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Metaphoric Representations of Refugees in the Print Media Reports on the Bakassi Peninsula Border Conflict

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Abstract: Metaphor, a significant linguistic resource for representing events, people and their actions in conflict situations, is capable of revealing ideological positioning and inclinations of news reporters. This paper therefore examines strategic deployment of metaphors by selected Nigerian newspapers in representing refugees and their actions in the Bakassi Peninsula border conflict with a view to uncovering underlying ideologies in the representations. Using insights from Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Theory and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Theory of Metaphor, the study analyses instances of conceptual metaphors in the news reports on the border conflict from two Nigerian national newspapers, namely *The Punch* and *The Guardian*, published between August 2008 and August 2009. The findings reveal that metaphors of disease, dangerous water, natural disasters and confusion are deployed to conceptualise refugees as threats, impending danger and agents of chaos and social disorder at their resettlement camps. The underlying ideologies are altruism, social justice and humanitarianism. The paper concludes that tact is essential in the choice of metaphors, especially in conflict news reporting, as metaphoric representations are capable of escalating or reducing conflict situations.

Keywords: Metaphor, Border Dispute, Print Media Report, Refugees, Ideology

1. Introduction

News reporting on conflict situations prominently involves the use of metaphors to compare events, actions or situations with another. Most human

activities and experiences such as struggles, combats, violence, etc., are often constructed and represented metaphorically. Thus, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 16) opine that

mankind's conceptual system is largely metaphorical and "the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor". That is, through metaphors, human beings often relate abstract topics to concrete observable phenomena by mapping concrete traits onto abstract domains for a better understanding of the abstract subjects. Metaphor therefore, becomes an integral part of our ordinary everyday thought and language. One instance of metaphorical representations of events and actions is in the news reports of the Bakassi Peninsula border conflict.

The Bakassi Peninsula boundary conflict is the longest-lasting international boundary disputes that Nigeria has had since independence in 1960. The peninsula is located at the extreme eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea, covering an area of some 1000km² of mangrove swamps, creeks and half-submerged islands. It lies along the border of two African countries, with Nigeria to the west and Cameroon to the east. The population on the peninsula is about 300,000 comprising mostly Nigerian fishermen and their families (*The Economist* 2008). According to Lukong (2011) and LeFebvre (2014), more than 90% of the people in Bakassi are Nigerians. Though the origin of the border conflict can be traced to the arbitrary partitioning of independent states to create artificial borders in Africa during colonialism, the source of the dispute is oil. The discovery of deposits of oil in the early 1980s triggered mounting hostilities and military confrontations between Cameroon and Nigeria who contested

the ownership of the region (Baye, 2010).

Bakassi Peninsula has been acclaimed as the richest peninsula in Africa since it contains extensive reserves of oil and gas (Mbuh 2004; Mbagha and Njo 2007). To Anyu (2007), Nwachukwu (2008) and de Konings (2008), the region lacks much modern infrastructure, such as potable water, electricity, and roads but contains deposits of more than ten billion barrels of crude oil and several trillion cubic feet of natural gas beds. Aside oil, the region is also a veritable ground for fish farming and other water-based businesses. Hence, the dispute over the ownership of the territory as claimed by both Nigeria and Cameroon for about three decades could be described as a struggle for the rich resources in and around the region. The crisis escalated in 1983 and continued till 1994 when Cameroon took the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague for intervention. After eight years of adjudication, in 2002 the ICJ ruled in favour of Cameroon and mandated Nigeria to handover the peninsula. The ICJ's judgement received mixed feelings. While resistant groups such as Niger Delta militants (i.e. Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Bakassi Freedom Fighters (BFF), and Bakassi Movement for Self Defense (BAMOSD)) rejected it and opposed the transfer of sovereignty to Cameroon, the Nigerian government reluctantly obeyed the judgement leading to the final handover of the peninsula to Cameroon in August, 2008. The period of the handover and resettlement of Nigerians in Bakassi created a serious refugee

situation. Indeed, the refugee situation was a subject of local and international interest and became a lead story and constant feature in the print media during that period following the final handover. The realities of the situation were metaphorically constructed and represented in the print media of Nigeria whose citizens were displaced.

Thus, this study undertakes a critical discourse analysis of metaphors deployed in characterising people and their actions in selected Nigerian newspapers' reports on the Bakassi Peninsula border conflict in order to reveal the underlying ideologies in the representations. The following research questions will be answered: (a) What are the forms and functions of metaphors in the Nigerian newspaper reports on the Bakassi Peninsula border conflict? and (b) What are the hidden ideologies underlying the metaphoric expressions and constructions?

2. Studies on the Bakassi Peninsula Border Dispute

Issues on the Nigerian-Cameroonian Bakassi Peninsula border conflict have been studied mainly from the anthropological (de Koning 2008), economic (Baye, 2010), legal (Mbuh 2004; Milano 2004; Kirchner 2005; Egede 2008; Oduntan 2006), historical (Ogen, 2010) and socio-political (Omoigui 2004; Mbaga and Njo 2007, Onomerike, 2008; LeFebvre 2014) perspectives. Available linguistic studies on the conflict are from sociolinguistic and discourse analysis perspectives (see Omoniyi and Salami, 2004; Igwebuiké and Taiwo 2015; Igwebuiké 2016). The most available literature has discussed the implications

of the 2002 International Court of Justice judgment; the 1884 treaties between Britain and Germany; oil and the armed conflicts on the residents and the economy of both nations.

From an anthropological perspective, de Koning (2008) examines the effects of military stalemate on the local communities/livelihoods and natural resource management in Bakassi Peninsula. He contends that the tensed situation had negative effects on the natives as well as on the ecosystem. He therefore advocates innovative natural resource management initiatives with a cross-border dimension to mitigate the negative consequences. While from a political dimension, Mbaga and Njo (2007) examine the inherent dynamics of globalisation in the Bakassi conflict, emphasizing decisive steps and mechanisms underlying accommodations into the context of an irreversible single world economy. Discussing the border conflict along the line of first' and contemporary globalization, the study concludes that the Bakassi border conflict "is just an illustration of the relationship between security and natural resource wars typical of the present day global system" and that the outcome of Nigeria and Cameroon dispute is "absolutely subject not only to their mutual agreements and accords, but also to the external forces that determine the prevailing transnationalism" (Mbaga and Njo 2007: 14). In the same vein, LeFebvre (2014) examines issues of identities and interests in peace negotiation of the Bakassi peninsula conflict and the impact of the negotiated settlement on the people of Nigeria and Cameroon.

Using an interests-based framework and an identities-based perspective, the paper discusses the processes of negotiation and implementation of the treaties signed in the dispute. This is complemented with a content analysis of newspaper articles from both nations published in 2010 in order to ascertain the lingering effects of the agreement on the stakeholders in the region. The findings specifically show a prevalent discussion of loss of social, economic and political identities and cultural way of life in the Nigerian newspapers while analysis of Cameroonian newspapers reveals the fulfilling of a new identity as the Bakassi region was proactively populated with Cameroonian citizens' culture. It concludes that though the Bakassi dispute resolution was heralded as a success by state leadership, it was not perceived in the same way by the general population as evidenced in the content analysis. Public opinions expressed in the media were less reflective of a cooperative result and more reflective of a zero-sum negotiation result with a clear winner and a clear loser.

Similarly, Onomerike (2008) examines the role of international diplomacy in the resolution of the Cameroonian-Nigerian border crisis. It analyses the effective or otherwise role that diplomacy played in resolving Bakassi Peninsula conflict in terms of the international mediation and arbitration. It concludes that though diplomacy is not the only means through which conflicts can be resolved, it remains an important strategy of conflict resolution.

Baye (2010) evaluates the socio-economic implications of the verdict of

the International Court of Justice in settling the Bakassi conflict settlement between Cameroon and Nigeria in terms of the verdict being a sustainable instrument for international conflict resolution and socio-economic development in Cameroon. It first looks at the geopolitics of the Bakassi dispute and then outlines socio-economic implications of its peaceful settlement. These are done with a view to developing a conceptual framework of international conflict dynamics and resolution. He argues that the colonial powers subjugated and divided Africa disregarding the relationship between territorial boundaries and the anthropogenic homogeneity and/or characteristics of the various ethnic groupings. He therefore opines that with the effective withdrawal of the Nigerian military, police and administration from Bakassi, it is possible for African countries in conflict to resolve matters amicably and avoid carnage, bloodshed, socio-economic and political dislocations, which many post-independent African nations have inflicted on themselves.

From a historical perspective, Ogen (2010) counters Nigeria's claim of ownership of the Peninsula and contends that Nigeria's attempt to forcefully annex the Bakassi Peninsula through Efik irredentism (historical claims) is logically indefensible and historically unsustainable. The paper argues that Nigeria's occupation of, and attempts to exercise sovereignty over the Peninsula emanated from the predictable desire of the Nigerian ruling elite to appropriate Bakassi's abundant natural resources and the strategic

advantage the Peninsula holds for Nigeria's oil interests in the Gulf of Guinea, making the socio-economic interests of the inhabitants of Bakassi secondary. The study therefore concludes that peace can only be guaranteed in the Bakassi Peninsula, and indeed in virtually all conflict prone African borderlands, if African governments respect and acknowledge the colonial treaties and national borders irrespective of their arbitrariness and artificiality, since that constitute the foundation of all modern African state structures.

Looking at the peaceful resolution of the conflict, Asiwaju (1996) proffers a political solution to war and litigation in the Bakassi crisis. Also, Nwobi (2006) examines the impact and the implication of the execution of the ICJ ruling and *Green Tree Accord* on the Bakassi populace. Nwobi (2006) examines the treaties of 1885 and 1912 and concludes that if the options in the ICJ judgement and *Green Tree* agreement are not properly handled, they have potentials to generate conflicts in the near future.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Omoniyi and Salami (2004) investigate identity constructs of the inhabitants' narratives as captured mainly in news media commentaries in order to determine ownership of the Peninsula. Analysing sociolinguistic variables such as ethnic affiliation, ancestry, language, cultural properties (e.g. sacred sites), the people's way of life (including occupation and religious practices) and resources embedded in personal and community narratives, the study discovers that the construction of Bakassi identity in the context of ICJ

verdict is dynamic and has a lot of implications to the understanding of the conflict.

Perhaps the studies which are near in focus with the present study are Igwebuike and Taiwo (2015) and Igwebuike (2016). Igwebuike and Taiwo (2015) examine the discursive representations of conflict actors as well as their roles in the Bakassi Peninsula dispute by the Nigerian and Cameroonian newspapers. The study discovers that newspapers from each of the nations slant the news to represent their key participants – the Cameroon security forces and Nigerians living in the peninsula as people with social power in the discourse. Specifically, while the Nigerian newspapers foreground the torturing experience of Nigerian citizens in the hands of Cameroon security agents, the Cameroon newspapers foreground the heroic exploits of security forces of their country in the face of constant attacks from the armed Nigerian militants. The study concludes that the divergent representations were motivated by the value of social justice in the Nigerian media and the ideology of patriotism in the Cameroonian media.

Igwebuike (2016) investigates lexical labelling of people and their actions in terms of ownership and non-ownership of 'oil-rich' Bakassi Peninsula border. This is done with a view to uncovering ideologies underlying the representations in the Nigerian and Cameroonian newspapers. By analysing the data using Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of Critical Discourse Analysis, the study discovers that newspapers generally label people as

either territorial owners or non-owners. While 'inhabitant' and 'resident' describe people as territorial non-owners and non-landowners, 'indigene' and 'native' represent them as territorial owners and landlords. It also discovers that the ideology of economic interests which are tied to national identity/nationality and ancestral root (or citizenship) motivated the labelling of territorial ownership and non-ownership in the newspapers of both nations. The study submits that there is a close interaction between ideology and lexical labelling and this interaction projected respective socio-political and economic concerns in the Nigerian and the Cameroonian newspaper reports.

None of the studies reviewed above considered the role of metaphor deployed in representing people and their actions, especially in news reports. How the media represented the conflict actors (especially the refugees) has a significant impact and ideological implications on the conflict. This study therefore critically examines the media representation of refugees, paying particular attention to metaphors in the Nigerian news reports on the border conflict in order to unearth the underlying ideologies embedded in the representations.

3. Critical Metaphor Theory: A Review

Metaphor is a key linguistic resource by which human beings construct and represent their social experiences, beliefs, world views or ideologies (Halliday, 1978) while ideologies are systematic frames of social understanding that organise and control specific group attitudes (Charteris-Black

2004). Metaphor and ideology are interrelated and interconnected in that metaphor has the potential to show reality, beliefs and values while ideologies influence metaphor choice in the presentation of reality (Charteris-Black (2004). In line with this, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) opine that metaphor is concerned with creating and forming coherent views of reality. Scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson, (1980), Davis, (1994), etc. have addressed issues bordering on metaphor and representation of events and social realities. To Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5), the essence of metaphor is "understanding one thing in terms of another" while Davis (1994) sees it as a resource that enables people to construct some elements of their experience in terms of something else that may be more generally understood, while also serving to obscure other aspects of our experience from view.

As a conceptual phenomenon, metaphor is of particular significance to critical study of ideologies in texts. To Hodge and Kress (1993: 15), ideology involves "a systematically organised presentation of reality", metaphors are ideological in so far as they "define in significant part what one takes as reality" (Chilton and Lakoff 1995: 56). According to Chilton (1996: 74), metaphors "can contribute to a situation where they privilege one understanding of reality over others". In their Conceptual Theory of Metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 3) conceptualise metaphor basically as a central conceptual device stating that mankind's conceptual system, in terms of "what we both think and act are fundamentally metaphorical in nature."

As described by Lakoff and Turner (1989), metaphors unconsciously guide and shape the way we understand and represent the world around us. They argue that metaphor allows us the power to define reality and can be employed to draw attention to unexpected aspects of social phenomena. Any metaphorical use of language has a concrete source domain or trait which is mapped onto an abstract target domain or trait (Lakoff, 1993). Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue that metaphors work by mapping what is already known onto an abstract or less known thing for easy understanding. They in turn provide frames through which words from a literal source domain are used to interpret a lesser known, abstract target domain.

Charteris-Black's discourse model for metaphor analysis consists of three interrelated parts: ideology, language (metaphor) and socio-cultural context. Ideology comprises political, historical and economic dimensions of world view and background of reports which influence representations. Linguistic aspect is mainly metaphors which involve mapping knowledge of lexical field onto another. This is very critical for the understanding of the complex relationship between language, thought and social context of the reports. The third part is the socio-cultural context. Context provides the cues for the interpretation of the metaphors. "Metaphors are . . . chosen by speakers to achieve particular communication goals within particular contexts rather than being predetermined by bodily experience" (Charteris-Black 2004: 247). For example, in metaphoric conceptualization of a refugee situation

that involves the displacement of a large number of people, metaphor is grounded in experientialist connections between the domains of disease and congested refugee camps. One conceptualisation could be DISPOSSESSION IS A DISEASE in which the ontology of a DISEASE is mapped onto the abstract concept of DISPOSSESSION to produce a rich understanding of what is transpiring between the displaced people and refugee situation. Thus, the semantic source domain DISEASE is mapped onto the semantic target domain DISPOSSESSION. One aspect of CDA involves highlighting how metaphors can be ideologically significant – how metaphors can help to construct, in the mind of the reader or listener, the nature of the events or situations being described via a particular set of values.

4. Methodology

The data are sourced from two Nigerian newspapers, namely, *The Punch* and *The Guardian*. Using purposive sampling, the study selects news reports based on the subject of violence appearing from August 2008 to August 2009. The period covers one year following the final handover of the peninsula to Cameroon on August 14, 2008. It is also the time of resettlement of the displaced Nigerians. The analysis of the metaphors follows three parts: description, interpretation and explanation. Description of metaphor here implies the identification of object, substance, entity that serves as the intermediate level between the linguistic and conceptual levels. Words and grammar whose meanings are metaphorically mapped onto another are identified and described. Interpretation

is concerned with spelling out the elements in the mapping and making the necessary inference about the different elements of the mapping. That is, it makes parallel inference between objects of the source and target domain and a one-to-one correspondence with objects of the target and source domain to obtain maximum structural match. Explanation takes care of the pragmatic function of metaphor. The pragmatic function is delimited as the evaluative and persuasive dimensions of metaphor. This function is the attitude or mood the metaphor intends to convey which according to Lakoff and Turner (1989:65) is the “power of evaluation”. This would in addition account for how

the media use the news reports to intervene in the dispute and impose their perspectives. The data consists of 83 instances of metaphors collected from the two Nigerian newspapers. Out of three hundred and twenty-five (125) news articles gathered, a sample of eighty-seven (87) is purposively selected based on the theme of violence for the analysis. ‘MR’ in the samples stands for ‘Metaphoric Representation’. For constraints of space, only few very important samples are reproduced in the analyses. In addition, selected pictures are used to complement and support interpretation of data analysis where necessary.

Metaphors	Nigerian Newspapers		
	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	Total
Disease	12	11	23
Dangerous Water	08	11	19
Confusion	0	15	15
Natural Disasters	16	09	25

Table 1: Metaphor and Representation of Refugees and their Actions in the Border Discourse

Through a content analysis, the metaphorical processes have been identified and classified into the following:

4.1 The Refugees as a Disease

The refugees who have been dispossessed of their land are conceptualised as a disease. Here, the image of wound infestation is deployed in depicting the returning of thousands of displaced Nigerians to their resettlement camps as a disease. For example:

MR1:

Following this fresh attack, thousands of Nigerians have fled the area for safety and officials at the Bakassi returnees camp confirmed that large number of persons from Bakassi area have **swelled** the number of returnees at the camp (*The Guardian*, August 17, 2008)

MR2:

Another batch of 200 returnees has fled the

Bakassi Peninsula over alleged continuous harassment and torture of Nigerians by the Cameroonian gendarmes. Our correspondent learnt that the latest development has **swelled** the number of returnees at the refugee camp in Ekpri Ikang, Cross River to 1, 500 (*The Punch*, November 23, 2009)

In MR1 and MR2, it is reported that Nigerians ran away from the peninsula over alleged Cameroonian soldiers' maltreatment and came back to Nigeria in hundreds. Their return in mass after forceful ejection from the Bakassi peninsula is described as "swelling" the camps. 'Swelling' depicts an unprecedented increase in the number of people dispossessed of their place of abode and the supposedly ugly conditions suffered in the refugee camps. It creates a mental and vivid image of an uncontrollable increase in size; and which portends a threat to the immediate community in particular and the nation in general. The refugees in the eye of the people are like a disease. Many times, their environment is usually dirty/ unkempt coupled with hunger and poverty. These make them vulnerable to disease and crime. Thus, they constitute a threat to their host communities and are avoided by people. Just as a 'swollen wound' constitutes a problem to the body, the displaced are also represented as posing a threat to the community where they are hosted as they may spill over like a burst wound and affect other members of the society. The use of figures 'thousand' (MR1) and '200', '1500' (MRS2) shows

upsurge in the large numbers of Nigerians displaced. The increase is beyond normal and as such demands control to avoid 'contaminating' other parts of the nation.

