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Recognition of the Meaning of English Idioms among College Students in Oman

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Abstract

Research suggests that EFL students’ comprehension and production of idioms can act as an indicator of overall language proficiency. Authors such as Cieslicka (2000) report a link between a lack of English-language proficiency and the non-recognition of idioms, while an understanding of contextualized idioms has also been associated with improved language comprehension. This study asked 76 Omani university student participants to write the meanings of 40 contextualized English-language idioms in either Arabic or English. Findings indicate that participants struggled to understand the meanings of idioms and that context alone is not sufficient as a cue for idiom recognition and interpretation and can, in fact, interfere with understanding.

Keywords: idioms, Oman, EFL, context, ungrammaticality, pragmatic deficiency, semantic deficiency
Recognition of the Meaning of K. Al Aghbri, R. Al Mahrooqi & C. Denman
English Idioms among College Students in Oman

1. INTRODUCTION

Comparative studies exploring how idioms invoke cultural elements and help set apart one community from another (Hou, 2013; Wang & Li, 2014), and those looking at the inter-lingual transfer of idioms and proverbs (Abdulmoneim, 2002), are many. Research on idioms has also been conducted in relation to equivalence and translation (Wang & Li, 2014). However, very few recent studies have devoted attention to the ways learners go about recognizing and comprehending contextualized idioms (Daoudi, 2014; Liontas, 2003). In fact, research investigating EFL learners’ recognition of idioms when they have been minimally exposed to them has been largely marginalized. This is especially the case in the Arab Gulf. The current research seeks to explore whether Omani EFL learners in an Arab Gulf university can utilize contextualized cues to understand idiom meaning. It also examines the accuracy with which learners are able to understand English idioms, with a special focus on those idioms that are specifically-linked to various aspects of Western culture/s.

Idioms are fixed language expressions whose meanings are generally opaque and not discernable from the meaning of their component words alone. Several studies (Abdulmoneim, 2002; Wray, 2002; Zyzik, 2011) have noted that the knowledge and production of idioms both act as indicators of language competence. Since idioms succinctly express a specific message, competent language learners can easily express the message they wish to convey through the selection of an appropriate idiom. In fact, a well-chosen idiom can often mean that speakers are not forced to elaborate upon their point, and also helps them to avoid grammatical mistakes or running the risk of being misunderstood. However, despite their potential utility, idioms constitute a substantial challenge for EFL learners. There are two major issues that these learners face when exposed to idiomatic expressions in foreign language learning: comprehension and production.

Since idioms are intricately linked with the culture/s associated with a language, the ability to comprehend and use them accurately is an intriguing issue within the field of EFL. The phase of idiom recognition or identification has been defined by Daoudi (2014, p. 41) as having to do with “what makes an EFL learner decide that the expression s/he is dealing with is idiomatic”. Naturally, a number of processes are associated with this phase, including whether the EFL learner looks at the idiom as a series of single words or as a phrase. It is often reported that EFL learners achieve this through the process of elimination whereby the appearance of unfamiliar
words and/or words that do not collocate suggests to them both the appearance and meaning of an idiom.

To assist this process, EFL learners may also translate idioms to or from their own languages and cultures. Since many linguistic expressions like idioms emanate from the cultural and historical aspects of the languages from which they are drawn, frequent exposure to these expressions or to the target language culture/s has been posited as one way of increasing idiomatic understanding in the EFL classroom. Those who support this practice claim that student exposure to the cultural aspects of English is crucial in helping learners contextualize idiomatic expressions in real life situations, and, as such, serves as a tool for efficient English-language communication.

With reference to English language teaching in the Arab world, Daoudi (2011) has suggested that EFL learners in Algeria and Saudi Arabia experience difficulty in recognizing, understanding and using idioms. The author states that an understanding of the socio-cultural and/or linguistic context in which idioms appear is vital in recognizing and understanding their meaning, which may be straightforward (literal) or figurative (idiomatic). However, despite the importance of being familiar with the context in which idioms occur, Daoudi cautions that, in learning tasks assigned to EFL students, idioms are often only presented in a “learning context” where students are required to come to terms with their meanings despite a lack of requisite background knowledge. For these reasons, the current research sought to examine Omani tertiary students’ abilities to provide accurate meanings of English-language idioms and whether the use of context assisted in their understanding of idiom meaning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hou (2013) explored the ways cultures/s associated with a language are expressed through proverbs. The author notes that an understanding of the meaning of proverbs may help in understanding what is acceptable or unacceptable, in addition to what is desired or undesired, in a given culture. Hou contends that an exploration of proverbs is one way in which cultural understanding of a target language can be built and offers the example of how this exploration can reveal differences between nations that may outwardly appear to share many linguistic and cultural similarities. In this way, Hou notes that proverbs offer “a window” for understanding at least some of the many layers of a particular culture, while also conveying the most important information related to that culture.
In his exploration of the transfer of idioms by Arab learners, Abdulmoneim (2002) maintains that students cannot comprehend and use idioms unless they attain a reasonable level of proficiency in the English language and that, even after years of exposure to EFL instruction, Arab students rarely use English idioms. This is a fact that Abdulmoneim attributes more to ignorance of the potential utility of English idioms than to intended avoidance. The author states that the type of errors that Arab speakers of English tend to make with idioms are either grammatical (prepositions and articles) or lexical, and that transfer errors occur across all idiom types including for idioms whose form and meaning in English are similar to Arabic, idioms whose meaning only is similar, and Arabic- or English-specific idioms.

Wang and Li (2014) discuss the translation of idioms based on Nida’s principle of equivalence. The authors highlight the intricate link between idioms and culture and claim that it is extremely difficult to produce faithful translations of idiomatic expressions. They state that idioms are associated with specific cultural hallmarks, religions, traditions and customs, all of which must be taken into account when seeking to translate them. Despite these difficulties, Wang and Li offer three distinct strategies for translating idioms: literal translation, partially literal translation, and free translation or paraphrasing, with the authors highlighting the importance of dynamic translation as a means of coming to terms with the restrictions of culture.

Zyzik (2011) explored the acquisition of Spanish idioms in a Spanish language classroom after ten weeks of formal instruction. 65 Spanish-language learners performed pre- and post-tests to examine their ability to recognize and use idioms in addition to a vocabulary test to measure their lexical knowledge. The author focused on two major issues: prior lexical knowledge which targets constituents (not individual words), and whether organizing idioms into themes facilitates the learning of these idioms. Results indicate that that prior lexical knowledge had a significant impact upon participants’ success in understanding idiomatic expressions, although there appeared to be no benefits to students accrued from grouping idioms based on themes.

Holsinger (2013) explored the role that syntactic, lexical and contextual factors play in the identification and interpretation of idioms. The author achieved this through two experiments, with the first involving the examination of syntactic and lexical compatibility on the processing of
idiomatic strings, and the second exploring the role of the provision of contextual information on idiom processing. Holsinger concludes that literal computation plays an important role in discerning the meaning of idioms and that the processing of idiomatic strings is supported by the provision of contextual, lexical and structural information.

