



**PRAGMATIC ACTS IN CHARACTERS' UTTERANCES IN FEMI OSOFISAN'S
WOMEN OF OWU**

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ABSTRACT: *Studies on Femi Osofisan's Women of Owu have examined the use of lexical choices and discourse markers in the drama text neglecting the choice of meaning negotiation in characters' utterances. This paper, therefore, undertook a pragmatic investigation of how meanings and actions are generated in a play text using Femi Osofisan's Women of Owu. Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Act theory was used alongside implicature and presupposition as elements of pragmatics to analyse five (5) purposively selected extracts from the play. This is done to critically bring to the fore the practs performed in the utterances, the maxims obeyed and those flouted and the type of presupposition made. Findings revealed that the practs of informing, explaining, stating, naming, and influencing were used in the text unveil the thought pattern of the audience. The paper also revealed that the pivotal role context plays in decoding the exact meaning(s) conveyed in each of the extracted utterances. Context is instrumental to the performance of certain acts. From this, the paper concludes that in order to do things with words and to use characters to communicate effectively in any given context, especially in tradition based plays like Women of Owu, a writer needs to have the knowledge of grammar as well as the knowledge of how to use language from a functional perspective in the contextual and traditional backgrounds.*

KEYWORDS: Practs, Metapragmatic Joker, Dramatist, Implicature, Presupposition



INTRODUCTION

Language comes alive when used in context and one of such avenues where language is contextualised is in literary genres be it drama, prose or poetry. The social practice of a particular set of people can be expressed through the genres of literature. When characters speak, they deploy lexical choices that are not value free but encoded with the ideology of the writer of the text or play. Thus, any interpretation of discourse should be based on text's lexical and grammatical choices as meaning negotiation among the character in the text. (Vaara, Sorsa & Palli, 2010) cited in (Oni, 2016).

Scholars' observations have shown that language is deposited in culture, and 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. Every society has its own culture and each culture has its own language which may solely belong to the said culture or is being used across different cultures and it is the society's culture that dictates the way of life of that society. Thus, culture is of great value to the human society. However, Adeniji (2014, p. 17) explained further that as significant as culture is in a society, it cannot express itself except through language. This shows that language and culture share a close relationship. This relationship, according to Odebunmi (2006), is exhibited in terms of language being a part of culture, and yet being its vehicle.

As explained above, each culture has its language. However, apart from having its language, it is also common to cultures to have stories, beliefs, customs and myths that form a part of its oral tradition and are usually specific to various communities. Resting on the background that literature mirrors life, African literary writers source their ideas and materials from these stories, beliefs, etc. and they re-tell these stories to showcase African tradition and culture. Playwrights, like Femi Osofisan whose work of art is the object of focus in this paper, have largely milked the African tradition as reflected in their works.

In Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*, characters' utterances are those that portray the women of Owu as victims of war in the war-torn society of Owu. A victim is someone that "has actually suffered from direct or indirect violence; which can be both physically and psychologically, inflicted by another group of people or from natural disaster which is beyond their control" (Bag, 2009, p.5). It can also be "in form of actual physical harm or psychologically disabling that person through social, political and economical discrimination and by abusing that person, creating an environment of insecurity and tormenting him in such a way that destroys his self worth" (Oni, 2016).

The focus of this paper, therefore, is to examine the Pragmatic study of characters' utterances in Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu* with a view to identifying the aspect of meaning negotiations that project women mainly as victims of war as a way to create stories that reflect the culture of the African people. Thus, this paper sets out to investigate the pragmatic use of language by characters in Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*.

Femi Osofisan as a Dramatist

Osofisan's drama articulates the historical and cultural processes in the society from a class perspective (Awodiya 1993, p. 77). Apart from his socialist credentials, Osofisan is also a Yoruba man with deeply held traditional beliefs, a post-negritudist thinker and a pragmatic



writer brought up under a strong colonial, Christian influence. His father, for instance, was a church lay reader and organist. Going to church every Sunday and on other Christian festivals was obligatory in Osofisan's youth (Adeyemi, 2009). Nevertheless, he is a materialist whose study of other cultures helped to define his attitude to religion.

Osofisan wrote over 26 published plays from 1969 to 2005. Winner of the first association of Nigerian Authors drama prize in 1983, Osofisan is a man of many parts; a renowned critic, poet, novelist, playwright, an actor and a producer. Osofisan's commitment to the negritude writers' course to reject Western ideologies that exploit Africa coloured his vision as his early plays dramatized his commitment to the theme of revolution, which tagged him a Marxist writer.

Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu* is one of his most recent published plays. The 78 pages play was written in 2006 and published through University Press PLC. It was adapted from Euripides' *The Trojan Women*. The book uses the combination of choruses, songs and dance to depict the history of the people of *Owu Kingdom* after a combined military force of Ife, Oyo and Ijebu invaded the city of Owu for seven years killing all of its male inhabitants and children. The text mainly focuses on the aftermath of a 19th-century war-torn Owu Kingdom. It reflects on the pains, depression and agony of the survivors who were only women after the killing of all males in the kingdom.

Summary of the text

The play is set in an open space near the city's main gate which used to serve as a market. It was a precolonial era when the white men were actively engaged in trade along the coast. It was a period when the people's religion was undiluted by foreign faith - when the gods were given a place of importance in the lives of the people. There is a pervading mood of sorrow, misery, destruction, pain and hopelessness in the play. The language is generally simple but elevated. In addition, it has many Yoruba words, proverbs, anecdotes, chants, mythical characters, allusions and so on are infused to help enhance the local colour so as to paint a clear image of the setting. It is also poetic because most of the dialogues are written in verse rather than prose. The playwright made use of chorus; a group of performers through whom important information is passed on to the readers or audience. The chorus -also renders the songs.