4.2 The Refugees as Dangerous Water

The refugees are also metaphorically constructed as dangerous water. Here, metaphors of unsafe water such as 'flood' and 'stream' conceptualise the refugees' movement as outpouring in large numbers from Bakassi into Nigeria. For example:

MR4:

The first wave of returnees saw many flooding the bordering states of Cross Rivers and Akwa Ibom. The Mbo council alone in the latter saw about 57, 000 Nigerians suddenly become refugees (*The Guardian*, September 7, 2008)

MR6:

Bakassi: More displaced indigenes stream into A'Ibom. As the August 14 hand-over date of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon draws near, thousands of displaced indigenes are still streaming into Ibaka Beach in Mbo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State (*The Punch*, August 11, 2008)

MR7:

Bakassi...Returnees Flood Cross River, Akwa Ibom State: 57,000 Returnees Recorded in Mbo Council; Akpabio Calls for Urgent FG Assistance. FOLLOWING the return of Bakassi to Cameroun last week, neighbouring states of Cross

River and Akwa Ibom have been receiving a steady influx of returnees which a state official termed “overwhelming” (*The Guardian*, August 17, 2008)

‘Flood’ (MR4 and MR7) and ‘stream’(MR6) are metaphors of dangerous water evoking the image of a concrete action. They convey the idea of refugees moving uncontrollably in large number; hence, the use of ‘wave’ in MR4. The metaphor of water ‘stream’ captures the constant movement of the displaced indigenes of Bakassi into Akwa Ibom State. Here, *The Punch* maps the continuous flow of stream onto the movement of the indigenes and describes the displacement with the image of ‘flowing water’ (stream). That the indigenes are still ‘streaming’ shows the magnitude of people who have been displaced and the extent of danger which their ‘flowing’ portends to the host community.

In MR4 and MR7, the metaphor of ‘flood’ conceptualizes an ‘over-flowing’ of large number of Nigerians. Just like flood is uncontrollable, the returnees are so many and uncontainable that they have ‘flowed’ to the neighbouring states of Cross River and Akwa Ibom. Through the ‘flood’ metaphor, *The Guardian* newspaper depicts the outpouring of the returnees as natural disaster that demands urgent attention. It also symbolizes the return of the returnees as an ‘unstoppable’ threat to Nigeria and that the nation might be ‘drowned’ in the process. This view is supported by the use of the figure 57,000 to depict the increasing rate at which the people are flowing as a result

of dispossession. The adverbials ‘overwhelming’ (MR7) and ‘suddenly’ explicitly capture the extremely large number of returnees as a result of the steady influx and the unexpected and speedy manner in which Nigerians were departing the peninsula in large number, respectively. Beyond numbers, the flood metaphors symbolize danger as the refugees who are ‘pouring’ into Nigeria could create social and economic problems and disaster with their unexpected arrival.

4.3 The Refugees as Confusion

The refugees are represented as confused and acting in a disorderly manner. In this wise, metaphors such as ‘swarm’, ‘crowd’ and ‘litter’ are used to represent **the refugees and their actions as rowdy and chaotic. For example:**

MR9:

Soon they were swarming around, all wanting to air their views, which were similar - that they were leaving their fatherland, come August 14 (*The Guardian*, August 12, 2008).

MR10:

As at yesterday, the returnees were seen crowding the primary school waiting anxiously for their state to come and evacuate them while their mostly “Ghana must-go” luggage were assembled in the middle of the small field facing the classroom blocks (*The Guardian*, August 25, 2008)

MR11:

At their temporary refugee camp at the Government Primary School, Ikang Central, the refugees looked

despondent and lost in their land, virtually littering everywhere in the primary school with no beds or mattresses to sleep on (*The Guardian*, August 1, 2008)

In MR9, 'swarm' is from the field of insect. It maps the manner in which the dispossessed throng to air their views about the displacement as confused and disorderly. 'Swarm' depicts the dispossessed as restless and perplexed. They are confused on how to go about their impending dispossession. That they were 'swarming' shows that they were hopeless and moving in disoriented way. Just like insects such as bees or gnats swarm, the refugees are represented as moving in large numbers in a chaotic and disarrayed manner. In the same vein, MR10 and MR11 capture the confused state of the refugees using the metaphors 'crowding' and 'littering'. In MR10, they are pictured as being gathered together in large

numbers in one primary school. The word 'evacuate' clearly shows the large number of the dispossessed who potentially constitute a danger or problem and needs to be properly resettled. The popular coinage 'Ghana-must-go bag' is a type of low-cost bags that the Ghanaians packed their belongings with when the Nigerian authorities 'ejected' them from Nigeria in the 80's. This foregrounds the extent of poverty of the dispossessed who could not afford decent travelling bags for their departure. Also, 'littering' negatively presents the dispossessed as a threat to the community just like pieces of trash that have been carelessly left on the ground. Comparing the refugees' action as 'littering' the environment is an explicit form of derogation. Thus, their action is associated with dirt and otherwise threat. This is foregrounded in the verbal processes of 'crowding' and 'waiting anxiously' (MR10).

The photos below from *The Punch* newspaper captures this



Pic 1: (*The Punch*, "give us our daily bread," Bakassi returnees cry out; 25 August 2009)

Picture 1 above presents the refugees in their camp. It is a three-in-one picture showing different postures of hopeless and dejected people who are battling with the harsh realities of their resettlement camp. The folding of hands, carrying of jaws and sitting on bare floor depict hopelessness. Their style of dressing also heralds disorderliness. Some are on loosely tied wrappers while others are on over-sized clothes such as knickers, gowns and blouses. They all relate to the

representation of the people as confused as the refugees do not know the way out of their predicaments, such as hunger and homelessness. Hence, the title of the report “Give us our daily bread, Bakassi returnees cry out”. The title aptly relates to the Christians’ daily prayer “Our Lord’s Prayer” in which they look up to the Almighty God for daily sustenance. Thus, the refugees see the Nigerian government as the Almighty who will ‘deliver’ them from the hands of hunger and consequently ‘cried out’ to them.

This is also graphically represented in the *Guardian* newspaper below:



Pic 2: (The Guardian, Bakassi returnees ask for permanent resettlement; June 28, 2009)

Picture 2 shows mainly children with few adults who have been displaced from their former abode. They are now residing in some blocks of a primary school. In the picture, the refugees are in a state of despair and are hopelessly waiting for the government (their last resort) to properly resettle them. Their mode of dressing along with their foot wears (mainly slippers) depicts their abject state of despondency. However,

they seem to be looking towards their right-hand side probably in expectation of succour and intervention. The two dirty buckets obviously show the source of water for the camp, which is rain water.

4.4 The Refugees as Natural Disasters
Metaphors derived from nature’s catastrophes, such as ‘storm’ also capture the dispossessed as natural disasters. ‘Storm’ is an outburst or

strong outpouring of feelings in reaction to something bad or ugly. Just like a violent weather (storm), the dispossessed are represented as constituting a disturbance through their sudden strong attack (protest). For example:

MR13:

Our correspondent gathered that the Bakassi women numbering 40, stormed the Calabar office of the Cross River State's Commissioner for Local Government Affairs, Mr. Edem Ekong, on Thursday to register their grievances (*The Punch*, July 8, 2009)

MR14:

...more than 800 Bakassi returnees yesterday stormed Government House, Uyo to protest alleged government neglect in their camp (*The Guardian*, September 23, 2008)

'Storm' is metaphorically used in MR13 and MR14 to capture angry protests of the displaced Bakassi residents. By representing the actions of the protesters as 'storm,' the Nigerian reports depict their outburst of feelings which had been 'bottled up'. Thus, just like lightning and thunderstorm (violent weather), the dispossessed decided to pour out their grievances in anger. The word 'stormed' is used here as a physical process which evokes the image of concrete action of sudden strong demonstration by the returnees. It is used in a metaphoric sense to mean that the returnees are engaged in angry

protests over the insensitivity of the government to their plight. Just like other metaphors, the choice of 'stormed' to describe the protests portrays the actions of the returnees as disturbances to government's activities.

5. Conclusion

The study has analysed different forms and functions of metaphoric representations of refugees in the Bakassi Peninsula border conflict. It discovers that metaphors of disease, dangerous water, natural disasters and confusion are deployed to conceptualise refugees as threats, impending danger and agents of chaos and social disorder in their resettlement camps. Images of chaos, lawlessness and threats are constructed through the metaphors. Specifically, there is the use of the metaphors of dangerous water (e.g. flood), natural disasters (e.g. storm), metaphor of confusion (e.g. swarm) and disease (swell) in constructing a negative representation of the refugees' action. The emphasis on big numbers supports the humanitarian "help" ideology. Thus, the refugees who are "pouring" into Nigeria are not shown to only constitute socio-economic problems but the need for their proper resettlement is highlighted. The underlying ideologies include altruism, social justice and humanitarianism. The paper concludes that tact is essential in the choice of metaphors, especially in conflict news reporting, as metaphoric representations are capable of escalating or reducing conflict situations.

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The Patterns of Acquisition of Syntactic Regularities in Pre-Secondary School Second Language Learners of English

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Abstract: The learning of complex syntactic structures of English by L2 learners have not been systematically dealt with in the available literature. This study investigated this problem, with the aim of replicating some works done in the L1, in order to determine their feasibility in the L2 perspective. Limited to a small sample, the study examined the developmental stages in the acquisition of English syntactic structures in 7 to 10-year-old children learning English as a second language. Six test constructs were used to examine linguistic competence over a wide range of surface structures, and statistical analysis provided the basis for interpretation of the general pattern of acquisition. The findings of the study show that the process of acquisition of syntactic structures continues actively during and after the primary school years among L2 learners, and they have implication not only for syntactic acquisition, but for language theory in general and L2 theory in particular.

Key words: second language, syntactic acquisition, linguistic competence, surface structures, PMD, pronominalisation

1. Introduction

In recent years, works in the field of psycholinguistics and second language teaching and learning have encouraged studies in language learning and acquisition, as well as provided the grammatical insights and data necessary

for their development. Language acquisition by children can be regarded in the same way. If the terms of a linguistic theory are available to them, they might make a fundamental choice of the grammar of the language they are exposed to. Although Chomsky (1965)

and Katz (1966) argue that the specific content of a child's ability for language is shown in the nature of linguistic universals, these terms are features that define the human language in general and therefore appear in any natural language irrespective of the physical and natural settings (L1 or L2). The child always hopes to reconstruct the tacit competence possessed by the fluent speakers of his T(arget) L(anguage). In other words, the child tries to formulate grammar of the language to which he is exposed in his attempt to become competent as an adult speaker. As he tests the formulations against his own intuition, he acquires various 'grammatical relations, such as subject-predicate, main verb- object and, possibly...main- subordinate-clause...' (McNeill, 1966: 101).

Until the results of Chomsky (1969, referring to Carol Chomsky's work), the general belief in psycholinguistics is that at the age of five, children have acquired most of their syntax. Her work was reinvestigated by many researchers (e.g. Morsback and Steel, 2008), with some disputing her findings such as Cromer (1970); Steel (1974) and Cambon and Sinclair (1974) and others supporting her claims e.g. Dale (1972). Data from L2 perspective are either unavailable or are too remote to dispute or conform Chomsky's thesis; hence the current study.

In view of this, and because it is assumed that competence can be determined to some degree, at least, through the comprehension of controlled syntactic structures; that is, comprehension is testable, this study reports an investigation of the syntactic

acquisition of a group of 7 to 10-year-old learners of English as a second language. It deals on the one hand with several aspects of the acquisition of syntactic structures and, on the other, it is concerned with the general question of the extent to which children, in this age group, have mastered their L2. Areas of disparity between adult grammar and child grammar are explored. Some grammatical structures with different levels of complexity were investigated. These structures were examined in the grammar of children of up to 10 years by which time it is believed that their mastery of the structures is near that of adult's.

The findings of the study are tentative though; they may have implications not only for syntactic acquisition, but for language theory in general and L2 theory in particular.

2. Structural complexity and the nuances of acquisition

Commenting on the systematicity of children's syntactic structure, Klima and Bellugi (1966) argue:

Not very much is known about how people understand a particular sentence or what goes on into systematicity of adult language. It has seemed to us that the language of children has its own systematicity, and that the sentences of children are not just an imperfect copy of those of an adult (p. 191).

This is subliminal acknowledgement of the fact that children, at an early age, are capable of producing and interpreting sentences based on a configured syntactic system within them. Crystal (1987), Klima and Bellugi (1966), Thorne (1997), and Yule (1996) agree that children, irrespective of their

cultural background and psychological configuration pass through three developmental stages before they become syntactically competent. They, however, stress that the exact age in a particular stage is not fixed. In this view, children of various ages may be in the same syntactic age. This is a known psycholinguistic phenomenon.

In the first stage, children form their negatives by simply adding *no* or *not* at the beginning of any utterance. For example, it is normal to hear children scream out: *NO FALL, NO GO, NOT DADDY, NOT BOOK*. Questions are formed by simply adding a *wh*-form to the beginning of their utterances. For example, *where Mary? Who that? What doing?* It is also common at this stage to hear them speak with rise intonation at the end of expressions, especially for *yes* or *no* markers, as in: *Sit chair? See Mom? Have some?*

At stage two, children exhibit more maturity in forming negatives. The forms *don't* and *can't* are at this stage introduced, and they begin to place *no* and *not* in front of a verb rather than at the beginning of the expression. Examples: *He no bite you, I don't know, He no little, He big*. Similarly, the formation of questions becomes more complex in that more *wh*-forms are being used; examples: *Why you smiling? What book name?*

In stage three, on the other hand, a new set of syntax system is manifested by the child. The auxiliaries such as: *didn't* and *won't* begin to occur in his speech. Examples: *I didn't caught it, This is not ice cream*. The auxiliaries are no longer restricted to *can't* and *don't*. Similar maturity is observed in the question

structure. The child can now invert subject and verb to form interrogatives. Examples: *can I have a piece? Did you caught it? Will you help me?* The child's grammar is considerably developed at this stage. This is an indication that, like in phonology and morphology, children pass through several stages in acquiring syntactic elements.

However, available studies in the acquisition or learning of the English pronouns suggest that, like any other language system, it takes time before a child masters the nuances of pronouns. For example, at age 1-2, the subjective group – I, he, she, etc. – is learned first before the objective set – me, him, them, etc. – is learned later around age 3; more complex pronouns like the reflexives are acquired not earlier than 3 years (Haas and Owens, 1985; Waterman and Schatz, 1982; Wells, 1985; Hendriks and Spenader, 2006; and Owens, 2008). Hendriks and Spenader (2006) argue that pronoun expression and comprehension are delayed in 4- to 7-year-olds. It is not clear whether they are referring to English or languages in general. Again, Childers and Tomasello (2001: 739) observe that English speaking children 'build many of their early linguistic constructions around ... particular pronoun configurations.' This means that any pronominal feature that is not in the configuration rarely occurs in their repertoire. And where such pronoun eventually occurs, the interpretation assigned to it is bound to be distorted.

As Cromer notes, children seem to employ strategies to interpret sentences they find complex. It matters little to them if these strategies violate certain

rule(s). One such rule that is often either violated or overgeneralised is the P(inciple)of M(inimal) D(istance). A term proposed by Rosenbaum (1967), PMD has been discussed extensively in the literature by Rosenbaum (1967); Chomsky (1969); Landau (2000); Davies and Dubinsky (2004); Fujii (2010) etc. It states that the real subject of a verb in a complement clause is the closest NP preceding it. For example, the actors/does in the sentences:

Eze wanted Ayo to dance

Audu told Tonmo what to say

are *Ayo* and *Tonmo* respectively.

According to the findings from Chomsky's (1969) study, learning to violate the PMD is a late acquisition; as such, her 5- to 10-year-old subjects tended to apply the PMD across sentences. This is because they had yet learnt to violate the PMD rule. Interestingly, Aller et al (1977, cited in Bowerman, 1979: 289) find in the study a similar over application of PMD by their Arabic-speaking children subjects.

An *NP is easy to inf vb* (where NP is noun phrase and inf vb is infinitival verb) construct is analogous to *NP is eager to inf vb* form. In the former, the implicit NP is the object of the inf vb, whereas in the latter, the NP is both the subject of the sentence and the subject of the complement inf vb. Available literature on children acquisition of complex structures indicates that the latter construct is acquired earlier by children than the former. Chomsky (1969) discovers that by age 5, children may not have learned to interpret the construct correctly, but by 9 they are able to do so. Other studies that replicated her work (such as Kessel,

1970; Cambon and Sinclair, 1974; Cromer, 1970; and Morsbach and Steel, 2008) arrive at similar a conclusion. On the other hand, Solan (1978 & 1981) argues that the form *NP is pretty to inf vb at* (e.g. Eze is pretty to look at) is yet a construct of later acquisition than its closely related *NP is easy to inf vb* (e.g. Eze is easy to see) form. Intriguingly, what makes the latter easier to acquire is not apparent. Except for the particle *at*, the relations that hold between words in the two constructs are analogous. Another verb used to test the PMD in the literature is *promise*. Some scholars like Fujii (2010) are of the view that the NP2 elements in the following structures 3 and 4:

3. NP1 promise NP2 to inf vb reflexive (e.g. Paul promised Princess to wash himself)

4. NP1 tell NP2 to inf vb reflexive (e.g. *Paul told Princess to wash himself)

belong to different structures. It is for this reason that Boeckx and Hornstein (2003) introduce the *null P* analysis, which says that the NP object of the matrix does not block the local control chain. Yet importantly, when and how L2 children apply or violate the PMD is a critical question for which as yet has no coherent answers.

3. Review: Chomsky (1969)

Since this work is a replication of the study carried out by Chomsky (1969), it is vital that a review of that work is presented below. The review focuses on Chomsky's choice of test constructs, her selection of subjects and the main findings of her study. Her work investigates the acquisition of four syntactic structures with varied level of complexity. The four constructs are

'considered candidates for late acquisition' (p. 200). They are:

1. John is easy to see;
2. John promised Bill to go;
3. John asked Bill what to do; and
4. He knew that John was going to win the race.

All the constructs have different criterion of syntactic difficulty. For example, in 1, *John* is the subject of the sentence as well as subject of the verb *see*. Whereas in 2 *John*, and not *Bill*, is the subject of the verb *go*, in 3, *John*, and not *Bill*, is the subject of the verb *do*. At issue in 2 and 3 is the presence of two NPs before the verbs *go* and *do* respectively. The author wants to know which of the NPs her subjects would pick as the correct subjects of the verbs *go* and *do* respectively. The underlying structure of the two constructs is:

NP1 verb NP2 to inf

Specifically, the author is interested in the violation or retention of the PMD by the participants, in relation to verbs *promise* and *ask*. Sentence 4 above tests the subjects' knowledge of the English pronominalisation.

Her subjects comprised forty children with ages ranged from 5 to 10 years. There were 22 boys and 18 girls in the sample. All the subjects were English monolinguals from varying socio-economic backgrounds. They were taken from kindergarten through fourth grade from a predominantly middle-class Elementary School in Massachusetts, USA. The sample was made up of pupils with different academic intelligence: above average, average and below average.

Besides discovering considerable age differences of the children who knew the test constructs and those that did not know, she reports four important findings from the investigation. Thus: 1) the research design is fruitful to the extent of 'investigating questions of linguistic complexity' among 5-10 year old English L1 learners. 2) There is a distinct pattern of acquisition in relation to each of the constructs investigated. 3) Active syntactic acquisition is possible at nine and beyond. 4) There is variation 'in rate of acquisition in different children together with a common shared order of' (Chomsky, 1969, p. 121) syntax learning.

4. Methods

4.1 Population and sample

From two pilot studies conducted with a small number of 5 to 6-year-olds, the result indicated that the tests would be more appropriate for slightly older children. Probably more because of the time constraint than the testing procedures, they showed considerable restlessness and confusion; answering correctly in what appeared to be more by chance than by actual comprehension. For this reason, 7 to 10-year-old children speaking English as a second language became the principal subjects in the study.