In Saudi Arabia, Aljabri (2013) explicitly acknowledged the relative lack of research about idiom comprehension among EFL and ESL learners, with this being especially the case in the Arab world. In seeking to redress this, the author distributed a set of 20 English-language idioms to 90 male students from the English department of the country’s Umm Al-Qura University. Participants were asked to rate idioms in terms of three areas. These were familiarity judgment which was concerned with how often participants encountered the idiom, idiom comprehension or whether respondents could indicate the idiom’s meaning from a list of four options, and idiom transparency which required respondents to decide how closely the literal and non-literal translations of idioms were related. Results indicate that, while English-language proficiency was associated with greater familiarity with, and comprehension of, idioms, more opaque, or less literal, idioms presented difficulties for all participants. The author recommended that teachers in the region provide learners with more activities that focus on inferring idiom meanings in meaningful contexts.

Also in Saudi Arabia, Rajab (2012) examined the errors made by Arab EFL learners when attempting to directly transfer idioms from Arabic into English. Rajab administered oral examinations and a written exam to 200 male Saudi university-level preparatory students over the course of three years. All exams employed in the study formed part of participants’ end-of-semester assessment. Analysis of errors with the use of idiomatic expressions suggests that respondents tended to transfer Arabic-specific idioms directly into English despite their confinement to Arab cultures and environments. While these errors occurred in both written and oral exams, students were far more likely to make these during oral interviews. Again, the author suggests that participants’ overall English-language level was associated with their accurate use of English idioms.

In Iraq, Yousif (2012) looked at the ability of 30 fourth-year male and female Iraqi EFL students to recognize the meaning of English idioms at the Department of English in the University of Mosul. Yousif administered a test consisting of two parts. The first involved presenting participants with 30 English-language out-of-context idioms followed by four possible
translations. Only half of these had Arabic equivalents. The second part employed the same idioms though in context and again required participants to select the most accurate translation. Findings suggest that participants found it more difficult to understand out-of-context idioms that did not have an Arabic equivalent than those idioms presented without context that had similar expressions in Arabic. While Yousif suggests that context plays an important role in helping respondents recognize idioms, he nonetheless notes that with more “opaque” idioms, it is much more difficult for respondents to gain a clear understanding of meaning even when context is offered.

Given the relative dearth of topic-related research emerging from the Arab region, the current study examines whether Omani students in an English-medium college in the Arab Gulf were able to accurately provide the meanings or Arabic equivalents of a set of English-language idioms and whether the contextualization of these idioms assisted in this process. It did so by administering a test containing 40 English-language idioms to 76 Omani tertiary-level students.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

76 Omani university-level EFL learners participated in this study. They were recruited from English credit courses in the colleges of education and arts in the country’s only public university – Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). Participants were all in their third year or above in their courses. 64 (84.2%) respondents were females and only 12 (15.8%) were males, with 50 (65.8%) participants coming from the College of Education and the remaining 26 (34.2%) from the College of Arts. In terms of specialization, 66 (86.8%) of participants were English majors and 10 (13.2%) majored in translation. The average GPA of participants was around 2.9 with 4.0 representing the highest attainable grade.

Students were recruited from intact classes, with the researchers explaining the nature of the study to them and asking for their participation. All students were reminded of the voluntary nature of the research, and that their participation and responses would remain anonymous and confidential. Moreover, they were reminded that, even though the study was taking place during regular classroom periods, participation or non-participation would in no way influence their standing in the class. Respondents’ exposure to the
English language during their time at SQU has been quite extensive, with all participants taking non-credit 20-hours per week of intensive English in the first year of their enrollment and six English credit courses in their second year in addition to studying in an English-medium environment.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were given up to two hours of classroom time to write the meanings of 40 English-language contextualized idioms that they received on a paper test (see Appendix). They were told that they could write the idiom meanings either in English or Arabic, and that they could supply an equivalent idiom from Arabic if they believed one existed. Participants were not allowed to use dictionaries or to ask about the meaning of any of the words that appeared on the test. Examples of the English idioms used include: “to add insult to injury”, “after the dust settles”, “all that glitters is not gold”, and “an apple a day keeps the doctor away”. All idioms appeared with some form of contextualization. For example, the idiom “asking for the moon” was presented in the test as: “John asked his mother for a hundred dollars today. He’s always asking for the moon”.

Students’ responses were corrected based on whether they displayed an adequate understanding of the English-language idioms encountered. Each participant received an overall mark from 40 that indicated their total number of correct responses, with these marks then converted into a percentage. Two independent samples t-tests were then used to determine the possible effect of the variables of gender and college of study on these results. Probability levels for both these tests were set at \( p \leq 0.05 \).

3.3 Idioms Selection

English has a wealth of idiomatic expressions which touch on various aspects of its various cultures and often include a wide variety of topics such as weather, ways of living, people’s worldviews and so on. Some idioms found in English express similar meanings to those found in Arabic, while others have no equivalent. The researchers chose 40 idioms which can be divided into three main categories. These included three idioms whose form and meaning are similar to Arabic (“All that glitters is not gold”, “As ye sow, so shall ye reap”, “A mere drop in the bucket”); six idioms whose form is different from similar idioms in Arabic but which express a similar meaning
Recognition of the Meaning of English Idioms among College Students in Oman

(“Add insult to injury”, “To clutch at straws”, “Cold shouldered”, “Hold your horses”, “An elephant never forgets”, “Every jack has his Jill”); and 31 idioms which have no equivalent in Arabic. Examples of this final category include “After the dust settles”, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”, “Have ants in your pants”, and “Asking for the moon”.

As stated above, the researchers presented these idioms to participants with two primary research questions in mind:

1. Will students be able to provide the accurate meanings of these idioms in English or Arabic or to write their equivalents in Arabic? Is this level of accuracy influenced by gender or college of study?
2. Will the context help learners provide accurate responses?

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Due to the familiarity in form and cultural connotations of those idioms whose form and meaning are similar in English and Arabic, the researchers expected students to display high rates of understanding of idioms from the first category. The researchers also expected understanding of English idioms whose form is different from similar idioms in Arabic but which express a similar meaning, or those drawn from the second category, to be relatively high, and certainly higher the third category whose idioms have no equivalent in Arabic. However, Table 1 indicates that participants struggled with understanding the meaning of idioms from all three categories, with percentages correct ranging from around 53%-59% and with an average score of around 55%.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th>% Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Similar form and meaning</td>
<td>53.94%</td>
<td>46.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different form, similar meaning</td>
<td>58.78%</td>
<td>41.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Arabic equivalent</td>
<td>54.71%</td>
<td>45.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the assumption that participants would be able to understand with
relative ease the three idioms whose form and meaning are similar in English and Arabic, they only managed to do so 53.94% of the time – the lowest percent correct from all three idiom categories. Although the majority of participants managed to correctly offer the meaning of the idiom “All that glitters is not gold” (72.36%) from this category, they nonetheless struggled with both “As ye sow, so shall ye reap” (43.42%) and “A mere drop in the bucket” (46.05%) despite the fact that these idioms have equivalents in Arabic.