REVIEW OF CONCEPTS

Presupposition and Implicature

Implicature is credited to Grice (1975) and it refers to what is suggested in an utterance although it has not been implicitly or explicitly expressed. Implicature can be described as the extra meaning attached to an utterance which does not necessarily follow from what is said. Grice differentiates three types of implicature namely: what is said, what is conventionally implicated and what is non-conventionally implicated. Thus according to Grice, implicature is seen as a type of inference which is distinctly different from presupposition and entailment. Yule in a related manner views implicature as an additional conveyed meaning, that is, an example of more being communicated than is said. Readers or hearers are able to



pragmatically work out a writer or speaker's meaning by relying on inferential rules either explicitly or by inferring (implicature).

Implicature is a technical term and it refers to what is suggested in an utterance even though neither expressed nor strictly implied (that is, entailed) by the utterance. Grice adopted this theoretical construct to deal with examples in communication where a speaker means more than he literally expresses in an utterance. To explain this, Huagh (2002) cited an example:

If I happen to be with a friend who is eating ice cream and I ask something like, "What flavour is it?", my friend might respond by offering me a bite of the ice cream. By offering some of her ice cream to me, my friend has shown that she thinks I was implying that I would like to taste it. I did not actually say I wanted to taste the ice cream, and thus I could deny that I implied this, either quite directly as in "Oh, I didn't mean I wanted to have a bite", or more indirectly as in "Oh, I am not hungry at the moment". However, unless I make some kind of denial, then the fact that I wanted to taste my friend's ice cream has been implied. In lay terms, I have communicated the implication that I would like to try some of my friend's ice cream (pp, 117-118).

This type of implication was termed an implicature by Grice. He goes further to classify implicature into two namely: "**Conventional implicature and Conversational implicature**".

a) Conventional implicature: This is derived from the conventional meaning of words. It is related to semantics and according to Yule (2002, p. 45), it is not based on the cooperative principles introduced by Grice.

b) Conversational implicature: This is related to pragmatics and relies on the cooperative principles.

The cooperative principle is a "social-psychological perspective" of how communication takes place between or among people (Wilson, 1985, p. 639; Spencer-Oatey & Zegarac, 2002, p. 83).

Presupposition is something a speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Speakers in any language sometimes make their utterances on the assumptions of what their hearers already know. These assumptions may sometimes be wrongly interpreted by the hearer. Presupposition therefore can be said to be what a speaker assumes a hearer knows or thinks is true. If speaker 'A' says to speaker 'B', "why did you finish the food?" at least two presuppositions may be derived from the utterance: there was food, and B ate the food.

Presupposition is an implicit assumption. These assumptions are made on assumed common ground. It could also refer to the logical meanings of a sentence. The presuppositions can be made based on presupposition triggers. Levinson (1983, pp. 181-184) states that factive verbs, that is, verbs such as 'know', 'learn', 'remember' and 'realize' which help to presuppose the factual truth of their object are responsible for the presuppositions. Implicative verbs, change of status verbs, iteratives and even questions are also possible presupposition triggers. In the sentence: "Has Musa stopped stealing?" has the presupposition that Musa exists and also, that he used to steal in the past. In the same vein, "negation under constancy test" helps to establish if there is a presupposition. For example, the utterance, "his



house is not beautiful” passes the negation test because it presupposes that there is a house even though its beauty is negated.

Levinson (1983, p. 204) is of the view that presupposition revolves round the concept of “appropriateness”, “felicity” and “mutual knowledge”, “common ground” or “joint assumption.” Akmajian, et al. (1980) are of the view that the presupposition of a sentence is the set of conditions that have to be satisfied in order for the intended speech to be appropriate in those circumstances. Akmajian, et al. aver that sentences require that certain culturally defined conditions should be satisfied in order for the utterance of a sentence to be understood. Implicatures and presuppositions are some of the most significant inference generating mechanisms involved in generating meaning. As a result of this, the notion of pragmatic presupposition and implicature are useful to our study especially as we realise that meaning sometimes get discounted or deflected as a result of certain presuppositions that are made (even in harmless conversations).

Cooperative Principles

Grice is the propagator of the “Cooperative Principle” (CP). He has to his credit the ‘theory of implicature’ in pragmatics. This theory was welcomed by many scholars because of the fact that implicature does not have an extended history like many other topics in Pragmatics (Levinson, 1983, p. 100). Grice (1975, p. 45) proposes that in each communicative event, it is required of each participant to make their contribution appropriate.

Grice (1975) in Leech (1983, p. 8) expresses the cooperative principle by making this declaration: “make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.” The cooperative principle assumes that people are guided by the four maxims which are called the “The Gricean Maxims” when they communicate. According to Grice (1975), participants in any communicative event speak cooperatively and accept one another in order to be understood in a particular way. The cooperative principle provides rational considerations which serve as guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation to ensure further cooperative ends. According to Levinson (1986, p. 102) The Cooperative Principle and its maxims help to specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, relational and cooperative way. Widdowson (2007, p. 130) captures the maxims in these words: “these are the tenets of the Cooperative Principle. The quantity maxim relates to amount of information provided, the quality maxim to its truth, the relation maxim to its relevance, and the manner maxim to how it is expressed.” In effect, these maxims specify what participants have to do in order to communicate in a maximally efficient, rational and cooperative manner. This suggests that people should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly while providing sufficient information. The Maxims are further explained below:

a. Maxim of quality: This maxim states that you should:

i. be truthful; ii. make your contribution one that is true; iii. not say what you believe to be false; iv. Do not say that for which you lack evidence;

b. Maxim of quantity: This maxim is concerned with the quantity of information given. It explains that you should:



i. make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange); iii. not make your contribution more informative than is required

c. Maxim of relation: Relevance; Make your contribution relevant.

