Sentence Structure Analysis of Selected Text in Ola Rotimi's *The God's Are Not To Blame*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on sentence structure analysis of selected text in *The God's Are Not To Blame*, a play written by Ola Rotimi; a Nigerian playwright. His play was an adaptation of a classical Greek Tragic-play written by Sophocles. The aim of this study is to find out the sociolinguistic influence on the play's sentence structure. The theoretical framework adopts the Use and Operation Theory, also known as the Use Theory of Meaning that was developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein. The methodology employs a qualitative descriptive design and a content analysis approach. The study reveals that sociolinguistic factors within a society or geographical region influence English language usage. The study therefore recommends that an intentional effort should be embarked upon by traditional leaders and educationist within every region of a nation to learn their indigenous language heritage with a view to preserve linguistic heritage of cultures and thereby prevent extinction of rich indigenous dialectical lexical structures. This work contributes to knowledge by opening up new areas for writing socio-linguistically influenced literary texts that are not yet fully tapped into.

Keywords: Language, communication, sociolinguistics, semantics, meaning, meaning relations, nativization.

Introduction

Language has over the decades proven to be a complex system of communication that involves the use of words, sounds, symbols, gestures and body stances to convey apt meanings that express human thoughts, ideas, and feelings. The complexity of language has resulted into different definitions of the term as found in diverse literature. Universally, humans speak one form of language or the other to communicate. The most employed language nationwide, according to various research findings, is the English language which is native to those living in the British Isles. It is the most wide-spread language used in the world for talk-exchange and in writing literary works. Consequently, its acceptance and spread has resulted into various English varieties as a result of its contact with other geographical regions, cultures and dialects.

Nigeria is one of such countries that the English language spread to via international trade, colonialism, missionary incursion; amongst other factors. In the cause of Nigeria's historical journey, the English language became her lingual franca, howbeit, with conspicuous traits of regional dialect-infusions. The English language varieties spoken differ from region to region. The reasons for the slight differences are as a result of sociolinguistic factors within different regions. This work will analyse some selected text in *The Gods Are Not To Blame* with a view to ascertain how sociolinguistic factors influenced the sentence structure of the English language in the play.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives set out to**;**

1. identify the sociolinguistic background of the play.
2. explain the sociolinguistic impact on the play.
3. analyze the sentence structure of selected text that shape the play's language and style.

Research Questions

1. What is the sociolinguistic background of the play?
2. How does the sociolinguistic background impact the play?
3. What is the sentence structure of the selected text that shape the play's language and style?

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Communication

Communication is the process where information, ideas, thoughts, opinions, or messages between individuals, groups, or organizations are exchanged through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior. In other words, the main purpose for language use is to communicate. Transmission, reception, and interpretation of information are involved during communication. It is a two-way process that involves both the sender and the receiver or the speaker and the listener or the writer and the reader. When there occurs a successful exchange of information as well as an understanding and interpretation of the information then communication is said to be effective.

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. It examines how language is used in social contexts to convey meaning, establish relationships, and negotiate power dynamics. Sociolinguistics draws on theories and methods from linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines to understand the complex relationships between language, society, and culture. Overall, sociolinguistics offers a nuanced understanding of the dynamic interplay between language, society, and culture with a view to communicate meaning.

Sociolinguistic factors like, age, sex, social class and educational background influence meaning. The effect of such language in contact in Nigeria produced a variety of English like pidgin, creole and nativization. Sociolinguistic factors in Nigeria brought about characteristics such as the use of duplication, code-mixing, idioms, proverbs, religious belief system, myths and other cultural practices among others. To fully understand sociolinguistic impact on English language it is important to have a basic understanding of concepts such as semantics, meaning, meaning relations and nativization.