Participants overall percent for correctly understanding idiom meanings was highest for the second category of English idioms whose form is different from idioms in Arabic but which express a similar meaning (58.78%). Of the six idioms featured here, participants accurately deciphered the meanings of three more than 70% of the time. These were “Add insult to injury” (77.63%), “Every jack has his Jill” (75.00%), and “Hold your horses” (71.10%). More than half of participants also accurately reported the meaning of “An elephant never forgets” (56.58%), even though they struggled with understanding “Cold shouldered” (40.79%) and “To clutch at straws” (31.58%).

The remaining 31 idioms featured in this study have no equivalent in Arabic. Although the researchers assumed that participants would struggle most with idioms associated with this category, their rate of accurately identifying these idioms’ meanings (54.71%) suggested that they experienced around the same level of difficulty as they did with idioms whose form and meaning were similar in Arabic and English. Of the 31 idioms featured here, more than half of respondents were able to accurately provide the meaning for 21. The idioms that more than 80% of participants displayed an understanding of were “an apple a day keeps the doctor away” (84.21%), “asking for the moon” (84.21%), and “barking up the wrong tree” (80.26%), while more than 70% displayed an understanding of “after the dust settles” (76.32%), “have ants in your pants” (76.32%), “every Jack has his Jill” (75.00%), “to the last ditch” (73.68%), and “an old head on young shoulders” (72.37%). The idioms that the majority of participants did not demonstrate and understanding of included “dyed-in-the-wool” (14.47%), “baptism of fire” (14.47%), “backs to the wall” (23.58%), and “cut out the banana oil” (34.21%).
only managed to correctly relate the meaning of idioms associated with each meaning of English-language idioms across all categories. For example, they
In relation to the first question, it appears as though Omani participants, like
whether context could, as posited by Yousif (2012) and Holsinger (2013),
are able to
The current research explored both whether Omani university level students
not reveal any significant differences between male and female participants
and between participants studying in the colleges of arts and education.

5. DISCUSSION

The current research explored both whether Omani university level students
are able to provide the accurate meanings of a series of 40 idioms associated
with the three different categories offered by Abdulmoneim (2002), and
whether context could, as posited by Yousif (2012) and Holsinger (2013),
assist in helping learners arrive at accurate understandings of these idioms.
In relation to the first question, it appears as though Omani participants, like
those from Abdulmoneim’s study, tend to struggle with understanding the
meaning of English-language idioms across all categories. For example, they
only managed to correctly relate the meaning of idioms associated with each

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
<th>Idiom</th>
<th>% Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An apple a day keeps the doctor away</td>
<td>84.21%</td>
<td>Stitch in time saves nine</td>
<td>56.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for the moon</td>
<td>84.21%</td>
<td>All at sea</td>
<td>55.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barking up the wrong tree</td>
<td>80.26%</td>
<td>Without batting an eyelash</td>
<td>53.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the dust settles</td>
<td>76.32%</td>
<td>Back in the saddle</td>
<td>52.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have ants in your pants</td>
<td>76.32%</td>
<td>Left holding the bag</td>
<td>51.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Jack has his Jill somewhere</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
<td>A fly on the wall</td>
<td>48.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the last ditch</td>
<td>73.68%</td>
<td>A chip on his shoulder</td>
<td>47.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An old head on young shoulders</td>
<td>72.37%</td>
<td>Cold-shoulder people</td>
<td>40.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose lips sink ships</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
<td>The cat that swallowed the canary</td>
<td>40.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free herself from her mother’s apron strings</td>
<td>64.47%</td>
<td>Cotton picking hands</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In two shakes of a lamb’s tail</td>
<td>64.47%</td>
<td>Cut out the banana oil</td>
<td>34.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never lost sight of the fact</td>
<td>64.47%</td>
<td>Backseat driver</td>
<td>23.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit the ceiling</td>
<td>63.12%</td>
<td>Backs to the wall</td>
<td>23.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the eleventh hour</td>
<td>61.84%</td>
<td>Baptism of fire</td>
<td>14.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get rid of some dead wood</td>
<td>59.21%</td>
<td>Dyed-in-the-wool</td>
<td>14.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was in the prime of life</td>
<td>57.89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent samples t-tests (with probability levels set at $p \leq 0.05$) did not reveal any significant differences between male and female participants and between participants studying in the colleges of arts and education.
of the three categories between 53 and 59 percent of the time. While this finding may not be surprising for those idioms featured in the study that were English-specific and did not have an Arabic equivalent, it was somewhat unexpected to find that the category that received the lowest mean was for idioms whose form and meaning are similar in English and Arabic – idioms that were, following Aljabri (2013), assumed to be by far the easiest for participants to understand.

These findings might be associated with the fact that Omani university students in English-medium colleges, even at the advanced stages of their academic careers, are usually exposed to the kinds of academic English that they need to succeed in their majors. It is very unlikely that the English for academic purposes language that they engage with, and which they are expected to have gone a long way towards mastering by the final years of their studies, would feature an explicit focus on idioms as this is an area often associated with colloquial speech. Moreover, when these students use English outside of the classroom within Omani society, the language is often used to engage with the service workers who make up a large percent of the nation’s workforce (Razavi & Kirsten, 2011). These workers are usually drawn from the Indian subcontinent and South East Asia and generally speak English as a second or foreign language and may also be unlikely to employ idioms which again limits potential exposure.

In terms of the influence of context, findings here suggest that context alone, despite Yousif (2012) and Holsinger’s (2015) belief, does not serve as a sufficient cue to idiom recognition and interpretation and may, in fact, negatively interfere with an accurate understanding of an idiom especially if students are completely unfamiliar with the component words or are not aware of idioms in their own language. To take one example, the idiom “as ye sow, so shall ye reap” was contextualized in the study by the following sentence: “When the leader of a murderous gang was shot himself, the local minister said: “as ye sow, so shall ye reap””. Participant interpretations of this particular idiom included:

1) The major trouble maker is vanished now.
2) You are caught.
3) Became sad.
4) He is responsible for his death.

Many of these responses are directly linked to the context itself.
This indicates that students believed the meaning of the idiom to be literal and subsequently identified some contextual clues to guess its meaning. Moreover, in addition to this low rate of accuracy when interpreting this idiom, it should be noted that more than 40% of participants did not attempt to offer a translation. Taking this with the difficulties with which participants had in translating this idiom, it can be concluded that participants lacked the ability to decide if the idiom had a figurative meaning based on its grammatical structure and semantic make-up, even though the fact that the idiom was presented in “old” English could have served as a clue to its idiomaticity.