With respect to this maxim, Grice (1989, p. 27) in a later work seemed to have discovered some flaws when he declared thus: "Though the maxim, itself is terse, its formulation conceals a number of problems that exercise me a good deal..." He attempted to indicate some shortcomings in this maxim, especially as regards the kind of relevance that is required. Although there may have been some shortcomings, his maxims are still very important in any type of discourse.

d. Maxim of manner: Be Perspicuous

i. Avoid obscurity of expression ii. Avoid ambiguity iii. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity) iv. Be orderly

These maxims enable effective communication to take place and they shall be used in analysing our data. The rationales for using the Gricean Maxims are:

- a. they examine how messages between interlocutors (writer and readers) are managed;
- b. the maxims are comprehensive in their nature because they show the connection between language users, messages and the psychologies of the interlocutors involved.
- c. they give room for various interpretations to an utterance or expression: either spoken or written.

The Gricean maxims are intended to guide our communicative activities even though there are some inherent limitations. These maxims suggest that the Cooperative Principle is a form of agreement entered into when one engages in conversation. Grice (1975, p. 48) identifies some features that jointly distinguish the cooperative transactions. These are stated thus:

1. The participants have some common immediate aim;
2. The contributions of the participants should be dovetailed and mutually dependent;
- and 3. there is some sort of undertaking (which may be explicit but which is often tacit) that, other things being equal, the transaction should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate.]

The combination of these features makes it possible for interlocutors to carry on conversations and understand themselves as long as the maxims are obeyed. However, the maxims are not always observed and the Cooperative Principle agreement is often broken and the conversational maxims flouted. This is because in the practical sense, language use cannot be so regimentally conditioned as to conform to a particular rigid format. Thus, figurative features and rhetorical strategies like metaphor, sarcasm, irony, satire, hyperbole, litotes, and a host of others are major culprits in breaking the Cooperative Principle.

Some people flout (overtly break a maxim) or violate (covertly break a maxim) mainly to achieve something in the course of the discourse. According to Clark and Clark (1977, p. 124) and Levinson (1983) a speaker could breach or flout the maxims by being deliberately



ambiguous or by the use of sarcasm in an utterance. They illustrate this with the example of a speaker who says something is “terrific” when he knows that the listener knows it is “terrible”. According to them sometimes when we speak we do mean something other than what our utterances suggest. One of the major limitations of the maxims is that they are not applicable to every culture; consequently, some writers sometimes disregard these principles because of some misplaced loyalty to “certain interests”. Another reason why these maxims may be disregarded can be attributed to the ideological, financial, ethical and even religious biases of the writer. The Gricean maxims serve as an important guide for meaning in social communication thus applying it for data analysis makes it crucial to this study because it makes it possible for the researcher to analyse how some writers flout or adhere to the maxims.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper uses Mey’s 2001 Pragmatic Acts Theory complemented with Implicature and Presupposition as the theoretical framework

Pragmatic Act Theory

The pragmatic acts theory was a theory born out of criticism of the speech acts theory. It is simply an improvement on the speech acts theory. Mey (2001, p. 219) criticised the speech acts theory as a theory that is not properly situated. Similarly, Fairclough (2001, p. 7), in a bid to criticise the speech acts theory, observes that the theory adopts and atomistic/individualistic approach to linguistic investigations.

According to Mey (2001), 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. Mey suggests that what would be a typical pragmatic look at people’s use of language would be to look at them as performing pragmatic acts. It is argued that pragmatic acts cater for such communicative acts that are not introduced by audible speech as we have in speech acts (Salaudeen, 2016, p. 14). This postulation means pragmatic acts take the non-verbal aspects of language use into cognizance in defining such acts. This makes pragmatic acts broader in scope than speech acts. Therefore, pragmatic acts theory readjusts our earlier conceptions of speech acts as the sole means of communicative control.

Despite Austin’s claim that the Speech Acts Theory caters for context, Mey contends that context is more than just reference. Context is action; it is about understanding what things are for; it is also what gives our utterances their true pragmatic meaning and allows them to be counted as true pragmatic acts (Mey, 2001, p. 41). Mey (2001, p. 43) argues further that “the context determines what one can say and what one cannot say”. Consequent upon the limitation of speech acts theory, Mey proposes the Pragmatic Act Theory as not just a theory of reference but a theory of action which situates speech acts in the appropriate socio-cultural contexts. Mey posits that in order for speech acts to be effective they have to be situated: “they both rely on, and actively create the situation in which they are realized ... there are no speech acts, but only situated speech acts, or instantiated pragmatic acts” (Mey, 2001, p. 218). Consequently, the emphasis is not on conditions and rules for an individual speech act,



