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Journal of Studies in Language, Culture and Society (JSLCS) is an academic multidisciplinary open access and peer-reviewed journal that publishes original research that turns around phenomena related to language, culture and society. JSLCS welcomes papers that reflect sound methodologies, updated theoretical analyses and original empirical and practical findings related to various disciplines like linguistics and languages, civilisation and literature, sociology, psychology, translation, anthropology, education, pedagogy, ICT, communication, cultural/inter-cultural studies, philosophy, history, religion, and the like.

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APA Formatting

Radia Bouguebs. ENS "Assia Djebbar" Constantine, Algeria.

Contents

Preface

With great enthusiasm, we present Volume 6, Issue 1, dated 30 June 2023, meticulously complied by the editorial board of JSLCS. This issue brings together a rich assortment of seven scholarly articles that explore diverse facets of language, culture, and society from across the globe. Each contribution reflects the unwavering commitment of the academic community to unravel the complexities of human communication and cultural dynamics.

The first article embarks on a captivating journey titled "Language Ideologies among Pre-service Teachers at the University of Burundi: An Appraisal of Language Policy in Burundi," authored by Clément Ndoricimp and Clément Bigirimana. This thought-provoking study investigates the language ideologies held by pre-service teachers concerning language use in educational and official contexts within Burundi. It endeavors to discern whether there exists a dissonance between the language ideologies of pre-service teachers and the top-down language policy articulated in the nation. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this research unveils the perceived significance of specific languages and their role in education within the intricate fabric of Burundi's linguistic landscape.

Following this, Ibrahim Eshlash Odeh Almomany presents an illuminating "Socio-phonetic Study on the Effects of Age on Emphasis Production in Jordanian Arabic." Investigating the impact of age on two emphatic sounds within the sub-dialect of Jordanian Arabic, this study illuminates linguistic changes taking shape within this linguistic community. By probing age as an extralinguistic variable, valuable insights are gleaned, advancing our understanding of phonetic patterns and their correlation with age dynamics.

Intriguingly, Mikail Adebisi Folorunsho's article, "Arabic Writers of Francophone Ancestry: Focus on Shaykh Ibrahim ʾal-Kawlakhī ʾas-Sinighālī (1900-1975)," offers a compelling portrait of Shaykh Ibrahim ʾal-Kawlakhī ʾas-Sinighālī, a remarkable Arabic scholar and influential Tijāniyyah leader in Senegal. Diving into the lesser-known facets of his life, this research accentuates his notable contributions not only to the Tijāniyyah Sūfī brotherhood but also to the rich tapestry of Arabic literary works. Thus, this study underscores his pivotal role in fostering Arabic scholarship within the vibrant milieu of West Africa.

Furthermore, Sidrah Niaz and Asad Ali delve into the fascinating "Impacts of Explicit Learning on Pakistani ESL Cognition." Focused on Pakistani ESL learners, their research scrutinizes the effects of explicit learning within the classroom on students' cognitive processes, specifically their verbal and non-verbal proficiencies. The findings proffer invaluable insights for ESL practitioners seeking to fortify students' cognitive capacities through targeted pedagogical interventions.

Embarking on a pedagogical odyssey, Loïc Pulido's article, "Teachers, Pupils, and Parents' Perspectives on a Pedagogical Approach to Strengthened Reading Fluency That Uses Touchscreen Computer Tablet to Read-Aloud, Recording, and Sharing," unveils a novel method designed to augment reading fluency in elementary school students. Engaging educators, pupils, and parents in evaluating this approach, this study yields constructive feedback on its efficacy and its impact on students' motivation and scholastic progress.

In the penultimate contribution, Sikiru Adeyemi Ogundokun, Olubunmi Oyebola Alaje, and Musibau Olusola Lawal present a profound examination titled "Interrogating Mental Stasis: A Critical Examination of Two Francophone African Novels." Within the realm of postcolonial African society, the authors wield the lens of Marxism to analyze the depiction of social realities. Notably, they underscore the authors' inclination toward protest writing as a powerful means to address social injustice, unemployment, and other societal ills.

Lastly, Ige, Ise-Oluwa Ojo, and Adeyemi Aderogba embark on an empirical journey, exploring the "Performance of Nigerian Newspapers in Accurate Reportage of Selected Supreme Court Decisions." Evaluating the accuracy of media reports on pivotal decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, this study sheds light on the media's role in precisely conveying legal information to the masses. Crucially, it unveils the factors that influence the accuracy of reporting in newspapers, illuminating the vital role media plays in informing the public on legal matters.

As always, the Journal of Studies of Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS) remains steadfast in its mission to disseminate cutting-edge research that enhances our comprehension of linguistic, cultural, and societal phenomena. We extend our deepest gratitude to all the authors, reviewers, and editorial team members who have wholeheartedly contributed to the realisation of this volume. May the illuminating articles presented in this issue ignite fruitful discussions and inspire further scholarly pursuits in the captivating realm of the human-being mainly language, culture, and society.

Editor-in-chief: Prof. Nadia Idri

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI: AN APPRAISAL OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN BURUNDI

Clément Ndoricimpa[1] ⓘ**D**, **Clément Bigirimana**[2] ⓘ**D**

[1]Ecole Normale Supérieure du Burundi, Burundi
ndoricimpac@gmail.com[1]
[2]University of Burundi, Bujumbura, Burundi
Clement.bigirimana@ub.edu.bi

Abstract

This study investigates the language ideologies held by pre-service teachers with regard to language use in education and official settings in Burundi. It also investigates whether there is a mismatch between pre-service teachers' language ideologies and what is articulated in the top-down language policy of Burundi. The study employed mixed methods- a questionnaire and a content analysis. The results revealed that pre-service teachers' language ideologies were connected to the perceived importance of a particular language. They believed that learning or having competence in English and French is similar to building a bridge to reach an elite, educated and global community. They also believed that Kirundi language should be a medium of education alongside English and French. These beliefs were in line with what is articulated in the official language policy of Burundi. However, it was shown that what is articulated in the language policy conflicts with the reality of language practices. Therefore, other studies are needed to investigate this conflict.

Keywords: Language ideologies; language policy; language practice; multilingualism

1. Introduction

Many countries adopt a language policy that is geared towards multilingualism in education for different reasons. One of the reasons is that multilingualism is a means by which counties employ to address the problem of linguistic diversity (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017). Another reason is that multilingualism is a means for a broader integration into a global community (Bacon & Kim, 2018). Predictable, scholarship on multilingual language policy in education has tended to focus on the reasons for the adoption of multilingual language policy and on the consequences of multilingualism on students and indigenous languages (e.g., Hornberger, 2009; Heugh, 2013; Samuelson & Freedman, 2010; etc.). In this scholarship, there has been an attempt to understand the decision-making processes that lead to the adoption of multilingualism in education. It is shown that in many countries language policy formulation is a top-down process, with most decisions regarding language use in education and in official settings made by a higher authority such as the minister of education (e.g. Maseko, 2021). It is also demonstrated that in many countries language policy formulation is closely connected to language ideologies. This suggests that in many countries the choice of language to use as medium of education and as official language represents the beliefs about language that the

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[1] **Corresponding author:** Clément Ndoricimpa,
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1809-2153

decision-maker has. In this regard, existing scholarship analyzes and critiques this top-down process of language policy formulation (e.g., Ndlovu, 2014).

Burundi has adopted a multilingual language policy since its integration into the East African Community. As a result, four languages namely Kirundi, French, English and Swahili are listed as languages in use in Burundi. Among these, Kirundi is a national and official language while French and English are official languages. Although Swahili is not legally recognized as an official language, it is taught as a subject from primary school to university and is a native language to some Burundians. This language policy was motivated by Burundi integration into international and regional communities which use English and Kiswahili as official languages and into communities which use French as an official language (Bigirimana, 2018). As a result, studies on sociolinguistic situation of Burundi have tended to analyze the challenges multilingualism presents to primary and secondary school learners (e.g., Toyi, 2015; Nsengiyumva, Oriikiriza & Nakijoba, 2021; Nsengiyumva, 2022; etc.). Other studies have tempted to unpack the multilingual language policy in Burundi to show how this policy affects the identity of Kirundi speakers (e.g., Bigirimana, 2018; Mazunya, 2016). However, a little attempt has been made to analyse the decision-making process that has led to multilingual language education in Burundi and to the ideology that has informed this decision-making process. In Burundi, language policy is a top-down affair, with most decisions made by the higher-ups. In addition, no attempt has been made to understand the issues of pre-service teachers' agency in bottom-up process of policy planning. Pre-service teachers, as future teachers, may have belief about language that challenges, resists and conflicts with top-down language policy. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by examining the language ideologies held by pre-service teachers with regard to language use in education and in official settings. It also analyses whether the beliefs about language held by pre-service teachers' conflict with Burundi language policy. It provides answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the language ideologies held by pre-service teachers with regard to language use in education and official setting in Burundi?
2. Is there a match between University of Burundi students' language ideologies and Burundi language policy?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Unpacking Language Policy in Burundi

The language policy of Burundi is very keen on promoting Kirundi language- the native language of almost all Burundians (Mazunya, 2016). This is clear in the 2018 constitution which informs language policy in Burundi. It is stated in article five of the constitution that Kirundi is the national language of Burundi and the official languages are Kirundi and other languages allowed by the law. Consequently, the language policy of Burundi recognizes three official languages: Kirundi, French and English (Burundi language policy 2015). This language policy was formulated mainly for two reasons. First, it was designed to preserve Burundi culture and identity through improving the status of Kirundi language. Second, it was formulated in order to meet Burundi geopolitical demands (Mazunya, 2016). Burundi is a neighbor to Francophone countries and is a member of communities which use French as an official language. Burundi is also a neighbor to Anglophone countries and is a member of communities which use English as an official language. Thus, Kirundi, French and English enjoy an equal status of being official languages in Burundi.

However, although the language policy of Burundi promotes Kirundi language and gives an equal status to three languages, the implementation of this policy may be different. Burundi language policy expands the role of Kirundi language and efforts are undertaken to make of Kirundi a springboard for cultural and economic development through the creation of

Rundi Academy. But, in reality the role of Kirundi language did not really increase. Kirundi language is the language of instruction from first grade to fourth grade of public primary school. From fifth grade to university, Kirundi becomes a subject and the language of instruction becomes French. In the administration, the language that is used is French. In the language policy of Burundi, French and English enjoy an equal status of being official languages. However, the reality shows that only French is the medium of education and the language of administration. English is taught as a subject from primary school to university and it is not used in the administration. This shows that what is stated in the language policy of Burundi does not really match with what occurs in reality in terms of language practice. In this context, the question that arises is the following. Since the language policy of Burundi is a top-down affair, does this mismatch result from opposing beliefs about language between Burundi language planners and those who are supposed to implement the policy?

2.2 Language Ideologies and Language Policy

Language ideologies are 'systems of belief, performed in context, at the intersections of language and social power structures' (Becon, 2018, p.2). The study of language ideologies can be traced back to linguistic anthropology (Kroskrity, 2004; Wortham, 2008), beginning with Silverstein (1979) who defines language ideologies as 'beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use' (p.134). From this conceptualization, study on language ideologies foregrounds the social situated nature of language, viewing language as inseparable from the historic, economic and social cultural context of its use (Irvine, 1989; Martínez, 2013). This focus also draws attention to the way in which beliefs about language maintain, resist or conflict social institutional hierarchies (Blommaert, 2005; Bourdieu, 1991).

Therefore, through this focus, some research on language ideologies explores the ways in which individual beliefs about language agree or conflict with what is articulated in a top-down language policy. For example, the study by Maseko (2021) examines teachers' self-reported language ideologies and how these ideologies conflict with the top-down language-in-education policy in Zimbabwe. Drawing on Spolsky's (2004, 2009) innovation on language policy, the study found that teachers' ideology about African languages and colonially inherited English predispose them to use English as a default language of instruction, contrary to the provision for the use of African language in Zimbabwean language-in-education policy. These results agree with the results in the study by Phyak (2013). This study examines the ideologies and practices of local languages as the medium-of-instruction policy in a multilingual school in Nepal. The findings reveal that the language ideologies and practices at school resist the Nepal language policy which aims at promoting linguistic diversity.

Other research on language ideologies investigates the ideologies which inform language practices. For example, the study by Bacon and Kim (2018) investigates language ideologies among South Korean adolescents. Using a questionnaire, Bacon and Kim found that participants' language ideologies positioned them to use English in relation to economic status, perceived intelligence and employability in both global and local contexts. Another similar study by Shank-Lauwo (2020) investigates how language ideologies of parents in Tanzania inform their decision to enrol their children in Kiswahili-medium public school and in English-medium private school. Using interview, the results in the study revealed that parents in Tanzania prefer to enrol their children in Kiswahili- and English-medium school because Kiswahili is a national language and enables learners to become member of national community while English is gatekeeper to employment opportunities.

In summary, language ideologies are central to language policy and practices. Language ideologies may inform policy makers in their decision to select the medium of education and official languages. It is found that this top-down decision may conflict with bottom-up language practices. In addition, language ideologies inform language practices. It is important however to note that language ideologies are not fixed characteristics reflective of individual's core value (Becon, 2018). Language ideologies are changeable, that is, individuals draw on different ideological orientations at different times based on contextual and historical factors (Rosa & Burdick, 2017).

3. **Methodology**

3.1 Context of the Study

The study was conducted at the Institute of Applied Pedagogy (IPA) of the University of Burundi. The Institute of Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi prepares future teachers of basic and post-basic school. Therefore, the language ideologies of students at this institute may provide information about their future language practices in classroom. Further, students' belief about language may provide information about whether their future language practices agree or conflict with what is articulated in Burundi language policy.

3.2. Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-method research design. First, it followed a quantitative approach, whereby a questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect the data. The questionnaire consists of 12 Likert-scale questions. The Likert-scale questions were designed to measure the respondents' language ideologies. Regarding language ideologies, statements in the questionnaire were classified according to whether they express particular beliefs about the ideological functions of the language. These beliefs included language as a tool for communication with a local and a global audience, language as a cultural capital for competition in a global job market and language as a medium of education and as a national treasure. With respect to language as a tool for communication with a local and a global audience, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree with the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree.

- LIS1: Having competence in English and French is important because English and French are international languages.
- LIS2: English and French are important because I can use them to communicate ideas to people in Burundi.
- LIS3: French and English are important because having competence in these languages is associated with the prestige of being educated and intellectual.
- LIS4: Kirundi is important because it is our national language.
- LIS5: Kiswahili is important because it is a regional language.

With regard to language as a cultural capital for competition in a global job market, the respondents were also asked to indicate whether they agree with the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree.

- LIS1: French and English are important because having competence in these languages allows people to compete in international job markets.
- LIS2: English is more important than French because international job markets require competence in English.

With respect to language as medium of education and a national treasure, the respondents were also asked to indicate whether they agree with the following statements on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree.

- LIS1: French is more important than English because French is the medium of Instruction and official language in Burundi.
- LIS2: French and English should not be official languages in Burundi because they do not match with Burundi culture and identity.
- LIS3: Kirundi should become the medium of education in Burundi because Kirundi language is connected to our identity, history and culture.
- LIS4: Kirundi is important because it is associated with Burundi culture.
- LIS5: Kirundi and Kiswahili are important because they reflect African identity.

Second, it followed a qualitative approach, whereby a content analysis of Burundi language policy was conducted.

3.3 Participants

The participants (N = 97) were pre-service teachers of English at the Institute of Applied Pedagogy of the University of Burundi. They were selected for two reasons. First, they are future teachers of languages. Therefore, their responses to the questionnaire may provide information about their beliefs about language and their future classroom language practices. Second, they have similar educational background. They graduated from secondary school in languages. They are majoring in English education to become English teachers. In this regard, their responses to the questionnaire may be generalized.

3.4 Procedures

To collect the data, the researchers themselves administered the questionnaire to students. All students in class were requested to fill in the questionnaire. The total number of copies obtained after administration of questionnaire added up to 97.

To analyze the data, the researchers assigned scores to each Language Ideologies Statement (LIS): (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. These scores were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistics were computed using the statistical package for social sciences SPSS 22.

4. **Results**

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

4.1.1 Language as a Tool for Communication with a Local and a Global Audience

Table 1 presents results of the descriptive statistics of pre-service teachers' belief about language as a tool for communication with a local and a global audience. It can be seen that pre-service teachers scored particularly high on statements (LIS1 and LIS4). They scored moderately high on statements (LIS3 and LIS5) and they scored moderately low on statement (LIS2). The results show that pre-service teachers believe that learning English and French is important because French and English constitute a bridge which helps them reach an educated and global community. The results also show that teachers believe that Kirundi and Kiswahili are import because they are tools for communication with a local and a regional community.

Table 1.

Pre-service teachers' beliefs about language as a tool for communication with a local and a global audience.

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
LIS1	4.40	.82	1-5
LIS2	2.36	1.21	1-5
LIS3	3.69	1.17	1-5
LIS4	4.62	.68	1-5
LIS5	3.60	.96	1-5

4.1.2. Language as a Cultural Capital for Competition in a Global Job Market

Table 2 presents results of the descriptive statistics of pre-service teachers' beliefs about language as a cultural capital for competition in a global job market. It can be seen that pre-service teachers scored particularly high on statements (LIS1) and moderately high on statement (LIS2). These results show that pre-service teachers believe that learning English and French is similar to accumulating capital for global employment.

Table 2.

Pre-service teachers' beliefs about language as a cultural capital for competition in global job market

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
LIS1	4.55	.74	1-5
LIS2	3.80	1.10	1-5

4.1.3. Language as a Medium of Education and a National Treasure

Table 3 presents the results of pre-service teachers' beliefs about language as a medium of education and a national treasure. It can be seen that pre-service teachers scored particularly high on statement (LIS4) and moderately high on statements (LIS1 and LIS3). They scored moderately low on statements (LIS2 and LIS5). The results show that pre-service teachers believe that Kirundi language is a national language connected to Burundi culture, history and identity. Therefore, it should be the medium of education alongside French and English.

Table 3.

Pre-service teachers' beliefs about language as a medium of education and a national treasure

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Range
LIS1	3.86	1.16	1-5
LIS2	2.80	1.30	1-5
LIS3	3.84	1.24	1-5
LIS4	4.53	.79	1-5
LIS5	3.13	1,41	1-5

4.2. Content Analysis of Burundi Language Policy

The language policy of Burundi recognizes four languages- Kirundi, Kiswahili, French and English. In education, Kirundi is a medium of education from first grade to fourth grade of primary school. From fifth grade to University, Kirundi language is taught as a subject and the

medium of instruction becomes French. English and Kiswahili are taught as subjects from primary school to university. In official settings, Kirundi, French and English are recognized as official languages in Burundi. Kirundi is also recognized as a national language. The results show that in education four languages are taught. The reason that is given for the integration of four languages in education is to develop learners' linguistic competence to compete in national and international job market. The results also show that three languages are recognized as official languages. The reasons that are provided for the choice of three official languages are (1) to preserve and promote the national language- Kirundi, (2) to open Burundi to two global communities- a community which uses English as an official and native language and a community which use French as an official and native language.

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to examine the language ideologies held by pre-service teachers with regard to language use in education and in official settings in Burundi. This study also analyzed a mismatch between pre-service teachers' language ideologies and what is articulated in the language policy of Burundi. The results obtained for the first objective indicated that pre-service teachers' language ideologies are connected to the perceived importance of a particular language. It was found that pre-service teachers believe that learning English and French is similar to building a bridge and accumulating capital to reach an elite, educated and global community and to have access to a global employment. The global community that pre-service teachers implicitly refer to is (1) the community which uses French as an official and native language and (2) the community which uses English as an official and native language. In addition, it was found that pre-service teachers believe that Kirundi language is connected to Burundi culture, history and identity and therefore it should be the medium of education and official language alongside French and English. These results concur with the results in the study by Bacon and Kim (2018). Although the study by Bacon and Kim (2018) was conducted in a context which is different from Burundi context, the findings showed that participants were motivated to learn English because they could leverage English to communicate with a global audience and to secure future employment. These results suggest that foreign languages; those inherited from colonization, French in Burundi and those introduced for strategic reasons, English in Burundi and South Korea; are considered in many countries as a bridge which connect local people with a global community.

The results obtained to meet the second objective indicated that pre-service teachers' beliefs about language match with what is articulated in the language policy of Burundi. In the language policy of Burundi, Kirundi is a national language and official languages are Kirundi, French and English. This matches with pre-service teachers' beliefs that Kirundi language is connected to Burundi culture, history and identity and therefore it should be an official and a medium of education alongside French and English. These results run counter to the results in the study by Maseko (2021). It was found in the study by Maseko that teachers' language ideologies and practices resist the top-down language policy in Zimbabwe. The differences in results may be due to the fact that the study by Maseko analyzed teachers' language ideologies from their language practices. Nevertheless, the results in the study by Maseko and in the present study suggest that what is articulated in a top-down language policy may agree or conflict with bottom-up language ideologies and practices.

6. Conclusion

This study was conducted to analyze pre-service teachers' ideologies with regard to language use in education and official settings in Burundi. It was predicated on the view that pre-service teachers' beliefs about language may agree or conflict with the official language policy of Burundi. The results of the study revealed that pre-service teachers believe in what

Mazunya (2016) calls functional multilingualism. They believe that learning or having competence in English and French, which are imported languages, is similar to building a bridge to reach an elite, educated and global community. They also believe that Kirundi language, a national language of Burundi, should be a medium of education alongside English and French. These beliefs are in line with what is articulated in the official language policy of Burundi. The language policy of Burundi four languages in education and three official languages. It is articulated that this multilingual language policy is adopted to promote Kirundi language and to open Burundi to global communities- a community which uses French as a native and official language and a community which uses English as a native and official language. However, although pre-service teachers' perceived importance of language use in education and official settings in Burundi match with what is articulate in the top-down language policy, the reality of language practices shows otherwise. French tends to dominate in the administration and official settings. The medium of instruction is mostly French – the language inherited from colonization. In this regards, other studies are needed to investigate the correlation between pre-service teachers, teachers and government employees' language ideologies and their language practices. In addition, other studies are needed to investigate the conflict between bottom-up language practices and top-down language policy. The results from these studies may provide information about whether there is a problem in the implementation of the language policy of Burundi. The results from these studies may also provide information about whether the resistance in the implementation of language policy is due to one reason. The voices of individuals who are meant to implement the policy were inaudible in the process of crafting the policy. Therefore, those individuals may interpret the process of crafting the policy, as Maseko (2021) points out, as undemocratic and as a process which perpetuates a view of those individuals as obedient servants of the system.

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EFFECTS OF AGE ON EMPHASIS PRODUCTION IN JORDANIAN ARABIC: A SOCIO-PHONETIC STUDY

Ibrahim Eshlash Odeh Almomany[1]

Department of General Linguistics. University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary
ibrahimshlash@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper investigates the effect(s) age has on two emphatic sounds, (vis. [sˤ] and [tˤ]) in a sub-dialect of Jordanian Arabic, namely Ajlouni-Jordanian Arabic. This study was for the most part motivated by the neglect of age in studies investigating the socio-phonetics of emphasis in Jordanian Arabic in general and in Ajlouni Jordanian Arabic specifically. The effect of this extra linguistic variable was examined in mono- and bi-syllabic words with the target sounds occurring at both edges of the word. Six vowel qualities were incorporated in the stimuli of this study: the long low-back vowel /a:/, the short low-back vowel /a/, the long high-front vowel /i:/, the short mid-high front vowel /ɪ/, the long high-back vowel /u:/ and the short mid-high back vowel /ʊ/. The data were collected from twelve native speakers of the dialect, with each respondent yielding 96 tokens. As for the acoustic means that were conducted on the gathered data, the following were used: consonant duration (CD), Voice Onset Time (VOT), F1, F2 and F3. The findings show that while age did not show any statistically significant bearings on CD, on the one hand, and on F1, F2, and F3 in both the target and non-target syllables, on the other hand, it has proved to have a significant effect on VOT.

1. Introduction

A feature of all Semitic languages, emphasis is a linguistic phenomenon that is still prevalent in almost all Arabic dialects, including Iraqi Arabic (Salman, 2020), Jordanian Arabic (Almomany, 2018; Omari and Jaber, 2019), Libyan Arabic (Algryani, 2014), and Syrian Arabic (Almbark, 2008), to mention but a few. Emphasis has, generally speaking, been defined as the co-articulation of a primary feature and a secondary feature, with the former being articulate in the alveolar/dental region and the latter being articulated in the posterior region (Davis, 1995; Lehn, 1963; Younes, 1993). However, depending on where the locus of the retraction is assumed to be occurring, emphasis is frequently referred to in the literature as dorsalization, velarization, pharyngealization, and/or backing (Davis, 1995; Herzallah, 1990; Hetzron; 1998; Jakobson, 1957; Kahn, 1975; Lehn, 1963; Watson, 1999, Zawaydeh, 1998, inter alia). Languages distinguishing non-emphatic sounds from emphatic sounds (whether phonemic or allophonic) usually use more common terms such as light vs. dark, clear vs. dark, plain vs.

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[1] **Corresponding author**: Ibrahim Eshlash Odeh Almomany.
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9141-4896

dark, soft vs. hard, etc. For consistency and familiarity reasons in the linguistics circles, the term emphasis will be used throughout this study.

By projecting emphatic sounds against their contrasting counterparts, some researchers posit the claim that there are two main types of emphatics: primary emphatics (i.e. [tˤ], [sˤ], [dˤ], and [ðˤ]) and secondary emphatics (i.e. [lˤ]) (for more details, see Jaber, Omari and Al-Jarrah, 2019). However, most researchers are still in disagreement as regards the essence of these two sets of speech sounds except that, unlike secondary emphatics, primary emphatics have plain contrasting counterparts. Consider the following pairs of the primary set and their non-emphatic counterparts:

[tˤi:n] 'mud' vs. [ti:n] 'figs'

[sˤɪn] 'Listen!' vs. [sɪn] 'tooth'

[dˤab] 'a type of lizard' vs. [dab] 'threw'

[ðˤam] 'hugged' vs. [ðam] 'badmouthed'

As for the secondary emphatic sounds, no such phonemic contrast exists at all. Consider the following:

[ba:lˤah] (auction) vs. *[ba:lah] (auction)

However, this claim has been challenged by Al Huneety (2015: 55, 70) for three sounds, namely /l/, /r/ and /j/ as shown in the following minimal pairs:

Waḷḷa 'by God' vs. walla 'to appoint him'

ṃayy 'water' vs. mayy [proper name]

barṛa 'outside' vs. barra 'to exonerate'

Notorious for the abundance of emphatic consonants in its phonemic inventory, Arabic is basically the language that is investigated the most as far as emphasis is concerned. As the phonetic realization of emphatic consonants differ from dialect to dialect, the phenomenon of emphasis in Arabic has been investigated thoroughly from phonetic and phonological perspectives (for a review, see Jaber, Omari and Al-Jarrah, 2019), but it has not yet been given its due share of research in terms of the impact of the individual, societal and cultural variables on its production. Particularly, there have been only very few studies addressing the effect(s) of the social variables such as gender (Abudalbuh, 2010; Almomany, 2018), age (Almomany, 2018), social class (Omari and Jaber, 2019), and education on the production of Arabic emphatic sounds. To this end, the present study addresses the possible effect(s) that age as a social variable may have on the production of two emphatic sounds, (namely [tˤ] and [sˤ]) in some social context (namely Ajlouni Jordanian Arabic (henceforth AJA). The dialect under present scrutiny is a rural sub-dialect of Rural Jordanian Arabic that is spoken by the indigenous people of Ajloun City, a city to the north of the capital city (i.e. Amman) of Jordan, and its countrysides like *Ibillin*, *Ibbin*, *Ras Munif*, *Baun*, *Urjan*, *Sakhra*, to mention but a few.

