beings and the spiritual world, the physical and metaphysical realm. According to Achebe, man's terrestrial being is complemented by his spirit being named as Chi (1975:131). As per the Igbo cosmology, everything has its counterpart standing beside it to support

or complement as in the Igbo world, nothing stands alone. This is confirmed by *dibia*² Njokwuji of Nkpa who says that:

“Even though humans exist on the earth in material form, they harbor a *chi* and an *onyeuwa*³ because of the universal law which demands that where one thing stands, another must stand beside it, and thus compels the duality of all things. It is also the basic principle on which the Igbo concept of reincarnation stands” (quoted in Obioma 2019).

With this notion, *chi* is a person’s representative in the spiritual realm being “the central, unifying theme that incorporates the different facets of Igbo social thought and usages, especially those aspects concerning man’s relationship with the inscrutable realm of the supernatural” (Chukwukere 1983:523). This indicates the notion of duality in Igbo thought where a human being is the only half and the complementary spirit, the other half is believed to be *chi*.

Achebe in *Morning yet on creation day* states that “*Chi* is a personal God” of an individual responsible for failure and success. It is clear that one can realize the meaning of life through collaboration with *chi* in the journey of life that a person and his *chi* undertake. *Chi* accompanies his/her host through life and accomplishes his mission at the host’s death being responsible for whatever good or bad fortune experienced by the host under the guidance of *chi*. Igbo people also believe that *chi* plays a crucial role even before the birth of the individual. Before birth, *chi* in the spirit world is supposed to make important decisions for individual fortune/destiny. With due reason, pregnant women offer sacrifices to ancestral spirits, deities, and to the *chi* of the unborn child; so that *chi* makes a good choice for the child’s future. According to Ejizu (1992: 386), “*Chi* is intimately associated with the vital values of individual health, personality and fertility (particularly human offspring), and even the belief in reincarnation”. Even Onyibor has the same opinion regarding *chi* having “a central role in relation to interpretation of individual attitudes and accomplishments in life. Life and its meaning cannot be understood without recourse to *chi* as a reference point” (Onyibor 2020: 87). Therefore, *chi* somehow maintains the “dialectic balance between destiny and personal responsibility” (Ude 2021: 8).

Chi is a spirit being, associated with creation and reincarnation of souls. It is believed that *chi* has a close connection with other benevolent spiritual beings

² *Dibia* broadly refers to those who possess mystical knowledge and skills in various aspects of traditional Igbo spiritual practices and medicine.

³ *Onyeuwa* is one’s reincarnate (past life). *Onyeuwa* maybe one’s great grand-parents or ancestors that a person gets reincarnate from.

and forces like Ala (the earth deity), Anyanwu (the sun deity), Ndichie (ancestral spirits), and Eke (the creative essence). Igbo people with a strong belief in chi, show reverence in names like Chika (chi is most powerful), Chikadibia (chi is greater than the medicine man), Chima (chi alone knows), Chikwe (if chi agrees) (Ejizu 1999: 386), Chibuike (chi is my strength), Chinazor (chi is my savior), Chinenye (chi gives), Chinecherem (chi thinks for me), Chibudom (chi is my peace), Chibuzor (chi is the way), Chubundu (chi is life), and Chibuizu (chi is the truth) (Okeke 2005: 12).

The following sections of the paper will highlight the character of Chi being centred in the novel like the belief of Igbo people about *chi* as a centre to Igbo cosmology, as the novel is not about the conventional character story but rather a story of Chi and his narration. The article reveals how Chi through multiple narration techniques chronicles his host's journey along with his own reincarnated cycles with different hosts narrating the events from the sixteenth century to the present time covering the incidents of the British colonial period, slavery, and the Biafra war. Chi, besides being the narrator of the novel, is also a guiding spirit of his host and a medium through which Obioma presents the oral tradition bridging it with the host story in a contemporary scenario.

An orchestra of minorities (2019) is a novel about the testimony of Chi presented in front of God Chukwu in Eluigwe, the land of eternal land, to seek forgiveness for his host who had committed a crime against Goddess Earth, Ala. Chi narrated his host Chinonso's entire story to God Chukwu to prove his innocence. Chinonso is a young poultry farmer in Nigeria who saved a lady named Ndali from committing suicide, with whom he fell in love later on against his Chi's fear,

"I feared it would push him in a direction in which I might be powerless to stop him from going. I feared that when the love had fully formed in his heart, it would blind him and make him deaf to my counsel. And I could see already that it had started to possess him" (Obioma 2019: 60).

The difference in Chinonso and Ndali's families concerning class and culture became the source of humiliation and disgrace for Chinonso. He was insulted in Ndali's house by her family for being a poultry farmer. This insult offended his Chi too as wise fathers in Igbo land say "When one is insulted, it extends to his chi" (Obioma 2019:149). To gain acceptance from Ndali's family, Chinonso sold most of his possessions to get an education in Cyprus. The journey to Cyprus made his state even more devastated as he was defrauded by his friend and abandoned in a foreign land. Chinonso's plight in Cyprus led him to into despair due to immense suffering and pain. Chinonso's return to Nigeria was not

a victorious homecoming but rather a return to additional despair and sorrow which led him to commit a crime against Goddess Earth. In the rage of jealousy and betrayal, Chinonso burnt the pharmacy of his beloved Ndali oblivious to the fact that Ndali was staying there that night which ended up killing his own beloved. Chinonso's chi presented his host journey along with his journey with Chinonso as a guiding spirit and an eye witness to get clemency from Ala for the crime committed in error unknowingly.

2. *An orchestra of minorities: exploring Chi as a narrator*

The change in African narratives towards their indigeneity created a point of view for the manifestation of African culture and beliefs through altered narrative techniques. Building an argument with the example of chi narratives in literature so far, chi was depicted as a guarding spirit in the life of character, responsible for failure and success in *Things fall apart* (2001), where chi in the form of abstract force, being an indirect agency influences the character Okonkwo. Contemporary writers have given the chi spirit direct agency by making them a subject of a narrative device to chronicle the entire Igbo culture with its cosmos.

Obioma in *An orchestra of minorities* (2019) explored the Igbo cosmology and metaphysics of being and existence from the point of view which can be transcended from physical to metaphysical, terrestrial to spiritual realm, as there is "no distinction between the physical and spiritual worlds, between the visible and invisible, the sacred and profane" (Kanu 2020: 43) having collective existence, to which Kanu confirms no end even by the death of human being as the soul extends to hereafter, considered to be a "return to the world of the ancestors. In this interaction, human beings commune with God, the angels, the ancestors and vice versa" (Kanu 2020: 43). This enigma is solved through Chi's fluid and democratic narration, inspired from the egalitarian system of Igbo land, thus surpassing the conventional narrative techniques with spatial-temporal boundaries. In the novel, narrator, Chi, is a 700-year-old reincarnating spirit moving from host to host being a companion from birth to death, acquiring their mind and wisdom.