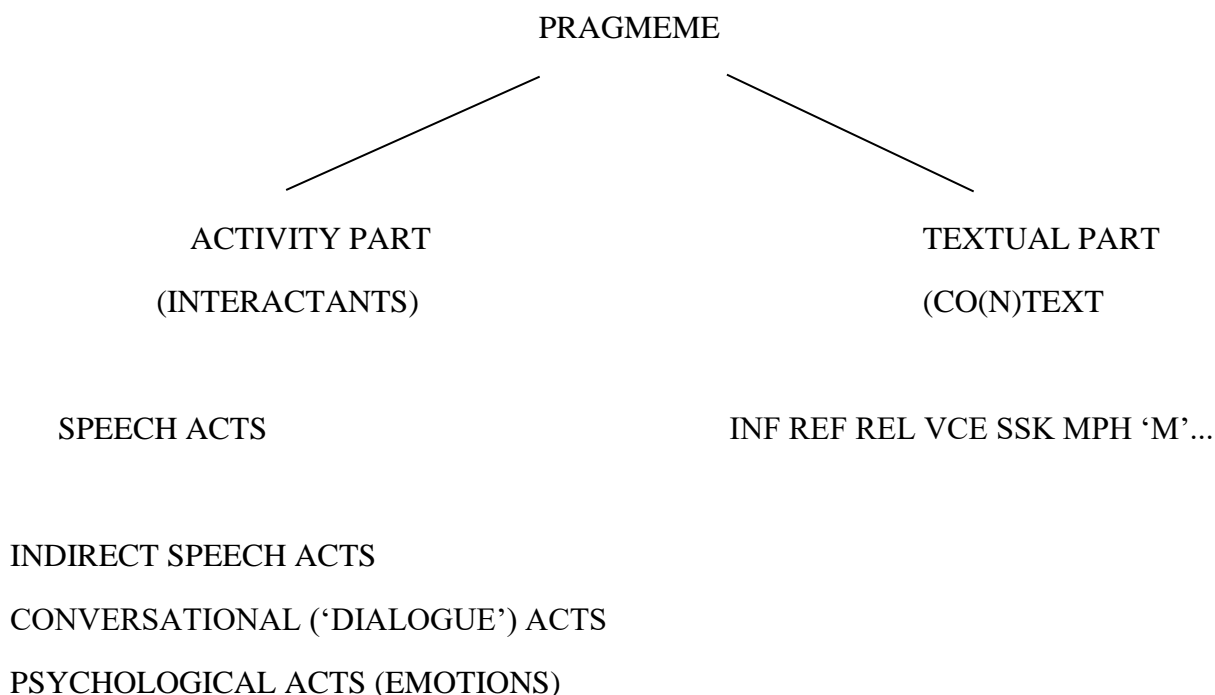
but on characterising a general situational prototype (pragmeme) that can be executed in the situation. Thus, a particular pragmeme can be substantiated and realized through individual pragmatic acts. In other words, a pragmatic act is an instance of adapting oneself to a context, as well as adapting the context to oneself.

The theory approaches language from a socio-contextual perspective. As explained by Mey (2001, p. 221), the theory focuses on "the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as what is actually being said". This perspective is captured as a pragmeme, a generalised pragmatic act regarded as the only force associated with making utterances. As argued by Mey (2001), a pragmatic act is instantiated through an ipra or a pract, which realises a pragmeme. "Every pract is at the same time an allopract, that is to say a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme" (Mey, 2001, p. 221). What determines a pract is solely participants' knowledge of interactional situation and the potential effect of a pract in a particular context.

Thus, practicing resolves the problem of telling illocutionary force from perlocutionary force (Odebunmi, 2008).

The theory explains that during communication, participants produce various contextinformed acts: speech acts, conversational acts, physical acts, psychological acts and prosodic acts. The contexts which inform acts produced include: INF (inference); REF (reference); REL (Relevance); VCE (Voice); SSK (Shared Situation Knowledge); MPH (Metaphor); and M (Metapragmatic Joker). Mey's pragmatic acts theory is favoured in this study, being a functionbased approach to the study of meaning. In the 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, p. 216).

The organisation of this theory is captured below:





PROSODY (INTONATION, STRESS,...) PHYSICAL ACTS:

BODY MOVES (INCL. GESTURES)

PHYSIOGNOMY (FACIAL EXPRESSIONS)

(BODILY EXPRESSIONS OF) EMOTIONS

...

∅ (NULL)

PRACT

ALLOPRACT

PRAGMEME, PRACT, ALLOPRACT

Figure1: A scheme of Pragmatic acts theory (Mey, 2001, p. 222)

KEY

INF.....Inference

REF.....Reference

REL.....Relevance

VCE.....Voice

SSK.....Shared Situational Knowledge

MPH.....Metaphor

‘M’.....Metapragmatic joker

The schema above shows that there are two categories involved in the realisation of a pragmeme: the textual part (the context within which the pragmeme operates) and the activity part (meant for the interactants). Adeniji and Osunbade (2014, p.13) explains that the activity part represents the options that are available to the speaker to perform the various functions he so desires. The options include speech acts, indirect speech acts, conversational (dialogue) acts, psychological acts (emotions), prosody (intonation, stress) physical acts, etc. And they are engaged in the textual part to communicate his intention, in which case, he may employ the inference (INF), reference (REF), relevance (REL), voice (VCE), shared situational knowledge (SSK), metaphor (MPH), or metapragmatic joker (M). They state that the listing on the textual part is not complete. Essentially, both parts depend on context for the meaning realisation of the discourse of interactants and the interaction between activity part and textual part results in a pract or an allopract.

Odebunmi (2008) further explains that the metapragmatic joker points to particular metapragmatic activities. Central to it is "indexicality" which, at the pragmatic level, demands good knowledge of the context of the utterance made.



However, Mey (2001, p. 222) further explains that the activity part lists the various choices that the language user has at his or her disposal in communicating. He considers this part as a feature matrix and it can either be filled or empty. If all the cells are empty, the matrix goes to zero ('Ø'), representing the borderline case of 'silence' (which is not the same as 'zero communication') (Mey, 2001, p. 222).