A lack of sufficient contextualization in the study may also have contributed to the low rates of accurately understanding idiom meaning reported here. For instance, the idiom “dyed-in the wool” occurring in the context “Max is a dyed-in-the-wool conservative republican” constituted a major challenge for participants due to two main reasons. The first is that there is not sufficient context in order to guess the meaning of the idiom, as most participants are generally unaware of world affairs and would not know about American political parties or even, perhaps, of the political implications of “conservative”. The second is the fact that the idiom has a quite unusual grammatical structure and is specific in terms of history and culture. That is, according to Webster’s Quotations: Facts and Phrases, this particular idiom refers to the fact that fabric may be colored in various ways. For example, woven fabric is died after it is woven. However, when the color becomes “dyed in the wool”, then the wool itself is dyed before being worked and the color is very unlikely to fade. Perhaps due to the culturally-specific nature of this idiom, very few participants attempted to translate it.

These findings, therefore, suggest that Omani EFL learners both lack exposure to idioms during their English studies and are largely not aware of how to determine the meaning of an idiom when encountered. Here, instructing students in Wang and Li’s (2014) practices of literal, partial literal, and free translation may assist learners in determining their meaning. Daoudi’s (2011) conceptual framework for recognizing and understanding idioms may also be useful. The author states that three major steps should be taken by students to understand the idiomaticity of an expression. The first involves relying on syntactic and structural knowledge to determine the grammaticality of an expression. If the expression is seen as being ungrammatical, then students can immediately think that is has an idiomatic meaning and can subsequently apply the elimination process which involves keeping key words as clues to understanding the idiom’s meaning. However,
when the idiom is grammatically correct, students then interpret the individual words that form the idiom and look at collocations.

If the idiom is grammatical but its composite words do not make sense – for example, “it’s raining cats and dogs” and “a storm in a tea cup” – learners can then move it from the category of literal to idiomatic. So, when the idiom refers to elements that cannot happen in the real world, then this indicates the pragmatic deficiency of the idiom which, according to the author, should lead EFL learners to assign it an idiomatic meaning. The final stage of Daoudi’s recommended approach for determining the meaning of an idiom is semantic interpretation which involves collocation and non-collocation strategies. This involves EFL learners relying on the literal meaning of an idiom and interpreting a string by identifying words that do not collocate. Examples of this include “going bananas” and “feeling blue”.

It appears as though both gender and college of study do not have any effect on the ability of students to understand the meaning of idioms. The lack of effect of gender here is particularly interesting, as female students in Oman and, indeed, much of the Arab Gulf, are often reported as having better English-language skills than male students (Mathew, Job, Al Damen, & Islam, 2013). If this is the case, then it could be assumed that, along the lines of Rajab (2012) and Zyzik (2011), their higher levels of English proficiency would result in better recognition and understanding of the idioms featured in this study. However, the fact that such a difference was not found may suggest that gender is not related to idiom understanding in the Arab Gulf, male and female participants in the current study shared similar English language levels, or that the gender imbalance in favour of female participants means that any potential differences could not be adequately explored.

Finally, results suggest that Omani EFL learners are unable to recognize the meaning of contextualized English-language idioms due to a lack of exposure to these in their studies and unfamiliarity with the linguistic components of idiomatic expressions. As a result, it may be necessary for EFL teachers in Oman, and in other similar contexts, to explicitly focus on some of the peculiar linguistic features of idioms introduced in class in addition to discussing their meanings. An important step here involves encouraging learners to explore cases where idioms follow or deviate from grammatical conventions. Therefore, EFL teachers could both explain the specific language characteristics of idioms and discuss the culture/s and historical backgrounds associated with a particular idiom.
and exploring idiomatic expressions in such a manner, frequent exposure to at least some of the most common English-language idioms in the classroom will also help students begin to integrate these in an appropriate manner into their speech and in their more informal written texts.

6. CONCLUSION

This research, therefore, appears to confirm the findings reported above that Arab learners of English – in this case Omani university students studying in English-medium environments – tend to struggle with understanding the meanings of English idioms. This may be associated with a number of issues, including a lack of awareness of the culture/s of the nations from which these idioms originally sprang, a lack of exposure to idioms as a useful device for developing communication in the English language during their largely academic-focused classes, and even the position of English as a lingua franca or even a foreign language, as opposed to a true second language, across much of Omani society.

Moreover, issues with providing contextualization of the idioms featured here on the data collection instrument, as highlighted above, may also have contributed to participants’ relatively low levels of understanding of the meaning of idioms, and even of those idioms that have close equivalents in Arabic. This study also did not attempt to measure participants’ English language proficiency, despite its importance on idiom recognition as posited by Rajab (2012) and Zyzik (2011). This is an important concern as the researchers assumed high levels of English language skills due to participants’ years and majors in English-medium college/s. However, future research could aim to directly assess this proficiency, at least in terms of vocabulary range (see Roche & Harrington, 2013), to determine if it is associated with levels of idiom recognition and understanding.

However, despite these limitations, the current research suggests that it may be beneficial if instructors in Omani tertiary institutions attempt to develop their learners’ understanding of both commonly-used idioms in the English language and the process of first determining if an encountered phrase is an idiom and, if it is, how to extract meaning from it. This can be achieved by following Daoudi’s (2011) concept of idiom deconstruction in the Arab world, and could also be achieved through discussion of such issues as ungrammaticality, pragmatic and semantic deficiency.
REFERENCES


Appendix: Questionnaire

Dear Student

This study aims to explore Omani students’ understanding of the meaning of English idioms. We are grateful for your participation, and we assure you that your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Therefore, no names or IDs are required in the background data section. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Part A: Background Information
1. Gender _____________________________
2. College _____________________________
3. Specialization ________________________
4. Year at college ________________________
5. GPA ________________________________

Part B: Idiom Understanding. Please write the meaning of the underlined idiom in either English or Arabic. If you believe an equivalent idiom in Arabic exists, you may also write that as your answer.

1. We started on a picnic, and first it rained, then, to add insult to injury, the car broke down.

2. John invited Tim for dinner, but, since Tim’s father had just died, he replied, “Thanks. I’d like to come after the dust settles”.

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3. Joe’s new computer keeps quitting on him. He should have stuck with his old one. It goes to show that all that glitters is not gold.

4. So you have poor digestion? Take more fruit. Don’t you remember the old saying, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”?

5. “How come you recognized me after twenty years?” John asked his friend. “I am like an elephant, you know,” came the answer, “and an elephant never forgets.”