Semantics

The meaning of lexical words, phrases, clauses and sentences are studied under the branch of linguistics called semantics. It examines how language conveys meaning and how people interpret and understand language. Semantics involves

the analysis of: 1. Word meaning: The study of word senses, connotations, and relationships; 2. Sentence meaning: The study of how words combine to form meaningful sentences; 3. Utterance meaning: The study of how context influences the meaning of spoken language; and 4. Textual meaning: The study of how meaning is created and interpreted in written texts. Semantics also explores various aspects of meaning, including: 1. Denotation: The literal or dictionary meaning of a word; 2. Connotation: The emotional or associative meaning of a word; 3. Inference: The process of drawing conclusions from language; and 4. Implicature: The implied meaning that goes beyond the literal interpretation. By examining the complex relationships between language, meaning, and context, semantics provides insights into how language communicates meaning and how people understand and interpret language.

Meaning

The meaning of meaning is a question that has puzzled philosophers, linguists and scholars for centuries. Meaning is a complex and multifaceted concept that can be understood in various ways, depending on the context and perspective. That is why it is commonly said that meaning is objective; it is not stable. It is illusive. In the light of that understanding or notion about meaning, some possible approaches to understanding meaning were proffered. They include; 1. Semantic meaning, which in linguistics, refers to the relationship between words, phrases, and sentences, as well as concepts, objects, or ideas that they represent. 2. Referential meaning; an approach which focuses on the relationship between language and the external world, where meaning is derived from the reference to objects, events, or concepts; 3. Pragmatic meaning; a perspective which emphasizes the role of context, inference, and implicature in shaping meaning. Pragmatic meaning is not just a matter of words, but also of how they are used in social interactions; 4. Conceptual meaning; an approach that views meaning as a mental construct, where concepts and ideas are formed through cognitive processes, such as perception, attention, and memory. 5. Intentional meaning; a perspective which focuses on the intentional or purposeful aspect of meaning, where language is used to convey intentions, goals, or desires.

Socio-linguistically, a giant driver of meaning, is the Cultural meaning; a perspective understood as a product of specific cultural norms, values, and beliefs

that shape the interpretation and understanding of language. Finally, there is Existential meaning; an approach which explores the deeper and more profound aspects of meaning, such as the search for purpose, significance, or transcendence. In all, the essence of meaning is a dynamic, multifaceted, and context-dependent concept that can be understood from the aforementioned perspectives.

Meaning Relations

Meaning relations refer to the relationships between words, phrases, or concepts that share similar or related meanings. These relations help to organize and structure the meaning of language, thus enabling effective communication and understanding. Comprehending meaning relations is essential for: Effective communication; Language learning and teaching; Lexical semantics and dictionary compilation; 4. Natural Language Processing (NLP) and 5. artificial intelligence. Meaning relations help to reveal the complex network of relationships within language, facilitating a deeper understanding of how words and concepts interact and convey meaning.

Nativization

Nativization refers to the process by which a non-native language, typically a colonial or imposed language, becomes an integral part of a local culture and is adapted to suit the needs and characteristics of the local community. Nativization can also be defined as a natural process that occurs when a language is used in a new cultural context, and it reflects the dynamic and adaptive nature of language. In the context of English language studies, nativization refers to the process by which English is adapted and modified to suit the linguistic, cultural, and social contexts of non-native English-speaking countries. Nativization involves changes at various levels which include: 1. Phonology that is, changes in pronunciation and accent; 2. Vocabulary. An adoption of local words and expressions; 3. Modifications to grammatical structures and 4. Idioms and colloquialisms which is development of local idiomatic expressions.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the Use and Operation Theory, also known as the "Use Theory of Meaning". It was developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his later work, particularly in his book "Philosophical Investigations" (1953). His theory posits

that the meaning of words, phrases, and language is not determined by reference to abstract concepts, objects, or definitions, but rather by their use and operation in concrete social and cultural contexts. Key points of the Use and Operation Theory are that: 1. Meaning is use that is, the meaning of language is derived from its practical application and usage in social interactions; 2. Contextual dependence which is, meaning that is, dependent on the specific context in which language is used; 3. Family resemblance which are words and concepts that are related to each other through a network of similarities and differences, rather than by precise definitions; 4. Language games; that is, language used in various social games or activities, such as ordering, describing, or explaining, which shape its meaning and 5. Holistic understanding; which is, meaning is understood in relation to the broader social and cultural practices in which language is embedded.