Being a functional and situated theory that is founded on context and emphasises the priority of socio-cultural and societal factors in meaning construction and comprehension

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper adopts a qualitative approach to analyse the selected data in Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*. Mey's Pragmatic Acts Theory, implicature and presupposition were used at the theoretical framework. A total of five (5) extracts were purposively selected

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Datum 1

Locution 1- Anlugbua: Tell me, dear women – you seem to come from there what's the name of the city I see smouldering over there? (p. 1)

Illocution (Pract); requesting (Directive)

Locution 2- Woman: Stranger, you don't know? Look at my tears! That was once the proud city of Owu, reduced to ruin yesterday. (p.1)

Illocution (Practs): answering (Assertive); lamenting (Expressive)

Locution 3- Anlugbua: Ah! Just like I feared! (p. 2)

Illocution (Pract); exclaiming (Expressive) (Directive)

Locution 4- Woman: Those soldiers you see revelling in the camp over there (*points*) dancing and drinking to their victory – And may Anlugbua choke them with it! – They were the ones who came yesterday and scattered our lives into potshards. (p. 2)

Illocution (Practs): explaining (Assertive); cursing (Expressive)

i. Pragmeme

Locution 1, 2, 3 and 4 presented above features three characters. One is the character of



Anlugbua – a former Owu war leader now deified as *Orisa* (deity) – and two other women. Locution 1 carries Anlugbua making an enquiry about the name and situation of the city in ruins.

Locution 2 performs the practs of ‘answering’ and ‘lamenting’. The character of the woman provided an answer to the question asked by the first character – Anlugbua and she also expresses the emotion of sadness by lamenting on the current situation of the city Owu.

In the extracted texts presented in Dialogue 1 here, it is evident that there is the use of the pragmeme of SSK. In the text, the African cosmological belief in the worlds of the living, the dead and the unborn is a shared knowledge that exist between the participants in this dialogue. In location 4, it is a mutual understanding between Anlugbua himself and the women that Anlugbua is a deity and he has supernatural powers which is why the woman prayed to Anlugbua to choke the enemy soldiers with the food they are eating in celebration of their victory. Here also, we have drawn the inference (INF) that Anlugbua is a deity worshipped and revered by the people of Owu and that it is their belief that Anlugbua can fight their battles for them.

Similarly, in locution 1, it can be drawn from the inference (INF) that Anlugbua is a stranger in that setting and he is not privy to information on what has befallen the city as he requests for information about it. This assertion is confirmed in the following dialogue as the woman referred to him as a stranger. It could also be inferred (INF) that before the incidence that led to the destruction of the city, the city of Owu used to be a great and prosperous city as the metaphor (MPH) of “proud city of Owu” is used in the dialogue. Apart from this, the use of metaphor (MPH) is also evident in locution 4 as the participant compared the present state of things in the lives of the remnants of the Owu kingdom to potshards.

Equally employed in this dialogue is the element of reference (REF). Reference is made to Anlugbua, whom as explained earlier, is a deity formerly human and a former Owu war leader. The element of voice (VCE) is also present here. The voice of the character of the woman in locutions 2 and 4 expresses her psychological state which is that of sorrow. She is so devastated about their present situation that she resulted to praying to Anlugbua, whom she does not know is the man conversing with her, to come to their intervention and choke the enemy soldiers with the food.

ii. Presupposition

Dialogue 1 above shows the lexical presupposition in locution 1 with the statement

“...you seem to come from there...” This presupposes that they are no longer where they were. Here also, there is the presence of an existential presupposition with the referential pronominal “there”. It presupposes the existence of a place being referred to as “there” and that place is known to the discourse participants. Another existential presupposition is noted in the statement “...What is the name of the city I see smouldering over there?” It presupposes the existence of a city and that city is smouldering. In this statement, there is also a factive presupposition with the verb “see”. That shows that the event of smouldering city is true.

In locution 2, there are both factive and existential presuppositions in the statement



“Look at my tears!” The verb used shows that, truly, there is tears on her face. Existential presupposition is further revealed in “that was once the proud city of Owu, reduced to ruin yesterday”. The existence of the city of Owu is presupposed and the statement “...reduced to ruin yesterday” presupposes that the city was not in ruin before the point in the term referred to as ‘yesterday’ in the text.

In locution 4, the existence of soldiers, camp and Anlugbua are presupposed and this forms an existential presupposition. Factive presupposition is shown with the verb “see” in the text and it shows that there are truly some soldiers revelling in the camp and the listener can see them. A lexical presupposition is in the expression “They were the ones who came yesterday and scattered our lives into potshards”. It presupposes that the listener knew that some people came a day before.

iii. Implicature

Locution 1 of this dialogue is clear and concise, thus, it adheres to the maxim of manner. This locution also adheres to the maxim of quality as there are no inaccurate information presented. It also adheres to that of quantity as it gives adequate information on what the speaker wants to know and every aspect of the locution is relevant, thus, it equally adheres to that of relevance.

In locution 2, the character flouts the maxim of quantity by giving more information than is necessary. In an attempt to answer the question asked in locution 1, the character here first gave unrelated information before mentioning the name of the city. Thus, it flouts the maxims of quantity and relevance. The maxims of manner and that of quality are observed as the information presented are clear enough and factual.

In locution 3, all the maxims were observed while in locution 4, the maxims of quantity and relevance are flouted. The speaker adds information that is not relevant to the preceding sentence as she diverted from explaining what the soldiers did to praying to Anlugbua to choke the soldiers with the food they are eating. Similarly, the information is more than necessary. Apart from these, the maxims of quality and manner are both observed as the information presented are factual and they are presented in a clear and unambiguous manner.