6. You have ants in your pants today. Is something wrong?

7. Suzie is so immature, I am afraid she will never free herself from her mother’s apron strings.

8. John asked his mother for a hundred dollars today. He’s always asking for the moon.

9. We had better fix the old car before we leave; you know how they say, “A stitch in time saves nine.”

10. When the leader of a murderous gang was shot himself, the local minister said, “As ye sow, so shall ye reap.”

11. The job was new to him and, for a few days, he was all at sea.

12. Aunt Matilda got married at the eleventh hour; after all, she was already 49 years old.

13. After his prolonged illness and stay in the hospital, Joe is back in the saddle.

14. The man who drove the car became angry with the backseat driver.

15. The soldiers had their backs to the wall.

16. Cut out the banana oil; flattery will get you nowhere!

17. Many 19 year olds had their baptism of fire during the Gulf war.

18. If he thinks he can fool me, he is barking up the wrong tree.

19. Bill told a story without batting an eyelash, although not a word of it was true.

20. How I wish I was a fly on the wall to hear what my fiancé’s parents are saying about me.
21. He went through life with a chip on his shoulder.

22. Jack is planning to chum around with Tim in Europe this summer.

23. When the police made it quite clear that they knew about everything, the accused felon began to clutch at straws to save himself.

24. It is impolite and unkind to cold-shoulder people.

25. “Your son is a very precious person; watch out for him,” John said to Ted. “What do you mean?” Ted asked. “He has an old head on young shoulders,” Ted went on, “it is obvious from all the remarks he makes.”


27. Our business will probably start to show a quarterly profit, if we can just get rid of some dead wood.

28. Our university needs several million dollars for its building renovation project; $50,000 is a mere drop in the bucket.

29. Max is a dyed-in-the-wool conservative republican.

30. “I’ll never find a suitable woman to marry,” Peter complained to his father. “Never fear son,” the father replied, “every Jack has his Jill somewhere.”

31. Uncle Willie was laughing fit to be tied at the surprised look on mother’s face.

32. When Elaine came home at three in the morning, her father hit the ceiling.

33. “Hold your horses!” Mr. Jones said to David when David wanted to call the police.

34. We went out for dinner together but, when it was time to pay, I was left holding the bag.

35. Poor John lost his job due to restructuring when he was in the prime of his life.

36. I’ll be back in two shakes of a lamb’s tail.

37. They will fight reform to the last ditch.

38. When she won the prize, she went home looking like the cat that swallowed the canary.
39. “You’re talking too much about your work,” the director warned Joe. “Don’t you know that *loose lips sink ships*?”

40. No matter how rich and famous he became, he never lost sight of the fact that he had been born in the slums.
Abstract

Apart from the universal principles of politeness which drive different people to be courteous, generous and cooperative, there is an under layer of behaviour governed by deeply seated 'unexamined', 'routinized' and 'unselfcritical' commonsense assumptions that make every culture what it is. These cultural specificities do not just predispose us to divide reality in different ways, they also allow us to link different parts of reality in different ways (Williams, 1992, p.90). This, in turn, renders the task of translation relatively difficult. Politeness is culture specific and failing to translating it accurately, would give rise to a great amount of stereotypes, good or bad, about different people and nations. Can we, thus, translate politely? According to Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), communication is riddled with face threatening acts that require redressive strategies. For fear of losing the meaning of the source text through “foreignising” or domesticating, the view presented in this paper offers that the translator should assess the threat and redress it using the appropriate politeness strategy through three independent and culturally sensitive variables: Cultural distance (D), power (P) and ranking of imposition (R).

Keywords: Translation, Cooperative Principle, Politeness, FTA, Arabic.
1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is not simply a medium for forwarding information from one language to another. A good translation functions to build bridges and establish relationships between people from different sociocultural contexts. Frighteningly enough, a bad translation can be a cause for conflict and disruption. All things being equal, translation does not occur in a vacuum clearly because the texts that we translate are the product of socio-cultural situations that involve participants bearing socio-cultural relationships that need to be acknowledged, maintained and strengthened, hence the importance of politeness. Indeed, every text is a communicative message carrying tokens of courtesy or politeness which people bring about in order to appease their need for rapport and involvement.

In the field of linguistic politeness and by and large translation, the existence of politeness or the lack of it is not in question, but a common and accurate understanding of what politeness is, and how to account for it cross linguistically remains problematic. Among the main aims of this undertaking is to use translation as a communicative strategy in order to go beyond some of the widely held stereotypes about one culture or the other. For this purpose, an objective study of politeness from a pragmatically based vantage point to provide the set of tools necessary for the construction of a general theoretical framework for its translation is very much needed. Naturally, it is no mean feat since the concept being investigated (politeness) is itself culture-specific. Looking closely at the manifestations of politeness, we discover variations even within the same culture between various speech communities divided ethnically, geographically, politically, socially, gender wise and so on. It is also the case that different communities of practice involve a sense of politeness having different functions, meanings and linguistic behaviors for different groups of people (Wenger, 1998; Mills, 2002).

2. RATIONALE

Politeness or the manifestation of correct and socially expected behaviour has been the concern of interactional linguistics, social psychologists, ethnomethodologists, anthropologists, and more recently translation theorists. Although no consensus definition of politeness has emerged, it is generally agreed that politeness is a social and linguistic phenomenon which involves a certain conduct for keeping social interaction friction free, be it strategic in the sense that it is motivated by the individual’s personal gain or conventionalized normative in the shape of commonly used readymade templates made to measure for different occasions or situations. These
templates provide speakers and writers with the right thing to say in situations where it is felt that something should be said (Tannen. and Öztek, 1977). It is the case that many speech communities have a number of general purpose responses or formulae appropriate for a number of situations. For instance, Arabic tends to have what Ferguson (1977, p. 144) calls the “same or more so” principle which is endorsed in the Koran (Surah IV, verse 86) “If someone greets you, either return the greeting or greet them better for Allah takes everything into account”. The ‘same or more so principle’ is different from the ‘you too principle’ kind of response which is familiar to the English and used in many other speech communities.

In the context of translation, such cross-linguistic variations in the source language often challenge the social norms and value of the target language giving rise to cultural stereotyping. Leech (1983, p. 84) states that “I have been seriously told that ‘Poles/Russians/ etc. are never polite’ and it is commonly claimed that ‘the Chinese and the Japanese are very polite in comparison with Europeans’ and so on”. Lakoff (1972, p.908) also argues that English sounds ‘harsh’ or ‘impolite’ to the Japanese, while Blumkulka (1982, p. 31) reveals that “refusal is often expressed in Israel by a curt ‘NO’... a habit that probably contributes to the popular view about Israelis’ lack of politeness”. Thomas (1983, p. 97) cites several other stereotypes about ‘the abrasive Russian/German’, ‘the obsequious Indian/Japanese’, ‘the insincere American’, and ‘the standoffish Briton’.

