

**PRAGMATIC ACTS IN SELECTED CULTURE-BASED
PLAYS OF AHMED YERIMA**

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**PRAGMATIC ACTS IN SELECTED CULTURE-BASED
PLAYS OF AHMED YERIMA**

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my most precious jewel, Elizabeth, Omolola Olajumoke (Ìyá Adéolú), who departed when the meal was ready.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. Shared cultural knowledge	sck
2. Shared situational knowledge	sck
3. References	ref
4. Relevance	rel
5. Inference	inf
6. Voice	vce
7. Pragmatics acts	practs
8. Face threatening acts	FTA
9. Metaphor	Mph
10. Relevance theory	RT
11. Cooperative principle	CP

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ABSTRACT

Culture is central to Ahmed Yerima's dramaturgy, and his culture-based dramatic texts largely project the cultural values of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, namely, Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Existing linguistic studies on Yerima's plays have concentrated on the use of proverbs and politeness features, ignoring an in-depth pragmatic study of their cultural contexts. This study, therefore, undertakes an investigation of culture-motivated pragmatic acts (practs) and contextual features of language use in the espousal of cultural issues in the selected plays of Yerima, with a view to establishing their cultural relevance.

The study adopts Jacob Mey's theory of pragmeme, which accounts for context-ingrained utterances within social and cultural bounds. Six plays of Yerima's cutting across the cultural practices of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria were purposively selected: *Mu'adhin's Call* and *Attahiru* (Hausa culture), *Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale* (Yoruba culture), *Idemili* and *Akuabata* (Igbo culture). Eight hundred and twenty-eight culture-based conversations in the plays were purposively selected from the texts: *Mu'adhin's Call* -128; *Attahiru*- 122, *Idemili*-112, *Akuabata*-119, *Mojagbe*-182, and *Ajagunmale*-175. Data were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

Eighteen practs and allopracts occur in the selected texts: explaining, informing, warning/cautioning, accusing, rebuking, persuading, insisting, assuring, praising, appealing, declaring, pleading, advising, condemning, inviting, confessing, invoking and lamenting. These are situated in three types of contexts: communal, traditional and emotive, to espouse different cultural issues in the play. Four main common ground features characterise the data: shared cultural knowledge, shared situational knowledge, reference and voice, indexed by metaphors and proverbs. Eight of the practs and allopracts cut across the six plays sampled, namely, explaining, assuring, informing, warning/cautioning, accusing, rebuking, persuading and praising. Ten practs occur exclusively in particular texts: two in *Mojagbe*: invoking which addresses the Yoruba concepts of immortality, death and reincarnation, within the traditional context; and lamenting which topicalises the Yoruba expression of grief in emotive context; two in *Ajagunmale*: pleading, which handles morality; and insisting, which deals with the subject of punishment in traditional context. Three are found in *Mu'adhin's Call*: confessing, declaring and condemning which topicalise the Hausa concept of royalty in traditional context; one in *Attahiru*: advising, which addresses the Hausa philosophy of valiancy within traditional context. One is noticed in *Akuabata*: appealing, treating social crisis and patience in traditional Igbo context; and one in *Idemili*: inviting, which handles the Igbo concept of familial bonding, situated in emotive context. Overall, in *Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale*, practs orient largely to Yoruba cultural predeterminism and communalistic checks and balances; in *Ma'adhin's Call* and *Attahiru*, the language generally practs Hausa cultural directness; and in *Akuabata* and *Idemili*, utterances express the Igbo cultural accommodation and filial attachment.

Ahmed Yerima engages language within emotive, communal and traditional contexts in practicing culture-constrained acts, which border on particular cultural practices of the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Thus, there is a motivated relationship between his pragmatic engagements and major Nigerian cultures.

Key words: Ahmed Yerima, Pragmatic acts, Culture-based plays

Word count: 475

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Scholars' observations have shown culture as that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and any other capability and habit acquired by man as a member of society (cf. Williams, 1963, Bennet, 1998, Bhabha, 2002; Odebunmi, 2006 etc). Every society has its own culture, and it is the society's culture that specifies the way of life of that society. Thus, the value of culture in the society is marked. However, as significant as culture is in a society, it cannot express itself except through language. Hence, Odebunmi (2006) submits that there is an intricate relationship between language and culture. This relationship, according to Odebunmi, is exhibited in terms of language being a part of culture, and yet being its vehicle. Consequently, each culture is recognized with its own language and the specific language expresses that specific culture. Also, common to cultures are stories and myths specific to various communities. These form aspects of the oral tradition of each community and thus become part of the culture of that society. Eventually, these stories become rich sources of materials for African literary writers who re-create the stories to project African tradition and culture relative to the writer's worldview.

In this sense, Osunbade's (2010:1) observation that literature or a literary text reflects and embodies the way of life of a people is established. This is in line with Kehinde's (2005:88) opinion that for any literary work to merit any meaningful consideration, it is necessary that it bears relevance, explicitly or implicitly, to the social milieu in which it is set. Invariably, literature reflects the way of life of a particular set of people. The prosaic and the dramatic genre of literature are noted to have immensely benefitted from culture as writers in this category create stories with cultural historical links to effect change and development in their present society. As Yerima (2007) observes, cultural historical links are useful in the re-creation of historical anomalies, perfection of political events and correction of moral and social malice. With this belief, based on the culture and traditions of the three major culture groups in Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba), Ahmed Yerima creates stories that project and protect the cultures of

these groups. Such are *Attahiru*, *The Limam*, *Mu'adhin's Call*, *Idemili*, *The Trials of Oba Ovonnramwen*, *Otaelo*, *Aetu*, *Ade Ire*, *Yemoja* and others.

Of interest is the use of language in Yerima's culture-based plays. According to Fowler (1996:3), the novelist's medium is the language, as through the use of language, we are exposed to the society's cultural heritage indicating the fact of Fowler's (1996) opinion that the meanings of words in a language are the community store of established knowledge. Invariably, Fowler's submission suggests that the language of a society (as depicted in proverbs, figurative use of words, wise sayings), are representatives of the society's cultural heritage; a knowledge shared by all the members of the community. In general term, language is considered as a guide to social reality as it powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. Language use in drama texts, consequently, becomes a significant means for literary expressions, thus justifying Boulton's (1980) suggestion that literature is the art that uses language and offers a corpus for language study in the written mode. Subsequently, scholars have been interested in such issues as the examination of the language used by authors to express their intentions and how they are achieved in drama texts. In certain instances, author's intentions are implicit as there is no use of language to indicate such, except for a "deep look" (in the words of Mey, 2001), at the conversational context (based on socio-cultural knowledge "sck") to appropriately determine the intention of the writer.

The intention of the author, in this instance, is the "pragmatic act" or "pract". According to Odebunmi (2006: 157), a pragmatic act is performed when we communicate implicitly. Observation reveals that Ahmed Yerima largely does this in his culture-based plays through the cultural tools of religion, ethics, codes and conduct, habits, customs, proverbs, figurative use of words, wise-sayings and so on, thus making the plays areas of interests to scholars. However, existing studies have shown that very little has been done in this direction in linguistic scholarship. Through Jacob Mey's theory of pregmeme, therefore, this study carries out a pragmatic investigation of culture-motivated pragmatic acts and contextual features of language use in the espousal of cultural issues in selected culture-based plays of Yerima namely: *Ajagunmale*, *Mojagbe*, *Idemili*, *Akuabata*, *Mu'adhin's Call*, and *Attahiru*.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Existing studies have shown that while literary works abound on the works of Ahmed Yerima, very little have been done in this direction in linguistic scholarship. A glean shows that from the literary stance, Adeoti (2002) examines the demonstration of identity, difference and indices of multiculturalism, in the expression of democratic imperative in Ahmed Yerima's *the Silent Gods* and observes that the play formulates some responses to the nagging problems of identity and difference in the quest for democratic governance in Nigeria. Adeoti (2007) studies Yerima's perspectives in some of his plays, and reveals that Yerima's concerns in his plays relate to issues on culture, ideology, politics and power. Adekoya (2007) examines the issue of ritual drama in *Yemoja*. He submits that elements of ritual drama such as character, action, plot, language, praise poetry, incantation and so on enrich *Yemoja* in creating a festive mood thus giving the play its gorgeous atmosphere of traditional festival that is both celebratory of life in all its multifariousness.

From the linguistic angle, Odebunmi (2006) examines proverbs in Yerima's plays from the pragmatic angle and Arua's (2007) is an examination of politeness features in the interaction of characters in Yerima's *Yemoja*. The fact is that there is a dearth of work on the extensive pragmatic investigation of Yerima's culture-based plays, and to the best of our knowledge, it is rare to find a work that attempts an in-depth examination of utilization of pragmatic tools in espousing African cultural experiences in Ahmed Yerima's selected culture-based plays despite Yerima's employment of language as communication tools within culturally defined contexts, especially with respect to on-going events in his society. The present study, therefore, hopes to fill this vacuum.

1.3 Research questions

This study sets out to answer the following questions:

- (1) what culture-motivated pragmatic acts and allopracts are performed in the selected texts?
- (2) in what contexts are the practs found?
- (3) what are the contextual features that characterize the practs?
- (4) what issues do the practs address?
- (5) which practs are peculiar to each of the cultures?

1.4 Aim and objectives of the study

The study sets out to examine culture-motivated pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yerima's selected culture-based plays. The objectives are:

- (i) to locate the pragmatic acts performed in different contexts in the plays.
- (ii) to identify the issues that necessitate particular pragmatic acts in the plays.
- (iii) to determine the contextual features that express particular practs.
- (iv) to examine how the conversational contexts of the practs that emerge in the plays relate to Yerima's thematic concerns in specific plays.

1.5 Significance of the study

The study will enhance an understanding of Yerima's culture-based plays by establishing a link between the plays and culture through a rigorous application of the theory of pragmeme. Also, judging from the fact that concentrations of studies on Ahmed Yerima's plays have been from the literary perspective, this study is a significant contribution to existing linguistic works, especially, considering its in-depth pragmatic explorations.

Moreover, as a cross-cultural study, it identifies and comparatively examines the particular pragmatic acts that are employed to relate to issues in the three main cultures in Nigeria based on context. Through this, one can ascribe peculiar pract to specific culture and identify the specific contextual features employed in specific culture to perform certain practs in given contexts. As such, the language used to express situations in the cultures is exposed giving us the opportunity to examine their similarities and differences. Also, the study contributes to knowledge, especially, on in-depth pragmatic explorations of culture-specific pragmatic acts in Yerima's culture-based plays and contextual features used to realize them.

1.6 Brief notes on Ahmed Yerima

Through our interaction with Ahmed Yerima, we got the following information. Yerima was born on the 8th of May, 1957 in Lagos. He attended St. Bernadette private School and Baptist Academy, Lagos. He did his certificate course in Drama and Bachelor of Arts at the

University of Ife where he graduated in 1981. He then moved to the University College, Cardiff in 1982 for his postgraduate Diploma in Theatre Arts. He was at the Royal Holloway College, University of London between 1982 and 1986 where he did an M Phil/Ph D in Theater Studies and Dramatic Criticism. Yerima specializes in playwriting and acting and these came as no surprise since he started writing in his secondary school days. He wrote his first play “*The Man’s Daughter*” while in form three. The production of “*The Man’s Daughter*” prompted Yerima to set up his own drama group called The Georgian and Victorian Drama Group.

Ahmed Yerima’s formal training in theatre arts started with Professor Wole Soyinka. He also learnt a lot from Dr Yemi Ogunbiyi, Laide Adewale, Kola Oyewo, Toun Oni, Peter Fatomilola and Gboyega Ajayi who were his senior colleagues. His association with the crop of talents mentioned above really enhanced his career in theatre, because as members of the University of Ife Theatre Company then, they are roundly experienced and accommodating. According to Yerima, Soyinka exposed him to dramatic criticism, satire and iconoclasm. Through Soyinka, he learnt that the playwright is relevant only when he contributes to changes within his society. This then forms the basis of his focus. Yerima thus sees the playwright in two capacities: the playwright as man and the playwright as God. As man, the playwright creates stories around his society with human thoughts, but as God, the playwright is omniscient and omnipresent. He sees everything and re-creates that all may be well. In the bid to be relevant to the society therefore, Yerima makes “man” the focus of his stories.

Yerima also sees man in the society as being central to things. According to him, man is complex and he has issues; these make him a two- face thing. A good playwright, therefore, creates his stories around man and the society. To Yerima, the society is a kind of a multi-culture thing. Using Nigeria as an example, he reveals that the country’s official language is English but there exist the ethnic or local languages based on cultural segregation- Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. These local languages are formed by the elements and images inherent in the culture of the tribe.

Furthermore, Yerima believes in the cultural context of a story. To establish these cultural contexts, however, there is the need for historical links since it significantly set up the thematic preoccupation of a writer who in creating stories just passes comments on the people and situations around him. He, therefore sees himself as a storyteller who goes to the village square to tell his story under the moonlight to the delight of his listeners. The story teller never

offends anyone, he goes home and everybody claps. As such, Yerima's thematic preoccupations in his plays have always bothered around humans, their ways of life (culture) and what they worship (religion).

To achieve these, Yerima employs cultural historical tools, one of which is proverbs. He sees proverb as a major part of the language that makes us say things easily, even things beyond ourselves. Apart from the fact that proverbs are common to all the tribes, Yerima's ability to reinvent the proverbs through a change of the images, and metaphors gives the proverbs a new outlook. However, much as the linguistic elements in proverbs are substituted to match those of other cultures, the semantic orientation remains. Proverbs thus become his major tool of expression.

Ultimately, Yerima sets out to find out the similarities between cultures and how societies react to issues. This, according to Yerima, is Soyinka's reasons for getting the opening of the play right. According to Yerima, Soyinka is of the view that if the opening of the play is right, the plot will be right. A significant way of doing this (in Yerima's view as against Soyinka's opinion), is by building the essence of the drama around the story and not around a god or any significant being in the play (as Soyinka would do). Yerima believes that we should not be oblivious of the fact that life is not difficult except for its complexities. Hence, the tragic essence of man comes from man himself such that he becomes the villain and not the protagonist.

Furthermore, Yerima tactically locates his stories in the various Nigerian cultures to give it a sense of reality. Also, most of these stories are largely enriched in local languages of the tribes involved and usually, there are manifestations of the author's in-depth knowledge of the cultures of the people in the setting. In instances where this occurs, Yerima is known to criticize or condemn a particular cultural practice or individual's shortcomings towards realizing a dynamic and progressive society. Towards this end, Yerima has written plays that have to do with the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo cultures. His treatments of characters and issues reveal a clear indication of Yerima's mastery of the people's aspects of culture such as proverbs, wise-sayings, norms, ethics and codes, religions and expressions. These all round knowledge and acquaintance make Yerima to stand out among his peers such as Femi Osofisan, Wale Ogunyemi, Bode Osanyin, Zulu Zofola, Bode Sowande, Cosmish Ekiye and so on.

In 1991, Ahmed Yerima was appointed Deputy Artistic Director of the Nigerian National Troupe, and in 2006, he became the Director General of the Nigeria National Theatre. As the Director, he has led the National Troupe to several memorable performances outside Nigeria. Indeed, Yerima led the National Troupe to a performance at the world intellectual property organization in Geneva. With the National Troupe, Yerima has also been on international outings in places like Ghana, Mexico, United States of America, Germany, Venezuela and so on. According to Adeoti (2007:2) working with the National Troupe, an organization that was founded on cultural integration, Yerima has at his disposal indigenous performance elements that could furnish him with themes and techniques, hence the exploration of myths, histories, religions and cultural beliefs of the Nigerian people.

Notably, Yerima is an award-winning, prolific Nigerian playwright, read both in Nigeria and overseas. He has published about 6 books and over 27 plays. Observation reveals that Yerima has written beyond his immediate ethnic group and brought to light the role of culture in the lives of women and men in various Nigerian societies. In the opinion of Eke (2011:543), “Yerima’s plays cover every possible description: historical, religious, political, mythical, and satiric”. Based on his interaction with his society and romance with the theatre world, Yerima has written *Attahiru* (1998), *The Sick People* (2000), *The Sisters* (2001), *Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees* (2001), *The Lottery Ticket* (2002), *Yemoja* (2002), *Otaelo* (2003), *The Angel and other plays* (2006), *Erelu-kuti* (2006), *Hard Ground* (2006), *Aetu* (2007), *The Wives* (2007), *Akubata* (2008), *Tuti* (2008), *Mojagbe* (2008), *Ajagunmale* (2010) among others. Yerima’s play, “*Hard Ground*” won the Nigerian play for literature, 2006, and ANA/NDDC, J. P. Clark Drama Price, 2006, after which it went on a country wide tour. These achievements of Yerima as a scholar and theatre practitioner make him to stand out among his peers.

1.7 Methodology

Ahmed Yerima’s drama can be grouped into two viz; contemporary and culture-based plays. The contemporary plays are based on specific acts of humanity, moral conduct, political activities, and social relations. They are basically constructed to mirror or lampoon and implicitly criticize certain acts of the government towards realizing a civic society. Some of the contemporary plays are: *The sick people* (2000), *The sisters* (2001), *The Lottery Ticket* (2002), *The Angel and Other Plays* (2006), *Hard Ground* (2006), *The Wives* (2007), *Tuti* (2008), *The*

Silent Gods, Kaffir's Last Game, The Bishop and the Soul with Thank you Lord, Dami's Cross and Atika's Well (2009, and so on.

On the other hand, the culture-based plays take their source from cultural historical links, in which case, the majority of the plays are based on historical myths and stories of heroic deeds of the Nigerian people's ancestral gods and goddesses. At times the stories are designed to correct certain historical or societal anomalies. Characteristically, the culture-based plays project the people's knowledge, belief, art, moral, law and custom. Yerima has written more in this direction as indicated by the number of publications. Some of the plays sampled for this study are: *The Limam and Ade Ire* (2004), *Attahiru* (1998), *Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees* (2001), *Yemoja* (2002), *Otaelo* (2003), *Erelu- kuti* (2006), *Aetu* (2007), *Akuabata* (2008), *Mojagbe* (2008), *Ajagunmale* (2010), *Mu'adin's Call* (2011), *Idemili* (2006), *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* (1998,2007), and *Ameh Oboni the Great* (2006). A cultural classification of these plays is given below:

Hausa culture-based plays	Yoruba culture-based plays	Igbo culture-based plays
<i>Mu'adin's Call</i>	<i>Yemoja</i>	<i>Otaelo</i>
<i>The Limam</i>	<i>Aetu</i>	<i>Dry leaves on Ukan Trees</i>
<i>Attahiru</i>	<i>Ade- Ire</i>	<i>Akuabata</i>
	<i>Mojagbe</i>	<i>Idemili</i>
	<i>Ajagunmale</i>	<i>The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen</i>
	<i>Erelu-kuti</i>	<i>Ameh Oboni the Great</i>

Table 1: Cultural classification of Ahmed Yerima's culture-based plays

Given that little effort has been paid to the in-depth espousal of culture-motivated practs in Yerima's plays in linguistic scholarship, purposively therefore, based on the three major cultures in Nigeria we purposively select *Mu'adin's Call* and *Attahiru* (*Hausa culture*), *Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale* (*Yoruba culture*), *Akuabata* and *Idemili* (*Igbo culture*) for this study as they offer more culture-based contents.

The conversations of the characters in the plays were considered and eight hundred and twenty-eight culture-based utterances, being culture-motivated, were purposively selected and they form the bulk of the data for this study. The utterances basically consist of; proverbs, figurative expressions, wise-sayings and so on. In *Mu'adhin's Call*, there are one hundred and twenty eight (128) utterances, *Attahiru*, one hundred and twenty two(122), *Idemili*, one hundred and twelve (112), *Akuabata*, one hundred and nineteen (119), *Mojagbe*, one hundred and eighty two (182), and *Ajagunmale*, one hundred and seventy five (175). These were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Literature, Culture and Language

A general conception of the term “literature” associates it with any material in the written form, or any other material whose features lend itself to literary appreciation or appraisal. However, Oloruntoba – Oju (1999:206) observes that in a specialized sense, literature refers to works of art in any of the established literary genres: prose, poetry, and drama. These categories, according to Adegbite (2005), reflect the world upon which literary works are based and, as the case may be, reveal events and developments in a particular society. This suggests that literature mirrors the society, for the writer lives in a society and takes his/her ideas, characters and situations from that society. In essence, literature is a vehicle through which the socio- cultural values of a community and people are depicted (Cole 2005: 257).

Furthermore, literature has been observed as a representation of social discourse. Social discourses, according to Fowler (1996) are discourses about people, institutions, power and status, and about relationships and differences. In drama for instance, elements that express thought and themes, ideas and notions relating to Africa achieved through cultural historical links are referred to as Africanisms (Oloruntoba- Oju, 1999: 213). Corroborating this, Cole (2005) observes that themes such as the fate of Africans, the vicissitudes of colonial and post-colonial politics, pride in race, specifically, African culture, may, for example, be considered the overriding concerns of modern African writers presented in the normal every day dialogic orientation. Thus, Bakhtin’s (1992) observation that “drama appeals to social realities and dialogic orientation” becomes substantial. African writers, therefore, create plays in form of normal everyday conversation, tapping from cultural historical links, to reveal and project the African experience.

Like other African writers, Ahmed Yerima employs cultural historical links as basis for his culture-based plays. Although as revealed by Ahmed Yerima, some representations of the images and social worldviews in his culture-based plays are real, but tainted with experiences and events in his perception, the plays assume particular representations of the African cultural world-view. Indeed, Ahmed Yerima’s *Otaelo* is an apt representation of this, as it is an adaptation of English William Shakespeare’s *Othello*. Notably, Yerima’s worldview and his

attempt at Africanisms are projected through such literary elements as characterization, location, status, images, and language use.

The “jigada”, which is the metaphor of destruction in *Otaelo*, is the “handkerchief” in *Othello*. The gifts that serve as metaphor of destruction in the two plays have different cultural connotations. While Shakespeare’s *Othello* is set in Venice and Cyprus, Yerima’s *Otaelo* is set in an Igbo town in Umuagu. The change of setting locates the play in the tradition and culture of the people involved (Igbo). Worth of mention also, is the divergence in titles of characters, status, and cultural practices. Also, there are aspects of rituals, and traditional beliefs in *Otaelo* which are absent in *Othello*. Of note also in points of divergence is the use of language. Whereas, Shakespeare employs poetic language of the Elizabethan times, Yerima uses prose, laced with the proverbs indigent to the Igbo people which significantly reinforces the Africaness of the setting of the play. Differences are also noted in areas of the plot, the manner in which the lieutenants were killed, and the offences committed by the two lieutenants in the separate plays. A close observation reveals that Yerima makes *Otaelo* to be culturally relevant to the new setting (Igbo land). Yerima, therefore, succeeds in showing that the problems of Otaelo are largely associated with his socio-biological background (*Osu*), whereas, Shakespeare’s Othello met his Waterloo in his being an emotional general. The play, therefore, reveals Yerima’s artistic excellence and the ability to deal with issues in his immediate social environment to project and protect, specifically, Nigerian cultures. One notable instrument employed by Yerima to achieve success in the play is the use of language, which serves as a means of communication aptly linking the author with the reader.

This indicates that language use is highly significant in drama texts. As Fowler (1996:3) observes, “the novelist’s medium is language: whatever he does, qua novelist, he does in and through language”. This suggests that without language, a writer cannot communicate with his readers nor project his perspectives. The significance of the use of language in literary works has made Chapman (1973) to assert that “literature is created from the basic material of linguistic study and is allied to it in such a way that the other arts like music and painting are not”. This, probably, is because the end-product of literature, the text, is always capable of linguistic investigation. This appropriately justifies the description of literature as “the art that uses language” (Chapman 1973, 6-7). In another sense, literature is considered as “a creative use of language” (Fowler 1996: 21). Moreover, according to Arua (2007), “literary texts present us with

depth of written data which serve as repositions of language in use. One can find in them real or concrete instances of communication in social context". Language use in drama (as in other literary forms), therefore, is of utmost concern to linguistic scholars, as it enhances detection of writer's intentions.

A further look reveals that language and culture are intertwined in social concerns, as according to Yule (1996(a):239), "speech (language) is a form of social identity, and, is used, consciously or unconsciously, to indicate membership of different social groups or different speech communities". In essence, through the use of language, we are able to identify people who share a set of norms, rules and expectations, that is, "speech community" (Yule, *ibid*). It is through a speech community that linguistic variations manifest, since cultures differ from one society to another, likewise, the set of norms, rules and expectations. These cultural parameters significantly affect language such that it reflects on the speech of the individual. This is noticed in the phonological aspects of the three main cultures in Nigeria. The pronunciations of certain speech sounds in the Hausa language differ from the way an Igbo and Yoruba man will produce the same sounds. Linguistic variation, therefore, derives from cultural differences and is tactically tied to the fact that different cultural groups in the world today have different languages. Indeed, in Nigeria, there are Hausa people speaking the Hausa language, Igbo people with the Igbo language and the Yoruba's using the Yoruba language. Language is significant in these cultures as it reflects their world-views. Obviously, playwrights find this ground resourceful hence, they marry language and culture together in order to create the textual world. This establishes Yule's (1996:248) submission that language reflects culture, and literary writers make use of language and culture in creating literary textual universes.

2.2 Drama as a discourse

A general conception of drama refers to "the script of a play", or the specific mode of fiction represented in performance (Esslin, 1976; Holman and Hugh, 1997; McGregor et al, 1979; Agoro, 2001). The "script" literally forms the basis for theatrical performance. In the description of drama, words such as actors /characters and play keep surfacing. Indeed, Styan (1975) defines drama as "an art form that tells a story through the speeches and action of the characters in the story". As Esslin (1976) observes, drama is synonymous with a play where a play is "a work of storytelling in which characters are represented by actions". According to Agoro (2001), drama is the art of expressing ideas about life so that they may be interpreted by

actors before an audience assembled to hear words and witness actions. In a more comprehensive description of drama, Williams (1963) reveals that drama bifurcates into two. The first is the description of a literary work, the text of a play and, second, the description of the performance of the work, that is, its production.

This description takes cognizance of the ambits of drama while specifically emphasizing the centrality of an “actor” to a drama since an actor performs the “action” in a drama. For a story to come alive there must be an actor. Agoro (2001: 2) reveals that “this has been the age-long tendency of treating drama and theatre as been synonymous”. This, of course, is not so, as drama is limited to the communication between the author and the reader through the play. However, we must not be oblivious of the fact that drama is a performing art whereby the script is performed on stage.

Consequently, drama can be described as a technique of communication between author and the reader. A mimetic action, drama is an imitation of the activities in the society, a fact emphasized by Aristotle et al (1977) when he claims that drama is an imitation of men in action. This is often achieved through the storytelling device, for in drama, the author tells his story through the dialogue between his characters and the description of setting of the events in the stage direction. Hence, the view that drama is basically a performing act. Specifically, drama has two manifestations. First, it is a literary work, that is, an order of words on page to be read, and second, it is a performance that presents speeches and visual effects on stage. A drama lifespan is curtailed by the usual limited time, a consideration which necessitates the drama being condensed and streamlined such that the message is not lost on the audience after the play.

The foregoing reveals that drama encompasses the activities and experiences of man. Obviously, drama is a manifestation of the totality of man’s life, as such, dramas are stories told by individuals about man and his society. A glean of scholarly contributions above makes us to conclude that drama is a story written to be performed. Our view shows two ends to drama here, the written form and its performance. However, since the data for this study, are got from the former, our explorations and discussions will solely be on the written form and not extend to the performance aspect of drama.

In the bid to further describe drama, the following have been identified as elements of drama. The first element of drama is plot. Aristotle (1977) opines that plot is the most significant element of drama. This is not unconnected to the fact that, to Aristotle, action, and not the word

is at the core of drama since it provides the basic framework for the play. Indeed, both the story line and the plot provide the outline of the action which, in fact, is carried out by the characters. Notably, there are two types of plot in literature, viz: the episodic plot, and the involved or casual plot. In episodic plot, one event follows the other with little or no causal effect or relationship. In this instance, some characters could be involved in different episodes which may not be connected as they present new or different stories, separate from former ones. However, both the author and his characters are forced to forge a link because of the appearance of same characters. Television series present a perfect situation where same characters are involved in different situations in each episode, thus making each episode considerably self-contained. On the other hand, in a stage play, each scene presents another plot which is self-contained and may not have a link with succeeding ones.

In involved plot or casual plot, events are related in a cause and effect manner as the story in the following scene is dictated by events of the current scene (McGregor et. al, 1978). Some serial plays are built on the basis of causal plot, as the same characters are retained in the series and stories of the plots are linked, related and chronological such that a scene cannot be removed without affecting the others. The plots are tightly built together such that events in the plot “can be linked to a chain where each joint is hooked to another from the beginning to the end” (Agoro 2001, 23).

The second element of drama is character. Indeed, according to Agoro (2001; 23), a character could simply be regarded as “one of the persons who appear in the play, or one of the dramatist personae (literally, the persons of the play). Characters are of two types: those on the side of the protagonist and those with the antagonist. According to Aristotle (1977), the protagonist is the hero or the main character in a play with a goal or a mission to carry out. In the course of achieving this goal, the protagonist encounters obstacles which he has to surmount. These obstacles, in some cases, are personified or individual. The individual obstacle, in drama, is known as the antagonist. The antagonist works to foil every attempt of the protagonist as he seeks to achieve his goal. This brings about conflict. According to Aristotle (1977), a drama is usually built around a conflict. In which case, conflicts in drama usually occur between the protagonist, the antagonist, and their supporters.

In complex plays, there may be many characters such that some are classified as major or minor, depending on the degree of their involvement in the play (Agoro, 2001). A major

character is involved in the play from the beginning to the end, while the minor character appears to perform specific functions. Characters are equivalents of people in the physical world hence, Mey's (2001) observation that authors create characters to populate the textual universe and employ each character in specific roles according to his needs in the textual world. Mey (ibid) notes that the needs of authors relative to characters in a play range from physical, social, and psychological to moral needs. The author, therefore, uses characters depending on his purpose as dictated by the themes of the play.

The third element of drama is thought. What Aristotle (1977) calls thought is now referred to as "theme". Theme is defined as the central or dominating ideas in a literary work (Agoro, 2001:33). According to Agoro (ibid), there is the "abstract concept which is made concrete through the representation in person, action, and image" in a literary piece. In other words, theme is the preoccupation of the author in the play. To communicate with his audience, however, the author needs the fourth element, diction. There are two ends to diction viz: sound and spectacle (Agoro 2001:35). According to Agoro, sound comprises the language, music and other aural effects, while spectacle includes all visual elements of a production such as physical movement and dance, costume, scenery, properties and lighting.

Specifically, language as an element of sound creates the dramatic world of a play. All other elements employed in dramatic production are dependent on language use. Language is largely employed by characters in production and it begets speech. Speech is such a strong factor that is gainfully manipulated by intelligent and brave characters. A major significance of the use of language is located in its ability to enhance our determination of the level of characterization. The language spoken by a character definitely locates him in the appropriate social status. There are three languages spoken in drama texts (Agoro, 2001). First is the Standard English which represents a well educated and high status individual. Second, the broken English which is an attempt at standard English occasioned by errors indicating a semi-literate and low status individual, while the third, pidgin English is a bastardization of the English language, a representative of a local individual without academic exposure. However, some non-literate characters may be made to speak Standard English. In such instances, the characters are users of the indigenous language which may be in use in the setting of the play, hence, the translation of characters' speeches into Standard English by authors.

Aside this, language in drama is used to convey information to readers. This is achieved through the interaction of the characters. Also, through the use of language, the theme and the story unfold. Through language, we are able to determine the tone of the play, that is, whether it is comic or serious, facial or tragic. Specifically, language suggests the degree of abstraction from reality. (Agoro, 2001: 38). It is through language that we determine the mood in the play. This is also achieved through the interaction of the characters.

Notably, the language of drama is highly exclamatory, interrogative and mainly employed to express surprise, disgust, and sometimes despair. It may also indicate excitement, the depth of high emotion, frustration and it ultimately reveals the degree of the seriousness of a situation. The interrogation aspect is largely used to inquire and ascertain the truth or validity of a piece of information or situation. Moreover, interrogative sentences come in handy in setting up an irony. Through imperative sentences, threats, commands, warnings, assertions are made. Lastly, active verbs largely dominate sentence constructions in drama texts. This is largely because of the need to make events new rather than stale. Making events new is essential so as to arouse and arrest the interest of readers. Although other elements of drama such as music and dance have been identified in literature (Aristotle, 1977), Agoro (2001) identifies language as the major element of drama that aptly performs the communicative function.

The features of language mentioned above make drama texts ready data for scholarly investigations. Basically, the literary and linguistic categories have benefitted immensely from this. Existing studies have shown different explorations of language use in drama texts from different perspectives; discourse, stylistics, pragmatics and so on. The contributions of these studies to knowledge cannot be underestimated. Like related previous studies, therefore, this study uses Ahmed Yerima's selected culture-based dramas as data.

2.3 Some previous studies on the works of Ahmed Yerima

Existing studies reveal that scholars have approached the works of Ahmed Yerima more from the literary than the linguistic perspective. The few linguistic works on Yerima's plays are indicative that, despite the resourcefulness of Ahmed Yerima's plays as data for scholarly research, very little has been done in this direction in linguistic scholarship. The following is a revelation of this.

2.3.1 Literary studies on the works of Ahmed Yerima

This section is an exploration of literary studies on the works of Yerima. However, an extensive review is attempted so as to be able to capture the essence as well as Yerima's thematic pre-occupation in his plays. Adeoti (2002:1-19) is an exploration of identity, multiculturalism and democratic imperative in Ahmed Yerima's *The Silent Gods*. The study shows that identities are employed to activate specific political cause which may sometimes threaten the legitimacy of the state or imperil the democratic rights of those who do not fall within the precinct of the right. Often, it could be regarded as a weapon explored to gain advantage in competition for inadequate resources and benefits. This, therefore, explains why some scholars see identity as a dynamic reality that can be historically constructed to achieve predetermined goal.

Furthermore, Adeoti reveals that multiculturalism seeks to transform the hegemony framework of the state in the bid to achieve socio-political heterogeneity and cultural pluralism. In other words, it recognizes the existence of multiple cultures in the boundaries of a state. Also, it canvasses for due recitation of each of the exciting cultures, affirms their distinctness, autonomy and independence. Characterized as it were, multiculturalism fits in for a theoretical practice, a reading strategy like post colonialism to examine a cultural multiplicity in a state. Notably, identity and multiculturalism are ineffective without power. The opportunity to exercise power resides in democracy as democracy provides opportunity to resolve inter-group conflict arising from unequal relations of power achieved through identity manipulation in a state. These are the kinds of situations in Nigeria and which Adeoti expects to contribute to our understanding of Ahmed Yerima's *Silent gods*.

Through identity and multiculturalism, therefore, Yerima depicts the travails of democracy in Nigeria in *The Silent Gods*. Yerima reveals the debris of historical struggles by competing forces of ethnicity, gender, generation class and ideology. Hence, the view that the basic challenge of democratization in an increasingly polycentric world is how to encourage co-operation across primordial divides. Adeoti therefore submits that through theatrical and rhetorical devices, Yerima shows democratic experiments in Nigeria as usually being abused by the orchestration of identity and difference, hence, marginalized groups should be involved in the struggle for democracy. Adeoti immensely contributes to scholarship here, especially as regards

a writer's worldview relative to on going events in his society. However, *Silent gods* is not enough data to generalize on what Yerima's perspectives are in his plays.

In another literary enterprise, Embu (2007) examines brain drain and the universities in contemporary Nigeria using Yerima's *Kaffir's Last Game* as a case study. Acknowledging the relevance of the play to the Nigerian situation, Embu tactically locates Yerima's creativity in the fact that he had once been a lecturer at the Department of English and Drama at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and as an academic, Yerima has experienced from within, the myriad of problems faced in tertiary institutions in the country, hence, the relevance and currency of the issues raised in the play to the Nigerian situation.

Embu further reveals that the play is topical and relevant to the Nigerian society considering the way it treats the brain drain issue in Nigeria. He also comments on the socio-economic and political prospects of the two countries, and concludes that the issue of brain drain in the play is a product of the social- economic and political realities in Nigeria. Tracing the origin of brain drain in Nigerian Universities back to the early 1970's when military dictatorship reigned supreme, Embu notes that Nigeria's budgetary allocation to education keeps depreciating every year. The Nigerian academics are, therefore, compelled to look elsewhere where their services are valued. *Kaffir's Last Game*, premiered at the Muson Centre, Onikan, Lagos, came at a significant period in Nigerian history because the universities started witnessing an astronomic rise in enrollment without a corresponding rise in facilities and investments. The relevance and the significance which extols Yerima's creativity and ingenuity is located in the fact that the publication came at a time when the whole university system was shut down for about seven months in 1996 (April to October) through a general strike, and the then military regime's repressive tact created such a general despondency in the academia. Yerima portrayed the university professor as being reduced to a mere pauper, whereas, outside the shores of Nigeria, he is accorded due recognition.

Embu therefore submits that in *Kaffir's Last Game*, Yerima tactically represents the Nigerian University System such that he shifts the public attention from the streets to the schools. Accordingly, he succeeds in revealing that the government has not been able to sponsor education because there is no political will and commitment to the universities. These and the consequences of the poor economic conditions on academics, according to Embu, are very grave. This, of course, is a dynamic and creative attempt at being a watchdog focused at guiding the

footsteps of the government of the day towards being productive and strategically beneficial to the public. In essence, it reveals Yerima's sensitivity and contributions to the on-going events in his society.

Furthermore, Jegede (2007) investigates historical links, literary imagination and language use in *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen*. The play, according to Jegede, is a dramatic reincarnation of the historic event of the British occupation of Old Benin Kingdom in the late nineteenth century at the dawn of colonial rule in Nigeria. Yerima's *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* therefore is a reply, not only to Nigeria's colonial history, but also to a similar previous play by Ola Rotimi. The two plays (*The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* by Ola Rotimi and Ahmed Yerima) are based on the same historical material (the story of Ovonramwen Nogbaisi). Jegede notes that Yerima's *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* pays particular attention to the gaps, omissions, silences and absences in Rotimi's *Ovonramwen Nogbasi*, especially in the aspects where the king is portrayed.