Datum 2

Locution 1- Woman: Yes, and I’d advise you to hurry away as fast as you can, Old man, for if they catch you your life won’t be worth a beetle. They are not sparing the life of any male that falls into their hands, whether old or young. Yesterday on the orders of their leader, Okunade, the Mayé, and before our very eyes here, they rounded up all our husbands and brothers, and sons, and slau—(*stops, choked by emotion.*) They slaughter them! All!

Illocution (Practs): advising and informing (Assertives); sorrowing and exclaiming (Expressives)

Locution 2-Anlugbua: All?

Illocution (Pract): asking (Directive)



Locution 3- Woman: Not one was spared! Not a single male left now in Owu, except those who escaped the night before with our king, Oba Akinjobi.

And—shame, oh shame! Our women were seized and shared out to

the blood-splattered troops to spend the night. Only some of us— we two, and the women you see over there were spared, those of us from the noble houses and others whose beauty struck their eye: we are being reserved, they say, for the Generals

Illocution (practs): Confirming and explaining (Assertives); lamenting (Expressives)

i. Pragmeme

This dialogue features same character and scene as that of dialogue 1. Locution 1 performs the practs of advising, informing, sorrowing and exclaiming. The character of the woman performed the pract of advising as she told the man to leave so as to save his life and also performs that of informing by letting him know what would become of him if the soldiers should catch him. The character also expressed the emotive pract of sorrowing. She was choked by emotion as she wants to tell the man that the enemy soldiers slaughtered all the males in the city. She exclaimed as she performs this pract.

In locution 2, the male character performs the pract of asking and the tone of surprise could be inferred (INF). In locution 3, the character performs the practs of confirming, explaining and lamenting. In this dialogue, there exists a shared situational knowledge (SSK) that Oba Akinjobi, the kind of the Owu Kingdom managed to escape with some other people and if he had not, he would have been killed together with the men that stayed behind. With this, we can draw the inference (INF) that the combined forces of the armies of Ijebu and Ife together with the recruited mercenaries from Oyo is stronger than the army of the Owu Kingdom and their strength together with some other factors made it easy for them to overpower the people of Owu in just a day of attack when they had set up a camp outside the city walls for seven years. There is also the use of another shared situational knowledge between the speaker and the hearer in locution 3 that in times of war, captives, especially women are regarded as part of the spoils of war and most often they are shared among their captors to warm their beds. This is relevant (REL) to the present day situation in Nigeria. Today, Nigeria is at war with insurgents and in the year 2014, the Boko Haram terrorist group kidnapped about 140 school girls in Borno state, Nigeria. Till this point, some of these girls are still in captivity while a few had escaped. It was observed that many of the escapees are either pregnant or carrying babies. This is relevant (REL) to the experiences of women in the society today. It exemplifies one of the numerous challenges women are facing today and it is one of the major themes of Osofisan's play text that is being investigated here which is the theme of violence against womenfolk.

There is equally the use of metaphor (MPH). In locution 1 here, while explaining what would become of the man if he were to be caught by the soldiers, the character draws a comparison between the worth of the man's life before the soldiers and the life of a beetle. Similarly, in locution 3, she made use of reference (REF) with the referential statement –“bloodsplattered troops”- in referring to the combined forces of the Ijebu and Ife and their mercenaries from Oyo.



Lastly, the use of the pragmatic element of voice (VCE) is evident as it is used to express an emotive pract. The woman, in locution 1, expresses the psychological act of sadness. Similarly, in locution 3, she lamented about the predicament of the *Women of Owuin* captivity.

Although the data chosen for this study is textual and not audio but being a drama text, the playwright did not fail to capture the characters' psychological and conversational acts by including their actions and reactions and revealing their physiognomy, etc. through words.

Therefore, through the pragmeme of voice, readers can deduce the mood of the characters.

ii. **Presupposition**

In this dialogue, locution 1 bears a lexical presupposition in "...if they catch you your life won't be worth a beetle?" It presupposes that the man, at the time of speaking, has not been caught. There is also an existential presupposition in locution 3 pointing to the existence of some other women and generals.

iii. **Implicature**

In locution 1 of this dialogue, the maxims of quantity and quality are observed. Sufficient and factual information are presented in this locution. However, the maxims of relation and manner are flouted. A good amount of the information provided in this locution are not relevant to the earlier asked question which is – "I don't understand: you said all this happened only yesterday?" Although the woman answered the question affirmatively, she went ahead to offer an advise. This is to mean responding with either 'yes' or 'no' would suffice but for the sake of building on the conversation, she opened up a new discourse by offering advice. Although the information here are orderly and clear of obscurity, but the speaker is verbose so, it flouts the maxim of manner.

In locution 2, the maxims of relevance, quality, manner and quantity are observed. It is relevant as it seeks to make clarification on the preceding dialogue. It is also true, clear enough and is informative as is required. In locution 3 as well, all Gricean maxims are adhered to. The maxim of manner was obeyed as the information is presented clearly. The maxim of quality was obeyed as it carries a truth value. The maxim of quantity was also observed as the information is adequately delivered without unnecessary additions or removal and the maxim of relation is obeyed as the information is relevant to this discourse.

Datum 3

Locution 1- Anlugbua: My words were clear enough, I thought! Whenever any grave danger threatens the town, I said! Whenever some misfortune arrives too huge for you to handle, run to my hill and pull my chain! How was it that no one remembered? **Illocution (Practs): lamenting (Expressive); questioning (Directive)**

Locution 2- Woman: You...you...who are you?

Illocution (Pract): questioning (Directive)

Locution 3- Anlugbua: Three times, I said! Call my name three times, and I shall be back,



sword in hand, to defend you!

Illocution (Pract): Lamenting (Expressive); explaining (Assertive)

Locution 4- Woman: Sword! That wouldf have served little purpose this time, I tell you!