The Use and Operation Theory challenges traditional notions of meaning such as Referential, based on reference to external objects or concepts and Representational which is based on representation of abstract ideas or definitions. Wittgenstein's theory emphasizes the importance of understanding language as a practical, social, and contextual phenomenon.

Empirical Review

Yul-Ifode (p.1) posits that "the term language is used every day in different ways with a great range of applications" and that, "being a fundamental aspect of human culture and society", language "is used to facilitate communication, build relationships, and convey knowledge and information." According to research, there are ample proves to show that animals also express some forms of language to communicate. Nwala defines language as "an organised and a systematic means of communication" and that "it is a shared code of conduct or behaviour by people" (1). He posits that "lower animals also have language" and "birds, ants exchange spatial wishes and communicate among their members" (1). He concludes that "what is correct to says is that human language is complex, developed and grammatical" while "animal language is a form of closed system used to express highly restricted desires, such as sex, danger, hunger and anger." The need for humans to interact and communicate with each other in circumstances that require that English must be spoken as well as the spread of foreign cultures through travel, socializing, economic activities, music, art,

commerce, aviation, technology and other global activities caused English to adapt fast within and outside Nigeria. That gave rise to a volley of English varieties because people from different geographical regions needed to still retain and assert their individuality and autonomy; culturally and linguistically. Chinua Achebe has this to say about regional language and cultural autonomy; "Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's"? he questioned. "It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling" he posits. He adds that for him "there is no other choice" and concludes that "I have been given the language and I intend to use it" (Thiong'o 7 1986). Achebe in another forum reiterates that "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience" and adds "But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" (The Guardian, Dec. 13, 2010).

Appraisal of Literature

Numerous research in language analysing African literature buttress Nigeria's rich dialectical tool like the use of proverbs in the works of Elechi Amadi, Chinua Achebe and Gabriel Okara to mention a few. However, an analysis of the sentence structure of some selected text in *The Gods Are Not To Blame* with a view to finding out what the variance of those words were in comparison to L1 English variation was not focused on.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the sociolinguistic background of the play?

The sociolinguistic background of the play is multifactorial. Rotimi was able to adapt and domesticate the play because of a similar belief system that the Greek and Yoruba geographical regions have. Both cultures belief in the supremacy of gods in the lives of men. Both believe that the gods dictate what happens in the affairs of men and nothing can avert whatever the gods decide to do, irrespective of what men resolve to do in other to overturn what the gods decree. Both cultures also believe in ritual performances to appease the gods and inquire frequently from different deities about what the gods have to say and want done. In addition, both cultures believe in the efficacy of curses upon men and the land. Furthermore, both cultures believe in myths and legends and that men's destinies depend wholly upon supernatural whims and caprices.

Research Question 2: How do the sociolinguistic background impact the play?
Supremacy of gods in the lives of men

Belief in supremacy of gods in the lives of men was what led to the cascade of the events right at the onset of the play. The play opens thus:

> NARRATOR: It is their first baby, so they bring him for blessing to the shrine of Ogun, the God of War, of Iron, and doctor of all male children. Then they call a Priest of Ifa, as is the custom, to divine the future that this boy has brought with him. [Enter BABA FAKUNLE, a purblind old man, led by a small boy. BABA sits on the ground, and begins to cast his Opele, stringed objects of divination.] Baba Fakunle, oldest and most knowing of all Ifa priests in this world, it is you I greet. Mother waits, Father waits. Now, tell them:
> what is it that the child has brought as duty to this earth from the gods?...

BABA FAKUNLE: This boy, he will kill his own father and then marry his own mother!