History reveals that Ovonramwen is a weakling who is troubled within by political unrest and without by British attack. However, Yerima characteristically re-creates history, portraying the king as courageous, and despite all the troubles, within and without, still faces his challenges without subjecting his throne and status to ridicule. According to Jegede, Yerima's re-creation of history is exposed in the author's note where he reveals that, "the play allows him false sense of illusion of going into the turbulent mind of a turbulent king, in a most turbulent historical period". This work of fiction, of course, is the version that the Benin people want. Yerima's success here could be traced to his telling the story, not as some know it, but the way the Benin people want it and that makes it their version.

To achieve the historic historical distortion, Yerima employs certain elements of drama and cultural parameters, notable among which is the poetic use of language. Yerima captures the dignity, traditional candour and cultural glamour of the Benin royal court through the various court poems incorporated into the play. Yerima's skills and gifts are further demonstrated in the play through the use of naming eulogies, proverbial expressions, metaphor, symbolism and riddles, which as symbols of culture and tradition promote the cultural import of Benin heritage. Jegede further reveals that Yerima uses proverbs and parables in difficult contexts when ordinary words cannot easily convey his message and when there is urgent need to deliver weighty message. She, therefore, submits that Yerima's exploration of the local culture of the Benin

people enhances Yerima's ideological, cultural and linguistic choices to successfully re-create the content and form of this historical event. Indeed, the study extols Yerima's cultural ingenuity and commitment to uplifting the African culture.

In yet another literary study, Umar – Buratai (2007) studies historical drama in nation building using Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru* as a case study. Umar emphasizes the significance of history in drama. According to Umar, the role of history in drama goes beyond mere provision of stories or theme that emanates from the individual dramatist's world-view since history provides a specific content, in terms of the playwright's own society. Moreover, history goes beyond the manifestation of communal experience to explain the crucial decision and events that inform the formative processes of a society. These include such aspects as legends, myths and traditions.

Indeed, African drama and history have been tactically linked with colonialism in a bid to correct the misrepresentation of African norms and values by the white men in order to uphold African culture and heritage. Towards this end, Yerima creates the play *Attahiru* from the history of the fall of Sokoto Caliphate into the hands of British Colonialist in the early twentieth century. This, to Umar, is a significant academic achievement as the aspects of the northern history, which remains potentially vibrant and full of events that are worthy of creative appreciation, is yet to receive enough academic attention. Yerima achieves success in *Attahiru* because it places issues in the context of Islam as a religion as a state ideology and people's cultural heritage. In the end, Umar concludes that Yerima's *Attahiru* is clearly a dramatic re-presentation of the subjugation of Sokoto Caliphate by the British colonial forces. The study, no doubt, emphasizes the significance of historical links as raw source of data for creation of drama pieces. However, Umar-Buratai fails to reflect on issues of recreation of events on the part of the author, Yerima, towards achieving his purpose in the play.

Sotimirin (2007) studies socio-psychological consequences of alienation in Yerima's *The Sisters* and *The Sick People*. Highlighting the socio-psychological motives of modern African drama, Sotimirin notes that such frameworks are mostly applicable to symbolic plays. Recognizing *The Sisters* and *The Sick People* as symbolic plays, Sotimirin states the need to recognize the place and significance of symbolism in drama so as to identify the causes of disintegration of social structure and institutions in contemporary society.

Establishing *The Sisters* as one of the Yerima's most interesting plays, Sotimirin notes that it deals with issues of social structures and human condition. Also, Yerima studies the

behavioural tendencies of members of the upper class and how they cope with their challenges. Sotimirin asserts that Yerima locates the problem of post-colonial Africa, especially, the one witnessed in Nigeria, at the door step of the people. In *The Sick People*, Sotimirin notes that Yerima captures the essence of lives of the downtrodden so positioned by socio-economic forces. To Sotimirin, in a sense, *The Sick People* could be seen as a logical existential play in which man bears the consequences of his or her sins established by the theme of retribution in the play. Central to the play is the theme of alienation, which is either physical or spiritual. He, therefore, submits that in writing the two plays, Yerima was motivated by the socio-economic pressures of the post-colonial society, and that Yerima is favourably disposed to the psycho-social responses of literary creativity, especially drama, to existential issues. As valuable as the study is, it falls short of locating issues in Nigeria which is the primary concern of Yerima as characters relate to issues in the play towards building a virile nation in Nigeria.

Adeyemi (2007) is a study of comic dramaturgy in Yerima's *The Lottery Ticket*. Identifying comedy as one of the dramatic forms employed by a playwright to express his understanding of human experience, Adeyemi commemorates Brockett's (1992: 432) view of comedy as derivation from normality in action, character, or thought, treated so as to arouse laughter or ridicule and to end happily. Noting that comedy seeks to ridicule human vice, folly and socio-political moral problems, Adeyemi recognizes greed as one of the problems pivotal to the corruption endemic in the nation's socio-economic fabric.

He relates Yerima's *The Lottery Ticket* to the attitude of the Nigerian public to sales promotion. This is because at every point in time, commodities producers' goal is to create awareness so as to improve sales on their products through sales promotion. The unfortunate public are pushed into participating in the sales promo because of a distressed national economy and at the end of the day, most of the producers achieve their goal of enhancing their sales and patronage at the expense of the public who fell on one another to patronize because of the sales promo, while some of the posters are credible enough to redeem their promises, the large majority of others fail to meet up with the high stake booty of prizes to be won.

Appreciating Yerima's comic dramaturgy as a reflection of the society, Adeyemi Observes that Yerima explores the behavioural attitude in man which he traced to differences in genetical composition. This, he said, is if manipulated by environmental contingency, could lead to such bestiality typified by social vices like pride, selfishness, and greed. He, therefore,

contends that man's serene mien is sometimes a facade that should not be misconstrued for humanity. Also, in instances where self-preservation reigns supreme, the survival instincts take over and the villainy in man is brought to the fore. Yerima, therefore, hammers on this self-centered nature of man as manifested in his greedy behaviour.

Adeyemi further observes that through the use of language, Yerima achieves comic effect. Also, his application of Pidgin English to convey the African vernacular experience and the accent of socio-economic aspects of Nigerian life significantly adds to the effects. Notably, Yerima's use of wit and humor makes the comic attack clever, intellectually gratifying and funny. Adeyemi notes that the use of innuendo, especially, sex innuendo is a valuable tool that enhances Yerima's implication of a target by a completely indirect attack, specifically, when the target is obscene. Also, exaggeration comes in handy through emphasis or overstatement to enhance comic effects in the play. According to Adeyemi, by attacking greed, Yerima, here, is concerned with morality, virtue and a fundamental ethical perspective requiring genuine interest in another's well-being. This is a plus to Yerima as his attempt at exposing this social vice (greed), which constitutes series of threats to the society in which he lives, is for the society's good. Adeyemi's views on issues in the play shows his effective grasp of the topic, however, he dwells more on the formal view of comic, thus failing to see that Yerima deliberately dotes on comic in building the feature of his characters so that they will be able to handle the various issues allotted to them to suit Yerima's purpose in the play.

Sotunsa (2007) attempts an examination of myth making and indigenous performance resource in Yerima's *Yemoja*. According to Sotunsa, Yerima already refers to Yemoja as a "self-conceived myth" which is an attempt at explaining the spread of the worship of the river goddess from the Yoruba cosmology into the entire diaspora (Yerima; 2002: 6). According to Sotunsa, Onwubiko (1991: 35) describes myth as a story which is believed to be true with far distant past history of a people relative to their culture. Also, oral narratives of historical events that unfold parts of the people's worldviews or explain a particular practice, belief or phenomenon constitute myth. In essence, myths are an attempt at linking the natural world with the supernatural such that metaphysical aspects related to people's religion and philosophy is espoused. As Sotunsa reveals, both Ogunjimi and Na' Allah (1994, 32) locate the use of myth by various cultures to justify their practices as manifested in their customs and traditions. This is because, to a reasonable extent, myth influences the cultural and religious thought patterns of the world in

contemporary times. He further reveals that because of their oral nature, and location in the distant historic past, critics opine that myths are false or exaggerated stories more so as mythical truth cannot be presently validated.

However, myths cannot be created in a vacuum as the components already exist in people's cultures. Specifically myth-making requires a combination of the specific and original contribution of the writer to the existing pool of mythic elements. As such, Yerima re-constructs, re-shapes, re-assembles, adapts and modifies the various mythic patterns and archetypes from the loric resources to produce a neo-myth to serve the writer's specific purpose(s).

Sotunsa observes that, this exactly is the case with Yerima and Yemoja myth and when juxtaposed with the original version of Yemoja, the story becomes lucid, as revealed by Adeoye (1989: 2- 222). Adeoye's version of Yemoja myth is a narrative in Yoruba language whereas Yerima constructs his play in English language. Noting that Yerima's case is an attempt at myth-making, Sotunsa observes that Yerima's self-conceived myth of Yemoja is radically different from Adeoye's version; while Adeoye refers to Sango as Yemoja's husband, Yerima cleaves to Ogun. However, the authentic Yoruba version of the myth recognizes Sango as Yemoja's husband. Yerima's departure from history here is purposive. As he notes in his inaugural lecture, God is the creator. Further to the issue of creation, Yerima notes that the mind of man, which God gives life has allowed him to create things himself (Yerima, 2013). Hence, his conception of the refracted universe where the artist is gOD. Obviously, Yerima's departure from history or myth, at times is purposely to portray his ideological views or to suit certain causes. However, it is pertinent to note that in both myths, Yemoja's name is associated with a river goddess with the name derived from "yeye omo eja", literally meaning "mother of tiny fishes". Notable in Yerima's mythic creation are other legendary characters such as Esu and Obatala whose actions are consistent with their legendary and mythic attributes.

To successfully achieve his target in *Yemoja*, Yerima tactically employs indigenous African music, songs, chants, and poetry which naturally suggest the rhythmic and lyrical language which dominate the play. There is also the use of praise poetry or eulogy to substantiate the various attributes of Yemoja. The foregoing led Adeoye (1989) to conclude that Yerima, through *Yemoja*, significantly contributes to the pool of mythic resources in Africa, particularly among the Yoruba people. Surely, *Yemoja* is one of Yerima's successes in the application of cultural historical links in the production of a drama piece. Adeoye successfully reveals this by

doting on Yoruba traditional artifacts relative to the people's traditional beliefs in Yerima's creation of the story of Yemoja.

Kafewo (2007) also examines adaptation, creativity and relevance in Shakespeare's *Othello* and Yerima's *Otaelo*. He does this by examining the motive, relevance and aesthetic principles of adaptation in Yerima's *Otaelo* which is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Using existing plays from other traditions and legends of other cultures as examples, Kafewo asserts that adaptation is a legitimate art form and a worldwide practice by dramatists across ages and cultures. To understand Yerima's *Otaelo*, Kafewo directs us to the author's note where Yerima (2003: 4) states that his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello* which he titled *Otaelo* is based only on Shakespeare's themes of jealousy and intrigue. Hence, the obvious point of convergence in the two works. The "jigada", which is the metaphor of destruction in *Otaelo*, is the "handkerchief" in *Othello*. Also, Kafewo (2007) notes the common trend that runs through the two plays. For example, there are issues of intrigues and betrayal. The sources of the gifts in the two plays are similar. The social backgrounds of the two heroes as war generals are also quite similar. The plots of the two villains are aimed at maintaining their status and achieving love.

However, despite all these converging points, there are also points of departure, one of which is the setting. While Shakespeare's *Othello* is set in Venice and Cyprus, Yerima's *Otaelo* is set in an Igbo town in Umuagu. The change of setting locates the play in the tradition and culture of the people involved. Even, there is divergence in titles of characters, status, and cultural practices. Also, there are aspects of rituals, and traditional beliefs in *Otaelo* which are absent in *Othello*. Even the gift that serves as metaphor of destruction in the two plays have different cultural connotation. Kafewo (2007) notes that differences in cultural orientations are significant in the artistic success of *Otaelo* and Yerima is culturally sensitive to this reality, hence, the departure. Of note also in points of divergence is the use of language. Whereas, Shakespeare employs poetic language of the Elizabethan times, Yerima uses prose, laced with the proverbs indigent to the Igbo people which significantly reinforces the Africaness of the setting of the play. Differences are also noted in areas of the plot, the manner in which the lieutenants were killed, and the offences committed by the two lieutenants in the separate plays.

In the end, Kafewo (2007) submits that Yerima makes *Otaelo* to be culturally relevant to the new setting (Igbo land). He succeeded in showing that the problems of *Otaelo* are largely associated with his socio-biological background (*Osu*) whereas Shakespeare projects his own

Othello as an emotional general. Kafewo (2007) in the study succeeds in revealing Yerima's artistic excellence and the ability to deal with issues in his immediate social environment. Having explored the literary attempts at examining the works of Yerima next is a review of the studies on Yerima's plays from the linguistic perspective.

2.3.2 Linguistic studies on the works of Ahmed Yerima

Odebunmi (2007(a)) is a pragmatic reading of proverbs in Yerima's *Yemoja*, *Attahiru* and *Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees*. Odebunmi establishes that the study is a pioneering effort at examining the use of proverbs as a communication tool by Yerima and unlike earlier studies that consider pragmatics from the angle of speech acts, the study employs the framework of speech acting with a more expanded perspective of Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acting, which, of course, is more adequate for an analysis of proverbs, since it is a theory of action, and it is situated as not emanating from an individual.

For the analysis, Odebunmi selects Ahmed Yerima's *Yemoja*, *Attahiru* and *Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees*. Notably, the three plays were set in traditional spatial context. According to Odebunmi, a careful study reveals that four proverb structures recur in the plays. These are: topic-comment, fixed/non-fixed, poetic/non-poetic, and anecdotal. Also, the most prominent proverb types in the plays are: weather, flora/faunal and cultural. The proverb types are largely employed in the plays to counsel (i.e. advise, warn, or threaten), to accuse, to pronounce and to assure. Substantiating with examples from the three plays, Odebunmi introduces a cultural situation phenomenon, shared cultural knowledge (sck), to cater for the cultural aspect of the practice that is directed at the hearer. According to him, the social knowledge shared by interactants occurs at two levels: shared cultural knowledge (sck) and shared situation knowledge (ssk). Interactants in the play share a cultural background that enables them to understand proverbs as used in specific situations. In conclusion, Odebunmi submits that Yerima's style of handling proverbs naturally shows that his plays are accessible to readers, both local and foreign, who desire to come to term with Nigeria culture and tradition through the proverbs, and are indispensable materials for proverbial pedagogy.

However, as significant as Odebunmi (2007) contributes to knowledge on Yerima's plays, his limitation of the study only to proverbs solely as a cultural parameter employed by Yerima in the selected plays, ought to have cover other viable aspects of culture such as religion, customs and ethics, codes and conduct, figurative expressions, wise-sayings, etc. which,

according to Yerima, specifically enhance his creative ingenuity and form, thus leaving the basis of his historical re-creation uninvestigated. This study, therefore, sets out to fill this relevant and significant vacuum.

Also, Arua (2007) examines politeness principle as a defining mechanism in *Yemoja*. Through this, Arua intends looking at how the concept of politeness helps in encoding the relationship between the characters in *Yemoja* and how it helped in defining them. According to Arua, conversation has its ingredients and one of them is politeness principle. As a principle in pragmatics, politeness is used in describing the extent to which actions, including the way we say things, tally with the way an addressee feels and perceives how they should be said or performed.

With substantial examples from the play, Arua submits that Yerima in *Yemoja* employs negative politeness more than positive ones and in most cases, praise chants are employed to sustain character's positive face. Instances of this abound in interactions between Yemoja and Ogun, Ogun and Esu, Olohun- Iyo and Ogun. Through the chants, the face – loss of the individual that is involved is minimized. Arua, using this as a measure of individual behavior submits that if Esu had been polite and used mitigating devices, the play would have ended on a different note. Our exploration of existing studies on the works of Yerima has shown that there is a vacuum in in-depth pragmatic exploration of culture-motivated pragmatic acts of Yerima's culture-based plays. This study, therefore, sets out to fill this vacuum in linguistic scholarship. The next section is on examination of theoretical perspectives employed in this study.

2.4 Pragmatics

This section is an exploration of pragmatics. This is done through a consideration of the definition, origin, scope, and principles of pragmatics. The following sections give exposee on pragmatics.

2.4.1 Definition

Scholars have variously defined pragmatics (Cf. Bach and Harish, 1979; Levinson, 1983; Leech, 1983; Barton, 1990; Thomas, 1995; Yule 1996(b); Adegbija, 1999; Mey 2001 and so on). Observations have shown that much as these scholars try, they fail to capture the scope of pragmatics. For example, Levinson (1983:5) describes pragmatics as “the study of language usage”. Further to this, he observes pragmatics to be “those principles that will account for why a certain set of sentences are anomalous or not possible utterances” (Levinson, 1983:5). This succinctly hints that pragmatics is a concept of grammar as established in Levinson's (1983: 9)

observation that pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and contexts that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of language. Obviously, Levinson's conception of pragmatics reveals the aspect of language use that has grammatical connotation thereby neglecting aspects of the relationships between language, the user and contexts.

Emphasizing the significance of context in the interpretation of utterance, Barton (1990: 6) describes pragmatics as "the meaning that consists of interpretation within contexts" this further strengthens Stalnaker's (1978) view of pragmatics as "the study of linguistic acts and the context in which they are performed". These descriptions of pragmatics are largely significantly relevant to us as pragmatists, as they recognize the acts of speech and the context which is considered as the mainstream of pragmatics. However, the scope of pragmatics is beyond these as the definitions give no consideration for the language user and his intention.

Leech's (1983:6) definition of pragmatics as being "the study of meaning in relation to situations" and Thomas' (1955: 22) as "meaning in interaction" prove useful and relevant in offering the tenets of pragmatics and its concern in interpretation of utterances, but are insufficient for the description of the processes and agents involved in pragmatics business.

In a more comprehensive attempt, Yule (1996(b): 3) reveals pragmatics as:

- (1) the study of speaker meaning;
- (2) the study of contextual meaning;
- (3) the study of how more gets communicated than is said,
- (4) the study of the expression of relative distance.

Though fragmented as it were, Yule's perception is a good attempt at decoding what transpires between language users. However, as Osunbade (2010:40) observes, Yule's definition falls short of the coverage of the scope of pragmatics, as according to him, "no mention is made of speech acts, which is, of course, the core of any pragmatic study of language". To cover for the lapses and inabilities to proffer a comprehensive definition of pragmatics, in lieu of the above given definitions, Adegbija (1999: 189) defines pragmatics as the study of language use in particular communicative contexts or situations. This would take cognizance of the message being communicated, or the speech act being performed, the participants involved, their impact on their interaction, what they have taken for granted as part of the contexts (or the presupposition) and the deductions they make on the basis of what is said or left unsaid, the impacts of a non- verbal aspects of interaction on meaning.

Adebija's (1999:189) definition of pragmatics is here considered all encompassing. In line with Mey's (2001: 747- 748) opinion, Austin's and Grice's theory of speech act is central to pragmatics and this is aptly recognized by Adebija in his definition. Adebija's (1999:189) definition will, therefore, be adopted for the present study. Ultimately, we agree with Osunbade (2010:41) that the body of existing definitions on pragmatics could be summed as follows:

- (1) how it is possible for different speakers in different circumstances to mean different things using the same words; What speakers mean when uttering certain words,
- (2) the particular circumstances of the utterance of these words;
- (3) the speakers intentions in uttering these words;
- (4) the actions performed by the utterance of these words;
- (5) what is involved in what one communicates than what one literally says;
- (6) the cognitive processes involved in the recovery of what is said (or unsaid); and
- (7) the beliefs of the speaker and those to whom he speaks, and the conversation they are engaged in.

2.4.2 Origin, scope, and principles

Pragmatics, "the study of sign use and sign users in situations, is usually considered to be a fairly recent addition to the language science" (Nerlich and Clark, 1996). According to Nerlich, pragmatics dates back to the work of the American semiotician and behaviorist, Charles Morris (1938) and his distinction of the three parts of semiotics: syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. The term was later adopted by logicians among whom Rudolf Carnap (1942, 1955) is noted. Both Morris (1938) and Carnap (1942, 1955) considered pragmatics as the study of signs and sign systems relative to users. The foundations for pragmatics, however, are laid by ordinary language philosophers and speech act theorists such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, John L. Austin, John R. Searle, and H. Paul Grice. With this new approach to language studies, scholars hoped to overcome an orderly narrow study of language as a closed system to be analyzed in itself and for itself, as advocated in structuralist tradition of linguistics after Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky.

Observation reveals that since the 1970's, pragmatics has become the focus of interest not only in mainstream linguistics, but also in communication studies, discourse analysis (including applied studies in the school of sciences, room or courtroom), conversation analysis, in

psychology, the social sciences, artificial intelligence, and in the study of language and cognition (Nerlich and Clark, 1996). With this development, the scope of pragmatics expands from the study of signs, to the study of the use of signs in social situations, and from sentence, to the use of utterances in context.

These developments are attestations to the fact that a wider pragmatic perspective on language, social interaction and mind had been in existence well before Austin and Grice made it popular in the 20th century. Austin's seminal book, *How to Do Things with Words* (1962) had been a great development in pragmatics. Austin's proposition places more emphasis on doing things, hence, his distinction between constative utterances and performative utterances. He further reveals that utterances could be of three kinds, the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Austin's work had been complemented by Searle (1969) in his book *Speech Acts: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language*. Searle is of the opinion that speech act theory is a theory of constative rules for performing illocutionary acts and proceeded to give conventional conditions for illocutionary acts, as well as their correct taxonomy.

Grice's contribution to the field of pragmatics had been differentiating between what is said and what is meant thereby giving birth to the theory of conventional implicature. The concern of conventional implicature is to account for issues on general knowledge and shared contextual knowledge. With the shortcomings of conversational implicature, Grice further proposed the co-operative principle (CP) theory. The theory has a great impact on a pragmatic search for conversational meaning.

With the establishment of pragmatics, there began several approaches to its study in Europe and America. The first is the Anglo- Saxon approach which emerged from ordinary language philosophy with such language philosophers as Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle. Notably, this approach dominates pragmatics study till date (Nerlich and Clark, 1996). The second is the school of British contextualism and functionalism. The third is the French approach based on the theory of enunciation elaborated by Emile Benveniste. The fourth is the German approach associated with the critical theory movement spear- headed by Jurgen Habermas and Karl Otto Apel. This school proposed the study of pragmatics as part of a general theory of communicative action.

According to Nerlich (ibid), all the four approaches, that is, the two Anglo- Saxon ones, the French one, the German one, and the American one, originated from rhetoric and, to some

extent, Immanuel Kant's philosophy of the "active (transcendental) subject", and from John Lock's philosophy of the "semiotic act". Based on the foregoing, Nerlich and Clark (1996) suggest that the pragmatic modes of thought can be studied as historical traditions, while at the same time be analyzed as theoretical framework that cluster around certain pragmatic key words:

Anglo-Saxon: speech act, meaning, use, intention, context, function.

German: agenthood of (transcendental) subject, dialogue, pronouns.

French: subjectivity, markers of subjectivity, indexical.

American: meaning as action, the triadic sign relation.

However, as established as the four traditions are, they cannot be taken as being monolithic, unchanging or exclusive. This is evident in the development of other approaches such as Jacob Mey's social pragmatics "language in use theory" (Mey 2001) the "systemic-functional approach to language" of Micheal A.K Halliday (1978) the various types of (critical) discourse analysis (Beaugrande and Dressler, 1986) and more recently the pragmatic and critical approach to metaphor analysis "the theory of metaphor in use". Indeed, pragmatics has come a long way.

2.4.3 Speech act theory

An influential school of thought in philosophy in the 1930's was logical positivism. One of their views is that "unless a sentence can, at least in principle, be verified (i.e. tested for its truth or falsity), it was, strictly speaking, meaningless" (Levinson, 1983:227). Invariably, this suggests that sentences that are not employed to make veritable or falsifiable propositions are simply meaningless. Against this background, J. L. Austin sets out to develop his theory of speech acts. The basic ideas formed by Austin were presented in a series of lectures at Oxford between 1952 and 1954, and later in his William James Lectures delivered at Harvard in 1955. These lectures were posthumously published in 1962 in a book *How to Do Things with Words*.

In the book, Austin observes that some ordinary language sentences such as "good morning", "go away", are not employed to make a statement, and, as such, cannot be said to be true or false (Huang, 2006). Furthermore, Austin reveals that some ordinary declarative sentences resist a truth-conditional analysis. Uttering such sentences is not just targeted at saying things, but doing things. These, Austin (1962) calls "performatives", and he distinguishes them from assertions, or statement-making utterances that are used to do things or perform acts, for example, "I now pronounce you husband and wife", while constatives are utterances used in

making assertions or statements, as in “the dry season will soon be over”. A cursory look at the two classes of utterances shows that performatives are not used intentionally to say anything, whether true or false about states of affairs in the outside world and, noticeably, they are used to constitute an action or part of an action.

In a further development, Huang (2006) observes that performatives are either explicit or implicit. Explicit performatives are characterized by performative verbs that show the acts being performed, while implicit performatives have no such verbs. Austin (1962) proceeds to state some rules guiding the construction and use of performative verbs, for example, explicit performatives occur in sentences, with a first-person singular subject of a verb in the simple present tense, indicative mood and active voice. Austin sees no sense in identifying a performative as true or false, but indicates that performatives are not successful or “felicitous” when they fail to meet a set of conditions. For example, “I pronounce you husband and wife” can only be uttered by a “reverend” or persons in such category for the pronouncement to be felicitous. Austin (1962), therefore identifies three types of felicity conditions.

- (1) there must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect.
- (2) the circumstance and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.
- (3) the procedure must be executed correctly and completely.

However, Huang (2006) notes that Austin later rejects his initial distinction between performatives and constatives in favour of a general theory of speech acts. As Thomas (1995) observes, Austin’s performative hypothesis is a revelation that people do not just use language to make statements about the world, they also use language to perform actions that affect the world in one way or another. As significant as Austin’s proposition of performatives is to linguistic scholarship, Thomas (1995) observes that “Austin’s claim that only performative verbs could be used to perform actions turned out to be untenable”. Below are Thomas’ reasons:

- (1) there is no formal (grammatical) way of distinguishing performative verbs from other sorts of verbs. Performatives can be plural as well as singular, they can be written and spoken, they do not have to be in the first person, nor is it essential that they be in the creative mood.

(2) the presence of a performative verb does not guarantee that the specific action is performed. One can indeed use the verb to promise actually to perform a threat, rather than a promise. He gives the following example:

“I promise things will go wrong for you if you don’t go immediately”.

(3) there are ways of doing things with words that do not involve using performative verbs. Indeed, for a great very many common acts such as offering, boasting, expressing an opinion, hinting, insulting, etc. it would be most odd to use a performative verb. In addition, there are also acts for which the language does not even have a performative verb, such as letting the cat out of the bag, putting one’s foot in it, pulling someone’s leg etc. (Thomas, 1995:44-46)

Austin, therefore, completely abandons his original distinction between constative and performative utterances for a more realistic truth condition of statements and the action it performs. Consequently, Austin claims that all utterances, in addition to their meanings perform specific acts through specific communicative force of the utterance. Based on this, Austin classifies three acts among which a speaker simultaneously performs while speaking. They are as stated below:

(1) locutionary act: the act of using words to form sentences, those wordings making sense in a language with correct grammar and pronunciation. Huang (2006) simply shows a locutionary act as the production of a meaningful linguistic expression.

(2) illocutionary act: this is an intended action by a speaker. It is the force or intention behind the words within the framework of certain conventions. Invariably, an illocutionary act reflects the action intended to be performed by a speaker in uttering a linguistic expression in line with the conventional force associated with it, either explicitly or implicitly.

(3) perlocutionary act: this is the intention that an utterance has on the thoughts, feelings, attitudes or actions of the hearer. In other words, perlocutionary acts reflect the effects or consequences of the utterance on the hearer.

In a further analysis of speech acts, Austin(1962) grouped them into five types: verdictives, that is, giving a verdict, exercitives, exercising power, or rights or influence, commissives, promising, behabitives, showing attitudes and social behavior, and expositives, that is, fitting an utterance into the course of an argument or conversation.

Since the institutionalization of Austin's proposition of speech act, there have been several attempts at systematizing, strengthening and developing the original Austinian taxonomy (Bach and Harnish, 1979; Bach, 2004). According to Huang (2006), some of the new classifications are formulated in formal or grammatical terms, and others, in semantic or pragmatic terms, and still others, on the basis of the combined formal or grammatical and semantic or pragmatic modes. Of all the classifications, Searle's (1969) neo-Austinian typology remains the most influential. Under Searle's taxonomy, speech acts are universally grouped into five types along four dimensions, these are: illocutionary point, direction of fit between words and world, expressed psychological state, and propositional content (see Searle, 1969). The five types of speech acts are cursorily considered here. Representatives or assertives: These are those kinds of speech acts that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition and thus carry a truth-value. They express the speaker's belief. Paradigmatic cases include asserting, claiming, concluding, reporting, and stating. In performing this type of speech act, the speaker represents the world as he or she believes it is, thus making the words fit the world of belief. Directives are those kinds of speech acts that represent attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. They express the speaker's desire for the addressee to do something. Examples of these are: advice, commands, orders, questions, and requests. In using a directive, the speaker intends to elicit some future course of action on the part of the addressee, thus making the world match the words through the addressee.

Another form of speech act, commissives literally commit the speaker to some future course of action. This is because they express the speaker's intention to do something. Commissives manifest in utterances of offers, pledges, promises, refusals and threats. In commissives, the world is adapted to the words through the speaker himself. Expressives as a speech act form are employed to express a psychological attitude or state of the speaker such as joy, sorrow, and likes and dislikes. These reflect in apologizing, blaming, congratulating, praising, and thanking. Declarations or declaratives are those kinds of speech acts that effect

immediate changes in some current state of affairs. This is more so as they tend to rely on elaborate extralinguistic institutions for their successful performance, they may, therefore, be called institutionalized performatives. In performing this type of speech act, the speaker brings about changes in the world; that is, he or she affects a correspondence between the propositional content and the world. Such is the case in instances as opening a bridge, declaring war, and excommunicating,

In the case of a direct match between a sentence type and an illocutionary force, there is a direct speech act. In addition, explicit performatives, which happen to be in the declarative form, are also taken to be direct speech acts, because they have their illocutionary force explicitly named by the performative verb in the main part of the sentence. On the other hand, if there is no direct relationship between a sentence type and an illocutionary force, the act is recognized as an indirect speech act. Thus, when an explicit performative is used to make a request, it functions as a direct speech act; the same is the case when an imperative is employed. By comparison, when an interrogative is used to make a request, we have an indirect speech act. In which case, the validity of the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts is dependent upon whether or not one subscribes to what Levinson (1983: 264, 274) calls the “literal force hypothesis”, this is the view that there is a direct structure-function correlation in speech acts and that sentence forms are direct reflexes of their underlying illocutionary forces.

However, as central and significant as speech act theory is to pragmatics, Odebunmi (2006:157) notes that one of its weaknesses is its non-featuring of an action theory. As Fairclough (1989:9) observes, the best way to conceive of speech act theory is to think of it atomistically, that is, as emanating from the individual. This, of course, renders it unsuitable for an analysis of a culture-based data, where elements such as proverbs, figurative expressions, beliefs, religions, etc. emanate not from the individual but from the majority of the people that constitute the citizens of that community. Also, Mey (2001) notes that speech acts are non-situated, and as such, cannot focus on the environment in which speaker and hearer can find their affordances, such that the situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation and what is actually being said (Mey, 2001:221). Consequently, there is the need for a theory of action that is situated and instantiated which Mey (2001) calls pragmatic acts. An overview of Mey’s (2001) pragmatic acts is undertaken below:

2.5 Theoretical framework and analytical tool

The study adopts Jacob Mey's theory of pragmeme, which accounts for context-ingrained utterances within social and cultural bounds. This is considered below:

2.5.1 Pragmatic acts

Mey (2000: 2006) have shown that pragmatic act is a fast developing field of pragmatics. Retracing the conception of pragmatics as a science that has to do with language and its users, Mey observes that the science must go beyond this point as we must take a typical look at the people using language to determine what they are doing. To expatiate, Mey (2000: 2007) gives the example below:

“I brought some sushi home and cooked it; it wasn't bad”.

Mey explained that this sentence could, of course, be regarded as a joke since sushi ought to be eaten raw and not cooked. The sentence, therefore, makes no sense to the hearer who could classify the sentence as being wrong. However, according to Mey, the sentence above contains a semantic clash, and as such, makes no sense. A close look at the sentence reveals two parts. The first part is the Sushi which contradicts the second, the cooking of it. This is the point where Jacob Mey says pragmatic acts come in.

According to Mey, pragmatics gives the language user the right to use language in various unconventional ways that, at times, may be “semantically shocking”. The interpretation of the intention, however, depends on the state of mind of the hearer. In the sentence above, the pragmatician has used his license to utter a semantically shocking utterance. The sense in the sentence, however, is realized in the last part of the sentence which is not expected to make sense. An expectation of the utterance, “it wasn't bad” in the state of mind of the hearer literally suggests an invitation to eat the unusual, a cooked sushi; hence, a pragmatic act of “inviting” is performed without any lexical item indicating the act.

A frequent pragmatic act is that of implied identification. With implied identification, the reader or viewer is co-opted into realizing the target of the act. The implied act cannot be pinpointed or identified as a specific speech act. To identify the act therefore, the speaker sets up the hearer through co-opting. The “said” is not significant in this instance but the “unsaid”, as such, the context of acting reflects the situational “setting up”. The context of acting carries more weight than the spoken act. In essence, there is no speech act to indicate the act in question, but to detect the act, the hearer must be on the lookout for it. In other words, he must consider the

compensational context of the set up such that he could imagine in the terminology of speech acts what the act counts for. For example, without any speech act indicating the act, the conversational context may count as “inviting”, “bribing”, “lying”, “denying”, “accusing” and so on. For every “set up”, there must be an “uptake”. The “uptake” is essential for the realization of a pragmatic act.

Mey (2000: 211) states the conditions for “setting up” a hearer.

- (1) for a conversational context to “count as” a particular pragmatic act, the circumstances (the “setting up”) must be right.
- (2) there need not be any speech act involved (of either bribing making a request, or whatever else), it is the context that determines the nature of the pragmatic act.
- (3) without “uptake” there cannot be a pragmatic act; however, the uptake can be cancelled by another subsequent act.

To expatiate on the conditions above, Mey gives an illustration. He tells of a Copenhagen University student, Erasmus, who irritates everybody in his village by involving them “in the absurdist of philosophical disputations”. According to Mey, Erasmus portends that people are not people but stones, bulls, roosters and so on and that the world is round and not flat as the people in his village believes.

He gives his girlfriend up for bet in the act and made his mother cry having proved to her that, in reality, she is a stone. He eventually gets involved in a discussion with an army recruiter passing through the village (unknown to him, some of the villagers has conspired with the lieutenant to try to get rid of Erasmus by enlisting him in the army). Their conversation involves instances where children should beat their parents. Pretending, the Lieutenant feigns disbelief and bets a ducat that Erasmus cannot prove such a ridiculous disposition. Erasmus rises to the bait and produces a proposition to prove his point, “what one has received, he ought, according to his ability, to return. In my youth I received blows from my parents. Ergo, I ought to give them in return”.

Having been convinced, the lieutenant agrees and decides to part with the ducat. Erasmus being an honest person refuses, claiming that it is an academic exercise. The Lieutenant presses Erasmus to collect the money because he gives him for his honour is at stake. Erasmus collects it and in that instant, the Lieutenant clamps the manacles on him and declares him to be properly inducted into the Royal Army. Erasmus tries to argue that he did not take the ducat as “

press- money” as there should be a difference between” money” and “ money”, hence, his “uptake” did not count. Unfortunately, the officer remains adamant insisting that whoever takes press- money is an enlisted soldier and that Erasmus has done so. Aided by his corporal, the Lieutenant drags Erasmus away to the amused discomfort of poor Erasmus’ fellow villagers. Mey proves here that the effect of the “setting up”, which is the contextual condition, is such that there is only one possible outcome of the situation. The uptake cannot be rescinded except by an extra- textual agency such that in the example above, Erasmus can only be liberated from service by “recanting” and “promising” never to bother anyone with disputations any more.

According to Mey (2000: 214), pragmatic acts can be viewed from two angles, that of the agent and the act. The agent concerns the individual as a person relative to his class, gender, age, education previous life history and so no. Through these factors, the individual as a person is located within a community. It is then imperative to determine the resources that people make use of with regards to communication. Fairclough (1989:141) refers to these as “background knowledge”. The background knowledge concerns the general idea available to both speaker and hearer about a situation. This is such that both the hearer and speaker share a pre-knowledge of the situation at hand and will be able to deal with the issue based on existing known information.

Verschueren (1999) is of the view that to realize background knowledge in situations, we may invoke the adaptability of language used by individual members of a society as the principal tool applied to events around them. In doing so, meaning is generated. In this instance, our interest lies in the language that is used in performing a pragmatic act. This could be considered based on the language used by individual, which may be changed based on the available context. The context therefore determines the linguistic choice made by individuals. This is done in three ways:

- (1) appealing to the actual circumstance legitimating a particular choice in the presupposition that the hearer is able to recognize. Let us consider example 1:

Ex 1: Tolu : I’m sorry to hear about your mother.
Bimbola: Thank you.

This presupposes that something bad has happened to the hearer’s mother.

- (2) Creating or inventing the circumstance that makes a particular choice appropriate as in the case of conversational implicatures. This could be gleaned from example 2:

Ex2: (Background: A Lecturer from another faculty entered the office of the Dean of Faculty of Sciences and was engaged in a conversation with the Dean's Secretary)

Lecturer: Is the Dean on seat

Secretary: Yes Sir

The Lecturer'ss inquisition here implies that he wants to see the Dean.

(3) Adapting an utterance only to certain circumstances that have to be actualized before the act becomes possible. Witness example 3:

Ex 3: Sola: Look at her.

Ayo: Who?

Sola: Our friend

Ayo: Her tummy is really protruding.

Sola: That tells you our friend has been quite busy.