1. Literature Review

Given the sizable body of research that has been done so far on the phenomenon of emphasis in many Arabic dialects (see Section 1. above), it has become evident that emphatic sounds affect the relative values of the first three formant frequencies of the vowels neighboring them. That is, emphaticized vowels are characterized by higher F1 and F3 values and a lower F2 value (Al-Omari, 2021; Salman, 2020; Almomany; 2018; Abudalbuh, 2010; Rababa, 2017; Al-Deaibes, 2016; Jongman, Herd, Al-Masri, Sereno, and Combest, 2011; Jongman, Herd, and Al-Masri, 2007). As for the probable effects other social variables such as

gender, social class, and education may have on the production of emphasis in Arabic dialects, there has been a small body of research accrediting such effects.

Almomany (2023) investigated the bearings of gender on the two emphatic sounds [sˤ] and [tˤ], along with their plain counterparts, in Ajlouni Jordanian Arabic. The researcher confined his study to mono- and bi-syllabic words, with the target (i.e. emphatic) consonants occurring at both edges of the word. Briefly, Almomany (2023) found that consonant duration, F1, F2, and F3 turned out to be unreliable acoustic cues of emphasis in this dialect. However, VOT proved to be a reliable acoustic correlate of emphasis, where males' emphatic VOTs were significantly longer than those of females were (for details, see Almomany, 2023: pp. 67-68).

Almomany (2018), for example, studied the probable effects of age and gender on emphasis in Jordanian Arabic. The researcher made the claim that the effect(s) of the emphatic sounds on the adjacent vowels could be ruled out when other extra linguistic influences (e.g. age) interject. Concisely, Almomany (2018) claimed that neither formant frequencies (F1, F2, and F3) nor consonant duration (henceforth CD) could be reliable cues when other variables are considered simultaneously. Only Voice Onset Time (VOT) was found to be a reliable acoustic correlate of emphasis when interacting with age.

Al-Omari (2021) investigated the effects of gender among the speakers of the four sub-dialects of Jordanian Arabic, namely Rural Jordanian Arabic (RJA), Urban Jordanian Arabic (UJA), Bedouin Jordanian Arabic (BJA), and Ghorani Jordanian Arabic (GJA). His major finding was that emphasis was more evident in males' speech than in females' only in RJA, UJA, and GJA. At greater levels of details, he found that female speakers of BJA and UJA produced shortened VOT's in emphatic environment, but female speakers of RJA and GJA produced lengthened VOT's in emphatic environment (see Al-Omari, 2021: p. 57).

Omari and Jaber (2020) examined the relative bearings of gender and social class on the production of emphasis in UJA. The researchers investigated the plausible effects of these two extra-linguistic variables only by means of the vowel first three formant frequencies in mono-syllabic words at both the onset and midpoint. The researchers employed the overall analysis technique that Almomany (2018) had already suggested to verify the so-called 'most reliable acoustic correlates of emphasis'. In this regard, Omari and Jaber (2020) found that gender (1) had no effect on emphasis at the onset position when interacting with manner (i.e. stop vs. fricative) and emphasis, (2) it had a significant effect on emphasis as males produced higher values of F1 following fricatives than F1 following stops (and vice versa) when interacting with emphasis, manner, and social class (see Omari and Jaber, 2020, p. 10), (3) it had no effect on emphasis at the vowel midpoint irrespective of the variables involved, (4) had an insignificant effect on emphasis by means of F2 value at both the vowel onset and midpoint, a finding first reached by Almomany (2018), and (5) had no salient effect on emphasis by means of F3 neither at the onset nor at the midpoint. As for the effect of the other social variables, Omari and Jaber (2020) reported some significant findings about the interplay of emphasis with manner, gender, and social class. Precisely, they reported a pronounced effect of social class on the production of emphasis in that lower-middle class male speakers produced more emphaticness by means of F1 raised value at the onset of the emphasized vowel (for details, see Omari and Jaber, 2020, p. 10). In addition, they found that there was a significant effect of social class on emphasis evinced by the raised value of F1 in an emphatic environment at the vowel midpoint. Likewise, emphasized vowels showed more lowered F2 value in an emphatic environment only at the midpoint position. As for F3, no significant effect of social class on emphasis production neither at the onset nor at the midpoint of the emphasized vowel was found (Omari and Jaber, 2020).

Omari and Jaber (2019) had already examined the effects of gender and social class on emphasis production in JA. The researchers used more acoustic parameters including VOT, post-release duration, frication duration, vowel duration, and the vowel first three formant frequencies (F1, F2, F3) at both the onset and midpoint of the vowel. Omari and Jaber concluded that: (1) emphasis was more pronounced in males' speech than in females' by virtue of the raised F1 value and the lowered F2 value and (2) lower-middle class speakers showed more emphaticness in their speech (for details. see Omari and Jaber, 2019, pp. 181-189).

Alzoubi (2017) studied the effects of extra-linguistic variables (viz. gender, social class, and origin of the speaker) on the production of the two emphatic sounds [sˤ] and [tˤ], along with their plain counterparts [s] and [t], in the dialect(s) spoken in the capital of Jordan, Amman City. The researcher posited that emphasis was more salient in males' speech than in females' by virtue of raised F1 and F3 values, lowered F2 values, and lengthened VOT. By means of Center of Gravity (COG), the researcher found that speakers in East Amman showed more emphaticness in their speech than those in West Amman. As for the effect of the Original Regional Dialect (ORD) of the speaker, the study yielded that only F2, F3, VOT, and Stop COG were reliable acoustic indicators of emphasis. Particularly, Urban Palestinian speakers were found to carry the least magnitude of change in the direction of emphasis as compared to the other two groups, namely Rural Palestinians and Rural Jordanians (for details, see Alzoubi, 2017, p. 100).

Abudalbuh (2011) examined the effect(s) of age on emphasis production in JA. The researcher reported that gender had, by no means, any significant effect on VOT, vowel duration (VD), and friction duration (FD). The researcher, however, contended that the effect of gender was only manifest by means of F1 raised value and F2 lowered value at both the vowel onset and midpoint (for details, see Abudalbuh, 2011, pp. 31-35).

Al-Masri (2009) studied the acoustic and perceptual effects of emphasis in UJA. The researcher claimed that emphasis was only evinced by means of F1 and F3 raised values and F2 lowered value. The researcher showed that manner proved to affect the relative degree of emphaticness (i.e. only emphatic stops had a significantly lower spectral mean than their plain counterparts). For verification purposes, Al-Masri (2009) conducted a perception study to find out how native speakers of UJA perceive the emphatic sounds vis-à-vis their plain counterparts. The researcher found that it was not the target consonant which contributed to the perception of emphasis but the rest of the word.

Almbark (2008) investigated the effect(s) of gender and region on emphasis production in Syrian Arabic. The researcher conducted two tests: a perceptual test and an acoustic test. In the former test, Almbark (2008) found that there was no significant effect of gender and region on the perception of emphatic (vis-à-vis plain) sounds. The perception study only showed that the type of the consonant had some significant effect on the correct perception of [d, dˤ] and [s, sˤ]. That is, the plain coronals of both sets were more likely to be perceived as semi-emphatics or full emphatics. As for the acoustic measurements, Almbark (2008) found that emphasis was more evident in females' speech than in males' by virtue of VOT and F2 only at the onset of the vowel (for details, see Almbark, 2008, pp. 40-43).

Targeting the effect of gender on emphasis production, Al-Masri and Jongman (2004) investigated the acoustic cues for emphasis in "the northern dialect" of Jordanian Arabic. The researchers found that neither CD nor VD proved to be reliable acoustic correlates of emphasis in that dialect. Only F2 was found to be a reliable acoustic cue for emphasis in that it maintained, irrespective of the locus of the target sound, a lowered value in emphatic neighboring as compared to plain neighboring. As for the effect of gender, it was found that

emphasis was, by means of F2 lowered value, attested more in females' speech than in males' (Al-Masri & Jongman, 2004).

Given the body of research available to date, it can be deduced that emphasis is still under-researched from a sociolinguistic perspective. Apart from Abudalbuh's (2011) study, the researcher finds that the bulk of the past research has focused on the effect(s) of other independent variables including dialect, gender, ORD, and social class on emphasis production. This study therefore aims to consider the effects of age on emphasis in a relatively more narrowed regional dialect (i.e. Ajlouni-Jordanian Arabic).

1.1. Research Questions

The present study is an attempt to find some answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the possible effects that age, as an extra-linguistic variable, may have on the production of emphasis in AJA?

2. Is the effect of age on emphasis production in AJA cross-syllabic?

1.2. Hypotheses

Based on some personal observations as a native speaker of the dialect, the researcher posits the claim that age could have some salient effects on emphasis production in the sub-dialect under present scrutiny. The researcher casts doubt on the past researchers' consistent claim that the most reliable acoustic correlate(s) of emphasis is the lowering of F2 value. Hence, emphasis production varies across age groups in AJA.

1.3. Rationale of the Study

Research addressing a specific topic such as this might yield conflicting findings due to logistic flaws related to either the design of the research, the execution of the experiments or the analysis of the findings. Upon reviewing the literature about emphasis production in different Arabic contexts (see Section 1. above), the researcher of the current study dares to claim that cross-comparisons are not always safe to make for at least two main reasons.

First, inconsistencies in research findings could be due to the lack of a unified methodology. For instance, the findings of several studies have been based on very limited number of stimulus materials while simultaneously incorporating a large sample of respondents (Al-Omari, 2021; Omari and Jaber, 2020; Omari and Jaber, 2019; Abudabuh, 2011), the findings of other studies were based on a limited number of respondents while incorporating a large number of stimulus material (Almomany, 2018; Jongman *et al.*, 2011; Al-Masri, 2009).

Second, whereas the bulk of research on emphasis has investigated the phenomenon void of the social context in which it is produced (thus relegating the extra linguistic variables to only a marginal role), very few studies have addressed how the phenomenon is socially constrained. The findings of these studies cannot be pulled together for cross comparisons. For example, although pioneering studies on emphasis production in Arabic dialectology (Card, 1983; Wahba, 1993; Watson, 2002; Al-Masri & Jongman, 2004; Khattab, Al-Tamimi, and Heselwood, 2006, among others) have confirmed that emphasis entails, for the most part, F2 lowering in emphatic contexts, other studies (Lehn, 1963; Khan, 1975; Almomany, 2018) have challenged this claim. A quick look at the literature available to date on the phonetic correlates of emphasis would immediately show that very little has been done about the socio-phonetic aspects of emphasis production, not only in Arabic but also in other languages such as Hebrew.

Being aware of such in-research gaps and inconsistencies, the researcher plans in this research paper to specifically address the influence of one social variable, namely age, on the production of two empathic sounds ([sˤ] and [tˤ])) in some specific linguistic environments as produced in one specific social context – the issues the researcher tries to shed more light on the methodology section below.

1.4. Article Structure

Section (3) projects the methodology of the present study, shedding more light on the research sample, instruments, and data collection and analysis. In section (4), the main findings are displayed. In section (5), the researcher tries to interpret these findings in light of the findings of the literature available to date on the phenomenon under current investigation. In section (6), some conclusions and recommendations are made in light of the present study findings.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

The respondents of the present study consisted of 12 native speakers of AJA (i.e. 6 males and 6 females) who were put into three age groups: Young (18-35), Middle-aged (36-50), and Old (above 51). The respondents were chosen based on two main criteria. First, they were only native speakers of AJA (i.e. they do not speak other languages as their parents had been living there since childhood). Second, they did not suffer from any speech impairments.

2.2. Instrument(s)

The stimuli of the present study consisted of 48 minimal pairs with the two primary emphatics [tˤ] and [sˤ], along with their plain counter parts [t] and [s], occurring at both edges of both monosyllablic and bisyllablic words. The minimal pairs were each incubated in the carrier sentence 'ʔɪħki (target word) (ɪ)lwalad' 'Say (target word) the boy'. To distract the respondent's attention from the target word, the carrier sentences were randomized. It is worthy of mention here that as there were many accidental gaps, it was inevitable to use some non-word tokens in the stimuli. As for the conditioning neighbouring linguistic environment, six main vowels were used: [a:], [a], [i:], [ɪ], [u:], and [ʊ]. As for the compatibility of the data, the stimuli of the present study were peer-reviewed by some language experts in the fields of phonetics, phonology, and syntax. In the end, 1152 word-tokens were obtained for analysis. The full list of the stimuli can be found in Appendix I.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Upon seating the respondents in a comfortable sound-proof place, they were cordially asked to read the list of minimal pairs in the given carrier sentence. The recordings were performed using Remax RP1, a digital voice recorder with a noise reduction quality. The recordings were then imported to a Lenovo Corei5- 1135G7 laptop and then to Praat, the speech analysis program the researcher used to get the real figures of the acoustic measurements.

Five acoustic measurements were carried out to investigate the plausible effect(s) of age on emphasis production. These were: CD, VOT, F1, F2, and F3. As for the first three formant frequencies, they were investigated only at the vowel midpoint both in the target syllable and in the non-target syllable. Due to the large number of tokens (i.e. $1152 > 30$) and in accordance with the Central Limit Theorem, which posits that large samples have variance close to their populations (i.e. normally distributed), the researcher resorted to use the parametric analysis (i.e. Two-Way Analysis of Variance) to measure the interaction effects of age and emphasis on the acoustic means. In the next section, the researcher reports the findings on those measurements.

3. Results

3.1. Consonant Duration and Voice Onset Time

Based on the conducted Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the following findings were obtained for CD and VOT.

- The interaction of emphasis and age has shown no significant effect of age on emphasis by means of CD as the test value was ((F= 0.273, P= 0.761), where P= 0.761 exceeds the significance level (i.e. 0.05), as shown in Figure (1) below.

Figure 1: Emphasis and Age Interaction on CD

- The interaction of emphasis and age on VOT has, nonetheless, turned to be significant (F= 4.729, P= 0.010) only for the non-emphatic VOT, where the VOT of the *middle-aged* group was longer (Mean= 22.854) than those of the *Old* group (Mean= 19.250) or the *Young* group (Mean= 14.729). Figure (2) and Chart (1) below show this interaction.
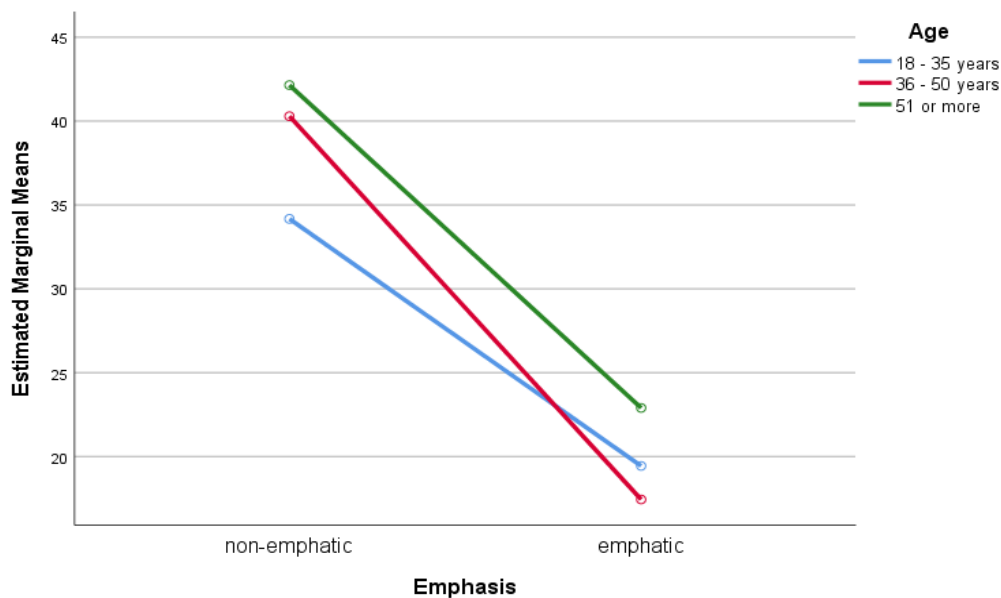
Figure 2: Emphasis and Age Interaction on VOT

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- The interaction of emphasis and age has shown no significant effect of age on emphasis by means of F1 in the target syllable as the test value was (F= 0.540, P= 0.583), where P= 0.583 exceeds the significance level (i.e. 0.05), as shown in Figure (3) below.

Figure 3: Emphasis and Age Interaction on F1 in the Target Syllable

- The interaction of emphasis and age has shown no significant effect of age on emphasis by means of F2 in the target syllable as the test value was (F= 0.255, P= 0.775), where P= 0.775 exceeds the significance level (i.e. 0.05), as shown in Figure (4) below.

Figure 4: Emphasis and Age Interaction on F2 in the Target Syllable

- The interaction of emphasis and age has shown no significant effect of age on emphasis by means of F3 in the target syllable as the test value was (F= 0.029, P= 0.971), where P= 0.971 exceeds the significance level (i.e. 0.05), as shown in Figure (5) below.

Figure 5: Emphasis and Age Interaction on F3 in the Target Syllable

3.2.2. *F1, F2, and F3 in the Non-target Syllable*

The Two-Way ANOVA was therefore conducted to pinpoint the possible effects age may have on emphasis by means of the first three formant frequencies in the non-target syllable. The following findings were obtained.

- The interaction of emphasis and age has shown no significant effect of age on emphasis by means F1 in the non-target syllable as the test value was (F= 0.191, P= 0.826), where P= 0.826 exceeds the significance level (i.e. 0.05), as shown in Figure (6) below.
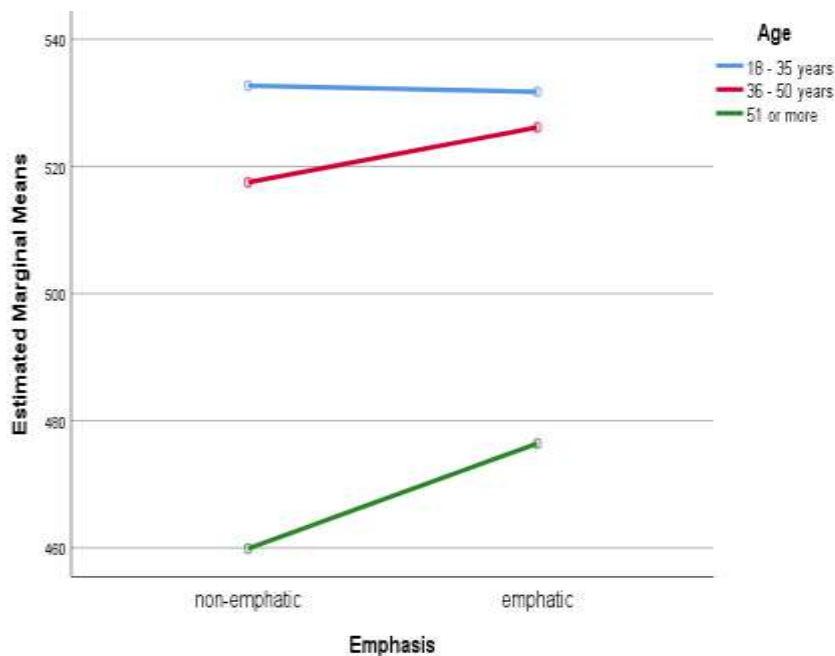
Figure 6: Emphasis and Age Interaction on F1 in the Non-target Syllable

- The interaction of emphasis and age has shown no significant effect of age on emphasis by means of F2 in the non-target syllable as the test value was ($F = 0.082$, $P= 0.922$), where $P= 0.922$ exceeds the significance level (i.e. 0.05), as shown in Figure (7) below.
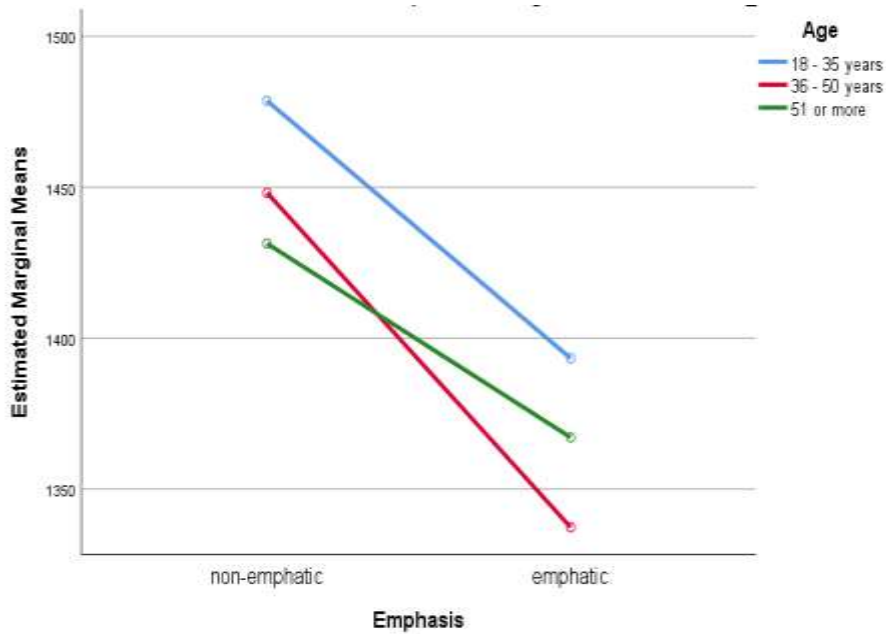
Figure 7: Emphasis and Age Interaction on F2 in the Non-target Syllable

- The interaction of emphasis and age has shown no significant effect of age on emphasis by means of F3 in the non-target syllable as the test value was ($F= 0.084$, $P=0.920$), where $P= 0.920$ exceeds the significance level (i.e. 0.05), as shown in Figure (8) below.
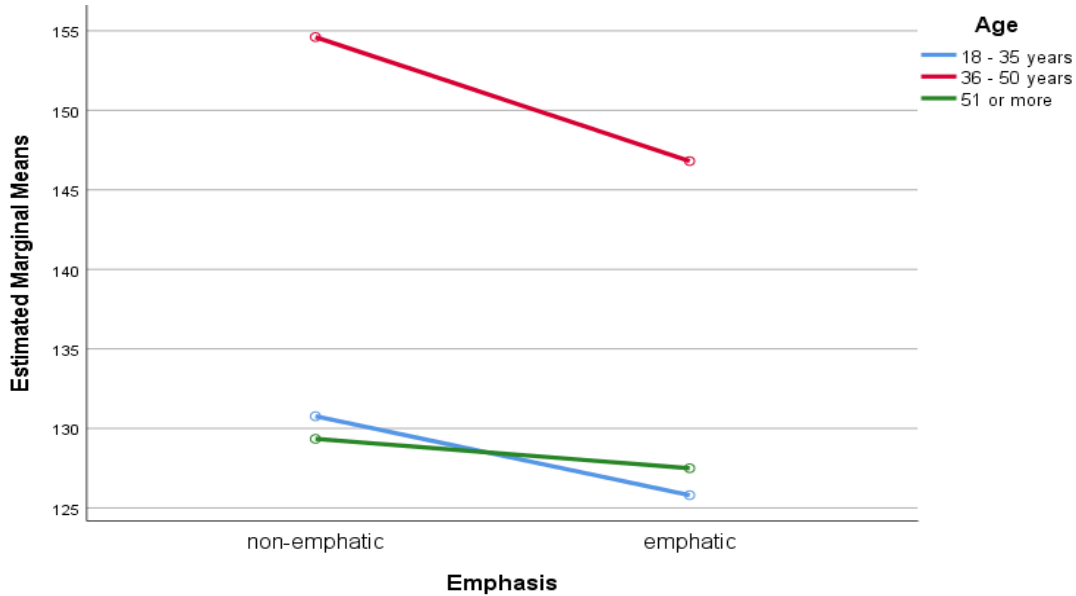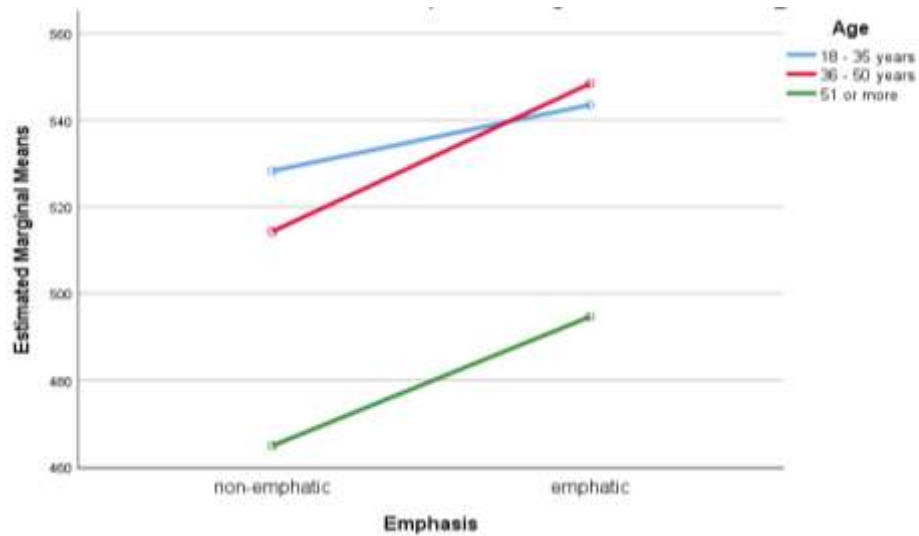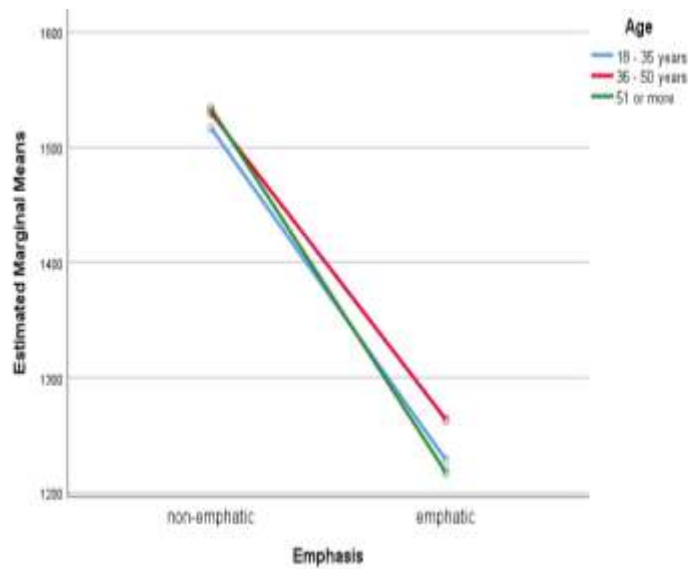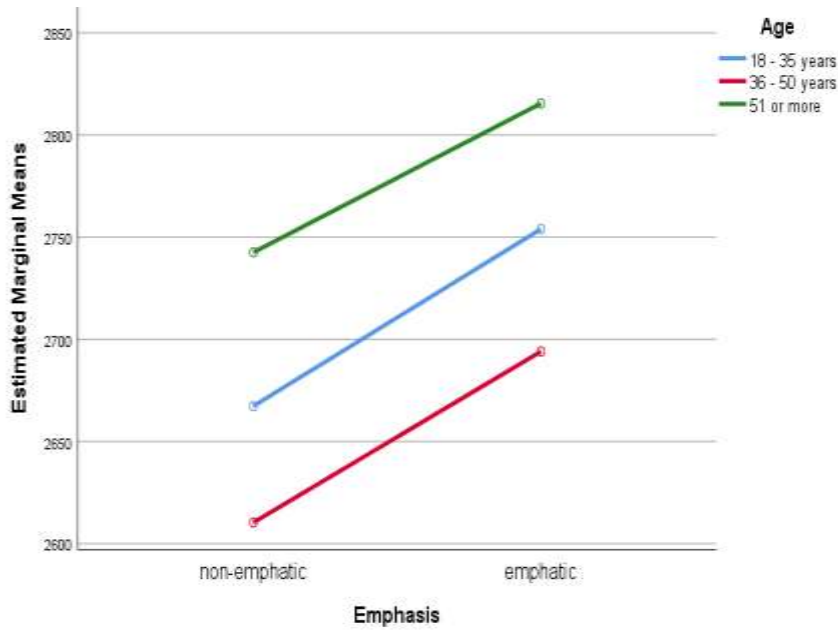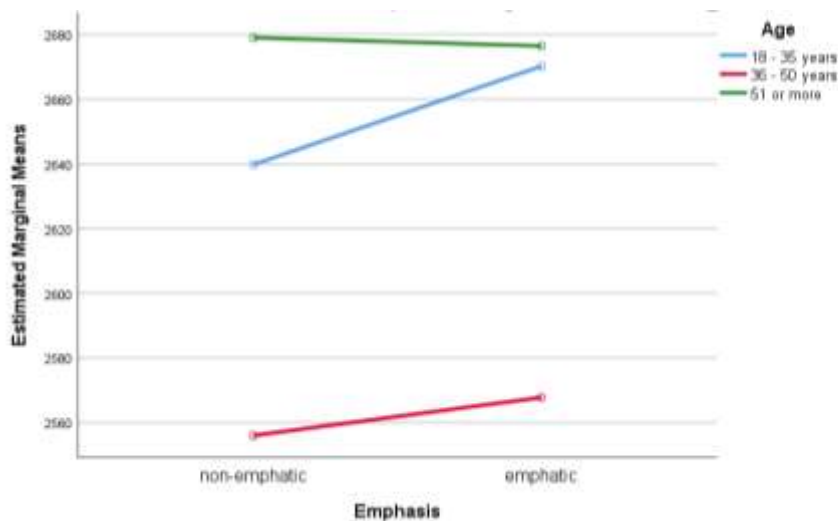

Figure 8: Emphasis and Age Interaction on F3 in the Non-target Syllable

4. Discussion

The present study has been by and large an investigation into the effects of age on the production of two emphatic sounds in AJA, a sub-dialect of Jordanian Arabic. Given the figures above, the researcher dares to claim that although these findings confirmed few previous research findings, they mostly run counter to many that have been confirmed by seminal works on emphasis production.