To forestall the patricide and incest they decided to kill the baby

> NARRATOR: …. Man must struggle. The bad future must not happen. …. Priest of Ogun ties boy's feet with a string of cowries meaning sacrifice to the gods who have sent boy down to this Earth. Priest bears boy to Gbonka, the King's special messenger and orders him to go into the bush with the little boy, to the evil grove. [GBONKA bears baby away. (Prologue 3-4)

Belief in the supremacy of gods in the lives of men that made King Adetusa and Queen Ojuola consent to killing their first-born male child. Secondly, Gbonka's attempt to spare the child's life also failed as captured in his word saying "GBONKA [subdued]: Pray, have mercy, I meant you no wrong, I only tried to spare your life, my lord, I meant no harm. They ordered me to kill you in the bush, but I took pity and gave…." (ACT THREE Scene 4, p.68) Thus, showing that irrespective of man's efforts, personal beliefs, convictions and decisions, the sociolinguistic factor of gods supremacy prevailed. Man's wisdom is shown to be futile. Also, in spite of all Odewale's efforts by running away from home the will of the gods for him to commit patricide and incest prevailed in his life again buttressing the sociolinguistic impact on the play.

Tribalism and Ethnicism

The feud between Odewale and an Old Man, which unknown to the former was his father, is another example of sociolinguistic impact on the play. Odewale said "No, … The powers would have failed if I did not let them use. They knew my weakness: the weakness of a man easily moved to the defence of his tribe against others." He continued saying "I once slew a man on my farm in Ede. I could have spared him. But he spat on my tribe." Furthermore, "He spat on the tribe I thought was my own tribe. The man laughed, and laughing, he called me a 'man from the bush tribe of Ijekun'." Then came the last straw which is:

"And I lost my reason. Now I find out that that very man was my ... own father, the King who ruled this land before me. It was my run from the blood I spilled to calm the hurt of my tribe, that brought me to this land to do more horrors… (ACT THREE Scene 4, p.71)

Tribalism and ethnicism is seen here as another sociolinguistic impact on the play. From the excerpt above, Odewale unwittingly fulfilled the prophesy of patricide by killing his father out of defense for his tribe. Tribal and ethnic sentiment in Nigeria was also what led the playwright to script the play which was an allegorizing of the Nigerian civil war that broke out in 1967. Rotimi believes that the gods, meaning the western world, should not be blamed for Nigeria's woes because it was ethnicism, tribalism and nepotism of Nigeria's political leaders that caused the civil war and that Nigerians do not consider their diversity as strength. Odewale's speech buttress that which is "Indeed! When the evil-plotter beats his drum for the downfall of the innocent, I say, Oduduwa, the all-powerful will never, never let it… It is all my fault. I should have known. The hyena flirts with the hen, the hen is happy, not knowing that her death has come." He then drops the bomb shell which is the tribal issue, "I am an Ijekun man. That is the trouble. I, an Ijekun man, came to your tribe, you made me king, and I was happy, ignorant that plots, subversion, and intrigues would forever keep me company." He then threatens "Oh, but you wait... you will know me. One by one I will catch you: one by one, I will fell you all." and then accuses unjustly "First, that boy, Aderopo or whatever he calls himself. He wants to be King, so what did he do? He bribed the Seer to come and insult me, to call me murderer of his father." (ACT TWO Scene 2, p.30-31)

Odewale's words above are full of insinuations, false accusations and veiled attacks thus fanning the embers of tribalism and mistrust in a multi-cultural society. The playwright used the above sociolinguistic factors to keep and heighten the plays suspense and tempo.

Research Question 3: What is the sentence structure of the selected text that shape the play's language and style?

Rotimi uses sentence structure to evoke empathy from readers in the sense that Odewale is seen becoming nervous with the probable realization that the man he killed could be his father which was the cause of the plague in the land of Kutuje where he is made king: For instance, the sentence by Odewale, above, as found in pages 30-31 of the play, begins with an exclamation: "Indeed!" (expresses strong emotions) followed by a declarative sentence; "When the evil-plotter beats his drum for the downfall of the innocent, I say, Oduduwa, the all-powerful will never, never let it— " (states a fact or opinion). An Imperative sentence follows; "You wait... you will know me." (gives a command or instruction). The sentence clause structure is a mixture of independent clauses, dependent clauses, noun phrases and verb phrases. The syntactic features make use of metaphors: "The hyena flirts with the hen, the hen is happy, not knowing that her death has come." (compares the hyena to a person who deceives others). It is also personification in that the hyena represents the people of Kutuje and the hen represents him (Odewale). There is use of repetition: "One by one I will catch you: one by one, I will fell you all." (emphasizes the speaker's determination). There is use of rhetorical questions: "He wants to be King, so what did he do?" (encourages the listener to think critically). The sentence structure analysis above enumerates the complex syntax and use of literary devices which contributes to its emotional impact and persuasive power of the playwright.