In the interaction in three above, Sola and Ayo are talking about a particular lady, so recognized as "our friend" based on shared situational knowledge (ssk), whose gossips must have been going round about as being into a secret relationship with a person, possibly, a friend. The discovery by Sola and Ayo that "our friend's" tummy is protruding indicates that the two secret lovers are engaged in sexual intercourse, a gossip confirmed by the protruding of "our friend's" belly. For the lady's belly to protrude, she must have been engaged in sexual intercourse, lexically marked by "quite busy" in the interaction. Considering the conversational context of quite busy, based on the socio-cultural context of the discourse, the act counts as "mating" or better still "sexual intercourse". The act of "mating or having sex", therefore, is actualized before pregnancy or protruding of the belly sets in. However, no lexical item is employed to indicate the act of mating or sexual intercourse.

A consideration of the above suggests that pragmatic acting can be regarded as adapting oneself, linguistically and otherwise, to one's world. The act must be seen to count as an "action" or pre-sequence to the action. As a theory of action, therefore, pragmatic act appeals to the underlying goal orientation of the interactants such that the interpretation of their utterances depends on individual interactional goals. What is more or less a "context" in speech act is known as "common scene" in pragmatic acting. The concept of "common scene" is more than just a "context" as it entails "the underlying presuppositions that make the context possible".

A pragmatic principle to speech acting's most important business is to raise the question of the user's possibilities in a given situation. A theory of pragmatic acts' focus is on the

environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that, the focus is on what can be “said” in the situation and what is actually “not said”. Invariably, we are trying to generalize a situational prototype that is capable of being appropriate in situations in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances. Such a generalized pragmatic act, Mey calls a “pragmeme”. The instantiated “ipras” or “pract” refers to a particular pragmeme as its realization. Every “pract” is an “allopract” since no two “practs” are the same because the situation that leads to their realization is different. An “allopract”, therefore, is a different realization of a particular instantiation of a particular pragmeme, since there is no way of determining a “piori”, that is, “what an allopract should look like”, and “a fortiori”, “what it cannot look like”. Prosody is a category that further enhances the function that a pragmatic act is used to perform. A good way of doing this is by determining the prominence placed on a syllable. Prominence on a syllable can influence the meaning of words. This is as a result of the prominence of the pitch or tone, which invariably generates the syllable. Syllables can be grouped into two according to the application of stress:

- (1) Primary stress: also called tonic stress, is the strongest. The tone or pitch here is higher.
- (2) Secondary stress: This is a non- tonic stress, the stress is weaker because the pitch or tone is lower.

Stress influences the meanings of words and sentences, thus, we talk of sentence and lexical stress achieved through intonation. Intonation defines the pitch of an utterance and functionally differentiates meanings. Statements end with a fall in pitch, while questions end with a rise in pitch. Intonation also determines the speech function of a sentence in the sense that it shows whether an utterance is meant as a statement or comment, which conveys connotation meanings of attitudes such as “surprise”, “annoyance”, “enthusiasm”, etc. Below is Mey’s schema of pragmeme:

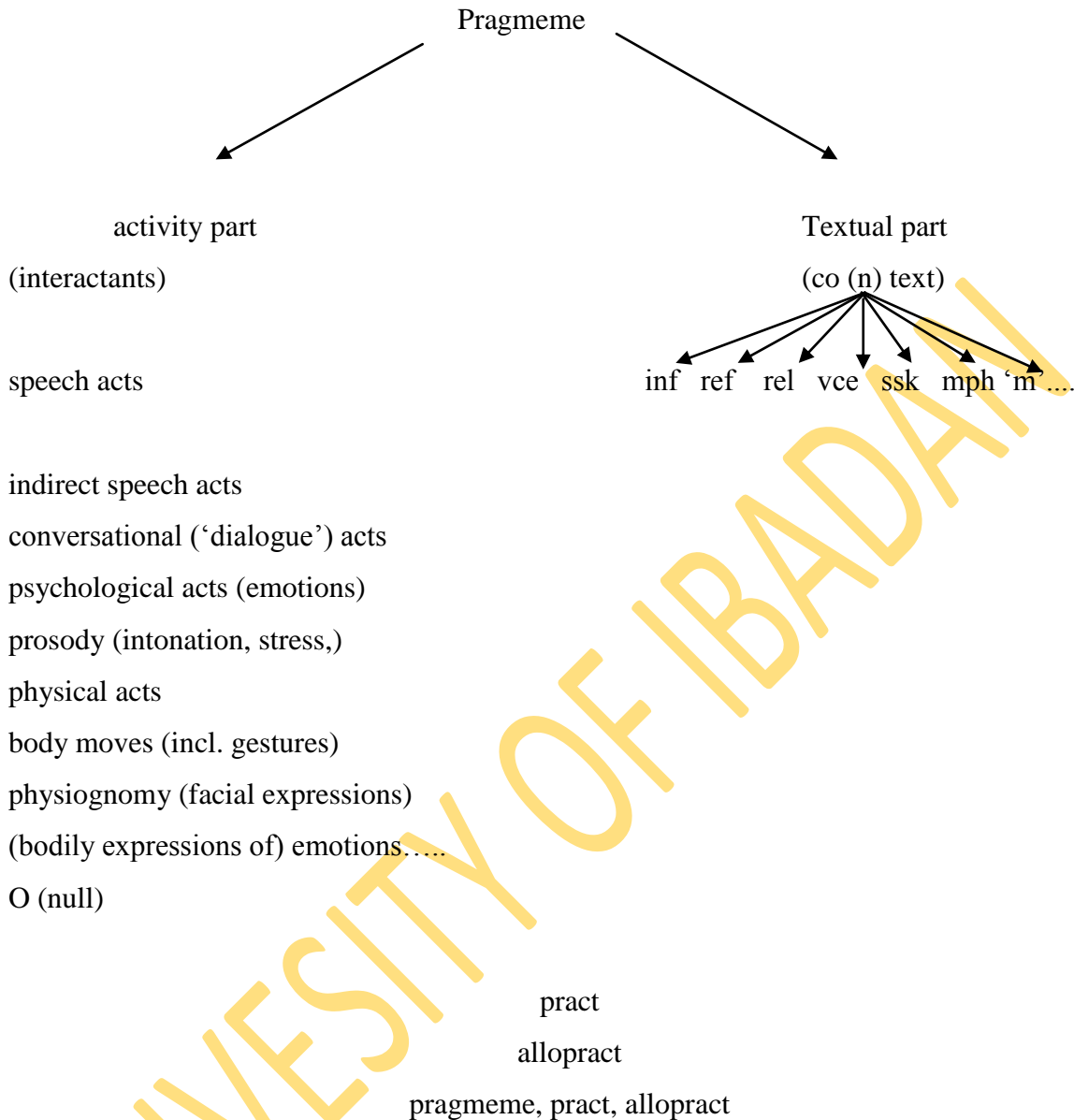


Figure 1 : A model of pragmatic acts (Adapted from Mey 2001: 222).

The schema above shows that there are two categories involved in the realization of a pragmeme: the textual part and the activity part. The activity part represents the options that are available to the speaker to perform the various functions he so desires. To achieve this, he depends on the textual part to communicate his intention, in which case, he may employ the 'inf' which stands for inference, the "ref" for reference, "rel" for relevance, "vce" for voice, "ssk" for shared situational knowledge, "mph", metaphor, or "m" for metapragmatic joker. Both categories depend on context for the meaning realization of the discourse of interactants. It is

useful to cursorily examine the textual parts that are considered central to the analysis to be carried out in this study. This is done in the sub-section below:

2.5.1.1 Inference

Some aspects in discourse require inferences on the part of the reader for interpretation. In this instance, it is cognizant for the reader or hearer to determine and understand not what the speaker or writer has said or written, but what he intended to communicate. Let us examine the following example.

Ex 4: “I cannot sleep with that radio on”.

The speaker in example four above intends to pass across a message. Evidently, he intends to sleep but the noise from the radio prevents him. The hearer upon hearing “5” above must infer that the speaker intends 5 below:

Ex 5: “Please, switch off the radio so that I can sleep”.

However, the inference must be based on a particular context. Clark (1996) identifies direct and indirect forms of inferences and submits that it takes longer time to determine speaker’s intention in indirect inferences. See example “6” and “7” below.

Ex 6: “Sola killed a snake yesterday”.

Ex 7: “It was quite big”.

It is easy to infer the referent for “it” in example “7” because of the already mentioned information of what was killed in “6” above. Consider “8” and “9” below.

Ex 8: “Ayo bought some books yesterday”.

Ex 9 “The dictionary is big”

Linking eight with nine needs what Yule (1996(b)) calls “bridging assumption”, since the dictionary was not stated as part of the books bought in eight by Ayo, it takes a longer time than in six and seven to link. One can, therefore, proceed to make a statement as in ten below to link the ideas.

Ex10: Ayo bought some books yesterday.

“The books mentioned include a dictionary”.

Yule (1996(b)) observes that ideas as represented in ten above are “missing links” that are “required to make an explicit connection between indirect references”. This invariably suggests that certain inference do not give room for automatic connections while some do

because of their logical connectedness. Inferences therefore are made by assumptions based on information given by the speakers of utterances.

2.5.1.2 Reference

The relationship which holds between words and things is known as reference (Lyons, 1979: 404). This, according to him, is simply because words refer to things. Words, however, cannot just refer, but must be manipulated by the user, hence, treatment of reference as an action on the part of the speaker or writer. Reference plays an important role in the production and interpretation of texts. Several definitions of reference exist. Lyons (1979: 424) sees reference as the relationship which holds between words and things (their referents). Yule (1996(a): 16) notes that reference is an act in which a speaker or writer uses linguistic forms to enable a listener or reader to identify something. Chimombo and Roseberry (1988) also note that reference is the process by which we refer to something or somebody. These definitions are indicative that reference concerns the relationship that exists between words and persons, things, events, actions and the qualities that they stand for:

This relationship has been described by Lyons (1979: 424) as the relationship that exists between form, meaning and referent in terms of the traditional view of 'the 'triangle/ of signification' or 'the semiotic triangle'. This is illustrated below:

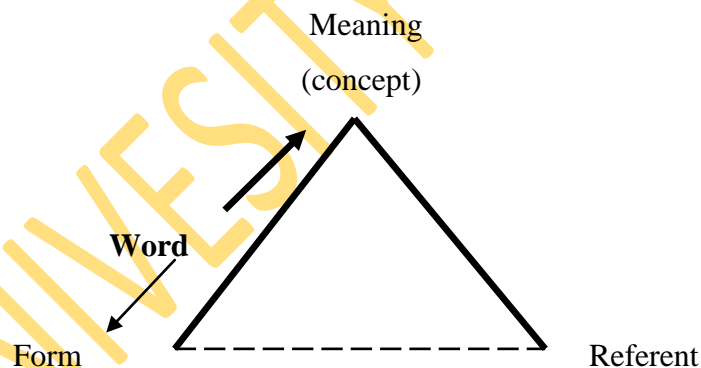


Fig. 2: The semiotic triangle (Adapted from Lyons 1979:404)

By this Lyons (ibid) observes that the dotted line between form and referent shows that the relationship between form and referent is indirect. Form, according to him, is related to its referent through the (mediating) conceptual meaning associated with both independently. Reference, he notes, always occur with presupposition of existence or (reality) which derived from our direct experience of objects in the physical world.

In a related vein, Yule (1996(a):19-20) sees reference as a situation where a speaker, or writer uses language to enable a listener to identify a person or something. He observes that the linguistic expressions employed here are referring expressions which can be proper nouns or noun phrases which are definite, for example; “the writer”, “the teacher”, “the coast” etc or indefinite such as :”a man”, “a woman”, “a beautiful place” and pronoun such as; “he”, “her”, “it”, “then” and so on. Yule further observes that speaker’s choice of a type of referring expression, rather than the other, depends on what he assumes the listener already knows. However, in shared visual contexts, pronouns functioning as deictics such as ‘this’, ‘ him’, are apposite for reference but not in instances where identification (reference) is elaborate, in which case, noun phrases may be employed (Yule 1996(a))

This buttresses the fact that reference is tied to the speaker’s goals and his beliefs in the use of language. Consequently, Yule concludes that reference is not just a relationship between the meaning of a word or phrase and an object or person in the world, but a social act whereby the speaker believes that the word or phrase he has chosen to identify an object or person will be interpreted as he intended.

Another point to note in determining the purview of reference is that all reference items contain the definite article and as such reflect the meanings and identity or definiteness of the referent (Halliday and Hassan1991:31). In identifying a referent therefore, Halliday and Hassan (ibid) identify two ways of referencing. First is the exophora (reference to a thing/person as identified in the context of situation) and endophoras (reference to a thing/person as identified in the surrounding text).

The foregoing obviously reveals that reference is a means to identify or point to a person or an item. In drama texts reference is often employed to identify an already mentioned person, or item, or that, which will be mentioned later. Our observation reveals that reference makes texts a unified whole, as such, it enhances cohesion of utterances. Reference shows the relationship that holds between words and things (referents). Just like anaphora, it keeps the relationship between objects and persons within the text straight and unambiguous within the limits of the narrative and in accordance with the purpose of authorial intention.

2.5.1.3 Relevance

Relevance as a notion is taken in terms of the sense made by an utterance. This suggests that what the speaker says must be meaningful to the hearer. It is the meaningfulness of an utterance that makes it relevant. Relevance, therefore, is a means of achieving successful communication in discourse (Mey 2000: 85). The idea here is that for additional information to be relevant, it must add something to the existing common environment as well as the interpretation of utterances. Relevance theory (henceforth RT), a cognitive theory of human communication is developed by Wilson and Sperber (1986, 2004). However, the theory really emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a cognition-centered alternative to Grice's pragmatics (see Wilson and Sperber, *ibid*). The main assumption of the theory is that human beings are endowed with a biologically rooted ability to maximize the relevance of incoming stimuli (including linguistic utterances and other communicative behavior).

According to Carston (2002), relevance is not only a typical property of external stimuli but also of internal representations and thoughts, all of which may become inputs for cognitive processing. The pursuit of relevance is a typical aspect of the mental activity of human beings, always geared towards obtaining the highest reward from the stimuli that they process. This biological endowment, Carston (2002) notes, is the result of the evolution of architecture, and the complexity of the human mind and a part of a general human ability to meta-represent one's and other people's thoughts and intentions. Hence Wilson and Sperber's (2004) observation that "as a result of constant selection pressure towards increasing efficiency, the human cognitive system has developed in such a way that our perceptual mechanisms tend automatically to pick out potentially relevant stimuli. Our memory retrieval mechanisms tend automatically to activate potentially relevant assumptions, and our inferential mechanisms tend spontaneously to process them in the most productive way".

According to Yus (1998: 44), relevance can be summarized as the decoded meaning of the sentence which is compatible with a number of different interpretations in the same context; these interpretations are graded in terms of accessibility; hearers rely on a powerful criterion when selecting the most appropriate interpretation; and this criterion makes it possible to select one interpretation among the range of possible interpretations.

2.2.3.5 Voice

An author's perspective is his feelings, conceptions, and beliefs about specific events in the society. This perspective manifest in literary texts and the means to project an author's perspective is voice. The literal meaning of voice shows that voice is the expression, speech, or utterance of words. Mey (2000) describes voice as a vocalized perspective. This invariably suggests that voice gives expression (vocality) to the inner thoughts of an author as expressed by his characters. It also shows that a character is represented in a narrative by his/her voice. The vividness of this representation usually presents a situation that is close to reality. Bakhtin (1992) observes this when he reveals that the direct way in which characters dialogue in drama texts appeal to social reality as it is patterned like the structure of everyday conversation which he calls "the dialogic orientation of discourse".

Voice, therefore, enhances the production and interpretation of literary texts. Consequently, Mey (2000) opines that "the determination of voice ownership is central to the understanding of texts". As such, the concept of voice is considered central to literary interpretation. Notably, voice can be determined in literary texts through linguistic and extra linguistic means. Mey (ibid) notes that voice can be classified into voice shift and voice clash.

Voice shift occurs when there is a transition from the narrator's voice to a character's voice or from a character's voice to another character's voice, to an intruding author's voice (Mey, 2000). Voice shift is also known as "voice change". In this instance, the author tells his readers that the character whose voice they are listening to has finished his contribution and another one is taking over. This change of voice is achieved through a system of roles which characterizes stage plays. In drama, characters' roles are written on a piece of paper. This piece of paper contains individual contributions, and during practice, characters usually role up this paper for easier handling, thus it becomes "a role". The role is explicitly marked by the stage name of the contributor on the role. The characters memorize the content of their roles and express them verbally. A character has to wait for the current speaker to finish his contribution before he starts his own. Hence, as the voice shifts from one speaker to another, the discourse is created and sustained.

In prose, Mey (2000) notes that such explicit change of voice is either omitted when it is not necessary, especially in a two way dialogue or it may be introduced by some verbs to indicate that a particular character 'said' or 'thought' as follows (or as preceded). Also, Mey

notes that it is possible to encounter a shift in voice from narrative perspective to a character's reported speech and thought (RST). Towards this end, devices such as deixis, introductory and parenthetical 'FID' may be applied to introduce an unannounced change of voice. However, Mey ought to note that these depend on the style of the author of the specific narrative.

"Voice clash occurs whenever voices do not match, either the character and a voice that is attributed to that character are out of sync, or two or more of the voices heard in the story are perceived as disharmonious" (Mey 2000: 189). In a narration, characters are expected to be consistent with the role they play and their voices throughout the narrative for the narrative universe that is supposed to be fictitious to be real. In some plays, the narrator too has a voice, and in this instance, he is also a character in the narrative. If in the course of narration, the narrator gives counter information, then his voice is said to be disharmonious, consequently, there is voice clash. Also, Mey (2000) opines that voice clash may be as a result of external factors such as when a character speaks out of turn, that is, when he contributes to the narration when another character ought to. A clash of voice may also occur when a character speaks out of place, that is, when he oversteps his assigned boundaries of narration. Mey (2000) subdivides voice clash into: voice trash, voice mash and voice crash.

According to Mey (2000), voice trash is an instance of clashing voice where there is an overlaying voice. In this instance, the voice of the narrator/author totally eclipses the voice of the character. By so doing, the character's world is expressed through the author's voice. Explicitly, lexical choices such as meta-languages, metaphorical allusions, and description of events and location beyond the scope and experience of the character betray an overlaying voice of the author/ narrator which trashes the voice of the character. In voice trash therefore, characters do not speak in their true voices, and do not reason in their true perspectives as the author is inclined to put together an impressive story, he therefore employs the make belief devices to project his points of view.

Voices are mashed when they are not clearly distinguished. Mey (2000) reveals that voices here overlap and overlay severally. There are instances when voices are presumed to continue, but have actually ended at a point, only for the narrator's or the author's voice to continue, as if it is still the character's voice that we are hearing. This more or less confuses the reader, as to him the point of voice change' is not explicitly marked. Such devices as personal

pronoun, references, tense, deixis, anaphora, free indirect discourse and certain lexical choices account for the double voicing in literary texts.

Voice crash refers to another instance of ‘authorial intrusion’. In this voice type, the heterodiegetic narrator is omnipresent as he knows everything about the characters. Through the third person narrative technique, the narrator passes his comments which usually are summaries of situation of things which more often than not are hidden to the readers.

2.5.1.3 Common scene

A consideration of “common scene” would be meaningless without an exploration of context whose significance lies in the volume of scholarly attention it has drawn over the years (see Levinson, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Yule, 1996(b); Palmer, 1996; Mey 2001; 2009 and so on). Contextual perspectives have either been in linguistic terms, in which case, context refers to previous and subsequent linguistic material in a text, or extra-linguistic terms of continually changing surroundings in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact intelligibly (Mey, 2001: 39).

Much works have been done on context (see Malinowski, 1923; Firth 1962; Hymes 1962; Halliday 1978; Levinson 1979; Brown and Yule 1996; Adegbite 2000, 2005; Odebunmi 2001, 2006 and so on). Context has been considered as the totality of the environment in which a word is used (Mey, 2001). In other words, it is the sum of the situations in which a text comes to life. It is an abstract category employed by language scholars to provide a link between linguistic items and the social and situational factors of communication (Adegbite, 2000), and provides the background from which the meaning of a word springs (Odebunmi, 2006). Context therefore enhances interpretation of words, hence, Odebunmi’s (2006) submission that context is the spine of meaning. A word that enhances our determination of the speaker’s meaning is known as the ‘co-text’. Co-text has been described as the lexical items that surround a particular word in a text (see Yule 1996(a); Odebunmi 2001, 2006).

According to Mey (2000) context represents the cultural, political and economic conditions of the people whose actions and words we are trying to describe or capture in smaller context of language, culture, painting, music etc. and whose actions we are trying to understand and evaluate. Hymes (1962) classifies context into physical, socio-cultural, psychological and linguistic. Physical context refers to such features as participant’s activities, the place and the

time that the discourse takes place. Socio-cultural context concerns the language of the people, the cultural heritage and religion. Psychological context reflects the states of mind of the characters or interlocutors, while the linguistic context reveals the individual choice of words and the peculiar use of language in a particular discourse.

Fowler (1996) classifies context into context of utterance, context of culture and context of reference. Context of utterance, according to Fowler, depicts the situation in which particular discourse is conducted. He shows the physical surrounding, that is, setting, participants (with linguistic markers such as “I”, “you” and so on), time (linguistically marked by deictis) and language. Context of culture reveals the whole network of social and economic conventions, all the institutions and the familiar settings and relationships, constituting the context at large. The context of relevance is the topic or the subject matter of the discourse.

Similarly, Adebite (2000) recognizes two types of context viz; the verbal context and the situational context. The verbal context is applied in the interpretation of linguistic items in terms of their linkage and relationship with one another. Adebite notes that this reduces instances of syntactic or lexical ambiguity that may arise if words are considered in isolation. The concept of the context of situation is largely associated with two scholars: Malinowski (1923) and Firth (1962). Both are concerned with stating meanings in terms of the context in which language is used. Bronislaw Malinowski was an anthropologist who did a lot of research in ethnographical field with specific interest in language (Langendoen, 1968:2). Malinowski's views on language are reflected in his works: “*Classificatory participles*” (1920), “*Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), “*The problem of meaning*” (1923), and “*Coral Garden and their magic*” (1935). Malinowski coined the term “context of situation” to show that in order to understand an utterance, we need to know not only the literal meanings of the words, in the form of their approximate equivalents in another language, for example, but also all the complex social details in which the utterance occurs (Bloor and Bloor, 2004). According to Bloor and Bloor (2004), the same goes for all cultural artefacts as meaning in language stands for the totality of ideas, issues, events and so on, associated with the context of language use. Such include the participants engaged in the discourse, the social context in which they are functioning, the broader presuppositions of the society, the nature of the task in hand, and others. In “*the problem of meaning*”, Malinowski observes that an utterance receives its meaning from

its relation to the situational context in which it occurs. This is because utterances and situations are bound up with each other and can only be understood through the context of situation. To ascertain the meaning of an utterance, therefore, Malinowski observes that one needs to correlate the utterance with the context of concurrent human activity. Problems however occur in obtaining the meaning of a written language, for semantic interpretation cannot be obtained by a context of human activity in written language. Malinowski explains that meaning of sentences can be determined in terms of the meanings of the lexical items comprising it. He, therefore, proposes three different types of context of situation:

- (a) situation in which putatively speech interrelates directly with bodily activity that is culturally significant
- (b) narratives – the situation of the moment of narration and the situation referred to by the narrative
- (c) situation in which speech is used to fill, so to speak, a speech vacuum.

Malinowski's arguments are based on observing ways in which the language of the people he was studying fits into their everyday activities. The "emphatic communion" is where the words do not convey meaning but have a purely social function. His remarks about the language as a mode of action are useful in reminding us that language is not simply a matter of stating information. However, Malinowski's argument is unacceptable for he observes that the "mode of action" aspect of language was clearly seen in the basic needs of man, as in the language of children or of primitive man. He assumes that the language he is considering is more primitive than his own and more closely associated with the practical needs of the primitive society. Also, he feels that the difficulties of translation are due to the differences in nature of languages and the need to invoke context of situation is more important when dealing with primitive languages.

This might not be appropriate for although there might be primitive people who lack the knowledge and skill of the civilized ones, there is no sense in which a language can be regarded as primitive (Langendoen, 1968:2). Many languages may not have the vocabulary of the modern society, but this is a reflection of the interests of the society. The difficulties of translation, he notes, result only from the differences between the languages, not the fact that one is more primitive. It is further observed that Malinowski does not even discuss the ways in which

context can be handled in a systemic way to provide a statement of meaning. If context is to be taken as an indication of meaning, all stories would have the same meaning. His solution to this is to invoke the “secondary context”, the context within the narrative, but that has no immediate observable status. Firth (1962) feels that Malinowski’s context of situation is not satisfactory for the linguistic approach of problems because it is a bit of the social process. Therefore, he prefers to see it as part of the linguist’s apparatus in the same way as the grammatical categories that he uses as it is best used as a suitable schematic construct to apply to language events. Consequently, Firth suggests the following categories:

- A. the relevant features of the participants: persons, personalities:
 - 1. the verbal action of the participants.
 - 2. the non-verbal action of the participants.
- B. the relevant objects.
- C. the effects of the verbal action.

In this way, contexts of situation can be grouped and classified, and this is essential if it is to be part of the linguistic analysis of language. Firth (1962) also sees context of situation as one of the techniques of description. He observes that all kinds of linguistic description, the phonology, the grammar, and others as well as the context of situation, are statements of meaning. Describing meaning in terms of context of situation is just one of the ways in which a linguist handles language. However, Firth’s context of situation has a very limited value in that he believes that we can never capture the whole of meaning.

Furthermore, Nerlich and Clarke’s (1996) contribution to the study of context is quite viable in that his classification of context into the objective and subjective nature still holds. Nerlich observes context as being objective when it assesses the speaker, the time, the place and the possible world in which an utterance occurs, and subjective when it concerns the common ground, that is, the shared beliefs which form the common presumptions for the interpretation of an utterance. A consideration of scholarly contributions reveals that issues on context borders around speakers and their environments as reflected in their interactions. Specifically, this notion is central to pragmatic acts, as according to Mey (2001; 217), it is necessary to situate our speech acts in contexts, especially, when analyzing people’s conversations. This, according to Mey (2001: 217), is because no conversational contribution at all can be understood properly unless it

is situated within the environment in which it is meant to be understood. An application of this is revealed in Odebunmi's(2006:240) treatment of context. According to Osunbade (2010: 74), Odebunmi (2006) harmonizes the idea of context developed by such scholars as Malinowski, Bach and Harnish, Ochis, Mey, Thomas, Adegbija etc. indicating contextual consideration as certain beliefs or assumptions held prior to or even during occasions of (human) interactions as coming into the communicative process, and facilitating it. Recognizing these as contextual beliefs, Odebunmi (2006) highlights both language and situation levels as forms of context in discourse.

While at the language level, meaning is considered as having a possibility potential if the same language of communication is at the disposal of interactants at the situation level, assumptions are held on the basis of the shared code (linguistic or non-linguistic) and experience of the interlocutors (Odebunmi, 2006: 240). Our concern in this study is the situation level. According to Odebunmi, three important features/aspects of context exist:

- (1) shared knowledge of subject/topic
- (2) shared knowledge of word choices, referents, and references and
- (1) shared socio-cultural experiences, previous or immediate.

Below is Odebunmi's idea of contextual belief at the situation level:

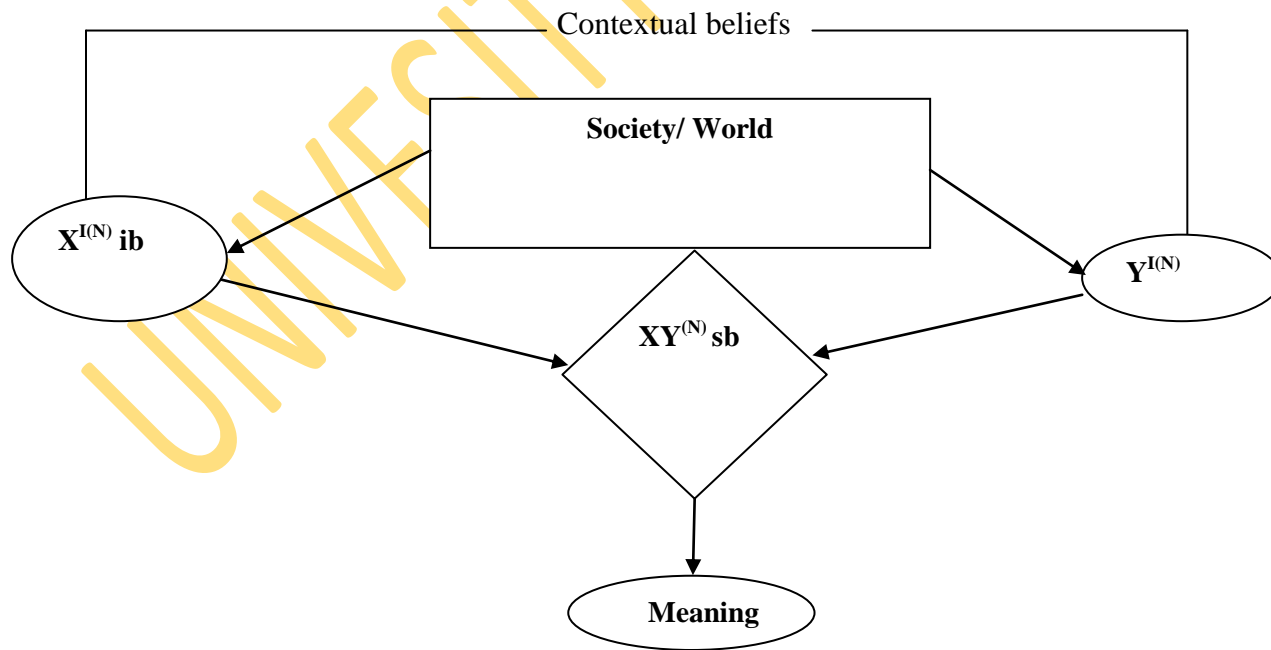


Figure 3: Odebunmi's (2006) model of contextual beliefs.

Key : N= many interactants (speakers or hearers)

X^1 = one speaker

Y^1 = one hearer

XY= speaker and hearer

ib = independent belief

sb= shared belief

Odebunmi's contextual beliefs are based on interactants' independent experience of the world which exists at two levels:

- (1) individual level
- (2) group level

To extract meaning, therefore, the interactants must have had related experiences drawn from the same world in which they exist. Hence, Osunbade's (2010:77) observation that "the idea of context expanded by Odebunmi here, no doubt, presupposes a (mutual) contextual ground on which participants operate and negotiate meaning". Relative to this, Clark (1996) notes that people take too much for granted in inter-action. Indeed, they assume a common language, shared knowledge of issues as cultural facts, new stories and local geography. If the interactants are acquaintance, then, there are considerations for shared knowledge of earlier conversations and other joint experience. In physical interactions, there are expectations of shared knowledge of the scene around them. A consideration of the above is what Clark refers to as "common ground". According to Clark (1996), common ground is "the sum total of the information that people assume they share". This is also known as "common knowledge". Common knowledge was introduced by Lewis (1969) to account for how people coordinate with each other. Literally, the principle of common knowledge stipulates that people agree to do things relative to their joint knowledge of their environment, as such, common knowledge is a property of a community of people, even though the community may consist of just two people.

According to Clark (1996), the notion of “common ground” was introduced by Robert Stalnaker (1978), based on Lewis common knowledge to account for the way in which information accumulates in conversation. Stalnaker observes that:

The presuppositions of a speaker are the pre-suppositions whose truth he takes for granted as part of the background of the conversation presuppositions are what is taken by the speaker to be the common ground of the participants in the conversation, what is treated as their common knowledge or mutual knowledge.

(Stalnaker,1978: 320).

Stalnaker’s observation here is a suggestion that people take certain propositions to be common ground in conversation, such that, when they make assertions, they add to the common ground. Common ground also includes common/mutual beliefs, and common/mutual suppositions (Clark and Marshall, 1981; Clark, 1996). Stalnaker (1972) further reveals that common ground is a reflexive or self-referring notion. This is based on the fact that the interlocutors take the proposition at hand as the truth, as such, they share the same belief about the information and “because of the self-reference, people can technically draw an infinity of inferences from what they take to be common ground” (Clark, 1996). According to him, for people to assess and re-assess their common ground, people need the right bases and these are: community membership, and personal experience. The communal common ground is built on the fact that communities share information that is common to its people. Common, in the sense that some of the communities are built around shared venues and locations, practices and expertise and so on. The community communal common good is such that when people are from the same community, they take as common ground, shared knowledge which is taken for granted. However, at times, some of the communities are either nested, when shared knowledge is specific, such as obtained in people belonging to the same culture or cross-cutting when people share beliefs on common ground of identical nationality. These lead to gradations in assessments of common grounds.

The other main basis of common ground is joint experience which may be perceptual. The experience may be linguistic or communicative. In essence, the dictates of common ground are influenced by language or conditions of discourse. In linguistic influenced common ground, there are considerations for the conventions of language or what can be referred to as rules of

language (semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology and pragmatics) relative to the interlocutor's community. In an instance as this, nesting or cross cutting influences common ground as both speaker and hearer (s) understanding of "shared communal lexicon" is expected. This is essential as every community or culture is expected to have its own communal lexicon which has linguistic implications that ought to be known by members of that community. As such, speaker "A" presupposes "B" to share linguistic knowledge of communal lexicon with him, hence, his expectation of understanding by "B". For example, the people of Kabba, in Kogi State, Nigeria call "feet", "*ehin*", such that, when a boy gets injured on the feet and comes home to his mother saying "*Mama, Mama, mo me' hin gbo*", the mother goes to examine the foot straight rather than the back as other hearer who is not nested with the speaker will, since in other parts of Nigeria, "*ehin*" means "back". Although some lexicons are common to some community members and are cross cutting because of their general or national outlook, some are nested as they can only be understood by members of the same immediate community. Other linguistic common ground forms may be specialized or professional which may either be nested or cross-cutting. These exist among nationalists, people of same professions such as lawyers, doctors, and people with same religious beliefs such as Christians, Muslims. These common communal lexicons are often called jargon, dialect, patois, idiom, parlance, proverbs etc. Instances are found in Ahmed Yerima's culture-based works and issues relating to interpretation of utterances based on communal common ground will surely enhance our analysis in this study.

Discourse common ground presents a situation whereby people design what they say against the common ground they believe they already share with their interlocutors. This process is easily achieved through the "information structure" and "grounding". According to Stalnaker (1978), information structure is a property of utterances; in which case, "A" uses the special construction to distinguish two types of information (Prince, 1978). According to Prince, "A" provides information that "A" assumes "B" is already thinking about or familiar with. This, according to him, can be achieved with the "Wh-cleft" form as in "what is committee after", progressively, the remainder of the utterance can be used to provide information that "A" assumes "B" doesn't yet know. The new information in this construct can be "is somebody at the white house?". Information in the construction of this utterance, therefore, depends on common ground for its interpretation. Indeed, the way "A" refers to objects in the discourse shows that

“A” takes for granted that “B” would not have known without a shared common ground (Prince, 1981).

Ultimately, the speaker must be able to establish that the hearer shares common ground with him, this is known as “grounding” (Clark and Brennan, 1991). To establish that the interlocutors share common ground, the hearers show periodic evidence of the state of his understanding of the speaker’s utterances. One way of doing this is back-channel signals such as “uh-huh, yeah, a head nod, or smile” as the case may be. In another form, appropriate next contribution as response to speaker’s utterance is adequate.

As exclusive as context or common ground is to the understanding of utterances, Mey (2001:218) opines that common scene is more than just a context, as context is understood as common background or a platform of conversation while our concern is about the underlying pre-suppositions making this very context possible. This context of common possibilities is a “scene” on which the actors can perform within the limits of their roles and the action of the play, their entire roles and the action of the play. Their entire rationality in acting rests on the affordable (“what can I do given the context?”), rather than exclusively on the thinkable and cognizable (“what can I say and understand, given this context?”).

Exploring the notion of common scene, Clark and Brennan (1991) examine discourse in the political domain and define politics as the “battle for the common scene of understanding”. According to Clark and Brennan (1991), the common scene is not simply a matter of agreeing on a common ground, or establishing some common definitions or some common conceptual framework. Rather, politicians, in this instance, are dealing with a battle, a contest, while people are trying to establish their common ground. The issue is that people incessantly engage in fights about issues thought to be “common”. Clark and Brennan (1991), here, sought to distinguish between a simple misunderstanding or even a lack of understanding and a misunderstanding on a deeper level, where understanding is not only difficult but even impossible because there is not, and cannot be any common platform where all the involved parties can meet, which is the usual, unfortunate situation in politics.

Clark and Brennan (1991) contends that in politics as in daily life, people often do not understand each other not because the words are ambiguous or not clear but because the hearer

does not see what the speaker is talking about, or because he interprets that which the other is talking about as something entirely different. In the words of Clark and Brennan (1991):

The cases of misunderstanding are those in which the dispute on what speakers' mean constitutes the very rationality of the speech situation. In that situation the interlocutors both do and do not mean the same thing by the same words. There are all sorts of reasons why a certain person X understands, and yet does not understand, another person Y: because, while he perceives clearly what the other tells him, he also doesn't see the object of which the other speaks to him; or even, because he understands, and must understand, sees and wants to make seen, another reasoning contained in the same argument.

(Clark and Brennan, 1991)

The common scene is thus transcendental as one's understanding depends entirely on the actions performed. According to Mey (2001: 218), to understand depends on the actions performed, that is, to have an idea of what to do, how to act not just of what to think or say. Also, understanding others depends on their acting of the roles they assume on the scene, as such, acts outside the scene may be misunderstood. However, common scene, in an instance like this, is squarely established by pragmatics within the social context. Hence, Mey (2001:219) concludes that our acting is always a situated action, that is, an action made possible and afforded in a particular situation, on a particular scene.

Common ground is central to pragmatic acts as it accounts for language use. It is needed in accounting for conversations, or rules of language, and to explain how people contribute to conversations and other forms of discourses.