The sample comprised thirty children, ten each from primary three to five. The children's age ranged from 7 to 10 years. There were 12 boys and 18 girls, though sex was not a variable in the study. All the subjects came from Addy Nursery and Primary School (ANPS), Kano State, Nigeria. ANPS is located beside Bayero University, Kano; thus, the pupils were predominantly the

children of faculty and non-academic members of the university. Fourteen of the subjects had Hausa as L1, 8 Igbo, 4 Yoruba, 2 Ijaw, 1 Tiv, and 1 Idoma. Some of the subjects began learning English before kindergarten. English was the medium of instruction in all their educational stages so far. Some of them spoke English at home alongside their native language. English, Hausa, Nigerian Pidgin were predominantly used for communication outside home and school. Thus, they all spoke English and any one or more Nigerian Languages. Their parents were not native-born English people. For the thirty subjects, the median age was 8-10 years, with the span ranging from 7;2 years (i.e. 7 years two months) to 10;4 years.

4.2 Design of test constructs

The purpose of the study was to test the subjects' knowledge of some syntactic structures by investigating their ability to interpret sentences with such structures. Therefore, the sentences were such that if the children have not learned their structures, they would be unable to assign the correct interpretation. The sentences used were:

- (i) John is easy to see
- (ii) John promised Bill to go
- (iii) John asked Bill what to do
- (iv) John told Bill what to do
- (v) He found out that Musa won the race
- (vi) Eze thinks he knows everything

Sentences (i-vi) were the classic structures employed by Chomsky (1969) (see sub-section 3 above), Klima and Bellugi (1969) and Kessler (1971) in the varied attempts to study children syntactic ability. In the present study

however each of the sentences was used to test the subjects' interpretation of a specific syntactic structure. Sentence (i), for example, was selected for its ambiguity. It can be either that *it is easy for John to see* or that *John can be easily seen by other people*. In essence, the surface structure of the sentence does not reveal the real grammatical relations between the words in the sentence. That L2 child learner can interpret sentences like:

1. The cars are easy to drive
2. The wood is hard to cut

where it is obvious that cars are easy to be driven by someone, and the wood is hard to be cut, does not necessarily mean children use their knowledge of structure. Because cars do not drive and wood does not cut, there is then one obvious interpretation to each of the sentences. To find out whether L2 children can correctly interpret sentences that are semantically ambiguous, sentence (i) was chosen. The only basis for interpretation is the subject's knowledge of the structure.

Sentence (ii) was chosen in order to test a particular syntactic structure that is associated with the verb *promise*, which gives rise to a dative construction (Larson, 1991) because it can take three arguments. The issue is the extent to which L2 English learner speakers realise that the syntactic structure surrounding a particular word is at variance with a common pattern in English language. The complement verb *promise* relates to the matrix subject, not the matrix object. As such, John

performs the action. Therefore, the PMD is violated.

In sentence (iii), unlike sentence (ii), what was tested was the subjects' extent of unravelling the inconsistencies between two or more possible semantic configurations associated with a particular verb. This verb is *ask*. For example, sentence (iii) is interpreted as *John asked Bill to tell John what John is to do*; whereas a sentence such as:

3. Chichi asked Taye to go

Chichi is requesting *Taye* to go. The researchers were interested in investigating whether the PMD is observed or violated.

Sentence (vi) tested the subjects' ability to utilise the PMD. In the sentence, it is *Bill* who is supposed to do something, not *John* who is the agent/actor. It is usual that when a sentence is of the structure:

NP1 told NP2 wh- to inf vb

(Chomsky, 1969: 7)

(where NP1 is the first noun phrase, NP2 is the second noun phrase and inf vb is infinitival verb), to activate the PMD, the NP2 is assigned the subject of the inf vb. Therefore, *Bill* in the sentence is the implied subject of the inf vb, do, not *John* who is the matrix subject.

Sentences (v) and (vi), on the other hand, focused generally on pronominalisation; the aim of which was to test how the subjects, given no semantic clues, would decide the reference of the pronouns therein. Of particular interest was investigating whether the L2 child learner realises that there are 'restrictions on a grammatical operation applied under certain limited conditions only' (Chomsky, 1969: 18). Like Ross (1967) in handling pronominalisation, the researcher understands the complexity of pronouns in syntactic environments and wondered how L2 children react to it (i.e. the complexity). In sentence (v), for example, the pronoun *he* is not associated with the **sub(ordinate) cl(ause) NP, Musa**. Thus, *he* refers to an entity unidentified in the sentence. Contrastingly, *he* in sentence (vi) may, in one situation, refer to the matrix NP, in another, to an entity outside the sentence. In view of this, the pronoun *he* in such syntactic environment is considered unrestricted. However, the researcher identifies *he* in the sentence with the matrix NP only. Therefore, a subject who associated *he* with an entity outside the sentence was scored wrong. Table 1 below summarises the test structures and the nature of their complexity.

Table 1: The Six Test Constructs and their Levels of Complexity

Structures	Complexity
i. John is easy to see	The NP is object of <i>see</i>
ii. John promised Bill to go	The NP of the main clause is the subject of <i>go</i>
iii. John asked Bill what to do	The NP of the main clause is the subject of <i>do</i>
iv. John told Bill what to do	The NP of the subordinate clause is the subject of <i>do</i>
v. He found out that Bola won the race	The pronoun <i>he</i> has an unidentified reference
vi. Eze thinks he knows everything	The pronoun <i>he</i> is restricted to the NP of the main clause

4.4 The interview

The constructions, written boldly on a wallboard in a classroom, were administered to the subjects.

4.5 The preliminary procedure

Before the actual testing, a series of pre-interview sessions was held with each child. Since the selected sentences were those that exhibited no contextual or semantic clues to influence subject's interpretation, and in order to establish relationship with him/her to facilitate optimum performance at the real interview, the examiner conducted several sessions of general conversation and directed dialogue in each meeting with each child. For example, in the preliminary sessions, the examiner ensured that each child understood and interpreted the following sentences correctly:

1. Bello is eager to see
2. Ayo promised me something
3. Chika asked Kate to leave
4. Chika told Kate to do something
5. He carried Musa in his car

The children were not however left to interpret the 1-5 above on their own. The researcher asked them some questions that aided them, such as:

6. Who is eager to see?
7. Who promised the other something, Ayo or me?
8. Who is supposed to leave, Chika or Kate?
9. Who is supposed to do something, Chika or Kate?
10. Is *he* referring to Musa or someone else?

It is worth noting that the preliminary sessions were not a subtle attempt to

provide clues to the subjects. Chomsky (1969), in studying the acquisition of syntax in NS English children, made use of dolls and other role-play techniques to direct the attention of her subjects before presenting the tests to them. Similarly, Kessler (1971) employed a series of preliminary sessions in which test constructions similar to those of the real interview were presented to the subjects, when he was investigating the acquisition of syntax among bilingual children. As a replication study, the researcher deemed it fit to provide similar preliminary session to the participants in the study.

5 Results and Discussion

John is easy to see (Si)

The real grammatical relations binding the words in the sentence are not directly expressed in its surface structure (Chomsky, 1969). As shown in Figure 1, more subjects interpreted the sentence as they would a sentence such as John is eager to see. Very few interpreted it as someone can easily see John. To the majority of the subjects, John is performing the action, not being acted upon. It appears the subjects had problem because the normal subject-verb-object order is not intact in the sentence. Another interesting aspect of the performance of the subjects was that the older the children were, the more they got the interpretation right (see Figure 2). Evidently, only about 14% of the children below 8 years got the interpretation right, while about 84% of the 10-year olds interpreted the sentence correctly.

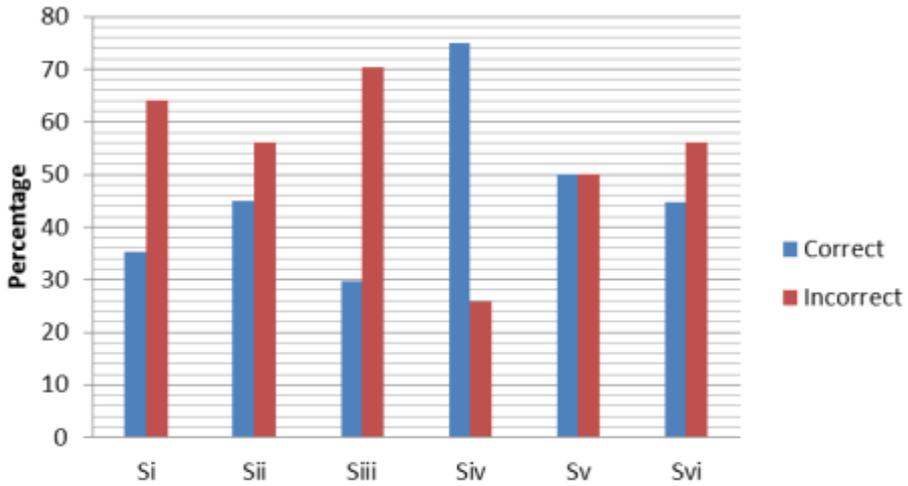


Figure 1: Percentage accuracy of the subjects in the six sentences

John promised Bill to go (Sii)

Specifically, the ability of the subjects to violate the PMD was tested in the sentence. The real subject of the complement verb is the matrix NP, *John* and not *Bill* which is the NP most closely preceding the infinitive verb. The results from the interview, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, are in many ways identical with those from Si. The salient difference is that whereas about 38% of the 9-year-olds got Si right, as much as 50% did so with Sii. The results therefore support the assumption that the older the children the more they understand syntactic nuances.

John asked Bill what to do (Siii)

As indicated in Figures 1 and 2, Siii was the test construct that the subjects failed most. About 70% of the subjects (see Figure 1) interpreted it as *John asked Bill what he (Bill) should do*, instead of assigning the subject of the infinitival complement verb *to do* to John. It is evident therefore that the subjects were yet to understand that in a sentence with the form:

NP1 ask NP2 wh- to inf vb,

the PMD is violated and the NP1 is assigned as the subject of the infinitival verb. All the 7-year-olds got the interpretation wrong. This has a strong implication on second language teaching and learning.

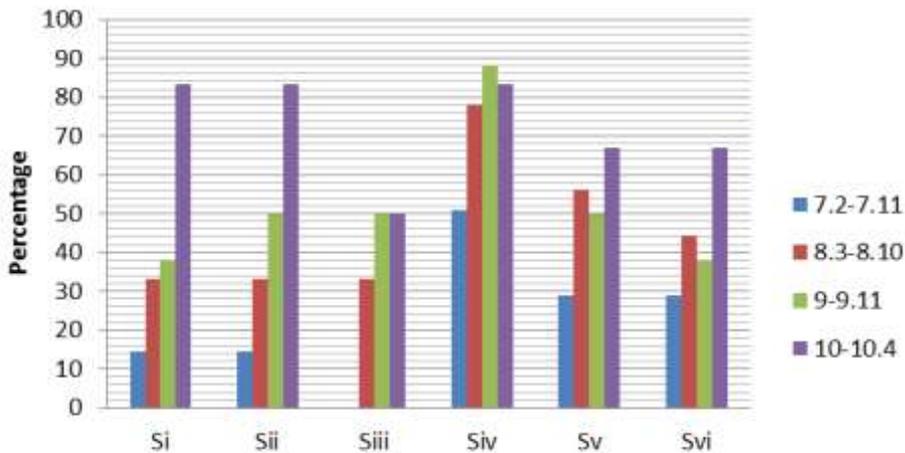


Figure 2: Percentage accuracy of the subjects according to age groups

John told Bill what to do (Siv)

The issue in this sentence is the subjects' ability to employ the PMD rule. The real subject of the infinitival complement verb is *Bill*; at the same time, it is the NP of the matrix verb. As is evident in Figures 1 and 2, most of the subjects got the interpretation right; that is they interpreted it as *John told Bill what he (Bill) should do*, where the subject of the infinitival verb is Bill, not John who is the implicit subject of the verb *told*. The remarkable thing about this sentence is that more 9-year-olds

got the interpretation right than the 10-year-olds. Interestingly, 88% of the 9-year-olds interpreted it correctly while about 83.3% of the 10-year-old subjects got it right, contrary to the expectation that the subjects would get the interpretation right with increase in age. The downward curve of the graph in Figure 3 shows that the percentage of the 10-year-olds, all of whom were supposed to interpret the sentence correctly, was slightly less than that of the 9-year-olds.

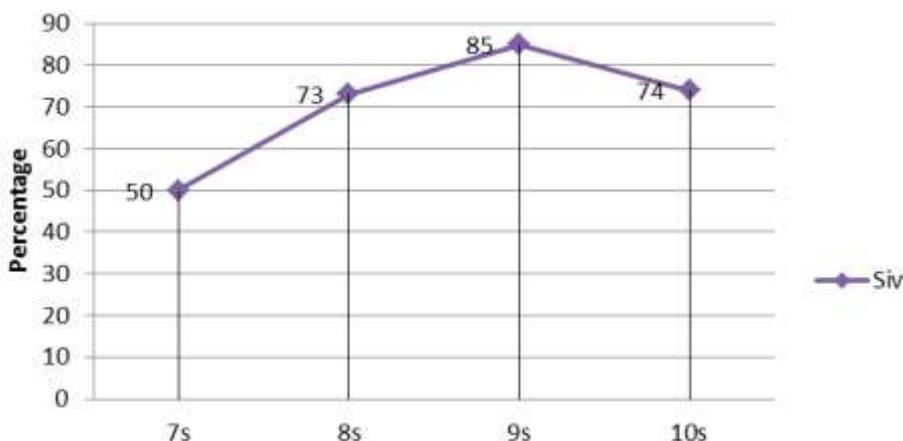


Figure 3: Subjects' performance in sentence iv

He found out that Musa won the race (Sv)

The result from this test shows that only 29% of the 7-year-olds could interpret the sentence correctly, whereas an average of 58% of the 8s, 9s and 10s got the interpretation correct (see Figure 2). It is evident from the results that most 8-, 9- and 10-year-olds were aware that the matrix pronoun *He* needs 'unidentified requirement' (Chomsky, 1969: 104). The basic principle of pronominalisation may be required more uniformly across children, perhaps at a certain age of maturation; whereas the more specialised constructions such as those concerned with unidentified reference vary more with individuals.

Musa thinks he knows everything (Svi)

Unlike Sv that has unidentified reference, the pronoun in Svi has unrestricted reference. On the average, about 37% of the 7s, 8s, and 9s got the interpretation right. This further shows that children in these age levels in the

sample did not know that a pronoun in a subordinate clause which follows the matrix NP has a restrictive reference. In fact, it is in anaphoric relationship with the matrix NP (Halliday, 1985). On the other hand, that only 33% of the 10-year-olds got the interpretation wrong is indicative that the more advanced children are, the more likely are they to know that a pronoun used restrictively can only refer to an NP (if it precedes the pronoun). Finally, the order of acquisition salient in the results is that more 8- than 9-year-olds interpreted the sentence correctly. This phenomenon is not however surprising given that some of the older subjects in the sample (all of whom were English native speakers) used by Chomsky (1969) wrongly interpreted such pronominal case.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The comprehension of the sentences was tested among 30 children who came from varied socio-economic backgrounds between the ages of 7 and 10. Important variation was found

between the oldest children and the youngest ones. This variation leads to the conclusion that the older the second language learners are the more correctly they interpret structures. Structure 3 for example was correctly interpreted mostly by children aged 10, on the other hand, structure 4 was interpreted correctly by most of the children in the sample. In order of acquisition, this clearly indicates that the rule in structure 3 is acquired rather later than the one in structure 4.

The nature of the children's linguistic processes examined in the study is generally significant in many ways: 1) it reveals that even after the age of 10, L2 learners of English continue to acquire the syntax of the language. This is contrary to the belief that children, by the age of 6 to 7, engage in active syntactic acquisition of their immediate language (Kessler, 1971); 2) it further indicates that as early as 7 years, L2 learners can apply the PMD, but not linguistically mature enough to violate it even at age 10; 3) the results are in agreement with the findings of other researchers who have studied children's syntactic acquisition in L1 and L2; 4) the varied patterns of the order and rate of the acquisition of the structures tested are each a characteristic of the construction itself.

If the similarities and differences between the grammars of L1 and L2 are considered in terms of linguistic competence (Kessler, 1971), then in language theory, L2 theory in particular,

the findings of this study are important for the application of child language acquisition to the theory of L2 teaching and learning given that structures shared by any two languages follow approximately a similar order and rate of acquisition. Green (1969: 198) argues however that 'the variations are modes of comprehending and uttering the one central linguistic pattern we are biologically destined to develop.'

The understanding of linguistic complexity in general may be facilitated by studying children's underlying linguistic competence and analysing the differences between their grammar and adults', where the latter forms the centre from which the former is viewed.

Most often, the findings of a research pave the way for further research. Therefore, based on the limitations of the investigation pointed out in the study, and the implication of the study on language theory, we suggest (for further research) that a replication of the investigation could be made with a larger sample to test reliability of the findings; older children may be studied in order to detect the limit of the acquisition of the six structures investigated; other syntactic structures with different levels of complexity may still be investigated with children; and possibly children whose L2 is considerably more developed than their L1 could be studied to determine the sequential order and rate in which children acquire an L2 without formal instruction.

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Pronunciation Difference between Public and Private Basic School Pupils in Ghana

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Abstract: There is a general perception that pupils who attend private basic schools speak better English than those in public schools, but there has not been an investigation to ascertain whether indeed there is a distinction between the English language skills of a private basic school pupil and a public basic school pupil. The present study seeks to show the English pronunciation difference between public and private basic school pupils and also to show which of them speak better English. Recordings from pupils from both categories of schools obtained from two regions of Ghana are analysed. The findings show that the pronunciation of English segments is a way to differentiate between these pupils. The English vowels / ɪ /, / a: /, / eɪ /, / aʊ /, / ɪə / and the voiced palato-alveolar consonant / ʒ / are the English segments that distinguish public and private basic school pupils used for the study. In all the instances where a distinction exists between them, the direction of the pronunciation of the private basic school pupils alongside their reading skills support the claim that they speak better English.

Key words: Linguistic difference, Ghanaian English, English pronunciation, Vowel, Consonant, Public School, Private School, Basic School

1. Introduction

In Ghana, basic education covers the first twelve years of education: three years of kindergarten; six years of primary (Basic one to Basic six); and

three years of Junior High School (JHS 1 - 3). Final year pupils (JHS 3) take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) conducted by the West African Examinations Council

(WAEC) before they proceed to Senior High School (SHS). It is the level of education with the largest number of schools and pupils. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census figures published on the website of Ghana Statistical Service, there are 3,809,258 pupils enrolled in primary schools and 1,301,940 pupils enrolled in junior high schools across the country.

There are large numbers of basic schools in the country. However, there have always been two main stakeholders involved in the provision of basic education in Ghana: the government or the state and private investors, which comprise individuals and religious bodies. This means that the basic school can broadly be categorized into private and public.

There are differences between the public and private basic schools. At this level in Ghana, the public school is largely free but pupils that attend private schools do not enjoy free education. It must be mentioned here that most private schools are very expensive. Now, most communities including rural areas have private schools. It is only the remotest villages that private schools do not exist. The private schools have survived over the years in spite of the introduction of free public education about ten years ago in Ghana. One other distinction between these schools is the academic performance of the pupils. For instance, pupils in private schools appear to perform better in external examinations. This was confirmed by the Acting Head of Private School Unit at the Ghana Education Service, as reported in the *Daily Graphic* page 11, November 26, 2010. In other words,

private school pupils (PRI) do better academically than public basic school pupils (PUB) (Nsiah-Peprah, 2004, p. 60).