Duplication, Tautology and Repetition

The English language usage in *The Gods Are Not To Blame* is nativized in and bear features of the educational background as well as the social status of speakers in their sentence structures. There are for instance duplication of words in a single stretch of sentence. In an L1 English language country like Britain, duplication is a mark of poor command of the English language but the reverse is the case in the sociolinguistic background of *The Gods Are Not To Blame*. Although it is true that

sociolinguist environment of a geographic region most times reflect the educational background of the speakers and sometimes their age brackets. However, at other times, duplication is deliberately used for emphasis by educated persons in a society for emphasis especially in Africa. Duplication is also a feature of pidgin English in Nigeria and is frequently and deliberately used. Below is an example of duplication of Subject in a single sentence:

> BABA FAKUNLE: This boy, he will kill his own father and then marry his own mother! (Prologue 3)

The sentence structure beams light on the complex syntax and phrase structure as well as its use of coordination, left dislocation, and adverbial phrases to create a sense of drama and emphasis.

Having at the back of our minds that two key principles of the Use and Operation Theory of meaning states that the meaning of language use is derived from its practical application and usage in social interactions and that meaning is dependent on the specific context in which it is used.

The sentence type is complex because it contains determiner + noun ("this boy") as well as an independent clause ("he will kill his own father") and a dependent clause ("and then marry his own mother"). The clause structure is made up of independent clause ("he will kill his own father").
Subject: "he" (pronoun), Verb: "will kill" (modal verb + main verb) and Object: "his own father" (possessive pronoun + noun). The dependent Clause begins with "and then marry his own mother" followed by "and" (a coordinating conjunction); an Adverb of time) and a main Verb "marry". The Object is "his own mother" which is, (possessive pronoun + noun). The phrase structure is made up of Noun Phrases; "This boy" (determiner + noun); "his own father" (possessive pronoun + adjective + noun); "his own mother" (possessive pronoun + adjective + noun); The verb phrases are dual namely "will kill" (modal verb + main verb) and "marry" (main verb).
The Word Order of the sentence follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order. Others are:

- A Left Dislocation: The sentence begins with a left-dislocated phrase "This boy", which is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. This

emphasizes the boy and creates a sense of drama in that, after saying "This boy", a prolonged silence follows during which all eyes are focused on the speaker and all ears are pricked, waiting to hear the concluding part of the sentence; and a Coordination: the two clauses are coordinated using the conjunction "and", which indicates a close relationship between the two actions; and Adverbial Phrase: The phrase "and then" functions as an adverbial phrase, indicating the sequence of events.

Like duplication, tautology and repetitions are also used for emphasis in the play's socio-linguistic environment which captures the educational status of speakers. See the example below:

FIRST WOMAN: Yesterday, my twins died—both of them.
FIRST WOMAN: My third child ... [unstrapping the baby on her back] here, feel her, feel how hot she is ... come feel. (ACT ONE Scene 1, p.9)

L1 English language does not say "twins" and add "both of them" in a single stretch of sentence. It is considered as tautology. In addition, repetition of feel, mentioned thrice, is considered as normal rendition of English in social context in the sociolinguistic environment of the play. The sentence is declarative, stating a fact or event. It consists of two clauses; an independent clause;
"Yesterday, my twins died" and an adverbial phrase; "Yesterday" which modifies the verb "died". The Subject"; my twins" is a possessive noun phrase. The Verb; "died" is past tense. indicating that the event occurred in the past. There is a non-essential appositive clause ("both of them") which provides additional information (about "my twins"), thus creating a sense to drama to evoke empathy, emphasizing the extent of the loss.