Clearly, such views are the product of a range of beliefs, customs, values, social experiences and expectations culturally and individually constructed. In this context, I refer to Rokeach’s (1968, p. 160) statement that values are ‘internalized... standard(s) for guiding action in an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-state of existence’. The question is whether it is reasonable, however, to assume that some modes of conduct are more or less polite in one language than another or that cultures in which linguistic constructions show a high degree of formality and restraint are more or less polite than those who are more inclined toward directness. In fact as Sifianou (1992, p.2) puts it “ no nation may be objectively verified as more or less polite than any other, but only polite in a different culturally specific way.”

On what being ‘polite’ means, Leech says that “some illustrations are (e.g. orders) inherently impolite, and others (e.g. offers) are inherently polite” (1983, p. 83). Lakoff (1972, p. 11) wonders whether it is possible to talk about universal conditions governing the use of politeness markers. Should this
be possible and politeness be considered as an undivided concept the significance of which is common to all groups of people, then a translation would be a straightforward and automatic task. Since this is not the case, the sorts of stereotypes mentioned above remain vital indices of important issues worthy of further investigation. For Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 1), the significance of politeness phenomena goes even further, ‘for they raise questions about the foundations of human social life and interaction’.

While all excesses in attitudes favoring universality and ones favoring relativity regarding language and culture have been discarded in recent years and a more moderate perspective of the relation between language and culture has been developed, new forms of linguistic determinism and therefore new stereotypes (eg. language and class, language and gender, language and war, language and racism, language and political controversies) have emerged. Seen from a pragmatic perspective, they stand as complex rather than simple resources of ways of communicating between people and therefore of ways of expressing politeness. Therefore, as Thomas (1983, p. 107) argues, “every instance of national or ethnic stereotyping should be seen as a reason for calling in the pragmaticist and discourse analyst”. The investigation of politeness could benefit from being placed in the framework of postmodern approaches to (linguistic) politeness (Eelen, 2001; Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Watts, 2003) where politeness is not deemed to be static but dynamic, and not predetermined but constructed by participants through discourse/interaction. However, to put this paper in an exhaustive theoretical framework, we simply cannot afford to miss out on discussing some major theories in the literature of politeness. I will present and discuss some views of politeness and postulate accordingly a theoretical framework for cultural translation.

3. THE LOGICALITY OF CONVERSATION

Grice did not set out to account for politeness in language use but a side remark he made in his paper 'Logic and conversation' (1975) about the fact that other maxims than those he proposed for the "aesthetic, social and moral" Co-operative Principle (1975, p. 49) need to be formulated in order to account for pragmatic meaning. Hence, the politeness maxim 'be polite'.

Grice observed that conversation is based on co-operation between the participants, which makes the participants recognise common aims and specific ways to achieve them. He says that conversation is governed by what he calls the Co-operative Principle. In accordance with this principle,
participants “make [their] conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which [they] are engaged” (Grice, 1975, p. 45). This principle is associated with four maxims which follow from it: quantity, quality, relation and manner.

Grice explains that the first three maxims refer to what is said while the fourth one refers to how something is said. He adds that these maxims characterise ideal exchanges regardless of the subject matter and type of speech acts, but observes that they do not have equal weight; lacking brevity for instance is less serious than lying. He also goes further to illustrate that the maxims are operational in any co-operative, rational human activity, such as mending a car or helping to prepare a cake. However, Grice is careful to explain the possibility that people do not always follow the observance of these maxims for a variety of communicative purposes. These departures require specific interpretation which he calls ‘conversational implicature’. That is to say, instead of consistently observing the maxims, the speaker may flout one of the maxims to imply something rather different from what s/he actually says. Thus, the addressee is ‘forced’ to look for a specific point in the conversation to help him or her interpret the addresser’s intended meaning, which has not been stated explicitly. Grice's famous example of implicature through the flouting of the maxim of quantity refers to a recommendation letter written for a student who has applied for a philosophy job. The letter, which says ‘Mr X’s command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular’, provides irrelevant or little information and is therefore not satisfactory for the addressee’s expectations. In consequence, it implies that the student is not suitable for the post.

Grice describes the observance of the co-operative principle and the systematic exploitation of the maxims as reasonable and rational human behaviour and therefore universal. However insightful Grice's principles of conversation are, they have the character of prescribed rules that are grounded on efficiency and informativeness which leave no room for the expressive aspect of language. A great deal of day-to-day linguistic exchanges do not aim at purely effective exchanges of information and, consequently, any suitable framework for a theory of language use should be able to provide for the variety of other purposes language use serves. Informative speech stands as the exception rather than the rule in the case of Moroccan Arabic.

Even in very formal contexts where informativeness is expected to be attended to, its application may vary cross culturally. Take for instance the
following letter of an Arab student seeking enrolment in an Australian University:

The Name of Allah The benevolent, the Merciful.
My Dear respected Master x University Good morning or after good night. [greeting]
I hope to complete my university studies. I begged to accept my application in your university.[Introduction and request]
I gained beshelor (Licence of Arts and Education). My Department is Arabic Language. [Elaboration of introduction].

(Clyne, 1991, p. 214)

This calquing of the Arabic structure in English is likely to be seen by the English native speaker as insincere, desperate or odd to say the least. This parallel structure attributed by Saâdeddin (1989) to “aurally developed discourse” is evidence to the fact that the informativeness principle does not apply universally as claimed by Grice. Should it be possible, the task of the translator would be much easier.

In his analysis of randomly selected letters from South-Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Srilankan, Bangladeshi) and Arab (Egyptian, Kuwaiti, Libyan, Moroccan, Lebanese) students requesting entrance information from an Australian university, Clyne (1994, pp. 173-174) observed that the letters generally demonstrate a high level of creativity. All of them gave an introduction and an expression of interest before coming to the actual request. They also contained expressions of deference such as (I beg to state, I have the honour to intimate, your esteemed university or my dear respected master x University) which are not considered appropriate in English. Among the routines supporting their request for information are desperate appeals for pity. Clyne notes that in some of the letters, the author's face is boosted by family, academic and financial status descriptions. Vocatives of address (Respected Sir, Please Sir) introduce every segment or request of the letters. In a number of letters they omitted the head altogether, devised a personal opening routine or used a mixture of formal and informal registers. This shows that the Relation maxim (Be relevant) can be interpreted according to different focuses of relevance. In Anglo discourse, relevance is closely linked with linearity, and to some extent with symmetry. It is not so in cultures such as Arabic which has the characteristic of ‘discourse subordination’, ‘repetition’, ‘redundancy’ and a ‘rhythmic balance of parallel propositions in contrast or similarity’ (Kaplan, 1972; Ostler, 1987).
The maxim of quality 'try to make your contribution one that is true' has also little meaning if put in a cultural context. Although it probably applies in many ordinary conversations, it is usually the case that other values such as kindness will override the rational sincerity required by the maxim of quality. Harris (1984, p. 191), in her study of Egyptian politeness and truth-telling behaviour, concludes that truthfulness is 'a sociolinguistic variable' and that like phonological variables, it depends both on the relationship between the participants and on the socio-cultural groups to which they belong.