In this respect, the researcher can answer the two main questions of the present study. Relative to the first question (i.e. what are the possible effects that age, as an extra-linguistic variable, may have on the production of emphasis in AJA?), there were no effects of age on the investigated acoustic cues in the direction of emphasis. Following this and relative to the second question (i.e. Is the effect of age on emphasis production in AJA cross-syllabic?), there was no effect of age either on the target syllable or on the adjacent syllable.

Following this, the hypotheses in Section 2.2. were partially refuted. The first main hypothesis was refuted in that speakers in the three age groups did not show any statistically significant differences when producing emphasis. However, the second main hypothesis was confirmed, as F2 lowered value proved to be an insignificant acoustic correlate of emphasis across the three age groups, hence emphasis production did not show any variation across the three age groups. Lending support to some previous research findings (e.g. Almomany, 2018; Al-Omari, 2021; Rababa, 2017; Al-Masri & Jongman, 2004), this study has shown that CD is an insignificant acoustic correlate of emphasis. The only factorization of the influence of this correlate was reported by Al-Masri (2009) who suggested that CD turned out to be insignificant word-initially, but significant when the target consonant (i.e. emphatic vs. plain) occurs word-finally (for details, see Al-Masri, 2009, p. 31).

Another finding confirming those of previous research (e.g. Almomany, 2023; Al-Omari, 2021; Almomany, 2018; Al Malwi, 2017; Rababa, 2017; Khattab *et al.*, 2006) is that VOT has turned out to be a reliable acoustic correlate of emphasis. To clarify, the voiceless stop [t] has, acoustically speaking, turned to be produced with relatively longer VOT than its emphatic counterpart [tˤ]. Spectrograms (1) and (2) below display the difference.
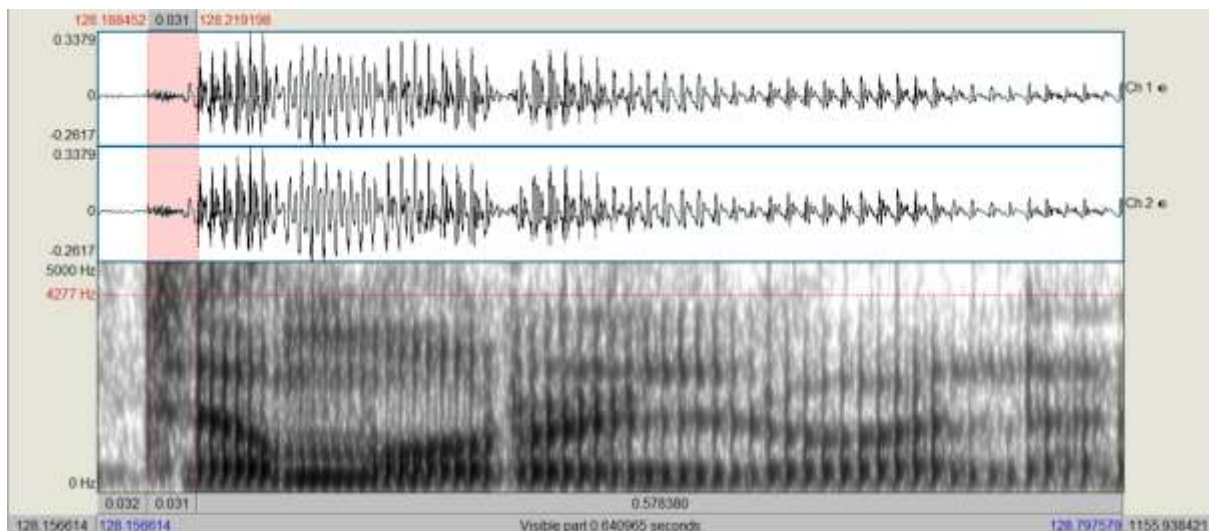
Spectrogram 1: VOT for plain [t] being almost 31 ms
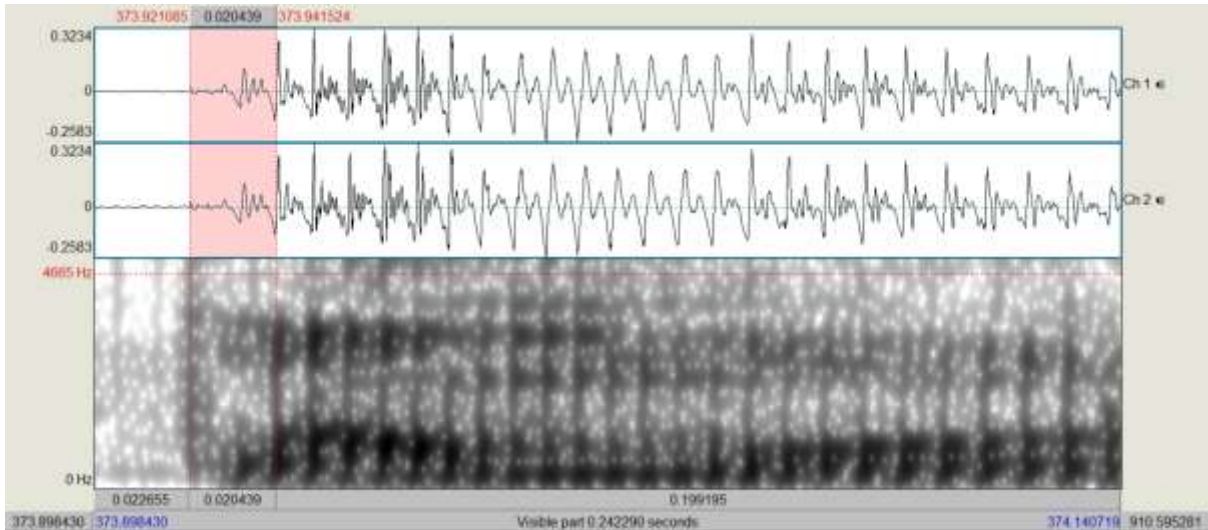
Spectrogram 2: VOT for emphatic [tˤ] being 20 ms

Despite this acoustically significant difference, the Two-Way ANOVA has shown that the effect was in the direction of non-emphasis. That is, the *Middle-aged* group have produced longer plain VOTs than the *Old* group and *Young* group, respectively. Chart (1) below displays the difference.
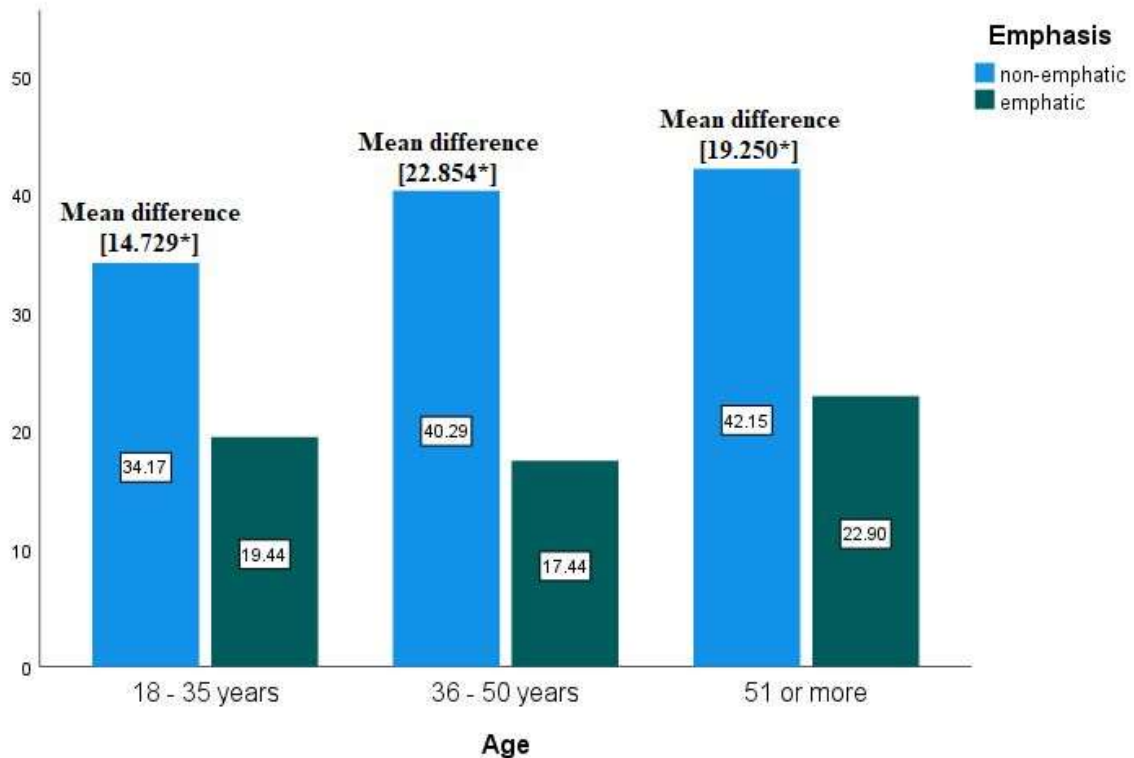
Chart 1: Mean Differences for Emphasis*Age Interaction

What this means is that the present study has shown that the effect of age is only manifested by the lengthened value of the consonantal cue, namely Voice Onset Time (VOT). While most of the previous studies have confirmed the reliability of VOT as an acoustic cue

for emphasis, only Omari and Jaber (2019) have challenged the consensus, arguing that VOT is not a reliable acoustic correlate of emphasis in UJA when intersecting with other social variables such as gender and/or social class (for details, see Omari and Jaber, 2019, p. 181).

Moving on to the vocalic cues, the researcher has found that there is no significant effect(s) of age on emphasis in AJA by means of the first three formant frequencies, neither in the target syllable nor in the non-target syllable. This finding runs counter to most of what has been reported in the previous literature which has confirmed that vowels in emphatic environment show more raised F1 and F3 values, and a more lowered F2 value (Alzoubi, 2017; Rababa, 2017; Al-Deaibes, 2016; Al-Masri and Jongman, 2014; Jongman *et al.*, 2011; Abudalbuh, 2011; Al-Masri, 2009, among others). Only minimal support for this finding is reported by Omari and Jaber (2019) who have found that F2 was significant only at the onset of the vowel (but not at the midpoint) when emphasis is constrained by social class. Omari and Jaber (2019) have also pinpointed that there is no potential significant effect of the interplay between emphasis and gender or social class in terms of F3 at both the onset and midpoint.

Another piece of evidence that would lend furtherance to the findings on the vocalic cues comes from Al-Omari's and Jaber's (2020) research in which they maintain that: (1) there is no significant effect of the interaction of emphasis, manner, and gender/ social class on F1 neither at the onset nor at the midpoint of the vowel. They have also claimed that the overall interaction of emphasis, manner, gender, and social class yielded no significant effect on F1 only at the midpoint of the vowel. In addition, the researchers (*ibid.*) have found that neither F2 nor F3 at either position (i.e. onset and midpoint) of the vowel was significantly affected by the interactions of (emphasis*manner*gender/social class) and (emphasis*manner*gender*social class).

5. Conclusion

This study has, given the abundance of the previous literature, not yielded findings which are far from being true. Hence, there have been clear-cut conflicting results since the emergence of the relatively new scope of research on the plausible effects of social variables on emphasis production in Arabic.

This study was an attempt to study the plausible effect(s) some social variables, such as age, may have on emphasis production in a variety of JA. This study fosters the importance to carry further future research, incorporating more extra-linguistic variables such as education, gender, inter-marriage, and social class with more precision on regional basis.

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Appendix I

Stimulus material for monosyllables (*Please note that the asterisk after each word indicates that it is a non-word).

Consonant	Vowel	Mono-syllabic Words							
		Word-Initial				Word-Final			
		Plain	Gloss	Emphatic	Gloss	Plain	Gloss	Emphatic	Gloss
s/sˤ	a:	sa:b	Dissipated	sˤa:b	Touched	ba:s	Kissed	ba:sˤ	Bus
	a	sab	Badmouthed	sˤab	Poured	bas	Enough	basˤ*	__
	i:	si:b	Leave!	sˤi:b	Touch!	ni:s*	__	ni:sˤ	Porcupine
	ɪ	sɪn	A tooth	sˤɪn	Shut up!	bɪs	A cat	bɪsˤ*	
	u:	su:g	Drive!/Market	sˤu:g*	__	bu:s	Kiss!	bu:sˤ*	__
	ʊ	sʊm	Poison!	sˤʊm	Tie tightly!	nʊs*	__	nʊsˤ	Half
t/tˤ	a:	ta:b	Repented	tˤa:b	Recovered	ba:t	Stayed overnight	ba:tˤ*	__
	a	tam	Done!	tˤam	Covered	mat	Did (something) lazily	matˤ	Stretched
	i:	ti:n	Figs	tˤi:n	Mud	bi:t*	__	bi:tˤ*	__
	ɪ	tɪf	Spit!	tˤɪf*	__	zɪt	Throw!	zɪtˤ*	__
	u:	tu:b	Repent!	tˤu:b	Bricks	fu:t	Enter!	fu:tˤ	__
	ʊ	tʊn*	__	tˤʊn*	Tuna fish	bʊt	Decide!	bʊtˤ	Stab!

Stimulus material for bi-syllabic words (*Please note that the asterisk after each word indicates that it is a non-word).

Consonant	Vowel	Word-Initial				Word-Final			
		Plain	Gloss	Emphatic	Gloss	Plain	Gloss	Emphatic	Gloss
s/sˤ	a:	sabba:r*	__	sˤabba:r	Cactus	ha:dʒɪs	Obsession	ha:dʒɪsˤ*	__
	a	samar	Female name	sˤamar*	__	?abus	Shall I kiss!	?abusˤ*	__
	i:	safi:*	__	sˤafi:	Pure	mi:das	A furniture shop name	mi:dasˤ*	__
	ɪ	samɪr	Male name	sˤamɪr*	__	bɪmʊs*	Related to	bɪmʊsˤ	Is sucking
	u:	su:mu:	Estimate!	sˤu:mu:	Fast!	mu:bɪs*	__	mu:bɪsˤ*	A village name
	ʊ	sabʊr*	__	sˤabʊr	Cactus fruit	fʊsfʊs	Flies	fʊsfʊsˤ*	__
t/tˤ	a:	tu:ba:s*	__	tˤu:ba:s	Name of a city in Palestine	ʃa:mɪt	Humiliating	ʃa:mɪtˤ	High
	a	tabar*	__	tˤabar	An axe	bafʊt	Slicing	bafʊtˤ	Stand up abruptly
	i:	tami:s	A type of bread	tˤami:s*	__	ʃi:mat	Characteristics	ʃi:matˤ*	__
	ɪ	tɪbɪr	Gold nuggets	tˤɪbɪr*	__	θa:bɪt	Fixed	θa:bɪtˤ*	__
	u:	tʊmu:r	Dates	tˤʊmu:r*	__	du:da:t	Worms	du:da:tˤ*	__
	ʊ	tamʊr	Dates	tˤamʊr	Heap	bʊket	Bouquet	bʊketˤ*	__

ARABIC WRITERS OF FRANCOPHONE ANCESTRY: FOCUS ON SHAYKH IBRAHIM ʾAL-KAWLAKHĪ ʾAS-SINIGHĀLĪ (1900-1975)

Mikail Adebisi Folorunsho[1]

Department of Foreign Languages, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

mikail.folorunsho@uniosun.edu.ng

Abstract

Shaykh Ibrahim ʾal-Kawlakhī ʾas-Sinighālī was a well-known Arabic scholar and Tijāniyyah leader in Senegal. It is quite impossible to classify his activities into only the Tijāniyyah *Sūfī* brotherhood or Islamic proselytization for which he became famous, because he contributed significantly to intellectual *Jihād* which culminated into the production of his voluminous Arabic literary works. He became a prominent figure in sub-Saharan Africa through the Tijāniyyah activities. A good number of works have been written on these activities while acute dearth of attention to his literary productions remains observable. This paper looked beyond his activities as a *Sūfī* by exploring his contribution to Arabic scholarship in Senegal and beyond. The paper drew the attention of researchers to a seemingly obscure aspect of his life. It revealed that the Shaykh combined Sufism effectively with literary production. Information obtained from the study could be a veritable tool in the efforts to identify and assess the Arabic scholars of Francophone provenance who have contributed significantly to Arabic literary activities in West Africa

Keywords: ʾal-Kawlakhī ʾ, Francophone, Senegal, *Sūfī* , Tijāniyyah.

1. Introduction

The great West African Arabic scholar and Tijāniyyah leader of Francophone ancestry, Shaykh Ibrahim ʾal-Kawlakhī ʾas-Sinighālī (1900–1975) has left indelible marks on the diffusion of Arabic scholarship and Tījāniyyah *Sūfī* brotherhood in West Africa. He is variously known as Ibrahima Niasse in French literature, in Wolof, he is known as Ibrayima Ñas and he is addressed in Arabic sources as Shaykh ʾal-'Islām ʾal-Ḥājj Ibrāhīm ibn ʾal-Ḥājj ʿAbdullāh at-Tijānī al-Kawlakhī .The sobriquet-Shaykh will be used frequently in referring to him in this paper. A Senegalese major leader of the Tijāniyyah *Sūfī* order of Islam in West Africa, whenever this Shaykh is mentioned, what readily comes to mind is his role as a Tijāniyyah leader of Francophone ancestry. Little attention is given to the fact that this Shaykh was a prolific writer with many literary works in Arabic.

The paper attempts to draw our attention beyond his activities as an Islamic preacher and leader of a *Sūfī* order in Islam, by projecting an 'obscure' aspect of his activities. The need to fill this vacuum serves as catalyst for the production of this paper. The Shaykh speaks Wolof as his mother tongue and French as the official language of Senegal. One of the catalysts for this paper is the proficiency of this Shaykh in Arabic which resulted in the production of his

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[1] **Corresponding author**: Mikail Adebisi Folorunsho

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3699-4428

enviable works in Arabic language. Various motifs stimulated his engagement in literary production and these actually facilitated his cultivation of various literary genres. Samples of these writings are listed with appropriate introductions, under the various thematic classifications to which they belong, in this paper.

Folorunso (2021, p. 40) has drawn our attention to the borrowing and usage of Arabic lexical items by French speakers and writers in Francophone countries of West Africa. Specifically, he identifies the use of some Arabic words and expressions by two Francophone African writers, Sembène Ousmane and Ahmadou Kourouma, in two novels of each of them, respectively. He posits that words and expressions from the Arabic language are integrated in *Le Mandat* and *Xala* of Sembène Ousmane as well as *Allah n'est pas obligé* and *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* of Ahmadou Kourouma. While attempting to justify why these writers adopt this style of code-switching and code-mixing in their works, he observes that:

> The major reason for adopting this style might be that they want to identify themselves with their immediate publics which are the Muslim communities of the Wolof in Senegal for Sembène Ousmane and of the Malinke in Ivory Coast for Ahmadou Kourouma. Secondly, it might be a way of breaking away from the conventional way of writing throughout in the French language to show their freedom of expression in their own peculiar manner as free citizens of their independent States (Folorunso, 2021, pp. 43-44).

Whatever might be the reason for the employment of code-switching and code-mixing in their works, the fact remains that Arabic is not alien in Francophone countries of West Africa and its usage is not restricted to the scholars of Arabic language in this region.

2. Literature Review

2.1. His Birth and Parentage

Shaykh Ibrahim 'al-Kawlakhī ̀as-Sinighālī was born in 1900 in the village of Tayba Niasse (spelled Taïba Niassène in French), a village founded by his father between the Senegalese city of Kawlakh (spelled Kaolach in French and English) and the border of Gambia, he was the son of Alhaji Abdullah (1840–1922), the main representative of the Tijānī *Sūfī* Order, in the Saloum region at the beginning of the twentieth century. Encyclopædia Britannica (2012) describes Kawlakh as a city in west-central Senegal. It lies on the right bank of the Saloum River, southeast of Dakar. An ocean and river port, it is one of the nation's largest communities and a trade and processing centre for locally produced peanuts and salt. It is linked by rail with Guinguinéo and the Dakar-Niger railway. It is also the hub of the road network that serves both the southern and eastern parts of Senegal. Kawlakh is the centre of one major branch of the Tijāniyyah order of Islam, whose great mosque of Shaykh Ibrahim 'al-Kawlakhī ̀as-Sinighālī is just outside the town (Encyclopædia Britannica).

2.2. Educational Career of the Shaykh

The Shaykh started learning the Qur'ān under the tutelage of his father from whom he received his Arabic/Islamic education as well as his initiation into the Tijāniyyah order of Islam. Busoeri (2008, p. 282) describes his father as a sound scholar of Arabic studies and a proprietor of a standard Arabic/Islamic institute from where many erudite scholars, including the Shaykh, have received sound training. Shittu (2012, p. 12) informs us that the Shaykh was known right from his youth as a scholar among his peers because he displayed an endearing enthusiasm to study. He began Qur'ānic learning under the tutelage of his father. Afterward, he was taken to a renowned teacher– Mukhtār Anjor for further studies. Relying on *Kāshif al-ilbās 'an faydat al-khatm Abı 'l-Abbās* of the Shaykh, Busoeri (2008, p. 283) informs us about the teachers of

this Shaykh, including Shaykh Sharīf ʿAbdullah ʾal-ʿAlawī, a Mauritanian. Busoeri (2008, p. 282) mentions some others who could be seen as his spiritual leaders, who had impacted significantly on him in Tijāniyyah and not in Arabo-Islamic scholarship. Just like he acquired proficiency in Arabic, the Shaykh has been described as a polyglot who spoke French as well, as observable in the following;

> Shaykh Ibrahim was asked to focus more on Arabic studies by his father. However due to his quest for knowledge, he extended his passion into learning French from his friend Jahbti who lived in Kawlakh. When his father got wind of this new found passion, he was sternly rebuked for drifting after which he discontinued the study. However, on a fateful day, his father received a mail in French language and Shaykh was called to read the letter; he did it successfully to his father's amazement. Thereafter, he was given the permission to continue his studies in French language but surprisingly, he politely declined saying: "I will rather stick to your first instruction" (Shittu, 2012, p. 12)

2.3. As a Tijāniyyah Leader

The introduction of the Tijāniyyah order to West Africa can be credited to the activities of Al-hājj ʿUmar bn Said ʾal-Fūtī (1794-1864). This Shaykh(Al-hājj ʿUmar bn Said ʾal-Fūtī (1794-1864)) was initiated into the Tijāniyyah and was appointed the *Khalīfah* of the Sudan. Before leaving Makkah where he was initiated (again) during his pilgrimage to Makkah (1826-1828), he got his *Ijāzah* (Licence) where it was stated by Muhammad Al-Ghālī , a Morrocan and the representative of the Tijāniyyah in Hijaz that: "Umar was authorized to give instructions in the Tijāniyyah to whoever asks of it among Muslims, young or old, obedient or rebellious, man or woman, slave or free" (Martin,1976, p. 98). By implication, Al-hājj ʿUmar bn Said ʾal-Fūtī was a predecessor to the Shaykh in both Tijāniyyah and Arabo-Islamic scholarship in Senegalese region.