Because – eh! Yeh!... Yeh! What did you say? You...you...mo gbe!... Is it you...? Have I stumbled upon... Impossible! My eyes have not seen a... No! Impossible!

Locution 5- Anlugbua: Calm yourself, my dear women. You have nothing to fear!

Illocution (Pract): Assuring (Commissive)

i. Pragmeme

This dialogue features same characters as those in dialogue 1 and 2 above. Locution 1 performs the practs of lamenting which is an expressive pract and questioning which a directive pract is. The character of Anlugbua expresses sadness over the state of the city of Owu and questions the women to know why nobody called on him for help.

In this locution, from his from his confidence and faith in himself, we can draw the inference (INF) that Anlugbua has some mythical power that would have been proved useful in averting the disaster that befell the Owu city. This is resting on the shared situational knowledge (SSK) that exist between the readers and the playwright that Anlugbua is a mythical figure with supernatural powers and he could have used his powers to fight off the enemy soldiers. In this locution also, the pragmatic acts element of voice (VCE) is recorded as Anlugbua laments and expresses sorrow on what has befell the city.

In locution 3, the writer relies on the shared situational knowledge (SSK) that in Yoruba land, which is the settings for this play, calling and invoking the names of deities or supernatural being three times could make them appear before one. Anlugbua had instructed the people of Owu to do some for him and he would return to defend them.

In locution 4, the woman realised that she had been speaking to the Anlugbua whom she had heard of severally. By exclaiming ‘mo gbe!’ which is a Yoruba expression for “I am in trouble”, she is expressing the psychological act of confusion. This rests on the shared situational knowledge (SSK) that setting one’s eye on a mythical being or one who has supernatural powers could spell disaster and doom for one especially if it is in form of an intrusion. Upon finding out the identity of the person before her, the woman became uneasy. For this, Anlugbua assures her that she has nothing to fear. We can infer (INF) that ANlugbua would have visited her with some terror had it been he had not wanted to be seen by her.

ii Presupposition

In this dialogue, locution 1 has a lexical presupposition in the expression “I said!

Whenever some misfortune arrives too huge for you to handle, run to my hill and pull my chain!



How was it that no one remembered?” presupposes that the misfortune that befell the people of Owu is too huge for them to handle and the people failed to do as they were instructed by Anlugbua.

iv. **Implicature**

In locution 1, all the Gricean maxims are observed. The speaker provided sufficient, factual and relevant information in a clear and unambiguous manner. In locution 3, the character flouted the maxim of relevance as the information provided does not have correlation with the question “Who are you?” asked in locution 2. In locution 4, one of the women flouted the maxim of quantity as her emotions could not allow her to complete her statement regarding what the sword would achieve in the war and as she finds out who the man is.

Datum 4

Locution 1- Woman: Ancestral father, the armies of Ijebu, Oyo and Ife, who call themselves the Allied Forces, under the command of that demon Mayé Okunade, caused this havoc.

Illocution (Pract): explaining (Assertive)

Locution 2- Anlugbua: Okunade? Not the man I knew? Gbenagbena Okunade, the one endowed by Obatala with the gift of creativity, to shape wood and stone into new forms? The fabled artist who also dreamed those arresting patterns on virging cloth?

Illocution (Practs): confirming (directive); describing (assertive)

Locution 3- Woman: The very one! But when his favourite wife, Iyunloye, was captured and brought here, and given as wife to one of our princes, Okunade became bitter, and swore to get her back. Shamed and disgraced, he abandoned his tools and took to arms. And so fierce was his passion for killing that he rose rapidly through the ranks, and soon became the Mayé! An artist? He’s a butcher now!

Illocution (Pract): explaining (Assertive)

i. **Pragmeme**

In this dialogue, we have the same characters as the ones in previous dialogues. In locutions 1 and 3, the character of one of the women performs the pract of explaining which is an assertive. She explains how the war came about. In locution 2, Anlugbua performs the directive pract of confirming and the assertive pract of describing. In trying to confirm if the Okunade he knew caused the havoc in the city of Owu, Anlugbua goes at length to describe him.

In the extracted texts presented in dialogue 4 here, the use of the element of reference



(REF) is recorded. The word ‘ancestral father’ is a reference to Anlugbua. Similarly, the element of metaphor (MPH) is noted in this locution. The character of Mayé Okunade is referred (REF) to as a demon.

In locution 2, we can infer (INF) that Anlugbua knew Okunade very well and that

Okunade, at a point in his life, was not a warrior but an artist. We can equally infer (INF) that

Okunade is a dexterious artist who has made a mark and a name for himself in artistry designs. Here also, reference (REF) is made to Obatala. In making reference to Obatala, the speaker relies on the shared situational knowledge (SSK) that Obatala, also known as Oshala, is a Yoruba deity believed to be the Sky Father and the creator of the human bodies. He is believed to mould the human bodies with mud and clay. Thus, he was a skilled artist. The relevance (REL) of Obatala to this discourse is to ascribe him the power of one that bestows creativity and artistic skills on humans. In locution 2, reference (REF) is employed in referring to white unstained and unprinted cloth as a virgin cloth. This is a metaphor (MPH) for white cloth and whiteness is likened to purity.

In locution 3, it could be inferred (INF) that Okunade’s village had earlier been attacked by the soldiers of the Owu kingdom as Okunade’s favourite wife, Iyunloye, was captured and married off to an Owu prince. This is resting on the shared situational knowledge (SSK) that female war captives are often made into slaves by the capturers or married off to the men among their capturers. This is the fate of Iyunloye.

ii. Presupposition

In locution 2 of this dialogue, there is an existential presupposition. The existence of

Obatala as a deity in charge of moulding the human bodies is presupposed. The existence of some arresting patterns on virgin cloth is also presupposed with the expression “...who also dreamed those arresting patterns on virging cloth?” In locution 3, the existence of other/another wives/wife of Okunade is presupposed with the expression “his favourite wife”.