Reincarnation is a belief in the rebirth of the soul into a new body; in the Igbo world it is called *ilo uwa* meaning 'coming back to earth', underlining the cyclical nature of life. It is believed that after death the soul enters the eternal land from where it transitions to *Alandiichie*⁴ before its rebirth into a new body, where the

⁴ *Alandiichie* - habitation of ancestors.

ancestral spirit reincarnates promoting continuity and ensuring family lineage and heritage. The action of an individual throughout their lifetime impacts the process of reincarnation. It is said that good deeds and moral actions favour the rebirth of the soul into a new life whereas negative actions can lead to rejection from the ancestral domain which disables reincarnation. "We know that a man's soul can return to the world in the form of an onyeuwa, to be reborn, only if that soul has been received in the domain of the ancestors" (Obioma 2019: 3). In Igbo cosmology, man continues transitions from birth to death and rebirth through reincarnation after death until "one is able to achieve ultimate perfection and thereby acquiring the status of a pure spirit" (Onwuatuegwu 2021: 4470).

An orchestra of minorities (2019) is about the testimony where Chi wants his host's pardon from Goddess Earth to have his complete reincarnation. "I come to intercede on behalf of my host because the kind of thing he has done is that for which Ala, the custodian of earth, must seek retribution" (Obioma 2019:4). To get clemency, Chi went for premature testimony to save his host from being rejected from Ala for complete reincarnation and admission to *Ndichie*. The fear from Ala that she will raise her hand against the host hastens Chi to testify before the supposed time as Chi is supposed to testify before Supreme God only "if his host is dead and his host's soul has ascended into *Benmuo*⁵, that liminal space crowded with spirits and discarnate beings of every hue and scale" (Obioma 2019:3), then only supreme God request Guardian spirits to enter the eternal land where call for safe passage of their host's soul is granted, entering into *Alandiichie*. The rejection from Ala is great humiliation and it is said *enu erughi ya aka, ani erughi ya aka* meaning 'he has no share in the sky nor on earth' (Okeke 2005: 10). As in the Igbo land, if a man commits heinous atrocities, he is said to have defiled the earth (Okeke 2005: 9). Such heinous crimes have far-reaching implications for the individual who committed it as well as for his community, "that it be atoned for in traditional Igbo society, whether done voluntarily or not" (Chukwumah 2015: 25). For instance, in *Things fall apart* (2001) Okonkwo in the sacred week of peace beats his second wife as a result of which the priest says that "the earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall all be perish" (2001:23). The earth goddess rejects even the corpse of such a man which eventually leads to the destruction of the soul making it unable to reincarnate. Man can only be reincarnated if "he lived well and died well (...) [then is] periodically reincarnated and (...) [is] given the title *ndichie* meaning the 'returners'" (Asante & Mazama 2009: 161), due

⁵ *Benmuo* - domain of evil spirits or spirits of the condemned.

to which chi continues forever without completion, present in different hosts. It is necessary for an individual to live well and die well with proper burial “to ensure that he lives well and happily in the spirit world, that he reincarnates into another life without any problems” (Nwala 1885: 47).

Obioma has transcended the narrative from conventional narrative boundaries portraying the collective existence of the physical and metaphysical world through Chi’s reincarnation covering the span of 700 years where Chi is a reservoir of ancestral wisdom and experience. Chi gave a direct account of the entire story as a flashback from the beginning when host Chinonso first met his beloved Ndali on the bridge rescuing her from a suicide attempt to the present atrocious crime. “Egbunu, the testimony for which I have come to your luminous court this night began at the Imo River nearly seven years ago” (Obioma 2019: 8). Chi unfolds the story as a character with first-person “I” standing in front of the jury of God as a representative of his host in the realm of spirits (Obioma 2019: 25) and as a persuasive power in host to influence him. “I simply put the thought in his mind that he was a lover of birds” (Obioma 2019: 13).

Chi, through the present host’s testimony, chronicles his own experience in the Igbo world with a different host in past centuries going beyond the limitation of temporality in fiction. “In my last cycle, I guided an extraordinarily gifted man who read books and wrote stories, Ezike Nkeoye, who was the older brother of the mother of my present host” (Obioma 2019: 58) or the *dibia*, Esuruonye of Nnobi, who was Chi’s host more than three hundred years ago, who reached the prime of human superabilities. Furthermore, Chi with the help of reminiscence of the host’s childhood memories paints the scenes of the Biafran war like this: “...they saw a tank which had been driven by one of my past hosts, Ejinkeonye, who had fought in the Biafran War and driven that selfsame tank” (Obioma 2019: 317) and its atrocities on women like this: “like the memory of his grandmother’s rape by enemy soldiers during the war” (Obioma 2019: 77).

Obioma in his interview states that

“The chi works both as a first and third person throughout the novel. There are times when—while within its host, Chinonso, it is speaking in the first person—but when the chi goes into the metaphysical space, it speaks in the third person” (Ajibade 2019: 2).

The transition from first-person to third-person shows the plurality of the point of views that Obioma presents through Chi as a first-person character and third-person omniscient: “His father had died only nine months earlier, leaving him with a pain that was exquisite beyond anything he’d ever felt” (Obioma

2019: 16). The transition that Obioma has given to narration is considered to be "the fact that third-person narration is so frequently contained within narration identified as first person" (Herman et al. 2005: 342).

Even in the third-person narration, there is a direct invocation to Chukwu: "Ebubedike, he told her about the gosling, beginning with how it was caught when he was only nine years old, an encounter which changed his life" (Obioma 2019: 69). This direct invocation delineates into the "second person narration which is also arguably a subcategory of third person narration" (Herman et al. 2005: 342), as the narrating voice Chi has direct attention towards the narratee, or addressee that is Chukwu in the entire narration. Chi addressed Chukwu with different names such as Chukwu, Egbunu, Oseburuwa, Ezeuwa, Ebubedike, Ijango-Ijango, Okaaome and Akwaakwuru, throughout, with uninterrupted flow in narration imbibed with other voices as well but having full autonomy of speech.

Apart from the transition in Chi's narrative techniques, there is constant transcendence of Chi from the physical to the metaphysical world and spirit world, exceeding the spatial boundaries by moving out from its host to the spiritual world within a blink of an eye: "Once out of my host, I was hit by the great clamour of the spirit world, a deafening symphony of sounds that would have frightened even the bravest of men" (Obioma 2019: 25) with the depiction of other spirits as well: "Then it morphed into a most frightening *agwu* – with a roachlike head and a portly human body. I lunged forward at once and ordered it to leave" (Obioma 2019: 64). Chi scrutinizes Ndali's intention of meeting after the rescue through a conversation with her chi where her chi replies: "Her intentions are pure as the waters of the seven rivers of Osimiri, and her desire is as true as the clean salt beneath the waters of Iyi-ocha" (Obioma 2019: 53). The journey that Chi covers in different realms to showcase the incidents were beyond any character's capability as the characters do have a limitation of space and time but not the spirit being.

Not just space and time travel, there was a progression of Chi in the character's dream to put thoughts in their subconscious mind. Obioma used a new way of depicting characters' thoughts where they are being complemented by chi as a vital force influencing the conscience of the host. "I flashed the image of the chicken and the vulture into his subconscious mind, for the easiest way to communicate such a mysterious event to one's host is through the dream sphere" (Obioma 2019: 27).

Besides the injection of thought in the character's mind, Chi as a narrator is among the very few "omniscient" narrators who "are allowed to know or show

as much as their authors know” (Booth 1983: 160). Chi is omniscient and privileged to details of facts that his host as well as the other characters are oblivious of. Like the author, the all-knowing omniscient Chi encounters other good or evil spirits to show their actions and intentions which simultaneously adds to the description of Igbo culture, where every idea or being, abstract or concrete is connected to a particular chi or spirit. According to Ejizu (1992: 386) “Chi is thought to be constantly in close contact with such benevolent spiritual beings and forces like Anyanwu (the sun-deity), Ala (the earth-deity), Eke (the creative essence), Ikenga (the patron spirit of achievement), Ndichie (ancestral spirits)”, as they are “also attributed to have or to be spiritual beings or divinities” in Igbo cosmology (Mbiti 1970: 100).