During his early years, the Shaykh relocated with his father from the village of Tayba Niasse a village founded by his father to the city of Kawlakh. After his father's death in 1922, the Shaykh's elder brother, Muhammad became his father's Khalifah (successor). Although the Shaykh never claimed to be his father's successor, he gained a large number of disciples, and tensions arose between his disciples and those of his elder brother, Muhammad. In 1929, the youthful Shaykh Ibrāhīm announced that he had been given the Key to Secrets of Divine Knowledge, and thus became the *Khalīfa* of Shaykh Tijānī in the Tijāniyyah Order, and sequel to these tensions, he had to relocate with his disciples to a new place. He set out with a small group of his closest disciples to find a new place and they established a new *Zāwiya* in ʾal-Madīnah ʾal-Jadīdah, a village that was later incorporated into the growing city of Kawlakh

According to Olaniyi (2016, p. 225), the emergence of the Shaykh Ibrahim as the spiritual successor of Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijani led to the global spread of the Tijāniyyah. In 1930, the Tijāniyyah became consolidated in Senegal when the Shaykh relocated his base from the city of Kawlakh to the outskirts of the city at ʾal-Madīnah ʾal-Jadīdah. In the new settlement, the Shaykh established a community of followers based on pristine Islamic injunctions. He established a Central Mosque at ʾal-Madīnah ʾal-Jadīdah which served the purposes of observance of obligatory prayers and recitation of Tijāniyyah litanies.

The fame and influence of this Shaykh grew rapidly across the globe and particularly in Nigeria. By the 1930s and 1940s, according to Olaniyi (2016, p. 225) the growth of Tijāniyyah had claimed several influential personalities in northern Nigeria. In the 1930s, Emir of Kano, Abdullahi Bayero submitted to the supreme spiritual authority of the Shaykh, describing him as the "saviour of the age". He made several visits to Nigeria and these visits generated wild enthusiasm and tremendous increase in the membership of Tijāniyyah.

He was one of the earliest West African leaders with wide connections throughout the Islamic world. He was a founding member of the Muslim World League based in Mecca, where he served as the Vice President of the Muslim World League with Faisal as President. He also served as Vice-President of the World Muslim Congress based in Karachi, Pakistan, for a number of years. He was also a member of the Academy of Islamic Research at al- Azhar University (Hunwick, 2003, pp. 280).

3.   Methodology

This paper employed historical, sociological and ideological approaches to assess and appraise the common features of the Arabic works of Shaykh Ibrahim 'al-Kawlakhī 'as-Sinighālī . Purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the specimen of their epilogues and prologues.   The paper examined the predisposing factors as well as the extent of the religious influence. The study derived information primarily from consultation of relevant literature. This method was adopted because of its reliance on extant sound submissions, which served as background to our analyses in this paper. The method is not empirical, it requires no instruments for data collection and it is not such that is verifiable by means of scientific experimentation. For the reliability and validity of the sources, we ensured the authenticity of every literature consulted.

4. Results

4.1. His Literary Contributions

It is quite impossible to deal justly with his works within the limit of an academic work of this nature. It is however, apposite to allude to few of them as we can see under the classification of his works as done in this paper. A perusal of the themes of his writings shows the importance of each of the works which are targeted at specific issues of social and religious significance. With more than a hundred literary productions through the medium of Arabic, most of which have received deserved scholarly attention, Shaykh has definitely cut a niche for himself as a pride of Africa amongst the literati who have left indelible marks through their contributions to the renaissance of *belles-lettres* in Africa. A testimony to his versatility and erudition in the language is his contribution to various issues of religious, social and political significance. He also ventured into language pedagogy and one of his contributions in this regard is *Kitāb al-taṣrīf*, a prescribed text on Arabic morphology for Arabic institutes in Senegal and environs.

Shaykh Ibrahim was an erudite scholar and a prolific writer. As many as over a hundred works written in Arabic have been attributed to him on various subjects including jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), Arabic language and literature, Sufism (*Tasawwuf*), panegyrics, travelogue, the life history of the prophet (*Sīrah*), and so on (vide: Hunwick,2003, pp. 279-301). He was a poet of high repute who produced many anthologies. A consideration of the motifs of his literary contributions shows his acculturation with the literary tradition in West Africa where the Arabic literati have cultivated various genres in their literary production.

Few of his writings have been mentioned and classified below as evidence of his high taste for the cultivation of Arabic literature. It is apposite to note that the factor of space limitation will prevent us from reviewing each of the works and this could be a fertile ground for further research on this Senegalese Arabic scholar.

(a)   *Defense of Tijāniyyah*

His motifs for writing were multifarious. As a Tijāniyyah leader, he wrote to explain the basic tenets of the *Tarīqah* (Religious fraternity) and to defend them. Abdul-Azeez (2016, p. 415) notes that Sufism is a branch of Islamic knowledge and teachings. However, some theologians of Islam have come with hard knock on it, condemning it as *bidʿah* (innovation) which should not be encouraged and that it should even be removed completely in the annals of Islam. The Shaykh authored a good number of works in defence of a number of issues raised against the practices of the Tijāniyyah. Some of his works in this respect are listed below:

(i).   *al-Bayān wa'l-tabyīn fī 'l-Tijāniyya wa'l-Tijāniyyīn,*
(ii).   *al-Fayda al-jāriya fī maʿānı al-Islam wa'l-tarīqa al-Tijāniyya,*
(iii).   *Ifādat al-murīd fī 'l-jawāb ʿalā as'ilat Muhammad b. Muhammad*
(iv).   *Ijābat fatwā fī tahāfut al-sufiyya,*
(v).   *Kāshif al-ilbās ʿan faydat al-khatm Abı 'l-Abbās,*a standard text of this Shaykh on Tijaniyyah,described by Wright (2010:109) as his *magnum opus*.
(vi).   *Majmuʿ thalātha majālis sunniyya ma'thūra ʿan khulafā' murshid al-sālikīn wa-murabbī al-murıdīn al-qutb al-rabbānī wa'l-ʿārif 'al-samadānī Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijānī,*
(vii).   *Mukhtārāt fī sīrah wa-manāqib shaykhinā wa-sayyidinā Abı'l ʿAbbās Ahmad al-Tijānī, al-Nūr al-rabbānī fī sīrat Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijānī,*
(viii).   *Rawd al-muhibbīn fı madh sayyid al-ʿārifın,*
(ix).   *Tanbīh al-adhkiyā' fī kawn al-shaykh al-Tijānī khātim al-awliyā'*

(b) Defense of Personal Opinion

He also wrote to answer questions which were put to him by the antagonists of Islamic tenets or to defend his own views as evidenced in his *Rafʿ al-malām ʿan man rafaʿa wa-qabada iqtidāʿan li-sayyid al-anām,* which he wrote to defend his views on *Qabd* (folding of arms in prayer) and raising hands in different postures in the prayer (Shittu,2012, p. 12).

(c) Apostolic Encomia/Panegyrics

We are beholden to Abdullah (2004, p. 375), while assessing the panegyric and elegy genres in the Arabic poetry of the 19th and 20th centuries in Senegal and Nigeria, on the classification of the poetic genres in the Arabic literary space in West Africa as follows:

> West African Arabic poetry included two poetic genres: lyrical (*al-shi'r al-ghinā'ī*) and didactic (*al-shi'r al-ta'līmī*). Lyrical poetry represents the majority of poems. This genre also includes a wide range of forms, from panegyric (*al-madīh*) to elegy (*al-rithā'*). Its types include pride (*al-fakhr*), description (*al-wasf*), love (*al-ghazal*), fortitude (*al-hamāsah*), militantism (*shi'r al-jihād*), complaint and nostalgia (*al-shakwā wa al-hanīn*), occasional poetry (*shi'r al-munāsabāt*), and encomiastic verse praising the Prophet Mohammad (*al-madā'ih al-nabawiyyah*).

Hiskett (1975, p. 43) informs us that the origin of the composition of panegyrics can be traced to the days of the Prophet Muhammad himself. Writing in the same vein, Yahya (1997, p. 12) states that though the origin of panegyrics on Prophet Muhammad dates back to the days of the Prophet himself, it did not develop into an independent genre of Arabic literature with its own motifs and class of exponents, until about seven centuries later. It is significant to note that encomiastic works in praise of the Prophet Muhammad (*al-madā'ih al-nabawiyyah*) dominate the writings of the Shaykh. Of his works on this genre are:

(i).   *al-Fayd al-Ahmadī fī 'l-mawlid al-Muhammadī,*
 (ii).   *Kanz al-ʿārifīn fī madh sayyid al-awwalīn wa'l-ʿākhirın,*
(iii).   *al-Majmūʿa al-kāmila li-aʿmāl al-mawlid al-nabawī,*
(iv).   *Majmūʿ qasạ̈id al-mawlid al-nabawī,*
(v).   *Manāsik al-widād fi madh khayr al-ʿibād,*
 (vi).   *Nujum al-hudā fī kawn nabiyyinā afdal man daʿā ilā 'llāh wa-hadā,*
(vii).   *Nur al-basar fī madh sayyid al-bashar,*
 (viii). *Nur al-haqq fi madh alladhī jāʿ bi'l-sidq,*
(ix).   *Nuzhat al-asmā̉ wa'l-afkār fī madh al-Amīn wa-maʿānı 'l-Mukhtār*
(x).   *Shifā̉ al-asqām fī madh Sayyid al-anām*

(e). Language Pedagogy

Kitāb al-taṣrīf (The Book of Arabic morphology) is one of the writings of the Shaykh on language pedagogy. It is a book commonly used as prescribed or recommended text for Arabic morphology in Arabic schools throughout Senegal and across the Francophone West African countries. This problem of non availability of suitable textbooks to teach Arabic language to non-Arabs is not peculiar to Senegal. Folorunsho and Iyanda (2020:100) observe that non-availability of suitable textbooks constitutes a serious problem confronting foreign languages learning even in Nigeria. The available textbooks are mostly of foreign authorship written to teach the languages in the first instance to the native speakers of the languages. The Shaykh wrote this book in response to the dearth of suitable Arabic textbooks for effective teaching of Arabic language in Senegal. The work shows diversity in the literary production of the Shaykh.

(f). Travelogue

According to Shittu (2013, p. 1), travelogue or travel literature typically records the experiences of an author touring a place for the pleasure of travel. Such literature may be cross-cultural or transnational in focus, or may involve travel to different regions within the same country. Furthermore, it is seen as a document which reveals the traveller's own interests and the purposes behind his travels, in addition to being a record of what he witnesses in the different lands he visited (Shittu,2013, p. 1).Travelogues are therefore collections of practical data about the countries the travellers visit and records of individual events, feelings, emotions, fears, and exceptional changes in dignified prose which inclines to moody artistry that depends on the writer's own viewpoint(Al-Daʿmi,1986, p. 135& Humood,2002, p. 2)

The Shaykh developed a transnational charisma within and beyond the West African borders through his evangelical tours and teachings. The travels of the Shaykh to different parts of the world are well documented in his literary productions, mostly in verses. Some of these works are listed here as samples:

Majmūʿ rihalāt al-shaykh Ibrāhım
(i)   *Nayl al-mafāz bi'l-ʿawd ilā 'l-Hijāz*
(ii)   *al-Rihla al-Gannāriyya wa'l-Kumāshiyya*
(iii)   *Nafahāt al-Malik al-Ghanī fī 'l-siyāha fi ard Bamakū wa-Kunākirı*
(iv)   *Nass al-kalima allatī alqāhā Ibrāhım Niyās fi ard Marrākish fi 'l-haflat allatı uqīmat fī ihdā̉ qāʿat Jāmiʿat al-Qarawiyyīn bi-munāsabat dhikrā tảsısihā*
(v)   *al-Rihla al-Hijāziyya al-ulā*

(g). Response to Attacks on Islam

Of his responses to attacks on Islam is his *Ifrīqiyyā li'l-Ifrīqiyyīn* (Africa for the Africans). Hunwick (2003, p. 284) describes his *Ifrīqiyyā li'l-Ifrīqiyyīn* as a rejoinder or response to an article by Archbishop Lefebvre of Dakar which appeared in *La France catholique* of 19 December 1959, attacking Islam and African nationalism. African leaders and freedom fighters under the chairmanship of Gamal Abd al-Nasser of Egypt entrusted the publishing of this book to Shaykh Muhammad al-Awwal a Nigerian disciple of the Shaykh. Abdul-Azeez (2016, p. 407) informs us that Shaykh Muhammad al-Awwal met the Shaykh in the early 50s, and moved to him for further training and guidance in the Tijāniyyah *Sūfī* order. In 1956, he was granted ʾal-Ijāzah al-Mutlaqah àl-Kubrah (that is authority to operate freely in the affairs of Tijāniyyah), having been made a *Muqaddam* (leader) in the first day of meeting the Shaykh.

(h). Others

The Shaykh contributed significantly to other genres, including *Fiqh* (jurisprudence). Of his writings on this genre are *Bahth fī thubūt ruʾyat al-hilāl* (on the question of sighting the new moon to mark the beginning of a month (especially Ramadān), *Hadīqat al-anwār fī-mā ihtawā ʿalayhi qawāʿid al-Islām min al-hikam wa'l-asrār, Irshād al-sārın ilā ʿadam al-hārın* on the question as to whether or not *zakāt* has to be paid on groundnut and *Kashf al-ghumma fı rafʿ mirāʾ ʿulamāʾ al-umma fı ikhtilāfihim fı-'l ahilla*, a treatise on the question of establishing agreed dates for the beginning and end of Ramadān.

On *Tawassul* (intercession), he authored *Miftāh al-nasr fī 'l-tawassul bi'l-dhikr*

(poem of intercession through the chapters of the Qur'ān and *Miftāh rahmat al-Rahīm fı 't-tawassul bi-bi'smi 'llāhi ar-Rahmān ar-Rahīm*. He also wrote on general admonition as evidenced in his *Daʿwah ilā wahdat al-muslimīn fī 's-Sinighāl*

5. Discussion

5.1. Literary Appraisal of his Writings

His works are not only in verses but also in prose. These works reveal the depth of erudition of this scholar and his mastery of the Arabic language, in spite of the fact that French was his mother tongue. An appraisal of the works revealed the mastery of Arabic by Shaykh as well as his commendable discursive ability.

The works fulfill the modern day styles of writing, as applicable to the Arabic works of West African provenance. The subject matter of style is central to Arabic literary production no matter the time or clime to which it is affiliated. In fact, the whole Arabic literary tradition from the classical to the modern times is circumscribed by what could be described as eclecticism. A cursory reading of Arabic literary writings of the Shaykh accentuates this assertion. It is apposite to note the imbrication of his literary works with religious themes. In other words, his Arabic works feature a strong predilection and preference for styles that are embedded in Islamic religious tradition, law and lore.

His writings are free from obscure words and complex constructions. The works portray the Shaykh as possessing a rich repository of vocabularies in Arabic. The reason for this is not far-fetched; the Shaykh had enough exposure to linguistic sciences. The works are free from unnecessary rhetorical embellishments. Another reason that could be given for the simplicity which characterizes his writings is the consciousness of the Shaykh that his works are didactic and this dictates the need to get his ideas across to the audience without hindrance.

6. Conclusion

This study has attempted filling what it perceived as a vacuum in documenting the life of Shaykh Ibrahim ʾal-Kawlakhī ʾas-Sinighālī. It focused the literary productions of this Shaykh, an aspect of his life that has not been significantly addressed. The Shaykh was an erudite scholar and a prolific writer. As many as over a hundred works written in Arabic, on various genres, have been attributed to him on various subjects; including jurisprudence (*Fiqh*), Arabic language and literature, Sufism (*Tasawwuf*), panegyrics, travelogue and the life history of the prophet (*Sīrah*). It is instructive for contemporary researchers on Arabic writings of Francophone authorship, to make further research on the Shaykh's other literary productions that are not listed in this study. This will further expose more of the literary inputs of the Shaykh to the English audience as we have rightly done in this work. Also, thematic as well as the stylistic study of these works are viable areas for further research on this prolific Arabic scholar of Francophone ancestry.

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IMPACTS OF EXPLICIT LEARNING ON PAKISTANI ESL COGNITION

Sidrah Niaz[1] ID **Asad Ali**[2] ID
[1] **Government Girls High School Anga, Khushaab (Pakistan)**
sdraawan31@gmail.com
[2] **The University of Lahore, Sargodha Campus (Pakistan)**
masad7721@mail.com

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the impact of *explicit learning* on Pakistani ESL' cognitive process in classroom setting. For conducting this study, the participants ($n=200$) of grade 10th have been recruited from government institutions of Punjab's remote areas and divided them into two groups: experimental ($n=100$) and control ($n=100$) learning situations. The experimental group was instructed in the classroom setting and they were explicitly taught English as the second language. The experiments are categorized into two parts: (a) pre-test and post-test to externalize the sensory motor system of competence and its improvement triggered by providing explicit learning. Firstly, the participants were evaluated with pre-tests i.e. *written comprehension task* and *verbal fluency test*. After evaluating, they are provided input of second language until three weeks. After providing input of second language, they were assessed in the same procedure, and now got an improvement in both the productively cognitive skills: *verbal* and *non-verbal* (written). For data analysis, Python 3.11.1 version has been used to get the statistical data processing. The pre-test results predict that the ratio of sensory motor system was mean=9.4 and 9.7 of the two groups with std=2.2 and 2.3 but fortunately, the post-test results reveal that the mean ratio of two groups is 11.4 and 14.8 with std=1.3 and 1.7. On the basis of these results, the study implicates that learners' efficiency in productive skills: (verbal and non-verbal) is mandatory but may be improved if sensory motor system works efficiently. For sensory motor efficiency, the ESL practitioners should adopt explicit learning.

Keywords: Explicit learning; ESL; Sensory-Motor system; Productive Skills; Verbal Fluency

1. Introduction

For a decade, a scenario on ESL input has broadened in educational circles on the impact of teacher directed (explicit learning) versus student directed (implicit learning) based on the initiative that explicit learning is passive rather than energetic and engaged learning. Therefore, it is considered as effective for learner's accomplishment and learning. It is important that ESL teachers must know well that what sort of grammar, teaching strategies and instructional materials best assist learning in the class sequentially to regulate their teaching in the direction of a realistic and getting maximum learners' output. According to Hulstijn (2005), "*Explicit learning is input processing with the conscious intention to find out whether the input information contains regularities and, if so, to work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured. Implicit learning is input processing without such an intention,*

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[2] **Corresponding author**: Asad Ali
ORCID ID : https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7398-9583

taking place unconsciously." (p. 131) explicit and implicit learning have taken an impetuous motivation to the ESL practitioners to get the better results with minimum effort. A lot of studies (Dulay& Burt 1973; Krashen, 1985; White, 1998; Ruhi, 2001; Rahem, 2022 and Xodabande, 2023) have been dedicated in this line of inquiry to externalize the underpinning issues of the ESL learners. Krashen (1985) focused on the formal instruction to the learners under the communicative approach, White (1998) focused on the form of the explicit and the main argument was to focus on the effectiveness of explicit learnings and its effects on the SLA.

Among Asian ESL leaners, getting mastery in language proficiency is the crucial area and no significant strategies have been adopted to assist the teachers but the very first point is that the focus of the interest in ESL is only leaner[s] whose development is essential so that all the experiments should be dedicated on them. For this, the study formulates the certain objectives.

RQ1: What are the impacts of explicit learning on Pakistani ESL cognitive faculty?

RQ2: How do explicit learning trigger cognition of ESL?

2. Literature Review

Since the early 1990s hold up the thought that several types of explicit formal instructions are pretty much helpful for second language *maturity* Dekeyser (1995), Ellis (2002), Robinson (1996) Doughty et al (1998). In very current studies on second language learning, classrooms have also shown inclination to point to that paying attention of the students on *form*, essentially through clear instruction that is better to *implicit* learning (White, 1998). According to the view of Schmidt (1992) who argued that if we are interested in making our learners fluent in second language (SLA), by the view of cognitive theory, we have to enable them to connect in the employing that language in the logic of communicating somewhat in that particular language, at the same time as they maintain the related *declarative knowledge* in working memory. Existing vision regarding teaching communicative approach disputes that grammar has its position in ESL learning environment. Applied linguists also claimed that *instruction* is useful for learners particularly in the area of second language acquisition (SLA) process, progress and in ultimate achievement in that specific language. Schmidt and Frota (1986) have laid a vehement stress on the notion that *instruction* and *chances of interaction* outside the classroom environment were both essential and crucial for second language development. Pienemann (1985, p. 36) devised a hypothesis on the basis of psychological research in second language acquisition (SLA). He claimed that those *instructions* which hit next developmental level of the student are far better than those which hit too far beyond his present level. Spada (1997) similarly planned a study to figure out whether or not there was any contact among contact type and type of the instruction. She studied the consequence of instruction and experience on huge number of adult learners who were registered in a demanding EST course held in Canada. She came to the conclusion that situation was less influential forecaster of disparity in second language learners' performance as compared to the instruction. She also came to know that contact *optimistically* considered for variation in grammar where the instruction-given was form-focused. Ellis (1989) has done a study to measure up to the classroom and naturalistic location and came to the idea that learners which were in a classroom setting appeared to be doing better than those naturalistic learners in that they have shown a high level of communicative skill in a very shorter period. Ruhi (2001) considered the consequence of implicit and explicit focus on form toughened by minor recast on second language development on 72 adult English language learners. The consequence of the study maintained the hypothesis. Doughty (1991) carried out a study on two groups of adult second language learner and tried to find out whether learners who have got visual improvement

in their contact to relative clauses with no metalinguistic rule declaration enhanced as much as those who in addition with this also received explicit metalinguistic rules. He found that both groups improved appreciably more than a control group on post-test managed right away after the instruction. She inferred her conclusions as proof for Schmidt (1990) *"Noticing Hypothesis"* and to his claim that in receipt of learners to be present at forms in *controlled input* is the most excellent condition for language learning.

According to VanPatten (2022), learning a second language especially vocabulary concatenation tasks via two incidental and intentional learning has been dedicated in the line language instructional research. In this parlance, incidental vocabulary development as the by-product of meaningful mutual compatibility to comprehend the amount of comprehensible input but faulty issue of these instructional strategies is that in this way the focus is only on language usage in real life span and only conveying meaning without grammatical development. Incidental vocabulary learning is a long term-cognitive process and it requires a huge amount of input while intentional learning contrastively is linked with our voluntary cognitive system of conscious control and direct focus is on language forms. Schmitt (2019) focused on the instructional programs to develop the intentional vocabulary learning but for developing vocabulary, various types of instructional material has been adopted such as workbook, classroom materials. It includes word lists, flashcards and activities and gamified assisted techniques. This study is not dealing with only language usage but also with grammatical development skill of the ESP learners. Grammatical development is linked with human cognitive faculty for this keeping in mind such methods and techniques that gives effective development of grammatical development. For this, the present study adopts explicit learning techniques. Learning vocabularies only did not boast the grammatical aspect of human mind for this, explicit techniques have been implied in the classroom setting.

To cut a long story short, there are a large number of hypothetical and realistic studies and an adequate amount of verifications in second language acquisition (SLA) which have observed that formal instruction are necessary and helpful in the acquisition of linguistic competence and have a very constructive and encouraging effects on second language acquisition (SLA) as it triggers the learners' competence level that potentially ensures the *modulation* of learning that enhances the cognitive sensory motor system.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 237 adult English as a second Language (ESL) learners in a private language teaching institute in Punjab, Pakistan. The mean age of the participants was 21-26, and they were selected based on the *convenience sampling* procedure and their availability in the study context has been ensured by the written consent by each individual participant. The general proficiency level of the participants in English was assessed using *verbal fluency* test, and the results showed that most of them were at intermediate level Learners (ELL). Following Li and Hafner (2022), the participants were assigned into two groups: experimental (n=100) and control (n=100) conditions based on their own preferences for using different materials excluding 37 participants due to their unwillingness and showing non-seriousness attitude to the study. Accordingly, 100 students preferred learning academic tasks via explicit instructional method (experimental group), and 100 participants opted for using traditional materials and method implicit instruction. Informed consent for participating in the study were obtained from the students before taking part in this study.

3.2 Procedures

The study was carried out over 3 weeks, and data collection started by administrating the pre-tests. During this period, both groups received classroom *instruction* based on the curriculum implemented by Single National Curriculum (SNC) for preparing the students for board exams (i.e., regional and federal). The classes were held once a day, within 3 weeks, and each session lasted for 45 min. All sessions focused on teaching academic writing with a specific topic: "*How did I spend my winter holidays?*" Additionally, the participants were asked to review target academic writing covered in the classroom using their preferred materials outside the classroom. The participants were informed that 30% of their overall evaluation would be based on their scores on post-treatment tests. Data collection ended with measuring and documenting changes in the participants' knowledge in the post-tests.

Data has been analysed using Python IDLE version 3.11.1. In analysing data, both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used. For descriptive statistics, mean values and standard deviation were obtained from data. For inferential statistics, the scores on vocabulary tests were analysed using multivariate analysis of variance. There is more than one dependent variable, and these variables are related to each other either conceptually or in a specific way.

4. Results

4.1 Pre-test Results

Test-Type	N	Group-Type	Mean	Std
Pre-Test	100	Control	9.4	2.2
	100	Experimental	9.7	2.3

Results of the Pre-test Table-1

The results of the pre-test study have been demonstrated in Table 1. As shown above, the test-type is pre-test, *n*=100 participants in both the groups: (a) control (b) experimental. The mean value of the control group is 9.4 comparatively low from the experimental group. The standard deviation (std) value is 2.2 for control group noticed low comparatively from experimental group.

4.2 Post-test Results

Test-Type	N	Group-Type	Mean	Std
Post-Test	100	Control	11.4	1.3
	100	Experimental	14.8	1.7

Results of the Pro-test Table-2

The results of post-test have been presented in the Table 2. As mentioned above, the test-type is post-test conducted among the two groups *n*=100 participants: control *vs.* experimental. The mean value of the control group is 11.4 i.e., comparatively low from the experimental group similarly the standard deviation (std) value is 1.3 for control group i.e., comparatively low from experimental group=1.7. Furthermore, the data reveals that improvement in experimental group is noticed.

5. Discussion

Test-Type	Mean	Std
Pre-Test	9.6	2.3
Post-Test	13.1	1.5

Table No-3

The present study investigated the impacts of explicit learning in ESP Pakistani leaners and the study hypothesized that explicit learning triggers the internal cognitive system to regulate in developing L2 system effectively. The primary research question was connected with the effectiveness of explicit learning in instructional classroom in improving intermediate level students' academic performance. Accordingly, learning consequences from two interventions, namely explicit and implicit using various techniques, werecompared. Data analysis revealed that before the treatment, participants in the experimental and control learning conditions were similar with respect to their knowledge of academic words. The overall values of the pre and post tests have been demonstrated in the table no-3. The total values of the pre and post tests have revealed that there is a difference in two variables i.e., pre-test and post-test with total mean value of pre-test is equivalent to 9.6% of both groups: control and experimental. The post-test mean value is 13.1% that is comparatively higher than pre-test values and there is a gap in between these values. It means that post-test treatment is effective as the results have demonstrated favourable results. Similarly, the standard deviation value of the pre-test is higher about 2.3% but comparatively in the post-test has been decreased to 1.5%. The decreasing of *std* means that positive response in cognitive faculty.