In locution 3, with the expression “Okunade became bitter”, a lexical presupposition is made. It is assumed that before his wife was captured and given off to another man in marriage,

Okunade was not a bitter soul. The factive presupposition is equally made here. In the expression

“He abandoned his tools and took to arms. And so fierce was his passion for killing, that he rose rapidly through the ranks, and soon became the Mayé!” presupposes that the rank or position of Mayé is that of a war leader, not a king and it requires one that has a record of brutality and known to be fierceless.

ii. implicature

In this dialogue, all Gricean maxims are observed. The characters gave the right amount of information. The information provided are also factual and relevant to the ongoing discourse and the manner in which they are presented is clear enough.



Datum 5

Locution 1- Woman: All night long and all of today the invaders have been looting our city, turning it into a wreck, violating our sacred shrines and groves. Now they are back in their camp, each of these pirates to sort out the plunder, and allot our city's riches to their soldiers and servants.

Illocution (Practs): informing and explaining (Assertive)

Locution 2- Woman: Meanwhile they make us wait here in abject terror, expecting the worst, and unable even to mourn our sons and husbands.

Illocution (Practs): informing (Assertive)

Locution 3- Woman: Mayé besieged our city for seven years, because of a woman, and would not go away! For seven full years, the people of Owu suffered and refused to open the city gates.

Illocution (Practs): explaining (Assertive); lamenting (Expressive)

Locution 4- Woman: Seven years without rain they were, seven years of failed harvests. All those terrible years where were you Anlugbua?

Locution 5- Anlugbua: You did not send for me! You know the oath I made forbade me to return here, unless you sent for me!

i. Pragmeme

In this dialogue, the assertive pract of explaining is recurrent. In locution 1, one of the women informs and explains to Anlugbua what the invaders have been doing to their city. In locution 2, the other woman informs him of the current state of the captured women. In locution 3, the assertive pract of explaining is also used together with the expressive of lamenting as one of the women recount what Mayé did to them within the period of seven years. In locution 4, the other woman took over to lament about the state of things in Owu kingdom in the period of seven years and in locution 5, Anlugbua explained why had not showed up to defend the people of Owu.

In this dialogue, the writer uses the shared situational knowledge (SSK) between himself and the readers that at the time of war, the party that win will take over properties and remains of that their defeated as to the victor belongs the spoils. They will share these spoils of war among themselves in celebration of their victory.

It could be inferred (INF) that during the period of seven years that Mayé besieged the city of Owu, the people were waiting on and expecting Anlugbua to come to their rescue. It could also be inferred (INF) that Anlugbua was not in the know of all the happenings as it is expected of him as a supernatural being that he is. If he had known of the situation of his people, he would have come to defend them in battle.



Anlugbua made reference (REF) to an oath he made. This is a shared situational knowledge (SSK) between Anlugbua and the female characters with him that Anlugbua, having disappeared into the ground, made an oath to re-emerge whenever his people are threatened by enemies and if he was alerted through a pull on the exposed end of a chain he was said to have dragged with him underground. It could be inferred (INF) that the soldiers of the Allied Forces were able to easily defeat those of Owu city because the people were already ransacked by hunger and they were already weak from starvation before the war. This is relevant (REL) as it is a war strategy to ensure one's enemies do not get supply of food so as to make them weak and fragile before attacking them.

ii. presupposition

There is a structural presupposition in locution 4 where one of the women ask the 'whstructure' question in "Where were you Anlugbua?". In locution 1, there is an existential presupposition. The existence of sacred shrines, groves and the Owu's riches is presupposed. In locution 3, the factive is presupposed. The gate of the city of Owu remained locked for seven years and this had prevented Mayé from gaining entry. It is presupposed that now that Mayé entered and defeated the Owu kingdom, the gate has been opened.

iii. Implicature

In this dialogue, all Gricean maxims were observed

FINDINGS

From the analysis, it can be observed that the frequency of assertives is higher than others. It was discovered that the characters employed more of assertives than any other illocutionary acts. This is because the characters in the dialogues explains, states, names, informs, and educates. This is closely followed by the expressive practs. In these dialogues, the characters expresses the acts of worrying, lamenting, condemning, and so on. In most of the instances, the women of Owu expresses their sorrow. They reveal the psychological act of sadness. The commissive pract occurs to the characters make promises and assures one another. They use the pract to commit themselves to some future actions. At no point in the selected extract that any of the characters make use of the declarative practs where they declare something open.

It was also observed that many of the characters give more information than is required. Some of the extracts where the maxim of quantity is flouted are deviations and are not related to the ongoing discourse. The manner in which some of the information are presented in the extracts are ambiguous and unclear. This is because in some of the cases, the characters' thought process is beclouded by their emotion. This is owing to the fact that the events in the story is tragic. Lastly, the maxim of quality is least flouted. The information presented are largely factual. The characters did not flout this maxim and this suggests that the characters might not have avoided facts.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that Osofisan engages language within emotive, traditional, and communal contexts in practicing which border on particular traditional belief of the people of Owu and the entire Yoruba land. Thus, there is a motivated relationship between Osofisan's pragmatic engagements and the Yoruba culture as one of the major Nigerian cultures. Also,



this paper serves as an eye-opener to the mind of the readers as there are hidden meanings that are embedded in it. The (special or unique) way language is used is revealed through the application of Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory.

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