The maxim of manner is no exception. The Gricean maxims are culturally relative even in academic work where one would expect greater uniformity among cultures. Loveday (1983, p.181) argues that the maxim of manner is rarely attended to in Japanese because in most contexts clarity and explicitness of expression could be easily interpreted as “offensively assertive”. Clyne (1994) speaks of the Vietnamese tolerance for ambiguity and explains that ‘orderliness’ is a concept of form-oriented cultures as the English as opposed to content-oriented cultures where the more knowledge provided, the better. Similarly, in her study of the differences between English and Polish speech acts and their connection with different cultural norms and assumptions, Wierzbicka (1985, p. 175) argues convincingly that the attested universality of the 'logic of conversation' seems ethnocentric and that “any community will have some orientation to the dimension of quality (truthfulness), of quantity (informativeness), of relevance, of manner (clarity)”. And since the principles of conversation are based on the propositional content of the utterances, they are far from being suitable translation strategies to an effective rendering in which the socio-cultural context of the source text is accurately identified and must be lexically encoded in the target text.

Different cultures have their own way of observing and expressing maxims for particular situations not to mention the immediate contextual factors which affect the way each individual will co-operate during a particular situation. Situational, individual and cross-cultural variations affect the maxims of conversation. Qualities such as those included in the description of the maxims are extremely difficult to determine or define even within the same culture, let alone across a variety of cultures. Should we take their universality for granted, then speakers of the same, let alone different, languages would be expected to be able to infer exactly the same meaning from any given utterance most of the time. Naturally, this is not the case.
Generally, explicitness and clarity work in parallel, i.e. the more explicit, the more clear, and vice versa. However, varying degrees of explicitness may not produce the same level of clarity, and the same degree of explicitness may produce varying levels of clarity depending on the type of discourse participants (age, gender, education etc.), situation and culture.

It is essentially maintained, even by Grice, that politeness is one of the communicative purposes responsible for the flouting of the CP maxims. Although he does not expand on the issue of politeness, he has provided a strong incentive for other linguists such as Lakoff, Leech and Brown and Levinson to do so.

In the context of translation, the CP and politeness are both relevant depending on the text’s object of concern: if it is mainly interested in the communication of a certain message as is the case in scientific and legal texts, the translator will concentrate on the clarity and informativeness of the end product; whereas, if the text is more concerned with social or cultural issues including the status of the interlocutors and/or the situation at hand such as political and literary texts, then even if politeness may not be the main purpose, the expression of it would be crucial. No matter how different and distant two cultures are, it all comes down to how politely we translate this difference. Assuming the importance of translation in the process of transmitting meaning and culture, as language is probably the most important vehicle serving this purpose, Hjelmslev (1943) concludes that understanding between the West and the East is in the last analysis largely a problem of translation (Aabi and Meghrab, 2003) We would go further and say that it is largely a problem of translating politely. Given the vital role of translation in cross-communication, adopting domestication of the text as a strategy to prevent clashes would not serve its ultimate communicative purpose. Although it may expediently make the two texts closer, it does not really achieve its purpose of intercultural rapprochement in the long run. On the contrary, it provides a homogenous, usually modified, account of the source language and culture, and therefore reinforces the cultural values of the target language. Let us consider the following example:

مرض السيدا الله يستر
Literal translation: Aids, may Allah protect (us/you/everyone)

The Arabic (الله يستر/ Allah yester) is a formulaic religious expression usually uttered following the announcement of some sort of calamity or the telling of some pitiful situation from which the speaker wishes to distance themselves, hence the prayer imploring protection from God. Now, saying prayers for the benefit of the speaker, the interlocutor or even a third party is very important
in Arabic and Moroccan culture. And failing to say the appropriate prayer/ formula when appropriate would scream of poor social decorum or be simply an instance of impoliteness. Evidently, translating this example, religious formula and all, might sound slightly awkward with the risk of sounding impolitically correct vis a vis the people suffering from Aids.

Should the religious formula be omitted, the text will lose a piece of its socio-pragmatic make which distinguishes it from any other standard text.

It goes without saying that given the essential role of translation as a means to open up to other cultures and world views, foreignisation is a highly desirable strategy as it resists homogenisation and preserves the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text (Berman, 2004; Ricoeur, 2006; Venutti, 1998). Foreignisation is not however the magical tool that would rapidly make cross-cultural misunderstandings go away, and may prove counter effective. Graphically translating a Muslim holding his hands high up and praying to Allah to let him die a martyr (ربی استوفني يس شيهدًا), might produce undesirable effects such as the feeling of threat and/or doom. Conflict and clash are part and parcel of the human nature of doing things between individuals belonging to the same community, let alone between nations and cultures. Somehow, we manage not to be constantly at each other’s throat. We often tend to come to a mutual understanding through polit and polite behaviour. The same applies to translation. Translators tread on dangerous grounds and for their communicative venture to be successful, they must be excellent politic and polite mediators.

4. THE POLITIC OF CONVERSATION: RULES AND MAXIMES

In this context politic conversation means the ability to carry out conversational exchanges tactfully and diplomatically in order to avoid friction and keep the conversation smooth and easy. It is within this perspective that Lakoff (1973) devised her pragmatic rules and Leech (1983) built up his scale of maxims.

Lakoff (1973) suggests that Grice's maxims should be reformulated as pragmatic rules to determine the pragmatic well-formedness of deviant utterances which present neither syntactic nor semantic problems. She says that pragmatic rules will help judge whether the form of an utterance is polite or not. She suggests two rules of pragmatic competence: be clear and be polite.

Leech (1983) proposes pragmatic scales which have a "bearing on the degree of tact appropriate to a given situation" (1983, p. 123). Leech's
approach sets out to relate between the domain of semantics concerned with
the logical meaning or sense of a sentence and the domain of pragmatics
concerned with the sense of sentence and its pragmatic force. Although
distinct, semantic sense and pragmatic force are related in that the pragmatic
force of an utterance involves its semantic sense. ‘Can you play the piano?’ is
an indirect request made to the addressee to actually play the piano. It is not
a question about the ability of the addressee to play the piano.