Chi covered the journey of narration through space, time, and mind with subtle craft having multiple points of view. Through the narration of Chi, Obioma restores the character to language with imaginative powers making it beyond an abstract which means what is written is alive with absolute fluidity. The picture that Obioma had put on the canvas of the novel through Chi’s narration of the host’s story in eloquence and craft of artist made the common story of a poultry farmer a supreme fiction.

3. Situating Chi as a guiding spirit in *An orchestra of minorities*

Chi in Igbo philosophy is believed to be a personal guiding spirit of an individual in his/her life. Literature so far has depicted *chi* as a vital force influencing, guiding, and inspiring characters through indirect actions. As mentioned above, *chi* narrative has changed in contemporary African literature where writers come up with narratives where chi or any other spirit has a direct role as an entity or character as “the Igbo concept of *chi* is not an abstract concept but a living reality in everyday life and experience of the individual in the community” (Onyibor 2020: 96).

Beside being a narrator, Chi is an active companion in the life of Chinonso where the former accompanies the latter in his journey of falling in love to sacrificing everything to achieve it. Chi supports every action of his host as he himself admits the fact that being a guarding spirit does not mean having full control over the host even in a matter that can be solved by the host alone, as the role of Chi is to handle higher matters according to their magnitude, which can affect the host in major or significant ways. Chi’s aim is to support their host’s every decision or “to attend to supernatural matters which man, in his limitation, cannot

handle" (Obioma 2019: 111). Chi explains that even Chukwu, the Supreme God, cautions the guarding spirit not to interfere in every affair of hosts and not to indulge in a matter that needs to be solved by the host alone through execution of the will and being a man.

In order to help the host Chi often ascends to the spiritual world like a customary journey to the great garden of Chiokike⁶ to find a white bone, as "finding of the bone meant that my host would always get whatever he wanted out of life if he persevered" (Obioma 2019: 150). Chi witnesses things that are beyond the host's reach, for instance, Chi steps out from the host's body to look out for the fowls that the host drowned in the river whether they are alive or not as the host did not listen to the voice of Chi and thought it to be his head voice or conscience. There are many times when Chi steps out of the host body to have a conversation with some other person's Chi, like Ndali's, to know if her intention is pure or not: "I returned to my host and flashed it in his thought that the woman loved him" (Obioma 2019: 53). After this Chi reveals the fact that his relationship with the host improved after falling in love with Ndali, "because a man is truly able to commune with his Chi when he is at peace" (Obioma 2019: 41).

Chi cannot communicate in direct ways to help his hosts so he flashes thoughts in his host's mind to make him believe and influence; for example, Chi is able to see the flame of envy burning in the host's friend, Ejike while asking to take gosling at home. Chi flashed the thought in the mind of his host to not give the gosling to his friend but the host did not pay any heed after which Chi could not protect the gosling from harm as they too have limitations. Even Chi motivated the host during his visit to Ndali's house where he was shamed by family members for being a poultry farmer and ill-educated which disheartened the host but Chi at that time encouraged him not to be afraid and to do as much as he could to hold up against Ndali's family. Chi was a great influence in the assurance to Ndali for Chinonso to sell his land and poultry to receive education, even though Chi was worried that he was selling most of what he had, Chi let him do it without interference as Chi said: "we must never try to compel our host against their will" (Obioma 2019: 178).

As it is mentioned, Chi also has limitations, Chi cannot predict the future which was apparent in his regret of influencing Chinonso to sacrifice and thought of Ndali to be perfect for his host, and if Chi could see what was to come, he would not have thought this foolish thing. Chi could not help his host from

⁶ *Chiokike* - name of the God Chukwu.

deception by Jamike who defrauded Chinonso convincing him about being enrolled in the International University of Cyprus. "I am even more disturbed that I did not suspect anything in the least" (Obioma 2019: 231). It is not that only humans have fear and regrets, even Chi has them, like in the initial stage of love of Chinonso, Chi fears the loss of influence on his host, "I feared that when the love had fully formed in his heart, it would blind him and make him deaf to my counsel" (Obioma 2019: 60).

Chi was in a state of betweenness when his host decided to go to Cyprus for education leaving his lady love Ndali for whom he sacrificed everything, so he remained silent because in silence Chi yields to the complete will of his host. The reason of Chi's ambivalence might be the disgrace that the host faced from Ndali's family by which Chi had been humiliated. "When one is insulted, it extends to his Chi" (Obioma 2019: 149), as Chi is the host other identity in spirit land (Achebe 1975:131). Despite being disgraced, Chi guides Chinonso and motivates him in his every decision no matter what the circumstance as "it is abominable for a chi to stand in the way of his own host" (Obioma 2019: 131).

It is clear that Obioma has presented the dynamics of chi on his host and the question of fate in the life of Chinonso as man's chi does have a "special hold over him such as no other powers can muster" (Achebe 1975:135). Chi's agreeing with Chinonso in "yes" to his host's decisions clarified the fact that Chi was more concerned with success and failure rather than what was right or wrong which ended up in calamity. When one suffers due to his or her chi, it is not because chi is bad or has negative energy; rather, it is said to be an imbalance between the host and chi. According to Igbo belief man has the ability to influence his fate through chi as Achebe confirmed "when a man is at peace with his gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm" (2001:12). There is even a saying in Igbo that if the host says yes, his chi also says yes, which means that chi does not have absolute power over man, man can take initiative for his destiny but cannot surpass his chi destiny. Obioma presents the role of chi destiny in the life of Chinonso, as chi too has a destiny from which escape is impossible.

4. Reading Igbo orality through Chi in *An orchestra of minorities*

Obioma has used the verbal art of conversation to enrich his narrative through proverbs as "proverbs deal with all aspects of life and are usually employed to convey effectively moral lessons and advice" (Taiwo 1976:32). Proverbs,

according to Irele "can be considered as practically a genre in itself, and it enters as a device into almost all kinds of speech activity and is regularly made to serve a formal function in the extended forms of oral literature" (Irele 2001:32). Igbo proverbs are nurtured as an art and manifestation of good oratory imbibed in traditional knowledge and ancestral wisdom. Achebe calls, "Igbo proverbs, the palm-oil with which words are eaten". Igbo proverbs "do not merely add "local colour", but are integral part of the narrative design. They lend an air of historical authenticity of "Africanness", to the language and ideas" (Iyasere 1975: 113). Like Achebe's *Things fall apart* (2001), that depicts the conflict between oral tradition and modern culture, Obioma has presented the inherent influence of oral tradition in a contemporary context. Even Ferris (1973:34) commented: "Achebe is particularly perceptive in his analysis of cultural change in Nigeria and the development of oral lore in this new context" which perfectly pictures the contemporary narratives where oral tradition has occupied the major space despite Nigeria's shift from tribal to urban society. For writers like Obioma, oral tradition is not just a history to be revered but rather a timeless source to philosophize life. It is something that gives vitality to expressions of life, as Scheub (1985: 2) states: "oral history is more a comment than a record. It is a way of observing a society that reveals the way the community feels about itself."