2.5.2 Analytical tool

The diagram below illustrates the analysis of the practs performed by Ahmed Yerima in his selected culture-based plays:

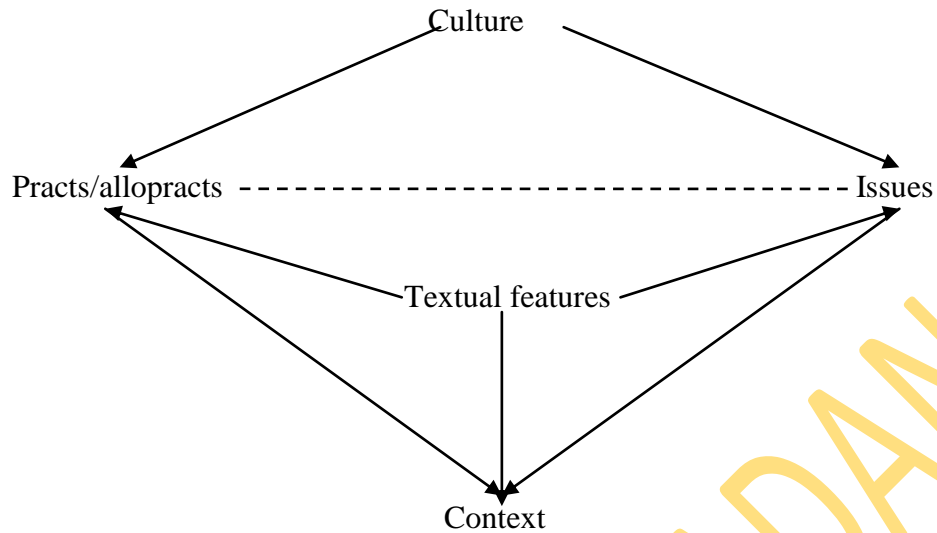


Fig 4: A pragmatic framework for the analysis of practs in Ahmed Yerima’s culture-based plays.

Figure four above reveals that utterances considered are culture-based. Through these, certain practs and allopracts emanate to treat particular issues through specific textual issues based on context. In other words, in utterances depicting the culture of the people, certain pragmatic acts and allopracts are performed. These practs and allopracts address some issues located in the culture of the people. As pragmatic acts and allopracts are got from the culture of the people, issues also emanate from the people’s culture as well. While the practs and allopracts are employed in treating certain issues, the issues likewise reflect particular acts. The practs and allopracts as well as the issues are projected through relevant textual features. However, the meanings of the culture-based practs and issues can only be determined based on the context of occurrences.

The selected plays of Ahmed Yerima for this study are basically culture-based. He performs particular practs to deal with certain issues relative to the society through such textual features as inference (inf), reference (ref), relevance (rel), voice (vce), shared situational knowledge (ssk), indexed by metaphor and proverbs. Of course, the application of socio-cultural knowledge (sck) comes in handy in the performance and interpretation of the practs because of the cultural orientation of the selected plays. Notably, Yerima creates the settings of the plays in African literary spatial contexts and have been categorized on culture-basis into Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. These are examined in turn in the study.

2.6 Justification for the theoretical framework

Different theories have been adopted by linguistic scholars in the investigation of speaker meaning in social interaction based on context. However, for a study such as this which examines language as communication tool for the espousal of culturally defined actions in different contexts of interactions, Jacob Mey's pragmatic acts theory is favoured. In Mey's (2000) pragmatic acts theory, a speaker may co-opt others, set them up, influence them through conversations, and deny certain claims without betraying such acts through lexical choices (Mey, 2001:216). In other words, there is no word or lexical item to indicate a particular act except for a consideration of the conversational context.

According to Mey (2001:221), a pragmatic act is instantiated through an "ipra" or "a pract", which realizes a "pragmeme" as "every pract is at the same time an allopract, that is to say a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme". In essence, what determines a pract is solely participants' knowledge of interactional situation and the potential effect of a pract in a particular context, hence, Odebunmi's (2006) submission, that "practing resolves the problem of telling illocutionary force from perlocutionary force". The focus (of pragmatic act) is on the interactional situation in which both speakers and hearers realize their aims. "The explanatory movement is from the outside in, rather than from the inside out: Instead of starting with what is said, and looking for what the words could mean, the situation in which the words fit is invoked to explain what can be (and is actually being) said" (Mey, 2011:751). Specifically, "implied identification" is central to Mey's pragmatic acts, such that, the importance is not on the "said" but the "unsaid". The hearer is controversially influenced (set up) to see the speaker's act as no act is explicitly made. In particular, there is no speech act to indicate a pragmatic act. The only way to identify a pragmatic act, therefore, is to be on the lookout, or listen for it. In other words, a consideration of the conversational context enhances hearer/ reader's identification of a pragmatic act, such that, in the terms of speech acts, the act may count as, for example, "bribing", "rebuking", "inviting", "denying", as the case may be.

The emphasis here is not on rules for the use of individual speech acts, but on characterizing a typical, pragmatic act, as it is realized in a given situation such that the act ultimately realizes a particular pragmeme. According to Mey (2011:751), with regard to pragmatic acts, one is not primarily concerned with matters of grammatical correctness or strict

observance of rules. What counts as a pragmatic act depends on the understanding that the participants have of the situation and on the outcome of the act in a given context, or what is known in pragmatic acts as “common scene”. Through common scene, Mey argues that pragmatic acts are situated. Pragmatic acts emanate not from the individual but from the people. What is more or less referred to as context in speech act is common scene in pragmatic acts. However, the commonness of the scene is realized through shared situational knowledge (ssk). Jacob Mey’s theory of pragmatic acts is therefore considered appropriate for this study as it aptly recognizes specific pragmatic acts in particular implicit communication of characters in drama texts as created by the author.

Ultimately, Jacob Mey’s theory of pragmatic acts has been considered suitable for this study in view of the following:

- (1) The data to be analysed is conversation-based, and the theory of pragmeme is conversation-based, taking cognizance of context.
- (2) It aptly accounts for pragmatic acts as emanating not from individuals, but from the society at large.
- (3) It significantly enhances the recognition of the interactional situation (common scene) in which both speakers and hearers found their peculiarities.
- (4) It determines particular “take ups” as end products of “set ups” in speaker’s utterances.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE SELECTED TEXTS

3.1 Synopsis of the plays and their thematic preoccupations

In this section, a summary of the plays are given as categorized into Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba cultures after which the thematic preoccupations of the author are discussed.

3.1.1 *Mojagbe*

Mojagbe is based on Yoruba culture. In the play, Oba Mojagbe is embattled because his people are against him. One of his arch enemies, Yeye, sends Layewu, the messenger of death, to kill the king. However, King Mojagbe has been spiritually fortified against such attacks, therefore, he survives Layewu's attack. Worried by the trend of uncomfortable events, Mojagbe sends for Isepe to seek for means to reinstate things. While Isepe is still with the king, Esan, one of the contestants to the throne comes in with a mission to assassinate the king. With the help of Isepe, Esan is detected and arrested. In anger, Mojagbe sentences Esan to death. He is to be executed at the market square to serve as a deterrent to others who might have similar intention. However, Esan's background and lineage as a prince is the cause of another trouble since a prince must not be executed in such a manner. Mojagbe becomes angry over this as he perceives it as a plot to overthrow him. This brings him against the likes of Yeye who stubbornly insists on Mojagbe's dethronement.

Luck is on Mojagbe's side as the people of Igbo Odo attack killing Ayodele and all his family. Mojagbe becomes angry and declares war on the people of Igbo-Odo. As he is preparing for the war in his shrine, Isepe comes in to warn him not to go to war because death awaits him there. Also, of all the war booty, he must not take more than one item. Isepe then teaches him the names of death, in case death visits him. Isepe gives him two names and when king Mojagbe asks for a third one, Isepe tells him there is no other except those two. Moreover, he, Isepe, will be around to fight death.

Mojagbe stabs and kills Isepe afterwards. Isepe tells Mojagbe that killing him, Isepe, is a mistake for when death comes, King Mojagbe cannot face death alone as there are still lots for him to be done to fortify Mojagbe. Mojagbe tells Isepe that he no longer needs him. After the

war, the people come back with lots of war booty. In obedience to Isepe, Mojagbe took only one item, Motunrayo. She is to replace Isepe because of her spiritual background. Unknown to Mojagbe, Motunrayo is death himself. She faces Mojagbe and attempts to kill him. Mojagbe tells death (Motunrayo) that he cannot kill him because he knows the names of death.

Having told death his first two names, death asks for the third and it is then that Mojagbe realizes his mistake and the stupidity of killing Isepe because death has a third name. Motunrayo whispers his name (Mojagbe) and Mojagbe gets angry because the slave girl calls him by name. Motunrayo then tells him that it is his anger that blurs his thoughts and that is why he fails to realize that death takes the form of the man he is going to kill. Death's third name, therefore, is the name of the person death wants to kill and that is why no matter how great a man is, when death calls, he follows. She then commands Mojagbe to do the things that Isepe forbids him not to do when death comes calling. First, he must not remove the crown on his head and second, he must not remove the skull cap. Unfortunately, Motunrayo seduces the king and removes both the crown and the skull cap. With a gentle touch to the forehead and a whisper of his name, Mojagbe feels the hand of death as he reveals that "it is suddenly so cool", and "his (Mojagbe) feet grows cold". Yerima's storyline here is indicative of his overbearing fear of death. Projecting the place of death in Yoruba culture, Yerima considers how man forgets about the greatness of death, until the moment it comes or strikes.

In *Mojagbe*, Yerima also takes a shot at leaders who forget to learn from history and the problems man encounters while searching for the inner peace which he himself destroys. As common to Yerima's culture-based plays, he has located this play in a specific culture. Locating the story in the history of Oyo Empire makes it convenient for Yerima to unfold his story as the images and the contextual features fits in with the Yoruba culture. *Mojagbe* is Yerima's platform to address the futility of man's ego. He projects man as being full of pride, which more often propagates his downfall.

3.1.2 *Ajagunmale*

Ajagunmale is another story based on Yoruba culture. The play opens with Balogun paying a visit to Saura, the priest of Esu, after sending valuable gifts to Esu. Saura is eager to know the cause for the gifts for after Balogun consults Saura that he wants to see Esu, Balogun

sends in excess all the materials asked of him. Balogun told Saura that he is not happy with the king, his brother. When Saura asks for the reason, Balogun reveals that the king is expected, in his twentieth year on the throne, to wage a war and after he has conquered, he must give the town to his brother to rule, thus, he adds to the empire. Correspondingly, the king did according to customs and the war is led by Balogun himself. However, after the victory, instead for the king to give the town to Balogun, he gives it to his son, which according to Balogun, is an abomination. Saura cautions Balogun by reminding him that the king makes him a chief (Balogun) after the conquest, and his countenance reveals that he is happy about it. Balogun retorts that it is pretence that he merely pretends as if all is well, whereas, all is not well. Saura then asks what Balogun requests from Esu and is taken aback when Balogun states that all he wants is to be king. Consequently, he contracts Esu to throw the town into confusion and that the king should be involved in shameful acts that will make the people to reject him. Saura cautions Balogun again and asks whether he has consulted Ifa to ask Ajagunmale, the head of all priests in heaven, if he is destined to be king. This does not bother Balogun as he believes that as a prince, he has the right to be king.

After consulting the oracle, Oluwo tells Oba that the cause of all the troubles in the land is someone who has money to spend. The king becomes worried and is determined to know who it could be that harbours so much hatred for him and his people. Esu goes to work starting with the prince. Under spiritual influence (*eedi*), the prince forcefully sleeps with three women unknowingly. To make the matters worse, the daughter of Iyalode who will soon get married is among those raped. The king gets angry and decides to disown him as a son and prince of Ikoto Ile. There is also the problem of Elesin Oba. Shakiru, the king's shadow has been going round the town committing atrocities. Being the one that will follow the king to his grave, he is given a free hand over everything so that he can enjoy himself since his life will definitely be cut short. Shakiru, taking his position as an excuse, oversteps his boundaries. The misunderstanding between him and the king is made public and when Shakiru commits suicide, the king easily becomes the suspect.

To worsen the case, Balogun condemns and challenges his brother, the king. In his state of confusion, Ajagunmale appears to the king in his sleep. His visit is to ascertain the truth of the allegations that the King's accusers make against him. Having met the king, Ajagunmale is

surprised at the king's behavior because everything he sees is different from the reports he gets from the Oba's accusers. He, therefore, advises the king to find the truth in his inner strength and Eledumare and he, Ajagunmale, will guide him. When the king wakes up, he is surprised because the meeting is very real.

The Oba later summons his Oluawo, and together, they ponder over Oba's meeting with Ajagunmale. The Oba later concludes that Ajagunmale tactically reveals that he should do away with anger and his "head" shall fight for him. In his wisdom, as guided by the gods, the king asks his brother, Balogun, to be made the king of Ikotun Igbado against the custom, in three days. Balogun is happy. During the traditional coronation process, the kingmakers reveal that Balogun has been cursed by a king and only the king can lift the curse as the King's spirit fights on his behalf. This is confirmed when Balogun picks the calabash of alligator pepper. He is afraid and consults Ifa priests to ascertain how the coronation will go. Almost all the priests distort the words of Ajagunmale out of fear that Balogun will kill them. At the coronation, there is no problem until Balogun presents his head for the crown. The gods strike him and he writhes in pain and clutches the crown to his chest as he dies. Through Saura, Yerima reveals that Balogun dies because he chooses a destiny never to be king and that whatever a man wants in life he must ask his "head".

Ajagunmale is the story of Yerima. The story is in appreciation of God, the Ajagunmale, victor in heaven and earth who makes him to overcome his afflictions. Yerima is preoccupied here in presenting man on the other side of life as a protagonist. He shows the effects of unhealthy rivalry despite the innocent conduct on the part of the afflicted. At such trying times, Yerima proves that the only way out is dependency on powers beyond the protagonist. In *Ajagunmale*, therefore, apart from showing that man is often persecuted without no just cause, Yerima is also concerned with portraying God, the Ajagunmale, as the only one who can intervene on one's behalf in times of trouble.

3.1.3 Idemili

Idemili is based on the Igbo culture. The play opens with Ngbeke pouring out her troubled heart to the god, Idemili. The petition shows how emotionally disturbed Ngeke is. This is because her husband along with eleven others have been trapped, as she calls it "in the bowels

of the earth”, for the past three days. Her agony is further aggravated by the fact that those that are involved in previous occurrences do not come out alive. Ngbeke is later joined by her daughter, Ngborie, who ceaselessly appeals to Ngbeke to have faith that the trapped men will come out alive. During the conversation, Yerima introduces Paul, who is also called Oheja, as Ngborie’s sister.

Yerima uses the medium to reveal how Paul abandons his home after a little family disagreement. Then, Paul is angry because everybody sides his father against him, and in annoyance, leaves for the city where he joins Christendom as reflected in Ngborie’s introduction of Paul as a priest of the white man with a new name, Reverend Father Paul. Paul’s family is aggrieved with Paul’s action since their expectation is for Paul to study medicine so that he can be a “Doctor of injections” and not a “miner” like his father. Paul’s diversion is conceived as betrayal by his family. However, Paul’s success and elevation later make his family to be proud of him since he is now a big Christian man.

Events take a new turn when the white men assemble the people to tell them that there is nothing they can do about the trapped men. Moreover, their plight, according to him, is their own cause, because they descend lower into the earth than he orders them. The column on top of them has just been dug and is not strong enough to hold, therefore, it falls on them. Thus, Ugwuaja (Ngbeke’s husband), along with eleven others are condemned to death, a reality which the families of the trapped men now face. In her agony, Ngbeke laments that her husband’s people will blame her and accuse her of killing her husband. When Paul reprimands and tells her not to talk in that manner, she confesses her guilt.

Ogwuaja, her husband, has just been promoted. His people want him to take a chieftaincy title and marry another wife. Like any other woman in such a situation, Ngbeke is angered and in her plight, goes to the shrine of Idemili in the dead of the night. Naked, she makes her pleas and begs Idemili to intervene by fighting on her behalf. Ogwuaja’s entrapment should be her punishment for her failure to fulfill her promise to the god. If he dies, therefore, Ngbeke believes she is responsible for Ogwuaja’s death because of her jealousy. She loses her mind in the process and with the help of Emeka (a Christian brother that comes to visit Paul), Ngbeke is subdued. Emeka has come to plead with Father Paul as regards the accusation of his misconducts in the

Catholic Church. To this effect, he brings two white fowls to plead with Reverend Father Paul who accepts the fowls with the belief that they will be used for Easter festivity the following day.

However, when Ngbeke regains control of herself, she locates her woes in her inability to fulfill her promise to Idemili. Her resolution to repent and make the sacrifice to Idemili is met with a brick resistance from Paul who insists that the fowls are meant for Easter celebration and that none must be sacrificed to any god. Paul then appeals and convinces Ngbeke to surrender herself to Jesus. She complies and is baptized. Ngbeke finds herself with two gods, Idemili and Jesus. She challenges Jesus to rescue her husband, but before she submits herself wholly to Jesus, she asks Jesus to wait for her to fulfill her promise to Idemili by carrying out the expected sacrifice. She takes one of the fowls intended for Easter celebration (for Jesus) and sacrifices to Idemili. The moment she carries out the sacrifice and offers supplication to Idemili, she hears the sounds of the bell signifying an emergency. Ngborie later comes in to tell her that Ogwuoja and all the eleven others have been rescued. Ngbeke gets confused and asks the gods, which of them did it, is it Jesus or Idemili.

Ahmed Yerima adapts this play from a German play. There are three people in the play, a woman, her son and daughter. The pain of loss of these people reminds Yerima of his own pains too, with the loss of his daughter, while he was with the coal miners, at Enugu. She is buried there. “The play, therefore, is about the mind, the family, pain, expectation, our culture of dual traditions and beliefs, and the contradictions we face when in moments of trials and tribulations” (Yerima, 2006:6). These factors make Yerima to think of the conflict between the Christian God and the people’s gods. Yerima creates the story around Idemili, the river goddess of the Igbo people. According to Yerima, the presence of Christ, the Christian God, enhances the juxtaposition in the play.

According to Yerma (2006), *Idemili* is about the mind, the family, pain, expectations, the culture of dual traditions and beliefs, and the contradictions we face in moments of trials and tribulations. Yerima wrote the play after the death of his first daughter who he buried with the coal miners in Enugu. He therefore addresses the conflict in man’s life through juxtaposition of the river goddess of the people and the presence of Christ, the Christian God. *Idemili*, therefore, is a revelation of how the presence of the two cultures brings conflict and a sad reality among the people.

3.1.4 *Akuabata*

Akuabata is yet another of Yerima's story on Igbo culture based on religious conflict as Yerima tries to juxtapose the Christian Catholic religion against the African traditional religion. While emphasizing the uniqueness of the new religion, Yerima is of the opinion that there are lots of local gods that are significant and cannot be forgotten. The play is about Olanma who has been blessed and separated from other women because she is the wife of the god, Iyieke. Isiugwu, the husband is just a figure head as Olanma performs all the manly duties in the home. Olanma stands out in everything she does. She has the largest harvest and is successful in all she does. She is envied by people and even, her husband, Isiugwu. Isiugwu is a royal prince from a neighbouring village, but refuses to go home even when invited to be king. Such is Isiugwu's love for Olanma. Unknown to Isiugwu, his wife, Olanma has been betrothed to Iyieke, Olanma's family god, who supports all the family members and ensures success in their endeavours.

However, Olanma is special to Iyieke because she is betrothed to Iyieke from childhood, a fact unknown to Olanma herself. Also, Isiugwu is in the dark about this matter. Unfortunately, the people of Olanma's family do not take the issue of Olanma being betrothed to Iyieke, a god, to heart, and marry her off to another man, Isiugwu. Also, the attention given to Iyieke shifts and the people no longer worship nor appease him. Iyieke becomes furious and starts attacking, rather than protect the Ayandoro family. With attention being shifted to the Christian God at the expense of Iyieke, the god's anger mounts and he starts killing the people. As the death toll mounts the elders of the family get worried. Iyieke's attack knows no bound. After a while, Iyieke attacks Olanma on the farm. The god appeared to her as human and called her his wife. This is the genesis of the social crisis in the play. Olanma's hostility and arrogance angered Iyieke as he expects submission. Olanma's hostility therefore, to Iyieke, shows her as doubledealing, running after another man at the expense of her husband. Iyieke gets angry and attacks her. Olanma falls unconscious and is brought home from the farm. When she regains consciousness, she recounts the story of how a man approaches her, calls her his wife. This makes Isiugwu angry as he sets out to fight the god. He is advised against this by Ayandoro who happens to be the eldest in the family. Ayandoro told Isiugwu the whole story and that it is because Olanma is Iyieke's wife that she prospers more than others in the family. This explains

why she is called “the wealth of the family”. This makes Isiugwu angrier as he dares Iyieke. Iyieke struck him and he becomes betridden alongside his wife, Olanma. Iyieke’s anger is aggravated when Obiageli, Olanma’s daughter, opts for the Christian religion, thus, abandoning Iyieke, her saviour from childhood. In the long run, Iyieke in his anger, because of the unrepentant way of the people, strikes Olanma and decides to take her with him. The people attempts to save Olanma, however, only the Christian Chatholic God saves the people through Obiageli.

Conflict of culture is Yerima’s major preoccupation in the play. The story is built around this theme as conflict arises from the peoples’ failure to continue the worship of Iyieke, a family god. With the adoption of Christianity by those that are even supposed to be priests of Iyieke, Yerima reflects how majority of the people abandon their cultural heritage to embrace the foreign culture. Also, Yerima shows filial engagements that hold in African cultural settings in times of crisis.

3.1.5 *Mu’adhin’s Call*

Another play based on the Hausa culture and Islamic religion is *Mu’adhin’s Call*. *Mu’adhin’s Call* opens with Emir, a once agile man on a sick bed. Because he is bedridden, his wife now directs the affairs of the state. Living in the shadow of death, Emir carves such a sorrowful figure as he becomes frustrated and dejected. Dogari, a palace servant, reveals that Emir is in this state because the kingmakers thwart the tradition. The Emir ought to have waited for some time before ascending the throne of his father. As if the abomination is not enough, Emir, on his ascent of the throne, becomes tyrannical, and subsequently makes enemies for himself. Notable among these enemies is the Limam who would not pity Emir’s present state because he has not been able to get over his dismissal as Limam by Emir.

Emir, therefore, is a wrongdoer who breaks tradition to ascend the throne. Taking a flashback into Emir’s past life, Yerima reveals that Emir is power intoxicated and gets involved in all forms of ills in the land. He is accused of cheating and robbing the people. Waziri specifically reveals that the people turn their backs on the Emir when he starts kidnapping women and children and impose huge tax on the people. With the state of affairs turning upside down, there is the need for a savior who will put things right. Fortunately, Limam came back and

being respected by the people and standing as if he still occupies his position as the Limam, he tries to save the caliphate and the people. Limam attempts to get to the bottom of Emir's sickness and learnt through Jakadya that the problem starts when the Queen's son, Abdulmalik, dresses like the Emir and rides on Emir's camel round the city. The Emir becomes angry. He disowns and banishes Abdulmalik despite pleas from the Queen. Seeing this as the end of the road for her since her hope is hinged on her son ruling the caliphate as Emir's successor, the Queen becomes violent and starts plotting for the downfall of the Emir. The Queen arranges with Jakadya to poison the Emir. Consequently, the Emir falls sick and since has been on the sick bed. The Emir's sickness confines him to the sickbed. He cannot control the affairs of the state any longer as he has lost his mind. Only once a while will he reason like a perfect human being. He becomes frail, loses his strength and agility and thus he is pushed aside as far as state politics is concerned and the Queen takes over the reign of the state.

After sometime, pressure mounts on Aasmau, the Queen, to get rid of Emir and install another Emir. To further the pressure, the rival party starts to press for the Emirship. The house of Dauda appeals to the District Officer who supports the dethronement of the bedridden Emir, thereby forcing Aasmau to do something. She is advised to kill the ailing Emir, and install his son, Abdulmalik in his stead. However, Aasmau hesitates to kill her husband, but having been persuaded by Zango, she gives in and the plot is hatched. To restore the status quo and ensure their hold on the throne, Aasmau names his son as successor to the dying Emir. Disappointed because her son is rejected as Emir, Aasmau poisons Dogari as punishment for his betrayal, and Tassala hangs him in his room as if he commits suicide.

The Emir dies shortly after this incident and in anger, Kaka, (Emir's Mother) chops off Jakadya's ear, accusing her of killing her son. Afraid for her safety, Queen Aasmau hides in her chamber. There, she learns that while the Emir is being carried away, a scroll falls from under his toga naming a successor which is not Abdulmalik. Seeing all come to an end, Aasmau commits suicide. The play ends with accusing fingers being pointed at the house of Dauda, Emir's second wife, and Aasmau, for the calamities in the land. Ahmed Yerima here attempts to examine man himself and how much man learns from his own history relative to his society. He is able to achieve this feat through the tool of culture, most especially, religion.

In *Mu'adhin's Call*, Yerima examines the futility of man's wordly desire, his inability to learn and be cautious, even when faced with reality. This, he asserts, when he states that he wonders at man's acts when we refuse to learn, even when the truth stares us straight in the face. The play, therefore, is a caricature of man's tomfoolery.

3.1.6 Attahiru

In *Attahiru*, Ahmed Yerima tactically employs cultural historical links to re-create the story of the amalgamation of the great Sokoto caliphate by the British colonial masters. The story is an exposition of the brave deeds of Caliph Mohammed Attahiru I and his followers in their bid to prevent the British invasion led by Lugard. Through the first scene of *Attahiru*, Yerima presents the Islamic religious background of the play as a strong historical cultural factor that is responsible for the essence of the story. The play opens with Abbas, Yakubu, and Ahmed talking about the demise of Caliph Abdulrahman, the known protector of Sokoto Caliphate, and the intended installation of one out of Prince Mohammed Attahiru Ahmadu and Mohammad al-Tahir Aliyu as the new caliph and protector of Sokoto. This is significant and urgent as well because of the intended invasion of the white man which has been witnessed in Kano, Kotangora, Bida, Yola and so on. The urgency in installing a new caliph as protector is emphasized by Abbas who informs us that the white man is already marching towards Argungu and Gwandu.

With the installation of Attahiru as Caliph over Aliyu, the caliphate witnesses a great and dynamic rule, and along with great men like Waziri, Madawaki, Galadima, Ubandoma and so on, the men of Sokoto seek for a way of dealing with a more pressing issue of the white man. It is on record that the white man extends a hand of friendship to the people of Sokoto and strictly proposes that if eventually, his negotiations with the Caliph degenerate into a war situation, it must not be allowed to be linked with religion since such is difficult and takes a long time to end. However, the Sokoto people already link the British invasion with religious issue as they see the white man as coming to impose his religion on them. This triggers a strong resistance in the people, and prompts their resolution to fight alongside their Caliph in the defence of Sokoto instead of accepting the hand of friendship extended by the white man. An attempt at re-creation of history is detected as Yerima readily gives information on the opportunity given to Attahiru to make a choice between war and peace. This is emphasized by Marafa and Galadima who propose that Sokoto is not ready for war and for the sake of the children and women; the Caliph

should allow reason to prevail on issues and not rush to spill blood. Both Marafa and Galadima give the example of the people of Katsina who averts war, opting for peace by accepting the white man. Relying on the reasoning of Madawaki, Dan Magaji, and the likes of Sarkin Kwanni, Caliph sees the option of accepting the white man as an act of cowardice. Instead, Caliph Attahiru goes to war with the white man. Yerima's story at this point is a departure from history and beliefs in some quarters as some people believe that the then Caliph Attahiru surrendered cowardly to the white-man. Yerima's thematic preoccupation is brought into the fore here as he re-creates history by painting Caliph Attahiru as a hero of the war between the white man and Sokoto Caliphate. Specifically, Yerima dotes on the details of the war as Caliph Attahiru's brave performance and great swordsmanship is revealed through Madawaki. Madawaki told us how Attahiru fought, killing the white men in thousands. In fact, Dan Sarkin told us how he saw the Attahiru cornered and craftily deal ruthlessly with the white-men. Despite the number and war might of the white men embedded in their possession of guns as against the people of Sokoto who use swords and arrows, the people led by Attahiru still fight on gallantly and fearlessly. However, it is an already lost war from the beginning as expected, the Sokoto people stand no chance with their swords, arrows and amulets against the civilized might of the white man's gun and ammunition in the battle field. The white man ruthlessly defeats the people of Sokoto. Attahiru, having been shot severely fell on the battlefield alongside several other bravemen of Sokoto. Seeing these as a signal of defeat, the surviving warriors of Sokoto flee from the battle field, recounting their losses and proudly narrating the valiant death of Caliph Attahiru. Thus Attahiru's name is painted in gold because of his brave act. Yerima records that he is mourned, honoured and respected by the people of Sokoto after the war as evidenced in their lamentation on who will lead them again as Caliph Attahiru does.

Yerima names the play after the hero and protagonist, Sultan Muhammadu Attahiru 1 of Sokoto. This is because in the history of northern Nigeria and Islam in Nigeria, Sokoto was and still remains the greatest Caliphate, having descended from Sheik Uthman Dan Fodio. According to Yerima (1999), Attahiru's reign of November 1902 was overshadowed by the British military penetration of the hinterland in the north which cut Attahiru's reign to less than six months. Attahiru died in 1903 fighting Lord Lugard and his British determination to rule the whole of the Niger area. Yerima reveals that Attahiru died in Burmi with over ninety-nine of his soldiers "after bravely defending his religion and the honour of the Sokoto Caliphate". Yerima's

preoccupation in *Attahiru*, therefore is to evoke sympathy, built honour, and uphold the status and respect for Caliph Attahiru and the Sokoto Calphate. This he does by mixing facts of history with the fiction of the mind to present a story that suits his purpose.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

CHAPTER FOUR

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS 1

4.1 Pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yerima’s selected Yoruba Culture-based plays

The Yoruba selected culture-based plays; *Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale* are examined in this section. First, we look at *Mojagbe*.

4.1.1. Pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yerima’s *Mojagbe*

Practs and allopracts of informing, invoking, warning, assuring, lamenting, insisting, and accusing are found in traditional and communal contexts in *Mojagbe*, to treat issues of power, danger, immortality, re-incarnation, death, bravery, punishment, insincerity, and war through contextual features of shared-situational knowledge (ssk), socio-cultural knowledge (sck), inference (inf), reference (ref), and voicing (vce). This is aptly represented in Table two below:

Practs/ Allopracts	Context	Issues	Contextual features
Informing	Traditional	power, danger, death war	sck, ssk, vce, inf, ref, rel
Invoking	Traditional	immortality, reincarnation, death, disappointment	sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel
Warning	Traditional	danger, death	vce, ref, inf, rel, sck, ssk
Assuring	Traditional	danger	ssk, sck, vce, ref, inf, rel
Lamenting	Communal	grief	sck, ssk, inf, rel
Cautioning	Communal	bravery, anger	sck, ssk, vce, ref, inf, ref
Insisting	communal, traditional	punishment	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Accusing	communal, traditional	insincerity	sck, ssk, ref, rel

Table 2 : An analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima’s *Mojagbe*

Table 2 reveals that eight practs and allopracts are found in *Mojagbe*. They are considered in turn below:

4.1.1.1 Informing

Informing is solely found in the traditional context in *Mojagbe*, especially, in dealing with issues of power, danger, and death through sck, ssk, vce, ref, inf, and rel. The following examples will suffice:

Ex. 11: Yeye: Tonight is not our night.
It belongs to the owners of the night.
A thousand big birds who perch on the sacred tree trunk
at the centre of the market square...

(*Mojagbe*, pg. 9)

The scene in eleven above is created in the traditional context. Yeye and three other women are dressed in white wrappers and “*shàkì*” (sacred woven clothes) as head ties. In Yoruba traditional context, this depicts individuals belonging to a particular secret cult. Usually, the people that adorn the sacred “*shàkì*” are the “*Babaláwos*” (Ifa Priests), the “*Àjés*” (witches), and the “*Osós*” (wizards). The witches are either white or black, depending on their spiritual activities relative to the society in which they operate. The witches are the ones Yeye refers to as: “a thousand big birds who perch on the sacred tree trunk at the centre of the market square...”.

Yeye relies on the sck and ssk of the readers about the “*àjé* cult” in Yorubaland for the readers to link witches to birds and also showcase the spiritual powers of witches when she reveals that they (the witches) are “the owners of the night”. With the application of reference, one sees Yeye calling humans, that is, the witches, birds. This is absurd as it is quite unnatural for a human being to be a bird except in fantasy stories. Without an application of ssk and sck of “*àjé* cult” in the situation above, one would not understand Yeye’s point of informing here, as a careful perusal of the excerpt does not reveal any lexical item indicating that Yeye is informing us of the coming of the witches. However, a consideration of the conversational context and the application of inference reveal the act as informing of the coming of the witches. Also, Yeye, implicitly informs us of the great spiritual powers possessed by witches that significantly enhance our sensibility in determining their relevance to the plot and the eventual realization of Yerima’s thematic foci of witches’ supernatural intervention in men’s affairs in *Mojagbe*.

The pract of informing in this instance is enhanced by the fact that the Yorubas believe that witches possess great spiritual powers such that when they are going for their nightly meetings, they place two legs on the wall while lying on their backs as their spirits leave the

body and turn to birds to fly to the meeting venue or other destination the witches so desire. Hence, the belief that witches can travel to any part of the world at night spiritually, and get back by morning without their body leaving their sleeping places. In fact, Yoruba people link birds with the bird-person (*eleye*), for whatever happens to the bird in the night happens to the body of the owner, that is, the *eleye* at home. An application of ssk and sck of the “àjé cult” here thus enhances our understanding of the information that Yeye is trying to pass across.

Yerima’s artistic craftsmanship is exhibited here as he skillfully manoeuvres between the physical and the metaphysical world. “A thousand big birds..” is a reference to the “owners of the night”, that is, the witches. With ssk and sck of the supernatural powers of witches, one can infer that the birds are at the same time, the witches. In Yorubaland, “witches” are known to possess great spiritual powers and are greatly volatile, posing as mothers to cult members. Africans call them “mothers of the earth”, (*iyá ayé*), and because of their immense and surpassing spiritual powers, witches are said to own this world (*àwon tí wón ni ayé*). As such, they willingly or unwillingly control the affairs of men. Yeye extols the powers of the “mothers of the earth” in the utterance; “tonight is not ours”.

Yerima’s separation of Yeye from the owners of the night brings a lot to mind. His presentation of Yeye and her colleagues would have gone down well as owners of the night if Yeye had claimed that “tonight is our night”. In which case, Yerima physically separates the women from the owners of the night, but unites them spiritually to demonstrate how witches operate and the height of their spiritual capability. Whoever offends the “witches” in Yorubaland is believed to offend the “world” (*ó se ayé*). Thus, witches are greatly feared in Yorubaland because of their great spiritual powers. Through Yeye, Yerima practs informing in the excerpt above and it is with the application of sck, ssk, vce., ref., rel., and inf. that one could be informed of the birds coming out at night and wittingly stay indoors to avoid danger. Moreover, the reference to birds as owners of the night significantly enhances the inference that witches are set to prowl the night and that the night belongs to the thousand birds that perch on the sacred tree trunk at the centre of the village market square. These highlight the relevance of the information such that one infers that coming out at such a night implies facing danger.

Another instance of informing occurs when Oba Mojagbe sends for Isepe to intimate to him the crisis in the land, powered by the unholy visit of the spiritual masquerade, Layewu, to

his palace. Yerima trashes the voice of Oba Mojagbe to inform Isepe of the issue on ground. Let us examine 12 below:

Ex. 12: (*Isepe attempts to prostrate with great effort*).
Mojagbe: Not in my palace. Rise, old one.
Isepe: You are my king ... I must greet my king.
Mojagbe: The intention is enough. Sit, old one. My palace burns.
 (*Mojagbe, pgs 14-15*).

In this interaction, Yerima emphasizes the urgency and the uncomfortability of King Mojagbe generated by the visit of the sacred masquerade, Layewu. The Yoruba culture recognizes the significance of paying homage to a king, even if the king is younger than the person greeting him (as reflected in the excerpt above), tradition demands that the king must be honoured before any discussion takes place. Isepe, being a traditionalist and regardless of his old age, insists on performing the rite of honouring his king. However, King Mojagbe is pressed by the danger of death hovering over him and is determined to overlook the issue of greeting and go straight to the point. As such, through the use of metaphor, Mojagbe practs informing: “my palace burns”

Mojagbe’s character as portrayed in the play shows an individual that will not take a short-cut explanation on issues as he enjoys trashing out issues properly. If not for the urgency of the issue, the King would not have cut Isepe off. Hence, we do not hear the voice of Mojagbe but that of Yerima who prefers to go straight to the point so as to drive home the issue of danger relative to death threats on Mojagbe. In Yorubaland, often, when there is an emergency, people employ this metaphorical expression to indicate the urgency of issues. The utterance does not suggest its direct meaning as, for instance, there is no report of a fire outbreak in the palace which makes King Mojagbe’s reference to the palace being on fire a false claim. One would have expected Isepe, on hearing that the palace is on fire to start running for water to quench the fire, or to start shouting for help. Instead, Isepe’s application of ssk of the spiritual implication of Layewu’s visit enhances his understanding of the King’s utterance and promptly infers that the palace being on fire could only imply lurking danger. Mojagbe’s interaction, here, is relatively informed by the Yoruba wise-saying, “a kii fi ina sori orule sun”, that is, “it is forbidden to leave one’s roof on fire and goes to sleep”, which is another signifier of danger. Through the metaphor

“my palace burns” therefore, Yerima tactically practs informing thereby, relating the essence of Mojagbe’s anxiety to Isepe in few words and the need to attend to issues immediately.

Also, Isepe practs informing when King Mojagbe asks Esan of his identity and the person that hires him to kill him (Mojagbe). However, Esan could not discover himself but remain stupefied. Example 13 aptly reveals this.

Ex. 13: Mojagbe: Howu, he repeats himself. Who sent you?.....

Mojagbe: Shut the fool up.

Isepe: It is “Edi” my lord. He was well sent. He shall continue to repeat himself until he dies. He was dead even before he came here, my lord. Those who sent him did a good job. Sending a dead man to kill the living. Ha, Ogun!.