Furthermore, there is a general assumption that pupils at the private basic schools speak English better but investigation to ascertain the level of performance difference between the English of a private basic school pupil and a public basic school pupil has been inadequate. This paper aims at analysing the pronunciation of the English vowel and consonant sounds by some selected private and public basic school pupils to show the distinction between them. The study examined pupils in the final year of their first twelve years of education, culminating in the BECE. Since it is established that English is acquired mainly through the process of formal education in Ghana (Huber, 2008, p.70), it is necessary that features of English pronunciation at the various levels of education be described and made available to researchers as advised by Boadi (1971, p. 54) to serve as part of the material needed for the on-going codification and standardization of the Ghanaian variety. The informants used are what Boadi (1971) describes as post primary.

2. Review of Literature: English in Ghana

On the basis of English expressions, Gyasi (1991, p. 27) argues against Ghanaian English. The suspicion here is that Gyasi's (1991) argument against Ghanaian English has its source from Sey (1973). For instance, Sey (1973, p. 10) cited by Ofori (2012) advises that the most accurate method to eliminate Ghanaian English is to expose it; and

the Ghanaian speaker will refrain from using the so-called Ghanaian variety. This has given the basis to assume that Ghanaian English does not exist or if it exists, it must be discouraged.

However, Ghanaian English exists as a different variety of English. Dako (2001, p. 107) views Ghanaian English as a type of English that is mostly spoken in Ghana. The Ghanaian English accent is identified with a Ghanaian who schools in Ghana. According to Dolphyne (1995, p. 31) there is an accent called "Ghanaian English." To these scholars, Ghanaian English exists as an accent, and pronunciation or accent is associated with identity (Huber, 2008, p. 90) In other words, the Ghanaian accent is a form of language identity. Ghanaian English, therefore, refers to the pronunciation of English, and it cannot be denied that a Ghanaian way of speaking English exists.

The Ghanaian accent of English is necessarily different from other accents including Received Pronunciation (RP) although the target of English pronunciation in Ghanaian schools, especially at the senior secondary level, is RP. The model aimed at in schools in Ghana is RP as seen in the syllabi provided by the Ministry of Education, but the teaching of English pronunciation is given little attention because most of the teachers lack the ability to teach it effectively (Quartey, 2009). This has inevitably promoted the emergence of the variety spoken by educated Ghanaians. Since it is difficult for the Ghanaian to match the standard of RP, Koranteng (2006) proposes a Ghanaian pronunciation standard. This standard has been tested and the result is

that the proposed standard is considerably in practice at the basic level of education and this standard is achievable (Ofori et al. 2014).

The general expectation of the language policy of the country is not much concerned about pronunciation where a target is set. It is well established that a Ghanaian who tries to sound foreign is even ridiculed (Ofori et al. 2014, p. 49). Despite this, a near-native pronunciation, although not necessarily sounding foreign, is admired and preferred. From the language policy, the National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP) which was introduced in 2006, focuses on pupils acquiring the ability to read in any of the indigenous languages (predominantly spoken in the region of the school) and simultaneously learning how to speak English, while the reading of it is delayed until Primary 2 (Quarcoo, 2014). Pronunciation is given little attention since the main target is the ability to speak, write and read. No matter the little effort put into pronunciation, once a child attends a school in Ghana, he or she acquires features that make him or her Ghanaian.

Huber (2008), writing on the vowels of Ghanaian English, observes that RP /i:/ in 'sheep' and 'seat' is realised as [ɪ]. Also, RP /ɪ/ in 'ship' and 'sit' is realised as [ɪ] in Ghanaian English. Huber's assertion that Ghanaian English speakers use [ɪ] in both instances where RP uses /i:/ and /ɪ/ is one of the inventories in Ghanaian English pronunciation that most researchers do not agree with. For instance, Dako (2001) and Adjaye (2005) list [ɪ] as a

distinctive vowel sound in Ghanaian English.

There is an observation that RP / **u:** / and / **ʊ** / in 'pool' and 'pull' respectively are pronounced as [u] in Ghanaian English. / **ɔ:** / and / **ɒ** / in 'cork' and 'cock' respectively are pronounced as [ɔ] in Ghana (Huber, 2008, p. 75). In addition, Huber (2008, p. 76) explains that the RP / **ɜ:** / in 'turn' is either [ɛ] or [ɛ:] in Ghanaian English. The predictable Ghanaian English replacement of RP / **ɜ:** / with [ɛ] in all situations is labelled as 'across the board' feature (Bobda, 2000b, p. 190) and that is one of the features that distinguishes between Ghanaian English and the other West African Englishes (Huber, 2008, p. 76).

According to Huber (2008), the RP / **ɑ:** / in 'cart' is rendered as [a] or sometimes [a:]. / **æ** / in 'cat' is pronounced as [a] and / **ʌ** / in 'cut' is realised as [a] in Ghanaian English (p.76). Of the pure vowels, the only short vowel that appears to be realised as it exists in RP is the vowel number 3 / **ɛ** /. In *ten*, it is pronounced as [ɛ] in Ghanaian English (Huber, 2008, p. 76). Huber (2008), further observes that Ghanaian English has the following vowels: [i], [u], [ɔ], [ɛ], and [a]. This observation is consistent with Koranteng (2006) but she adds [e] and [o] as the Ghanaian English pronunciation of RP / **eɪ** / and / **əʊ** / respectively.

On English diphthongs, Huber (2008:81) groups the diphthongs into closing and centring. He remarks that all closing diphthongs can be monophthongized except / **ɔɪ** /.

Dako (2001) identifies nine pure vowels of Ghanaian English, four of which are front vowels and five are back vowels: she lists [i], [ɪ], [ɛ], [a], [ɔ], [ɔ:], [o], [u], and [u:] (p. 110-111).

The identification of / **ɪ** / and / **u** / (which is RP's / **ʊ** /) as distinctive sounds in Ghanaian English sets Dako's (2001) work apart from Koranteng (2006) and Huber (2008) who do not treat these vowels as distinctive in Ghanaian English.

Dako (2001, p. 108) observes that 'dear' and 'fear' which are transcribed in RP as / **diə** / and / **fiə** / are realised as / **dɛ:** / and / **fɛ:** / respectively in Ghanaian English. This is a possible realisation but ample evidence shows a different realisation for this vowel in Ghanaian English. For instance, Koranteng (2006, p. 327) observes that the word 'year' is rendered as [iɛ ~ iɛ]. Again, Huber (2008:82) argues that Ghanaian English has [iɛ ~ ia] equivalent of RP's / **iə** /. The result of this study also shows consistency with Koranteng (2006) on this diphthong. This shows that Dako's (2001) claim that Ghanaian English has [ɛ:] for RP's / **iə** / is no more the case as it exists in the spoken English of Ghanaians today.

The word 'poor' which is said to be rendered as / **pɔ:** / according to Dako (2001) is not exclusively a feature of Ghanaian English. Some English language dictionaries like the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, low price edition, transcribes 'poor' as / **pɔ:** ^r /. Since RP is a non-rhotic accent, (^r) is only pronounced in word final position before another vowel. In this case, it is no longer arguable that [ɔ:] in 'poor' is distinctly

Ghanaian, but it becomes Ghanaian when it is observed that most Ghanaian English speakers do so without the length marker. In the present study, respondents pronounced ‘poor’ as / **pu** /.

Dako (2001, p. 109) remarks that ‘bud’ is rendered as / bəd / in Ghanaian English but Huber (2008, p. 78) points out the root of / **ʌ** / > / **ɛ** / in Ghanaian English and observes that it originated with the *Fantes* (who speak *Fante*, which is a dialect of *Akan* in Ghana). According to Huber (2008), / **ʌ** / > / **ɛ** / replacement is giving way today to / **ʌ** / > / **ɔ** / or / **a** / and that is one of the characteristics that sets Ghanaian English apart from other West African Englishes. It is clear that most Ghanaians do not say / **kɛp** / for / **kʌp** / (cup); / **kap** / is a more likely pronunciation.

On diphthongs, Dako (2001, p. 112) remarks that Ghanaian English has [**aɪ**], [**ɔɪ**], [**au**]. Her view that / **eɪ** / “is hardly ever heard” and that “it is replaced with [**ɛ**], thus: / **dɛ** / (they); / **tudɛ** / (today)” is also a possibility. Although / **eɪ** / is certainly hardly heard, it is rather replaced with [**e**] according to Koranteng (2006) and Huber (2008, p. 74) and not [**ɛ**].

On the issue of Ghanaian English consonants, most writers agree that they do not differ substantially from their British English equivalents. However, some important observations have been made. In her thesis, Quartey (2009, p. 86) points out that the velar nasal sound / **ŋ** / is replaced with [**ɪ n**], [**ng**] or [**ŋg**] and that this is not only unique to *Ga* and *Twi* speakers of English but according to Koranteng (2006, p. 242-

243) it is a feature of Ghanaian English. There has always been an assumption that the *Gas* always drop their [h] in word initial position. Comparing some *Ga* and *Twi* English speakers, Quartey (2009, p. 89) states that the former have a 29% chance of omitting [h] where it is required to be pronounced and they inserting it where it ought not to be pronounced.

(Quartey, 2009, p. 92) goes on to reveal evidence of consonant cluster reduction by her informants in words like *correct*, *child*, and *question* which she transcribes as / **kɔ'rɛt** /, / **tʃɔɪd** / and / **kwɛsʃɪn** / respectively. Adjaye (2005, p. 175) adds that the dental fricative [**θ**] is replaced with the stops [**t ~ ʈ**] in word initial position and that the labiodental fricative [**f**] is rare word initially to replace [**θ**]. With her informants, Adjaye (2005, p. 176) remarks that replacing / **ð** / with [**d ~ ɖ**] at word-initial position has a high occurrence. These features of Ghanaian English pronunciation are easily identified and these with others mark it off as an accent of the English Language.

3. Methodology

Two basic schools from Greater Accra Region and two from Eastern Region were selected for this study. Accra and Koforidua were chosen respectively because they are cosmopolitan cities where most Ghanaian languages are spoken. Informants from such environments are likely to show less traces of their first languages (Ofori, et al. 2014, p. 51-52). This is a major reason why these two cities were used for this investigation. The paper seeks to minimize the influence of their L₁. The criteria for the selection of schools are

that two of them should be private schools and the other two should be public or government-sponsored schools from each city.

3.1 Public Basic School

One of the characteristics of public basic schools is that they do not provide extra classes (thus paid extra tuition after normal school hours and sometimes during weekends) for their pupils. They have PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations) but their influence is almost not felt since every decision needs approval from the District Directorate of Education. In addition, some run the shift system (two sets of pupils and staff share the same school building and other facilities in rotation: morning and afternoon). This shift system is still in place in some places in the country; however, there has been political pronouncement to abolish it. The pupils of these schools do not pay any levy or fees. The children are provided with free text books and other learning materials. Sometimes, the pupils get free exercise books and they get free school uniforms once a while from the government. Any maintenance or additional structures are funded by the public purse. Teachers are mostly professionally trained: that is, graduates from the colleges of education or graduates who possess Bachelor of Education degrees from the universities. The interest of this study, however, is to select a public school that represents the average government-sponsored schools which form the majority of public basic education in the country.

In the light of this, a *Junior High School* (JHS) which is part of a cluster of schools at Madina, a suburb of Accra,

was selected. It is one of the five Junior High Schools on the same compound. The cluster is also made up of some primary schools which supply the Junior High Schools with pupils. The selected JHS does not run the shift system. The medium of instruction in the JHS is English. In the JHS, there are eleven professionally trained teachers: two of them teach English. Both of them have university degrees. One other public *Junior High School* selected from Betom, Koforidua has ten professionally trained teachers who teach the various subjects in the school. In all, five of them have first degrees. It must be mentioned at this point that one does not require a university degree to teach in a basic school in Ghana. A diploma from the colleges of education is all that a person needs to teach at this level. The school has a primary section that supplies the pupils. They do not run the shift system and they have common features with their counterpart from Accra.

3.2 Private Basic School

On the other hand, private basic schools provide extra tuition for pupils and often have functioning PTAs which contribute to the development of the school. Pupils pay tuition fees and other levies. These pupils do not get free exercise books or textbooks from the government. Private basic schools are owned by individuals who see them (the schools) as business entities, for which reason close supervision is always provided. These schools run the Ghanaian system of basic education. There is another kind of private schools which run the British or the American curricula. This type of

private school was not considered because it is in the minority.

A Junior High School at Lapaz New Market, another suburb of Accra, was selected for the study. It is a private school with all the departments that make up the basic school and it is one of the private schools that are in the majority (those that run the Ghanaian system of education in the country). This study includes private schools because, at this level of education in Ghana, the level of private participation in the provision of basic education is very high. The school has staff members who have qualifications such as Teacher's Certificate 'A', Higher National Diploma (HND) and University Degrees. In the JHS department, five teachers teach English Language which is divided into sections: comprehension, composition, and grammar. The medium of instruction is English. The other private Junior High School was selected from Old Estate, Koforidua. This school has every department: nursery to JHS. None of the teachers here is professionally trained. Of the twelve teachers, eight are first degree holders and four are HND graduates. The medium of instruction is mainly English and the pupils are strictly required to speak English in the school compound.

3.3 Selection of Respondents

The first condition for the selection was that respondents should be in the final year of the Junior High School because this represents the highest class at the

basic level. Secondly, a respondent should have spent at least seven years in the school. This was to make it legitimate enough to label a respondent as a pupil of that category of school. The private school from Accra had 73 pupils and Koforidua had 32 pupils. Of this number, only 36 and 19 pupils respectively could meet the conditions. On the other hand, 18 and 16 pupils from the public basic schools from Accra and Koforidua of a total of 35 and 33 respectively met the conditions. Considering the vast volume of data to work with, the simple random sampling method was used to select five male and five female pupils from each school: bringing the total number to twenty public and twenty private basic school pupils.

3.4 Description of Respondents

The respondents were divided into two groups. The first group comprised respondents from the public schools and the second, the respondents from the private schools. The average age of the respondents was 15. The distributions of the L_1 of the respondents were as follows: Twi – 16; Ewe – 6; Hausa – 4; Fante – 4; Ga/Adamgbe – 4; Cherepon/Okere – 4; and Dagomba – 2. (The distribution of L_1 was not a determiner of how they spoke English because most of these pupils spoke more than one local language. The L_1 of a respondent did not qualify or disqualify him or her to take part in this exercise: the emphasis was not on that.) See Tables 1 - 2 below.

Table 1: Public School Respondents

F / F	16 / 16	Dagomba / Twi
F / F	17 / 17	Ewe / Twi
F / F	14 / 17	Hausa / Ewe
F / F	14 / 16	Twi / Twi
F / F	16 / 16	Twi / Hausa
M / M	16 / 16	Cherepon / Ga
M / M	16 / 14	Twi / Twi
M / M	17 / 14	Ewe / Ga
M / M	17 / 17	Twi / Dagomba
M / M	16 / 16	Ewe / Twi

Table 2: Private School Respondents

F / F	14 / 15	Ewe / Twi
F / F	14 / 14	Fante / Hausa
F / F	15 / 15	Fante / Ga
F / F	14 / 14	Twi / Cherepon
F / F	15 / 14	Hausa / Twi
M / M	14 / 15	Twi / Cherepon
M / M	14 / 15	Twi / Fante
M / M	15 / 14	Twi / Cherepon
M / M	15 / 14	Ga / Twi
M / M	14 / 14	Ewe / Fante

3.5 Data Collection

Before the data were collected, the heads of the schools were approached with formal letters requesting their permission to allow the participation of their pupils. Consent forms were attached to the letters which they signed

appropriately. Also, since the respondents involved were minors, a parental consent form was given to each of them for their parents to read and agree by signing. All parental consent forms were received. All these were done prior to the days of recording.

3.5.1 Interview

A brief informal interview was conducted with each respondent before he or she was asked to read out the words and the sentences. The interview helped to obtain the age and the linguistic background of the respondents.

3.5.2 Reading Material

Each respondent read out a list of 231 English words that catered for each English vowel and consonant sound in the syllable initial, medial and final positions in different sound combination environments. Also, each respondent read out a list of 60 sentences in which the listed words were used. The sentence pronunciation was used mainly for verification. This means that, if a word which appeared on the wordlist and the sentences had two different pronunciations by the same respondents, the sentence pronunciation was considered for the analysis. The digital recorder, Zoom H2, obtained from the Department of English, University of Ghana was used.

3.5.3 Procedure

The set of respondents recorded first were those from Accra. They read out the words, followed by the sentences. Since the recording took place during school hours, the process was marginally disturbed by interference from other pupils. This procedure was repeated in Koforidua. There was some background noise from some school children who were playing on the compounds at the time, but this did not interrupt the process. The words put together were simple English words; however, a few were skipped by the respondents.

3.5.4 Transcription

The recordings were transferred to a computer with a headset. The transcription was impressionistic. The transcription was phonemic and the symbols were taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The transcription was checked by two experts from the Department of English of the University of Ghana.

3.5.5 Data Analysis

The number of realisations of each vowel and consonant sound by each group was computed and presented as proportions. The differences in the proportions between the two groups were compared using Chi-squared analysis or Fisher's exact test where necessary. A value of $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant. For each speech sound, no fewer than five words, in different orthographies, were selected for the analysis but no sound had more than ten words for its analysis. All the English vowel and consonant sounds were analysed, however, two consonants were presented since the differences between the others were statistically insignificant.

4, Analysis

4.1 Pure vowels

From table 1 above, the respondents' realisations of all the twelve English pure vowels have revealed six distinctive vowels in Ghanaian English. There are no long vowels but it is possible to observe some length in some pure vowels made by some of the respondents. Nevertheless, their frequency is statistically insignificant. There are no central vowels: the English central vowels are realised in a number of ways either with a front or back

vowel. The quality of ‘backness’ of the back vowels is quite suspicious. Sometimes these back vowels were actually fronted.

The analysis shows that the respondents realised the English vowel / i: / as [i] which recorded the highest mark and it has a quality as the English vowel number 1 but without the length marker: it is shorter. Other realisations like [i:] which is an equivalent of the English vowel was heard. Also [i·] which has the quality and half the length of the English vowel 1 was heard. In some instances, the English vowel 2 / ɪ / was actually used for English vowel / i: / by some of the respondents. This is becoming a new realisation in the word *feel* which one would have expected [i] in Ghanaian English. From the data, 38/40 or 95% of the respondents pronounced *feel* with [ɪ].

English vowel number 2 / ɪ / was realised as [ɪ] at a 52% rate of occurrence by both groups. Although this was the realisation with the highest percentage, it was observed that [i] also occurred fairly high in the data. The meaning that can be made from this is that the realisation of English vowel number 2 as such in Ghanaian English has not disappeared yet. Some speakers use it quite well to distinguish between it and English vowel number 1 and others use it where it is not expected to be used. For instance, it occurred 21.5% in the realisation of vowel /i: /. English vowel number 3 / ε / was realised by all respondents as [ε] with a percentage of 98.13%.

English vowel number 4 / æ / was realised as [a] which recorded 85%.

Another realisation which is a developing feature in Ghanaian English is the pronunciation of the word *thank* with English vowel number 3 / ε /.

The analysis revealed that the English vowel number 5 / ɑ: / was realised by the respondents as [a] which recorded 82.14%. Realisations like [a:] and [a·] occurred but with low percentages.

It is clear at this point that English vowel / æ / and / ɑ: / are pronounced as [a] by the respondents.