Proverbs are an integral part of Obioma's narrative, without which his fiction would be a mere skeleton with no flesh. Obioma delineated the expression and voice of Igbo natives through Igbo proverbs. The use of them provided him a vehicle to transmit the message that "a toad whose mouth is full of water cannot swallow even an ant" (Obioma 2019: 214), which depicts the fact that if a mind is occupied by something bothering its peace it gets consumed by it. Through Igbo proverbs, Obioma presented the interpretation of principles and philosophy of Igbo life, as they "are the wisdom and experience of a people, usually of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression" (Kanu 2014: 165).

An orchestra of minorities (2019) serves as a reservoir of Igbo oral tradition where Chi in the eloquence of ancestors presents their wisdom and sayings, simultaneously complementing his narrated story through Igbo proverbs. Obioma used Igbo proverbs and ancestral sayings as a vehicle to express the beliefs and principles of the Igbo people. Chi, apart from being the narrator and guiding spirit, is a crafty orator in the novel whose orality is cultivated from the experience of different hosts. Chi directly conveys the saying or proverb, "the great father says that to get to the top of a hill, one must begin from its foot" (Obioma 2019: 16) to support his story of the host. Chi justifies his premature testimony in the court of Supreme God Chukwu explaining the exigency of sudden

intercession by quoting the Igbo proverb “I am here because the old fathers say that we bring only the blade sharp enough to cut the firewood to the forest. If a situation deserves exigent measures, then one must give it that” (Obioma 2019: 4). Chi confirms that his host is not a criminal and his hands are clean and request God to let him join the ancestors. “Ezeuwa, let the eagle perch, let the hawk perch, and whichever says the other should not perch, may its wings break!” (Obioma 2019: 197).

The story of Chi’s host is set at the backdrop of oral tradition where the old father’s wisdom is used to complement the host’s experiences of life. For instance, when Chinonso is left out alone in a devastated state by a woman named Motu whom he was temporarily attached, Chi comments: “the great father often says that a child does not die because his mother’s breast is empty of milk” (Obioma 2019: 45). Old father had a belief system that man has the strength to overcome every hardship, as there is nothing in the world that could not be solved by man. The struggle of Chinonso for his love, crossing every hurdle was depicted in the cautionary wisdom of wise fathers that “whichever position the dancer takes, the flute will accompany him there” (Obioma 2019: 88). Chi further states the fact about the human tendency to sustain in difficult situations with strong will and courage without losing as Chi comments, “IJANGO -IJANGO, the nidiichie say that if a wall does not bear a hole in it, lizards cannot enter a house. Even if a man is troubled, if he does not become broken, he can sustain himself” (Obioma 2019: 98).

Chi used the oral sayings, such as “the old father says that without light, a person cannot sprout shadows” (Obioma 2019: 41) to present the philosophy of love and its healing power that helped his host to recover from his past. The oral history in terms of ancestral wisdom or their wise sayings are the manifestation of commentary by Chi: “the wise fathers say that one hears the message of an *udu* drum clearer from distance” (Obioma 2019: 83). Chi comments on the state of his host’s realization in the absence of his beloved, that he hadn’t realized in her presence about the sacrifices he had to make to achieve her.

The rise and fall of Chinonso are strung with Igbo proverbs by Chi: “the life of a man is anchored on a swivel. It can spin this way or that way, and a person’s life can change in significant ways in an instant” (Obioma 2019: 127). Like the way Chinonso’s life was changed within the blink of an eye, everything became an illusion after he was duped by his old friend Jamike which he could not have imagined to be that way nor his chi, as chi cannot see the future, but Chi somehow suspected the possibility of such outcome as Chi comments, “OSIMIRIATAATA, indeed, as the fathers of old said, a fish that has gone mad would be known from the smell of its head” (Obioma 2019: 146).

Chi expresses the wisdom that governs the philosophy of life, as he states the fact that old fathers say that the fact that a "millipede has more than a hundred legs does not mean that he is a great runner" (Obioma 2019: 211). It is clear that an "expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly clearly in proverbs" (Finnegan 2012: 380).

Obioma handed down the wisdom of old fathers through Chi to emphasize their timeless influence even after a generation. The legacy of oral tradition is carried forward through Chi's narration of the story to Chukwu in the oral mode which somehow reflects the consciousness of oral tradition in the novel. Chi as an orator justifies the standard of Igbo orality having experience of Igbo people accompanying them for so many years. Chi, a timeless agency, had eloquence and wisdom imbibed in him to convey Igbo orality in a manner of old fathers and ancestors; this excellence of oratory would not have been possible with any other character in the novel.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that a paradigm shift has been created by contemporary African writers like Chigozie Obioma. Justifying the fact that Obioma, with an elevated craft and transcendence, raises the standard and perspective of the traditional novel with all its indigeneity and expressions. In *An orchestra of minorities* (2019), Obioma maps the Igbo culture and history blending it with the fictional story through the guiding spirit, chi. The character of Chi as a narrator, guiding spirit, and orator is presented with an elevated vantage point where Chi as a reincarnating spirit presents the testimony as a representative of his host in the eternal land, narrating his host story as a flashback. Chi being a spirit has the freedom of spatial-temporal transcendence that eventually gave Chi an agency of multiple narrative techniques that exceed conventional narration.

Simultaneously playing the role of an active guide in his host's life to support him in his every decision as chi has to say yes if the host says yes to anything. Chi craftily traces down the different realms and time zones to showcase his entire journey with different hosts as well as his present host's journey of love and sacrifice, bridging it with Igbo oral tradition. Chi with eloquence imbibed in the oratory of Igbo ancestors and their oral tradition philosophizes his host's story.

The dexterity with which the Igbo world of spirits and ancestors was picturized through the entity *chi* being central in Igbo cosmology, having a life and absolute fluidity and freedom make the novel beyond the abstract, living reality of the Igbo

cosmos. Obioma has imbibed the metaphysical and transcendental domain of Igbo in the novel which makes it a complete cosmological novel answering the question of the metaphysics of being and existence through chi.

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REVIEW

Frank Gerits, *The ideological scramble for Africa: how the pursuit of anticolonial modernity shaped a post-colonial order, 1945-1966*, 304 pp. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2023. ISBN: 9781501767913

The work of Frank Gerits is an extremely interesting contribution to the historical research on 20th-century Africa. Gerits can be read in the context of postcolonial discourse; however, his main focus is on ideological struggle for the political and social shape of the independent continent. The discussion concentrates on anticolonial modernity, non-alignment and liberationist movements. This makes the book a must-read for those involved in research and general reflections on what is happening at the moment in Africa and the Global South in the context of the latest political and economic developments. The BRICS with its new members (also from Africa, Ethiopia among others), the states of the Gulf, and the role of Russia — extremely popular and active in Africa — who presents itself as an opposition to ex-colonial powers, all of them contribute to the rivalry of new powers with the aim to control the global situation. This contemporary state of affairs provokes questions about the historical role of the non-aligned movement and ideological input of the “Third World” or Global South, and their input resulting in the shape of the world of today.

Frank Gerits has undertaken an extremely difficult, although timely, task. It has been lately postulated on many occasions that history of Africa should be rewritten and African perspective should be treated as a point of departure in contemporary African studies. This, as has been argued, should be done in opposition to the long experience of presenting the view on African history and cultures mostly by Westerners, with the use of Western methodology and from the perspective of the Western world. In *Ideological scramble for Africa* Frank Gerits fills an immense gap in our knowledge of the continent’s 20th-century history. What seems to be worth mentioning, he manages to avoid falling into the trap of extreme reaction to colonial gaze provoking presentation of Africans’ achievements without proper critical attitude.