(*Mojagbe*, pg 16).

Isepe’s deep knowledge of Yoruba charms makes him to identify Esan’s folly in his being binded spiritually. This, in Yoruba context, is referred to as “èèdì”. With “èèdì”, a man goes to perform the “èèd” designer’s designated act even against his will as he is not in control of his reasoning. Isepe practs informing in the utterance “sending a dead man to kill the living” to sensitize Mojagbe of Esan’s psychological state. The fact is that the referent of “dead man”, Esan is not actually dead, but is called a dead man because a person who is under a spell, or binded is referred to, in Yorubaland, as a dead man, and in this context, it is with an application of ssk of spiritual binding in Yorubaland, that Mojagbe understands the pragmatic implication on the issue of danger.

Furthermore, informing also manifests in traditional context on the issue of war through contextual features of ssk, inf, and rel Example 14 is a testimony:

Ex. 14: Isepe: (*Knocks the door*) Kabiyesi o.

Mojagbe: Who?

Isepe: It is me, Kabiyesi. Please hurry, Kabiyesi, I have a message from the gods.

Mojagbe: (*Opens the door*) Speak. The blood boils. We are off to war.

Isepe: Thank you, Kabiyesi. First you shall not go on this war. If you do not go, no one will die. Not even a shot will be fired at anyone.

Mojagbe: Isepe, what are you turning me to? A coward? I am Mojagbe, the fearless animal in the bush. The hunter of the hunted. My people shall jeer and mock me. My detractors shall say Haahah! At last, I bend to the whims of age, and now I am an easy prey. Mojagbe a weakling? Never.

(*Mojagbe*, pgs 42-43)

After declaring war on the people of Igbo-odo, Mojagbe sets to get dressed and instill confidence in his boys as they go to war. Just then, Isepe comes in to deliver the message of the gods. Definitely, Mojagbe is busy with his consultation, hence his short and brisk inquiry about the person that knocks. A consideration of the extract shows a tone of urgency on the part of the interactants. Mojagbe is in a hurry so that he can join his warriors and Isepe, because of the significance of the message. Examine the note of urgency sounds in Isepe's voice "it is me... Kabiyesi. Please hurry. Kabiyesi. I have a message from the gods"

The lexical item "hurry" suggests the note of urgency which prompts Mojagbe to open the door. However, the urgency on the part of Mojagbe, despite his readiness to listen to Isepe, prompts him to tell Isepe to hurry. The need to hurry is expressed in a figurative expression "the blood boils". With ssk of the situation, the application of inference here reveals that "the blood boils" basically informs of Mojagbe's eagerness to go to war. The eagerness of being in the war is not expressed through any lexical item in the excerpt. However, based on the consideration of the context of the discourse, Isepe could infer the relevance of the meaning of the figurative expression. The pragmatic success could be read in the words of Isepe; "that too, Kabiyesi", the reference which Isepe indicates as the eagerness to go to war which makes the blood to boil is part of the message.

What can be referred to as direct informing or reporting is recorded when some people rush into the palace to report a shocking incident. Let us consider example 15:

Ex. 15: All: They killed them, Kabiyesi. Before our very eyes,
they slaughtered them like goats for sacrifices.
They are dead, Kabiyesi.

(Mojagbe, pg. 39)

Informing occurs in fifteen above, through metaphorical application in the traditional context. From the interaction above, we can infer the following information: (a) they killed them, (b) they slaughtered them like goats for sacrifices, (c) they are dead. A consideration of the three utterances indicates that one and same information is conveyed in example fifteen; some people are dead. The first utterance in "a" above gives background information on the occurrence, while "c" is a confirmation of "a". "b" contains detailed information of the occurrence, in which case, the manner of the killings is revealed. This, of course, is achieved through the use of simile in order to give a vivid description of the killings. Without an application of ssk, and sck of how a

goat is slaughtered in Yorubaland, one will not be able to make reference nor infer how a goat is slaughtered to be able to understand the relevance of the utterance. In other words, to know the manner of death, one will have to be equipped with ssk of how a goat for sacrifice is slaughtered. In Yorubaland, it is common practice to appease and appreciate gods by offering goats as sacrifice. In such situations, goats are tied hands and legs and laid on their sides before they are slaughtered at the shrine. This form of killing is applied to humans that were killed in the extract above, hence the upheaval. Without the application of sck, ssk, ref., rel., and inf., Mojagbe and the Chiefs would have missed the information relative to the issue of danger, even as detailed, as it is. The lexical content of the interaction does not reveal anything as regards informing. However, a consideration of the conversational context in terms of speech act makes the act to count as informing.

4.1.1.2 Invoking

The second pract in the play is invoking. Wherever it occurs, invoking is found in the traditional context in dealing with issues of immortality, reincarnation, death and disappointment, through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, inf, and rel. An instance is found in Yeye's invoking of the masquerade, Layewu. Let us examine 16 below:

Ex. 16: Yeye: The evening breeze which blows cool and swift , awaken the gentle, tender nostrils of Esu, the tall and short friend of Orunmila. Arise!
 Through the groves of the jaded crypt Arise!
 The people who own us Those who enthroned us fathers of the land ...
 and gave our tongues power to pronounce, sent us, hence we summon you.
 Hurry now in the darkness of the wind...
 To the palace of our king, Mojagbe, make swift the heavy feet of Layewu...
 move. Let Iku take the soul of the king.....
 Let death give our people the respite that they need.
 Mojagbe... now let us see how well your boasts mount you on a horse of
 shame! Gallop this instant to the fall which awaits you!
 Galo... galo... you mount
 Guli... guli ... you shall fall.
 Now, where is my father, Layewu?
 One with the shreds of cloth of a basket cowries.. the masquerade... our
 father who walks in two folds.
 Layewu, it is you that I call
 Layewu! o
 Layewu! o
 King of the masquerades of life.. father to your people.
 But a messenger of death to the king.
 Tonight reveal yourself to the sacrifice of the land. Reveal yourself,

Great one. Reveal.

(*Mojagbe*, pgs 9-10)

In sixteen above, Yerima adopts the Yoruba traditional way of bringing out the masquerade from the shrine during masquerade festivals. References are made to the spiritual world as a means to merge both the spiritual and the physical. For example, the spiritual power is referred to as “the people who own us”, “those who enthroned us”, “fathers of (our) land” and “fathers who gave our tongues power to pronounce”. Thus, Yerima tactically creates the link between the spiritual and physical realm, through the use of references, to perform the pract of invoking.

The act is an exposee of Yorubas’ belief in the relationship between the physical and the spiritual. Yorubas do invoke the spirits of gods and ancestors to intervene in certain issues. In this instance, Layewu (the masquerade of death) is invoked. Layewu is an evil masquerade employed by the evil ones to attack their “preys”. The witches’ prey, and Layewu’s target, here, is the king. The spiritual masquerade syndrome is more emphasized in the Yoruba cultural belief that it is a bad omen for one to dream or see masquerade pursuing one in a dream as it practically suggests death. Yerima continues the narration and his manipulation of Yeye is evident in his out of culture, but characteristic creative rhythmic expression, “Galo..-galo..-you mount, Guli ...guli ..-you shall fall”, which is way out of Yorubas’ rhythmic cultural ethic.

However, Yerima tactically reverts to form as he recognizes “Layewu”, the masquerade as “father” in line with Yoruba cultural practice. It could be strange, especially to somebody from another culture, if one refers to a masquerade as one’s father. More amazing is the fact that, in Yorubas’ conception, the masquerade is not of this world, as Yorubas call the masquerade, “*ará Òrun*” that is, “the heavenly being”. One then begins to wonder how an earthly being, that is, a person in the costume of the masquerade is referred to as “the heavenly being”. With the application of *sck*, and *ssk* of Yoruba masquerade beliefs, one infers the relevance of Yorubas’ reference to masquerade as “*ará Òrun kìn kin*”. In which case, Yerima practs immortality and reincarnation to signify that the forefathers are always there to guide and protect us, while at times, the evil ones are employed to perpetrate evil.

Also, it could be amazing how somebody can be “tall” and “short” at the same time. However, with the application of *sck*, and *ssk* of Yoruba cultural knowledge of “*èsù-òdàrà*”, one easily infers that “tall” and “short” are references to the confusionist “èsù”. Furthermore, Yerima

taps on the knowledge that evil in Yoruba culture is executed in the night and not during the day, hence, his setting of the act in the night when all have slept. In fact, some Yorubas are greeted as: “*omo òru làá sè kà, tó bá di ojú ojó a se rere*”, that is, “evil is perpetrated during the night, while the day is meant for good”. Hence, Yerima in the excerpt above through Yeye urges Layewu to “hurry now in the darkness of the wind”, to move to the palace of king Mojagbe to “let Iku take the soul of the king”. Without a socio-cultural knowledge of this Yoruba way of life, one might not completely understand Yerima’s intention here. Yerima’s dependence on Yoruba cosmology is further emphasized in his representation of “father Layewu” being with the “shreds of cloth of a basket of cowries”. Linked with the costumes of Yoruba masquerades, cowries are usually attached to signify a link to ancestral background. Above all, the call of Layewu three times imitates Yoruba’s way of invoking spiritual beings to intervene in the physical realm.

4.1.1.3 Warning

Warning largely occurs in the traditional context through such contextual features as *vce*, *ref*, *inf*, *rel*, *ssk*, and *sck*, to treat issues of danger, and death. Let us consider example 17:

Ex. 17: Abese: The frightening drums sent a thousand shivers down our spine. The Akoda’s stood stupefied. Not a soul could move in the palace yard. The chief akoda inspecting the night guards was rooted to the ground, consumed by the wrath of the fearsome masquerade... the frightening drums of death, my lord, were heard throughout the four corners of the village. Ha Kabiyesi, the thick smoke of evil roams, the figure of death looms large tonight, my lord.

Mojagbe: I heard it too. Now, hurry to Balogun, tell him to come with the chiefs to the palace. The fire on the mountain top looms large, all it needs is an ill wind to spread it. Mind who you speak to on the way. Put the sacred *aamo* leaves between your lips and bite it. Speak to no one. Hurry man, before the drums die down and Layewu returns to its senders. Hurry!

(*Mojagbe*, pg 12)

In this interaction, one could easily identify an omnipresent heterodiegetic narrator who knows and sees all the actions in the play. From all indications, the sound of Layewu’s drum stupefied everybody and instilled fear in them. If “the Akoda’s stood stupefied” and the chief Akoda that is inspecting the night guards “was rooted to the ground”, consumed by the fear of the masquerade, how much more an ordinary palace servant, Abese. Abese’s claim that the frightening drums sent a thousand shivers down their spine links him with those who are afraid, in which case, the first person plural pronoun “our” collectively links Abese as referenced along

with those who are afraid. It is amazing, therefore, for Abese to have knowledge of the situation of the four corners of the village, despite the gravity of the fear that gripped everybody, and shook them out of their wits, definitely, Abese could not be in a condition to give such report.

Consequently, Yerima's voice trashes that of Abese as it overshadows Abese's voice to project the traditional context where Yerima establishes that "the thick smoke of evil roams", and "the figure of death looms large". These figurative expressions, which relevantly, are fall outs of certain precedence, could only be inferred by someone with the *sck* and *ssk* of Yorubas' cultural expressions as references to danger and death. As such, the utterances are basically employed to pract warning on the issues. The effect is reflected in Mojagbe's response to Abese's contribution when he asks Abese to hurry to Balogun to call the chiefs to the palace. There is also the need for *sck* and *ssk* of Yoruba cultural practices to understand the act of putting "aamo" leaves between Abese's lips and biting it. In Yorubaland, this act is to prevent a messenger from divulging a secret. Lessons from Yerima's cultural consultants, Chief Adeyemi and Ayo Ewebiyi are evident here. However, the "aamo leaves" are supposed to be "à mó", short form for Yorubas "ménumó" leaves. A socio-cultural knowledge in this direction, therefore, will enhance one's identification of Yerima's pract of warning.

4.1.1.4 Assuring

Assuring occurs in *Mojagbe* in the traditional context basically to address the issue of danger, through contextual features of *sck*, *ssk*, *ref*, *inf*, and *rel*. Let us consider example 18:

Ex. 18: Olori: (*Raises her head, still sleepy*) Kabiyesi.

The noise I thought I heard....

Mojagbe: Nothing when the mother fish senses danger in the belly of the sea, it opens its mouth for all its children to swim in, and yet no one single tiny fingerling is hurt or even scratched. Mine is mine to keep, sleep, Olori... this fight is mine. Sleep, child, (*Olori Deola turns her back and goes back to sleep*). Now to turn to my search for the doomed faces who clamour and chatter for my downfall. (*He goes, as if in a trance, to a small pot in a corner of the room*). Ela! My eyes were washed with the sleep paste, ipin in the eyes of a dog, so I see beyond the eyes. Open and show me. By all the gods who stand with me, who sent death to the king of death? Who wants Mojagbe, the son of the great medicine man dead? Show me. Elaiwori! Agbe nu omi riran niteja, Elaiwori! Ha, here they are... fools on the false drunken horse of shame and death... fools. One by one, I shall hack them down. Those who wish to repay my kindness with death. I shall cut down their souls. With Ogun's mighty war sword. One by one.

(*Mojagbe*, pg 13).

A glean of the trend of events from the opening of the play highlights Oba Mojagbe living in fear of death embodied in Layewu. The fear of Layewu grips everybody because of the myth that surrounds the masquerade and same goes for Olori when she subconsciously hears the noise made by Layewu. The Yoruba culture demands that a man should protect his family, hence, Yerima's intrusion to pract assuring in Mojagbe's contribution as reflected in: "when the mother fish senses danger in the belly of the sea, it opens its mouth for all its children to swim in, and yet, no one single tiny fingerling is hurt or even, scratched".

Mojagbe's utterance brings to mind the Yoruba philosophy of the protective mother hen or the war lord, "*elégbèje*". The myths of these two are rooted in Yoruba incantation. "*Elégbèje*" is known for going to war and bringing all those who go with him back safely. These two are known in Yoruba culture to protect their own. Hence, Mojagbe equals himself with the mother fish indicating that no harm can come to Olori. The utterance exposes Yerima's tactics in manipulating elements of the people's culture to suit his purpose. The need to protect Olori, the fingerling, by the mother fish, Mojagbe, in this instance, makes him to engage in spiritual investigation which is common to Obas, powerful warlords, and powerful people in Yoruba society.

Mojagbe, therefore, seeks to detect his detractors through spiritual means which is indicative of Yorubas' cultural way of life in such situations. To take a peep into the unknown, Mojagbe reveals that his eyes were washed with the sleep paste, "*ipin*" in the eyes of a dog, so (he) sees beyond the eyes. "*Ipin*" is the "eye discharge". Of special kind is the "*ipin*" of a dog. Yoruba's belief that the dog sees the unseen, hence the Yoruba proverb that "a barking dog is not insane, he knows what he sees". The Yorubas, therefore, use "*ipin*" of the dog to prepare charm which when washed the eyes with (*we ojú*), makes a man to see what ordinary eyes cannot see. It is with the application of sck and ssk of Yoruba supernatural world that one can infer Yerima's pragmatic act in the excerpt.

Yerima, in this context, discusses the issue of danger. Such lexical items as "hurt" "scratched", "fight", "downfall" and "dead" are references to danger and with the lexical items, one can infer that the king is in danger, hence, his restlessness. However, to cover up his attempt at spiritual excursions, Yerima makes Mojagbe claims to be "the son of the great medicine man". Yet, one wonders why he still sends for Isepe, when he knows of charms and divination. Through sck of the truth of the utterance therefore, Yerima successfully practs assuring, for with

the assurance that “when the mother fish senses danger in the belly of the sea, it opens its mouth for all its children to swim in and yet no one single tiny fingerling is hurt or even scratched”, Olori went back to sleep and she sleeps like a child.

Another pract of assuring is performed when Isepe detects Esan who sneaks into the palace to kill the King when Mojabge is telling Isepe of the danger of death hovering over him. Isepe begins to sneeze, and Mojabge greets him, offering to give him water as antidote, but Isepe replies that he smells danger. Example 19 captures this:

Ex. 19: Isepe: Water ke? (*Rises and walks round the palace room*) I smell the blood of another. I smell the danger from a child (stops, shaking in one spot). Ewoo! No one has given the king’s head as sacrifice, wherever and whoever you are, freeze like the effigy of clay, and slowly die. (*Esan begins to make muffling sounds behind the throne chair. Mojabge is enthralled.*) You refuse to freeze, then come out stupefied... a living dead. Out! (*Slowly, Esan emerges and stands at attention. Isepe hits his forehead gently with his horsewhip*).

Mojabge:(*With disgust*) a cricket... a common cricket fit for food for the wall gecko... a common lizard comes to the palace to kill a king. (Walks round him). A childish fool!

(*Mojabge, pg 15*)

There are lots of metaphorical expressions in the voices of Isepe and Mojabge in the extract above to portray the intensity of the danger in the palace. First, Isepe pragmatically proclaims that no one has declared the king dead. His emphasis on this lies in the use of the exclamatory item rendered in Yoruba dialect suggesting an act of impossibility. Something that must not be attempted as it is against the tradition. Isepe depicts the killing of the king in metaphorical expression, “no one has given the king’s head as sacrifice”.

Without an application of sck of Yoruba cultural practices, it would be impossible to interpret the assertion that whosoever’s head is given as sacrifice is already dead. The sck of giving the head as sacrifice enhances a right and accurate attempt at the meaning of the speaker. Through the ssk of such cultural practice, one is able to infer the relevance of Isepe’s exploration of the issue of danger in the extract above which enhances the performance of the pract of assuring. With the expression “no one has given the king’s head as sacrifice”, Isepe assures Mojabge of his safety with the knowledge that he will not die. It must be noted that there is no reference to death, however, with inference, based on sck and ssk of the cultural implication of the utterance, one can infer the intended meaning and the relevance of the act of assuring.

4.1.1.5 Lamenting

Lamenting is found in the communal context to deal with the issue of grief in *Mojagbe*. Yerima successfully achieves this through the use of contextual features such as ssk, ssk, inference and relevance. This is shown in example 20

Ex. 20: Mojagbe: Howu! Who hates me this much.
Who is so resolved to let me starve to death, by removing
all the teeth in my mouth? What have I done, Baba Isepe, that
my arms are to be pulled out of my body by my own people like
a common thief!.....

(*Mojagbe* pg 16)

Following the exclamation in Yoruba language, “*howu!*”, to show surprise, Yerima successively employs certain figurative expressions to depict the state of mind of Oba Mojagbe. This is expressed in the following utterances: “who is so resolved to let me starve to death by removing all the teeth in my mouth?; what have I done... that my arms are to be pulled out of my body by my own people like a common thief!”.

These two expressions indicate violence towards the other to achieve certain goals. The violence in the expressions is explicit while the intention of the author is implicit. A close consideration however reveals a figurative use that indicates frustration based on events in the immediate environment. Except for a consideration of the context of discourse in terms of speech acts will one discover the act. Since there is no lexical item indicating the act, there is a need for an application of ssk of condemning a thief in Yorubaland to properly understand King Mojagbe’s lamenting here. With the application of ssk and ssk of the utterance, Isepe properly understands Mojagbe’s figurative use of words, especially, starving one to death by removing all the teeth in one’s mouth, and the pulling of one’s arm from his body like a common thief. Through the figurative expressions, the act of lamenting is performed without neither an actual removal of the King’s teeth, nor his hands being pulled from his body. In other words, the king is not treated like a common thief.

4.1.1.6 Cautioning

In dealing with the issue of bravery and anger, Yerima practs cautioning in the communal context in *Mojagbe* through such contextual features as ssk, ssk, vce, ref, inf, and rel. Let us consider the following examples:

Ex. 21: Abese: No my Lord. We only want the king to walk right.....
in the footpath of his father. (*Breaks into a chant*) Mojagbe o,

remember whose son you are. Only great men, beget great sons.
Do not hurry to shed his blood. An act a king will think
about consequences later is not a good act. A dog does not eat a
dog...Don't be in a hurry to show your fangs, your growl is enough to drive a
thousand fears into our hearts. Do not bite so quickly, great one.
(*Mojagbe* pgs 18-19)

Abese, in line with Yoruba cultural way of appealing to a person, sings the praises of King Mojagbe. One can see Yerima's voice trashing that of Abese as he intrudes into the narration vagary to relate his King, Mojagbe, to a dog. The reference is not in terms of morals, but of the wrath of a dog. This is unusual as palaces' wards are not in the capacity to advise, talk, or interfere in royal matters or decisions. Through an application of *sck* of Yoruba wise-sayings, one can make an inference that Yerima manipulates the Yorubas wise saying; "*adire kii je ifun ara won*", that is, "fowls do not eat each other's intestine" to come up with his own fabrication of "a dog does not eat a dog" which undoubtedly satisfies his purpose of appealing to King Mojagbe through his plea "don't be in a hurry to show your fangs". The relevance of this cautionary piece lies in restraining Mojagbe from getting angry. Known for his bad temperament, Mojagbe might wreck havoc. The reference to a dog eating a dog is indicative of the two parties (Mojagbe and Esan) being royal bloods and according to tradition, the blood of a prince must not be shed, else, it brings evil in the land. Without the *sck* of a dog and its known characteristics in Yoruba culture, one might not be able to adequately infer the implication of a dog eating a dog, or a dog showing his fangs, nor the growl of a dog. As such, an application of *sck* of the utterance enhances one's understanding that a dog gets angry when provoked. However, the pragmatic act here is that of cautioning as Mojagbe is being pleaded with on the issue of anger, to be lenient, so as not to "bite so quickly". Yerima tactically extorts this figurative use of language and its significance lies in the dog's characteristic ability of biting. However, Mojagbe is not a dog, hence, he ought not to bite. Hence, the need for *sck* of the biting dog in Yoruba cosmology to be able to infer that the biting is an act of punishing which Yerima cautions Mojagbe not to do because of Esan's royal background which might fuel the already flaming social crisis in the town.

Another cautionary act is performed when Alaa'in's messengers come from Oyo to demand for the customary annual gifts for Alaa'in from Mojagbe. Mojagbe gets angry but Abese cautions him as example 22 reflects:

Ex. 22: Abese: (*Chants*) Kabiyesi, sit. No matter how angry a sane man is with his mother, he will never slap her or else the land will reject him.... and people will call him mad. Ewo! Kabiyesi Mojagbe, a king is a bin into which all sorts of people heap all sorts. Sit, my Kabiyei, sit. Like a king and smile.! (*slowly Mojagbe sits*).

(*Mojagbe pg 59*)

The pragmatic act of cautioning is achieved through proverb, built around the mother in the extract above. A mother, in Yorubaland, is an institution, a mini-god that one cannot offend. It is unheard of that one beats up or slaps his mother; hence such an act is considered an abomination. This is reflected in Abese's cautioning piece realized through Yoruba's proverb, "no matter how angry a sane man is with his mother, he will never slap her." It is only with the application of sck of son cum mother relation and the cultural upholding of maternal institution as a mini god that one can understand the cautionary act in this utterance.

Yerima's literary creative ability is fore-grounded here. Mojagbe is referred to as "man", while "Alaafin" is the mother. Without an application of sck of heirarchical lineage of the status of Kingship in Yorubaland, one cannot infer the referent in the utterance, nor the relevance of the caution which repercussion, as grave as it is, one may not understand. In Yoruba land, it is believed that no matter the situation, one must not beat one's mother, thus emphasizing the role of the mother in the life of a child. However, an application of sck to the expression in twenty-two enhances a pragmatic success of the interaction as it is only then that the punishment of the land rejecting such person and the end result of his being called a "mad man" is inferred.

4.1.1.7 Insisting

Insisting occurs on one or two occasions in the traditional context, through sck, ssk, reference, inference, and relevance to deal with the issue of punishment. For example, when Esan was caught in the palace while trying to assassinate King Mojagbe, the King, out of anger pronounces capital punishment on him. However, because of the royal status of Esan as a prince in the land, it is an abomination to execute him as it is bound to bring evil in the land. Determined, Mojagbe insists on carrying on with his decision despite oppositions. Example 23 shows this:

Ex.: 23 Mojagbe: ... there is limit even for the dance and perching freedom of pigeons, even in the house of peace lovers.

(*Mojagbe pg 19*)

Pigeons, in Yorubaland are known to be peaceful. The belief is that pigeons are spiritual bringing wealth to whatever house they visit. Yorubas have a saying with respect to this; “*tòtún tòsì ni eyelé fí kó ire wolé*”, that is; “pigeons carry wealth on both wings to the host”, as such, pigeons are welcomed by everybody. It is common knowledge that pigeons do not prepare their food, they are fed by the hosts. The relevance of this to Mojagbe’s utterance lies in the pragmatic interpretation that there is limitation to everything in this world. With the application of sck and ssk of pigeons’ freedom in Yorubaland, both Abese and Isepe could infer Mojagbe’s reference to pigeons and its import. Mojagbe’s position here is that whoever Esan is, Mojagbe is a nonsense man who puts limitation to everything. Consequently, Esan’s royal status notwithstanding, he must be punished through capital punishment. Yerima practs insistence here without any lexical item that suggests the act. However, with the application of sck and ssk of the pigeon syndrome in Yoruba land, both Isepe and Abese could infer that Mojagbe does not rescind his decision, despite caution and advice from Abese, rather, he insists on going ahead with the execution of Esan.

4.1.1.8 Accusing

The pract of accusing is also found in the play in both communal and traditional contexts to address the issue of insincerity through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, and rel. This is depicted in example 24:

Ex 24: Mojagbe: Rise, friends of the throne, or is it not safe to call you that anymore?
Balogun : We do not understand, Kabiyesi...
Mojagbe: But you do, Balogun. Hands that are clean abhor dirt, unless the owner intends to wash them again. I am worried when you feign ignorance in the face of the consequence of actions taken by you.
(Mojagbe, pg 25)

A close observation of Mojagbe’s utterance above reflects ironical expression which directly addresses the insincerity of the chiefs. For example, “friends of the throne” speaks a volume. The ironical use is located in Mojagbe’s elicitation “or is it not safe to call you that anymore?” The use of the lexical item “safe” practically relates to the trust that Mojagbe has in his chiefs. Hence, he proceeds to accuse them when he says that; “hands that are clean abhor dirt, unless the owner intends to wash them again”. It is only with the application of sck., ssk. and ref. of the utterance that one can relate the hands that are clean and how they abhor dirt to Balogun and his present status of insincerity.

Following the intention of Mojagbe to execute Esan, the townswomen come to appeal to Mojagbe who insults them. They remain adamant and get angry in return. The chiefs plead with Mojagbe who takes this to be an act of betrayal and insincerity. Let us examine the example below:

Ex 25: Otun: Kabiyesi, these are mothers of the village.

Mojagbe: Then let them treat me as a son. Hear their song.

An undignified chant for a king. Haa, already they sing my funeral song. Not a word of praise. Osi, your women dance well to the song and dance you have crafted... but you all sit like shigidi before me. I shall not sit to share bean cakes at my own funeral. Ewo!

(Mojagbe, pg. 31)

Yerima tactically exploits the relationship between mother and child to emphasize the negativity of the insincerity on the part of the townswomen. A mother is expected to be sincere and protect the interest of her son. In a situation where such is lacking, the relationship goes sour and the son sees the mother as threatening his well being. Yerima, therefore, draws on the picture of son and mother to expose the degree of the damage that exists when even mothers betray sons. Without an application of sck and ssk of the utterance “let them treat me as a son”, one would have missed the pragmatic import. Also, with the knowledge of inference, one identifies the chiefs who Mojagbe metaphorically refers to as “*shìgìdì*”, that is, “molded or carved image” who is useless in acts and might. Making a reference that likens a man to this kind of statuetic item is insulting and shows the King accusing the chiefs for his misfortune.

In the same vein, Mojagbe’s accusation of the women as plotting his downfall continues as he sees his enemy in Yeye. Example 26 shows this:

Ex. 26: Balogun: Kabiyesi... a king... a great king like you does not fight his mother and wives. Let it be Yeye will soon be here. Let her speak with the women one by one.

Mojagbe: Haa, it is now that you have sharpened the knife that will behead me.

And you ask me to put it by my bedside, and wait for the lover you have chosen for me. Unaware that the lover who sleeps by my bedside tonight, and whom you chose for me, is the royal head cutter, and you ask me to trust and love him. Death instant death awaits me.

(Mojagbe, pg 32)

Yerima’s artistic craftiness realized through the interconnectivity in the story is highlighted here. In the opening of the play, Yeye is observed to be the driving force that led the three women to invoke Layewu and send him on errand to kill the king. The link is knotted here

as Mojagbe established Yeye as plotting his downfall. In Mojagbe’s view, trusting Yeye will be like “sharpening the knife that will behead (him)”. It is only with the application of sck and ssk of the wise-saying that one can infer that Yeye is the referent of the knife that will behead Mojagbe. Also, the allusion to the lover that will behead Mojagbe requires an sck of the utterance to be able to interpret.

4.2. Pragmatic Acting in Ahmed Yerima’s *Ajagunmale*

Certain practs and allopracts characterise *Ajagunmale* based on contexts to deal with some issues through identified contextual features. These are represented in the table below:

Pacts/allopracts	Context	Issues	Contextual features
Explaining	traditional, emotive	faith, deceit, culture, status/power	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Warning/cautioning	Traditional	achievement, culture, belief, social crisis, predestination	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel, vce
Persuading	Traditional	inquiry	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Rebuking	Traditional	status/power	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Praising	traditional	religion, power, culture	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Accusing	traditional	morals	sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel
Pleading	traditional	morals	sck, ssk, inf, rel, ref

Table 3: An analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima’s *Ajagunmale*

Table three reveals the occurrence of practs and allopracts of explaining, warning/cautioning, persuading, rebuking, praising, accusing, and pleading in *Ajagunmale*. Our observation reveals that the practs are largely performed in the traditional context, while few occur in the emotive context to treat issues of faith, deceit, culture, status/power, achievement, belief, social crisis, predestination, inquiry, religion, and morals through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, inf, and rel. Let us examine them in turn:

4.2.1 Explaining

A glean of *Ajagunmale* reveals that the play is largely dominated by the pragmatic act of explaining in the traditional context. Although, explaining is also found in the emotive context, the occurrence is comparably low. Notably, the pract of explaining is employed through socio-cultural knowledge (sck), socio-situational knowledge (ssk), reference (ref), inference (inf), and relevance (rel) to deal with the issues of culture, status/ power, faith etc. The following examples

will suffice: (**Background:** When Balogun visits Esu, he is welcomed by Saura, the Esu Priest. In the course of their discussion, certain facts about the relationship between Esu and Saura are revealed). Let us consider example 27:

Ex. 27: Balogun: But I thought you knew everything?

Saura: Not quite, Balogun. I am only a servant of the great one.
I do not possess such powers yet and if I must advise my master,
I must have the facts with me. Speak with me, Balogun, my ears yarn.
(*Hands him a pebble*). Speak to it.

(*Ajagunmale*, Pgs, 9 – 10)

Balogun is presented as a layman to *esu* cult in twenty-seven above. As a novice, he cannot understand the hierarchical operation of the cult. He is of the impression that his grievances are known and understood by the priest, Saura. Hence his innocent confession that he thought Saura knows everything that is happening to him. With the confession, Saura explains that he is only a servant of Èsù. Through this, we are made to be aware of the master-servant relationship between Èsù and Saura.

In Yoruba culture, a servant is a lowly one who occupies a position that could be equalled to that of a slave. A servant therefore carries out multifarious errands for the master. He is at the beck and call of the master. The servant cannot do anything against the will of the master, and cannot affect nor influence the decision or acts of the boss. This is the position of Saura in Esu cult. Relatively, Saura is Èsù's errand boy, hence, his confession that

“I do not possess such powers yet. And if I must advise my master,
I must have the facts with me”

Saura's utterance indicates that Èsù's power is greater than his. In order for Balogun to understand and make his case known to Èsù towards finding a solution, Saura explains to Balogun about his status. The structural classification, no doubt, significantly enhances Balogun's ability to place the status of Saura and greatly influences the effectiveness of his dealings with Èsù. Such co-textual lexical item as “power” in the extract enhances our reference of status since power indicates individual's position. Without an application of sck and ssk of hierarchy of Èsù cult in Yorubaland, Balogun could not have inferred from Saura's contribution, especially, the reference to “such power”, that the status is beyond Saura.

An instance of explaining is also found in Balogun's bid to reveal his problems. Example 28 captures this:

Ex. 28: Balogun: I am prince, but not too long ago, the king
broke tradition and made me a chief in the palace.
Ewo! Me, a blue-blooded prince.

(*Ajagunmale*, pg. 11)

The above reveals that an abomination has been committed. A careful examination of the utterance, “me, a blue-blooded prince” reflects the status of a prince in Yorubaland. The Yoruba royal families are regarded as the greatest in the land. A blue-blooded prince has the capability of becoming a king in the future. It is, therefore, an abomination for a blue-blooded prince to be made a chief when he ought to be an awaiting king.

What then could make a blue-blooded prince like Balogun to be angry? Balogun explains without hesitation. As he reveals, the king broke the tradition and made him a chief, dashing his hopes of being a king. With the application of *sck* and *ssk* of kingship and chieftancy installation in Yorubaland, Saura could infer the meaning of a blue blooded-prince, and what it entails, hence, his desire to help Balogun out of his predicament. Also, explaining is found in the traditional context in dealing with the issue of faithfulness. Let us examine example 29:

Ex. 29: Saura: Thank God, I am but a mere servant of a god.
He sees my heart always, and I do not have to pretend.
Before I sleep, it is to Esu that I turn, and when I wake up,
it is Esu that I turn to. He is my symbol of royalty,
while I am the scrapped, scratched, bone of
loyalty indented on his royal staff. They must go together.
But you have me fooled. I still think that was what I saw
on the day of the coronation. With eyelids firmly shot and
man lying so still, indeed sleep is the brother of death.
You fooled us all, Balogun.

(*Ajagunmale*, Pg. 12)

Through Saura’s utterances in twenty-nine above, Yerima tactically deals with the issue of faithfulness by highlighting the ingredients of being faithful and the significance of observation of the principles. First in this direction is a consideration of the degree of Saura’s dedication and faithfulness to his master, *èsù*. Second, Saura’s conception of his master is presented in a rhythmical form as he considers *èsù* as his “symbol of royalty” and he is “a bone of loyalty” indented on his (*èsù*’s) royal staff”. Yerima’s attempt at poetic excellence cannot go unnoticed for the pragmatic success achieved through the rhymes of royalty and loyalty. An application of *sck* of the dedication of high priests of gods in Yorubaland enhances one’s ability

to infer the meaning of Saura's utterances above. Through *sck*, therefore, one understands that in Yorubaland, royalty interacts with loyalty. As such, in royal circles, loyalty is expected. Hence, in royal circles, issues and pebbles of deception are quite unexpected.

Consequently, Balogun's act of deception and pretence on the chieftancy coronation is totally unexpected and culturally unacceptable because it is never an act expected of royalty. References to "symbol of royalty", and "bone of loyalty" enhance our ability to infer that Saura is proud of and faithful to Esu, especially. This is achieved through the pragmatic act of explaining.

Explaining is also employed in the traditional context to address the issue of culture. Let us consider the following example:

Ex. 30: Saura: Did he at that point promise to make you the king of Igboado?

Balogun: Did he have to? It was his twentieth year, I am his brother, and he was about to wage a war like our forefathers before him. It was reasonable to assume...

(*Ajagunmale*, pgs 15 – 16)

Yerima's stylistic excellence is fore-grounded in the interaction here. In a rather stylistic dialogue, Balogun answers Saura's inquisition with further inquiry. However, Balogun's elicitation framed as a response prepares the ground for the pragmatic act performed in the extract. Based on assumption, Balogun believes that the king, his brother, ought to follow tradition. This, he reveals when he states that "it was his twentieth year", "...and he was about to wage war like our forefathers before him". It is only with the application of *sck* and *ssk* of the traditional practice of waging war in the town that Saura understands Balogun's explanation here. Since Saura shares a common cultural knowledge with Balogun, he immediately understands that according to tradition, in his twentieth year, the king must wage war like his forefathers and give the town to his brother to rule. With this in mind, Balogun believes that he ought to be made king of Igbo-ado after conquering the town.

Another pragmatic act of explaining is performed when Oluawo enters the palace and meets Oba and Olori in intimate circumstance. Let us examine their interaction in 31 below:

Ex. 31: Oba: Rise, my beloved wife. Pillar and strength to the palace.

If we even return for a second life, I, like now, will marry you again.

Oluawo: (*Breaks into a laugh*) no wonder the egret perches on the cow ignored and yet protected. No wonder the bees will not stop sucking the flower fulfilled. It is the sweetness of honey that keeps them there.

My eyes have seen it all. How Olori massages the tender ego of the king and extracts everlasting promises of even the world beyond from him. Kabiyesi o.

(*Ajagunmale*, pgs 23 – 24)

Olori is presented as pillar and strength to the palace here. This phrase is intended by the King to reiterate the role of an Olori in the life of an Oba, hence, his promise of being with her, even if given a chance in the next world. To this, Oluawo comments; “no wonder the egret perches on the cow ignored”. This proverb relates the King and Queen’s relationship to that of the cow and egret. Intimate man-woman relationship is usually likened to cow-egret relationship in Yorubaland. With an application of *sck* and *ssk* of the cow-egret relationship, the Oba understands Oluawo’s meaning that the egret is not only secured, having perched on the cow, it enjoys the benefits of transportation as well. With the aid of reference, we are able to link the Queen with the egret, and the King, the cow. The relevance of the utterance lies in its ability to adequately express and communicate the intention of Oluawo in the circumstance.

Without an application of *sck* and *ssk* of the cow-egret phenomenon, it would have been difficult to establish the link between the egret and the cow. As such, one is able to conceive the picture of the sympathetic skinny legged egret perching on the fatty cow for survival. The perched egret is ignored because it is light in weight and, of course, constitutes no burden to the cow. With this, it is easy to make inference that Olori’s relationship which equates with the perching of the egret on the cow is ignored by the king because she brings no burden to the king.