As the study posted the two hypothetical questions:

RQ1- *"What are the impacts of explicit learning on Pakistani ESL cognitive faculty?"*

RQ2- *"How do explicit learning trigger cognition of ESL?"*

The findings, as summed up in Tables above have given an empirical verification for the effectiveness of explicit learning for developing grammatical knowledge of second language knowledge. The participants of both groups in particular have gained knowledge of a significant proportion of the target language tenses from the pre-test to the post-test and results are far better in post-tests.

According to address the RQ1 *"What are the impacts of explicit learning on Pakistani ESL cognitive faculty?"* this question is more related to the neurolinguistics and psycholinguistics. The human faculty of language is a compacted and unified shell of neurons that works collectively to develop the grammatical, phonological and memorizational underpinnings. As a whole dealing with neurolinguistics issues of explicit learning, the findings of the study show that explicit learning is significant in developing cognitive system of Pakistani ESP learners who are taking SNC in Pakistan. It consequently develops the whole cognitive faculty that includes receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge, grammatical aspects like tenses and inflectional morphology without focusing on only communicative approach to language teaching. Such findings might have resulted from the following reasons. First, given that grammatical drills.

Dealing with the RQ2- *"How do explicit learning trigger cognition of ESL?"* the study predicts that it deals with what is the method through with the internal cognition takes.

The study has some pedagogical implication for teaching grammatical chunks in classroom setting as learning second language has been defined as a "specialized English-language teaching grounded in the social, cognitive, and linguistic demands of academic target situations, providing focused instruction informed by an understanding of texts and the constraints of academic contexts" (Hyland, 2006, p. 2). This instructional approach improves the explicit knowledge and grammatical underpinnings of the cognitive faculty as a whole. This study can be considered to develop the highly material developments and practice for the ESP teachers and practitioners in classroom. In this parlance, the explicit method of instructional input in the classroom setting is extending learning to provide EAP students anytime and anyplace with practical strategies (Xodabande & Atai, 2022).

The conclusive remark of this study aligns with previous studies that accounted positive learning outcomes from explicit learning in 2nd language acquisition. There may possibly be various factors adding to the effectiveness of explicit method for learning tenses as experienced in this study. Firstly, by providing the nature of the target language tenses, participants well thought-out of those items pretty much related to their wants and devoted time and energy in getting expertise in them. Secondly experimental group students learned in a systematic manner and got a chance to review and practice their learning in a given scenario. That's why they outperformed in post-test as compared to the control group participants. So, teachers who have been teaching language are encouraged to include this strategy into their teaching list by giving a learner suitable material and encouraging them to expand their knowledge of target language.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the effectiveness of explicit method in academic instructional teaching to the ESL Learners in developing their cognitive skills in writing. The findings show that those who were taught explicitly have gained more *accuracy* and performed efficiently than control group participants. The results also offered further empirical confirmation for the effectiveness of explicit learning compared to implicit learning. In this way, explicit learning triggers the sensory motor competence to perform the learners' efficiently in an academic setting. This research is limited to only Pakistani ESL learners and we are focusing on our single national curriculum (SNC). Pedagogically it implicates that learning is mediated by the human cognitive system that regulates the learning process. If this cognitive motor system can be efficiently regulated, all the ESL learning modules: vocabulary, composition and comprehension will work energetically.

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TEACHERS, PUPILS AND PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO STRENGTHENED READING FLUENCY THAT USES TOUCHSCREEN COMPUTER TABLET TO READ-ALOUD, RECORDING AND SHARING

Loïc Pulido [1]

[1] **Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Consortium Régional de Recherche en Éducation du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Centre de Recherche et d'Intervention Sur la Réussite Scolaire (Québec, Canada)**

lpulido@uqac.ca

Abstract

Oral reading fluency involves being able to read with accuracy, automaticity, and oral prosody to access to the meaning of texts. Improving pupils' reading fluency is crucial for the elementary school. Various resources are available to help teachers achieve this quest, in particular educational recommendations and research results that focus on the effects of different forms of interventions. The goal of this paper is to introduce a tool to improve the assimilation of a pedagogical approach created by two experienced second-grade teachers. This approach implies 1) regular appointments with the pupils to set goals and challenges; 2) let the children practice, reading aloud, recording themselves on a touchscreen computer tablet and sharing the recordings with their teacher and parents. After eight months of use, 4 teachers, their 88 pupils and 12 of their parents were invited to participate in interviews in which they were questioned about their experience of the use of the tool and its effects on the students. The analysis shows that the pedagogical approach is reliable and that the participants feel that it has a positive impact on the pupils' motivation and learning. It allows to identify strengths and weaknesses. This provides arguments for a larger implementation and for further research on its impact.

Keywords: classroom app, interventions, reading fluency, touchscreen computer tablet.

1. Introduction

Oral reading fluency involves being able to read with accuracy, automaticity, and oral prosody (e.g., Aldhanhani & Abu-Ayyash, 2020; Kiefer & Christodoulou, 2020), all these abilities converging toward comprehension (e.g., DiSalle & Rasinski, 2017). It is one of the key skills that children must acquire through learning-to-read according to the work of the national reading panel (NRP, 2000), a world reference on learning to read and its implication for reading instruction.

In this context, elementary teachers need resources to help their pupils to improve on oral reading fluency, as reading-aloud is necessary (Gibson, 2008) but not sufficient. Different resources are available. Aro & Lytyynen (2016) offered a description of approaches stem from the pedagogical tradition. These approaches aim at increasing the amount of supervised reading practices with a variety of methods, including group-based method (method of instruction in which reading aloud is realized in small groups) and peer-tutoring (a variety of approaches in which students are placed in pairs and practice reading aloud to others). Rasinski (2005) outlined four principles that underlie effective fluency instruction: 1) children should have the

opportunity to listen a fluent reader reading for them; 2) children needs feedback when they read-aloud; 3) children should focus their attention on reading in meaningful text; 4) Children need to have a lot of opportunities to read.

Synthesis of research and meta-analysis on fluency interventions on elementary student with learning disabilities are available (for example, Chard, Vaughn & Tyler, 2002; Schwab, Seifert & Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2013; Steven et al., 2014, Lee & Yoon, 2017). The last of which was conducted by Hudson, Koh, Moore & Binks-Cantrell (2020). They identified the characteristics of efficient intervention on oral fluency for struggle readers, through the review of 16 studies published between 2000 and 2019. Their findings reveal that repeated reading of texts (see Samuels, 1979) strengthened oral reading fluency. Generally, repeated reading is completed by other components as peer coaching, teacher modelling, phrase drill, error correction, feedback on prosody, verbal cueing, goal setting, echo reading (a student repeats a sentence that has just been read by a fluent reader), choral reading (all students in the class repeat a sentence that has just been read by a fluent reader), listening passage preview, question answering on comprehension, phonic or vocabulary intervention. The most effective interventions in their review were realized one-on-one, not in group, and with a trained model, not with a peer coach. The synthesis reveals that prosody is relatively neglected on the studies, as compared to rate and accuracy. However, Calet, Guttierez-Palma and Defior (2017) showed that supporting children prosody has a superior impact on automaticity and oral prosody than supporting automaticity by encouraging them to read faster. The works mentioned above stress the importance of carrying out repeated readings of the same texts. It should be noted that several studies (e.g. Therrien, Kirk & Wood-Groves, 2012 and the meta-analysis of Zimmerman, Reed, & Aloe, 2021) have compared the progress of students who have practiced fluency by repeating the same reading several times, with that of students who have done non repeated-readings. This work shows relatively similar progress for both. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that studies of this type are rare and that these results remain to be confirmed today.

Some interventions based on the use of specific software support reading fluency. A few of them target interventions at a perceptive level, for example, saccadic training consisting in training children with a software that stimulates their eye movement to gain accuracy and improve reading fluency (Dodding et al., 2017). Most of them propose reading activity gamification (see Massler et al., 2019, for a list). But these software tools are difficult to find, do not exist in all languages, are sometimes difficult to use in the classroom, sometimes not even known by the teachers and sometimes due to the lack of appropriate equipment.

Some research also shows that the use of touchscreen computers tablets can be interesting to train fluency. As early as 2012 (the first touchscreen computer tablet was made in 2010), Thoermer and Williams published a text intended for elementary school teachers to show them that touchscreen computers tablets could be a very interesting object for presenting texts to be read aloud to students. Musti-Rao, Lo and Plati (2015) evaluated the impact of using a touchscreen tablet computer application on reading fluency. The application in question leading children to quickly read isolated words. The results of the study show a positive effect of the interventions on the reading of isolated words, but not on the fluency in reading text and had a positive effect on student engagement. Minze and Park (2021) conducted a study in which a few children with reading difficulties in mid-primary received fluency training through a touchscreen computer tablet. During this training, they do repeated readings of a text and received feedback regarding their performance. The results indicated progress in fluency and a change in students' posture towards reading. These progresses are even better when the use of the touchscreen computer tablet is combined with peer-assisted instruction (Mize, Bryant & Bryant, 2020). Overall, these studies therefore seem to show a positive effect of using this type

of tool. This effect seems robust with regard to motivation and remains to be confirmed with regard to progress in fluency, in particular in tasks which deviate from those performed during interventions.

The interest of the touchscreen computers tablets can be explained by the fact that they allow reading aloud to be recorded. This opens up interesting possibilities in terms of self-assessment. Self-assessment seems to benefit the development of fluency skills. Indeed, Duffey (2015) reports the results of a mixed research which shows that using rubrics to self-assess fluency helps students improve motivation and performance. Arens, Gove and Abate (2018) reports a study in which children had the opportunity to record themselves reading and listening to themselves again. The results of this study show significant progress made by the students in fluency. Özenç and Ferhat (2022) made more or less the same observations when they evaluated the impact of a method of teaching reading based on self-evaluation. Indeed, they noted a positive effect of this method on reading fluency. Ness (2017) offers a possible explanation for understanding this phenomenon. She points out that introducing a recording facility for self-assessment allows children to discover how they "sound" when reading and allows them to put in place appropriate strategies to be prouder of their performance.

While all of this research shows that the use of a touchscreen computer tablet is promising, it is clear that little information is available on how teachers can use them to support their students. A few targeted apps are referenced, but not always available in different languages. And educational scenarios using this kind of tool certainly remain to be described.

Ultimately, the involvement of parents also seems to determine part of the progress of students in fluency (e.g. Sénéchal, 2006; Zambrana et al., 2015), resources are also available to increase this involvement. For example, Rasinski and Stevenson (2005) have shown that pupils who have benefited from interventions aimed at working on fluency at home with their parents, progress more than children who have not benefited from such intervention with their parents. Despite this kind of resource, parental involvement remains an important issue in many communities.

2.The Present Study

This study originates in a research/practice partnership. A school board was interested in developing a tool to help teachers take ownership of an approach developed by two experienced teachers (Caroline Naud and Isabelle Paradis), providing excellent results according to their evaluation dashboard. This approach consisted mainly in having the students read aloud books they chose among several presenting an appropriate level of difficulty, in having them multiple record using a touchscreen computer tablet until they were satisfied of their reading, then to share it with their teachers and parents through a classroom application.

In the present paper, we will present the tool developed, and qualitative data collected through interviews with the actors involved in the use of the tool: the teachers, the pupils, and their parents. A close look on a way to approach fluency training is provided along with the testimonies of these users on its strengths, its weaknesses and its relevance. These testimonies provide helpful information to widely implement this approach.

2. Methodology

3.1Participants

Four experienced (> 10 years) Canadian second-grade teachers, inhabitants of the French-speaking province of Quebec participated in this study. These four teachers are women, all four of whom hold a bachelor's degree in preschool and primary education. They all teach in rural areas. In Quebec, the education ministry uses two indicators to qualify the socio-economic

status of schools: an index of socio-economic background, which takes into account the proportion of children whose mother does not have a diploma and the proportion of parents who have no job, and a low-income index. With regard to socio-economic background, the schools that participated in the study were in the 6th and 7th deciles. This means that the environments in which the study took place include a relatively large number of families whose mother does not have a diploma or whose parents don't have a job. For the low-income index, they were between the 2nd and the 6th deciles. This means that the environments in which the study took place are varied in terms of family income.

The 88 second-grade pupils (mean age: 7 years old) of the four teachers, and 12 of their parents participated too in this study. In Quebec, pupils generally attend one year of kindergarten, which curriculum is geared toward fun activities and global development. Mandatory school begins at 6 years of age. The first two years are mainly dedicated to fundamental learning (reading, counting). As far as reading is concerned, the first year is mainly concerned with systematic learning of reading (letters, alphabetical principle, etc.); the second year is primarily dedicated to reading automation, crucial skills to learning in subsequent years.

3.2 Material

Each participating group (1 group = a teacher and his/her pupils) received a box called "«Fluency Box»" composed of:

-Nineteen children books to be read aloud, classified according to their difficulties (the principles for the categorization are explained further in the paper).

-One touchscreen computer tablet[2] with a free voice-recording application[3], and a free classroom application[4] to share files (picture, audio, video) between the teachers, the pupils, and their parents. When sharing a file, the participant chooses who can see it.

-A headphone with a microphone

-Instruction sheets that presents the pedagogical approach.

3.3 Interventions to train fluency

The pedagogical approach presented in the instruction sheets alternates fluency assessment (to define incentive, advices and encouragements) and autonomous training (figure 1).

1-Fluency assessment
to determine goals, to give advice on book-level choices and to share that with each pupil and their parents

2 - Autonomous training
to leave time for the pupils to choose books in the class book cases, practice, record, listen, and share
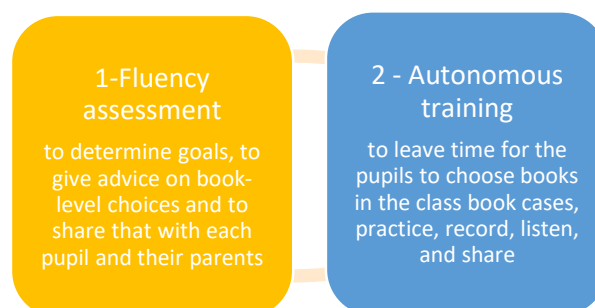
Figure 1: Pedagogical approach of the interventions with the «Fluency Box».

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[2] an Ipad ©

[3] Voice Record Pro ©: https://apps.apple.com/ca/app/voice-record-pro/id546983235

[4] See Saw © : https://apps.apple.com/us/app/seesaw-class/id930565184

Fluency assessment

For the fluency assessment, the teacher and a pupil listen together to a recording made by the student from a book in the «Fluency Box». For each book included, an evaluation grid is provided containing the text of the book, so that the teacher can mark the passages on which the pupil experiences difficulties while reading or with certain words. The books are categorized according to difficulty levels (we used an *ad-hoc* categorization developed by the research team (author, Isabelle Desbiens, Carol-Ann Ménard, Caroline Naud, Isabelle Paradis and Sonia St-Gelais), and inspired by the Ministère de l'éducation du Québec, ND). The books in the «Fluency Box» and all the books in the classroom book cases were sorted into 4 categories:

- The books of the green level are composed of 8 to 20 pages. On each page, there are mainly declarative sentences, close to spoken language, made up of 5 to 6 words. These sentences contain repetitions, frequent and easy to read words. Images illustrate the text. The fonts used are quite large and easy to read. The texts deal with subjects familiar to children (animals, family, sport, friends).

- The books of the blue level are composed of 20-28 pages. These pages contain one or two sentences. These sentences contain less than 10 words, have a syntactic and lexical structure close to spoken language. Each page is limited to the description of an action. The words are easy to read. The fonts used are large. The texts deal with familiar themes for children.

- The books of the red level contain less than 7 sentences per page. These sentences are simple and made up of less than a dozen common words. Themes are no longer necessarily familiar to children.

- The books of the yellow level contain less than 11 sentences per page. The sentences are organized in paragraphs and longer than in the previous level. They use less frequent words and they use syntactic structures generally reserved for writing.

After the listening of the recording, the teacher asks questions to ensure the understanding of the text. Then, he provides incentives or advice. We choose to express them in terms of challenges. They concern first the adequacy between the level of difficulty of the book and the actual skills of the children. The adequacy is considered as good when the pupils read with a good prosody and rhythm and has a good understanding of the text. It is considered inadequate when the pupils failed at reading with a good prosody and rhythm or at understanding the text. When the adequacy is good, the pupil is encouraged to choose books of the same level, or higher, in the book cases of the classroom, to realize his/her autonomous training. When there is no adequacy, the pupil is encouraged to choose books in a simpler level.

The teacher provides then possible supports which have been determined by the research team through an analysis of theoretical knowledge on reading fluency acquisition (mainly the ones exposed in the first section of this contribution) and through a collection and a sharing of the most efficient practices of the professionals involved in the research team. Two categories of incentives and advice are highlighted:

-general incentives and advice, useful for each pupil whatever their initial skill level: choosing books of adequate difficulty that arouse interest; taking the time to record while reading aloud, and listening; never losing sight of comprehension, even while concentrating on reading fluency; taking every opportunity to read.

-specific encouragement, advice, and challenges, depending on the need of each pupil: using para-textual information; reading more than once if necessary; concentrating on punctuation; using the index finger to follow the text; ensuring that all words are processed

while reading; treating the narrative structure of what is being read; monitoring comprehension, and acting when necessary; make sure that word read is the word written.

Autonomous training

During autonomous training, the pupils have to choose a book among the classroom book cases, that fit their actual fluency skills and their interest. They have to read it aloud, while recording with the tablet computer, and following the incentives and advice given by their teacher. After reading, they have to heard the recording. If they are happy with the recording, they can share it with their parents and teacher. If not, they can proceed to another recording the next day. Parents and teacher can comment the recording, provide new incentives and encouragements. When the teacher consider that incentives and advice are fully integrated by the pupil, he proposes him or her a new assessment phase, to provide new incentives and new advice and eventually determine a new adequate level of difficulty for the books.

The teachers received a half-day training to learn how to use the material and the instructions. It was delivered in October. The data collection occurred in May-June of the same school year.

3.4 Data collection

a. Individual teacher interviews. The teacher individual interviews were realized at the end of the school year (May-June), at school. They were structured around 8 questions. 1) Can you tell me in detail how you use of the «Fluency Box» in your classroom? 2) Can you tell me about your pupils' progression this year in terms of reading fluency? 3) Can you describe your pupils' involvement with the «Fluency Box»? 4) Can you describe the involvement of your pupils' parents in relation to the «Fluency Box»? 5) What do you consider as helpful in relation with the «Fluency Box» implementation? 6) What do you consider as a weakness of the «Fluency Box» implementation? 7) What could be changed for a better use of the «Fluency Box»? 8) Can you share some significant and concrete situations in relation with the use of the «Fluency Box»? The author of this paper conducted the interviews, wrote a detailed report, and submitted it to the teacher for validation or completion.

b. Pupils group interviews. Interviews were conducted in each class, during school hours, in the presence of the teachers. They were structured around 4 questions. 1) Can you tell me how you used the «Fluency Box» in the classroom and what you did, at home, regarding your recordings (sub-questions draw attention on the different steps planned for the use of the «Fluency Box»)? 2) What do you like the most about the «Fluency Box»? 3) What did you dislike the most about the «Fluency Box»? 4) Do you have advice to give to improve the «Fluency Box», for the years to come? The group interviews were conducted by the author of this paper, recorded, and transcribed by a trained student.

c. Parents individual interviews. Every parent that participated in the project received information and was invited to contact the research team if they wished to share their feelings about the project. Thirteen parents contacted the research team and were interviewed by phone. They were asked the following questions: 1) Can you tell us about what you know on the use of the «Fluency Box», at your child's school? 2) How do you personally perceive the project? 3) Did you take notice of your child's recording? 4) Did you consult the teacher's comments? 5) Did you comment the recording? 5) What are your feelings about this project? 6) Can you suggest improvement? Each interview was summarized in a detailed written report by the interviewer: the same trained student that transcribed the classroom interviews.

3.5 Data Analysis

Applied thematic analysis was chosen for data analysis (Guest, McQueene & Namey, 2013). Analysis was realized jointly by the author of this paper and a trained student, using NVivo software. We imported data sources (transcription of the interviews with children, and the reports of the interviews with teachers and parents). Then, we labelled each source with the participants who produced them. After that, for each data sources, we used specific code to label the answer to each question of our interview guideline. Finally, we use an inductive thematic treatment of each question to be able to summarize participants' feedback and highlight the views shared by the teachers as well as those that would not be shared.

From our interviews guidelines and our objectives, we reported our analysis and results in 4 points: 1) The actual use of the approach; 2) its strength; 3) its weakness and the improvement proposed; 4) its impact as perceived by the users.

4. Results

4.1 The actual use of the pedagogical approach

The actual use of the approach in the classroom globally complied to what was expected.

The book level progression, the iterative structure of the approach, the realization of the initial interviews resulting in the formulation of advice or incentives, the use of the planned strategy list to help children, the use of tablet computers to record, the sharing of the recordings through the classroom application, the comments provided through the same application by teachers and parents were all confirmed by the actors interviewed.

In every classroom, the «Fluency Box» was used daily and each child read at least 5 books for recording purpose. However, two variations of its use were reported.

1) For one group, the teacher found that the headphones were difficult to manage. For the other group, the children did not like the noise the microphones were making when rubbing on their clothes while they were recording. So, these two groups did not use the headphone (which is to say that the recordings and the listening were done using the internal speakers and the internal microphone of the touchscreen computer tablet);

2) The parents' involvement in the process differed from one group to another. One teacher gave the parents access to the application around Christmas time, as planned. Two teachers preferred to wait until February to give access. One teacher had not yet given the access when the interviews occurred (at the end of May) but planned to do so in the following days.

Some unplanned uses were reported.

1) Every teacher used the recordings as the main component to assess the reading skill and complete their grade book. Both parents and teachers appreciated that unexpected use, as the recordings provided a tangible trace of the pupils' progression of reading skills.

2) Several pupils, parents and teachers reported that some pupils frequently borrowed the tablet computers or cell phone at home to continue to practice reading aloud and occasionally shared these home recordings with the specifically designed application. Teachers and parents considered this as an indication of the pupils' motivation to practice fluency with technology provided.

4.2 Strengths of the pedagogical approach

The four teachers who participated in the project underlined strength of the approach. For them, there is a convergence around the idea that having a common space to comment on what the children are doing was very beneficial as it provides a common stance on the children's

challenges and how to support them. They also underlined that the possibility of hearing each pupil recording when they want was user-friendly. The method used to assess the initial fluency skills of children (an interview with a standard guideline) was considered as very useful to get a precise view of the pupils' actual level. In the case of our research, the school board hired a substitute teacher on a few occasions to work with the pupils in class while the teachers were conducting these interviews during school hours. The teachers reported that the approach provided opportunities for the parents to discover strategies to support their children when reading (e.g.: helping them choose books at an appropriate level). Finally, they maintained that the approach was an excellent way to ensure that pupils actually read books and developed an interest in reading: they reported that most pupils read more books during the project than they did prior to it.

Most of the parents had feedback regarding the strengths of the project. Some pointed out that the applications were user-friendly for them and their children. Others emphasized the fact that the approach gave opportunities to follow closely the children's progress, which lead to a better school-family partnership. Some parents stated that their child had pleasure sharing their recording and feel proud about it. This idea of pleasure, toward the approach or reading in general was mentioned spontaneously mentioned by 6 parents.

As far as the pupils were concerned, they were delighted to have the opportunity to use a tablet computer independently. They mentioned that this chance to listen to their own voice was a great source of improvement, although hearing it at first was disappointing.

4.3 Indicators of improvement

The teachers indicated that the reading fluency assessment tools provided should be improved. They were constructed for a narrative book whereas the relation between local and global meaning is genre specific. Then, they proposed to create a vulgarization sheet explaining to the parents what they could do to support their child the same way that teachers do in the classroom, to improve consistency of interventions. They wish there were for more books of the simpler level, since they found there was not enough in the classroom bookcase. While they systematically listen to the pupils' recordings, they recommend not listening to the whole recording systematically, but rather to excerpts taken at several passages in the book. According to them, the reading is sufficiently homogeneous in a recording that one is not required to listen to everything. It saves time. Finally, the classroom application used produces too many notifications in its standard configuration, and teachers suggested that their number be decreased.

As the teachers did, the parents also thought that a guideline explaining how parents can support their child reading would be very useful. Several parents indicated the difficulties in configuring the app in a chosen language and relate to having missed the information to access their child's recording, which shows that the means implemented to inform parents and assist them in handling the software are important to ensure their participation.

As far as the pupils are concerned, they noted some technical issues to be addressed to make the devices more user-friendly: to have bigger shortcut icons to control the apps, to ensure that the microphone is sufficiently close to the headphone to prevent it from scratching on the clothes which produces noise and provide them with the possibility to name their audio-files using a voice command. They explained that they would appreciate having more books (in the box and in the classroom book cases) for each level, but especially for the more complex ones. Some pupils did not use the headphone. They recorded themselves at the back of the classroom without headphones. Those who did this stated that the noisy environment made the recording and rehearsal difficult. In the meanwhile, pupils who used the headphone do not mention that.

In one classroom that does not use the headphone, teacher made an acoustic booth with cardboard and foam, and pupils appreciate that.

4.4 Perceptions on the impact of the approach

The teachers noticed that most of their pupils had a better progression in reading fluency than did other groups of students they had during their career. Progress was not consistent overtime. Some students progressed very quickly, then stagnated. Others stagnated for 3 months before making rapid progress. They noted that some pupils needed to go back to a previous level before moving forward. This backtracking has helped to unlock some difficulties. Three pupils spontaneously decided to go back to a previous level. Unfortunately, the approach failed to help one pupil, in one group, who kept the same skills throughout the year.

The parents noticed their child's progress in reading fluency. While most of them made a relation between the project and the progress, one parent mentioned not being sure of this project/progress relation. Word used to qualify the progress were fluency, clarity, volume, rhythm. Some pointed out unexpected but positive consequences of the project: increase in self-confidence; increase in the taste for reading; increase in the capacity to made relation between the different readings.

The pupils did not elaborate spontaneously on the consequences of the project. When questioned, they explained that the challenges provided by their teachers helped them to improve their reading fluency. Others made a connection between their improvement in reading fluency the project.

5. Conclusion

In this contribution, we have presented a tool designed to help teachers assimilate an approach to developing their pupils' reading fluency skills. Developed by two experienced teachers, this approach uses educational technologies and involves giving the pupils challenges related to their skills, letting them practice reading aloud, recording themselves, and listening and sharing the recordings. Material needed have a moderate cost (about 1000 Canadian dollar per group).