Gerits argues that during the period under discussion Africans were not just passive participants in the Cold War rivalry, and as he claims, “the Cold War was not exported to the Global South. Rather, the East-West division between the US empire of liberty and the Soviet empire of equality was submerged by a North-South conflict in which US and Soviet empires, together with European empires of exploitation, were rebuffed by Pan-Asian, Pan-African, Pan-American, or Pan-Arab federations” (from “Introduction”, p. 3). In other words he gives voice to African intellectuals and politicians and claims that their discussions impacted global history of the 20th century. At the same time, the author proves that there was not one Pan-African ideology with the aim of uniting Africa, on the contrary, the father-figures of African independence including Nkrumah, Nyerere, Lumumba and others, actively participated in fierce discussions and diplomatic and political activities on continental and world arenas. This picture of African ideological discussions adds another part of the much needed picture of Africans who are not only not “backward”, but also try, however difficult it is in the dawn of colonial world, to participate in world politics on equal footing. Obviously, African ideological struggle took place in reaction to colonial dependency from the Western powers, thus Gerits also presents the reaction of the empires involved in African relations (US, USSR, European countries, but also other powers including China and India) quite often painting a picture of chaos and disorientation among their leaders. This, in my opinion, makes one of the most interesting parts of the book and an important contribution to historical studies on political relations of the mid-20th century with Africa in the centre.

Gerits' work is based on extensive research in a number of archives from different continents, including Africa. The problems connected with accessing material in African archives and working with it makes an important methodological problem which is discussed in one of the parts of the introduction (“African agency in historical scholarship”, p. 14). Throughout the book the author provides us with colossal bulk of detailed information, including personal names of those involved and the names of organisations. This makes the book very informative, while at the same time the reader is confronted with so many details that on some occasions those less read in African history might even find it quite difficult to follow the story.

The book comprises an introduction, eight chapters, a list of abbreviations, notes, bibliography and index. The subjects discussed in following chapters are arranged chronologically, but also some of the chapters concentrate on a choice of problems related to certain areas of Africa. The first chapter (“A Foreign Policy of the Mind 1945-1954”, pp. 18-39) discusses the period of reaction to the post-war

order which brought a chance to fight for independence. It also describes how the idea of psychological damage to colonial minds grew and how undoing the damage was confronted. The second chapter ("Offering Hungry Minds a Better Development Project 1955-1956", pp. 40-61) concentrates on Bandung Conference and its attempt to "pave the way for an anticolonial modernization project to acquire international influence" (p. 60) and the reaction of the Global North to the African fervour for the independence. The third chapter ("The Pan-African Path to Modernity, 1957-1958", pp. 62-84) presents how Nkrumah's Pan-African ideology influenced the situation well beyond Ghana. The example of Guinea and its leader, Sékou Touré, proves how it served as a "test for the strength of Accra's liberationist route to modernity" (p. 84). Chapter four ("Redefining Decolonization in the Sahara, 1959-1960", pp. 85-102) discusses the influence of French atomic bomb testing in the Algerian Sahara on discussions of sovereignty. Chapter five ("The Congo Crisis as the Litmus Test for Psychological Modernization, 1960-1961", pp. 103-122) presents the problem of Congo's (as "a likely trouble spot", p. 122) path to ("premature") independence and also discusses the reason for the assassination of Lumumba, as a mirror of Northern concerns with Africa being perceived a threat to stability. In chapter six ("Managing the Effects of Modernization, 1961-1963", pp. 123-143) the Belgrade Non-Aligned Conference is discussed among other matters in the context of Nkrumah's Pan-African propaganda. Chapter seven ("The Struggle to Defeat Racial Modernity in South Africa and Rhodesia, 1963-1966", pp. 144-160) concentrates on southern Africa, as a special case of racial modernity. In chapter eight ("The Collapse of Anticolonial Modernization, 1963-1966", pp. 161-180), the problem of political use of aid and regionalization of the continent is confronted with African attempts for different and new solutions instead of these which had been proposed so far. The author provided a subtitle to the "Conclusion" of the book (pp. 181-187), which is: "How Decolonization Made Our Times" where he collects the main points of the book and presents how the intellectual anticolonial, modernist and liberationist fervour in Africa mattered in global terms.

The work of Frank Gerits should be regarded as a contribution to a much needed critical discussion on the history of African political thought and Africans' participation in world politics.

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Noëleen Murray & Jonathan Cane & (eds). *Creative cities in Africa: critical architecture and urbanism*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2024, 240 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7969-2648-7

The monograph *Creative cities in Africa* is a collaborative effort by the Chair of Critical Architecture and Urbanism (first University of Witwatersrand, from 2020 University of Pretoria). Its authors take us on a journey to eight sub-Saharan cities and one in virtual space. Their selection is eclectic and may surprise. The list includes not only large metropolises such as Dakar or Johannesburg, but also smaller and less known cities, like Dalaba or Lumumbashi. Telling their stories, the authors aim to challenge the African cities and their temporality through their materiality and to add the African angle to the vast amount of narrative on urban creativity born in the global north.

The volume contains a wide range of perspectives on the city and its architecture. They range from J. Cane's reflections on the artistic installation of the Phantom City to the story of the construction of the Nelson Mandela Bridge in Johannesburg described by M.F. Sihlongonyaene. The Phantom City, a mock-up by B.I. Kingelez presented at the Sao Paulo Biennale in 2002, is a performance rather than a dream, the sum of imaginings of an ideal city. It is a combination of a dream, an unrealistic variation of imagination, and a search for an ideal city as a place to live. The artist's installation is encased in a surprising number of details, which – like the numerous and free parking spaces (sic!) – probably grow out of the artist's personal experience. Its essence is freedom and living the joy and beauty of life. Doctors and police are not necessary here, and the line between life and death is blurred – there is even a bridge here that allows walking between one and the other. In contrast, the Nelson Mandela Bridge is a real-life, carefully thought-out development, under the auspices of Nelson Mandela's party, the African National Congress (ANC). The structure was meant to activate and offer a chance to develop the apartheid-era neglected areas of Johannesburg. In fact, however, the noble idea clashed with economic and business realities that, according to the author, undermined the message it aimed to pass. As an aside, it may be noted that it was perhaps due to similar entanglements in support of the economic rights of the elite that the ANC failed to gain a parliamentary majority in the last election.

The two extremes described above set the limit of the multidimensional polemic against the concept of the Creative City in the American-European sense. This well-documented debate provides the value of the 240-page monograph.

The concept of the Creative City has its roots in the 1930s, when the importance of the culture industry and its impact on society was recognized and further developed in the 1970s and recalled by R. Florida's brilliantly sold idea of the Creative Class at the start of the new Millennium. Florida's concept has distorted the original idea of the Culture Industry, treating it as part of a liberal environment or an incentive-providing catalyst to gain a competitive advantage for an urban centre. In essence, then, it is a concept limited to supporting economic development. The term "creative city" was formalised in 2004 with the creation of The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). The network aims to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. It currently brings together 350 cities. Only 15 of them are in Africa, which in itself suggests that the notion of "creativity" in the context of African cities may have a specific character.