In the same vein, Oluawo remarks that “the bees will not stop suckling the flowers fulfilled”. With the application of *sck* of the traditional meaning of the wise-saying, one catches the famous picture of a bee suckling the flowers and the contentment derived therein. With this, one could see a situational relationship whereby the flower provides fulfillment for the bees in terms of the sweetened buds. Without the sweetened buds, the bees might have not come. It can thus be easily inferred that the King is the bee, while the Queen is the flower. Hence, they are inseparable, hence their preference to even live together as husband and wife even in the coming world.

4.2.2 Warning/Cautioning

Warning/cautioning solely occur in the traditional context to deal with issues of achievement, culture, belief, social crisis, and predestination through contextual features of *sck*, *ssk*, *vce*, *ref*, *inf* and *rel* in the play. For example, when Balogun consults Èsù, Saura, the priest,

is intolerant of Balogun's inquisition and because Saura is feeling sleepy already, he attempts at summarizing Balogun's problems and telling him what to do. However, this does not go down well with Balogun who decides to make his problems known to Èsù himself. This is evident in his words as presented in example 32 below:

Ex.32: Balogun: I will speak to the point, if only you will talk less and let me do the talking. I am the one who knows where my boil is and how it hurts”.

Saura: Please, forgive me. My lips will remain sealed from now on. Please, speak Balogun.

(Ajagunmale, pg 10)

The context of conversation here confirms Adegbite's (2005) view of politeness and face management. The concept of face is employed to describe how the individual's self image is damaged, maintained or enhanced in an interaction. A positive face is reflected in the desire of participants to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by others, while the contrary is the negative face which manifests in the desire not to be impeded or put upon.

A consideration of Balogun's utterance above suggests a face threatening act (FTA) of Saura. This, obviously, is borne out of Saura's intolerance of Balogun coupled with Balogun's determination to make his case known to Èsù. It is only with an application of ssk of the communal use of the wise-saying that Saura understands Balogun's FTA in “I am the one who knows where my boil is and how it hurts”. One would not expect Balogun to have talked in this manner to Saura whom Balogun holds in high esteem. With an application of ssk of the wise-saying, therefore, Balogun detects an act of impoliteness and a threat to his negative face. Through a shared sck, Saura infers the meaning and the relevance of Balogun's warning/cautioning to the conversation. However, except for a consideration of the conversation context, Saura would not have read the FTA as cautioning since there is no lexical item indicating this. For instance, Balogun asserts that he has a boil, whereas in actual sense, he has no boil but our sense of reference reveals that he carries a grudge that is painful, as such, it hurts, and he is the only one that knows where it hurts and how much it hurts. Hence, the caution that Saura should talk less and allow him to state his case before Èsù. The pragmatic success is recorded in Saura's response “please forgive me. My lips will remain sealed from now on. Please, speak, Balogun”. The remorse of his act of intolerance towards Balogun could be read in Saura's repeated plea. Hence, his recognition of Balogun's cautioning.

Warning occurs in the play to alert Oba of Ifa's forecast of the approaching evil as shown in the following example:

- Ex. 33: Oluawo:** What does anybody ever do to offend ESU? Orunmila says we should send him some gifts. And also his high priest, Saura.
- Oba:** Send them.... Anything they desire. All these evil happenings must stop.
- Oluawo:** But remember, Kabiyesi... no matter how wild a masquerade is, .. he is propelled by the carrier. It is those carriers you should be after. That is why I propose that at the next meeting of the Chiefs you serve them good palm wine, laced with this, kabiyesi. (*Brings out a small calabash with a cover.*) Whoever has a hand in this, be he a man or woman, shall die two days after. And we shall have peace in the land. This has to do with somebody that has money to spend... even ESU does not just stand at the crossroads for a man. It is people who ask him to. I have given you my message, kabiyesi.
- Oba:** Very well. But I do not want bloodshed. Not one life. I only want to know who harbours so much hatred for me and my people. Leave the punishment to the gods.

(*Ajagunmale*, pg 27)

With the manifestation of evil occurrence all around him, the King knows that all is not well. Hence, he commissioned Oluawo to inquire from the gods the cause of the social crisis. Specifically, Oluawo reveals that Èsù has a hand in it, as such, Èsù must be appeased. Doting on Yoruba's cultural belief, Yerima puts Èsù in the centre of the confusion in the play. As earlier noted, Èsù is the mischief maker, the short man that lives at crossroads. These and other accolades belong to Èsù. When problems come, it is Òrúnmìlà that people go to for solution. Hence, Oluawo's consulting Òrúnmìlà. True to expectation, Òrúnmìlà sees into the unseen and locates the problem as originating from Esu. The height of the problems and social disorder leaves the Oba with no other solution other than to speedily offer the sacrifice, however, the Oluawo sees differently. The culprit is not in Èsù but in somebody that is sponsoring him, and that is the person that Oluawo refers to as somebody that has money to spend. Hence, his warning through the proverb, "no matter how a masquerade is, he is propelled by the carrier", that is "*kòsì bí egúngún se burútó, atókùn ní daríi rẹ*".

The concept of the masquerade and the carrier is such that with the belief that the masquerade is from heaven, "*ará Òrun*", the disguising costume (*èkú*) makes him all the more, a mystery. Usually, masquerade's disguising costume dwells in the shrine, and that is where the carrier adorns the spirit of the forefathers and comes out of the shrine as the person from heaven

(*egúngún*). The disguising costume is believed to be possessed by the spirit of the masquerade. The masquerade covers his face with a net known as “*kerèé*” so that his identity is not revealed.

In Yorubaland, some disguising costumes are made sacrifices to. Some are appeased with goats, some hens, in which case, blood must be shed, while others take petty things eaten by humans such as pap, bean cake and so on. The disguising costume is spirit filled such that the carrier, once in it is spirit filled as well. He becomes a supernatural entity and does amazing things. Such is the case with the “*ajókòó mágbòdó*” masquerade, that is, “he who sits without a mortar” in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, that sits on thin air. Some masquerades are wild while some are gentle.

Oluawo’s utterance above, therefore, practs caution. The carrier is not known and he acts under the disguise of the masquerade. The disguising costume cannot go anywhere unless it is mobilized by the carrier, as such, no matter how wild the masquerade is, it is the carrier that propels it. With our knowledge of reference, we adequately link the masquerade with Èsù, and the carriers with those who send Èsù on errand. Without an application of sck, and ssk, one would not understand the proverb as cautioning. Here, Òrúnmìlà through Oluawo cautions the King to look beyond Esu and seek those who send Esu on errand. A careful look at the scene reveals that there is no masquerade, nor carrier in the palace; it is only the concept of the masquerade and the carrier that is borrowed because of its relevance to the discourse. However, there is no lexical item that shows or suggests cautioning except for a consideration of the context of discourse which in terms of speech act count as cautioning.

Furthermore, when Balogun sends for Familola to know what will happen the following day that he will be crowned king of Igboado, Familola saw death, but for fear of being killed by Balogun, he turned the hand of the clock round. Let us examine example 34.

Ex 34:Kekere: (*Looks around to confirm they are alone.*)

May Ifa forgive us,
This is not what you taught me, Baba.

Familola: Watch what you say, son, or else we trip on the sharp edge of your inquisitive tongue. We are still in the face of danger. We must tread softly.

Kekere: Baba, you did not tell him the truth. I saw it all. You deliberately misread the signs.

Familola: Shii. Yes.... I told him that he wanted to hear, so that we may live. Our lives were more important. Our master, Orunmila will understand.

We must hurry out of here, evil lurks and the land wrecks of it. Esu prowls.
I thought you said you read the signs?

(*Ajagunmale*, pg 52)

Familola practs cautioning in his interaction in thirty-four above. Having read the signs, Kekere detects that Familola lies to Balogun, hence, the challenge that he deliberately misread the signs and did not tell the truth. However, with a consideration for their lives, Familola cautions Kekere through the metaphor, “watch what you say son or we trip on the sharp edge of your inquisitive tongue”. One then begins to wonder whether it is possible to thread on a tongue not to talk of tripping on the sharp edge of a tongue as if it is a land or mountain that could be walked upon. Without an application of ssk in the communal context, it is difficult to interpret Familola’s methaphor. Familola further tells Kekere to watch his tongue or else they will be in trouble because “they are still in the face of danger”. This figurative use of language is a vivid attempt at describing the state of things as one wonders whether danger has a face or not. A consideration of the conversation context here does not reveal any word signifying the act. However, when considered in terms of speech act, cautioning occurs in the traditional context to deal with issue of social crisis.

Also, Yerima intrudes into the narration to conclude the play through Saura to pract cautioning as shown below:

Ex. 35: Saura: You see what shame Balogun brought to himself?
You see how his tomfoolery envelops him? And he wallows
in his own stupidity? Always man is in a hurry...gra,... gra....
gra.... Destroy.... give me..... swallow.... me..... take it. At no time
do they listen to sense. See Balogun... I warn him.... And now see how
he lost it when the crown was only a hand stretch away. But do men
listen...do they ever learn? My master ESU must be fed. So, I must hurry
home to meet more men like you, whose ambitions spirit blurs their senses.
(*Ajagunmale* pg 56).

The conclusion, here, comes through Saura whose voice, Yerima trashes. This is evident as Saura’s diction changes in this last appearance and one begins to wonder whether he has had access to education. Saura’s vocabulary amazes one. Such choice of words as “tomfoolery envelops him”, “wallows in his own stupidity” are beyond Saura who once claims that he is incompetent before Èsù and often “Èsù walks away leaving (him) with the blabber of a pained, weeping and dejected soul....”.

Yerima's voice could be heard talking to his audience as he rounds off the play as he talks as if to another character in the play. For example, when he says "I must hurry home to meet more men like you", one has a feeling that the play is still on as Saura is talking to another character in the play. However, Yerima's voice is heard in the form of an heterodiegetic narrator who sees all around him as he reveals that there are still lots of other men like Balogun who will never wait for their time. Without an application of ssk, one might not understand how man is always in a hurry and it is only with the application of sck that we understand how man gives his life to the devil (Èsù).

4.2.3 Persuading

Instances of persuading are rare in *Ajagunmale*, however, some are found in the traditional context to deal with the issue of inquiry through sck, ssk, ref, inf and rel. An instance is when Balogun goes to Saura to inquire how far he has gone in employing Èsù to fight for his cause having sent goods in double fold to Èsù, Saura reveals his ignorance of the cause for the gifts and persuades Balogun to reveal it himself. Let us examine example 36:

Ex. 36: Balogun: And my requests?

Saura: My Lord and master heard them, but I did not.

Please tell me, Balogun, so that I the messenger of Esu can understand the reason for your generosity to my master.

The taste of the Kolanut is usually better described by the mouth of the chewer. Your messenger delivered the message like a messenger.

(*Ajagunmale*, pg 9).

Saura in the extract above reveals that he is just an ordinary man and it is the information given to him that he works on, hence, his insistence that Balogun must state his case before Èsù. Saura effectively packs the utterance "the taste of the Kolanut is usually better described by the mouth of the chewer". Here the request for the person who is involved in the issue to relate the state of things is inferred in the taste of the kolanut which is the issue that is better described by the mouth of the chewer who is the person that witnesses the occasion. It is only with ssk of being in such a situation before that one can understand that Saura is persuading Balogun to explain things since he is the one that feels and experiences the situation.

4.2.4 Rebuking

Rebuking is found in the traditional context in *Ajagunmale* to deal with issues of status and power through sck, ssk, inf, rel and ref. An instance arises when Balogun reveals his desire to be king. Let us consider the following example:

Ex. 37: Balogun: In life you cannot ask for success, you have to create it ...
And if it remains far, grab it ... is it unnatural to be ambitious? Is it?

Saura: But the gods have already made you a prince. Contentment is also a virtue.

Balogun: Woe betides contentment! A thousand curses on contentment. I need more than what the gods have given freely. To be a prince is even another burden to my soul. To aspire to be king after being a prince for such a long time..... That is right thing to do..... to be.

(*Ajagumale*, pg 13)

Balogun is presented in thirty-seven as being overambitious. Balogun's overambition leads him to Èsù and Saura. As a custodian of culture and specifically, priest of a religious cult, Saura evaluates Balogun's status and the cultural implication and opines that Balogun needs not aspire for power any longer. With the application of sck of the people's cultural belief and practices, Saura reveals that destiny plays a lot in the status and placement of a man in the society. Saura thus counsels Balogun that it is only the gods that make a man what he is (be it a king, a prince, commoner or slave), as reflected in his words: "but the gods have already made you a prince."

In Yoruba culture, a prince is almost a king because he is so regarded everywhere he goes and the treatment of a king is given to him. This, of course, is so as a prince is often referred to as "*Oba lóla*" that is, "the future king", although not all future kings become kings, their way of life is kingly, hence, Saura's rebuking of Balogun.

A consideration of Saura's pract shows no word indicating the pract except for a consideration of the act in terms of speech act. Without an application of sck of the people's cultural belief, one will definitely lack the required shared cultural knowledge to know the role of gods in human destiny and the status or power held by a prince. Notably, Balogun does not share this sck with Saura, although he has the knowledge, such that when Saura rebukes him, saying that "contentment is also a virtue", Balogun erupts in anger "woe betide contentment...", this, of course, leads to his downfall in the play.

4.2.5 Praising

Praising in *Ajagunmale* occurs largely in the traditional context to deal with issues of religion, power, and culture through sck, ssk, ref, inf, and rel. Let us consider the following examples.

Ex. 38: Oba: Me. Oba Akinbiyi Adetutu Arabambi.. Egun nla labi....
the raw hot lead that burns the heart of great prey.....
son of the Big Elephant who steps on his enemies at will...
husband of a thousand wives..... the Olumona of Ikoto Ile. Me.

(Ajagunmale, pg 23)

The Oba is weighed down because of threats to his life and especially, the one that arises as a result of the dream he has that Shakiru, his shadow in life and partner in death (*abóbakú*), jeers at him. To strengthen him, the Oba starts singing his own praise. This is common in Yorubaland as praise singing is expected to lift the spirit and instill confidence for one to surmount all obstacles. In example thirty-eight, there is a need for an application of sck and ssk of the communal practice of lineage praise rendering to properly understand the act of praising here. For example, allusion to names such as “*Arábámbí* ” and “*Egúngún nínlá* ” are quite culturally inclined. With the application of sck of cultural lineage praise rendering, one understands that “*Arábámbí* ” is one of the names of Sango, the god of thunder. Sango is a powerful god in Yorubaland. When angry, Sango emits fire from the mouth and causes rain. Sango is not a coward, and because of this attribute, people from Sango’s lineage or that looks like Sango with ferocious look, red eyeballs, or platted hair are likened to Sango.

Also, “*Egúngún nínlá* ” in Yorubaland is considered to be quite spiritually powerful and as such are respected as father to younger masquerades. Great people in Yorubaland are likened to “*Egúngún nínlá* ” because of their status. In the heat of the moment, the Oba says that he is “the raw hot lead that burns the heart of great prey”. The metaphoric representation here is noted. Oba’s claim that he is the hot lead that burns the heart of great prey simply implies that he is strong and will kill all his enemies. This, he reiterates by calling himself “the son of Big Elephant”. Obviously, an Elephant whether big or small can never give birth to a human. However, Yorubas do reference themselves relative to Elephant because of its strength and might. Without an application of sck and ssk of Yoruba lineage praise rendering, one will not understand how an Elephant gives birth to a man as captured in the expression. However, with the proper sck and ssk, one realizes that the Elephant is the biggest animal in the bush and when it steps on a bush, it never rises again. This personal praise chant thus implies that the King will step on and kill all his enemies. Also, it is only the Olori that we know as his only wife in the play, yet he claims to be husband to a thousand wives. It is only with the application of sck of the people’s cultural practice, that one will understand the implication here. The King is the husband to three groups of women in the palace: “*ayabas*” (wives of the former Kings), “*Olorìs*” (his own

wives), and “*aya omos*” (wives of his children). The last lexical item “me”, considered with *sck* of assurance got from praise-singing is a reassurance on the part of the King, relative to the situation around him, indicating that he is capable of overcoming the situation.

Praising is also found in showing spiritual power on the part of some humans. When Oluawo enters the palace and meets the Oba and Olori in a happy mood, Oluawo asks for forgiveness for interrupting. But the Oba tells him that he is not interrupting. Example 39 captures this.

Ex. 39: Oba: Forgive? We were just talking about you. You are indeed the son of your father. Oluawo, son of Awolola. Awo that looks for food for the white birds. The one that stays at the back of the house, and still knows what Ifa says. Owonrin is the father of Ifa, Ejiogbe is the father of Opele. Otototo, orororo, differently did we come to this world, differently do our destinies unfold. I will chant the praise of Ejiogbe, I will chant the praise of Oluawo, the all seeing priest of my palace. I say you are the son of your parents.

(*Ajagunmale*, pg 24)

Yorubas also sing people’s praises to make them happy. However, *sck* and *ssk* of this cultural practice must be employed to understand such. In Yorubaland, to say that one is “the son of his father” implies that the individual is not a bastard. The King in thirty-nine above further sings the praises of Oluawo’s father and it is only with an application of *sck* of Ifa cult that one understands the pragmatic import of this expression and realizes how great an Ifa priest “Olúawo” and his father are, for only great priests are so recognized as “awo that looks for food for the white birds” that is “*awo rere tí wá oúnje fún eye*”. It should be noted that white birds are not mentioned in the Yoruba version of praise chant of Ifa Priests, the mention of white birds, here, indicates Yerima’s attempt at showing how pure Awolola, Oluawo’s father is. This is imperative so as to segregate Awolola from the wicked priests that do evil. One needs an application of *sck* and *ssk* of Yoruba cultural beliefs and practices to understand the praise chant, especially, ancestral African gods such as “*Òwónrín*”, “*Ifá*”, “*Èjìogbè*” and cultural religious item, “*òpèlè*”, and other religious expressions as “*òtóótótó*”, “*òróóróró*”. Since there is no lexical item indicating the act, with the aid of *sck*, and *ssk*, Oluawo understands this pragmatic act of praising and being happy, continues in singing his own praises as well.

4.2.6 Accusing

Accusing is found in the traditional context to treat the issue of morals through sck, ssk, reference, inference and relevance in the play. For example, when the prince is infected with “èèdi”, he starts misbehaving; however, the King fails to realize that the prince is acting under evil spiritual control. As such, when the prince rapes the daughter of Iyalode who is meant to be given to the King of Iberekedo in marriage, the Oba gets angry and accuses the prince of bringing shame to him. Witness example 40:

Ex. 40 Oba: See what my son has brought to me? Shame!
With his oily hands, he stains my most treasured robes”.
(Ajagunmale, pg 28).

The King’s anger towards his son is highlighted here without any lexical item showing the act of anger. However, it is only with the application of sck and ssk of Yoruba proverbs and uses that one can interpret the King’s accusation packed in the proverb “with his oily hands, he stains my most treasured robes”. This proverb foregrounds the offence of the prince such that it is difficult to plead for him. “My most treasured robes”, is a reference to the throne which because of prince’s shameless and immoral act gets soiled with oil. The practice of accusing arises, in this instance, because of the King’s anger, consequent upon his being put to shame.

4.2.7 Pleading

Yerima also practices pleading in the traditional context to treat the issue of morals through sck, ssk, ref, inf and rel. When the Oba gets angry because of the prince’s misconduct, the Oluawo pleads with him as captured below:

Ex. 41 Oluawo: Easy, Kabiyesi. E je bure. Easy. Our enemies prepare
their drums of shame, do not dance to it.
(Ajagunmale, pg 28).

In the extract above, an application of sck and ssk of Yoruba cultural belief is imperative for the understanding of Oluawo’s utterances, especially, the Yoruba wise-saying “e je èbùrè”. This is a form of pleading, which however, is not just given to anybody but somebody of high spiritual or societal status in Yorubaland. With this form of pleading, the offender is expected to be forgiven. Another act of pleading is further revealed in the wise saying, “our enemies prepare their drums of shame, do not dance to it”. The utterance here takes its source from

Yorubas' saying, "otá mílu ìlù ìbàjè, Olórun kò ní jé kí ó dún", that is, "the enemy drums of shame, God will not let it sound". The original version of the wise-saying is a wish. However, to suit his purpose, Yerima manipulates the wise-saying to be a plea realized in what looks like a command but actually it is a plea, "do not dance to it". This is one of Yerima's artistic genuity, as Yerima is known to thwart words and utterances to suit his purpose doting on images that are related to such issues in the people's culture.

4.3 A comparative analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's selected Yoruba culture-based plays.

Twelve practs and allopracts occur in Ahmed Yerima's selected Yoruba culture-based plays (*Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale*). These are informing, explaining, warning/cautioning, assuming, lamenting, cautioning, accusing, pleading, praising, rebuking, persuading, and invoking. Although the practs and allopracts do not solely feature in a single play, they characterize the Yoruba plays generally. For instance, informing, assuring, lamenting, invoking, and insisting are found in *Mojagbe*, while explaining, pleading, praising, rebuking, and persuading are found in *Ajagunmale*. However, the practs of warning/ cautioning, and accusing are found in both *Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale*. Table 4 below aptly captures this:

Practs/allopracts	Plays
Informing	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Assuring	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Lamenting	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Invoking	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Insisting	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Explaining	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Pleading	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Praising	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Rebuking	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Persuading	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Warning / cautioning	<i>Mojagbe / Ajagunmale</i>
Accusing	<i>Mojagbe / Ajagunmale</i>

Table 4: A comparative analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's selected Yoruba culture-based plays

Table four establishes the practs and allopracts that are performed in Yerima’s selected Yoruba culture-based plays, with emphasis on those that are performed in specific plays and those that cut across the plays. Here, the practs of warning / cautioning, and accusing are noticed to cut across the Yoruba culture-based plays.

Notable in the performance of the practs is their contexts of occurrence. In *Mojagbe* for instance, the practs largely occur in the traditional contexts, except for lamenting and cautioning that occur in the communal contexts, all the others are found in traditional contexts. Also, there is a dominance of the traditional context in *Ajagunmale*, except for explaining that occurs in both traditional and emotive contexts. The large dominance of the traditional context is not unconnected with the fact that the plays are culture oriented. Also, being culture-oriented, Yerima tactically sets the plays in Yoruba cultural spatial context thus addressing the issues that Yerima intends to project. The following table provides more information on this:

Practs/allopracts	Context	Pays
Informing	traditional	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Assuring	traditional	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Lamenting	communal	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Invoking	traditional	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Pleading	traditional	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Praising	traditional	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Rebuking	traditional	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Persuading	traditional	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Warning/cautioning	traditional	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
warning/cautioning	communal, traditional	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Accusing	communal, traditional	<i>Mojagbe</i>
	traditional	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Insisting	communal, traditional	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Explaining	traditional	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
	emotive	

Table 5: A comparative analysis of contexts of practs and allopracts in selected Yoruba culture-based plays of Ahmed Yerima

From table five above, we could glean that the practs and allopracts of informing, assuring, and invoking are found in traditional contexts in *Mojagbe*, while praising, rebuking, and persuading are also found in traditional contexts in *Ajagunmale*. However, the pract of lamenting occurs solely in the communal context in *Mojagbe*, as warning/cautioning is found in the traditioal context in *Ajagunmale*, and in both communal and traditional contexts in *Mojagbe*. Also, accusing is found in communal and traditional contexts in *Mojagbe* as it is found in communal context in *Ajagunmale*. The pract of insisting is solely found in *Mojagbe* in communal and traditional contexts, while explaining occurs solely in *Ajagunmale*, in traditional and emotive contexts.

The occurrences of the practs and allopracts in specific contexts specifically address certain issues. Indeed, an examination of *Mojagbe* reveals that through the practs and allopracts, such issues as power, danger, death, immortality, reincarnation, disappointment, grief, bravery, anger, punishment and insincerity are treated. On the other hand, in *Ajagunmale*, issues of faith, deceit, culture, status/power, achievement, belief, social crisis, predestination, inquiry, religion and morals are addressed. This obviously shows the differences in authorial preoccupation in the two plays thus revealing the difference in authorial intention in the plays. Table 6 which follows clearly illustrates this:

Practs/allopracts	Issues	Plays
Informing	power, danger, death	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Assuring	danger	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Lamenting	grief	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Invoking	immortality, reincarnation, death, disappointment	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Pleading	morals	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Praising	religion, power, culture	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Rebuking	status/power	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Persuading	inquiry	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Warning/cautioning	achievement,culture,belief,social-crisis,predestination	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Warning/cautioning	bravery,anger,danger,death	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Accusing	insincerity	<i>Mojagbe</i>
	morals	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Insisting	punishment	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Explaining	faith,deceit,culture,status/power	<i>Ajagunmale</i>

Table 6: A comparative analysis of issues of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's selected Yoruba culture- based plays

As table six above reveals, the practs are variously employed to address different issues relative to the desire and creative intention of Yerima. Furthermore, same practs such as warning/cautioning and accusing that are found in the two plays only correspond through nomenclature semblance as they are employed to address different issues in the plays. However, the corresponding semblance in the practs is located in the context of use, though they address different issues, they have common use and application such that in the act of warning, Yerima warns; in the act of cautioning, he cautions; and in accusing, Yerima actually accuses. Thus, it is revealed that the practs in selected Yoruba culture-based plays of Yerima are employed to address different issues relative to authorial preoccupation, and in instances where the same practs are employed (in different texts), they practically address different issues relative to the intention of Yerima in the plays.

Furthermore, we found that the practs in the plays are realized through the contextual features on the table below:

Practs/allopracts	Contextual features	Plays
Lamenting	sck,ssk,inf,rel	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Accusing	sck,ssk,ref,rel	<i>Mojagbe</i>
	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Insisting	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Invoking	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Explaining	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Pleading	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Praising	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Rebuking	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Persuading	sck,ssk,inf,ref,rel	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Informing	sck,ssk,vce, inf,ref,rel	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Assuring	sck,ssk,vce inf,ref,rel	<i>Mojagbe</i>
Warning/cautioning	sck,ssk,vce, inf,ref,rel	<i>Ajagunmale</i>
Warning/cautioning	sck,ssk,vce inf,ref,rel	<i>Mojagbe</i>

Table 7: A comparative analysis of contextual feratures of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's selected Yoruba culture-based plays

Table seven above shows the dominance of the contextual features of sck, ssk, inf., ref., and rel. in the two Yoruba culture-based plays. Notably, sck, ssk, inf., ref., and rel. are the common features with which the practs and allopracts are realized. However, reference is not used to realize the pract of lamenting, and accusing is also not realized through inference in *Mojagbe*. The last three practs at the bottom of the table, informing, assuring, warning/cautioning are realized through the intrusion of Yerima into the narration, as such, there are instances of voicing in these practs. Indeed, vce. is added to the common mechanisms of sck, ssk, inf, ref, and rel in

the realization of some of the practs and allopracts, and this, of course, is a common feature in the plays.

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CHAPTER FIVE

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS 11

Pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yerima's Igbo and Hausa selected culture-based plays

5.1 Pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yerima's Igbo Culture based-plays

This section explores the practs and allopracts performed in Ahmed Yerima's selected Igbo culture-based plays, *Idemili* and *Akuabata*. They are examined in turn below:

5.1.1 Pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yerima's *Idemili*.

Idemili is characterised by practs and allopracts of explaining, rebuking, accusing, persuading/inviting, and praising solely in the communal context to deal with issues of trust, danger, confusion, death, habit, manners, familial bonding and bravery through contextual features such as socio-cultural knowledge (sck), shared-situational knowledge (ssk), inference (inf), voice (vce), reference (ref), and relevance (rel). Table 8 below shows this:

Practs/allopracts	Context	Issues	Contextual features
Explaining	communal	trust, danger, confusion	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf
Rebuking	communal	death, habit	sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel
Accusing	communal	manners	sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel
Persuading/ inviting	communal	familial bonding	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Praising	communal	bravery	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf

Table 8: An analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's *Idemili*.

5.1.1.1 Explaining

A glean at table eight above reveals that the pract of explaining largely dominates *Idemili*. In the entirety of its occurrence, Yerima practs explaining in the communal context to deal with issues of trust, danger and confusion relative to the society of the setting of the story, Igboland. He effectively achieves these through the use of contextual features of sck, ssk, inf., ref., and rel. The following examples will suffice:

Ex. 42 Background: (Having heard of the situation at home, Paul who ran away from home after a disagreement years ago, comes back home and meets Ngorie, his sister, and the following conversation ensue).

Ngorie: It is you Oheja! (*in one swift move, Ngorie jumps on him. They embrace*). You came! But why hide who you are? You frightened me.

Paul: I had to. That was the only way I could escape from the parish. I also don't want your many old women here to see and recognize me. And, besides, the way you sounded on phone, frightened me too, it was as if all was gone.

Ngorie: It is, my brother. Papa is still trapped with eleven others in the weak belly of the Mines. And Mama is falling apart little by little

Paul: Where is she?

Ngorie: Asleep. I gave her some medicine. She does not eat or sleep. Always she talks of Papa and you, her beloved child. The medicine should knock her off good and proper.

(*Idemili, Pgs 16- 17*).

With the knowledge that Ngorie is a competent nurse, we expect the voice in the excerpt, to be hers. Notably, she captures the occurrence of the events in vivid lexical choices and expressions which effectively reveal the situation at home to Paul. First, she tactically forces him to come home through “the way she sounded on the phone” and now she employs the metaphorical expression “mama is falling apart” to explain the situation of Mama to Paul. With the application of sck of Igbos’ cultural world about utterances, Paul is able to infer that with the father, who is Ngbeke’s husband trapped in the belly of the weak mines, Mama will surely fall apart. The relevance of “falling apart” here is located in the love that Ngbeke has for her husband. The thought, therefore, that her beloved husband is buried deep in the ground is enough to make her to “fall apart”. Literally, “falling apart” means to come off in pieces. With the application of this to Ngbeke, Yerima through Ngorie performs a pract of explaining as he tries to capture and present Ngeke’s state of health to the son and not that Ngbeke is dismembered. The metaphorical use via explaining here is meant to sensitize Paul and make him realises how grave the situation is.

Actually, there is no lexical choice that indicates that Ngbeke is not well and may even lose her reasoning, but with the use of the metaphorical expression and based on the shared situational knowledge, Paul quickly realizes and understands the situation. With the aid of inference ans ssk therefore, Paul understands and his sense to handle emergency situation is awakened. The pragmatic success is registered in the eagerness in his voice, as he asks for his

mother, “where is she? Through the pract of explaining, therefore, Yerima unfolds his story. Another instance of explaining is revealed in the following example:

Ex. 43 Ngbeke: I know what you are trying to do. I am not a child.

*(she unties the nylon end of her wrapper
and brings out her medicine).*

Here. *(Opens her palm).*

Your medicine. The rest are under my bed.

Ngborie: Mama *(Alarmed)* This is why you did not sleep.

Ngbeke: I have never taken them. A woman whose neighbour’s house is on fire,
does not shut her eye for fear of her own house...

(Idemili, pgs 21-22)

The person of Ngbeke is made known to us in the interaction in forty three above. In order to enjoy good health, certain drugs were given to Ngbeke with the expectation that they will assist her to get some rest. However, with her present situation, Ngbeke believes that sleep is out of her need now, as for her, time stands still, since her husband is still buried “in the belly of the Mine”. To Ngbeke, therefore, there is danger in going to sleep, since anything can happen anytime. In time of danger and impending doom, the Igbos believe that if danger presently affects a neighbour, to prevent it from spreading, there is a need for all to fight the situation, hence, the saying “a woman whose neighbour’s house is on fire, does not shut her eyes for fear of her own house”. That is, “*nwonko obula ouye ulu ouye abata obiya na obaku anagi emche anya ya maka ujo nke ulu ya*”. Yerima once again manipulates the proverb here to suit his purpose. He has stylistically and deliberately replaced the man “*nwonko*” in the original version of the proverb and replaced it with woman, so that the proverb directly applies to Ngbeke.

Through the proverb, Ngbeke practs explanation to state her reason for staying awake. Ngborie has to apply ssk of the Igbo cultural practice to be able to infer that her mother is psychologically linked to their father, hence, her refusal to sleep. However, there is no lexical item to indicate that she is explaining. Nevertheless, the consideration of the context of discourse will make us to identify the act as explaining. Also, in her hysterical stage, Ngbeke employs a figurative expression in form of simile to explain the state of her husband. Let us examine example forty four below:

Ex. 44 Ngbeke: Ugwoja is down there like a caged antelope, ready for slaughter.
My own husband....

(Idemili, Pg. 27)

The figurative expression here presents the husband as a valiant, a strong man who takes care of himself in times of trouble. However, there is a turn of event as the antelope is now caged and awaits death. This metaphoric allusion is aimed at weeping up emotions for Ugwuaja and the need to rescue him on time. With the application of *sck* and *ssk* of the Igbo cultural world, Paul understands what Ngbeke means by saying that “Ugwoja is down there like a caged antelope, ready for slaughter” as explaining her position and concern for her husband who in his state of entrapment is likened to a caged antelope, ready for slaughter. Ngbeke prays explaining here so that she can get help to assist her husband out of the predicament.

5.1.1.2 Rebuking

Rebuking occurs in the *Idemili* to deal with issues of death, and habit in the communal context through contextual features of *sck*, *ssk*, *ref.*, *inf.*, and *rel.* Let us examine the following examples:

Ex. 45 (Background):(Ngbeke becomes hysterical at the plight of her husband’s misfortune and declares her intention to follow her husband if, eventually he dies).

Ngbeke: Easter? Small girl, we talk of death, you talk of life. Easter? For whom? My husband, who faces death? No! Ala is not a goddess to play with. She swallows even the greatest of men. (*Rushes to the Shrine of Idemili, pulls out the cutlass*) I swear by the sea goddess, Idemili, who gave me life, and my children, if my husband, Ugwuaja, dies in the belly of the earth, let me not last two days. Let me die and follow him. (*Bites the cutlass*).

Ngborie: Hey Mama. These are heavy words...

(*Idemili*, Pg 14)

A consideration of her situation makes Ngbeke feels that she is at the end of the road. To her, life cannot be meaningful if her husband dies in the belly of the earth. Hence, the best option to her is to die and follow the husband with the belief that there is nothing left for her. Her action in swearing, especially, by the cutlass at the shrine of Idemili is a grave one. In Igboland, people have fear for the gods because they believe they are the messengers of God. As representatives of God, they present people’s request before Him, and whatever one requests for is granted. A death request at the shrine of Idemili could, therefore, be deadly. Moved by frustration, Ngbeke swears to follow her husband if he should die in the belly of the earth.

Expectedly, Ngorie responds in amazement, and in this state, tactically rebukes the mother in her utterance, “mama, these are heavy words”, “*nne, nka bu nuukwu okwe*”. In Igboland, the institution of motherhood represented in the “*nne*” is greatly respected. As such, Ngorie cannot rebuke her mother, but because of Ngbeke’s state, she has to say something to curb the mother from going far. A literal consideration of this utterance invariably reveals that words are abstract and are not physically seen. Although, words significantly make communication possible, they cannot be physically held nor carried so as to decide whether they are light or heavy. However, in Igbo cultural world, when utterances go beyond the ordinary, or beyond the speaker, it is said to be heavy. Without an application of *sck*, and *ssk* of Igbo cultural practices, Ngbeke could not have been able to infer that her daughter is rebuking her for swearing to follow her husband if he should die. The status of Ngorie and Igbo’s cultural practice, whereby the child cannot rebuke the parent, therefore, makes Ngorie to practise rebuking without the use of any lexical item to indicate that her mother is being unreasonable.

In another, instance, Ngorie rebukes her brother when he threatens to run away from home. The practise of rebuking in the communal context to deal with the issue of insincerity is presented in 46 below:

Ex. 46 Ngorie: (*Paul picks up his bag*) Where are you going?

Paul: Back to my church. I think it was a bad idea that I came.
I shall never step my foot here again.

Ngorie: Stay away! Run! That is your stock in trade.

(*Idemili*, pg 19)

As usual, there is no use of words here to indicate the act. However, a consideration of the conversational context shows that Paul, having examined the situation at home and feeling that the best thing is to run, packs his bag to go. Ngorie practises rebuking so as to restrain Paul from leaving home again, saying that, “that is your stock in trade”. Such utterance as “*auyi mma gi o bu ka isi eme*” is usually employed to rebuke an individual who is known for a particular act and despite being known for it does not repent. Paul is such a person, here.

Literally, the stock in trade suggests that Paul is a merchant, a trader who is known for selling a particular good. However, an application of *sck* and *ssk* of Igbo’s communal use of words reveals the act of running away as being a character of Paul. A reference to something as one’s stock in trade in Igboland indicates that act as being part of the individual. Since Paul is used to running away from home, anytime there is misunderstanding or a crisis at home. Paul’s

decision to leave is not strange to Ngorie who already knows how he behaves at such times. With the application of *sck*, and *ssk*, Paul could infer that his sister is not talking about him doing any business or handling any trade, but to locate the relevance of the utterance in Paul rebuking him to make him to stay.

5.1.1.3 Accusing

Accusing occurs in *Idemili* to treat the issue of manners in the emotive context through contextual features of *sck*, *ssk*, *ref.*, *rel.*, and *inf.* For example, Ngorie accused Paul as a trouble maker who could not even legally perform his rightful duty consequent on his earlier acts. Let us consider example 47:

Ex. 47 Ngorie: You did not even take time to understand these dammed souls. You went head on, being your father's son. You charged at each other like bulls, until you both tore the family apart. Now look at you coming to your father's house like a thief in the day.

Paul: You don't understand, I was trying to.....

(*Idemili*, Pg 18)

Notably, there is no lexical item here that indicates that Ngorie is accusing Paul. One of the accusations is that, Paul, being overcome with shame, crept into the father's house like a thief when he ought to enter boldly like a man. In a situation like this, the Igbos will say "*ime ha ihe ojo ina abata na ulu nna gi ina agazi ka onye ohe*". The Igbos believe that if a child leaves home over a period of time and is coming back home, he should come back gloriously into the father's house. This is not the case in Paul's situation. He came sneaking in for the shame of being seen and being jeered at. Such sneaking in is likened to the act of a thief in the day who lacks the cover of darkness.