Like many previous studies, this approach uses repeated readings of texts (as what the results of the meta-analysis by Hudson, Koh, Moore & Binks-Cantrell, 2020, suggest). The interest of the approach proposed in this article is to offer a motivating scenario to the pupils to produce these repetitions: they must repeat themselves as much as necessary to transmit a recording of which they are proud to their teachers and to their families. Firstly, this introduces a self-evaluative dimension to the work of fluency that the students, as well as the teachers, have found to be determining, according to our data. The value of self-assessment of reading aloud has already been highlighted in research (Duffey, 2015; Arens, Gove & Abate, 2018; Özenç & Ferhat 2022; Ness, 2017) and probably explains a significant part of the positive experience of the experiment which the participants share. Then, communicating the recordings to the family offers opportunities for parents to get involved and previous research showed how important this lever is (Rasinski & Stevenson, 2005; Sénéchal, 2006; Zambrana, 2019). In the case of our study, the incentives and advices that the teachers gave to the students were communicated to the parents. Our results show that parents, teachers and students found it facilitating because it allowed them to agree on common goals.

The approach uses targeted feedback, offered by a fluent reader, as proposed by Rasinski, 2005). Here, feedbacks are provided by the teachers or the parent, and the feedback provided by one is known by the others. The approach uses a touchscreen computer tablet, as several research on fluency interventions. As mentioned in the introduction to this article, some works that use touchscreen computers tablets do so to make use of specific fluency training

applications (Thoermer & Williams, 2012, Musti-Rao, Lo & Plati, 2015, Minze, Bryant & Bryant, 2020; Minze & Park, 2021), while others use them instead for recording (Arens, Gove & Abate, 2018; Özenç & Ferhat, 2022; Ness, 2017). Our study is in the tradition of the latter and go further by highlighting the possibilities offered by information sharing between school and home through a classroom application.

The data collected indicate that the approach can be realistically implemented. It allows parents and teachers to share opinions and contributes to the development of children's reading fluency skills. Of course, the approach is not solely about using a touchscreen computer tablet to record, listen and share. Our data highlight the conditions that need to be met to ensure that the approach is consistent with what we have described:

-Teacher training is needed to enable teachers to use a variety of strategies to support pupils' reading fluency skills. In our project, this support took the form of challenges, incentives, and guidance that can be provided depending on the children's current skills.

-Support to teachers within the classroom is essential. In our project, teachers identified two elements that they felt crucial: support in taking ownership of the interview process with students and support in determining the difficulty level of books in the classroom bookcases.

The data indicate that the approach can be improved. Teachers found that the application sent a large amount of notification and advised to address this problem by adjusting the notification settings. They also suggested limiting listening to pupils' recordings to a few clips, as they felt this would not affect the quality of the feedback they could give, and would free their time to focus on other aspects of their pupils' success.

The parents recommend that they be better informed about how the app works and especially how they can help their children. In the project, some parents did not use the app. Whatever the reason, we need to find a way to remedy this problem.

Pupils drew attention mainly on two points.

1) They need a calm and quiet space to practice reading aloud. So, the conditions to ensure this must be meticulously planned and different solutions emerged (use of the closed headphone, an acoustic booth, a designated space).
2) They were not sufficiently aware of the progress they were making. Therefore, feedback should emphasize this progress more to help the pupils identify it.

For this research, we decided to begin by ensuring that the approach could be implemented and by gathering the perspectives of the actors on this implementation. This contribution ensures it, although the point of view of the parents remain to be more representatively assess, as a few of them responded to our solicitation. Now that the conditions for this feasibility are more precisely defined, further research is needed to objectively assess the impact of this proceeding on the fluency skills of children. Such research would allow us to determine if the progress noted by teachers and parents can be measured and associated to the approach implemented.

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INTERROGATING MENTAL STASIS: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF TWO FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN NOVELS

Sikiru Adeyemi Ogundokun [1] **Olubunmi Oyebola Alaje[2]** **Musibau Olusola Lawal[3]**

[1]Department of French, Faculty of Humanities, Ikire Campus,

Osun State University, Osogbo (Nigeria)

sikiru.ogundokun@uniosun.edu.ng

[2]Department of French, Faculty of Humanities, Ikire Campus,

Osun State University, Osogbo (Nigeria)

olubunmi.alaje@uniosun.edu.ng

[3]Department of English and Literary Studies Faculty of Humanities, Ikire Campus,Osun State University, Osogbo (Nigeria)

musibau.lawal@uniosun.edu.ng

Abstract

After 1960, there is a shift from the Negritude idea which celebrates African culture to a more committed literary activity that matches the contemporary realities of the post-independent experiences. Most African creative writers are troubled by the kind of politics and political ideologies Africans are subjected to. This study, therefore, interrogates the social realities in postcolonial African society. The purpose of this study is to call the attention of those in positions of authority to the fact that social injustice and unemployment are the root causes of insecurity, crimes, and other vices in human societies. Based on *French explication de texte*, that is, textual content analysis as its methodology, two novels are examined. The two selected novelists are militant in nature and they have an inclination toward protest writing with a view to correcting the ugly practices in their societies. The paper adopts Marxism as its theoretical framework. The findings reveal that the required liberation of the downtrodden from oppressive authorities is possible if the masses unite. The research finding also suggests that social transformation can be achieved through sociopolitical consciousness. The paper, therefore, submits that for a country to develop, the masses should make the governments, at various levels, do the needful by making them accountable for their actions and in-actions.

Keywords: Francophone, mental stasis, novel, society, post-independent experiences.

1. Introduction

Mental stasis can be translated as *Mùmú*. *Mùmú* is an urban slang that is commonly used by city dwellers. It connotes the state of keeping quiet unnecessarily for too long over important matters which adversely affect one's life socioeconomically, politically, and otherwise. As a concept, it describes a poor state of mindset or mental capacity when people accept whatever is thrown at them without any question. The state of being in mental stasis demonstrates a lack of awareness, ignorance, or a show of nonchalant attitude. However, the rejection of mental stasis

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[1] **Corresponding author:** Sikiru Adeyemi Ogundokun
ORCID ID : https://0000-0003-4243-8695

marks the beginning of the emancipation of the mind. That is, to be mentally freed from the shackles of sociopolitical bondage, to say the least. The rejection of mental stasis shows that citizens, especially the poor masses are ready to take their destiny into their hands and fight for their rights, without minding the consequences. In other words, the people are saying *ótógé* (it is enough). Hence, they are ready to *sòròsókè* (to speak out loud and clear). The terms *ótógé* (it is enough) and *sòròsókè* are markers of the rejection of mental stasis. These two terms denote a state of self-consciousness when people decide to revolt against certain forms of social injustice individually and/or collectively. The end ♯SARS saga in Nigeria in October 2020 is a good example of the rejection of stupidity which is conceptualized in this article as the rejection of mental stasis. It simply means a state of saying a big "NO" to oppression, corruption, cheating, and other forms of social injustice which are often perpetrated by government agencies, security apparatus, or people at the corridors of power.

Good governance has to do with the ability to draw up government policy, coordinate the policy, and supervise or monitor human actions to achieve the desired goals, within a stipulated frame of time through serious acts of discipline. Attempting to define governance, (Omoleke, 2009, p. 14) opines that "to govern implies harnessing human and material resources, compliance with the law that is the constitution, listening to and accepting advice, allowing freedom of expression, accepting guilt and ready to make corrections." According to World Bank (1989), good governance means "sound management." In other words, good governance is "the manner in which (political) power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development." One thing is clear, good governance demonstrates administrators' capacity to organize and coordinate effectively both human and material resources with a view to providing adequate social amenities which are required for development socioeconomically.

However, in African states, underdevelopment is the hallmark of the human condition occasioned by bad governance and docile followership. Some committed literary writers, therefore, center their creative works on the prevailing situations. They make their narratives people and society oriented. This study is guided by the assertion that "some questions can indeed be answered in the laboratory, while others cannot. One cannot (for instance), measure happiness in the laboratory" (Schofield, 1972, p. 31). Aside from that, many problems remain unsolved in Africa because the people have failed to develop their own philosophy. According to Oladipo (1999, p. 71), there is actually a difference between the "culture of belief" and the "culture of inquiry." And, for that reason, Oladipo says:

The culture of inquiry involves systematic investigations of phenomena-natural or social– with a view to enhancing our understanding of their nature. These investigations demand not only systematic observation of things and processes in nature and society, but they also involve the use of reason to conceive of possible explanations for what we observe. Thus, the culture of inquiry is usually propelled by the pursuit of meaning. It "involves seeking and purposeful effort" aimed at creating a better world.

Fundamentally, to fulfill the quest for a meaningful culture of inquiry, committed writers adopt satire to expose the follies and the vices in their communities for people to ponder about the situations around them and adjust their ways of life for the purpose of ensuring positive social change. As a matter of fact, Africans should drop the idea of just believing things without making an inquiry. The development of an inquisitive mind leads some creative writers into interrogating the social order of their time in their community in their search for good governance. By good governance, Ode (2013, p. 131) has argued:

A good government would ensure that social amenities are provided, that policies which are formulated are achievable, sustainable, and consistent, and that the three arms of government remain independent of each other to enable them to act as checks and balances for each other.

Relating the description of a good government painted by Ode to the African situation, one will say the journey has not started. Inadequate social infrastructure, unemployment, prostitution, poverty, and a high rate of crime are the order of the day. (Falola, 2015, p. 79) asserts:

The monopoly of the state to sell its own ideology has to be confronted. Knowledge must empower women, the grassroots, and civil societies to solve age-old problems of economic underdevelopment and political instability. We cannot expect to take advantage of new possibilities and opportunities if we cannot comprehend and correct the mistakes of the past.

From the foregoing, the truth is that Africans have to constructively confront the existing social order which does not allow sustainable development if they are interested in overcoming the prevailing challenges. This is the motif of some African novelists, playwrights, and poets. Patrick Ilboudo and Fatou Keïta whose novels are selected for this study belong to the category of writers seeking social transformation in Africa.

1. Brief Insight into the Concept of Marxism

Marxism, as a theory in literary studies, can be connected to the philosophical beliefs and principles postulated by Karl Heinrich Marx, a German philosopher in the 19th century, and Friedrich Engels, a French political economist of the same century. Marxism is an economic and political ideology. It is revolutionary in nature because it seeks to put an end to capitalism which is believed to be the root cause of socioeconomic imbalances in every society.

Marxism advocates for equality, fairness, and a balanced society in terms of the production and distribution of resources (wealth) of a given society. The rejection of religion and spiritualism is pertinent to the Marxists because it is believed that religion has been misused to brainwash mankind and to control his mind to his disadvantage. The issue of woman emancipation is equally taken seriously by the Marxists because it is hoped that too will contribute meaningfully to the development of society if they are liberated and empowered socioeconomically as well as politically.

Applying Marxist theory to arts, in this case, literature; there is an established dialectical connection between the content and the context of literary expressions. The content is the message of a text while the context implies the style, the form, or the technique applied in putting the text together. The content is often drawn from the social life of the people and the society presented in the arts. The style is informed by the social life itself which may sometimes be conditioned by the existing forces of nature and humans in a particular society.

Marxists see the issues of economic power, class conflict, materialism, and spirituality as the bone of contention in human societies. To them, literature, as a form of art, is a means of expressing a class struggle. Literary production is, therefore, a matter of personal and social expression. It is sufficient to say that each class in a society produces its own literature and art. In other words, there is evidence of class consciousness in Marxist texts.

2. Synopses of the Selected Novels

Patrick Ilboudo's *Les vertiges du trône* (1990) is about Bogya, an imaginary Franco-African State, whose capital city is Titao. The country is under a dictator after the much-awaited independence. President Benoît Wédraogo displays all the characteristics of *"l'État, c'est moi"* (I am the state). He is a wicked dictator per excellence, a corrupt leader of the highest order,

and an unrepentant blood-sucker. President Benoît Wédraogo administers his country without empathy. His government does not wear a human face.

Ting Boutoum and Alain Boussé among other cohorts are the tools in the hands of the said President of Bogya to manipulate the populace and subject them to perpetual suffering. However, the novelist uses Gom Naba as a watchdog in the story. Gom Naba is indeed born sound-minded but his environment later makes him miserable. Hence, he is considered a madman. He is a character of multiple faces, who keeps his eagle's eyes on the activities of the government officials, the military, the police, and the perceived opposition of the dictatorial government of President Benoît Wédraogo. In the end, we see the fall of President Benoît Wédraogo and his associates as well as the destruction of the systemic structure they have injected into the polity of their nation. The ruler, President Benoît Wédraogo, falls from grace to grass and becomes an object of ridicule. He is paid back in his own coin by the people he has humiliated and exercised his megalomania upon. As a price for his wrong dealings, Ting Boutoum's lifeless body is found by the roadside, and on the second day, his master is overpowered. It is hoped that Bogya will be permanently liberated from its political shackles and socially transformed after the disgraceful exit of President Benoît Wédraogo and his cohorts.

Fatou Keïta's *Rebelle* (1998) in a journalistic style, presents the story of Malimouna, a 14-year-old young African girl who refuses to be circumcised as demanded by the custom of her land. She is forced into a marriage that makes her a murderer and a wanted criminal. Malimouna has to flee from home, and later, goes abroad. She courageously braces herself for challenges that confront her. She is able to educate herself formally, get a job, and get married. She however returns home after some time and settles with Karim, a young African man, who has experienced a failed relationship with Philippe Blain, a French national. Malimouna eventually succeeds; she forms a Non-Governmental Organization to fight social injustice particularly in Africa as regards gender imbalances occasioned by socio-cultural pretenses.

3. Discussion on Critical Interrogation of Mental Stasis in Two Francophone African Novels

Narration is a verbal or written description of events and actions. It is a process of storytelling in continuous writing form or in a play. The narrative form adopted by different authors or even the same author can change from time to time. For example, what an author treats (subject matter), why he treats it when he treats it, and where and how he treats the subject can determine an author's narrative strategy.

Amadou Touré, Patrick Ilboudo's protagonist in *Les vertiges du trône* demonstrates a practical use of force to demand the legitimate rights of the poor, the deprived, and the oppressed in African societies. In a collective struggle, the downtrodden, encouraged by the action of Amadou Touré, a student leader, are able to bring President Benoit Wédraogo and his government to a tragic end by carrying out a mass action against the dictatorial regime. Obviously, Ilboudo makes his audience(s) understand that even in the post-independence African socio-political space, violent revolt stands a chance of bringing the desired social change.

Interestingly, in Fatou Keïta's narrative entitled *Rebelle*, there is a mixture of violent and non-violent protests. Malimouna begins by refusing to be circumcised and moves on to radically and violently reject forced marriage by killing old Sando, his father's friend whom she is compelled to marry only because the man is rich. After she escapes from many challenges, she is educated overseas and forms a non-governmental organization to assist women who have difficulties in one way or the other. Through her NGO, Malimouna fights social injustice in Africa, using non-violent means.

Another element of narrative used by the selected Francophone African writers is satire. The two selected Francophone African novels are satirical as they expose the seeming vices and follies in African communities. The attempts to ridicule such unacceptable behavior, attitudes, and practices are for the purpose of correcting them so that society can develop. In their attack on religion, culture, and politics, the selected Francophone African writers use satire which is laced with sarcasm, irony, simile, metaphor, humor, symbolism, and allusion.

The mental pictures created through the scenes where President Wédraogo, the maximum ruler in Patrick Ilboudo's *Les vertiges du trône* is tortured are sarcastic. They teach the lesson of life that no condition is permanent. A great deal of humor is again found in Fatou Keïta's *Rebelle*, with the picture of old Sando as he struggles with Malimouna at the night of their marriage and the image of Dimikela who engages in a love affair with Seynou under a tree in the forest. These actions betray the so-called elders who are supposed to be the custodians of good culture and moral uprightness in African societies. Keïta designs a major character, Malimouna with adequate potential and knowledge which makes her successful. An individualized struggle that begins with Malimouna ends in a collective struggle against unacceptable traditions. Through her NGO, "l'Association d'Aide à la Femme en Difficulté" (AAFD), the protagonist and other women are able to break some sociocultural ethos that is used to oppress women. (Sanusi, 2015, p. 113) remarks:

Gramsci's idea of "permanent victory" can only be attained in a dual process involving the re-creation of the oppressed subject and the transformation of the socio-cultural context in which the oppressed (in this context, the oppressed woman) finds herself.

In terms of narrative technique, the omniscient narrative method which is an eyewitness account of an event where the narrator seems to be all-knowing, all-present, and has direct access to explore the mind and vision of each character in a story is used in the two selected novels.

In his narration, Patrick Ilboudo injects the character of a mentally challenged man, Gom Naba, to serve as a watchdog over events and actions in the novel. This proves that everybody in any society counts and that everybody is somehow conscious of the decay often caused by myopic governments.

As part of their narrative strategy, the selected Francophone African writers use dialogues in their prose-fictions to particularly make their works dramatic and more entertaining. Through detailed descriptions, the writers create a deep sense of realism and solidity. Gestures, actions, scenes, and characters are minutely captured. They are adept in the use of imagery and figures of speech.

In fact, the narrative style adopted by the selected writers matches the three major stages of the revolution. They x-ray the unconsciousness stage when the oppressed are ignorant of their rights and privileges; that is, the period before the self-awareness and self-identity; then the rebellion stage when the downtrodden become informed about their rights and privileges and decide to ask for them from their oppressors whether violently or non-violently. For instance, the time when African railway workers, who are later joined by their women, get the full knowledge of the economic exploitation they suffer at the hands of their colonial employers marks the rebellion stage. The time Amadou Touré declares protest against the dictatorial government of President Benoit Wédraogo whose agents attack *Le Républicain*, the only private media in the land at that time, represents the stage of rebellion. The time Salla Niang and her fellow beggars organize themselves out of the roads, repackage and earn their living in a more decent manner indicate the rebellion stage.

Moreover, Malimouna's rejection of cultural excesses on the feminine gender in Africa is rebellion. "Permanent victory" which is the third stage of any positive revolution can be translated as the evidential turnaround in the displacement of the old social orders and the social transformation which follows it. Revolutionary consciousness and rebellion will continue to be an object of discourse not only in academic debates but also in our daily socio-political discussions. Baje (2016, p. 22) has noted:

The dark days are here for real. The screaming newspaper headlines attest to this: "79.9 million Nigerians are jobless." "272 manufacturing companies close shop." "Industrial production dips by 9.53 percent." "Banks and insurance companies cut workers' salaries." "Inflation hits an all-time high of 17.1 percent; the worst in three decades!' '1,200 workers lose jobs as Aero Contractors halts operations." "600 pilots roam our streets." "Many Nigerians are relocating to their villages…"

Currently, 22 states have yet to pay pensioners their entitlements and 27 states cannot pay staff salaries, as and when due. That is curious, even as some of the state governors concerned fly over the long-suffering masses in private jets, while others riddle our days with convoys of siren-blaring, exotic wonders on wheels.

What the quotation expresses is the contemporary realities of African states and it confirms that consciousness and rebellion shall always be a continuous issue of debate in human nations. The expressions of bottled anger mark that somebody must ask questions about why policies and programs are not working. The high-handedness of the upper-class characters is the root cause of rebellion as one can practically see in the purposively selected Francophone African novels. The downtrodden, the deprived, the poor, or the oppressed become aggressive in an attempt to change their situation for a better life experience.

Unfortunately, more than fifty years of self-rule in most African states have only resulted in corrupt leaders, politicians, soldiers, and other security agencies that are as dangerous as criminals. They are supposed to be apprehended and made to pay for their atrocities against the state. (Sanusi, 2015, p. 203 -4) reiterates:

The majority of francophone African writers, very conscious of their commitment, have, as soon as they appeared on the African literary stage, launched a caustic attack on various forms of injustice reigning within their society or state. After the ambivalent years of colonialism and independence in Africa, the continent and, most especially, Africans have continued to witness another imperial era, this time, controlled by the new lords of the lands, clothed in either Khaki or Agbada. This set of new lords or rulers constitutes a greater menace, if not a terror, to the continent, than the colonial lords they replaced.

Sanusi's submission shows that the struggle of the Africans, particularly the innocent masses, continues as their plight appears unending. This sharp gap between the oppressor and the oppressed has informed the revolutionary tendencies of the poor masses. The hostility in the socio-cultural, political, economic, and religious spheres of Africa has allowed the successful adoption of Marxist cum communist ideologies as demonstrated in Patrick Ilboudo's *Les vertiges du trône.*

It can be recalled that Africans have a mindset for setting up an egalitarian society. And, this informs the anti-colonial or anti-apartheid movement in Africa. They expected that independence would mean self-actualization, good governance, and adequate social well-being. They expected employment opportunities and a sufficient food supply for everybody. Disappointedly, the reality is the failed system. For instance, President Benoît Wédraogo, in

Ilboudo's *Les vertges du trône* orders the military to fire the protesting students, who are constitutionally exercising their fundamental human rights of expression (freedom of speech), movement, and that associations.

Le ministre de la Défense, sur instruction expresse du Président, chef des armées a donné carte blanche au capitaine Zizien Traboulga de tirer sur la foule en cas de nécessité (Ilboudo, 1990, p. 53).

> The Ministry of defense, on the President's order, the Chief of Army Staff authorized Captain Zizien Traboulga, with immediate effect, to fire at the crowd when necessary [The authors' translation].

The same President Wédraogo orders that the revolutionary agitators be arrested and tortured. ". . . avait donné l'ordre de les appréhender et de les torturer . . . les troupes des révolutionnaires . . . (p64) . . .". had given the order to apprehend and torture them. . . the troops of the revolutionaries.) [The authors' translation]. President Wédraogo openly declares: "Il faut, à partir de maintenant, les exterminer tous (les révolutionnaires)" (p. 120). It is necessary from now on, to exterminate all of them (the revolutionaries). This is not the type of independence the Africans fought for. They do not deserve to be treated like wild animals. This instance actually reminds us of a dialogue between Bohi Di and another character in Alioum Fantouré's *Le cercle des Tropiques* (1972) which is reproduced below:

> Tu sais, dans nos villages, nous nous demandons ce qu'est l'indépendance. Notre vie n'a pas changé, nos récoltes sont toujours mauvaises, nous travaillions toujours durement comme avant. Les impôts ont augmenté, ce qui est pire qu'avant, et puis les délégués du Paris nous dépouillent lors de leurs tournées et ils en font plusieurs par mois ; si ce n'est pas l'un c'est l'autre. Si c'est ça l'indépendance, mieux valait supporter les toubabs, car maintenant nous supportons et les toubabs et les chefs indigènes (Fantouré, 1972, p. 168).

> Do you know that in our villages, we ask ourselves what independence stands for? Our life has remained unchanged, our farm yields remain poor and we still labor hard as we did in the past. Taxes have increased, even worse than before, and more so, party delegates exploit us during their several monthly unsolicited visits; it is either one fellow or the other. If that is what independence implies, it would have been better if we supported the Whites, because now we are supporting both the Whites and the native chiefs [The authors' translation].

From the excerpt, the character laments an ugly situation of serving two exploitative masters at the same time, when the so-called masters do not care about the plight of the populace. There is practically endemic poverty in African states, and this is one of the causes of the open confrontation between the rulers and the ruled. Embarrassingly, the inferno that guts *Le Républicain*, the only privately owned media, is masterminded by the agents of President Wédraogo. This can be authenticated by the show of ignorance in the president's speech:

> La radio, la télévision et la presse écrite, dans ma République, doivent dicter aux gens ce que je voudrais qu'ils pensent des événements (Ilboudo, 1990, p. 12).

> The radio, the television, and the print media, in my Republic, must tell the people what I would like them to think about events [The authors' translation].

Obviously, it is understood why President Wédraogo *"Président pourri, fasciste"* (*Les vertiges . . .* p. 64), as described by the novelist, bottled the press as it were. The Press is a powerful agent of social mobilization, which can be used to influence the populace by setting agenda for them and gate-keeping their public opinions. But, what President Wédraogo displays here is a serious abuse of his political power. He is power drunk and has committed a crime against humanity. Strongly connected with this demonstration o.f political corruption is the socio-political alienation, which can be found in the segmentation of the society in Bogya, especially in Titao. There is a sharp difference between the two parts into which Titao city is divided: Le contraste entre les deux quartiers de Titao est frappant à l'œil nu comme le jour et la nuit" (Ilboudo, 1990, p. 25). The disparity between the two parts of Titao is glaring [The authors' translation].

The people in government and their White collaborators live in affluence while the masses wallow in abject poverty. "Le Président à l'imagination fertile et extravagante. Quand une idée le séduit, il la chiffre et fait payer la facture à la caisse de l'État" (Ilboudo, 1990, p. 28). The President has a high and extravagant taste. When an idea seduces him, he costs it and pays the bill from the state's treasury [The authors' translation]. The dictator, President Wédraogo describes the ideology of the revolutionaries as primitive, "projet primitifs". He, therefore, wants this vision or system of belief, which according to him, dates back about three centuries, crushed. He wants the agitators exterminated so that their activities can be neutralized. With that, he would have his way and perhaps his peace of mind and continue to stay on in power, unchallenged, for a long period.

Similarly, the opening pages of Keïta's *Rebelle* present awareness of the poverty which ravages African communities and the cultural consciousness on the part of the Diamas. Sanita's parents wished she could be connected to African cultural values, particularly the ability to speak their native language. Hence, they took their daughter to their hometown during holidays so that they could achieve their objective.

> Sanita habitait Salouma, la capitale, et ne parlait que le français, c'est pourquoi ses parents l'emmenaient régulièrement passer ses vacances au village, afin qu'elle s'imprègne de sa culture et de sa langue d'origine (Keïta, 1998, p. 6).

> Sanita lived in Salouma, the capital and she could only speak French which was why her parents took her to the village regularly to spend her holidays in order to imbibe her culture and learn her native language [The authors' translation].

Mr. and Mrs. Diama's effort to make their daughter learn their native language and imbibe their customs is commendable. It is the beginning of wisdom. The decision to "défranciser" (*Rebelle* 17) their children who are born in France can also be seen as a form of rebellion.

In Fatou Keïta's *Rebelle*, Malimouna violently rejects marrying old Sando, a rich man who happens to be her father's friend. Similarly, female African writers are conscious that infidelity among men is a blow to women. It is a serious cause of female annoyance. It can be described as a social, cultural, and moral mess. While men promote this practice, women frown at it because it often breaks marriages or leads to polygamy. Polygamy, to the Marxist feminists, is injurious to the progress of the couple and the home. It does not permit a true sense of belonging on the part of women. Infidelity is the cause of Jacqueline's psychological disorder in Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre*. Mojola (2000, p. 249) has observed:

> Pour les femmes-écrivains, la polygamie nuit à l'épanouissement du couple… Et même si elles sont conscientes que le mariage monogame n'est pas une garantie de bonheur, il reste à leurs yeux une marque de respect pour la femme, partenaire à part entière dans le mariage.