In 2024, a book on creative cities may seem outdated. In the last 20 years, the world has heard about Smart City 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, Sustainable City, Green City, 15-minute city, etc. All these concepts get picked up by the political world and fade into oblivion faster than it takes to prepare and enact most of the urban plans that have the real power to shape the urban space. The planning practice, moreover, finds translating this theoretical concept into applicable urbanistic rules challenging. In reality, the model is usually simplified into a programme that is more political than functional. The common solutions only involve building more museums, theatres, and galleries, tidying up city centres by turning busy streets into pedestrianised areas and with pocket parks installed alongside. Sometimes turning into a "creative city" only involves introduction of a new nomenclature. Independently of all these attempts, the essence of existence and specificity remains unchanged and the same continues throughout ages and continents. For example, the Polish word for 'city' (*miasto*) probably derives from 'place' (*miejsce*, Latin *locus* and *civitas*, Brückner 1927). This was particularly evident in the Middle Ages, when cities had separate legal systems precisely to be able to maintain their uniqueness. Therefore, a city was and still remains a space with specific functions and ways of life. A place where rich and poor, indigenous and newcomers live side by side.

Although the authors of the book have used a globally popular label, the reviewed work is much deeper than the concept that gave rise to the title. The authors rather approach the term "creativity" as it is understood by Pawlik in his study on the daily life of Lome dwellers. *Creative cities in Africa* is a collection of texts that are much more mature than the simple and perhaps even naïve ideological understanding of the creative city often presented by city authorities in the global

north. All texts remain close to the realities of urban life and human problems that fill and shape urban space. They show that the everyday life of cities is not a joyful play of designers but a very serious matter; all the more so when resources are scarce.

The significant part of the objects and locations described in the book refer to politics and difficult history. The monument of the African Renaissance in Dakar, Miriam Makeba's refugee home in Dalaba, Guinea, or the history of the Gujarati minority in Durban struggling to preserve its identity may serve as examples. Of particular interest to a European are the issues of the colonial past and the experience of racial segregation. This publication adds a voice from inside Africa and an opportunity to gain insight into local perspectives on these widely discussed problems. For example, the case of the architectural heritage of Lumumbashi (DRC), presented by J. Lagae, demonstrates that urban planning concepts, which in Europe were a positive inspiration to improve the quality of urban life, could also serve to create a racially segregated city model. That any theory can be used for the good of or against humanity is perhaps a well-known fact, but it is still necessary to remember it. It also brings attention to the responsibility resting with urban planners and managers.

Although all the examples cited in the book are from sub-Saharan Africa, its message is not confined within the borders of this part of the world. It can be creatively read by anyone. A creative city, by definition, is different and has to differ from other cities also for local reasons. At the same time, it remains dynamic: it reinvents itself and looks for new solutions every day. This book brings examples of such a search and encourages the reader to continue it on his or her own. It may be recommended to anyone who wishes to explore the essence of creativity. It serves as an excellent aid to developing one's own knowledge-based perspective on urban development issues.

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Sergio Baldi, *Dictionary of Portuguese Loanwords in the Languages of Sub-Saharan Africa*. Brill Studies in Language, Cognition and Culture, Volume 40, 350 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2023. ISBN: 978-9004549227.

The *Dictionary of Portuguese loanwords in African languages* is an essential and valuable resource for Africanist scholars, researchers, linguists, and all language enthusiasts interested in the historical and linguistic connections between Portuguese and African languages, as well as students interested in studying the impact of Portuguese on selected Sub-Saharan African languages. The lexicon, compiled by renowned linguist Prof. Sergio Baldi, is a meticulously and thoroughly researched collection of the largest number of Portuguese loanwords discovered in numerous African languages, such as Swahili or Kimbundu. This review presents an overview of the dictionary's content, its organisation, methodology and scholarly contributions.

Undoubtedly, one of the strengths of the dictionary is its extensive coverage of different regions and languages in the African continent. From West to East Africa, it provides an in-depth analysis of how Portuguese words have been absorbed and integrated into local languages. There are consequential benefits, one of which is that the book offers some practical lessons in linguistics and a practical approach. This dictionary is notable for its scholastic rigour and meticulous attention to detail. The entries are well-researched, providing valuable and useful insights into the lexical borrowing processes between Portuguese and African languages. By documenting and analysing these loanwords, the dictionary contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural, socio-economic and linguistic exchanges that have shaped the linguistic landscape of Africa. The author underlines that "Portugal, despite this remarkable linguistic influence and having formed the longest-lived colonial empire of a European nation, has never raised the study of African languages to an academic level by creating departments of African languages as have so many other European countries with a colonial past, like the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy [...]" (p. 7). Looking from this perspective, the author underscores that the volume is a response to the lack of sufficient data analysis.

In addition to the main entries, the dictionary begins with a lengthy and detailed Introduction that discusses the historical context of Portuguese-African contact, as well as the linguistic features of loanwords that are critical to text clarity and intelligibility (pp. 1-88). In the vast Introduction, the author briefly explains the history of Portuguese presence in the African continent, dating back to the 15th century

and the occupation of Ceuta. Portuguese loanwords in African languages reflect the historical interactions between Portugal and various regions, particularly during the colonial era and the subsequent periods of trade and imperial power. As Portugal established colonies and trade routes (the British, the Arabs and the Dutch were also present there), Portuguese language and culture affected local languages, leading to the incorporation of numerous terms into indigenous vocabularies. This interaction was often associated with the expansion of Christianity and the occupation of land that involved oppression and subjugation of local populations. This all facilitated linguistic exchange.

Baldi also outlines the book's structure and summarises its main arguments and material included in four chapters and several subchapters: 1. Portugal and African Languages (pp. 5-7); 2. African Loanwords in Portuguese (pp. 7-13); 3. The Structure of the African Languages, including 3.1. Classes, 3.2. Atlantic languages, 3.3. Gur languages (pp. 13-68); and 4. Plan of the Work and Its Methodology (pp. 68-88). Also, the Introduction follows a Preface (pp. IX-XI) and Abbreviations (pp. XII-XVII), including all grammatical abbreviations and authors' names used in the volume.

The third section, titled "Structure of the African Languages", offers an explanation on the semantic relationship between Portuguese loanwords and language class system. As stated by the author, the findings concern a wide range of languages, with a focus on the Niger-Congo family, namely the Mande languages and the Atlantic-Congo languages (and a few other unclassified groups), which are spoken in nearly the entire Sub-Saharan Africa. In general, while Portuguese loanwords can be found in several languages, they are particularly prevalent in Bantu languages, which have incorporated many terms that encompass various domains related to: agriculture, flora and fauna, religious terminology, trade, everyday life, culinary, administrative and legal terms often stemming from colonial administration changes. Examples include words for objects, food, clothing, Catholic practices and concepts introduced by the Portuguese and terms which played a crucial role in local economies. These borrowings are often reflective of cultural exchange and adaptation as societies engaged in trade and agriculture under authoritarian regimes, hence the incorporation of Portuguese terminology into local lexicons. What is important, and pointed out by Baldi, the presence of Portuguese loanwords "varies now according to different environments. In fact, if on the one hand in the former Portuguese colonies, such as Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, Portuguese is widespread and therefore able to maintain its influence in the languages spoken there, in West Africa, English influence has gradually replaced that of Portuguese which has diminished over

the centuries” (p. 11). Baldi did an excellent job in each of the subchapters by providing readers with knowledge of languages such as Kongo (in which there are 427 Portuguese loans), Changana (with 267 Portuguese loans), Kimbundu (with 167 Portuguese words) or Swahili (with 115 Portuguese loans). For instance, as presented in a special table (pp. 45-47) the total number of Portuguese loanwords in all researched Bantu languages is 1619.