English vowel number 6 / ɒ / was realised by the respondents as [ɔ] which recorded 92.86. Also, English vowel number 7 / ɔ: / was realised as [ɔ] which recorded 76.5% by the respondents. It is observed here that English vowels 6 and 7, / ɒ / and / ɔ: / respectively are realised as [ɔ] in the spoken English of the selected pupils for this study. Furthermore, English vowels / ɔ / and / u: / were realised as [u]. [u] recorded 88.57% and 77.14% for / ɔ / and / u: / respectively. From the data, the central vowel sounds / ʌ / and / ə / have other realisations such as [ε] and [ɔ] but in all situations, the [a] rendition was more prominent. / ʌ / was realised as [a] with a 52.5% occurrence. The central vowel sound / ə / was realised as [a] with a percentage of 61.25. It can be said that the vowel sound [a] played a major role in the their English. The central vowel sound / ɜ: / was realised as [ε] at a 95.83% rate. It can also be said that the vowel sound [ε] is one of the prominent vowels in the spoken English of these pupils. This study shows the distinctive pure vowels used by these selected pupils of the basic schools as: [i], [ɪ], [ε], [a], [ɔ], and [u].

4.2 English Diphthongs

It is observed that the eight English diphthongs have phonemic realisations in the spoken English of the respondents. Four of the realisations are what Ofori, et al. (2014) label ‘Autonomous’ diphthongs. This is so because they exist on their own and they are: [ai], [ɔi], [au], and [iɛ].

Unlike the ‘Autonomous’ diphthongs, / uə / was realised in a number of ways: [ɪʊ, uə, ua]. Specifically, [ɪʊ] was most realised in *pure* and *sure*; [uə] was most realised in *poor* while [ua] was realised in *actual* by the respondents.

The English Diphthongs / eɪ /, / əʊ /, and / ɛə / were realised as monophthongs [e], [o] and [ɛ] respectively. Since these realisations are similar to those talked about earlier as monophthongs, they can be seen as pure vowel sounds in the spoken English of these respondents. See table 1 above.

4.3 English Consonant Sounds

A test on all the English consonant sounds was done and both sets of respondents did not show any significant divergence as far as the pronunciation of these sounds is concerned. However, it is quite important to show the analysis of the pronunciation of Palato – Alveolar Voiced and Voiceless Fricative sounds. The Public School Respondents pronounced / ʒ / as [ʃ] 80/120 or 66.67% and the Private School Respondents also realised it as [ʃ] 56/120 46.67%. Also, the Public School Respondents pronounced / ʒ / as [ʒ] 40/120 or 33.33% and the Private School Respondents realised it as such 64/120 53.33%. There is a significant difference here since the P value is 0.0491.

Table 3. Analysis of the Data

No.	Vowel Sounds and the words they occur	Realisations by Public and Private School Respondents	P<0.05
1	/ i: / <i>eat, seat, thief, cheap, feel, sheep, week, reach, see, tree</i>	1. [i]- PUB - 128/200 or 64% PRI- 134/200 or 67%; 2. [ɪ] - PUB - 52/200 or 26% PRI- 34/200 or 17% 3. [i.-] PUB- 20/200 or 10% PRI - 30/200 or 15% 4. [i:] - PUB- 0/200 or 0% PRI - 2/200 or 1%.	0.8116 0.0956 0.1823 0.1583
2	/ ɪ / <i>it, ring, live, ship, sin, pretty, fill, district, elect, enact</i>	1. [i]- PUB- 104/200 or 52% PRI- 60/200 or 30% 2. [ɪ] - PUB- 80/200 or 40% PRI- 128/200 or 64% 3. [ɛ]- PUB- 16/200 or 8% PRI- 12/200 or 6%	0.0037 0.0068 0.4649
3	/ ɛ / <i>end, pets, bed, get, set, leg, yet, men</i>	1. [ɛ]- PUB- 158/160 or 98.75% PRI- 156/160 or 97.5% 2. [ɛ.-]- PUB- 0/160 or 0% PRI- 4/160 or 2.5% 3. [i]- PUB- 2/160 or 1.25% PRI- 0/160 or 0%	0.9361 0.0472 0.1592
4	/ æ / <i>academic, accident, cat, thank, man, scan</i>	1. [a]- PUB- 102/120 or 85% PRI- 102/120 or 85% 2. [ɛ]- PUB- 18/120 or 85% PRI- 18/120 or 85%	1.0000 1.0000
5	/ ɑ: / <i>arm, start, far, harm, farm, dark, smart</i>	1. [a]-PUB- 120/140 or 85.71% PRI- 110/140 or 78.57% 2. [a.-]- PUB- 20/140 or 14.29% PRI- 24/140 or 17.14% 3. [ɑ:]- PUB- 0/140 or 0% PRI- 6/140 or 4.29%	0.6254 0.5756 0.0155
6	/ ɒ / <i>option, orange, pot, stopped, cloth, lock, shop</i>	1. [ɔ]- PUB- 126/140 or 90% PRI- 134/140 or 95.71% 2. [o]- PUB- 12/140 or 8.57% PRI- 6/140 or 4.29% 3. - PUB- 2/140 or 1.43% PRI- 0/140 or 0%	0.7211 0.1711 0.1595
7	/ ɔ: / <i>order, ordain, fork, short, bought, caught, talk, fall, saw, war</i>	1. [ɔ]- PUB- 156/200 or 78% PRI- 150/200 or 75% 2. [ɔ.-]- PUB- 42/200 or 21% PRI- 48/200 or 24% 3. [ɔ:]- PUB- 0/200 or 0% PRI- 2/200 or 1%	0.7964 0.5681 0.1588

		4.[o]- PUB- 2/200 or 1% PRI- 0/200 or 0%	0.1588
8	/ʊ/ <i>pull, put, book, full, could, look, cook</i>	1.[u]- PUB- 128/140 or 91.43% PRI- 120/140 or 85.71% 2.[ʊ]- PUB- 12/140 or 8.57% PRI- 20/140 or 14.29%	0.7117 0.1809
9	/uː/ <i>pool, stool, cool, smooth, do, shoe, school</i>	1.[u]- PUB- 112/140 or 80% PRI- 104/140 or 74.29% 2.[uː]- PUB- 28/140 or 20% PRI- 36/140 or 25.71%	0.6828 0.3675
10	/ʌ/ <i>under, upper, public, cut, result, judge, just, wonder</i>	1.[a]- PUB- 74/160 or 46.25% PRI- 94/160 or 58.75% 2.[ɔ]- PUB- 52/160 or 32.50% PRI- 40/160 or 25% 3.[ɛ]- PUB- 34/160 or 21.25% PRI- 26/160 or 16.25%	0.2116 0.2706 0.3438
11	/ɜː/ <i>earth, bird, nurse, serve, heard, transfer</i>	1.[ɛ]-PUB- 118/120 or 98.33% PRI- 112/120 or 93.33% 2.[ɛː]- PUB- 2/120 or 1.67% PRI- 8/120 or 6.67%	0.7776 0.0635
12	/ə/ <i>away, about, affected, political, possible, the, colour, actor</i>	1.[a]- PUB-100/160 or 62.50% PRI- 96/160 or 60% 2.[ɪ]- PUB-18/160 or 11.25% PRI- 20/160 or 12.50% 3.[ɛ]-PUB-20/160 or 12.50% PRI- 20/160 or 12.50% 4.[ɔ]- PUB- 20/160 or 12.50% PRI- 20/160 or 12.50% 5.[i]- PUB- 2/160 or 1.25% PRI- 2/160 or 1.25% 6.[ə]- PUB- 0/160 or 0% PRI- 2/160 or 1.25%	0.8221 0.7594 1.0000 1.0000 1.0000 0.1592
13	/eɪ/ <i>eight, aim, education, shameful, away, tray</i>	1.[e]- PUB- 118/120 or 98.33% PRI- 108/120 or 90% 2.[eː]- PUB- 2/120 or 1.67% PRI- 8/120 or 6.67% 3.[ei]- PUB- 0/120 or 0% PRI- 4/120 or 3.33%	0.6334 0.0635 0.0477
14	/aɪ/ <i>ice, identified, time, wife, thigh, fly</i>	1.[ai]- PUB- 102/120 or 85% PRI- 102/120 or 85% 2.[ar]- PUB- 16/120 or 13.33% PRI- 18/120 or 15% 3.[ɪ]- PUB- 2/120 or 1.67% PRI- 0/120 or 0%	1.0000 0.7486 0.1599
15	/ɔɪ/ <i>oil, choice, voice, joy, boy, toy</i>	1.[ɔi]- PUB- 110/120 or 91.67% PRI- 106/120 or 88.33% 2.[ɔɪ]- PUB- 10/120 or 8.33% PRI- 14/120 or 11.67%	0.8436 0.4371
16	/əʊ/ <i>old, vote, joke, told, throws, ago</i>	1.[o]- PUB- 118/120 or 98.33% PRI- 120/120 or 100% 2.- PUB- 2/120 or 1.67% PRI- 0/120 or 0%	0.9269 0.1599
17	/aʊ/ <i>out, about, mouth, town, cow</i>	1.[au]- PUB- 90/100 or 90% PRI- 98/100 or 98% 2.[a]- PUB- 10/100 or 10% PRI- 2/100 or 2%	0.6756 0.0251
18	/ɪə/ <i>ear, year, idea, fear, dear</i>	1.[ie]- PUB- 98/100 or 98% PRI- 90/100 or 90% 2.[ia]- PUB- 2/100 or 2% PRI- 0/100 or 0% 3.[iɛ]- PUB- 0/100 or 0% PRI- 8/100 or 8% 4./jɛ/- PUB- 0/100 or 0% PRI- 2/100 or 2%	0.6756 0.1604 0.0056 0.1604
19	/ɛə/ <i>air, affairs, square, aware, pair, wear</i>	1.[ɛ]- PUB- 70/100 or 70% PRI- 66/100 or 66% 2./ɛː/- PUB- 30/100 or 30% PRI- 34/100 or 34%	0.7916 0.6640
20	/ʊə/ <i>tour, pure, sure, poor, actual</i>	1.[ɔ]- PUB- 38/100 or 38% PRI- 40/100 or 40% 2.[uə]- PUB- 22/100 or 22% PRI- 20/100 or 20% 3.[ua]- PUB- 20/100 or 20% PRI- 18/100 or 18% 4.[ɔː]- PUB- 16/100 or 16% PRI- 16/100 or 16% 5.[ɔ]- PUB- 4/100 or 4% PRI- 4/100 or 4% 6.[uə]- PUB- 0/100 or 0% PRI- 2/100 or 2%	0.8479 0.7795 0.7666 1.0000 1.0000 0.1604
	Consonants		
21	/ʃ/ <i>shoe, shy, fishing, flushed, wash</i>	[ʃ]- PUB- 100/100 or 100% PRI- 100/100 or 100%	1.0000
22	/ʒ/ <i>treasure, pleasure, measure, confusion, vision, television</i>	1.[ʃ]- PUB- 80/120 or 66.67% PRI- 56/120 or 46.67% 2.[ʒ]- PUB- 40/120 or 33.33% PRI- 64/120 or 53.33%	0.0999 0.0491

5. Discussion

The task of this study is to investigate the distinctions that exist between pupils of public and private basic schools with respect to their pronunciation of the

English segments. The section discusses where there are differences in their pronunciations.

During the recording of the two groups, it was realised that those respondents

from the private school read and spoke English comfortably. It was easy to notice how difficult it was for some of the public school respondents to read the simple English words on the list. For instance, apart from the word *wreaths* which almost all the respondents found rather extremely difficult to pronounce, some of the public school respondents struggled with words like *flushed*, *though*, *tough*, *razor*, and *luggage*. Specifically, Respondent Pub8 could not pronounce *snake* and *joke* (the pronunciations were /**snak**/ and /**huk**/ respectively). Pub10 could not pronounce *absolutely* and *watched* in the data. He could not pronounce *enact*, *men*, *set*, *pot*, *seat*, *beat*, *bought* and *ordain* at first glance. The researcher had to point to them again before he was able to pronounce some of them.

Most importantly, a major difference between these sets of respondents is the realisation of English vowel number two /ɪ/. The Public School Respondents pronounced vowel /ɪ/ as [i] 104/200 which is equal to 52% while the Private School Respondents realised it as [i] 60/200 or 30%. Since the P value is 0.0037 which is statistically significant, the Public School Respondents are more likely to realise English Vowel number two /ɪ/ as [i]. Also, the Public School Respondents realised vowel /ɪ/ as [ɪ] 80/200 which is 40%. On the other hand, the Private School Respondents realised it as [ɪ] 128/200 or 64%. The P value here shows 0.0068 which means that the Private School Respondents are more likely to realise Vowel /ɪ/ as [ɪ] (See table 1). Koranteng (2006) states that there is a level of distinction between RP vowels /i:/ and /ɪ/ in

Ghanaian English but it is obvious that in Ghanaian English, /i:/ and /ɪ/ are realised as [i] in most situations. Again, writing on the vowels of Ghanaian English, it is observed that RP /i:/ in ‘sheep’ and ‘seat’ is realised as /i/ in Ghanaian English and /ɪ/ in ‘ship’ and ‘sit’ is also realised as /i/ in Ghanaian English (Huber, 2008). It is interesting to note that /ɪ/ is listed as a distinctive Ghanaian English vowel (Dako, 2001; Adjaye, 2005; and Ofori et al., 2014). The observation here is that, unlike the Public School Respondents, the Private School Respondents make a clear distinction between English vowel number 1 and 2 which is supported by research findings.

From the tables above, it is seen that the Public School Respondents realised Vowel /ɑ:/ as [ɑ:] 0/140 or 0% while the Private School Respondents realised it as [ɑ:] 6/140 or 4.29%. The difference here is statistically significant since the P value is 0.0155. It means that the Private School Respondents are more likely to pronounce vowel /ɑ:/ as [ɑ:] in order to distinguish it from the other sounds. The low occurrence of this vowel is not strange since it is known, according to Gimson (2001: 116), that /ɑ:/ is absent in most languages so foreign learners of English are encouraged to make efforts to pronounce /ɑ:/ as it is in order to have a clear distinction between it and /æ/ and /ɒ/.

Significantly, the analysis of the pronunciation of the diphthong /eɪ/ also shows a distinction between the Public School Respondents and the Private School Respondents. The PRI have a 3.33% chance of realising this sound as

[ei] while the PUB make no effort of having this realisation. Statistically, the P value of 0.0477 makes this distinction significant.

One other diphthong that brings a distinction between the two groups of pupils is / aʊ /. From the analysis, it can be seen that PUB are more likely to realise / aʊ / as [a] with 10% occurrence against 2% from the PRI. This means that the PUB are more likely to move away from the established realisation.

The last diphthong that shows a distinction between them is / iə /. The Private School Respondents are more likely to pronounce it as [iɛ] with 8% chance against 0% on the part of the Public School Respondents. The P value here is 0.0056.

There exists a distinction between the realisations of both groups: the pronunciation of the voiced palato-alveolar consonant / ʒ /. While the Public School Respondents realised it as [ʒ] at 33.33%, the Private School Respondents realised it as [ʒ] 53.33% and this is statistically significant. It is observed that / ʒ / exists more in -sure words and it is realised as / ʃ / in most -sion words. This observation is consistent with Ofori (2012, p. 17).

Finally, although the distinction that exists here is statistically insignificant, it is quite important to make this observation. Fourteen (14) of the Public School Respondents pronounced the vowel / ʌ / in *judge* as [ɛ] but only six (6) of them preferred [a]. On the other hand, only eight (8) Private School Respondents pronounced it as [ɛ] and twelve (12) of them preferred [a].

Again, the vowel / ʌ / in the first syllable of *public* was pronounced as [a] by all Private School Respondents while eight (8) of the Public School Respondents pronounced it as [a] and twelve (12) preferred [ɔ]. On the whole, of a total of eight (8) words used for the analysis, the Public School Respondents realised the vowel / ʌ / as [a] 74/160 which is 46.25%; it was pronounced as [ɔ] 52/160 or 32.5%; and as [ɛ] 34/160 or 21.25%. This means that the Public School Respondents have no specific realisation for the English vowel number ten, instead, they realised it in three forms [a, ɔ, ɛ] because non scores 50%. Meanwhile, the Private School Respondents realised the vowel / ʌ / as [a] 94/160 which is equivalent to 58.75%. This means that their preferred choice for vowel / ʌ / is [a]. Dako (2001:109) remarks that 'bud' is rendered as / bɛd / in Ghanaian English but Huber (2008, p.78) takes us to the root of / ʌ / > / ɛ / in Ghanaian English and observes that it originated with the Fantes (who speak Fante which is a dialect of Akan in Ghana). Huber is of the view that / ʌ / > / ɛ / replacement is giving way today to / ʌ / > / ɔ / or / a / which is one of the characteristics that sets Ghanaian English apart from other West African Englishes. Since there is a claim that / ʌ / > / a / is a recent feature in Ghanaian English (Bobda, 2000b, p. 188), in effect, it can be said that the Private School Respondents' pronunciation of vowel / ʌ / is more recent than that of the Public School Respondents.

6. Conclusion

The study shows that pupils from the private school read and speak English

comfortably while most of the public school pupils show an identifiable difficulty with the speaking and reading of English words and sentences presented to them. Findings also show that while the Public School Respondents prefer [i] in the context of / ɪ /, the Private School Respondents prefer [ɪ]. Also, the Private School Respondents are more likely to pronounce vowel / ɑ:/ as [a:] in order to distinguish it from / æ / and / ɒ /. The realisations of the diphthongs / eɪ /, / aʊ /, and / ɪə / show distinctions between the public and private school pupils.

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Subverting the Patriarchal Narrative of the Female Character in the African Novel: A Feminist Reading of Amma Darko's Novels

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Abstract: The paper re-examines feminist issues that are prevalent in the African literary discourse. Many feminist writers have on several occasions alleged lack of adequate, positive, active and credible roles in the male-dominated literary space in Africa. They contend that women have been relegated to the background for too long in African societies. Besides, women having found their voice back through the instrumentality of literature are now fighting back with all the weapons at their disposal. The paper holds that feminist writers, especially female writers are also guilty of the same misrepresentation which they accuse male writers of. The paper finds out that the female writers see nothing good in any of their male characters. The paper, therefore, contends that female writers are simply trying to whip up sentiments, recreating and reconstructing the gender questions and narratives to their advantage. The paper submits that the gender war and issues remain open in the African literary discourse.

1. Introduction

Feminism is the doctrine which declares that social, political, and economic rights for women should be the same as those for men. Feminism is a movement advocating equality of rights between men and women. According to Emenyonu:

Feminism is a pro-women movement that evolved in the west and America as a part of the women's liberation movement. As a critical perspective, feminist scholarship both originates and participates in the larger efforts of feminism to liberate women from structures that have

marginalized them; and as such it seeks not only to interpret, but to change the world in favour of women. (*Goatskin Bags*: 28).

Feminism as a social movement has grown and spread its wings beyond the frontiers of the Western World. Feminism started in the 18th century with the publication of a number of books. The first feminist book was written in 1792 by Mary Wollstonecraft, entitled *A Vindication on the Rights of Women*. In 1845, Margaret Fuller wrote *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. In 1869, John Stuart Mill wrote *The Subjection of Women*. Today, Feminism has given birth to a branch of literary criticism called “feminist criticism”. Feminist criticism seeks to evaluate the depictions of women in works written by men as well as women. It also seeks to correct the stereotype roles given to women in works written by men.