> For female writers, polygamy is injurious to the development of the couple… And even if they are aware that the monogamous marriage is not a guarantee of happiness, it still remains for them a mark of respect for the woman, a full-fledged partner in the marriage [The authors' translation]

> La nouvelle de l'incendie du Journal a surchauffé l'esprit des élèves et des étudiants, au point qu'ils ont décidé d'organiser une marche de protestation à la fois contre la suppression de la liberté d'opinion et contre le non-paiement des bourses d'études (Ilboudo, 1990, p. 42)

> The news about the setting ablaze of the Newspaper house (Le Républicain) punched the spirits of the pupils and students, to the point that they decided to organize a protest march against the suppression of the freedom of speech and at the same time, to fight against the non-payment of their bursary allowances [The authors' translation].

Amadou Touré, the leader of the students' body further adds:

> L'instant est grave. Le gouvernement vient d'incendier le seul journal indépendant du pays. Il ne paie pas nos bourses. Il met en chômage technique nos parents. L'instant est grave et nous devons agir (Ilboudo, 1990, p. 43).

> The case is serious. The government has just burnt down the only independent newspaper in the country. It does not pay our bursary allowances. It subjects our parents to unemployment technically. The case is serious and we must act [The authors' translation].

The minor, as it were, call for the removal of a dictator, an unfriendly and shameless regime that has succeeded in reducing them to nothing. During the protest march, some of the inscriptions on the students' banner read: "Nous voulons du pain et de la liberté". "Benoît Wédraogo, démission". "Non à la dictature", (*Les vertiges* . . . p. 51). We want food and freedom. Benoît Wédraogo, must go. No to dictatorship [The authors' translation]. The students frown at the charlatans, who have nothing to offer society. It can also be understood that the conflict between the government and the students symbolizes a divorce between the government (the state) and the masses. The students' body is to readers and to the novelist, the Marxists, or the Communists, who demand the replacement of the old social order that closes its eyes against the progress of the suffering tax-payers. The restructuring of unfavorable social order and the re-establishment of trust, which will bring *permanent victory,* are the major concerns of the revolutionaries. True democracy should permit constructive criticism and objective opposition. The revolutionaries also see the idea of freedom and responsibility as crucial to social transformation and human development.

As a matter of fact, *Rebelle*, as Keïta's novel is entitled, is indeed a revolutionary piece. The writer criticizes a lot of social injustices, especially those vices which incapacitate women in African societies. Malimouna, Keïta's protagonist, protests against the tradition of circumcising young African girls (*Rebelle,* pp. 14, 15, 21, 26, and 27). "Je ne veux pas passer cette épreuve, déclara Malimouna brusquement" (*Rebelle* p. 15). I do not want to go through this test, Malimouna declared bluntly [The authors' translation]. (Sanusi, 2015, p. 121) notes:

Keïta in her novel (*Rebelle*) strongly condemns the practice of female circumcision and advocates for its end because, to her, this rite causes harm to women and has no reasonable justification to be carried out on them any longer.

The heroine also condemns forced marriage (*Rebelle,* pp. 29 & 39) and the abandonment of women. According to the narrator;

> Louma, le père de Malimouna, les avait abandonées depuis longtemps, sous prétext que Matou ne faisait plus d'enfant, et qu'il lui fallait des fils qui porteraient son nom et seraient sa fierté (Keïta, 1998, p. 24).

> Louma, Malimouna's father had abandoned them for a long time on the pretense that Matou could no longer have any child, and that he would like to have sons that would bear his name and make him proud [The authors' translation].

In *Rebelle*, Keïta again frowns at rape (*Rebelle,* p. 6) and arranged marriages between young couples even though they are not forced (*Rebelle,* p. 86). For instance, the writer rejects abnormal behavior which most men display towards their female counterparts, especially in an arranged marriage as readers can see in the case of Barou and Fanta. Such a marriage must be discouraged if Africa must develop. Sanusi (2015, p. 113) has remarked:

> The subaltern person, generally speaking, when fighting to overthrow the system that oppresses him or her, functions within a group with which he/she is affiliated. It is generally assumed that it is after the subaltern becomes conscious of his or her condition that he or she seeks a change of situation by attacking the oppressors.

From the foregoing, seeking compromise does not often work in the settlement of issues, hence, the oppressed result to the use of force in destroying religious, cultural, and other forms of shackles that imprisoned them. And, this is exactly what Malimouna has done.

There is also a non-violent protest against racism (*Rebelle,* p. 137). Malimouna's relationship with Philipe Blain, a French man hits the rock because of color difference. Keïta tries to correct the idea of treating women as doormats by removing the established double standard of sexual morality and equality in African society. For example, Fraschetti (2001, p. 2) has affirmed:

> Every woman's life was surrounded by a thick silence imposed upon her by the outer world and by the woman herself. It was considered unseemly for outsiders to praise a woman's virtues, for talents and abilities could find expression only within her home. No one but her closest relatives could know anything of her merits, and the members of her family were the only persons permitted to speak of her to others.

Society is divided along the line of gender; the male and the female. The male which comprises the men is adjudged to be the powerful, the oppressor, and the predator while the female connotes the weak, the oppressed, and the prey. The novelist seeks, among other things, a redress of the patriarchal power, which has crippled women from contributing to the progress of human society and the social well-being of men. Patrick Ilboudo's *Les vertiges du trône* has two social classes, namely, those in the corridors of power, and then, the masses, who are recklessly oppressed. Fatou Keïta's *Rebelle* like Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* has two social classes which are divided along gender lines. The male folk, who take the advantage of culture and religion to unduly oppress the womenfolk, stand for the powerful class, whereas the second social class is made up of the deprived, particularly the women.

From what one can observe, historic material possession is the baseline of these class demarcations and social stratifications, which eventually lead to frustration and social conflicts. "The conflicts, contradictions, and misfortunes of characters in the novel grow from and flourish in the manure of poverty, moral decadence, and greed" (Ekundayo and Ikediugwu, 2015, p. 136). Falola (2015, p. 81) has postulated:

> A 'cultural Africana' is a cultural coup to reclaim Africa, a nationalization project, to have a platform to withstand devastating capitalist forces, and to end the commodification of Africa. Representation offers the affirmation of our citizenship and our position in the global network. Representation allows the humanities to distance itself from inefficient states and corrupt leadership, positioning us to create the crucial difference between scholars and governments. I have to demonstrate that the scholarship we generate connects with the aspirations of the majority of Africans, and are not subcultural ghettos aimed merely at climbing the ladder of privileges.

By and large, by documenting cultural practices, their norms, and values (where applicable) in literary compositions, it becomes easy and possible to transmit or reshape such customs and beliefs from one generation to another without distorting them. Information kept in black and white remains intact longer than the oral traditions and this has contributed to social transformation which any human society requires. Lamphere (2005, p. viii) has stressed the importance of culture by proposing that the knowledge of how culture works gives human beings greater control over their own future. She condemns the view that Western culture is the best; more evolved, and asserts that each culture must be seen as it sees itself. Abayomi (2000, p. 7) has suggested:

> that the right leader should be chosen and not the rich leader. A leader that will lift us up, not the one that will eat us up. The ideal government demands us to raise men and women of courage to guide and guard us, for it is the human that makes a difference in the affairs of mankind.

Yes, every nation of the world needs a leader that will ensure development through human capacity building. However, the problematic aspect of Abayomi's point of view is that good morals, which are a required factor of good governance, are a thing of the mind. It is evident in Africa that both leaders who were rich and those who were poor before they found themselves in elective positions could be power-drunk at very slight chances and become dictators. There are often reports of leaders who had no shoes while growing up but when they had the opportunity to rebuild their country, there were allegations of indiscipline and financial recklessness against their personalities. So, all that is needed is developing the right core value system.

African people must be influenced positively in their cultural terms to help them design and develop the kind of government they want. Besides employment creation, some aspects of African culture can bring the desired attitudinal change. Hence, the government needs to finance the development of culture, which can contribute meaningfully to socioeconomic development. Cultural enterprises must be patronized for social mobilization of the citizenry and other activities. Cultural industries, apart from economic values, will uplift people aesthetically and psychologically. Jain (2010, p. 89) is of the view that "in influencing people, some important aspects deal with attitude and attitude change, as well as with communication, alternatives, and outcomes..." It is imperative; therefore, that Africans must understand fully what has negatively happened to them culturally and sincerely provide solutions. If they must progress, there is a need to correctly manage their culture. Culture is about the people from one

generation to another. This view is what the two selected novelists intended by presenting cultural issues in their literary works to form a part of their narratives.

Undoubtedly, readership is sustained by the selected Francophone African writers through spectacular handling of their themes, motifs, plots, imagery, myths, characterization, and the use of dialogues in their artistic works. Issues of class society and social injustice such as cruel cultural practices as well as religious hypocrisy there-in motivated the selected Francophone African novelists to embark on their artistic creation. The socioeconomic struggle for survival is a serious issue that hunts human societies from one generation to another, and this is often reflected in literary works. As has been pointed out before, the narrative form adopted by different authors or even the same author can change from time to time. For example, what an author treats (subject matter), why he treats it when he treats it, and where and how he treats the subject can determine an author's narrative strategy.

5. Conclusion

In this study, Fatou Keïta's *Rebelle* and Patrick Ilboudo's *Les vertiges du trône* are investigated. Fatou Keïta is a female Francophone African writer while Patrick Ilboudo is a male. They are both contemporary writers of the postcolonial phase of African political history.

In sum, this study has argued that creative writers; novelists, poets, playwrights, and even essayists can use their narratives to capture the sociopolitical realities of their countries. Seeking good governance in Africa, the selected novelists, Keïta and Ilboudo, build their narratives around prevailing contemporary issues in the postcolonial African space. They agitate for fundamental human rights which will pave the way for sociopolitical consciousness and economic development. They raise the issue of culture and suggest cultural re-design and re-orientation for Africans to have a sense of direction. The two authors also advocate for women's liberation and empowerment, in a male-dominated Africa. To the writers, all these issues raised are the determinants for all forms of development and a tenet to reject any form of manipulation from oppressive governments.

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Note: The translations in this work are done by the authors.

PERFORMANCE OF NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS IN ACCURATE REPORTAGE OF SELECTED SUPREME COURT DECISIONS

IGE, Ise-Oluwa Ojo [1] [ID]   Aderogba Adeyemi [2] [ID]
[1] Osun State University, Osogbo (Nigeria),
ise-oluwa.ige@uniosun.edu.ng
[2] Osun State University, Osogbo (Nigeria),
aderogba.adeyemi@uniosun.edu.ng

Abstract

Previous studies have focused on the Supreme Court of Nigeria (SCN) from a wide range of perspectives. But literature search reveals a dearth of studies on media reportage of SCN's decisions and the extent to which the media accurately communicate the judgments to the public. This study evaluates the magnitude and accuracy of media reports on six selected decisions of the apex court. Social responsibility theory provided the theoretical framework. Primary data was collected from the reports of the selected newspapers while certified Supreme Court judgments of the selected cases formed the secondary data. The Guardian, The Punch, Daily Trust and Daily Sun newspapers were selected for the study based on ownership and national circulation. Twenty-four editions of the newspapers were selected for content analysis. A 14-item coding sheet was the instrument of data collection. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The selected newspapers were fairly accurate (57.5%) in communicating the decisions of the SCN. The Guardian newspaper had the most accurate reports (76%), while the Daily Sun had the least accurate reports (44.7%). The study found that the magnitude and degree of accuracy of the newspaper reports depended on the nature of the case facts, the political weight of the parties involved in the dispute, nature of the judgments handed down by the SCN in the cases, and the individual newspapers owing to ownership interest, location and their editorial policies.

Keywords: *Accuracy of report; Supreme Court of Nigeria; holding; Nigerian newspapers; Supreme Court decisions*

1. Introduction

Public understanding of the apex court, and in fact, the entire judiciary, depends almost exclusively on the press. It is so because it is the press that mirrors what happens in the court including the justices' opinions that are difficult for the ordinary citizens to obtain and understand. In fact, the Supreme Court, which epitomizes the judiciary, regularly, makes decisions with profound policy implications but it leaves it largely to the media to transmit and shape public opinion regarding those policies (Greenhouse, 1996; Clawson, Strine IV and Waltenburg, 2003). In other words, the press, not only, determines the quantity and quality of information available to the public on the judiciary institution, it, also, gives an image and legitimacy to it through reportage of its operations (Greenhouse, 1996; Watson, 2007). This implies, therefore, that the press is an important intermediary between the legal system and the people it serves. Mathewson, cited by Musdapher (2012:6), puts it succinctly thus:

When the court speaks, who listens? Who transmits each new rule of law to the citizenry? Even in the internet era, when the court posts its opinion promptly on its website, both the justices and the citizens still depend on journalists to get the word out to the broad public. It is still reporters who immediately read the often challenging legal language and make sense of it for lay understanding

While getting the story right is the first duty of professional journalists, the law, however, is a complex field for reporters to operate as it requires expert knowledge and years of experience to understand its subtleties. Notwithstanding its complexity, the news media, however, are under a duty to mirror the court's proceedings and decisions accurately to the public. The report must also be balanced and fair to all subjects of news and free from pressure or direction by the people who own and run the newspapers (Davis, 1996).

Unfortunately, Snipke (2013) says media reportage on both the executive and the legislature is vast and extensive in virtually all jurisdictions but a review of the literature shows that journalists may cover the third arm—the judiciary—too little and that when they do, may do so inaccurately. Musdapher (2012) who corroborates Snipke's observation, however, localized the allegation when he says that the Nigerian media, more often than not, misrepresent not only the proceedings and decisions of courts in cases they report but also issues about the judiciary owing to poor knowledge of the law and desire to pander to selfish interest of media owners.

Elaborating on his claims, he adds:

I am aware today that most media houses have an editorial policy and clear leaning towards sectional and often myopic perspectives. Tribal and nepotistic leanings are present in most issues debated or reported in our media. The government-owned media showcase the activities of government with little or no critique in contrast to the harsh realities faced by the millions of subscribers of these news mediums. Newspapers and mediums owned and operated by politicians are mostly reflective of the interest of their principals as opposed to the need to permanently reside with the truth and justice.

He argues that, though, newspapers should be neutral in the treatment of news, the case is not so with the Nigerian press. He maintains that the editorial views and political beliefs of the owners and editors of newspapers are infiltrating the news page which he believes is an anathema. Popoola (2011) who agrees with Musdapher says a meticulous review of scholarly works and research findings with respect to the accuracy of reporting by the Nigerian mass media shows that it may be fallacious, sometimes, to say that the media always handle reporting with fairness, accuracy and justice, at least, as expected of a socially responsible media.

Inaccurate reportage itself is a 'sin' in journalism. However, when it recurs as long as courts have published decisions as observed, it calls for examination. The preceding allegations against the media on the reportage of the proceedings, decisions and issues around the judiciary compel this study not only because misleading reportage of court proceedings and decisions has the potential to confuse the public and distort their views about the nation's justice system, the authority of the judiciary itself to adjudicate depends solely on the public perception of its propriety which inaccurate reportage definitely undermines.

In addition, while the SCN, as an institution, has attracted substantial literature in Nigeria, not much attention has been paid in media studies to evaluation of newspaper reportage of the decisions of the summit court in public interest cases handled by it to establish not only the extent of reportage but also how accurately such judgments are communicated to the public. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the important gap in the literature. This study, therefore, seeks

to investigate how four selected newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Punch, Daily Trust* and the *Daily Sun* reported decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in six public interest cases decided between 2006 and 2012 legal years of the Fourth Republic to ascertain the extent to which the selected newspapers accurately communicated the decisions of the SCN in the cases to the public.

1.1 Objectives

The key objectives of the study are to:

i. To examine the extent to which the selected newspapers communicate the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria to the public in the selected public interest cases.

ii. To find out how accurately the selected newspapers communicate the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria to the public in the selected public interest cases.

1.2 Research Questions

Consequently, the following research questions have been designed to guide this study in an attempt to find answers to the problems enunciated above:

iii. To what extent did the selected newspapers communicate the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria to the public in the selected public interest cases?

iv. How accurately did the selected newspapers communicate the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria to the public in the selected public interest cases?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

One principal ingredient which inspires the formulation of theoretical framework for the study is explanation. The study is anchored on social responsibility theory. The theory provides the platform to explain the benchmark against which media reportage of the selected Supreme Court cases in this study is measured.

Social responsibility theory of the press is a normative theory that explains how media should ideally operate in a given system of social value and states the standard against which the public should judge the performance of the media. According to Folarin (2002), the chief duty of the media operating by this theory is to raise conflict to the plane of discussion.

McQuail cited in Baran (2010) identifies the main principles of the social responsibility theory in driving media practice to include that the media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to society and meet these obligations by setting high standards of professionalism, truth, accuracy and objectivity. In other words, the media are expected to hold high the canon of accuracy in performing its constitutional role of reporting news and holding the government accountable to the public. According to Ganiyu (2004), accuracy is fundamental, like truthfulness, to the trust the public reposes in the media, adding that the first duty of a journalist is to the truth and not the source of the story or even his organisation. He is of the view that accuracy means more than being exact with facts but also involves quoting a source or figures, correctly, anytime such is done. He said it also extends to ensuring that all headlines are fully in accord with the body of the stories or reports. Okoye (2007) sees accuracy as a conscious effort to guard against inaccuracies, carelessness, bias and distortion through deliberate technological manipulation, omission and emphasis. Okoye who says accuracy implies accuracy with all details like titles, names of persons and places says adherence to the principle is a mark of good journalism. He explains that the media that have made accuracy a tradition

are the most patronized by the public regardless of the owner, the place it is sited and the caliber of people working there. He used this yardstick to explain why most Nigerians would rather tune to BBC, even for local news, about Nigeria. Other principles of social responsibility theory highlighted by McQuail are that the media should be self-regulating within the framework of the law and avoid disseminating material that might lead to crime, violence or civil disorder or that might offend minority groups. Besides, he also says the media, as a whole, should be pluralistic, reflecting the diversity of the culture in which they operate and give access to various points of view and rights of reply even as he adds that the public have the right to expect high standards of performance while official intervention can be justified to ensure the public good. He concludes that the media professionals should be accountable to society as well as to their employers and the market. In a nutshell, social responsibility theory, according to Baran (2010), asserts that the media must remain free of government control but in exchange, they must serve the public. This theory is therefore relevant to this study because it mandates accurate communication of information by the media to the public. In fact, the accuracy of information is not only the obligation of the media, it also forms one of the indexes of assessing how responsible a media organization is. The implication is that any report that lacks accuracy is not only irresponsible but also constitutes a mark of bad journalism.

2.2 Some empirical studies in newspaper coverage of the Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Nigeria, as an institution, has attracted substantial literature in Nigeria. For instance, scholars from the fields of law, political science and communication studies had done some studies on the Supreme Court of Nigeria including Alabi (2002), Akeredolu (2006) and Adesanoye (1974) to examine the role of the SCN in the nation's political system covering 1963 and 1997; highlight the profiles of all the justices that were appointed to the SCN's bench between 1963 and 2006; and review selected proceedings and judgments of four categories of court—Magistrate Court, High Court, Court of Appeal, and the Federal Supreme Court of Nigeria for stylistic error analysis to establish whether proceedings of the court are communicated in good English Language respectively. But not much attention has been paid in media studies to evaluation of newspaper reportage of the decisions of the nation's summit court in public interest cases to establish not just the quantity of the reportage but also how accurately such judgments are communicated to the public.

Curiously, however, there is abundant literature in all of these areas in the advanced democracies like the United States of America. For instance, Yanus (2009) did a content analysis of the newspaper coverage of the decisions of 20 state Supreme Courts in the United States handed down in 1998 to establish the relationship between news coverage of the courts and the following: case facts, characteristics of the media and characteristics of the judiciary. The study found that there was a significant relationship between news coverage of the state Supreme Courts and case facts, judiciary characteristics and media characteristics. The study revealed that media were more likely to cover courts' decisions that had the greatest likelihood of altering the status quo, and were least likely to be overturned or both. Clawson, Strine IV and Waltenburg (2003) also did a content analysis of the coverage of the US Supreme Court decisions in the case of Adarand's Constructors. Inc. v. Federico Pena, Secretary of Transportation, et al. by the Black press and the mainstream press in the United States. The study clearly found that the mainstream press and the Black Press covered the decision in significantly different ways. As an advocate for Black interests, the Black press focused on the implications of the rulings for minorities, actively criticized Justice Thomas and emphasized pro-affirmative action sources. Also, by relying on a Dramatic Setback frame, the Black Press stressed the detrimental effects of the ruling on Black citizens. The Black Press also devoted significant attention to interpreting the court ruling as a decision consistent with the basic principles of affirmative action. On the other hand, the mainstream press coverage of the ruling

of the Supreme Court in the decision focused more on the Supreme Court ruling more than its implications. The mainstream newspapers also anchored their framing of the decision more on No Preferential Treatment Frame than Dramatic Setback Frame embraced by the Black press.

Also, Solomine (1980), Tarpley (1981), and Bowles, Dorothy and Bromley (1992) examined, in three separate studies, how news magazines covered the Supreme Court of the United States to establish how well they accurately communicated the decisions of the apex court to the public at varying time periods. Solomine, in his own study, investigated the 1975-1977 terms of the Court. Tarpley, on the other hand, examined the 1978-1981 terms of the Court while Bowles and Bromley looked at the 1981-1989 terms of the Court. In the Solomine's study, it was found that out of five cases that the Supreme Court heard, news magazines reported only one. For the cases reported by the newsmagazines, Solomine adopted six variables of measurement which Ericson (1977) used to assess newspaper coverage of the Supreme Court of the United States during its 1974 term. The variables included the followings: (1) background facts and litigation history (2) probable or expected impact of the decision (3) Explanation of the decision process (4) balance (respective to coverage of the dissent or reactions critical of the result (5) contextualization with relevant law and (6) reportage of outside reactions to the decisions. The variables examined in the newsmagazine reports of the court cases represented the significant ingredients of a standard published decision and as such useful in determining the accuracy of newspaper reports of the Court's decision. Unlike Ericson's (1977), in another but similar study, which found that newspapers covered almost none of these variables in their reports, Solomine (1980) discovered much greater depth in the coverage of the variables.

Tarpley (1981), in his study, though had similar focus with Solomine, he nonetheless distinguished his work by looking at the degree to which newsmagazines were inclined to report media-related court decisions than non-media decisions in terms of frequency. He also used the six variables adopted by Solomine to assess the quality and accuracy of the reportage. But Bowles and Bromley (1992) not only expanded the scope of studies in Solomine and Tarpley, but they also added three variables to the 6-factor list adapted from Ericson's work. The variables are the followings: (1) whether the story denotes the case name or provides identifying information (2) whether the story provides background facts of the case or litigation history (3) whether the story provides the specific votes of the court (4) whether the story mentions the reasoning of the Court or in some way discusses the Court's reasoning (5) whether the story mentions the dissent or outlines the dissenting argument in some way (6) whether the story discusses applicable statutes or precedent with respect to the case at hand (7) whether the case discusses expected effect of the decision or impact in general (8) whether the story describes any reaction to court's decision and (9) whether the story properly attributes the source of the reaction as coming from legal experts, parties, people in the street. The study, however, found that news magazines treated their readers to less than 10% of the cases decided by the Supreme Court. Besides, the study also found a significant improvement in quality of reportage notwithstanding the fact that the variables were upped by three. The four studies—Ericson (1977), Solomine (1980), Tarpley (1981) and Bowles, Dorothy and Bromley (1992) are significant to the instant study as one of its principal objectives is to determine the extent to which the four newspapers selected for this study reflected the standard outlined parameters in their reports. Overall, all other previous studies reviewed in this work will form the basis for comparison between what obtains in Nigeria and the US. The present study will, also, contribute to the body of literature on the subject, research being a global work.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study adopted quantitative research design in collecting relevant data for this study. Specifically, content analysis was the research method used to study the contents of the relevant editions of the selected newspapers that fell within the time frame of this study. Content analysis is an organized procedure designed to identify and evaluate the content of a text or recorded information (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000 and Frey, Botan, Friedman and Kreps, 1991). The research method is useful for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (Krippendorf, 1980). The conclusion to use this research method for this purpose is reinforced by Borden and Abbot (2008, p. 238) who advised researchers to go for the method "when you want to analyse a written or spoken records for the occurrence of specific categories or events…"

The study covered 2006 to 2012 legal years of the SCN in the Fourth Republic. All the decisions selected for this study were delivered by the SCN during the 2006-2012 legal years of the court. They are as follows:

i. The decision of the SCN in the Governor Ibori's ex-convict trial—May 19, 2006

ii. The decision of the SCN in Governor Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja---December 7, 2006.

iii. The decision of the SCN on late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's election---December 12, 2008

iv. The decision of the SCN on the sack of five sitting governors--January 27, 2012.

v. The decision of the SCN on the disputed 76 oil wells between Cross River state and Akwa Ibom state—July 10, 2012.

vi. The decision of the SCN on validity of Governor Aliyu Wamakko's election---November 26, 2010

The following constituted the data sources: editions of the Nigerian newspapers published between 2006 and 2012 legal years of the SCN as well as certified copies of the SC judgments on the selected cases.

Purposive sampling technique was used to pick the sample for the study. Four Nigerian newspapers were therefore purposively selected from the study population for this study. The newspapers were: *The Guardian, The Punch, Daily Trust* and *Daily Sun*. The four newspapers were chosen because they were national in spread while the ownership of the newspapers also cut across the geo-political zones of the country. Six cases as listed above were also purposively picked for this study for five reasons: First, all the cases were decided between 2006 and 2012 legal years of the SCN in the Fourth Republic, and therefore, fell within the time-frame of this study. Second, all the cases threw up novel constitutional issues for determination which decisions could alter the status quo in the polity. Third, the issues decided by the SCN in some of the cases were so controversial that the justices of the SCN, which most times, enter unanimous decisions, were divided in their opinions to enter split decisions. In the other cases in which the SCN entered unanimous decisions, Nigerians were themselves, polarized by the judgments. Fourth, the cases represented good instances of appropriate cases in which the SCN could exercise its original and appellate jurisdictions as enshrined in sections 232 (1) and 233 (2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria respectively. Fifth, all the six cases were public interest litigations.

Twenty-four editions of the four selected newspapers were also purposively picked for content analysis. That is, for each newspaper, six editions containing reports and pictorials on the six selected decisions of the SCN were purposively picked. The editions selected for each newspaper were those published a day after the judgments were delivered on each of the cases while all other editions of the newspapers published before and after those specific dates were excluded notwithstanding whether they contained reports and pictorials on proceedings and decisions of the SCN in the cases. The editions of the four selected daily newspapers were purposively picked because they contained news reports on the selected decisions; news reports on the immediate reactions of stakeholders to the decisions, news analyses on the decisions and pictorials taken immediately after the selected decisions of the SCN were handed down. The editions were dated May 20, 2006 (Ibori); December 8, 2006 (Ladoja); December 13, 2008 (Yar'Adua); November 27, 2010 (Wamakko); January 28, 2012 (Tenure elongation) and July 11, 2012 (76 oil wells).