The broadest chapter, “Dictionary”, provides an index of 983 Portuguese etymons borrowed into 160 African languages (pp. 89-288). The dictionary is thoughtfully organised, with entries alphabetically arranged in Portuguese for easy reference for users to locate specific loanwords and their meanings in each African language also classified in an alphabetical order and accompanied by a brief description in the footnotes (covering geographical distribution, classification and notable characteristics). More specifically, each entry in the dictionary includes the Portuguese word, its etymology with original meaning (from Greek, Latin, Arabic or French), the list of African languages in which it appears, and its local form, meaning or usage. In some cases, additional information is provided on the historical context of the loanword’s adoption, its semantic evolution, local variant, and its cultural significance. A very valuable element is adding a reference to the source in each case, including a specific dictionary or grammar work. Abbreviations of authors’ names are given in brackets after the language name, which enhances readability. By doing so, Baldi demonstrates excellent source preparation and at the same time appreciates the contribution of language researchers throughout the ages, compiling a list of their works. Therefore, this comprehensive approach allows users to gain a deeper understanding of the linguistic, historical and socio-cultural exchanges that have occurred between Portugal and Africa over the centuries.

The author also describes how certain food items not indigenous to Africa, for instance, *tabaco* (Eng. ‘tobacco’), *sabão* (Eng. ‘soap’) or *açúcar* (Eng. ‘sugar’) were imposed or introduced in local markets as a result of invasion, global exchange of goods, imperialism, and colonisation. When incorporated into African languages, Portuguese loanwords often undergo phonological and morphological adaptations to fit the phonetic and grammatical structures of the local language. This can include changes in pronunciation, alteration of vowel sounds, or addition of affixes appropriate to the grammatical rules of the local language.

The dictionary also includes helpful features such as cross-references and a Bibliography of sources consulted (pp. 289-318), an Index of English keywords from Portuguese borrowed into African languages (pp. 319-338), a General Index of Portuguese keywords borrowed into African languages (pp. 339-350),

and an Index of Scientific Names of plants and animals in Latin (p. 351). These resources enhance the users' ability to navigate the dictionary and further their research on Portuguese loanwords. Additionally, the dictionary's clear and concise writing style makes it accessible to both scholars and general readers interested in the topic.

In conclusion, the *Dictionary of Portuguese Loanwords in African Languages* offers a comprehensive compilation that illuminates the complex interplay between Portuguese and African languages, shedding light on the enduring impact of Portuguese linguistic influence. Consequently, this latest book by Sergio Baldi comes timely as the most complete research and coverage on Portuguese loanwords in sub-Saharan African languages. Its meticulous research and scholarly insights make it an indispensable tool for anyone interested in the linguistic legacy and intercultural connections between Portugal and African nations.

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Colin Darch & David Hedges (eds). *Samora Machel: leader and liberator in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2024, 454 pp. ISBN: 978-0-79692-668-5.

Samora Machel: leader and liberator in Southern Africa is a comprehensive work that delves into the life story of Samora Machel, a prominent figure in the history of Mozambique and Southern Africa. He was a well-known figure in the fight against colonialism and apartheid in Southern Africa. The book explores Machel's upbringing, his revolutionary leadership role, and his impact on the liberation struggle in Mozambique and the broader region. The book, edited and analysed by Colin Darch and David Hedges, provides readers with a detailed account of Machel's journey from his humble beginnings to his role as a key leader in the Frelimo anticolonial liberation movement. The book consists of several interviews with Samora Machel conducted in Portuguese and translated into English. The book is structured to provide readers with a deep understanding of Samora Machel's life, achievements, challenges, and legacy. It includes a biographical introduction that sets the stage for Machel's story, followed by a chronology spanning from 1933 to 1986, capturing key events in his life. The book content is divided into three parts with sub-sections that cover different phases of Machel's life.

The first part of the book, which is "His life" has one sub-chapter, which is "Locating Samora Machel". This chapter explores the early life and background of Samora Machel, shedding light on his upbringing and formative years. Samora Machel was born on September 29, 1933, in the rural village of Mambone in the Gaza Province of Mozambique. This part of the book explains the activities of the Portuguese in the late nineteenth century. The book reveals that by the late 1880s, most of the men of working age had been recruited by the colonial government to work in the gold mines and in the construction of railway lines which led to the presence of few men of working age in the villages. The Portuguese Colonial Government introduced numerous taxes which were unbearable for the local people of Mozambique. Growing up under Portuguese colonial rule, Machel experienced first-hand the challenges faced by his people. His relatives were forced to work as migrant labourers in the South African mines after their farmland was taken from them and given to Portuguese settlers.

As a growing child, in the opening of the book Machel recounted several comments of his parents on the activities and brutality of the Portuguese in Mozambique. Nursing was one of the usual professions open to the people

of Mozambique at the time. Machel had no option but to follow that path. After qualifying as a trained nurse and while practising the profession, he gained a fundamental understanding of health challenges affecting his community. He openly campaigned on behalf of his fellow medical workers saying that “the rich man’s dog gets more in the way of vaccination, medicine and medical care than do the workers upon whom the rich man’s wealth is built.” In the book *Samora Machel: an African revolutionary. Selected speeches and writings* Machel constantly complained about the politicising of the health sector of the country. However, he soon abandoned this career after a tip-off that the secret police of Portugal were after him to join the liberation movement known as FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique), where he received military training driven by a desire to fight against colonial oppression to a standstill.

After his return to Mozambique, Machel quickly rose through the ranks of FRELIMO due to his leadership skills and dedication to the cause. As a leader, Machel played a crucial role in uniting various factions within FRELIMO and mobilising support for the liberation struggle. He emphasised the importance of education, healthcare, and social welfare programs to improve the lives of ordinary Mozambicans. Machel’s vision extended beyond Mozambique, as he also supported other liberation movements in Southern Africa, such as the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. Machel’s leadership style was characterised by his charisma, strategic thinking, and commitment to socialist principles. He led FRELIMO to victory against Portuguese colonial forces in 1975, leading to Mozambique’s independence. As the first President of independent Mozambique, Machel focused on nation-building efforts and implementing socialist policies to address poverty and inequality.

Tragically, Machel’s life was cut short when he died in a plane crash in 1986 under mysterious circumstances. His death remains a subject of speculation and conspiracy theories, with some suggesting foul play by external forces opposed to his anti-imperialist stance. The book titled *Mozambique’s Samora Machel* revealed how he died and asked the question: who killed Samora? This question has remained unanswered to date.

The second part of the book which forms the core of the research is “His voice”. This part consists of three sub-chapters which address the armed struggle of 1965-1975, the challenges of independence of 1975-1980 and the struggle against destabilisation of 1981-1986. This part consists of a series of interviews conducted by national and international journalists and speeches given by Machel. In one of such interviews in the book titled *Samora Machel speaks*, Machel revealed that the state was rapidly becoming the organiser

and transformer of the lives of the people of Mozambique. The first sub-chapter reveals that Machel was involved in armed struggles with the Portuguese from the time of his return to Mozambique in 1975. This resonated not only within Mozambique but throughout Southern Africa. Machel's leadership at the time shaped the trajectory of Mozambique's liberation and influenced broader regional dynamics.