The accusation here is pragmatically inferred as Paul is considered a man of God, a Reverend Father, therefore, being compared to a thief is a challenge to Paul's morals. With the application of *sck* and *ssk* of Igbo's cultural use of words, Paul understands that Ngorie is not calling him a thief, but as usual of Igbos in such circumstance, such a person that acts like that is likened to a thief entering the house in daylight. Through a consideration of the conversation context, therefore, there is a common ground where Paul and Ngorie find their affordances. With access to same cultural and situational background, Paul infers Ngorie's meaning and attempts to apologize when he says "you don't understand, I was trying to..."

5.1.1.4 Persuading/Inviting

The practs of persuading/inviting is found in Idemili in dealing with the issue of familial bonding in the traditional context through sck, ssk, inf., rel., and ref. Let us examine example 48:

Ex.48 Background (Ngbeke refuses to eat. Paul tries to persuade her to eat).

Ngborie: (*Ngborie comes out with a tray, with two bowls and a cup of water*). She has not eaten a morsel. And now the food is getting cold. She did not even drink the water. How will she not have bad dreams. (*Paul collects the tray, kneels down before Mama, washes his hand, and cuts a morsel*).

Paul: Good soft Akpu, the way you like it. My sister is an angel, the soup looks great too....

Ngbeke: I know what you are trying to do. I am not a child.....
(*Idemili, Pg. 21*)

Two pragmatic acts are performed here, and these are the practs of persuading and that of inviting. Paul in his interaction above refers to his sister as an angel. This comment, coming from Paul is almost unbelievable as the duo of Paul and Ngborie just had a disagreement. However, a consideration of the conversational context shows that Paul seeks to make his mother to eat having heard from Ngborie that Mama has not eaten, even, a morsel since the father has been trapped in the belly of the earth. Through the utterance, “good soft Akpu, the way you like it”, Paul persuades his mother to eat making her to realize what he holds and to announce that the food is prepared the way Ngbeke likes it. To persuade Ngbeke, Paul announces that Ngborie is an angel. With the application of sck and ssk of cultural references in Igboland, Ngbeke could infer that an angel is blameless and is perfect in all things. If a food is prepared by an angel, therefore, it is expected to be appetizing, delicious and satisfying. Paul thus performs the pract of persuading. A close observation reveals no use of lexical item to indicate the pract. However, a consideration of the conversational context in terms of speech act reveals the act as persuading.

Furthermore, Paul goes ahead to invite his mother to eat when he tells her that “the soup looks great too”. In other words with inference, Ngbeke’s application of ssk of a soup looking great will stimulate her appetite such that she gets hungry all of a sudden and wants to eat.

5.1.1.5 Praising

Praising is found in the communal context in treating bravery through sck, ssk, ref., inf., and rele. Let us examine example 49:

Ex. 49: (Background): (Ngbeke was talking with Paul and in the process intends to make Paul realize the kind of man Ugwuja is)

Ngbeke: My own husband. A lion in human skin. Son of Obiora, the great fisherman from Onisha.

(Idemili, Pg 27)

In the Igbo culture, the act of praising always goes with pride for it is the pride of marksmanship or achievement that is appealed to in singing praises in the land. Yerima adopts this for Ngbeke to sing the praise of her husband. The pride she felt reflects in her claim for the man: “my own husband”. Ngbeke goes further to describe her husband as “a lion in human skin”, that is “*onye sirike ka agu*”.

One needs sck and ssk of praise singing in Igboland to be able to recognize a man as a lion (*agu*). In Igbo cultural world, anybody likened to a lion is a great man. He is supposed to be strong, agile and fearless as he takes control of whatever situation arises around him and dominates all. Several people, therefore, appreciate such praises and like to be likened to a lion. It is only with sck, and ssk that one can understand the reference to lion and why Ugwuojia is likened to a lion. There is no word that shows the act of praising, in which case, the act counts as praising when considered in terms of speech act. With the choice of “lion” as an animal to liken Ugwuojia with, one can infer that Ngbeke takes pride in illuminating the bravery of her husband. She goes further in the pract of praising by linking Ugwuojia with his descendants which is a common practice of the Igbo people. In Igbo cultural world, if a man renders brave deeds, he is recognized and appreciated and usually chants of the brave deeds of his fathers are usually reiterated. With pride, Ugwuojia is linked with his father in: “son of Obiora”

5.1.2 Pragmatic acting in Ahmed Yerima’s *Akuabata*

Practs and allopracts such as informing, explaining, cautioning, accusing, and appealing occur in the traditional context to treat certain issues. This is presented in table 9 below:

Practs/allopracts	Context	Issues	Contextual features
Informing	traditional	death, culture	sck, ssk, inf, ref, vce, rel
Explaining	traditional	culture, social-crisis	sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel.
Cautioning	traditional	anger, social crisis.	sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel
Accusing	traditional	social crisis	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Appealing	traditional	social crisis, patience	sck, ssk, inf, rel

Table 9: An analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's *Akuabata*.

A glean at table nine above reveals that *Akuabata* is largely dominated by practs and allopracts of explaining, closely followed by informing, and appealing. There are also practs of cautioning and accusing, all solely occurring in traditional contexts to deal with issues of death, culture, social crisis, anger, and patience. These are examined in turn below:

5.1.2.1 Explaining

In *Akuabata*, explaining occurs in traditional contexts to deal with issues of culture and social-crisis through contextual features of sck, ssk, inf., rel., ref. and vce. The following examples will suffice:-

Ex. 50: (Background) Olanma had just been attacked by Iyieke on the farm. She was brought home in her state of trance and only regains consciousness after Iyieke touches her with his staff. Following inquiries from inquisitive elders, she has this to say).

Isugwu: What happened at the farm?

Olanma: I was busy pulling out the yams. Jesu Kristi has blessed me again this year, each tuber looked like the thigh of that mad monstrous wrestler from Opaju. As I worked, and hummed, I felt a tap on my shoulder. The young fool called my name as if we were mates and as I rose to see who it was..... (in a whisper). It was him. He greeted me as if he knew me from somewhere, and he began to ask about the yams my farm and members of the family, as if he knows them. As he spoke about my family and the recent deaths, I began to feel. Then he spoilt it, with his right arm on my shoulder, he called me his wife. At first I thought it was a joke and it was when he started to drag me to himself, saying he has never held me since we got married that I started to scream. The young man was really mad. With one arm he pulled me up by my air, as if I was a chicken's feather. Frustrated with fear and anger, I spat on his face cursing and kicking,

his calling him all sorts of names. He slapped me. (The villagers scream). I spat on face again. Angry he started shouting, “useless wife”, “ingrate”. The more he shouted, the more I felt my voice leave my throat, and then my body went numb. I kept calling on my lord, Jesu Kristi, the catechist said we should. As I was saying my prayers... everything froze, I was trapped in a looking glass, where I could witness life and not partake in it..

(*Akuabata*, pg 30).

In fifty above, five instances of explaining are employed to give detailed information about Olanma’s meeting with Iyieke which left her in such pitiful state. The first one is: “each tuber looked like the thigh of the mad monstrous wrestler from Opagu”. One could hear the voice of an intruding author, here. An x-tray of the extract reveals that Olanma’s voice stops at “Jesu Kristi has blessed me again this year” for the author to intrude into the narration to give a pictorial view of the yam tubers thus emphasizing how much Jesu Kristi has blessed Olanma in reaping again. According to Mey (2000), voices overlap when voices are presumed to continue, but have actually ended at a point only for the narrator’s or the author’s voices to continue which, more or less, confuses the reader, as to him, the point of “voice change” is not explicitly marked. This, Mey (2000) calls voice mash.

Yerima’s voice mashes that of Olanma to explain that Olanma is special and is different from other women as even men’s yams are not as big as Olanma’s yams. Our observation reveals that Olanma’s interaction throughout the play is channeled through subtle use of words, hence, such harsh choices as “that mad monstrous wrestler”, is strange to the character of Olanma. However, Yerima withdraws from the narration to allow Olanma to continue with her explanation and she continues at “As I worked, and hummed....”.

To achieve the mashing effect, Yerima employs certain lexical choices as “the thigh of the mad monstrous wrestler from Opagu”. It is only with the application of *sck*, and *ssk* of being familiar with the environment that one can understand the explanation and the referents. Notably, there is no word that indicates the action, it is only through a consideration of the context of discourse in terms of speech act that one can see the act as explaining. Invariably, one must be familiar with Opagu to know the wrestler who is mad and monstrous and to further appreciate the size of his thigh. To accurately place things, therefore, there is a need for adequate understanding of the reference items in the interaction to be able to infer and precisely identify the relevance so as to determine the pragmatic act performed. These, Olanma’s interlocutors successfully apply so as to understand what happens to Olanma in the farm. In Olanma’s

utterance, one deduces Yerima's bid at explaining the achievement of Olanma in farming which only could be compared to that of a successful man, hence, her kinsmen's reference to her as the "Akuabata", that is the pot of the wealth of the family.

In the second one, Olanma seems to be furious with the fact that "the young fool called (her) my name as if (they) we were mates". This indicates that the so-called young fool knew Olanma very well. Already, this suggests that Olanma is dealing with somebody with supernatural powers. However, Olanma still plays it cool but is more angered that she is called by name by somebody younger than her. With the application of sck and ssk of the people's culture, it is understandable that in Igbo cultural society, honour and respect are given to housewives.

For the young unknown man therefore to call Olanma by name is unethical in Igbo culture, hence, her reference to Iyieke as "the young fool".

Likewise, in "it was him", one needs an application of reference to place the first person singular pronoun as the subjective case and the third person singular pronoun as complement to further understand that Olanma is still talking about Iyieke. Yerima practs explaining through these reference items such that we could infer that Olanma has met Iyieke before. This short, but effective pract, literally knitt the story as it tactically links the present with the past. Also, "with one arm, he lifted me up by my air, as if I was a chicken's feather" is a revelation of the strength and might of Iyieke. Through this, Yerima practs explaining basically to reveal Iyieke as a superhuman since Olanma is revealed as a thickset woman, in which case, it will almost be impossible for her to be lifted into the thin air, given her thickset appereance. However, with an application of the sck here, one is able to understand the situation for it is only somebody with shared sck that can understand how light a chicken's feather is, and make comparison with the weight of the thickset Olanma.

Further to her explanation, Olanma explained that "I (she) was trapped in a looking glass, where I could witness life and not partake in it". This practically explains the state in which Olanma was, having been dealt with by Iyieke. A consideration of the trend of events shows that this is not a physical trap, but a spiritual entrapment which only could be understood by somebody with a shared ssk. It could, therefore, be understood why Olanma's explanation looks like a fluke to her husband. The pract of explaining thus comes in handy as an efficient tool in the hand of Yerima to narrate the story and to ensure effective pragmatic success with the reader.

5.1.2.2 Informing

Informing occurs in *Akuabata* in the traditional context through *sck*, *ssk*, *inf.*, *ref.*, *rel.*, and *vce.* to treat issues of death and culture. These are considered in turn below:

On the issue of death, Yerima practs information in the traditional context to inform Isiugwu about the death of his father, the King. Let us consider the following example:

Ex. 51: **All:** Eze Ogo! Ka o!
 Isiugwu: So....
 Ibe: The Gabon Viper’s head is lowered. Let his son raise his head as king!
 All: Eze Ogo!
 Isiugwu: You do not meant that....

(*Akuabata*, pg 16)

The instance above presents a situation in which information about the death or passing on of a king is announced through figurative expression. In the interaction, Ibe told Isiugwu that “the Gabon Viper’s head is lowered”. A careful look at the play shows no Gabon Viper that Ibe may be referring to. In Igboland, the Gabon Viper is a big, long snake, with poisonous venom. It is highly feared and regarded as the head snake. Out of respect for the King, his name is rarely mentioned, especially, among title holders and those close to the King. The accolade, Gabon Viper is thus adopted to indicate that he is a leader. There is a need for the application of *sck* of the cultural practice of the people and the principle of reference by Isiugwu to understand the Gabon Viper and the pragmatic import of its head being lowered. Since Isiugwu shares same cultural background knowledge with Ibe, he does not find it difficult to understand that Ibe is referring to the King as the Gabon Viper, and its head being lowered indicates that the King has passed on.

Ibe’s information is shrouded in figurative expression borne out of the respect for the throne and a consideration of the royal status as been spiritual and linked with the ancestors, common to the cultural practice. As such, the Igbo culture demands euphemistic, rather than dysphemistic means to declare the death of a King, in which case, without a shared *sck*, and *ssk* of kingship issues, it will be difficult to understand the context of such communication. It is only a consideration of the conversation context in terms of speech act that indicates an act of informing as there is no mention of the act. In pragmatic acting, therefore, Ibe informs by saying that “the Gabon Viper’s head is lowered”, whereas in speech act, Ibe ought to be heard saying “I am here to inform you that the King is dead”. Isiugwu’s understanding of the pract is revealed in

the response; “you do not mean that...”. Isiugwu could not complete the statement for in Igbo cultural practice it is forbidden to say that the king is dead, hence the resort to such figurative expression to announce the king’s death. However, with the application of inference, Isiugwu could infer Ibe’s intention and his utterance could be read thus: “you do not meant that (the king is dead).

5.1.2.3 Appealing

The pragmatic act of appealing is characterised by occurrences of social crisis and attempts at resolving them in *Akuabata*. In appealing, issues of social crisis, and patience through contextual features of sck, ssk, inf., and rel., are dealt with in the traditional context. The following examples will suffice:

Ex 52: Background: (When Olanma claims that a young man (Iyieke) calls her his wife, Isiugwu got mad and insists on knowing the truth as to whether Olanma was once married or not. The following ensue).

Duruaku: (*Pointing at Olanma*). There. This woman sitting on the ground. She is the *Akuabata* of the Ayandoro family. She is the wealth that binds us together. Isiugwu, you married the wealth of the family. This was why when she brought you, we were shocked, and we did not receive a bride price from you.

Isiugwu: (cuts in) so that was why? What then....

Duruaku: In-law, wait. I have just started the dance and you are asking how it is going to end. Wait, chew unpicked beans with caution. Wait (*clears his voice*). I am Duruaku, the oldest man in this family. After me is Nwosu. I am very old, so the ones I forget, Nwosu will add to it.

Isiugwu: Forgive me.

(*Akuabata*, Pg. 36)

Two pragmatic acts of appealing are tactically performed in the extract above. This is prompted by the heat of the social crisis which needed to be subdued immediately. All along in the play, Duruaku plays his part as the oldest in the Ayandoro family well, filling in historical, moral and patience gaps effectively. A consideration of these elderly traits makes one to ascribe the voicing here to Duruaku, rather than Yerima. In his bid to settle the crisis between Isiugwu and Olanma, Duruaku, in his usual style, goes down memory lane and at a point metaphorically tells Isiugwu that Olanma is married (though spiritually) and that is why they are surprised when she brought another man for marriage. This accounts for their not accepting a bride price on her. As Isiugwu grew impatient, Duruaku appeals to his patience “I have just started the dance and

you are asking how it is going to end”. This wise- saying is usually applied by Igbos on issues and situations like this. A literal consideration of the utterance shows that Duruaku is appealing to Isiugwu to “hear him out”. Without an application of the sck and ssk of the cultural practice of the people, Isiugwu would just be waiting for Duruaku to begin dancing. However, because of his application of sck, and ssk, Isiugwu could infer Duruaku’s meaning. This he understands as he responds “(please), forgive me”.

To reinforce his appeal to Isiugwu on the same issue, Duruaku told him to “chew unpicked beans with caution”. In Igboland, before beans are cooked, they are picked for pebbles and stones. If a man eats unpicked beans, therefore, he runs the risk of gnashing his teeth on stones and pebble which are dangerous as they pose harm for the teeth. In the situation under discourse here, there is no bean that the people in the gathering are eating, hence, reference to beans may be awkward here. However, with an application of sck and ssk of the people’s cultural practice, the picture of picked and unpicked beans comes to mind and a consideration of chewing the unpicked one will definitely require caution. Such witty sayings come in handy among Igbos to appeal to an angry man.

5.1.2.4 Cautioning

Cautioning occurs in the traditional context to deal with issues of anger, and social crisis through contextual features of sck, ssk, inf., ref., and rel.

Ex. 53 Duruaku: (*Goes to him (Isiugwu) and takes his cutlass from him*). Sheath your cutlass, friend.... The rain has already fallen... it is foolishness to take a cutlass against a cuckold god.

Nwosu: Yes....he is gone now.....

(*Akuabata*, Pg 31).

The pragmatic act in this instance effectively draws the gap in the superiority between a god and man. Although, Duruaku’s utterance comes in form of appealing, it actually cautions Isiugwu not to take a stand against a god. Let us examine his words.

“sheath your cutlass, friend.... The rain has already fallen. it is foolishness to take a cutlass against a cuckold god”.

The interaction here represents that of somebody talking to another who operates on the same social plane despite the age disparity for Duruaku is older than Isiugwu, yet, because of their relationship as in-laws, Duruaku sees Isiugwu as a friend. From his vast knowledge of

culture and experience, Duruaku offers three utterances: sheath your cutlass, the rain has already fallen, it is foolishness to take a cutlass against a cuckold god.

The first utterance reflects a status role relationship. Though, subtle, as an elder, Duruaku commands Isigwu to disarm himself by putting the cutlass away, thus cautioning him. Also, in the second utterance, a close observation reveals that it is not raining. Yet, Duruaku insists that “the rain has already fallen”, taking its source from Igbos cautionary piece “*the mere eme emego oba hn uru inu ogu na ihe na egwilu isi*”. With an application of ssk, Isiugwu could infer that “the rain” is a referent to the crisis between him and Iyieke which led to the revelation of Olanma’s spiritual relationship with Iyieke. Through ssk, therefore, Isiugwu understands that if it rains on a man, his clothes will be soaked and this, of course, makes a caricature of him. A rainy situation on the other hand could signify blessing, the coming of good thing, the actualization of what seems dreamy, the fulfillment of an expectation. To ascribe meaning in this context therefore, the imaginary rain makes a caricature of Isiugwu bringing shame. Isiugwu becomes angry and decides to fight Iyieke with his cutlass. Duruaku’s cultural and vast experience bails him out here as he knows that Iyieke is not a man but god. He, therefore, cautions Isiugwu that “it is foolishness to take a cutlass against a cuckold god.” The caution comes out of the knowledge that since man is ordinary and gods are supernatural, there is no way one can fight the unseen, even if one wields a cutlass.

5.1.2.5 Accusing

Accusing is found in the traditional context to deal with the issue of social crisis through ssk, ssk, inf, ref, and rel. Example 54 is a testimony.

Ex. 54 Isiugwu: No. but today..... your god stoop so low like a man and sets out to defend his his wife, your child.... and because a stranger in your midst after thirty years. What do I think of all these?

Olanma: Nothing. This is your only fault... you leave things until they are too late..... and then stick your tongue to it until the whole world goes to bed. My Christian name is Ruth.... I shall stand by my husband even in death. Grow up, Husband, and leave bad stories alone. They make a good man sick in the head.

(Akuabata, Pg 32)

From Olanma’s utterances above, Isiugwu’s only shortcoming is his late response to issues. For instance, now, he has been aware of all that erupt in their faces now for quite a while, yet, he has done nothing about it. But now that everything is exposed, Isiugwu starts talking, gets

angry and would not stop fighting, hence, the accusation that he leaves things until they are too late, and then stick his tongue to it until the whole world goes to bed. There is an instance of overgeneralization in “until the whole world goes to bed” since the whole world cannot go to bed at the same time. However, the relevance of this is in highlighting the over exerting character of Isiugwu. With an application of ssk of the people’s situational general utterances, Isiugwu easily understands Olanma’s accusation as he becomes aware of his overbearing attitude.

Another instance of accusing is found in Nwosu’s remark to Isiugwu in his (Isiugwu’s) quarrel with Olanma. Nwosu is one of the family elders, in fact, he is next to Duruaku. As expected in Igbo land, words of wisdom are found in the mouth of elders and this is reflected below:

- Ex. 55:** **Isiugwu:** (points to Olanma). Who is this strange woman?
 Duruaku: Your wife....
 Olanma: Strange woman? Me? (sits up and whispers). Fool.
 Nwosu: This is strange.... Your wife’s voice which was once like whispers from heaven to you is now irritating chatter to your ears. How strange.... How. Very strange indeed. Iyieke continues his fight through you.
 Isiugwu: Me? Iyieke? Amadioha forbid!

(*Akuabata*, pg 35)

The interaction above is typical of social crisis, especially, misunderstanding between husband and wife and the mediation. In this context, Isiugwu is angered by the knowledge that his wife is seeing another man (still entertaining the negative involvement of Iyieke who is a god). In his anger, he sees his wife as strange since her actions are strange to him. Olanma too was angered and her response fuels the situation, “strange woman? Me?” and she calls her husband, a “fool”

With the application of ssk of marital expectations, both the husband and the wife are supposed to love each other. It is unethical for a woman to abuse the husband in Igboland. To save the situation, Nwosu accuses Isiugwu that his wife’s voice which was once like whispers from heaven to him is now irritating chatter to his ears. This utterance is a window for us to take a glimpse into the couple’s past. A peep into the past reveals that, Isiugwu and Olanma are emotional and peace-loving couple. At a time, Isiugwu compares Olanma’s voice to whispers from heaven. With an application of ssk, one discovers that whisper from heaven is soft and refreshing. However, with the intrusion of Iyieke to claim his wife, Isiugwu could see a double-faced lover and this ignites his anger such that the soothing voice which was once “whispers

from heaven” now turns to “irritating chatters”. The representation of feelings and perception are totally opposite. For such to happen, it takes a neutral vision through elderly perception like that of Nwosu to detect preternatural mediation. Obviously, it is Iyieke that spiritually ignites Isiugwu’s anger, so that he can fight his wife and he, Iyieke can come in to lay claim to the woman, hence, Iyieke’s engagement in the spiritual fight. Nwosu sees all, and promptly accuses Iyieke of the trouble at hand and Isiugwu being his vehicle in his utterance, “Iyieke continues his fight through you”

Without a lexical choice indicating this, the implicit accusation is subtle and at the same time challenging. In Igboland, such accusation when directed towards a person signifies that he is spiritually possessed. It is only with an application of *sck* that Isiugwu can understand this.

5.2 A comparative analysis of the practs in Ahmed Yerima’s selected Igbo culture-based plays.

Eight practs and allopracts are found in the two Igbo culture-based plays (*Idemili* and *Akuabata*). These are: explaining, rebuking, accusing, persuading / inviting, praising, informing, cautioning, and appealing. Let us examine the following table:

Practs/allopracts	Plays
Explaining	<i>Idemili, Akuabata</i>
Rebuking	<i>Idemili</i>
Accusing	<i>Idemili, Akuabata</i>
Persuading / inviting	<i>Idemili</i>
Praising	<i>Idemili</i>
Informing	<i>Akuabata</i>
Cautioning	<i>Akuabata</i>
Appealing	<i>Akuabata</i>

Table 10: A comparative analysis of practs and allopracts in Yerima’s selected Igbo culture-based plays

Table ten shows that the practs of rebuking, persuading / inviting, and praising, are peculiar to *Idemili*, while informing, cautioning, and appealing are solely found in *Akuabata*. However, the practs of explaining and accusing are found in the two plays.

Furthermore, *Idemili* is dominated by communal context, as *Akuabata* is dominated by traditional context. However, while the practs of explaining and accusing occur in communal

contexts in *Idemili*, they feature in the traditional contexts in *Akuabata*. The table below sheds more light:

Practs/allopracts	Context	Plays
Explaining	communal traditional	<i>Idemili</i> <i>Akuabata</i>
Rebuking	communal	<i>Idemili</i>
Accusing	communal traditional	<i>Idemili</i> , <i>Akuabata</i>
Persuading / inviting	communal	<i>Idemili</i>
Praising	communal	<i>Idemili</i>
Informing	traditional	<i>Akuabata</i>
Cautioning	traditional	<i>Akuabata</i>
Appealing	traditional	<i>Akuabata</i>

Table 11: A comparative analysis of contexts of practs allopracts in Yerima's selected Igbo culture-based plays

The practs in the plays are realized through contextual features of sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel, and vce. However, the mechanisms are employed in the realization of the practs and allopracts relative to the intention of Yerima in the plays. Let us examine the practs and allopracts as well as the contextual features used to realise them in the two Igbo selected culture-based plays:

Practs/allopracts	Contextual features	Plays
Explaining	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Idemili</i>
	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Akuabata</i>
Rebuking	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Idemili</i>
Accusing	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Idemili,</i>
	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Akuabata</i>
Persuading / inviting	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Idemili</i>
Praising	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Idemili</i>
Cautioning	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf	<i>Akuabata</i>
Appealing	sck, ssk, rel, inf	<i>Akuabata</i>
Informing	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf, vce	<i>Akuabata</i>

Table 12: Comparative analysis of contextual features in Yerima's selected Igbo culture-based plays

Table twelve above reveals a re-occurrence of the contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, rel, and inf, in the realization of the practs and allopracts in *Idemili*, and *Akuabata*. There is a predominance of this set of contextual features as they run through six of the practs and allopracts (explaining, rebuking, accusing, persuading/inviting, praising, and cautioning) out of the eight found in the plays. Only contextual feature of reference is not employed in the realization of appealing in *Akuabata*. Also, with the contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, rel, and inf employed in the realization of informing, it is the only pract where Yerima intrudes into the narration through voice mash. Furthermore, the practs are employed to treat separate issues in the plays. These are represented in the table below:

Practs/allopracts	Issues	Plays
Explaining	trust, danger, confusion culture, social-crisis	<i>Idemili</i> <i>Akuabata</i>
Rebuking	death, habit	<i>Idemili</i>
Accusing	morals social-crisis	<i>Idemili</i> , <i>Akuabata</i>
Persuading / inviting	danger	<i>Idemili</i>
Praising	bravery	<i>Idemili</i>
Informing	death, culture	<i>Akuabata</i>
Cautioning	anger, social-crisis	<i>Akuabata</i>
Appealing	social-crisis, patience	<i>Akuabata</i>

Table 13: A comparative analysis of issues in practs and allopracts in Yerima's selected Igbo culture-based plays

In *Idemili*, explaining is used to treat issues of danger and trust, while it is employed to address culture and social crisis in *Akuabata*. These are realized through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, rel, and inf. These are also employed in the realization of other practs and allopracts such as rebuking, persuading / inviting, and praising in *Idemili*. The practs are used to treat issues of death, habit, danger, and bravery as the case may be, while informing, cautioning and appealing are used to address issues of death, culture, anger, socio-crisis, and patience in *Akuabata*.

5.2.1 Pragmatic acting in Ahmed Yerima's *Mu'adhin's Call*.

Practs and allopracts of assuring, confessing, inquiring, declaring, condemning, explaining, occur in both traditional and communal contexts through contextual features of ref., rel., inf., sck and ssk to deal with issues of religion, death, royalty, deceit, anger, emotions, and reinstatement in *Mu'adhin's Call*. A breakdown is presented in the table below:

Practs/allopracts	Context	Issues	Contextual features
Assuring	communal, traditional	culture, death	sck, ssk, inf, ref, rel.
Confessing	traditional	royalty	sck, ssk, rel, ref, inf
Rebuking	communal	religion	sck, ssk, ref, inf, rel
Declaring	traditional	royalty	sck, ssk, rel, ref, inf.
Condemning	traditional	royalty	sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf.
Explaining	traditional	deceit, royalty	sck, ssk, inf, ref.

Table 14: An analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's *Mu'adhin's Call*.

5.2.1.1 Assuring

Assuring is found in the communal and traditional contexts on issues of culture and death through sck, ssk, inf, ref, and rel. in *Mu'adhin's Call*. On the issue of culture for instance, Emir practs assuring to assert that he knows his medical status before the Bokan Fulani looks into his future. Let us examine 56 below:

Ex. 56 Dogari: I am sure that he will be here. The Bokan Fulani uses sand for his divination. He takes his time, consulting the spirits of the desert. He will be back soon, Your Highness.

Emir: He does not need to ask the sand what the stale sandy night wind whispered to me last night. (Pause) Death is close.

Dogari: Death? Whose Death?

Emir: Mine

(*Mu'adhin's Call*, Pg 8)

The transaction between the Emir and Dogari is successful here because they share same cultural and situational knowledge. Yerima breaks cultural grounds here as he creates a scene whereby a servant is brought to converse with the royal, the Emir, contrary to the Hausa cultural practice. Generally, cultural parameters do not permit such, but this is Yerima's way of revealing the Emir's thoughts and feelings thereby upholding the narration vagary. The pairing is strategically designed for this specific purpose, as whoever will be a Dogari must be highly

conversant with the culture of the people. Also, to become an Emir, one must be practically familiar with the people's culture and ways of life. Through this unusual pair, Yerima successfully establishes a mutual common background where both interlocutors can successfully find their affordances.

With the application of sck and ssk of the Islamic religion, both Emir and Dogari share common understanding of the use of sand for divination by Bokan Fulani. With the application of reference based on sck, Emir infers who Bokan Fulani is and his relevance to his situation. However, against Dogari's belief that the Emir's future will be positively determined through the Bokan Fulani's divination, the Emir asserts that the Bokan Fulani "does not need to ask the sand". That is, he does not need to carry out any divination because, as he revealed, "the stale night wind whispered to me last night". In which case, the message that the Bokan Fulani will get from the spirits of the desert has been communicated to him. The Hausa's belief that when evil looms over somebody, he will be communicated through spiritual realm. With the knowledge of impending doom, therefore, the Hausa's are prepared for the worst such that when evil eventually strikes, they ascribe it all to Allah and give him all the glory.

Again, with the Emir's wish that death comes quietly, Dogari tries to assure him that death is far from him. Consider example 57.

Ex. 57 Emir: No.... if it came quietly.... Swiftly and decisively and took me away..... I would embrace it like a great visitor who came to the palace to pay his respects. But death to me has become an albatross.... a cloak of shame. I with the rich edges of my Jalabia..... as if he connives first with my body and second with my enemies, to strip it all its worldly fleshy blessings and give to my white shroud, on the final day, a pack of bones.

Dogari: Walahi! You shall be well, father... insha' Allah. I swear by the name of the Almighty Allah, you shall live....

(Mu'adhin's Call, Pg 12 – 13)

Emir in the excerpt above, out of frustration and tired of being bedridden seeks death as an escape. This to Dogari is alien to Islamic way of life. Out of the abundance of his love for his Emir, Dogari attempts to brighten Emir's hope by assuring him that the Emir shall not die, but be well. In employing the phrase "insha Allah", Dogari assures the Emir that he shall not die. The belief in Islamic circle is that at the mention of the name of Allah, everything is possible. In instances where the phrase "insha Allah" is used, the people affected are assured that things will

turn out well. In assuring the Emir, Dogari did not employ any lexical item to signify assurance. Rather, a consideration of the conversation context in terms of speech acts indicates an act of assuring. With the use of father to refer to Emir, Dogari shows how dear he holds the Emir in his heart. Through this, one could infer the reason for Dogari's wish that his Emir lives. This he strongly proclaims through the use of the auxiliary verb "shall". With shared sck of the power in the name of Allah, the Emir believes that his future can be changed for good and might not die afterall.

5.2.1.2 Confessing

Confessing is rarely found in *Mu'adhin's Call*. In the few instances, confessing occurs in the traditional context to deal with royalty through ssk, sck, ref, inf, and rel. The following is a testimony:

Ex. 58 Dogari: My Lord, if you had not chosen to play the game, and you kept the seeds to yourself. If you had not allowed the camel to hire you into the desert heat.... May be you.....

Emir: Would have lived?

Dogari: Yes. But see, you are alive my lord.

Emir: Um um. No! not this way! Is this how to be alive? ... Now to the task I accepted to play the game..(coughs) only for the love of my people.... Not to break with tradition.... and since there was an absence of another prince..... a divine soul.... a worthy candidate chosen by the people, and blessed by Allah in the house of Dauda, I became the chosen one (pause). Forgive me if I appear arrogant, I was only a brief moment of human flight on my part. Forgive me.

(*Mu'adhin's Call*, Pg 14)

Expectedly, nobody confesses to a bad act. As such, it is surprising for Emir to accept his ill fate as man-made as he agrees that he caused it himself. This is because, if he had not agreed to ascend the throne despite the fact that he is not eligible, he would have not been in his present state. Despite the difference in status, Dogari told the Emir that his agreeing to play the game brought about the woe that befell him. This in Hausa community is referred as "*na yada zain buga*". With the application of ssk of communal use of words, Emir infers Dogari's meaning from this utterance, and with the application of reference, reads the meaning of the game as cutting corners to ascend the throne. Thus he confesses, "I accepted to play the game". Although, there is no word or lexical item that suggests the act, but a consideration of the utterance in the

terms of speech each reveals an acceptance of blame and confession to an evil act which led to the breaking of tradition and the grave consequence which the Emir presently suffers.

5.2.1.3 Rebuking

Rebuking is found in the communal context to deal with the issue of religion through sck, ref, inf. and rel. in the play. Instances of rebuking are rare as Yerima merely employs it to highlight specific issues salient to the realization of his thematic preoccupation in the play. An instance is recorded here.

Ex.59 Background (in Dogari's conversation with Emir, Emir condemns Abdul-Kabir from the ruling house of Dauda, Dogari feels other-wise and since he cannot challenge an authority higher than his, he tactically rebukes Emir)

Dogari: Are you God..... to describe a man as nothing.

(Mu'adhin's Call, pg 13)

The Hausas' belief is that God is the creator, that is, "*Allah ne Mahalita*", meaning that he is the one who creates the world, and everything in it. Islamic beliefs hold that only God can create or destroy. Emir's comment about Abdulkadir, therefore, is blasphemous as he equates himself with God. A close glean of the utterance "are you God" may be taken ordinarily as a question. However, the conversational context, based on Hausa communal belief shows that it is not a question but intended as a soft rebuke. This is due to the social status of Emir and Dogari. The Hausa culture does not allow a lower class citizen to rebuke a senior class officer, in which case, Dogari is in no position to rebuke the Emir. With the application of ssk of Islamic practice the Emir infers the meaning of the utterance and the reference to God suggests that Emir in condemning Abdulkadir equates himself with God.

5.2.1.4 Declaring

Declaring occurs in the traditional context to deal with the issue of royalty through the use of sck, ssk, inf., rel. and inf. in the play. In Dogari's conversation with Emir, Emir tries to discredit Abdul-Kadir, a fact which does not go down well with Dogari. This is because Dogari has knowledge of certain facts about Abdul-Kadir which he tries to deform. The pragmatic act of declaring is necessitated by the fact that the Emir is already aware of the status of Abdul-Kadir

but is merely pretending about it. Hence, Dogari needs not inform, nor explain but declare to make the truth stick.

Ex. 60: Dogari: Freely and with caution then I shall speak. He had the same blood as the late Emir who ruled before your father. Did he not? His blood was as blue as royal blood comes! (Excited. Forgets himself) By Allah, he too was a prince!

(*Mu'adhin's Call*, Pg 16)

Dogari first of all appreciates the fact that he has the conversation turn. He builds his declaration on the premise that Abdul-Kadir “had the same blood as the late Emir who ruled before (Emir’s) father”. Hausas employ the utterance “*jinni mu ya zo daya*” to indicate that certain people share the same blood, that is, they are from same descendants. In which case, the son of a past Emir is automatically a prince, and of royal blood, hence, Dogari’s conclusion which is a declaration of the royal status of Abdul-Kadir; “his blood was as blue as royal blood comes”.

A common cultural knowledge in Hausaland is that blood is red in colour. However, people from the royal house are tagged as having blue blood running in their veins. Although if they have a cut, red blood will still flow in their veins, because they are of royal birth, they are classified as different, superior, and privileged than others, hence the ascription of blue blood to them with the fact that Abdul-Kadir is of royal birth because he is the son of the Emir who ruled before Emir’s father, Abdul-kadir has blue blood flowing in his veins. Definitely, he is of royal birth, and the implication is that he is qualified to be crowned Emir and is the one that ought to be installed instead of the present Emir. With the application of *sck* of the people’s cultural practice, Emir understands Dogari’s words and intention since he shares same notion of blue blood with Dogari. The third person singular pronoun, “his”, automatically refers to Abdul-Kadir. Through this, the Dogari establishes who the conversation is about. With the facts gathered to support the truth of Abdul-kadir’s royal lineage, it is easy for Dogari to declare Abdul-kadir’s blood as blue, as royal blood comes.

5.2.1.5 Condemning

Another pract found in *Mu'adhin's Call* is condemning. Emir is noted to condemn his act of playing the game, which is, colluding to ascend the throne unjustfully. However, he could not

condemn himself openly. Thus, in the traditional context, Emir practs condemning to deal with the issue of royalty through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref., rel., and inf. Consider example 61:

Ex. 61 Emir: The truth? The truth is bitter indeed. (*Chuckles sadly*).
If only I had known then what I know now.... but when the
milk has gone sour, we must throw it all away... no matter how
wasteful or sad.

Dogari: So you now know, great one? You too know the truth?
Now? then how come?

(*Mu'adhin's Call, Pg 16*)

Emir in 61 above accepts that the truth is bitter. His acceptance is a pointer to the fact that he feels remorseful for his earlier unjust acts. With remorse comes a condemnation of his earlier acts and the whole deed is framed in Emir's wise-saying

“when the milk has gone sour, we must throw it all away....
No matter how wasteful or sad”.

There is a need for an application of sck, and ssk of the peoples' cultural practice to understand Emir's utterance. The utterance “when milk is sour, we must throw it all away”, takes its source from Hausas belief that “in *madara yayi tsami dole mu ya duka*”. Milk, that is, “*madara*”, is refreshing and is commonly taken by Hausas. As such, some of their foods have milk content. The “*fura*”, “*kunnu*”, “*wara*” (cheese), all cannot be taken without an addition of “*madara*”, such are the significant uses of milk, but then, it is only if it has not gone sour (*tsami*). With the application of sck of Hausa cultural practices, both Emir and Dogari are aware that milk, having gone sour, could be harmful for human consumption, hence, it does not have any use other than to be thrown away “in all its totality”. This is what Emir relates his reign to. The Emir's utterance practs condemning without any lexical item indicating the act. It is only with sck, therefore, that the act can be identified.

5.2.1.6 Explaining

Explaining fairly dominates the play as characters adopt it for discussion in the play. The pract of explaining deals with issues of death and royalty based on sck, ssk, ref, rel, and inf. The following examples will suffice:

Ex. 62:Dogari: Your eminence...you. You alone live your own life. Have you

forgotten the rule of kingship, only one moon at a time?