As a distinctive and concerted approach to literature, feminist criticism was not inaugurated until the late 1960s. Much of feminist literary criticism continues in our time to be interrelated with the movement by political feminists for social, legal, and cultural freedom and equality. (Abrams 110)

An important precursor of feminist criticism is Virginia Woolf, who, in addition to her fiction, wrote *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and numerous other essays on women authors and on the cultural, economic, and educational disabilities of women within what she called a ‘patriarchal’ society, dominated by men that have hindered or prevented women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities. A much more radical critical mode, sometimes called

“second-wave feminism” was launched in France by Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), a wide –ranging critique of the cultural identification of women as merely the negative object or “Other”, to men as the dominating “subject” who represent humanity in general; the book also dealt with “the great collective myths” of women in the works of many male writers.

Feminism differs according to cultures; the scope of feminism in the West is different from the African concept of feminism. But one thing that links them all together is the fact that their goals are the same, which is to correct the stereotype representations in works written by men as well as their struggle for equality with men. African feminism is quite different. Most African women do not want to be called feminists because of the way men view it and because Africa is indeed a rigid patriarchal society. As noted in Emenyonu quoted by Chukwuma:

In Africa, feminism is a Western importation that came with Western education and awareness. Like its Western counterpart, the feminism Africa has inherited strives for gender equality and operates on the belief that ‘anything a man can do, a woman can do better’... it is a rejection of inferiority and a striving for recognition (Chukwuma 1994: ix, 1989: vii).

African feminism also seeks to give the woman a sense of self as a worthy, effectual and contributing being, while it rejects stereotypes of women that deny her a positive identity. In respect to feminism, a lot is discussed in African literature, such as: the representation

and misrepresentation of women in literary texts; the education of women; the access of women to the economic means of survival; motherhood; women in the domestic sphere; women as part of their communities; women's role in politics and revolution; sexuality; and the direct treatment of women by men, and men by women. Underlying this array of specific interests are questions of gender in representation and of the reality or realities of life for women in Africa- past, present and future. All these offer much for the consideration of feminist thought with respect to African literatures. African writers and feminists have written a lot on the issue of gender inequality and misrepresentation, writers such as Buch Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Chimamanda Adichie, Ama Aita Aidoo, Efua Sutherland, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Amma Darko to mention just a few.

Amma Darko, a Ghanaian writer and feminist, has through her eagle eye portrayed the injustice of patriarchy and marginalization of women in Ghana in particular and Africa in general. This work is thus an analysis of the feminist issues raised in Darko's *The House Maid* and *Beyond the Horizon*.

2. Feminism and Feminist Criticism

Feminism directly concerns itself with contemporary agitation by women for social, economic, political and cultural equality with their male counterparts. Unlike Marxism, however, feminism has no body of traditional reference materials which can serve as guidelines for its practitioners. While feminism has to do with the struggle for equality with men and for equal representation in society; it is also against male-established institutions such as cultural

and traditional institutions which are constructed and designed to favour men and hoodwink women. Feminist criticism looks at these representations in literary works including those written by men and women. The major problem of feminist criticism is its lack of a properly articulated theory. According to a foremost feminist Elaine Showalter:

The absence of clearly articulated theory makes feminist criticism perpetually vulnerable to attacks and not even feminist critics seem to agree (sic) what it is that they mean to profess and defend (Rylance 23).

Elaine Showalter is equally against the works accepted as universal when in fact what those works depict are simply limited to male perceptions. She says: "too many literary abstractions which claim to be universal have in fact described only male perceptions, experiences and options, and have falsified the social and personal contexts in which literature is produced and consumed (Showalter 37)."

In her essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics", Showalter insists that a clearly articulated feminist literary theory is necessary against male ignorance, biases and prejudices: against those who, like Robert Partlow, often insist that "Feminist criticism will naturally be obsessed with phallus" or those like Robert Boyers who argue that feminist criticism suffers from lack of "intellectual candour and some degree of precision" (Rylance 25).

First inaugurated in the sixties, feminist criticism proceeds from the assumption that "the history of all societies is the history of patriarchy, of male domination and exploitation of women";

a situation which they claim has hindered the actualization of women's possibilities and potentials in all fields of human endeavour. Indeed, as it is often argued, women over the time have come to be defined as the negation of man, the human norm whose characteristics include: intelligence, rationalism, adventure and creativity; and that precisely in accordance with Frantz Fanon's concept of self-fulfilling prophecy, women themselves have, in the process of socialization come to accept their own denigration as true and natural. Women have over the years submitted to the concept of male superiority and eventually agreed to participate in their own subordination. Against this background, feminism insists that there is nothing natural in the whole question of gender, that what constitutes femininity or otherwise is nothing other than cultural constructs which have been cleverly erected by male hegemonists of different societies and ages.

Feminists believe and hold firmly that literature represents a very strong infrastructural support of this patriarchal ideology:

Typically, the most highly regarded literary works focus on male protagonists... who embody masculine traits and ways of feeling and pursue masculine interests in specifically masculine fields of action: to these, the female characters when they play a role, are marginal and subordinate, and are represented as complementary, or else in opposition to masculine desires and enterprises. Such works, lacking autonomous female role models, and implicitly

addressed to male readers, either leave the woman reader as an alien outsider or else solicit her to identify against herself by assuming male values and ways of perceiving. (Abrams, 209).

Elaine Showalter argues about men's works:

If we study stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited roles women play in literary history, we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be. (Rylance 238).

It is from the above argument of men dominating the literary scene and offering opinions from male perspectives that Elaine Showalter came up with the concept of "Gynocritics" which concerns itself with the analysis of the works of individual female authors: "Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture." (238)

According to Showalter quoted by Rylance, "The task of Feminist Critics "... is to find a new language, a new way of reading that can integrate our intelligence and our skepticism and our vision. This enterprise should not be confined to women" (Rylance 246).

3. African Feminism

African feminism respects African woman's self-reliance and the penchant for co-operative work and social organization but rejects the "muledom" that has been the lot of African women. It also looks at traditional and contemporary avenues of choice for

women, accepts an international feminism and a global sisterhood proposed by the international women's movement but rejects the European and American models of feminism such as lesbianism, violent confrontation, militancy and aggression, as is evident in their writing.

According to Emenyonu, African feminism is "assertive and individualistic breaking away from the norm and presenting a more balanced and plausible picture of the African female character" (28). African feminists have become more assertive and have taken a stand against male treatment of women in literary works. They have collectively condemned the female image and depictions in male-created texts as not only subordinating but false. They have reacted against male treatment of women like in *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe 1958), Okonkwo beating his wife Ekwefi, and the treatment of women as tools for pleasure in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine*.

Feminist criticism arose out of the need to reassess the limited and most times degrading depictions of females in male-created and oriented fictional works. Women and especially, African women after many years of silence have eventually found their voices and are speaking out against these denigrations, hence, the quest for equality.

In "Representations of the Womanist Discourse in the Short Fiction of Akachi Ezigbo and Chinwe Okechukwu", Ijeoma Nwajiaku writes:

Auspiciously, the enhanced need for self re-definition and self-evaluation has located the African female at crucial ideological spike.

This assertion becomes even more credible when one considers the intensity, complexity and quality of the multifarious literary activities birthed in the last decade of the twentieth century. Indeed no preceding decade had witnessed a similar development (55).

As Kolawole puts it in her book; *Womanism and African Consciousness*:

They are deconstructing imperialistic images of the African, rejecting luminal and negative images of women that are prevalent in African literature by men and they are reacting to mainstream western feminism. Having broken the yoke of voicelessness, these women are speaking out (1997:193).

The African woman on her road to self-actualization is not interested in battling with men neither is her preoccupations those of unhealthy rivalries and competition with men. The African woman is interested in self enhancement and of the restoration of the denigrated dignity of the African woman through patriarchy. The African woman is ready to be heard, to be seen and fitted in all positions previously occupied by men in order to assume equality in its entirety and not to be denied of anything because of her sex.

As Kolawole further observes:

The African woman seeks self-fulfillment within this plural cultural context. The average African woman is not a hater of men; nor does she seek to build a wall around her gender across which she throws ideological missiles. She desires self-respect, an active role, dynamic participation in all areas of social

development, and dignity alongside the men (1997:36).

4. Female Writers and their Preoccupations

Female writers have increased in number and the quality of their works has improved tremendously over the years. At the time when pioneering female writers were writing their novels, it was imperative for them to re-examine and re-balance the position women occupy in the society dictated by men in the guise of tradition. Since these female writers were placed in the position of responding to the distorted images of women created by men in their literary works, they were highly preoccupied with faithful portrayals of their visions. "Often departing from male fantasies and monolithic stereotypes, they have exploded myths about women through their realistic and in-depth exploration of their heroine's fictive lies" (Emenyonu 39).

Feminists have written and countered stereotypes in male oriented literary canons. In fact, in "The Female Writer and Her Commitment", Molara Ogundipe-Leslie encourages women not to be apologetic but respond openly to false male depictions. She opines:

Male ridicule, aggression and backlash have resulted in making women apologetic and have given the term "feminist" a bad name. Yet, nothing could be more feminist than the writings of these women writers, in their concern for and deep understanding of the experiences and fates of women in society (14).

5. Feminist Authors

Most female authors have come out boldly to embrace the task of being a feminist and precursor of female

liberation in a patriarchal society. Such authors include: Adichie who asserts:

I am a feminist. I am a happy feminist. Women are marginalized and we need to right it. I have always said that sometimes it is the women themselves who have been brainwashed to hold themselves down, and the only way we can get away from this is feminism. I think women should be educated on what it means to be a feminist, that we should help other women. I think my work is very feminist (Qtd. in Allwell 193).

In corroborating this stance, Iniobong I. Uko in her "Transcending the Margins: New Directions in Women's Writing" submits:

It is remarkable to note that contemporary African women writers are not only establishing the new woman who is free to love and express love; they also essentially surmount all sexist depictions and picturesque portrayals (93).

According to Femi Osofisan in Allwell:

The important factor is the gradual loosening of the habits of male patriarchy in our societies, which has led to a tremendous increase in female literacy. This access to better education has without dispute emboldened the female voices and promoted the birth of more female authors (Allwell 222).

For Ama Ata Aidoo, the main issue is the impossibility of fulfilling the multiplicity of task required from a wife. When a man marries, he gets:

A sexual aid
A wet-nurse and nursemaid for (his) children
A listening post
An economic and general consultant
Field-hand and

If (he is) that way inclined, a punch ball.

In her novel *Changes: A Love Story* (1993), Aidoo shows the impossibility of fulfilling all these roles through a comparison of two female characters. Opokuya is labeled a traditional woman who puts caring for the family first, fitting her career round this; Esi kicks against 'tradition' blatantly, prioritizing her career over traditional wifely duties. Yet neither woman finds her position satisfactory. Whilst Esi admires Opokuya's 'full wife role' Opokuya is jealous of Esi's freedom of movement. Also in her play *Anowa*, the female protagonist Anowa determines that, to her, wifehood will be a conscious choice rather than a passive yielding to tradition. She chooses her own husband. By implication, Anowa emerges as a heroine within this category. She successfully withstands the forces that work against her vision of a society that allows individual choice in marriage, and condemns the interference of the supernatural in human activities, and advocates hard work and result-oriented life.

6. Critics on Darko

According to Juliana Daniels Ofose (2013), Darko uses her fiction as a vehicle to cross-examine the complexities of the Ghanaian woman's life in relation to culture and gender. She further explains that Darko's novels are insights which capture her philosophical reflections on the plight of women and girls in contemporary Ghana. To Ofose, Darko's novels provide important lenses through which we can better understand some of the

core cultural contexts of feminist issues in contemporary Africa as a whole.

Felicia Annin (2013), justifies Darko's feminist presentation in *Housemaid* and *Beyond the Horizon*. She is of the opinion that Darko's literary contribution is geared towards fighting the imbalances that exist between the genders in Ghana. To her, these imbalances have further reduced women and girls who are in the poor and the needy bracket to social ghetto in Ghana. Though Annin's study is an overview of Darko's novels, she provides a great approach and direction towards the understanding of Darko's fiction.

Umezurike Uchechukwu Peter (2015), takes a critical look at the issue of resistance in *Beyond the Horizon*. He interrogates female autonomy against the backdrop of established traditional and modern socio-cultural formations. His study highlights the actions of the female characters as rooted in the material practices of ideology which makes it rather impossible for them to reconstitute their agency, especially against the prevailing phallogocentric African culture in which they find themselves.

Philomena Yeboah (2012), traces the nature of the trials of motherhood and analyzes the causes and effects of the trials of motherhood on mothers and daughters. Her study argues that the trials of motherhood if not eliminated or at least be mortally attenuated, will result in daughters not wanting to emulate their mothers in the area of child-bearing. Daughters may want to elect not to bear children and become mothers in a system that circumscribes them instead of honouring them. Her

study further highlights the strategies used by those mothers who are able to train good daughters irrespective of the challenges they face as mothers. She concludes that women can carve out dignified images of themselves through motherhood.

From the foregoing, we can deduce that the current study is remarkably a different approach from the existing studies which largely center on conflicts, motherhood and character portrayals. This study deals with the subversion of male characters in Darko's novels.

Amma Darko, whose writing is the focus of this paper, is a rising feminist voice in Ghana. Darko, through her narrative postures and significations, exhibits strong anti-patriarchal tendencies and attempts to deconstruct and demolish the patriarchal status quo by reducing men both to worthless, irresponsible, physically grotesque images and to wicked husbands and fathers in order to engineer new social order in which women are in control of their common destiny. The result is that taken together, there is not a single man of honour in her novels. She creates female characters who are repositories of knowledge and wisdom and who act as commentators and counselors expressing the female view point, female counter forces based on group solidarity, and through authorial intrusion in terms of sympathy and empathy.

In *The House Maid*, she depicts a Ghanaian society where women have been maligned and oppressed. The first paragraph of the novel is very impressive:

In Ghana, if you come into the world a she, acquire the habit of praying. And master it. Because you will need it, desperately, as old age pursues you, and Mother Nature's hand approaches you with a wry smile, paint and brush at the ready, to daub you with wrinkles (1).

This portrays the oppression women go through in a patriarchal society. Old age is being associated with witchcraft; women are subordinate to men and have ignorantly accepted the docile roles and position imposed on them by men.

Also, in the novel, when a dead baby is discovered in the bush, the men all have one voice; they blame the woman for abandoning her child, thus, describing women as witches capable of evil acts. When the dead baby attracts public attention, the comment of the driver is noteworthy. He says: "It has to be the woman. It is always the woman. Ah! Who committed the world's first sin" (8)?

Darko has a very sharp and keen eye in her observation of the evils committed against women by misogynists. Misogynists are men who regard women as evil creatures. They premise their argument on the fall of man in the Garden of Eden where Eve lured Adam to sin by giving him the forbidding fruit. Consequently, misogynists see women as the cause of their troubles and downfall, hence, their hatred for women. The truck pusher in the novel is of the opinion that when the woman is caught, "her womb should be removed, cut in two, and given to her to swallow by the count of three" (6).

Just as it is the case in a patriarchal society, the men in the novel are not interested in knowing the circumstances surrounding the abandonment and subsequent death of the child; they are just interested in the fact that a woman has further extended her witchcraft by abandoning her child in the bush.

Another issue which Darko raises in *The House Maid* is the fact that women are a problem to one another, thereby provoking the central problem of intra-gender conflict. The novel is a celebration of the different lives of women in Ghana. Men are given peripheral roles that are of no great significance and inconsequential; this fact makes the novel more of an advice to women. She is against women indulging in meaningless and unhealthy competitions with one another. For instance, Tika who is Sekyiwa's daughter falls in love with Owuraku; they both write an exam which she fails but Owuraku does well and proceeds to the university to have his degree. Tika decides to give up on education and go into business. She learns from her mother's friend how to make good gain in business by sleeping with rich men and bankers to get loans. When she learns of Owuraku's girlfriend in the university, instead of her to settle issues with Owuraku, she regards the girl as her competitor; she indulges in lavishing more money and gifts on Owuraku to get his attention away from the girl. In her ignorance, she believes that her money was much more valuable than education. She says: "How can she even try to step into my shoe? What has she to offer Owuraku? Money is the power word. Not book."(24). However, her

plans fail as Owuraku smartly avoids marrying her after he graduated from school.

Also, Darko stresses the issue threatening women solidarity. She emphasizes that women are problems to one another. If they can overcome their jealousies and rivalries amongst one another, they will be able to stand together in sisterhood to confront male domination and oppression. She buttresses this point in her novel when Tika decides to employ a house girl who would help her out with her chores. She decides to choose a girl from her father's family as a way of making up for the wrongs her mother did to her late father. With the help of Teacher, she decides on the girl 'Efia' whose life would have been greatly upgraded in the city but for the greed and selfishness of her father, her grandmother and her mother Maame Amoakona. When Tika loses her womb to an abortion, Efia's parents and grandmother decide to use the opportunity to lay their hands on Tika's money. Efia's grandmother tells her that "the woman you are going to live with is a rich but wasted woman". She encourages Efia to get pregnant so they would convince Tika to adopt the child as her own, thereby making the child, the sole inheritor of Tika's wealth. She says:

Old and wrinkled as I am, when I bombard her with the volumes of tears I shall shed, she will need an iron heart to turn down my fervent plea to forgive my granddaughter. I will sob like a child, go down on my weak old knees and beg her to have mercy on us (47).

Thus, Efia, her mother and her grandmother plot against a fellow woman whose intention is only to give Efia a better life as payment for being her house help. However, their plans backfire as Tika smartly sees through their wicked plans and decides to play along with them. Efia is frustrated at the end, having got pregnant and blaming it on the infertile Nsorhwe who insists on a DNA test before he takes responsibility. Their plans fail and Efia steals a reasonable amount of money from Tika and escapes to an uncompleted building where she stays with her friend Akua. In her wretched condition, she gives birth to a baby girl who dies immediately. Efia decides to go to the village to give the child a proper burial but the stench of the dead girl was unbearable for her and the passengers in the bus. She gets down with the excuse of going to ease herself, goes into the bush and abandons the baby there. She goes to Teacher to ask for forgiveness and to plead with Tika to forgive her after she confesses to her mother and grandmother's failed scheme to reap where they have not sown. Darko depicts this to advise women to keep away from unhealthy struggle and rivalry against one another which is fruitless. With solidarity they can help one another and better their lives just like the solidarity between Tika and Teacher, both of whom are successful in Accra.

Furthermore, Darko in her novel confronts and demolishes male dominance and exploitation. She revolts against patriarchy by reducing men to worthless, physically grotesque appearance and wicked husbands in

order to engineer a social order in which women are in control of their common destiny. The result is that there is no single man of honour or admirable character in her novel.

For instance, in *The House Maid*, the men though given peripheral roles are all irresponsible and shameless. Attui, one of Tika's customers married two wives and has twelve children and two concubines, yet he is still a randy goat sleeping around with other women. He is proud of his many wives and yet he is shameless in his adulterous act. He says: "It is a great honour when a man dies and in his obituary you read 'widows' (12).

Another trivial male character in the novel is Mr. Nsorhwe who is so ugly that one could not really stand his appearance. His wife marries him simply because he is rich and she wants financial security. Not only is he ugly, he cannot get a woman pregnant because he is sterile.

Another male character is Efia's father, Papa Kaawire, who is useless; the only thing he knows how to do well is to drink himself to stupor with "Akpeteshie". Another inconsequential male character is Efia's grandmother's husband who marries five wives and when he dies, Efia's grandmother does not cry for him. According to her, he dies leaving her with troubles and more troubles. She says that when she dies she will tell God to let her and her husband marry again, on the condition that she will be the husband and he can be the wife.