The second sentence above by FIRST WOMAN is an imperative sentence, issuing a command or instruction. It consists of multiple clauses. The first is an independent clause; "My third child" is a fragmented sentence, lacking a verb). The second clause is also an imperative clause; "feel her". It is also a command to the listener to take action. It creates a sense of urgency and emphasis. The second clause also provides additional information and commands the listener to take action and move closer and feel the sick child. Both sentence structures above are

full of emphasis and heightens the sense of drama with a view to evoke empathy from readers and the audience.

The following are other conspicuous and deliberate use of repetitions in the play; a push for stress and emphasis; a key sociolinguistic feature. Nine sentences are by the protagonist, King Odewale and one by his friend; Alaka. They include:

> ODEWALE. No, no—do not beg…. (p.10); ODEWALE. No, no, do not thank me…
> (p.12); ODEWALE. No, no. You must boil it longer, woman, longer, (p.13); ODEWALE. No, no—that is no punishment for the killer… (p.21); ODEWALE. No, no, Sango, the thunder lion, (p.44); ODEWALE. No, no food yet. I must carry on my search... (p.50); ODEWALE. No, no, I do not ask for pity… (p.59); ALAKA. No, no—he said he came from this very land of Kutuje.… (p.64); ODEWALE. No, no! Do not blame the Gods. Let no one blame the powers... (p.71); ADEWALE. No, not your left hand!... (p.72)

The above sentence structures above reflect the sociolinguistic environment of the play's society.

Proverbs and metaphorical use of language

The variety of English has much cultural background infused namely the use of proverbs which is another sociolinguistic feature. Profuse use of proverb is seen in the text above. It is a key yardstick in discourse in Yoruba society. See more another example below:

> ODEWALE: What is the matter, fellow, aren't you a Yoruba man? Must proverbs be explained to you after they are said? Aderopo, if you think like a tortoise you can plot against me without my cutting you down first with my own tortoise tricks, then, fellow, madness is in your liver. (Act TWO Scene 2 p.32)

Odewale in the above sentence is accusing Aderopo (his step-son) of plotting to overthrow his kingship but instead of accusing him directly, he meanders in addition to the use of proverbs. This is typical of the sociolinguistic background of the play where accusations are laced with proverbs and indirect manner of accusation. "Tortoise", in this context means deception and cunning. In other contexts, it symbolizes wisdom, representing renewal and transformation. The

sociolinguistic background of the play is laced with proverbial and metaphorical use of the English language. Code-switching; another sociolinguistic factor in Nigeria is seen in the play where people hide information from perceived strangers by code-switching. Below is another excerpt to buttress that:

> ODEWALE: … an old man whom I had long known as my father's brother walked up to us. I lay flat in greeting, as custom says. But what did this man do? He looked down at me, looked at me... looked, then spat: 'the butterfly thinks himself a bird'. That was what he said: 'the butterfly thinks himself a bird'. Then he hissed, and walked away. Spat again.
> ODEWALE: …my people, it is what is in the heart when there is no wine in the head, that comes out when there is wine in the head. A bush does not sway this way or that way, unless there is wind. I went to a priest of Ifa. I asked him: 'Am I not who I am?'
> Voice: 'You have a curse on you, son.'
> ODEWALE: 'What kind of curse, Old One?'
> Voice: 'You cannot run away from it, the gods have willed that you will kill your father, and then marry your mother!'
> ODEWALE: 'Me! Kill my own father, and marry my own mother?'
> VOICE: 'It has been willed.'
> ODEWALE: 'What must I do then not to carry out this will of the gods?'
> VOICE: 'Nothing. To run away would be foolish. **The snail may try, but it cannot cast off its shell**. Just stay where you are. Stay where you are ... stay where you are...' ODEWALE: 'Continue to stay in the house of my father and mother? Oh, no, the toad likes water, but not when the water is boiling.' (ACT THREE Scene 3, p.60)

The use of proverbs is a key feature of the English language variety in the play. Most sentences are laced with proverbs with the aim of making meaning come to life, so to say. The proverbial language usage is context bound. And in terms of discourse analysis, Language is used in context. Metaphorical language usages abound and they are also context bound. See another example below:

> ODEWALE: … She now is bearer of all my four seeds: Adewale, and Adebisi his sister, Oyeyemi, her brother, and Adeyinka, second sister. (Prologue 8) "Seeds" in this context of usage means children and not planting-seeds.