Emir: Very true, but many stars surround the moon. Each with its own twinkle. Each fighting to be the dominant one. Yet, each one living at the mercy of the shine and grace of Allah. So who lives my life for me now? I ask once more.

Dogari: And I answer most emphatically, no one. No one can live the life of an Emir for him. You cannot even complete it. One Raweni head at a time. That is why when the subjects bow, they bow. Even when swallowed by the essence and the presence of the moon. They bow in total supplication. Even when there is darkness everywhere, and the rains refuse to fall, and hunger rules the stomach. And the taxes are hard to swallow, they bow in profound supplication. (He stoops) Zaki! Torongiwa! I call you.

(*Mu'adhin's Call*, Pg 17)

Role status still has a great influence on the utterances of Dogari as he becomes aware from time to time that he is before the Emir, his lord. This is evident in the manner of his response as he stammers indicating that despite the fact that Emir allows him to talk, he is uncomfortable since the Emir is far above his status. However, to concretise this, Dogari employs the Hausa's popular belief that "*daya wata a lokaci*" (one moon at a time), emanating from Hausas' belief in one Allah, highlights the Hausas' essence of the existence of only "one moon at a time", indicating that only one Emir can rule at a time. Dogari further explains the sovereignty of the status of the Emir, stating that no one is equal to him. This is expressed in the saying, one rawani at a time. Dogari subtly explains that the Emir can live his life for himself as no one can live his life for him. In essence, the Emir lives his life the way he wants, hence, he is the architect of his own problem, and he has no one to blame for his misfortune.

A close look at Dogari's utterances does not indicate any lexical item indicating the practice, except for a consideration of the conversational context. "One rawani at a time" effectively explains that as long as the Emir lives, no other Emir can be installed. Without an application of the Hausas' belief in one Allah, rubbing off on one Emir at a time, as observed in the existence of only one moon at a time, the Emir could not have understood Dogari's utterance. In this instance, Dogari practices explanation on royal status, and the essence of death in Emirship position. The reference to moon is symbolic of the Emir, and the existence of a moon at a time makes the Emir to infer that no other Emir can reign while an existing one rules.

Pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru*

Explaining, informing, accusing, describing, asserting, advising, and warning are in proverbs, wise sayings, metaphorical expressions and ordinary day-to-day word usages in *Attahiru*. The table below aptly captures this:

Practs/allopracts	context	Issues	Contextual features
Explaining	communal	war	vce, ref, rel, inf
Informing	traditional	death, ability	vce, ref, rel, inf, ssk, sck
Accusing	communal/traditional	religion negligence unity	ref, rel, inf, ssk, sck
Describing	traditional	colonialism ability	ref, rel, inf, ssk, sck
Asserting	traditional	attitude colonialism	ref, rel, inf, sck, ssk
Advising	traditional	preparation	ref, rel, inf, sck, ssk
Warning	traditional	colonialism	ref, rel, inf, ssk, sck

Table 15: An analysis of practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's *Attahiru*.

5.2.2.1 Explaining

From the table above, explaining occurs in the communal context to project the issue of war through vce, sck, ssk, inf, ref. and rel. in the play. In instances wherever it is found, explaining reveals actual situation of things and why things turn out the way they are. For example, in the beginning of the play, when Abbas and his younger siblings were travelling, they were robbed by a boy who pretended to be a beggar girl. His ploy is successful because Abbas likes women. Let us consider example sixty three:

Ex 63 Yakubu: He must have followed you from Kano. He must have seen how much you all had. My advice remains that you should leave fat women alone

Abbas: I swear....(more laughter)

Ahmed: I agree with Yakubu, he must have known

Abbas: He must have...Haa Allah...All that money. Our uncle had died a rich man.
The war in Kano with the white had been a great loss to my family. We lost all of his camels and load. His shop was burnt.

(Attahiru Pg. 16)

The interaction above presents three people taking a guess at the turn of events. This is made possible through a stylistic repetition of the phrase “he must have” in the utterances of Yakubu, Abass, and Ahmed. A syntactic consideration of the phrase reveals a common syntactic composition in the utterances of the characters.

He / must have

S p

Yerima tactically employs the phrase without stylistic or syntactic variation. The repetition apart from being rhythmic is purposely targeted at emphasis, indicating common agreement or reasoning as to the cause of the boy dressing as a lady and following them. The three could reach a common conclusion based on a shared common knowledge. Without an application of ssk of communal practice, it must have been difficult for the three to agree on the cause of the set up. However, through the heterodiegetic narrator, we experience voice crash here as Yerima intrudes into the narration vagary to give information through explanation before withdrawing.

It is convenient for Yerima to crash into the voice of Abbas whose uncle is in the centre of discourse here. A glean at the character of Abbas shows that he is a blind man who after all is not too intelligent. For a character with these disabilities to be able to know the extent of an uncle’s wealth and the height of his loss in a battle with the Whiteman and even the coming of the Whiteman to Sokoto could be baffling. However, a textual consideration shows the voice of an ever present, all knowing heterodiegetic narrator, stating the turn of events and telling us what to expect in the play. Let us consider his voice; all that money, the war in Kano had been a great loss to my family; the King of the Whitemen, Lugga, wants to come to Sokoto.

An examination of the voice crash shows the voice of a narrator trying to explain in order to build the plot of the story. We were made to know the state of things before the advent of the Whiteman, the consequence of his coming and the aftermath. This can only be done by an heterodiegetic narrator, Yerima thus practs explanation through the ssk of communal practice of

the people by Ahmed and Yakubu. However, a consideration of the conversational context shows an act of explaining without a mention of the act through any lexical item. Yerima's attempt at explaining starts with Abbas' utterance "our uncle had died a rich man", in which case, it is only with inference that we can determine the act through the conversation of the character.

5.2.2.2 Informing

A look at table six above reveals that Yerima practs of informing in *Attahiru* in the traditional context to discuss issues of death and ability through ssk, ref., rel., and inf. These are discussed in the examples below:

- Ex 64 Abbas:** We cannot waste much time my friends. The fast shooting gun of the Whitemen spits bullets of death. It talks to soldiers from afar. The princes should not squabble over who should be caliph, there is no time. I heard the Whitemen are marching towards Argungu and Gwandu, already.
- Yakubu:** The Whitemen never cease to amaze me.
- (*Attahiru* pg. 17)

A close look at the character of Abbas shows that Ahmed Yerima narrates through him as Yerima finds it convenient to crash into his voice to give information and withdraw from the narration. A consideration of the conversational context reveals Yerima crashing into the voice of Abbas once again to inform us of the ability of the Whiteman, especially, his guns. Abbas is so sure and well informed that he relates how the fast shooting gun of the Whitemen "spits bullets of death". He further informs that the shooting gun of the Whitemen "talks to soldiers from afar". One then begins to wonder how a beggar like Abbas came to know about the Whiteman and the ability of his gun and how he comes about the figurative use of words as the "gun talking to soldiers from afar". In fact, it is amazing for a blind man to testify to a shooting gun, spitting bullets of death. All these point to the voice of an heterodiegetic narrator who intrudes into the narration to inform and withdraws.

Furthermore, the conversational context shows given information without any lexical item indicating the act. The context literally informs about the ability and the advance of the Whitemen so that the emirate makes haste and prepare for the Whiteman as reflected in the

words of Abbas “we cannot waste much time...”. It is only with an application of ssk of Hausa warfare situation that one infers Abbas’ attempt at informing here. For example, he talks about the guns of the Whitemen spitting bullets of death also; it talks to soldiers from afar. With these, one can infer that there is a need to make haste. The relevance of the gun spitting bullets of death and talking to soldiers from afar lies in the caliphate making preparation for the Whitemn’s attack hence “the princes should not squabble-one who should be Caliph”.

To cap it all, Abbas informs that “the Whitemen are marching towards Argungu and Gwandu, already”. Ahmed and Yakubu could understand him with an application of ssk for it is with this shared situational background that they understand his stylistic use of the word “march” and its figurative impact. Literally, marching towards a place would not indicate any harm, however, used metaphorically, “marching” in this context indicates “attack”. Amazing, therefore it is for an illiterate beggar to use words so constructively. However, with an application of ssk, Yakubu understands and this is reflected in his reply “the Whitemen never cease to amaze me”. Informing also occurs in the play when reporting an incident. Let us see the following example:

Ex.65 Yakubu: Yet, the greatest moment was when the Caliph fell. As the bullet struck him, he raised up his sword and screamed Allahu-akbar! Allahu-akbar! he was a great man indeed. With the bullets he still cut down two more soldiers, then his Rawani loosened, and his cap fell. He twisted in pain holding on to nothing but his guts. Slowly, he started to fall. And as he fell, the Madawaki noticed him, he covered him with his shield, the Ubandoma, all forming a human shield. But the Caliph had fallen, and with his last breath, he screamed again. Amidst the noise of the guns and dying men, a gentle breeze blew, and as if the passing breeze. That was when the thunderous call came.....”

(Attahiru pg. 63)

The above could be seen as a conclusion to the play. It is not surprising, therefore, to see Yerima trash the voice of Yakubu in an attempt at summarizing the play. A limit to the act of informing comes with the first utterance, “yet, the greatest moment was when the Caliph fell”. In this instance, Yakubu sets out to inform Mai Wurno of the incident at the war front, most especially, the manner of the death of the Caliph. The information which comes in form of narration reveals Yakubu giving in-depth detail about the situation of the war between the men of Sokoto and the whitemen. One wonders whether Yakubu is at the war front or not, and even if

he is there, it is amazing how he gets all the minute detail of the fall of the Caliph. Then the question is, is Yakubu fighting or watching? For even a war-press man cannot give such detailed report. For example, Yakubu knew when the bullet struck the Caliph, and that was the exact moment he raised up his sword and screamed, Allahu-akbar? Yakubu knows very well that even with the bullets in him, he still cut down two more soldiers and that it was exactly that moment that his Rawani loosened and his cap fell. Yakubu also notices how the caliph twisted in pain and how he kept struggling for his dear life. He could tell that the Caliph got the attention of the Madwaki as he fell, and how all others alongside Ubandoma formed a human shield around the caliph. He also notices that it was too late to protect the Emir.

A careful consideration of the above shows the voice of a heterodiegetic narrator who narrates from the third person narrative, which trashes the voice of his character to narrate and comment on the story. Notably, Yakubu or Yerima gives a valiant account of the Caliph and indeed comments that “as the bullet struck him, he raised up his sword and screamed Allahu-akbar!”, then his comment; “He was a great man indeed”. The fact that he lifted his sword and shouted Allahu-akbar alone does not make him a great man indeed! However, a consideration of historical trend reveals that Attahiru’s reign was overshadowed by British colonization of Nigeria. Attahiru was Caliph for less than six months, hence, his reign is almost not mentioned because of the little time he spent. Yerima thus sets out to elevate this great Caliph and in his own words “for a playwright who wants to write drama out of history, I am able through the materials history provides, to subject, it to a process of self-criticism, while empowering even the sometimes historical contradictions presented with illusion, immediacy and theatrical magic”. This Yerima calls “faction” and this according to him is “the art of mixing facts of history with the fiction of the mind of the playwright” (*Attahiru*: 6). Yerima sees this as giving life to the past, to the dead, so that it makes a new and more immediate meaning to the present.

It is evident that Yerima in the play sings the praises and the valiant death of Attahiru. However, the wrong thing is his vehicle of information, Yakubu. Yakubu is a beggar and a coward who despite his and Abbas’ decision to join the Caliph in his fight against Lugard turns out shaking before Lugard when they were caught on their way to caliph’s camp. Yakubu is presented with little intelligence and non-capability for rendering details. Well, Yerima continues to hide under the fact that as a coward, Yakubu hid and watched all the details of the war as there must be somebody left to relate events after the war. Through the narration, Yerima attempts to

paint Caliph's death as being valiant and purposely singles him out as a great leader whose death brings about the end of the war. With an application of ssk, we are able to understand Yerima's comments based on the person of the Caliph.

With shared sck, the reader could understand the people involved in the war, especially, those who formed a human shield around the caliph as his chiefs and warlords. Also, we could understand what is meant by human wall and understand that such is the situation when a great man falls in Hausaland. The Caliph's death is not mentioned in the report; we are just given the information; "the Caliph had gone with the passing breeze". With the metaphorical utterance, we could infer that the Caliph's soul has departed to join his ancestors. With the aid of sck and inference, we are able to detect the pragmatic act as there is no lexical item that indicates that there is information, except that a consideration of the conversational context suggests in terms of speech act that the act is informing.

5.2.2.3 Accusing

Accusing is found in the communal and traditional contexts through sck, ssk, ref., rel. and inf. Accusing occurs next to informing to deal with religion, negligence and unity. The following examples will suffice:

Ex. 66 Yakubu: Look at them; first, I hear they come as friends to your own land, asking for a place to stay. Then, before long, they say you are a pagan for worshipping Allah and that you will not see heaven for having more than one wife. And that it is evil in the eye of Annabi Isah Alaihi Salam to.....!
(Attahiru, pg. 18)

Considering the communal context of discourse here, the Hausas are good hosts to their visitors, the Whitemen. If the hosts receive the visitors well, the visitors ought to behave well towards their hosts. However, this is not the case for the visitors come with a purpose, and that is to capture and take as theirs the rights and properties of their hosts. Hence, Yakubu's accusation introduced by a jeering tone "look at them".

With an application of ssk of communal practice of the people, we know that the Whites come as friends. They later turn round to be enemies, claiming that one is doing a wrong thing on one's own land. Yakubu's accusation here is targeted at the Whiteman's assertion that "you are a

pagan for worshipping Allah”. The people of Sokoto are seen as pagans for worshipping Allah. The accusation comes in form of a jeer, “look at them”, because they practice the same thing as the people they accuse. It is only with sck and ssk of the Islamic religion that one understands the situation.

Accusing is also found in the traditional context through contextual features of ssk, sck, ref., inf. and rel. Let us consider example 67 below:

Ex. 67 Caliph: Like good Muslim brothers, we must find common grounds for peace. The times we are in are not times for land and well problems. We all heard what happened to great Kano. The Emir, Aliyu who you earlier mentioned, never arrived Kano after he left Sokoto. Now I hear he has fled for his dear life. This worries me, and indeed, should worry us all. Even now as I speak, the Whitemen trouble me with letters begging us to be friends. I find them a difficult people to understand. They throw dust in the wind of shame all over the place, and yet with their bloody hands they want you to shake and embrace them while the dust of shame settles on your face. We Muslims must stick together in these trying times, and not allow Shaitan create disharmony amongst us. May Allah forbid this.

(Attahiru, pgs. 25-26)

Caliph Attahiru practs accusing, here, to deal with issues of unity among Muslims and that of disorder by the Whites. In the first instance, Caliph accuses the people “like good Muslim brothers, we must find common grounds for peace”. The accusation comes on the background of the quarrel between two stakeholders in the community, Zarkin Zango and Zarkin Fateke. The quarrel degenerated to the extent that the two communities avoid each other, and to cap it all, Zarkin Zango refuses his daughter to get married to Abdul-Gafar, Sarkin Fatake’s son. This social crisis is unhealthy and ostensibly causes harm to the unity of Muslims who by now ought to come together as one and fight a common foe, the Whitemen. Without any lexical item suggesting it, the accusation comes in form of advising because of its subtle presentation. Without ssk of communal Hausas’ dispute settlement, one would have taken the pract, here as advising or challenging. However, with sck of the incidence between Zarkin Zango and Zarkin Fateke, one could see Caliph accusing the Muslims under the leadership of the two chieftains as causing disorder and thereby re-uniting them through the act. This could be gotten from Caliph’s accusation that “the times we are in are not times for land and well problems”. With ssk, we are

able to understand references to land and well problems as issues between Zarkin Zango and Sarkin Fatake. The relevance therefore, is that “Muslims must stick together in these trying times and not allow Shaitan to create disharmony amongst us”.

Reference to Shaitan is to the Devil, who is known as the god of confusion. Through an application of sck of cultural practices of the people, Caliph’s hearers understand who Shaitan is, and with a contextual consideration of Caliph’s utterances, it could be inferred that the Caliph accuses Muslims of not been being united. Second, the Caliph accuses the Whitemen of causing disorder in the community. The accusation comes strong as the Caliph states that the Whiteman causes disorder, pretending to be a friend while putting one to shame. In his words, “they throw dust of shame all over the place and yet with their bloody hands they want you to shake and embrace them while the dust of shame settles on your face”. Before this, the Caliph reveals that “the Whitemen trouble “him” with letter begging us to be friends”. Perhaps, the social disorder and untimely end of Caliph and eventually, his reign, would not have been if he has accepted this offer of friendship. However, he could not accept the Whitemen because he “finds them a difficult people to understand”, hence the accusation “they throw dust in the wind of shame all over the place”.

The pract of accusing is also used to deal with the issue of negligence while Ubandoma is addressing the people in the Caliph’s palace. Let us consider example sixty eight.

Ex. 68 Ubandoma: So great Caliph, now it is our turn, and all of a sudden, it was as if we cannot remember that we slept so soundly, when the hungry dog came for our dried meat. I am sorry if I offend anyone.

(Attahiru, pg. 32)

Ubandoma subtly employs the wise-saying “*mu sha barchi har me yun wa kare ya zo chi burshe-she nama mu*” to accuse the people of negligence. With the application of reference, we identify the “hungry dog”, “*yun wa kare*”, as the Whitemen, while the “dried meat”, “*nama mu*” referes to the peoples’ spoil. In this sense, it could be inferred that the Whitemen covet the people’s possession. However, it is only with an application of sck and ssk of the peoples’ cultural practice that one can understand the wise-saying as one needs a shared socio-cultural knowledge to interpret the hungry dog as somebody that covets other people’s treasure, as there is no dog in the setting here and a dried meat, a reference to the Hausas treasure which is also absent. The idea of sleeping soundly suggests negligence, hence, the interpretation of the accusation as the people being caught unaware by the coming of the Whitemen.

5.2.2.4 Describing

Describing occurs in the traditional context on issues of colonialism and danger through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref., and rel. in the play. Examples are cited below:

Ex. 69 Caliph: (Allows the murmur for a while. He sits straight and clears his voice. There is silence). You have heard what the friend of the Muslims wrote to Caliph Abdul-Rahman. I have received my own letters from Morland. I had earlier ignored the two letters for me, at the time; the Whiteman was like a little almajiri playing in the mud, instead of seeking for alms. I felt he would realize his folly later in the day when he has nothing to declare to his teacher and master, and the horse whip descends. I ignored him, but we have inherited the crisis.

(Attahiru, pg. 27)

The Caliph in the interaction above blames himself for ignoring the Whiteman in the first instance. However, he states his reason for ignoring him. Through the use of simile, “like”, the Caliph likened the Whitemen to a little almajiri playing in the mud instead of asking for alms. One needs sck and ssk of the culture of the people to interpret the utterance as it is only with a shared cultural knowledge that one can understand the reference of the Whitemen as a little almajiri girl. It is also necessary to have a shared sck and ssk of the Islamic religion to infer what is expected of an almajiri girl. In essence, through the simile “like”, Caliph describes how the Whitemen is at his first coming. Perhaps, if the little almajiri girl had been asking for alms as she ought to, maybe, the Caliph would not have ignored her. The Caliph thus practices describing in this instance to deal with the issue of colonialism.

Contrary to the harmless little almajiri girl playing innocently in the mud, Caliph in another instance describes the Whiteman differently through the use of simile, “like”, and other contextual features as sck, ssk, ref., inf. and rel. Let us consider example 70:

Ex. 70 Maiwurno: We must not allow that to happen, Baba. If we must, your caliphate must remain intact.

Caliph: How; my son? With the Whiteman set like a wild hyena in the desert looming for a kill? (Pause) and the princes restless to rule, selling off the only element of dignity we have to the Whitemen, that is why you must promise me, son.

(Attahiru, pg.38)

In order not to question the Caliph's authority over the states, Mai wurno (Caliph's son) advises that the caliphate must remain intact. This is a great and insurmountable task for the Whiteman is "set like a wild hyena in the desert looming for a kill". It is only with an application of sck and ssk of the peoples' cultural belief that one infers the referent of wild hyena as the Whiteman. The hyena itself in Hausa culture is regarded as evil, and as such, dangerous. The hyena referred to in the extract is even more dangerous as it is located in the desert and is hungry hence, his long for a kill. If the Whiteman is so referred here, with our shared situational knowledge, we can make inference that the little innocent almajiri girl has grown into a dangerous hyena, hence it is difficult to run down. A careful consideration of the conversation context here reveals no presence of an hyena. However, because of his military might and ability to run over empires as evident in recent parades, the Whiteman must be feared.

5.2.2.5 Asserting

Asserting is found in *Attahiru* in the traditional context to deal with issues of attitude and colonialism through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, inf. and rel. The following examples will suffice.

Ex.71 Madwaki: You did well your highness. No matter how well one glorifies a donkey with beautiful apparels of a horse at a durbar, a donkey is still a donkey and a horse still a horse. I beg his royal highness to ignore the Whiteman.
(*Attahiru*, pg. 28)

After the Whiteman wrote to Attahiru asking for his hand in friendship, Attahiru confesses having received several other letters in the same direction. However, after digesting the details, he ignored the letters. The interaction above shows that this goes down well with the Madwaki, who, through Hausas wise-saying that "*ko yaya ne in a ma jaki kwaliya saurata me kyau na rakumi, jaki shi ne jaki, ada rakumi shi ne rakumi*" asserts that the Whiteman cannot change his attitude as revealed in "no matter how well one glorifies a donkey with beautiful apparels of a horse at a durbar, a donkey is still a donkey and a horse, still a horse".

This wise saying requires both sck and ssk of the people's cultural practice to interpret the attitudes and attributes of the donkey and horse. A share socio-cultural knowledge of the people's culture is highly required in determining the reference to horse and donkey. It can, therefore, be inferred that the Whiteman is referred to as both. The cultural implication of the wise-saying is that no matter how good one treats an animal, an animal will always be an animal.

Hence, Madwaki's advice that the Caliph should ignore the Whiteman, as he will never change his attitude. There is no donkey or horse at the discussion, and there is no lexical item that suggests the practice of assertion, it only takes an application of sck and ssk to infer the meaning as well as a consideration of the context of discourse in terms of speech act. Also, the caliph practices asserting through the cotextual features of sck and ssk, ref., inf. and rel. in the socio-cultural context to deal with the issue of colonialism. Let us examine the following example:

- Ex. 72** **Caliph:** We sat and listened to the different reactions to the Whiteman's letter from the time of my grandfather, Caliph Atiku. I knew that the Whiteman smiles more than he speaks. His white flesh corners his thick, dirty and hardened soul. As for me, I have never trusted a man who asks too many questions about your culture, and shows you only drawings and photographs about his.
- All:** (Laughter and then murmur), only pray that there should be love between the bride and the groom, but also, the holy book says there must be honesty and patience. Without them, the marriage is built on quick sand. It will slowly sink. May Allah forbid!
- All:** Amin!
- (*Attahiru*, pg. 33)

The Caliph's consideration of the Whiteman in the interaction above shows that his white flesh covers his thick, dirty and hardened soul. Hence, the conclusion that the Whiteman smiles more than he speaks as such he cannot be trusted. However, as Muslim brothers and sisters, there is a need to trust one another, hence Caliph's assertion that "there must be honesty and patience" according to the Holy book.

Without an application of sck and ssk of the general communal belief of the people, one might not be able to understand the assertion here. The Caliph relies on the requirement of the Holy book in making the assertion. Hence, it requires a shared situational or cultural knowledge on the part of the hearers to understand the aspect that the Caliph is talking about. All the same, it makes Caliph's task easy since his assertion is backed by the Holy book. In making his assertion a success, the Caliph makes allusion to a wedding Fatiah. The import can only be understood by Muslims as the act is coated in Arabic language which could only be understood by Muslims and those who have interest in the religion itself and take time to study their ways.

5.2.2.6 Advising

Advising is found in the communal context in dealing with preparation through such contextual features as sck, ssk, ref., inf., and rel. Let us examine the following example:

Ex. 73 Ubandoma: I thank the last speaker, whose tongue touched the depth of my heart and raised my belief in Islam. I thank you all who have found time to come and listen to the Caliph and the Whiteman's games. But, my concern is how prepared are we? How safe is it to dare the Whiteman? As a little child, I never dared a bully in my koranic class until I was within the safe distance of our compound or the presence of my bigger brothers. How prepared are we? We heard how easily the Zaria walls fell and how quickly the Whiteman filled the Kano moat with the borders and bones of Kano warriors, sad. We must ponder deeply, greatly one. For it is only in pondering that Allah may reveal the true meaning of all these to us. For now we are like little children offended by the threat of a bully (sits)

(Attahiru, pg. 30)

Ubandoma's pract of advising is introduced by the rhetorical question, "how prepared are we? Without expecting answers to his question, Ubandoma sensitizes the people and makes them to understand the significance of being prepared. He goes ahead to give an allusion of what he does in his early days. It is only with an application of sck and ssk that one understands the allusion. References are made to the fall of Zaria and Kano which in essence significantly strengthens Ubandoma's advice.

5.3 A comparative analysis of the practs and allopracts in Ahmed Yerima's selected Hausa culture-based plays.

Eleven practs and allopracts are found in Ahmed Yerima's Hausa culture-based plays (*Attahiru* and *Mu'adhin's Call*). These are: explaining, informing, accusing, describing, asserting, advising, assuring, confessing, rebuking, declaring and condemning. Table 16 shows this:

Practs/allopracts	Plays
Explaining	<i>Attahiru</i> <i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Informing	<i>Attahiru</i>
Accusing	<i>Attahiru</i>
Describing	<i>Attahiru</i>
Asserting	<i>Attahiru</i>
Advising	<i>Attahiru</i>
Assuring	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Confessing	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Rebuking	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Declaring	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Condemning	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>

Table 16: A comparative analysis of practs in Yerima's selected Hausa culture-based plays

Table sixteen reveals that five pragmatic acts are specific to each of the two selected Hausa culture-based plays. However, the two have one pract in common, as the pract of explaining is found in the two plays respectively. Let us examine the context of occurrence of the practs in the following table:

Practs/allopracts	Context	Plays
Explaining	communal traditional	<i>Attahiru</i> <i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Informing	traditional	<i>Attahiru</i>
Accusing	communal/traditional	<i>Attahiru</i>
Describing	traditional	<i>Attahiru</i>
Asserting	traditional	<i>Attahiru</i>
Advising	communal	<i>Attahiru</i>
Assuring	communal/traditional	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Confessing	traditional	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Rebuking	communal	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Declaring	traditional	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Condemning	traditional	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>

Table 17: A comparative analysis of context of practs in Yerima's selected Hausa culture-based plays

With eight instances, there is a predominance of the traditional context in the two plays as six practs (informing, describing, asserting, confessing, declaring, and condemning) practically occur in the traditional contexts, while two practs; advising and rebuking occur in communal contexts. However, the practs of explaining, accusing, and assuring are found in both traditional and communal contexts. Table 18 below shows the textual mechanisms with which the practs are realized:

Practs/allopracts	Contextual features	Plays
Explaining	vce,ref,rel,inf sck,ssk,inf,ref	<i>Attahiru</i> <i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Informing	vce,ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Attahiru</i>
Accusing	ref,rel, inf,sck,ssk	<i>Attahiru</i>
Describing	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Attahiru</i>
Asserting	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Attahiru</i>
Advising	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Attahiru</i>
Assuring	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Confessing	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Rebuking	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Declaring	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Condemning	ref,rel,inf,sck,ssk	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>

Table 18: A comparative analysis of contextual features of practs in Yerima's selected Hausa culture-based plays

Ahmed Yerima employs the contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, rel inf. in majority of the practs. These are: accusing, describing, asserting, advising, assuring, confessing, rebuking, declaring, and condemning. The voice device is only employed in explaining, and informing. This shows a predominance of contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, rel, and inf. in the realization of the practs. Also, we found Yerima's intrusion in the plays to be limited. This, probably is because, *Attahiru* is a historical play, and in *Mu'adhin's Call*, there is no instance of authorial intrusion as Yerima leaves his characters to highlight his views in the play. With this, there is a need to examine a comparative analysis of the issues addressed in the two plays. The issues in the plays are as presented in the table below:

Practs/allopracts	Issues	Plays
Explaining	war deceit, royalty	<i>Attahiru</i> <i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Informing	death, ability	<i>Attahiru</i>
Accusing	religion, negligence, ability	<i>Attahiru</i>
Describing	colonialism, ability	<i>Attahiru</i>
Asserting	attitude, colonialism	<i>Attahiru</i>
Advising	preparation	<i>Attahiru</i>
Assuring	culture, death	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Confessing	royalty	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Rebuking	religion	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Declaring	royalty	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>
Condemning	royalty	<i>Mu'adhin's Call</i>

Table 19: A comparative analysis of issues in practs in Yerima's selected Hausa culture-based plays

A close look at table nineteen above shows that different issues are addressed by Yerima through the practs. For example, Yerima employs explaining to treat deceit and royalty in *Mu'adhins Call*, and war in *Attahiru*. He uses informing to address death, and ability in *Attahiru*, accusing address religion, negligence, and unity, describing: colonialism, and ability, asserting: attitude and colonialism, and advising: preparation, all in *Attahiru*. Furthermore, Yerima employs assuring to treat issues of culture, and death, rebuking, to address religion, and the trio of confessing, declaring, and condemning: royalty in *Mu'adhin's Call*.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

This study carries out an investigation of culture-motivated pragmatic acts and contextual features of language use employed in addressing cultural issues in selected culture-based plays of Ahmed Yerima using insights from the theory of pragmeme. Six plays of Yerima cutting across the cultural practices of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria were purposively selected (*Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale* from Yoruba culture; *Idemili* and *Akuabata*, Igbo culture; *Attahiru* and *Mu'adhin's Call* from Hausa culture). Eight hundred and twenty-eight culture-based conversations in the plays were purposively selected from the texts. From *Mu'adhin's Call*, one hundred and twenty eight, *Attahiru*, one hundred and twenty two, *Idemili*, one hundred and twelve, *Akuabata*, one hundred and nineteen, *Mojagbe*, one hundred and eighty two, and *Ajagunmale*, one hundred and seventy five. The collected data were subsequently subjected to pragmatic analysis.

6.1.1 Practs in Ahmed Yerima's selected Yoruba culture-based plays

In *Mojagbe*, practs and allopracts of informing, invoking, warning, assuring, lamenting, insisting, and accusing occur in traditional and communal contexts to treat issues of power, danger, immortality, re-incarnation, death, miss-understanding, bravery, pride, security, and social intercourse, through contextual features of sck, ssk, inf., ref., vce. and metaphor. Explaining, warning/cautioning, persuading, rebuking, praising, accusing, and pleading are found in *Ajagunmale*. Notably, the practs and allopracts largely occur in the traditional context, while few occur in emotive context to treat issues of faith, deceit, culture, status/power, achievement, belief, social crisis, predestination, inquiry, religion, and morals through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref., inf., and rel. Twelve practs and allopracts occur in Ahmed Yerima's selected Yoruba culture-based plays (*Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale*). These are: informing, explaining, warning/cautioning, assuming, lamenting, cautioning, accusing, pleading, praising, rebuking, persuading, and invoking. Although the practs and allopracts do not solely feature in a single play, they characterize the Yoruba plays generally. For instance, informing, assuring, lamenting, invoking, and insisting are found in *Mojagbe*, while explaining, pleading, praising,

rebuking, and persuading are found in *Ajagunmale*. However, the practs of warning/ cautioning, and accusing are found in both *Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale*. The practs largely occur in the traditional contexts, except for lamenting and cautioning that occur in the communal contexts, explaining in traditional and emotive contexts. All the others are found in traditional contexts. Sck, and ssk, inf, ref, and rel. are the contextual features with which the practs and allopracts are realized.

6.1.2 Practs in Ahmed Yerima's selected Igbo culture-based plays

Contextual features of sck, ssk, vce, and ref. are employed to pract explaining, rebuking, accusing, persuading/inviting, and praising solely in the communal context to deal with issues of trust, danger, confusion, death, habit, manners, familial bonding, and bravery in *Idemili*, while *Akuabata* is largely dominated by practs and allopracts of explaining, closely followed by informing, and appealing. There are also practs and allopracts of cautioning and accusing, occurring solely in the traditional contexts to treat issues of death, culture, social crisis and patience. Eight practs and allopracts are found in the two Igbo culture-based plays (*Idemili* and *Akuabata*). These are: explaining, rebuking, accusing, persuading / inviting, praising, informing, cautioning, and appealing. Rebuking, persuading / inviting, and praising, are peculiar to *Idemili*, informing, cautioning, and appealing are solely found in *Akuabata*, while the practs of explaining and accusing are found in the two plays. As *Idemili* is dominated by communal context, *Akuabata* is dominated by traditional context, while the practs of explaining and accusing occur in communal contexts in *Idemili*, they feature in the traditional contexts in *Akuabata*. The practs and allopracts are realized by contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, rel, and inf.

6.1.3 Practs in Ahmed Yerima's selected Hausa culture-based plays

In *Mu'adhin's Call*, practs and allopracts of assuring, confessing, rebuking, declaring, condemning, explaining, are found in both communal and traditional contexts through contextual features of sck, ssk, ref, rel, inf, to address issues of religion, death, royalty, deceit, and culture. Explaining, informing, accusing, describing, asserting, advising, and warning are employed to deal with issues of death, ability, religion, negligence, unity, colonialism, and preparation in communal and traditional contexts in *Attrahiru*. Eleven practs and allopracts are found in Ahmed Yerima's Hausa culture-based plays (*Attrahiru* and *Mu'adhin's Call*). These are: explaining,

informing, accusing, describing, asserting, advising, assuring, confessing, rebuking, declaring and condemning. Five practs and allopracts acts are specific to each of the two selected Hausa culture-based plays as one, explaining is common to the two plays. There is a dominance of the traditional context in the two plays. Informing, describing, asserting, confessing, declaring, and condemning are found in the traditional contexts, while two advising and rebuking occur in communal contexts. However, the practs of explaining, accusing, and assuring are found in both traditional and communal contexts in the two selected Hausa culture-based plays. Contextual features of sck, ssk, ref., rel., and inf. are employed in performing the practs.

In all, eighteen practs and allopracts occur in the texts. These are: explaining, informing, warning/cautioning, accusing, rebuking, persuading, insisting, assuring, praising, appealing, declaring, pleading, advising, condemning, inviting, confessing, invoking, and lamenting. While eight of the practs cut across the texts, ten are peculiar to the plays. Notably, explaining, assuring, informing, warning/cautioning, accusing, rebuking, persuading, and praising are found in each of the six selected culture-based plays. However, invoking and lamenting are found in *Mojagbe*, pleading and insisting in *Ajagunmale*. In *Mu'adhin's Call*, three practs, confessing, declaring, and condemning occur, while advising is solely found in *Attahiru*. Also, only one, appealing, is found in *Akuabata*, and one inviting, in *Idemili*.

Three contexts characterise the plays, and these are: communal, traditional and emotive. While invoking is found within the traditional context, lamenting occurs in the emotive context in *Mojagbe*. As pleading and insisting occur in the traditional context in *Ajagunmale*, the trio of confessing, declaring, and condemning in *Mu'adhin's Call*, as well as advising in *Attahiru* are found in the traditional context. In *Akuabata*, appealing occurs in the traditional context as inviting in emotive context.

Furthermore, practs of invoking addresses immortality, death, and reincarnation, while lamenting topicalises grief in *Mojagbe*. In *Ajagunmale*, pleading treats morality as insisting handles punishment. All of confessing, declaring, and condemning topicalise royalty in *Mu'adhin's Call*, and advising addresses valiancy in *Attahiru*. In *Akuabata*, appealing treats social crisis and patience, as inviting addresses the subject of filial attachment in *Idemili*.

Overall, four main contextual features characterise the plays. These are: shared cultural knowledge (sck), shared situational knowledge (ssk), reference and voice indexed by metaphors and proverbs.

6.2 Findings

This study examines pragmatic acts performed in Ahmed Yerima's selected culture-based plays. It shows that certain acts were performed in the plays without any lexical item indicating such. Only a consideration of the conversational context reveals the act as counting, as a particular act. With a rigorous application of the theory of pragmeme to the plays, the research reveals the following findings:

1. eighteen practs and allopracts characterise the plays
2. eight practs and allopracts cut across the plays
3. ten practs and allopracts are peculiar to the plays
4. issues addressed by the practs and allopracts vary from culture to culture. However, they topicalise similar issues in the different cultures in varying instances.
5. the practs and allopracts are situated in three types of contexts namely: communal, traditional, and emotive contexts.
6. traditional context largely dominates the plays. This is closely followed by the communal context. The emotive context is rarely found in the plays.
7. practs and allopracts largely occur in the Yoruba and Hausa plays more than in Igbo plays.
8. four main contextual features characterise the plays: sck, ssk, ref, and vce indexed by metaphors and proverbs.
9. contextual features occur in the texts relative to issues which determine their realization in the texts.

6.3 Conclusion

Practs occur in Ahmed Yerima's culture-based plays. While some practs cut across the selected plays, others are found to be peculiar to the cultures. Where practs cut across the plays, they do not necessarily address same issue. In instances where similar issues are addressd, it may be in same or different contexts, realized through similar contextual features, except where Yerima intrudes into the narration. Notably, Yerima engages language within emotive, traditional, and communal contexts in practicing culture-constrained acts which border on particular cultural practices of the Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. In *Mojagbe* and *Ajagunmale*, practs and allopracts orient largely to Yoruba cultural predeterminism and communalistic check and balance, in *Mu' adhin's Call* and *Attahiru*, the language generally practs Hausa cultural directness, and in *Akuabata* and *Idemili*, utterances express the Igbo cultural accommodation and filial attachment. Thus, there is a motivated relationship between Yerima's pragmatic engagements and major Nigerian cultures.

6.4 Suggestions for further studies

Future researchers can apply the theory of pragmeme to culture-based plays of other African writers. Also, pragmatic acts in Ahmed Yeima's works can be compared to culture-based works of other African writers to determine common and divergent form and functional features in the bid to promote African cultural heritage.

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