Another male character who symbolizes male exploitation against women is Owuraku, Tika's school lover on whom

she lavishes money and gifts. Owuraku knows he is not going to marry Tika yet he accepts her gifts and money. When he graduates from school, Tika asks him when he will come and see her people to start marriage preparations which she offers to sponsor since Owuraku has no money. He refuses saying: "...only a shameless, desperate woman who wanted a husband for the sake of earning the title of a married woman would do that. Have you incinerated all your pride and dignity?" (24)

He avoids marrying her after calling her shameless, yet when he takes money and gifts from her he does not see it as shameless to be sponsored by a woman. Darko favours the feminist ideology of the equality of the sexes. She portrays characters such as Tika and Efiā's grandmother in their determination to assert their rights. After Tika fails her examinations and decides to go into business and to make it by asserting that her failure in life has ended with the examinations. She is a successful rich lady in Accra. She travels around the world and acquires wealth by all means possible, including using men to feed her fantasies or desires. She decides not to bear a child for Attui and goes for an abortion. She equally decides not to get married but to settle for lovers. She defies the African concept of motherhood. For her, motherhood and wifehood are not all that make a successful woman but rather money. Thus, she pursues wealth.

Efiā's grandmother equally assumes equality with men. When they want to pour libation to the gods and Efiā's mother Maame Amoakona goes to call her husband because she believes it is a

man's duty, Efiā's grandmother defies tradition and goes ahead to perform the libation ritual in place of Papa Kaawire whom she considers useless and irresponsible.

Male writers depict the rural woman as docile and never wanting a change and reacting against modernism. But the feminist Molarā Ogundipe-Leslie, in her critical work, "The Female Writer and Her Commitment," says that:

The rural woman wants change and innovation. She wants power, wealth and status like the men. She wants to ride a car rather than walk; use plastics or metal instead of calabashes; use a gas or electric stove instead of firewood, despite all our middle-class nostalgia for that past (34).

Darko agrees with Molarā in her novel. She portrays village women such as Efiā's mother and grandmother in their struggle for money. They hatch a plan to get Efiā pregnant so that when Tika adopts Efiā's child all her wealth would go to the child and eventually to them. Even when Efiā's mother visits Tika, she feels so comfortable in the soft leather seats and bed and wishes that all would eventually come to them.

Darko also portrays women using the instrumentality of 'bottom power' to get what they want. She portrays Akua, the village girl from Kataso, who on her way to the city, does not have money for transport, yet, she stops a driver who tells her the fare and she says she has no money. The driver asks her if she will not pay. She unbuttons her blouse and shows him her breasts. They go to a secluded spot near the bush for quick sex after which the man takes her to Accra and drops her off. Also, both Tika

and her mother use their body to get loans and pay off their debts. Even the girls who stay in the uncompleted buildings are also in the business of using their bodies as payment for whatever services they get. One of the girls whose name is not mentioned says to Akua and her friends: "I have my own problems. The owner of my base has returned from abroad and wants to resume work on his building, so I had to bribe Atinga yesterday with a couple of quick rounds behind the blue kiosk to get him to find me a new place (95)."

Darko encourages women solidarity. For her, the most important thing for women to do is to stand by one another since they have shared experiences. She portrays this through the solid relationship between Tika and Teacher whose bond became stronger as a result of their shared experiences. Thus, "Together, they laughed and cried; laughing and crying away their pain, their disappointment, their anger, their fear. And laughing with hope" (107).

While Darko's *The House Maid* is a novel about women solidarity, her first novel *Beyond the Horizon* is a revolt against patriarchy and the tradition that suppresses women. She dissects the issue of marriage and offers a way out. Gone are the days when marriage is for better, for worse; she urges women to join forces together and fight their common enemy: 'man'. In *Beyond the Horizon*, "man is the enemy, the exploiter and oppressor, the devil, etc". She portrays women as victims of exploitation, rape, abuse, abandonment, wickedness and battery. These women finally triumph through their solidarity with one another. Thus, her novel

Beyond the Horizon is a celebration of female bonding and the breakdown of the male institution of slavery called marriage through perseverance, patience and longsuffering.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, the story is told through the first person narrator: Mara who is also the heroine of the novel. Her experiences are rendered vividly to be a warning to women who may still be under the illusions created by men through their various machinations. Mara's experiences are such that anyone who reads them would not want to be such a woman. In the novel, Darko condemns marriage by arrangement; she prefers women to decide whom they want to marry as against the traditional way of parents passing their girl children as possessions to any man who shows up and pays their dowry. This is the case of Mara and this sort of marriage is what eventually destroys her illusions as she learns her lessons the bitter way. She recounts how she was bought. She says: "but that was before I was given away to this man who paid two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, jewellery and two bottles of London Dry Gin to my family, and took me off as his wife from my little African village, Naka, to him in the city (3)."

If she had a choice, or even a say in her marriage, perhaps she would not have married Akobi. Darko is against this sort of arrangement because to the men, a good man is that man who could afford the bride price in large amounts. And these possessions in the body of wives are in turn expected to 'Obey and worship' their husbands no matter what they do to them.

Also, Darko depicts the brutality and inhumane treatments these women receive at the hands of their husbands. They are subjected to different rounds of battery. Mara recounts her experiences with Akobi. Shortly after their marriage, she goes to the city with him and involuntarily takes up the job of throwing away dirt for Mama Kiosk, one of her neighbours, who in turn pays her with foodstuffs and vegetables. When Akobi learns of it he orders her to stop doing that and she obeys him and tells Mama Kiosk what her husband said. Mama Kiosk asks Akobi why he stopped his wife from helping her and he denies any knowledge of it. That night, he goes home and beats up Mara. When she dares to ask him why, he gives her more slaps. According to her, he replies: "Shut up! He roared, landing me a slap on one cheek. I scurried into one corner and slumped on the floor, my burning face buried in my hands. I understood the world no more" (11).

Darko also portrays the exploitation women are subjected to at the hands of their husbands. Akobi knows very well that the woman he wants to marry is Comfort, but because of his low income, Comfort does not reciprocate his feelings; instead, she goes with ministers who have fleets of cars. Akobi maps out a plan on how to get Comfort by exploiting and abusing another woman. He marries Mara simply as a means to achieve his dreams of marrying Comfort someday.

The fact that most African wives are treated like house maids does not escape Darko's attention. She portrays this through Mara who is more of a slave to

Akobi than a wife. She recounts all she has to do:

So I started looking for work in addition to keeping home, earning foodstuffs with my rubbish dumping, serving him still to the full which meant still being the first to get up in the morning to make fire and warm water for him and stand by while he bathed, and of course also carrying the bucket of water daily to the bathroom for him in spite of my physical change. And I dared not ask questions or make demands (17).

Even when she gets pregnant and informs Akobi thinking he will be happy, she is taken aback by the question which he greets her with: "And why did you get pregnant?" (17). She tries to press further and Akobi gives her four slaps and refuses to speak with her until after three days when he eventually tells her to get a proper job so she can take care of herself and her baby, that he has "more important plans" for his money, as if she did it alone, as if she got herself pregnant.

Akobi treats Mara as a sex object, not even one of pleasure but of disgust; he orders her in and out of his bed as he wishes. Mara recounts one of her experiences after she has been battered by Akobi in her pregnant state:

He was lying on the mattress, face up, looking thoughtfully at the ceiling when I entered. Cool, composed and authoritative, he indicated with a pat of his hand on the space beside him that I should lie down beside him. I did so, more out of apprehension of starting another fight than anything else. Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped

off his trousers, turned my back to him and entered me. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and layout my mat because he wanted to sleep alone (22).

Mara is an outright victim in a loveless marriage. Her parents, by marrying her off to a man she does not even know or love, had compromised her chances of happiness. She says: "I don't know what it is to love a man. I never learnt it because I wasn't taught. I never experienced it because I never got the chance to love before this marriage was arranged with Akobi" (86).

Darko further stresses the need for solidarity amongst women as the only way to achieve their goals and defeat their common enemy. The city becomes easy and bearable for Mara through her relationship with Mama Kiosk. As she says: "Between Mama Kiosk and me now existed a mother-daughter relationship. I had grown to trust her and to talk openly with her about everything..." (23). Mama Kiosk takes good care of Mara and instructs her to be careful so her husband does not destroy her. She tells her to see red with her eyes, her way of telling Mara that men cannot be trusted. She says: "This your ministries man, he is not only a bad man and a bad husband, he has also got something inside his head. I only hope that he won't destroy you with it before you too start seeing red with your eyes like I do" (24).

Mara who does not know that things will get worse neglects the warning of Mama Kiosk. She eventually learns the bitter way. Akobi secures his visa to travel to Germany and he convinces Mara that he is going in search of

greener pastures in order to give her a better life. Mara, the brainwashed illiterate that she is, believes him and in his absence works hard to make herself a better woman before Akobi returns. She learns how to sew and buys herself new clothes. Two years has gone yet she patiently awaits Akobi's return. Finally, she gets a letter from Akobi informing her of his plans to bring her to Germany to work and be with him; little did she know of the surprise that awaits her in Europe. When she gets to Europe, the reality of the situation dawns on her. She realizes that Akobi does not live up to their plans. At first, she endures the pain of living with Akobi and his German wife Gitte as Akobi's sister. She gets a job as a maid for their white neighbours but unfortunately for her, she loses the job because illegal black employment is not allowed. At this point, Akobi decides it is time to let her know the real reason he brings her to Europe. Osey, Akobi's friend, plays a video tape for her in which she is naked and men of different colours take turns with her. She remembers the night Akobi takes her to a party and get her drunk. It is with this tape that Akobi and Osey blackmail her into prostitution. The worst is that the money she earns goes into Akobi's account or else the tape would go public. Mara, having been stripped of every sense of respect, pride and dignity, lives up to her reputation as a prostitute.

Moreover, Darko stresses the need for solidarity amongst women. It is through solidarity that Mara is eventually able to fight and defeat her enemy, Akobi. At the night club where she works, she meets Kaye, her manager's wife who

advises her on what to do. She tells her that the money she is making through such means should be hers and not to the man who has ruined her life. Through Kaye, Mara contacts a detective who investigates Akobi and she realizes that Akobi is married to Comfort whom he brought to Germany a year after he left and of course before Mara. She learns too that Comfort does not work. Akobi takes care of her with the money Mara is earning. She also learns that Akobi has married Gitte just so he can get a permit to stay in Germany and that contrary to what Gitte thinks, he is not building any house for them in Africa. The only house he renovates is Comfort's father's house. Mara feels sorry for Gitte who is a victim just like her. Akobi uses both of them to fulfill his dreams of marrying Comfort. Mara decides to undermine him, Akobi, after getting sufficient information from the detective. She sends a letter together with facts and evidence of Akobi's lies and infidelity to Gitte. Akobi is arrested and put away in prison while Mara finds a new pimp to work for through Kaye's help. She decides to work as a prostitute to earn a lot of money and better the lives of her sons in Africa.

She thanks Kaye for helping her and decides to pay her but Kaye refuses the money and says that her payment is "sisterhood solidarity". The novel, *Beyond the Horizon*, is indeed a celebration of solidarity amongst women and the deconstruction of the avowed feministic biases in female writings in Africa. It is considered the only way to defeat patriarchy and

unfavourable institutions erected by men to subject women to their whims and caprices.

7. Conclusion

Feminism is an intellectual, ideological, and political movement that advocates equal rights between men and women. A lot of critical and literary works have been written on the issue of feminism. Women over the years have been maligned through various systems such as cultures and tradition in a patriarchal society. Now that they have an opportunity to be heard, these women are no longer silent. African feminism as an intellectual movement dwells on the issues that affect women in Africa. Through writers whose works have examined and re-assessed the roles women play in works written by men. Amma Darko, a Ghanaian novelist in her novels, *Beyond the Horizon* and *The House Maid*, urges women to stand together as that is the only way they can be happy and dismantle patriarchal biases in all its manifestations.

Her works portray the injustice against women in a patriarchal society and offers women a way out. Feminism manifests itself in various shades in African literature, especially in fiction written by women and some male feminists. The paper concludes that the impression of most female writers in Africa that nothing good can come out of men is further sustained in Darko's novels studied. Female writers are as chauvinistic in disposition and conception as their male counterpart who they often accuse of deliberate female misrepresentation.

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Théâtre et Ecologie : Etude de *Gouverneur de la Rosee* d'Abdou Anta Kâ

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Résumé : Le théâtre francophone africain est un théâtre dynamique. Depuis son origine en Afrique, à travers les écoles coloniales (William Ponty, 1930) jusqu'à l'heure actuelle (en 2016), ce théâtre n'a pas cessé d'évoluer. Il aborde maintenant divers thèmes sociopolitiques, économiques, historiques et écologiques, qui sont pertinents à la réalité africaine contemporaine. Dans *Gouverneur de la rosée* de l'écrivain sénégalais, Abdou Anta Kâ, (une pièce théâtrale adaptée du roman du même titre et thème de l'Antillais, Jacques Roumain), nous y remarquons le thème de l'écologie. Dans cet article qui se sert de la théorie écocritique, nous étudions les éléments de la nature dans cette pièce théâtrale pour faire ressortir l'effet du changement climatique en Afrique et apprécions les solutions proposées pour pallier les inconvénients de ces phénomènes de changements climatiques.

Mots-clés : théâtre francophone africain, changement climatique, élément de la nature, théorie écocritique, phénomènes écologiques

Abstract: Francophone African theatre has been a dynamic one. Since its origin in Africa, through the colonial schools (William Ponty, 1930) up till this moment (in 2016), this theatre has not stopped evolving. It now treats various sociopolitical, economical, historical and ecological themes, which are pertinent to the African contemporary reality. In *Gouverneur de la rosée* of the Senegalese writer, Abdou Anta Kâ, (a play adapted to the novel of the same title of the Caribbean, Jacques Roumain), we examine the theme of ecology. In this article, which is based on ecocritic theory, we take a look at the elements of nature in this play in order to emphasize the effect of climate change in Africa and appreciate the solutions proposed to alleviate the inconveniences brought about by this climate change phenomenon.

Keywords: francophone African theatre, climate change, element of nature, ecocritic theory, ecologic phenomena

1. Introduction

Le théâtre comme genre littéraire en Afrique se reconnaît essentiellement par son esprit de contestation et de dénonciation des phénomènes sociopolitiques. Allant dans le même sens, Jacques Chevrier place l'engagement du théâtre africain actuel sur trois angles : « Actuellement le théâtre africain semble se développer dans trois directions principales : la dénonciation du colonialisme et de ses séquelles, l'analyse du conflit des générations et la critique des mœurs politiques » (157). Pendant la colonisation, par exemple, le théâtre africain contestait l'ordre colonial. Mais la plupart des pièces théâtrales contestant le colonialisme apparaissent après les indépendances sous forme de pièces historiques. Pour corroborer cette affirmation, Chevrier écrit : « La dénonciation du colonialisme s'effectue souvent de façon indirecte par le truchement de pièces historiques qui ont pour fonction de revaloriser une histoire dénigrée et de restaurer dans leur dignité des sociétés et des personnages du passé préhistorique » (158).

Comme théâtre colonial, on cite : *Les derniers jours de Lat Dior* d'Amadou Cissé Dia, *Le procès de Lat Dior* de Mbengue Mamadou Seyni, *L'enfer, c'est Orféo* de Martial Malinda, *Le fils de l'Almany* de Cheik Ndao, *Sikasso ou la dernière Citadelle* de Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Béatrice du Congo* de Bernard Dadié, *Simon Kimbangu ou le Messie noir* d'Elebe Lisembe et de *Tarentelle noire et diable blanc* de Sylvain Bemba, *Kondo, le requin* de Jean Pliya, *L'Exil d'Albouri* de N'dao Cheik, *La mort de Chaka* de Seydou Badian, *Les malheurs de Tchâko* par Charles Nokan et *Monsieur Thôgô-gnigni* de Bernard Dadié, entre autres (voir Dorothy, S. Blair 1976 et Jacques Chevrier 2004). L'apparition du théâtre essentiellement

historique répond au besoin impulsé par le développement du mouvement de la Négritude pour revaloriser la culture africaine, ses traditions et son histoire. Les auteurs réhabilitent la mémoire des grands chefs guerriers résistants, et font du théâtre un moyen d'expression de la dignité de l'homme noir.

Après les indépendances, les dramaturges africains analysent les conflits qu'engendre l'affrontement de la tradition et du modernisme. On y remarque les problèmes familiaux comme la dot, le mariage forcé ou arrangé et le problème de la polygamie. Parmi ces pièces de théâtres, on note : *Trois prétendants... un mari ; Jusqu'à nouvel avis* et *Notre fille ne se mariera pas* de Guillaume Oyônô Mbia, *La marmite de Koka-Mbala* de Guy Menga, *Le lion et la perle* de Wole Soyinka, *Le respect des morts* d'Amadou Koné, *La tortue qui chante*, suivi de *La femme du blanchisseur* de Zinsou, Sinouvou Abotta, entre autres (voir Jacques Scherer 1992 et Jacques Chevrier 2004).

De nombreux autres auteurs prennent pour objectif les milieux politiques, administratifs et financiers et critiquent leurs défauts. Nous pouvons retenir pour cette catégorie, *La secrétaire particulière* de Jean Pliya, *Politicos* de Jean Mba Evina, *Termites* d'Eugène Dervain, *Le train spécial de son Excellence* de Guillaume Oyônô -Mbia et *Les enchaînés* de Rémy Medou Mvomo, *La tragédie du roi Christophe* et *Une saison au Congo* d'Aimé Césaire, *La torture qui chante* de Senevou Agbota Zinsou, *Monsieur Thôgô gnini* de Bernard Dadié et *Les malheurs de Tchâko* de Charles Nokan, entre autres (voir Jacques Scherer 1992 et Jacques Chevrier 2004).

A partir de cette dernière décennie, le théâtre africain continue sur le gain des siècles précédents. Nous avons affaires à

des auteurs relativement moins connus, mais qui s'aventurent à des sujets divers y inclus l'écologie. Parmi ces auteurs moins connus, on compte Abdou Anta Ka, l'auteur de *Gouverneur de la rosée*, qui s'inspire du roman du même titre de l'Antillais, Jacques Romain.

Dans cet article, nous scrutons les éléments de la nature dans *Gouverneur de la rosée* d'Abdou Anta Kâ. Il est bien vrai que Anta Kâ pourrait avoir une autre visée en publiant cette pièce théâtrale. Mais nous nous intéressons aux éléments de la nature injectés dans cette pièce. Notre étude, qui se sert de l'approche écocritique, se divise en trois parties ; la première ressort et analyse les éléments de la nature, la deuxième porte sur l'effet de la destruction de ces éléments sur la vie humaine et la troisième apprécie les solutions proposées pour pallier les inconvénients de l'effet de la destruction de la nature.

2. Encadrement théorique : la théorie écocritique

Pour mieux cerner la théorie écocritique, il convient de la définir et d'en déterminer les principes de base.

2.1 L'écocritique : Essai de définition

La théorie écocritique, relativement nouvelle, est rendu célèbre cette dernière décennie par Lawrence Buell dans son œuvre publiée en 2005, *The Environmental Imagination*. Selon Dana Philip (2016):

Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination* attempts to lay the groundwork for environmentally aware readings of literary texts, and to suggest the shape that the ecocritical research program might take in the future. As a

wide-ranging survey of those works of nineteenth and twentieth-century American literature that ecocritics should find of interest, *The Environmental Imagination* is a valuable book. Buell's treatment of his subject matter verges on the encyclopedic, and he has interesting things to say about Thoreau, his specialty, and about a diverse group of other writers, too, including Susan Fenimore Cooper, Aldo Leopold, Annie Dillard, and Leslie Marmon Silko (583).