In 1962 the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) was established, with Samora Machel emerging as one of its key leaders. The organisation aimed at uniting the various factions within Mozambique to combat Portuguese colonialism through armed struggle. By 1965, FRELIMO had begun its military operations against Portuguese forces, marking the start of an intense phase of guerrilla warfare that lasted for nearly a decade. Machel's leadership style was characterised by his commitment to Marxist-Leninist principles and his ability to mobilise support among the rural population. He emphasised political education and ideological training for fighters, which helped solidify FRELIMO's base and create unity among diverse ethnic groups within Mozambique.

During this period, FRELIMO adopted guerrilla warfare tactics that were effective against the better-equipped Portuguese military. The movement utilised hit-and-run strategies, sabotage operations, and psychological warfare to undermine colonial authority. Machel understood the importance of popular support; thus, he focused on winning hearts and minds through community engagement and social programs. The armed struggle also saw significant external support from other African nations and socialist countries. This assistance included military training, supplies, and diplomatic backing that were crucial for sustaining FRELIMO's operations against Portugal.

The armed struggles in Mozambique were part of a larger wave of decolonisation sweeping across Africa during the 1960s and early 1970s. Countries like Tanzania provided refuge for FRELIMO fighters and served as a base for launching attacks into Mozambique. The geo-political landscape was heavily influenced by Cold War dynamics, with both Western powers and Soviet-aligned nations vying for influence over newly independent states. Machel's leadership was not only about military strategy; it also involved navigating complex international relations. He forged alliances with other liberation movements in Southern Africa, such as those in Zimbabwe, former Rhodesia, and South Africa, recognising that their struggles were interconnected.

By 1974, following years of sustained conflict and increasing international pressure on Portugal due to its colonial wars in Africa, a revolution occurred in Portugal

itself, the Carnation Revolution, which led to a shift in policy regarding its colonies. FRELIMO launched a military attack on the Portuguese troops remaining in their barracks. This resulted in an agreement for independence to be granted to Mozambique in June 1975 after which Machel became the first President of independent Mozambique. A new constitution was drawn up, in line with his Marxist-Leninist ideology, resulting in the creation of The People's Republic of Mozambique which in Machel's words would be "a State of People's Democracy, which, under the leadership of the worker-peasant alliance all patriotic strata commit themselves to the destruction of the sequels of colonialism, and to annihilate the system of exploitation of man by man." Machel's vision extended beyond just independence because he aimed at establishing a socialist state that would solve problems such as poverty, education, health care, and land reforms. According to the book titled *Samora Machel: A Biography*, after independence in 1975, socialist reforms were carried out in Mozambique making it very difficult for Portuguese people to reside there. Many of them had to leave the country.

Between 1981 and 1986, Mozambique, under the able leadership of Samora Machel, faced significant challenges stemming from regional destabilisation efforts primarily orchestrated by apartheid South Africa. The period was marked by a complex interplay of internal and external factors that sought to undermine the sovereignty and stability of Mozambique. This era is crucial to understanding Machel's leadership style, his commitment to liberation movements across Southern Africa, and the broader geopolitical dynamics at play. During this time, the apartheid regime in South Africa viewed Mozambique as a threat due to its support for liberation movements in neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe and South Africa itself. The South African government employed various tactics to destabilise Mozambique, including military incursions, economic sabotage, and support for insurgent groups like RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance). These actions were aimed at undermining Machel's government and disrupting the socialist policies he implemented after independence from Portugal in 1975.

In response to these threats, Machel adopted a multifaceted approach. He sought to strengthen national unity while also appealing for international solidarity against imperialism and colonialism. His government focused on mobilising the populace through political education campaigns that emphasized self-reliance and resistance against foreign intervention. In the book titled *Samora: Man of the people*, it was clearly stated Machel wanted his people to have access to education and share the knowledge accumulated to humanity. Furthermore, Machel worked closely with similar liberation movements across Southern Africa, creating a sense of regional solidarity against their common enemies. Machel's

administration engaged in military strategies to counteract the insurgency posed by RENAMO. This included bolstering the armed forces and seeking assistance from allied nations such as the Soviet Union and Cuba. The Mozambican military was involved in confrontations with RENAMO fighters while also attempting to secure borders against incursions from South African forces. Despite these efforts, the conflict led to significant humanitarian crises within Mozambique as civilians bore the brunt of the violence.

The ongoing conflict severely impacted Mozambique's economy. Agricultural production declined due to both direct attacks on farms by RENAMO and broader economic sanctions imposed by Western nations sympathetic to apartheid South Africa. Machel's government struggled with food shortages and inflation, which further complicated efforts to maintain public support amidst growing discontent. Machel was not only a military leader but also an astute diplomat who sought international attention for Mozambique's plight. He participated actively in forums such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and appealed for global awareness regarding South African aggression. His speeches often highlighted the need for collective action against apartheid regimes while advocating for equity and justice throughout Southern Africa.

The third part of the book is on the legacy of Samora Machel, which is multidimensional, revealing his actions and activities that have impacted Mozambique and the broader Southern African region. His contributions can be understood through several key dimensions. The eulogy during his funeral was delivered by Marcelini dos Santos, Ferlimo party veteran, on 28 October 1986 where he showered the deceased president with praises. He further mentioned several achievements of Samora Machel during his lifetime.

Another piece of his legacy includes his significant role in Mozambique's struggle for independence from Portuguese colonial rule. As a leader of the Frelimo (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) movement, he was instrumental in mobilising support for armed resistance against colonial forces. After the independence of Mozambique in 1975, Machel became the first president, where he focused on nation-building efforts aimed at unifying a country that had been deeply divided by colonialism.

Machel's presidency was marked by ambitious social reforms aimed at improving education, healthcare, and gender equality. He believed true extended beyond political independence to encompass social justice and economic equity. His government implemented policies to promote literacy and access to education, particularly for women, which laid a solid foundation for future generations.

He was a vocal critic of imperialism and neocolonialism, advocating for unity among African nations. He supported liberation movements in neighbouring countries such as South Africa and Zimbabwe, viewing their struggles as interconnected with Mozambique's fight against oppression. This regional perspective helped create a sense of unity among such movements across southern Africa.

During his presidency, Machel faced significant challenges from external forces attempting to destabilise Mozambique, which he resisted. The apartheid regime in South Africa supported insurgent groups like Renamo (Mozambican National Resistance), which waged a brutal civil war against Machel's government throughout the 1980s. Despite these challenges, Machel remained committed to defending his country's sovereignty and promoting peace through negotiation rather than violence. Machel's death in a plane crash in 1986 added an air of mystery to his legacy but also solidified his status as a martyr for the cause of liberation in southern Africa. His speeches and writings continue to inspire activists and leaders who seek justice and equality today. Machel is remembered not only as a national hero but also as an enduring symbol of resistance against oppression.

Overall, *Samora Machel: leader and liberator in Southern Africa* provides a comprehensive overview of Machel's contributions to the freedom struggle in Southern Africa and his outstanding legacy as a visionary leader who fought for social justice and equality. The book also contributes significantly to the history of colonialism in Africa. However, one major observation is that few archival materials were used in the research. Again, for a reputable personality like Samora Machel, oral interviews with his close associates and family members would have been necessary to strengthen and add more value to the book.

The book is, however, a laudable addition to the existing knowledge of the history of colonialism and liberation struggles in Mozambique, Southern Africa, and Africa as a whole.

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