The study employed Coding Sheet as a tool to collect data for the study. A 14-item coding sheet was designed to generate data from the editions of the selected newspapers for this study. This researcher was guided by the research questions for the study in designing the coding sheet. The coding sheet, therefore, contained relevant units of analysis and the categories of analysis to extract data from the content of the relevant reports in the selected newspapers to answer relevant research questions. Six research assistants, all university graduates, were trained on how to use the coding sheet. They all assisted in the coding process. As earlier stated, two broad categories—unit of analysis and category of analysis, were constructed.

3.2 Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis (Wimmer & Dominick 2000). Simply put, it is the unit of text that is counted wherever it is encountered in any edition of the selected newspapers. For this study, the units of analysis represented news story, news analysis, feature article, opinion, editorial, photograph, and cartoon. For this study, straight news stories on the selected decisions of the SCN are classified into two: main news stories and support news stories. The units of analysis for this study are therefore explained as follows:

a. Main News: These are news stories specifically published by the newspapers as straight stories to capture the reasoning of the SCN on the selected cases. They are supposed to be factual and different from opinions, features, analyses or editorials.

b. Support News: These are news stories specifically published by the selected newspapers as straight stories to capture the reactions of stakeholders to the reasoning (decisions) of the SCN in the selected cases. They are also different from opinion or analyses

c. News Analyses: These are discourses written by the editorial staff of the selected newspapers critical of the reasoning of the SCN on the selected decisions of the summit court for this study. The analyses are different from opinion, feature, and editorial, in format.

d. Features: These are comprehensive and discursive reports on the selected decisions of the SCN written by an editorial staff of the newspaper.

e. Opinions: These are opinionated essays written by staff or persons who do not necessarily work in the newspaper organization (regular and guest writers as well as columnists), expressing personal views about the reasoning of the SCN in the selected cases.

f. Editorial: This is an important article in a newspaper expressing the official opinion of the newspaper about the reasoning of the SCN in the selected cases.

g. Photographs: These are images published by the selected newspapers to complement or illustrate news stories on the decisions of the SCN.

h. Cartoons: These are amusing drawings in a newspaper about the reasoning of the SCN in the selected cases or the parties involved in the cases.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000), the category of analysis implies a category system used to classify media content. They are like pigeon holes into which units could be sorted. The intensity of reports and accuracy of reports formed the categories into which the units of analysis were classified (See Appendix 5A).

Categories of Analysis

The Intensity of Report (Quantity and Emphasis)

The intensity of reports, in this study, refers to the quantity of various genres of (units of analysis) newspaper reports on each of the selected newspaper decisions on the one hand and the emphasis placed on such reports in the newspapers on the other hand. To determine the quantity of reports in this study, the number of times or the frequency of various genres of reports on each of the selected decisions of the SCN formed the index. The genres of reports, otherwise, known as the unit of analysis, refers to the various types of newspaper reports on an issue—news stories, news analyses, features, opinions among others.

The emphasis of reports, however, refers to the prominence given to the newspaper reports on the selected decisions of the SCN. The prominence of reports, for this study, was measured by two indexes: The position of reports and the size of reports.

Position of reports: This researcher stratified the position occupied by newspaper reports on the selected decisions of the SCN into two for significance ascription purposes. They were: Front page and inside page. The classification was done on the basis that highly significant reports were placed on front pages while less significant reports were placed on the inside pages. In other words, reports that were placed on the front pages of the selected newspapers were considered more significant than those placed on the inside pages by the editorial managers of the newspaper organizations.

The size of a report: For this study, the size of a report refers to the space allocated to newspaper reports on the selected decisions of the SCN. Specifically, the space allocated to reports was, first, determined by columns and inches before it was categorized into three broad groups. It is standard that a full-page size newspaper report is an equivalent of 6 columns by 14 inches; half-page takes 3 columns by 14 inches or 6 columns by 7 inches while a quarter-page is 3 columns by 7 inches. The three broad groups, therefore, are:

a. Less quarter-page---Small report

b. Quarter-page but less half page---Medium report

c. Half-page or more---Large report

The classification was done for measurement purpose. For this study, therefore, the reports that occupied less than quarter-page was categorized as small; those that were up to quarter-page but not up to half-page were categorized as medium while those that were allocated up to half-page or more were categorized as large.

Accuracy of Report (Quality)

The accuracy of a report, in this study, refers to the quality of newspaper reports on the selected decisions of the SCN and this is measured by only the straight news stories.. To determine the accuracy (quality) of reportage, the Bowles' and Bromley's method that was developed over several similar but previous interactions provided a guide. Specifically, Bowles and Bromley's standard of measurement took into account nine parameters in the examination of the quality of newspaper reportage of Supreme Court decisions. The Bowles' and Bowles' measurement standard, as earlier stated, was a revision of the methods used by Ericson (1977), Solomine (1980) and Tarpley (1981) in past studies. While Ericson took into account six parameters which Solomine adopted, wholesale, in his 1980 study of newspaper coverage of the 1975-1977 terms of the Supreme Court of the United States, Bowles and Bromley, in a study conducted in the US in 1992, took into account nine parameters. But all the methods used by all these scholars were deficient in one way or the other. The latest by Bowles and Bromley was though an improvement on the earlier ones, one vital parameter—headline analysis, was conspicuously missing from the parameter list. For this study, a compact eight-parameter standard was designed. It is an improvement on the earlier standards for two reasons: One, it captured all the key parameters in previous standards. Two, it added a new parameter that was missing in previous iterations: headline analysis. The headline analysis involves a comparison of the headline of the newspaper report with the body of the report on the SCN's decision to determine whether or not the headline is misleading or appropriately communicates with the main body of the stories. The headline analysis is considered important because of the fact that headline is not only an important part of a news story but also can complement or mar the accuracy (quality) of report. Besides, not every newspaper reader has the time to go through the body of news stories.

For this study, therefore, the accuracy of the report was measured by comparing the content of the newspaper's main news stories with the content of the SCN's judgment on the following counts:

a. Whether the story denotes accurate names of parties in dispute and the panel of justices of the SCN that decided the case

b. Whether the story provides the background facts and litigation history of the case

c. Whether the story provides the specific vote of the court against the names of SCN justices on the panel

d. Whether the story mentions the issues formulated by the SCN for determination

e. Whether the story captures the holdings or reasoning of the court on each of the issues formulated for determination and the dissent's argument in some way where the decision is split

f. Whether the story discusses the relevant statutes and precedents upon which the decisions were anchored

g. Whether the story discusses the expected effects (implications) of the judgment

h. Whether the story carries an appropriate headline that communicates with the body of the story.

The combination of the outlined parameters represented the organic constituents of a standard published decision.

The accuracy of a report, in this study, was, therefore, measured, through a multi-stage process. The first stage involves comparing and contrasting the newspaper reports with the

original judgments of the SCN in the selected cases to determine the presence or absence of the outlined variables listed above in the newspaper reports. This method accords with the model employed by Bowles and Bromley which involves counting the number of outlined variables captured in every coded report along with some considerations of means and medians in order to explicate the accuracy (quality) of the reportage.

Afterward, the presence or absence of the outlined variables in the coded newspaper reports is further measured by determining the extent to which each of the outlined parameters (variables) is captured in the newspaper reports. For instance, if the original judgment of the Supreme Court formulated three issues for determination in a particular case, and the newspaper report captured all the three issues, it was rated Fully Captured and scored 1. But if the newspaper did not mention any of the three issues in its report on the decision, it was rated Not Captured and scored 0. However, if the newspaper report captured, at least, one but less than the three issues formulated for determination by the SCN, it was rated Partially Captured and scored 0.5.

Finally, the extent to which each of the newspapers, overall, accurately covered each of the decisions of the selected SCN with respect to the outlined parameters (variables) was, afterward, determined by class interval scale. Specifically, if a report, for instance, cumulatively scored, at least, 6 (75%) of the maximum 8 (100%) in the reflection of the outlined variables, it was classified as Accurate while a report that cumulatively scored, at least 4 (50%) and at most 5.9 (74%) in its reflection of the outlined variables was rated Fairly Accurate. Moreover, any report that cumulatively scored, at least, 2 (25%) and, at most, 3.9 (49%) in its reflection of the outlined eight parameters was rated Inaccurate while any report that, cumulatively, scored less than 2 (24%)) in its reflection of the outlined factors was classified as Very Inaccurate. This is further represented thus:

Table 1.
Class Interval (scale of measurement) for accuracy of reportage

Ranking	Proportion of Variables	%
Absolutely Accurate	**8**	**100**
Accurate	**6-7.9**	**75-99**
Fairly Accurate	**4-5.9**	**50-74**
Inaccurate	**2-3.9**	**25-49**
Very Inaccurate	**0-1.9**	**0-24**

After the instrument was validated and found reliable, research assistants were hired and trained by the researcher to use the research instruments to collect relevant data from the sample. The researcher employed and trained six research assistants who not only sourced some of the newspapers from the library shelves but also used the coding sheet to collect relevant

data from the newspaper editions for content analysis. The researcher effectively monitored the coding exercise.

3.3 Method of Data Analysis

The researcher used the discursive and explanation building techniques to analyse data for this study. Specifically, the researcher, on the one hand, presented data gathered through the quantitative research design in tables of frequency count and simple percentage while a discursive technique was used to discuss and interpret the data in each table in relation to the relevant research questions. The explanation building was subsequently used to develop a general explanation that applied to the research questions under study. Specifically, tables of frequency counts and simple percentage were used to analyse the data generated by coding sheet while discussion and interpretation of the data followed each table to answer relevant research question simply because descriptive statistics, according to Wimmer and Dominic (2000) are intended to reduce the data sets to allow for easier interpretation. They also make generalizations possible (Osuala, 2000).

4. Results

4.1 Volume of Coverage

Table 2.

Cumulative quantity of newspaper reports on the selected SCN decisions

Genres	*The Guardian*	*The Punch*	*Daily Trust*	*Daily Sun*	Frequency	%
Main news	6	6	6	5	23	19.6
Support news	12	18	15	19	64	54.7
Analyses	0	1	0	2	3	2.5
Pictorials	8	8	5	6	27	23.0
Total	**26**	**33**	**26**	**32**	**117**	**100**

(**Source:** Content Analysis, 2014)

4.2 Prominence of Coverage

Table 3.

Placement of newspaper reports on the six selected decisions of SCN

Placement	*The Guardian*	*The Punch*	*Daily Trust*	*Daily Sun*	Frequency	%
Front Page	11	11	10	12	44	37.6
Inside Page	15	22	16	20	73	62.3
Total	**26**	**33**	**26**	**32**	**117**	**100**

(**Source:** Content Analysis, 2014)

4.3 Size of coverage

Table 4.

Space/size of newspaper reports on the six selected SCN decisions

Space/Size	*The Guardian*	*The Punch*	*Daily Trust*	*The Sun*	Frequency	%
Short	18	21	19	26	84	71.7
Medium	6	10	4	4	24	20.5
Large	2	2	3	2	9	7.6
Total	**26**	**33**	**26**	**32**	**117**	**100**

(*Source***:** Content Analysis, 2014)

Table 5.

Cumulative data on frequency of indices of accuracy in six selected cases

Dailies	Parties & Panel	Facts & History	Votes	Issues	Holding & Dissent	Statute	Impact	H/L Analysis	Pro	%	Degree of Accuracy
The Guardian	5	4.5	5	2.5	6	2	5.5	6	36.5	76	Accurate
The Punch	3.5	3	3.5	1	4.5	0.5	4.5	6	26.5	55.2	Fairly Accurate
Daily Trust	3.5	2.5	2.5	0	4.5	2.5	4.5	6	26	54.1	Fairly Accurate
Daily Sun	3	1.5	2.5	1	4.5	0.5	3.5	5	21.5	44.7	Inaccurate
Total	**15**	**11.5**	**13.5**	**4.5**	**19.5**	**5.5**	**18**	**23**	**110.5**	**57.5**	**Fairly Accurate**

5. Discussion

5.1 To what extent did the selected newspapers report the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the selected public interest cases?

Holistically, the selected newspapers reported the decisions of the SCN in the six public interest cases to an average extent but in varied proportions, depending on the nature of the decisions entered by the SCN in the cases regarding whether the judgments were split or unanimous and whether they altered the status quo or not; the nature of the case facts regarding whether the cases were purely political or not; the weight of the parties involved in the dispute, ownership and the editorial policies of the selected newspapers.

Specifically, the selected newspapers reported the decisions, in terms of quantity and emphasis, to an average extent with the verdict which affirmed the electoral victory of late President Yar'Adua in the 2007 presidential poll and the reactions from stakeholders to the decision, having the highest 38 (32.4 %) coded reports of the newspaper items, followed by 33 (28.2%) items from tenure elongation decision; 29 (24.7%) items from the verdict on Ladoja's case; 8 (6.8%) items on the disputed 76 oil wells case; 5 (4.2%) items on Ibori's ex-convict case and a lean 4 (3.4%) items on the validity of Governor Wamakko's election. Yar'Adua's case

got the highest reportage because the decision was about struggle for the highest political office in Nigeria while the SCN itself which sparingly enters split judgments, did so in the two major appeals challenging late President Yar'Adua's electoral victory. Besides, data also showed that out of all the newspaper reports on the selected judgments of the SCN in the chosen cases, reactions to the decisions accounted for 54.7% of the reportage, followed by pictorials which accounted for 23%, the main decision accounted for 19.8% while analyses accounted for 2.5%. Furthermore, out of the total 117 coded items on the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the six public interest cases, *The Punch* had 33 items which represented the highest coded newspaper items, followed by *The Sun* with 32 items and 26 items each from *The Guardian* and the *Daily Trust*. The frequency of the reports, nonetheless, a preponderant 84 (71.7%) of the 117 items coded were short in sizes, 24 (20.5%) items were of the medium size while the remaining 9 (7.6%) were large in sizes, thus indicating that majority of the newspaper items coded on the SCN decisions in the selected public interest cases were small in terms of the space occupied in the newspapers. Moreover, of the total 117 coded items on the six selected decisions of the SCN, a significant 44 items representing 37.6% were on the front pages of the selected newspapers while a preponderant 73 (62.3%) items of the coded reports were placed on the inside pages of the selected newspapers, thus showing that the newspapers attached very great importance to the decisions which accounted for the reason such high percentage of the items was given front page attention. The statistics also showed that more of the coded newspaper items were placed in the inside pages.

Consequently, one can safely conclude that the selected newspapers, holistically, reported the decisions of the SCN in the public interest cases to a medium extent because the reportage was far below average in three of the cases involving Ibori, Wamakko and the 76 oil wells while it is far above average in the cases involving late President Yar'Adua, Ladoja and the five PDP governors who were sacked from office on the same day.

5.2 How accurately did the selected newspapers communicate the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in the selected public interest cases to the public?

A holistic analysis of the data collected from the selected newspapers for this study indicated that the newspapers were not absolutely accurate but fairly accurate in the reportage of the decisions of the SCN in the chosen public interest cases for this study. However, the degree of accuracy by the Nigerian press in communicating the decisions to the public varied according to individual newspapers, nature of the case facts and nature of the decisions.

For the newspapers, statistics have revealed that *The Guardian* newspaper was cumulatively accurate in its news reportage of the selected decisions of the SCN with 76% accuracy even though the degree of accuracy was not absolute. *The Punch* followed *The Guardian,* though not closely, with 55.2% accuracy while the *Daily Trust* closely followed *The Punch* with 54.1%. The *Daily Sun* came last with 44.7% accuracy.

For the decisions, the statistics reveal that the newspapers were fairly accurate in their reportage on tenure elongation with 72% accuracy followed by the reportage of the court's decision on Ladoja with 69% accuracy and 61% accuracy in Yar'Adua case. The newspapers were, however, found to have performed below average in the reportage of the Ibori's case as they were 50% accurate. The nature of the SCN's judgments in the cases which did not alter the status quo definitely was responsible for the trend. Again, these findings, in a way, corroborate outcomes of a number of studies in advanced democracies including Ericson's (1977), Bowles and Bromles (1992) and Snipke (2013) to the effect that newspapers misstate, omit or muddle up the organic constituents of the decisions of the Supreme Court in their reportage, particularly issues for determination, holdings of the court and the statutes or the judicial precedents on which the judgments were anchored. The implication of this is that the

selected newspapers provided their subscribers (newspaper readers) with insufficient, and, at times, warped information on the selected decisions of the SCN to enable them do an accurate appraisal of the reasoning of the summit court.

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that the selected newspapers, on the whole, were not fantastic in the reportage of the selected cases in terms of quality of reportage. But it is safe to conclude that the selected newspapers were, on the whole, average, notwithstanding the deluge of factors constraining their performances. However, of all the four newspapers selected for this study, *The Guardian* newspaper was found to be constantly faithful to the principle of accuracy in its reportage of the selected decisions and it is therefore safe to recommend the newspaper, of the quartet, to any reader who wants to enjoy accurate reportage of the substance of the SCN decisions.

Furthermore, the study concludes that the extent of reportage of the selected cases by the newspapers was dependent on the nature of the decision entered by the SCN regarding whether the judgments were split or unanimous and whether or not the judgment altered the status quo in the polity; the nature of the case facts regarding whether the issue in contention was about struggle for political power or not; the weight of the parties involved in the dispute with regards to the weight of the political offices occupied by them and the editorial policy cum ownership interest of the newspapers.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that newspaper reporters and their editors should religiously adopt the 8-parameter guideline on accurate reportage of SCN's decision designed by this researcher to improve the reportage of court proceedings and decisions in Nigeria and enhance objective public perception of the summit court through newspaper reports.
2. Journalists, especially judiciary reporters and their editors, should be trained regularly and be encouraged to be familiar with the parameters of accurate reportage of Supreme Court decisions to guide them in writing fairly informative and accurate news report on court proceedings and decisions.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Appendix 5A

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING SHEET

Newspaper:	Date Published:										Analyst:			
UNITS OF ANALYSIS	CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS													
	FREQUENCY	ACCURACY								PROMINENCE				
	Total Number of Reports									Position		Size		
										on	Position	Size		
		arties and panel	acts &history	otes	ssues for determination	oldings and dissent	tatute	mpacts	eadline analysis	ront page	nside page	arge	edium	mal l
ain news														
upport news														
ews analysis														
hotograph														
artoons														
eatures														
pinions														
ditorials														
thers														

Appendix II
Appendix 5B: Coders Instruction Guide

The instructions below serve as a guide in completing the coding sheet

A.   NEWSPAPER IDENTITY

I.   **Name:** Particular name of newspaper being coded should be written in the space provided

II.   **Date of Publication**; The day, date, month and year of publication must be indicated in the space provided (i.e Tuesday 1st January, 2008)

B. NATURE OF PUBLICATIONS (UNIT OF ANALYSIS)

1.   *Main News*: These are news stories specifically published by the newspapers as straight stories to capture vital information including the reasoning of the SCN on the selected cases. They are supposed to be factual and different from opinions, features, analyses or editorials.

2.   *Support News:* These are news stories specifically published by the selected newspapers as straight stories to capture reactions of stakeholders to the reasoning (decisions) of the SCN in the selected cases. They are also different from opinion or analyses.

3.   *News Analyses:* These are discourses written by the editorial staff of the selected newspapers critical about the reasoning of the SCN on the selected decisions of the summit court for this study. The analyses are different from opinion, feature and editorial, in format. In few of the cases when they were published by the newspapers, they were placed side by side with the major news stories which captured the reasoning of the SCN in the selected cases.

4.   *Features:* These are comprehensive and discursive reports on the selected decisions of the SCN written by an editorial staff of the newspaper.

5.   *Cartoons:* These are amusing drawings in a newspaper about a person and or events or ideas etc.

6.   *Features:* These are reports of events, issues, etc. They are usually lengthy and discursive in nature, written by an editorial staff of the newspaper

7. *Opinions:* These are opinionated essays written by staff or persons who do not necessarily work in the newspaper organization (regular and guest writers as well as columnists), expressing personal views about an issue, event etc. The essays are not necessarily factual.

8.   *Editorial:* This is an important article in a newspaper expressing the official opinion of the newspaper about an issue of social, political or economic importance

ACCURACY OF REPORT AS CATEGORY OF ANALYSIS

The following are the parameters used in this study to de*termine ac*curacy (quality) of the selected newspapers' reports on the verdicts of SCN in the selected cases.

Parties and panel:

This refers to names of the principal parties to a dispute and the names of justices of the SCN that decided the dispute. Mark (**1**), when the main news report captures the principal names of the parties in dispute and the SCN panel members. Mark (**0.5**) when the main news report captures either the names of parties in dispute or the SCN panel members. Mark (**0**) when the main news report fails to capture either the names of parties in dispute or the SCN panel members.

Facts and history of the case

This refers to the summary of the facts of the case from the perspectives of the appellants and the defendants in a SCN decision and the history of the case relating to where the case was first filed before it got to the SCN. Mark (**1**), when the main news report captures both the facts of the case and its history. Mark (**0.5**) when the main news report captures either the facts or the history of the case. Mark (**0**) when the main news report fails to capture either the facts or the history of the case.

Votes

This refers to the opinions of the justices of the SCN who decided a case. All the justices who may either be 5 or 7, depending on the nature of the case, may agree with one another and enter unanimous decision or divided and enter a split decision. Mark (**1**), when the main news report captures the nature of the opinions of the court, which may be unanimous or split, with names of justices who entered the opinions. Mark (**0.5**) when the main news report captures only the nature of the opinion without mentioning the names of justices who entered either the unanimous or the split decisions. Mark (**0**) when the main news report fails to capture either the nature of the opinion or the names of justices of the SCN who entered the decisions.

Issues for determination

This refers to legal issues or questions formulated by the SCN in a dispute to decide a case. Mark (**1**) when the main news report captures all the legal issues formulated by the SCN for determination, Mark (**0.5**) when the main news report captures, in part, the legal issues for determination. Mark (**0**) when the main news report fails to capture the issue (s).

Holding and dissent

In this study, both the holdings and the dissent are lumped together. It is so because some of the decisions are split. Mark (**1**) when the main news report captures, both the reasons for the SCN decision (majority opinion) and the dissent opinions of the SCN, otherwise called minority decision of the court, with the names of justices of the SCN who gave both the majority and the dissenting opinions. Mark (**0.5**) when the main news report captures either the reasons for the majority opinion of the SCN or the dissenting opinions of the SCN and the justices who gave the opinions. Mark (**0**) when the main news report fails to capture either the reasons for the majority opinions or the dissenting opinion of the SCN.

Statutes

This refers to the applicable laws or judicial precedent applied to the facts of the case in issue. Mark (**1**) when the main news report captures, in full, the applicable statutes and judicial precedents applied to the facts of the case. Mark (**0.5**) when the main news report captures, in part, the applicable statutes and judicial precedent applied to the facts of the case in issue. Mark (**0**) when the main news report fails to capture the applicable statute or judicial precedent applied to the case.

Impact

This refers to the expected effect of a decision or its general impact. Mark (**1**) when the main news report captures, in full, the expected effects of the decision to the parties in dispute and the space where the judgment is to be executed. Mark (**0.5**) when the main news report captures, in part, the expected effects of the decisions to the parties in dispute and the space where the judgment is to be executed. Mark (**0**) when the main news report fails to capture the expected effects of the decision to the parties in dispute and the space where the judgment is to be executed.

Headline analysis

This refers to the analysis of the headline to the main news story on the SCN decision in terms of whether or not the headline correlates with the body of the news story on the decision. Mark (**1**) when the headline to the main news report captures, in full, the substance of the main news story on a decision. Mark (**0.5**) when the headline to the main news report captures, in part, the substance of the main news story on a decision. Mark (**0**) when the headline to the main news report fails to capture the substance of the main news story on the SCN decision.

INTENSITY
Frequency:

This refers to the quantity of reports on the SCN decision in a newspaper edition. Write the number of times each unit of analysis under investigation was reported in a newspaper edition---1, 2, 3, 4 etc. this accounts for frequency of reports.

Placement

This refers to the placement of the report on SCN decisions by the newspaper in terms of page position, position in the newspaper and space covered.

Position in the newspaper

This refers to the page of the newspaper on which the reports on the SCN decisions are placed. The placement is categorized into two: front page and inside page. Mark (**FP)** if the report is placed on the front page. Mark (**IP)** if the report is placed on the inside page.

Space

This refers to the size of the newspaper reports on the SCN decisions. The size of the reports is determined by the amount of space allocated to each report in terms of columns and inches. Reports that occupied less than quarter of a page should be grouped into small size while those that occupied quarter of a page but less than half of a page should be grouped into medium size and those that occupied half a page or in excess are grouped into large size. Mark (**SS**) when the newspaper reports on the SCN decisions are small in size. Mark (**MS**) when the reports are medium in size and (**LS**) when they are large in size.

Table 1.

Research Design

| Steps	Date	Data collect
Contextualize	December 2017	Focus group (6 hours)
Cooperation	February 2018	Semi-structured interview (60 – 75 min.)
Cooperation	March 2018	Focus group (6 hours)
Cooperation	April 2018	Semi-structured interview (60-75 min.)
Coproduction	October 2018	Focus group (6 hours)
Coproduction	December 2018	Focus group (6 hours)
Coproduction	May 2019	Focus group (6 hours)
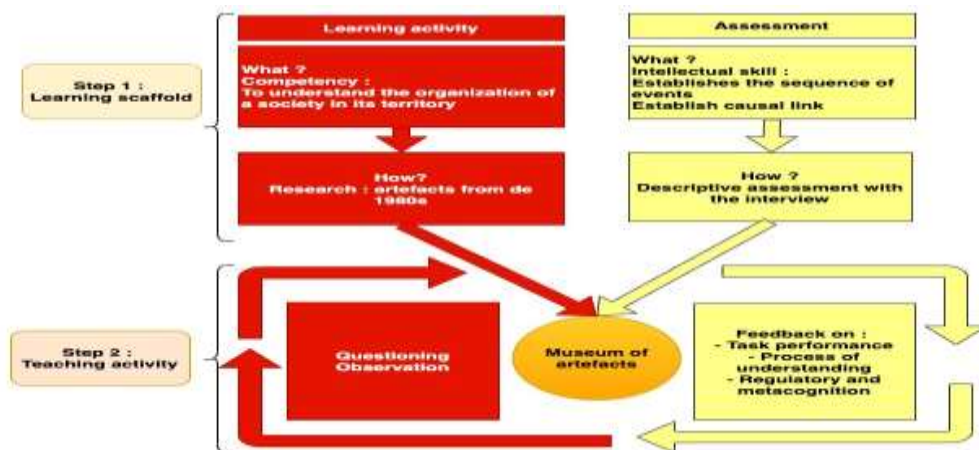
Figure 2: Interview to Assess History