Pour Glotfelty et Fromm (cité par Buell) l'écocritique se définit comme « the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment... » (xviii). Dans le contexte de la définition de Glotfelty et Fromm, l'environnement physique inclut les citoyens qui constituent la population. Onyemelukwe (2015), en apportant plus de clarification à la définition de l'écocritique, montre que l'écocritique est « l'admiration que fait l'écrivain de la nature dans son écriture, soit la dénonciation des agents prônant la dégradation de l'environnement (eau, forêts etc.). Autre chose à remarquer c'est sa tentative de sensibiliser son public à la bonne gestion, au contrôle efficace et à la sauvegarde de son milieu naturel ou de son environnement » (55). A notre avis, une lecture écocritique est l'usage des concepts écologique dans l'analyse d'une œuvre littéraire.

2.2 L'écocritique : Principes de base

Une lecture écocritique d'une œuvre consiste à étudier et à analyser les éléments de la nature ; de l'environnement physique en rapport

avec les activités des êtres humains dans cette œuvre. Le but principal d'une étude écocritique d'une œuvre littéraire est de chercher les activités de l'homme qui provoquent le changement climatique et les moyens pour pallier les inconvénients de ce phénomène afin de protéger l'environnement. Comme principe, l'écocritique pousse également à assumer une responsabilité face aux problèmes écologiques urgents d'ordre politique ou social et de développer des solutions durables adaptées. L'écologie gagne largement du terrain et cela particulièrement dans le domaine des sciences sociales et naturelles. Le domaine de la pièce théâtrale ne peut pas, lui aussi, fermer ses yeux à ce phénomène.

3. Résumé du *Gouverneur de la rosée* d'Abdou Anta Kâ

Gouverneur de la rosée d'Abdou Anta Kâ est une pièce théâtrale de 159 pages repartis en cinq actes. Dans cette pièce un jeune homme nommé Manuel qui part pour travailler à Cuba, en revient avec les idées révolutionnaires. Du retour chez lui, il est frappé par la pauvreté, la souffrance, la sécheresse qui tourmentent son peuple à Fonds-Rouge. Il décide de lutter et de combattre cette sécheresse. Pour y parvenir, il décide de créer le coumbite qui va lui permettre d'amener de l'eau au village. Manuel a une amante qui s'appelle Annaïse et qui l'aide dans sa tâche révolutionnaire. Mais deux familles sont en guerre et vont rendre la tâche de Manuel et d'Annaïse un peu difficile. Il s'agit de la famille de Bienaimé, père de Manuel et celle de Gervilen, oncle d'Annaïse. Gervilen assassine Manuel. Mais Annaïse porte

déjà un enfant pour Manuel. Pour dire que le rêve de Manuel ne peut pas s'éteindre entièrement. L'intrigue de la pièce *Gouverneur de la rosée* d'Abdou Anta Kâ se noue autour des éléments de la nature tels que l'eau, la sécheresse, le déboisement qui sont présents dans la pièce. Cette pièce aborde également les questions relatives à la protection de l'environnement. On note l'emphase sur l'eau, le soleil accablant, le déboisement qui provoquent la misère telle que la pauvreté à Fonds-Rouge, village imaginaire qui est le cadre de la pièce. Analyser cette pièce en se servant de l'approche écocritique, croyons-nous, reste adéquat.

4. Le rapport eau-vie comme rapport vie-mort

Dans *Gouverneur de la rosée*, l'importance de l'eau comme source de subsistance est capitale. En général, l'eau est la source et le support de toute vie. Selon Dieudonné Musibono Eyul'Ank (2016) « l'eau c'est la vie...; mais l'eau peut être aussi source de mort soit directement par manque (déshydratation), inondation et par contamination (eaux polluées), soit indirectement par les conflits qu'elle provoque » (1). Dans le continent africain, l'eau saine reste toujours source de problématique partout.

Le peuple de Fonds-Rouge, village qui cadre la pièce d'Abdou Anta Kâ dispose d'une histoire longue et tortueuse qui est « caractérisée par l'exploitation, l'humiliation et la misère. Il s'agit précisément de la traite négrière en vertu de laquelle les Blancs purent acheter les Noirs et les utiliser comme main d'œuvre surtout dans les plantations de canne à sucre et de coton en Amérique

et en Europe » (Adebisi 2008 : 130). L'esclavage, qui allait durer des siècles, fera perdre à l'Afrique, précisément au Golfe de Bénin, des milliers d'hommes. Avec l'abolition de l'esclavage, des milliers d'Africains dont le nombre s'accroît considérablement du fait de la naissance, éparpillés dans les continents concernés, déjà enracinés et ayant perdu toute notion de leur pays d'origine, restent dans leur nouvelle contrée, y compris les Antilles. Ces gens sont les paysans qualifiés d'habitants dans *Gouverneur de la rosée*.

L'un des symboles de la présence des colonisateurs, Hilarion, dit ceci : « Tricheurs. Nègres tricheurs. Où est l'eau ? Sans eau pas de coumbite. Levez vos yeux au ciel. Une plaque de tôle brûlante. Voyez les corbeaux s'abattre sur les chandeliers, sur vos champs calcinés » (Anta Kâ 147). Cette remarque d'Hilarion montre l'état de la situation de l'eau à Fonds Rouge. Au fur et à mesure que la sécheresse bat son plein Antoine, l'un des personnages de la pièce crie : « l'eau compère Bienaimé ; l'eau ! » (Anta Kâ 147). La répétition du mot « eau » suivie d'un point d'exclamation montre le degré de la nécessité de cette source vitale. Les paysans confirment le rapport eau/vie en rétorquant : « C'est vrai... nous mourrons tous, les bêtes, les plantes, les chrétiens vivants » (Anta Kâ 147). L'eau symbolise la vie tandis que l'absence de l'eau symbolise la mort de tout ce qui a en soi un signe de vie ; qu'il s'agisse de vie animale ou végétale. L'adverbe « tous » dans la phrase « c'est vrai... nous mourrons tous » montre que la mort par déshydratation n'épargne aucune vie.

Elle décime aussi bien les plantes que les êtres vivants. Manuel, le protagoniste sait que les activités des citoyens de Fonds Rouges sont à l'origine de la sécheresse qui décime les vies. C'est pourquoi il les reproche en ces termes :

J'ai vu que vous avez déboisé les mornes. La terre est toute nue, sans protection. Ce sont les racines qui font amitié avec la terre et la retiennent ; ce sont les manguiers, les bois de chênes, les acajous qui lui donnent les eaux des pluies pour sa grande soif et leur ombrage contre la chaleur de midi. C'est comme ça et pas autrement, sinon la pluie écorche la terre et le soleil l'échaude ; il ne reste plus que les roches (Anta Kâ 154-155).

A travers ce reproche, Manuel ouvre les yeux des citoyens de Fonds Rouges sur la cause du drame qu'ils vivent. C'est d'ailleurs l'un des principes de la théorie écocritique. En effet, l'écocritique est une théorie qui sensibilise et éduque la société sur les dangers des activités humaines sur l'écosystème. Le déboisement est nuisible à la protection de la terre. Il l'expose au rayon du soleil et l'environnement est laissé à la merci de la chaleur. Toutes les actions qui sont nuisibles à la terre sont contre les normes des environmentalistes comme nous le montre les théoriciens de l'écocritique. C'est d'ailleurs la raison pour laquelle ils prônent la protection du sol contre l'érosion et la chaleur en poussant les citoyens à planter des arbres. Manuel est donc environmentaliste voire écologiste dans cette pièce.

En effet, l'eau et la sécheresse sont les symboles du rapport vie-mort les plus fréquemment cités dans *Gouverneur de la rosée* d'Abdou Anta Kâ. Dans *La Rue Cases-Nègres*, par exemple, Joseph Zobel aborde, lui aussi, les éléments de la nature aux Antilles. Selon Eweka et Illoh (2013) : « Dès le commencement de *La Rue Cases-Nègres*, Zobel démontre son emploi de la nature par un manque de passivité chez celle-ci. Il personnifie bien les éléments naturels » (10). L'importance de l'eau est principale dans ce roman. Le narrateur du roman laisse voir cette importance de cette manière :

La mer, c'était pour moi, une chose visible, belle, mais inaccessible comme le ciel, son frère...ce jour-là où dans la petite embarcation à vapeur qui reliait Fort-de-France à Petit Bourg, je me trouvais en plein océan...C'était un grand bain d'espace. Ce vide entre le ciel et l'eau m'impressionnait. Etrange aussi, la vigueur avec laquelle l'eau bougeait en tous sens, comme un troupeau de bêtes bleues... (Zobel *LRCN* 208)

Zobel donne ainsi les portraits écologistes de la Martinique. Ces portraits sont les plus recherchées, les plus stylistiques et les plus existentiels dans cette œuvre, ce qui donne l'impression de la crise écologique dans cette région. La situation centrale de la pièce, *Gouverneur de la rosée* est celle du manque d'eau et la conséquence qui en résulte : le changement climatique qui engendre le désert. Les peuples de Fonds-Rouge vivant dans des régions chaudes, souvent arides, dépendent de l'eau : de la pluie ou, plus tard, de l'irrigation pour leur survie.

La question de l'eau est fortement consolidée dans le roman original, ce qui n'est pas le cas dans la pièce, puisque Jacques Roumain, le romancier, peut se permettre de consacrer beaucoup d'expressions pour expliquer ce phénomène. Dans ce roman, l'auteur laisse voir la prépondérance de l'eau comme source de vie : « Cette question de l'eau, c'est la vie ou la mort pour nous » (Roumain 60). Il laisse voir le rôle joué par Manuel, le héros écologue, dans la découverte de la source : « Chaque fois il y avait un bouillonnement qui s'étalait en une petite flaque... Manuel s'étendit sur le sol. Il l'étreignait à plein corps : « Elle est là la douce, la bonne, la coulante, la chantante, la fraîche : la bénédiction, la vie » (Roumain 122). Enfin, l'eau c'est la vie, l'usage des multiples adjectifs pour qualifier l'eau montre son rôle inéluctable au sein de la communauté. Elle donne la joie. La sécheresse à Fonds-Rouge c'est le résultat du déboisement ; l'un des indices des activités humaines qui sont nuisibles à l'environnement. L'eau est nécessaire pour supporter la vie. Il va sans dire que le manque d'eau à Fonds-Rouge engendre la sécheresse qui, elle aussi, déclenche d'autres problèmes sociopolitiques.

5. La sécheresse à Fonds-Rouge : implications sociopolitiques

La destruction de la nature crée, sans doute, des effets néfastes. S'il existe trop de soleil accablant aujourd'hui, c'est à cause de la destruction de la couche d'ozone, l'émission des gazes et d'autres substances qui sont nuisibles à l'environnement. Dès le commencement de

la pièce, l'attaque de la nature est évidemment visible:

Et le soleil soudain était là. Il moussait comme une écume de rosée sur le champ d'herbes. Plus caressant et plus chaud qu'un duvet de poussin sur le dos rond du morne tout bleui, un instant encore dans la froidure de l'avant-jour. Ces hommes noirs te saluent d'un balancement de houes qui arrache du ciel de vives échardes de lumières (Anta Kâ 146).

De surcroît, la sécheresse anéantit tout. L'effet de la sécheresse est grave : « Nous mourrons tous (...) les bêtes, les plantes, les Chrétiens vivants » (Anta Kâ 145). Que la sécheresse n'ait pas épargné le Chrétien est une dénonciation de l'appareil administratif mis sur pied par les colonisateurs qui ont toujours vanté le bienfait de leur œuvre à l'égard du Noir et surtout à l'égard du Chrétien noir. L'un des résultats de la sécheresse à Fonds-Rouge c'est la misère qui frappe presque toutes les familles de ce village. Délira, la mère de Manuel, dit ceci : « Ne me tourmente pas, maudit. Est-ce que j'ai pas assez de tracas comme ça ? La misère, je la connais, moi-même. Tout mon corps me fait mal, tout mon corps accouche la misère, moi-même. J'ai pas besoin qu'on me baille la malédiction du ciel et de l'enfer » (Anta Kâ, 149). La sécheresse implique beaucoup de choses dans cette pièce. Il s'agit d'abord de la destruction de la terre par le truchement du déboisement et d'autres activités néfastes qui sont nuisibles à l'environnement.

D'autre part, la sécheresse symbolise aussi l'étroitesse d'esprit des habitants qui, au lieu de s'unir pour faire face au danger permanent représenté par celle-

ci, se consomment dans une querelle fratricide inutile. Vue l'imminent danger représenté par la sécheresse, et la possibilité à écorcher le peuple jusqu'aux os par ce phénomène, l'antagonisme entre Gervilien et Bienaimé n'est pas nécessaire. Ceci mène à l'assassinat de Manuel le révolutionnaire.

Mais, le projet de Manuel ne va pas mourir car avant de mourir, Manuel, le personnage principal, l'écologue et le porteur du message vert, qui cherche toujours à trouver une source, arrive à la trouver et « c'est bien là que les ramiers ont joué. Un morne bien boisé, il y a même des acajous, et ce feuillage gris qui fait argenté au soleil ne me trompe pas. C'est des bois trompette et les gommiers naturellement ne manquent pas ... mais de quel côté, je vais entrer de quel » (Anta Kâ, 178). Voici Manuel qui aide ses compatriotes, qui joue un rôle clé pour unir son peuple et pour tenter de pallier la pauvreté. Lui-même sait qu'il est devant une tâche de taille :

Ça sentait le pourri depuis quelque temps à Fonds-Rouge, la haine, ça donne à l'âme une haleine empoisonnée, c'est comme un marigot de boue verte, de bile cuite, d'humeurs rances et macérées. (...) Maintenant que l'eau va arroser la plaine, qu'elle va couler dans les jardins, ce qui était ennemi deviendra ami, ce qui était séparé va se rejoindre, et l'habitant ne sera plus un chien enragé pour l'habitant (Anta Kâ 186).

Manuel sait que la reconquête de la paix au sein des siens ne passera pas par les pourparlers ; mais l'instauration d'une source d'eau qui mettra fin à la pauvreté dans la communauté. Manuel conclut

que: « C'est pas Dieu qui abandonne le nègre, c'est le nègre qui abandonne la terre et il reçoit sa punition: la sécheresse, la misère et la désolation » (Anta Kâ, 155). Enfin de compte, la sécheresse, c'est la mort pour les paysans et une occasion à saisir pour leurs exploités, faits sociaux contradictoires. Mais, il va sans dire que l'auteur laisse voir l'espoir dans l'histoire de la souffrance des citoyens de Fonds-Rouge.

6. Solutions proposées pour pallier les inconvénients du changement climatique

Dans *Gouverneur de la rosée* d'Abdou Anta Kâ, Hilarion, l'un des personnages, s'adressant à Florentine, laisse voir les propositions de l'auteur pour résoudre le problème: « Florentine ma vorace, regarde-les, ces nègres va-nu-pieds, ces grès orteils. Tu sais à quel jeu ils jouent là? C'était ça le coumbite. Chacun cultivait pour tous. Tous pour un » (Anta Kâ 146). Larivoire semble supporter l'idée du coumbite:

Je parle. Elle est donc venue Annaïse et, paraît que, d'après ce qu'elle a entendu, il faudrait pour amener l'eau jusqu'à la plaine, un coumbite de tous les habitants de Fonds-Rouge, parce que c'est une grosse corvée, un travail trop difficile que les gens de ce Manuel ne pourraient pas réussir pour leur propre compte. Alors, s'il n'y a pas de réconciliation l'eau restera là où elle est. Forcement (Anta Kâ 184).

L'importance de coumbite est plus fort renforcée lorsque Laurelien s'adresse à Anselm: « Un jour viendra... nous ferons le grand coumbite de tous les travailleurs de la terre, l'assemblée des gouverneurs de la rosée, pour défricher

la misère et planter la vie nouvelle sur la terre » (Anta Kâ 196). En plus du projet concernant coumbite, l'auteur propose l'arrosage de la terre pour la rendre verte encore. Manuel laisse voir ce désir de l'auteur de cette façon: « suppose, Annaïse que je découvre l'eau, suppose que je l'amène dans la plaine » (Anta Kâ 162). Le chœur, l'un des personnages, en supportant cette proposition de Manuel, dit ceci:

L'eau! son sillage ensoleillé dans la plaine; son clapotis dans le canal du jardin; son bruissement lorsque dans sa course, elle rencontre des chevelures d'herbes; le reflet délayé du ciel mêlé à l'image fuyante des roseaux. Ces négresses remplissant à la source leurs cruches d'argile rouge; le chant des lessiveuses, les terres gorgées, les hautes récoltes murissantes (Anta Kâ 162).

Abdou Anta Kâ nous conseille de nous réunir pour protéger la terre. Autrement dit, si nous ne réussissons pas nos efforts pour protéger notre planète, nous la perdrons et la pauvreté, la misère et les tribulations régneront. Cheik Aliou Ndao corrobore notre prise de position de cette façon:

En adaptant au théâtre *Gouverneur de la rosée*, le roman de l'écrivain haïtien Jacques Romain, Abdou Anta Kâ, par-delà le thème de la sécheresse, souligne la solidarité, l'effort collectif, l'espoir inébranlable qui doivent cimenter les *Damnés de la terre*. Ces paysans haïtiens en butte à un environnement hostile gardent le même courage qui les rapprochent (sic) des Africains du Sahel. Ils savent tous que chaque chant du coq annonce un jour de combat

contre la misère. Et pourtant, il faut livrer bataille contre la sécheresse, la désertification, les feux de brousse, l'analphabétisme, les maladies endémiques, dans la plus grande dignité, sans plainte ni murmure. Abdou Anta Kâ a tout de suite senti des affinités avec les personnages de Jacques Roumain. Il en a tiré parti pour mieux tisser ces liens de sang, d'origine et de souffrances qui forment un pont entre l'Afrique et les Caraïbes. Naturellement, au-delà de cet ancrage si légitime, le dramaturge sénégalais s'adresse à tous les fils d'Adama Ndiaye ou qu'ils se trouvent, de la Laponie au Cap. Tel est le destin de toute œuvre réussie (4).

Autrement dit, si les habitants arrivaient à arroser leurs terres, ils refuseraient de les céder, en paiement des dettes et des emprunts à taux usuraires qu'ils accumulaient chez Florentine. Il fallait foutre le Manuel sous clef, dans la prison du bourg, et lui faire dire où se trouvait la source. On avait les moyens de le faire parler. Ensuite, on laisserait les habitants sécher dans l'attente et quand ils auraient perdu courage et tout espoir, lui, Hilarion, leur raflerait leurs

jardins et deviendrait propriétaire de quelques bons carreaux de terres arrosées. L'ennuyant était qu'il faudrait partager avec le lieutenant et le juge de paix.

7. Conclusion

Abdou Anta Kâ est un dramaturge très peu connu en Afrique, surtout par le public de son temps aussi bien que par le public contemporain. Par contre, son message dans *Gouverneur de la rosée* – la préservation de la terre à travers l'assiduité, l'unification et la coopération - reste valable surtout pour un peuple qui, s'étant débarrassé des Blancs, n'arrive pourtant pas à prendre en main son destin. Il crée ainsi un personnage-héros, un personnage vert pour remédier aux problèmes. Chaque pays africain a son Manuel et a ses jeunes gens disposés à tout sacrifier pour le bien-être et le bonheur de tous. Mais il manque encore les efforts des patriotes pour coordonner et guider ces jeunes gens. Cela étant, ce travail ne fait que déblayer le terrain pour l'étude ultérieure de ce dramaturge Abdou Anta Kâ, qui est moins connu par le monde littéraire africain.

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