Meronymy

ODEWALE: Hmm. My people, I fear and I tremble. Suspicions, heavy suspicions fill my heart. I look about me ... eyes, white, vacant, innocent, they stare back from faces of sorrow and pain. But the faces may as well be smiling. For who knows what is behind those eyes: white eyes, vacant eyes, innocent eyes? When the frog in front falls in a pit, others behind take caution. It would be me next. Me an Ijekun man, a stranger in the midst of your tribe… When crocodiles eat their own eggs, what will they not do to the flesh of a frog? (p.23) The sentence structure is lengthy and complex. In addition, instead of Odewale to say that everyone or people are watching or looking at him, he creates a meronymy of **eyes** representing hypernymy of **people** to further heighten the drama. This is another sociolinguistic feature of the culture which makes use of lots of imagery in discourse. This dramatic effect creates long lasting imagery and pass potent meanings across in a more forceful and aesthetic manner.

Modality

There are modal verbs (like "**can**," "**must**," or "**should**") which express degrees of possibility, necessity, or obligation. For example:

> ODEWALE: If you think that you **can** drum for my downfall, and hope that drum will sound, then your head is not good…Aha! I said if you think that you **can** uproot a tree that has been planted by the gods ... hmm ... my brother … (ACT TWO Scene 2, p.32)
>
> ADEROPO. It is said that the secrets of a home **should** be known first to the head of the home. [He then "Goes to ODEWALE to whisper in his ear."] (ACT ONE Scene 2 p.19)

Overview of Findings

Sociolinguistic factors of belief in the supremacy of gods, deities, myths and legends played major roles in the chain of events that took place in the play. The sentence structure of the selected text above show-forth the linguistic richness of Yoruba cultural dialectical tool and by extension Nigerian English as influence by enormous sociolinguistic factors which shaped the play's language and style. The characters' sentences vary in length and complexity and there are patterns and correlations between sentence structure and character traits, emotions, social status and educational background.

Conclusion

The sociolinguist factors affected the play's sentence structures, mood, tempo, themes, characters, incidence and outcome of the events in the play. King Adetusa, his wife Queen Ojuola as well as the entire community had absolute belief that the boy truly had an evil mission to commit patricide and incest. The variety of English usage asserts the cultural background of the play. It has heavy cultural flavourings. The domesticated English language reflect the sociolinguistic realities of Yoruba and by extension all regions in Nigeria at phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantics levels which give an insight into Rotimi's creative use of nativized language and the cultural and linguistic contexts that shape the play and contribute to the play's themes, characters, and cultural identity. By implications of this research, we understand that language in African literature is used to convey cultural identity and heritage, morality and justice, reinforces and challenge themes. In all, language is used to create and develop characters and traits, reveals character relationships, conflicts, and dynamics.

Recommendations

This study recommends that all citizens in Nigeria should strive to preserve their rich regional rich lexical heritage and portray same by writing literary works in nativized English language literature. The use of more nativized English texts will contribute to the development of Nigerian English literature nationally and internationally. To accelerate that motion, traditional rulers and education policy-makers should collaborate and come up with educational frameworks in every State as a matter of policy that will push for more cultural-values reawakening; in order to sustain our rich linguistics heritage and prevent its extinction because a language lost is a culture lost.

Contribution to Knowledge

Students, teachers, lecturers and scholars should go through the findings of this research and build upon it by incorporating and encouraging essays that capture students' regional realities. This study will also contribute to knowledge in that it will bring about an inroad to new areas of writing literary texts which will highlight on the impact of nativized English language literary works that will showcase our lexicons and pass them on from generation to generation,

Furthermore, it will present opportunity for more authors to take up the responsibility of nativizing existing classical works.

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