To establish a link between sense and force, Leech expands Grice’s co-
operative principle (CP) with its four maxims (quality, quantity, relation and
manner) through the addition of a Tact Maxim. The Tact Maxim comes under
the Politeness principle (PP) along with other maxims such as the Generosity,
Approval, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy maxims. Leech says that in
communication, Grice’s CP interacts with his proposed politeness principle.
He insists on the importance of the politeness principle as a necessary
complement to the Co-operative principle, not just an addition to it, in the
treatment of cases that cannot be satisfactorily handled by the co-operative
principle alone. In other words, the CP and its maxims are used to explain
how an utterance may be interpreted to convey indirect messages and the PP
and its maxims are used to explain why such indirectness may be used (see
Leech 1983: 104). Similar to Lakoff and Grice, he admits that the CP and the
PP can conflict. When this happens the speaker will have to sacrifice one of
them. If the speaker sacrifices the PP in favour of the CP, s/he will be putting
at risk the maintenance of “the social equilibrium and the friendly relations
which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being co-operative in
the first place” (1983, p. 82). In this respect, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 5)
comment that Grice’s CP and Leech’s PP have different status given that no
violation of Grice’s maxims occurs without a reason, whereas Leech’s
politeness maxims constitute such reasons for violations.

Whereas Leech is concerned with how politeness provides the missing
link between the Gricean CP and the problem of how to relate meaning to
force within a more general pragmatic theory, Brown and Levinson are more
interested in a theory of politeness in which linguistic devices are realisations
of specific politeness strategies aimed at the management of face. Brown and
Levinson’s model has been the most influential in providing a paradigm that
goes beyond a mere extension of the Gricean maxims (Watts, 1992, p. 7). The
degree to which Brown and Levinson’s theory relates to actual interaction and
the fact that their discussion of data is taken from a range of languages other
than English render their model less abstract and more functional than the
preceding theories.
5. WHEN FACE IS AT STAKE: BROWN AND LEVINSON

Drawing on Goffman’s (1955) notion of face as a “positive social value a person claims for himself by the line others assure he has taken during a particular contract” (Goffman, p.213), Brown and Levinson (1978) base their pragmatic theory on the premise that a model rational person is concerned about his/her face and recognises that other rational model people have similar face wants. Brown and Levinson say a model person has both a “the public self-image” that every member wishes to project to other group members (Goffman, 1967, p. 4) and the need to act without being impeded by others (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 66). Brown and Levinson elaborated on Goffman’s notion of face which is reformulated as ‘positive face’. They added the notion of ‘negative face’ which represents the model person’s desire for freedom of action. Central to Brown and Levinson’s concept of politeness, is a rational model person who would know to deviate from the Grice maxims of conversation without the risk of threatening the addressee’s positive or negative face and in the process his or her own. At this point, the model person has the choice of going bald on-record to commit a face threatening with the possibility of minimising or redressing it using a variety of politeness strategies.

6. STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING POLITELY

It is clear that the study of politeness plays a crucial role in providing the tools necessary for the construction of a cultural framework for translation. There must be, therefore, a scale responsible for the evaluation of the degree of politeness required in a specific situation. Evidently, the degree of politeness will naturally depend on the assessment of the seriousness of, to borrow B&L’s expression, the face-threatening act (FTA) between addressee and addressor. Acts such as requests, orders, threats, suggestions and advice are said to restrict the addressee’s independence and freedom of action because they put pressure on him or her to act in a certain way irrespective of one’s will and therefore threaten the person’s negative face. Thanks, acceptance of thanks, offers and so forth also threaten the person’s negative face because they entail they bring people to accept debt and humble their own face. Apologies (regrettting a committed FTA) and compliments are seen as FTAs to the speaker’s positive face because s/he feels compelled to reciprocate them in one way or another.

Since translation is also a communicative transaction between the source language producer and target language reader, FTAs will be defined in
this context as those acts which by nature run contrary to the face wants of
the source language producer and target language reader. The degrees of
politeness are measured in terms of the degree of redress to face in the
translation of FTAs. Using Brown and Levinson’s terminology, the argument
goes that the translator’s use of redressive strategies should depend on three
independent and culturally-sensitive variables.

Cultural Distance (D) between source language and language: The less
culturally related the two languages are, the greater the potential face threat
of the act. Plainly presenting placentophagy, eating the placenta which by
strict definition would be considered cannibalistic, may not be to everybody’s
taste regardless of how ancient, popular or trendy the practice is and would
probably cause great uneasiness. Mentioning it would be an FTA that requires
redressing. The translator might redress the degree of face threat through
mitigation strategy such as presenting local peculiar habits or softening the
impact with scientific evidence that the placenta is not eaten raw but in the
form of medicinal pills in order to prepare the reader/viewer to acknowledge
difference.

However, in other instances of cross-cultural distance, where religious
or sexual taboos come in play, redress may require more that softening or
mitigation. The word “gay”, for example, extends its meaning from the
adjective gay meaning happy as its denotative. In Arabic, on the other hand,
the phrase ‘sha:dh jinsiyyan’ (lit. sexual pervert) is used for the same referent.
sha:dh denotes extremity and deviance from the norm. The reference to the
same concept in English and Arabic represents two divergent cultural
assumptions, causing a cultural conflict when substituting one for the other.

Developing acute sensitivity towards the cultural distance would
undoubtedly assist the translator, as a privileged reader whose interpretation
of the text is the version of reality that will reach the receiver, in carefully
assessing the degree of the FTA and devising appropriate redress accordingly.

Power (P) is the second variable relating to the relative power relation
between the two languages; the more power a language has in respect to the
other, the greater the face threat. Power is not just a relation between people
but a relation between texts and meanings that often passes over unnoticed
and is scarcely perceived by the parties involved (Fairclough, 2003). Such a
relation usually takes the form of ‘common sense’ assumptions that are
actually ideologies seeking to legitimize existing power relations (Fairclough,
2001). In the process, diverse realities are converted into one single and most
advocated version inspired, produced and imposed by the powers that be. If
so, translation can be conceived as knowledge made of a set of
presuppositions about the world that forge the perspective from which a social group views the world.

Translation must, therefore, be read as “records of cultural contestations and ideological struggles, rather than as simple linguistic transpositions or literary creations” (Tymoczko, 2006, p.443). Redressing the condescending force of the more powerful language is an inescapable duty for the translator.

The absolute ranking (R) is the third variable. It relates to the ranking of impositions in a particular culture and the degree of imposition intrinsic to a particular act: the more imposition an act involves, the more threatening it becomes to the speaker and/or hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) consider this variable as culturally-dependent since it is assumed that cultures rank acts with reference to their degree of imposition, which will vary according to the culture. What is appropriately regarded as an expression of generosity in one culture may be inappropriate and imposing in another.

It is quite common for Moroccan hosts to insist that their guest eat a great deal. The invitation to eat would be incessantly repeated throughout the meal with the host telling the guest they are not eating enough. The insistence on the part of the host that the guest should eat profusely certainly aims at showing hospitality. However, it might translate as imposing to someone to whom such practice is not familiar.

Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that attending to face (positive or negative) and the choice of a politeness strategy depends on the weightiness of the imposition. The view adopted here is that the equation of the weightiness of imposition and type of politeness varies cross culturally. Let us look at the following example which involves a contrast between British and Moroccan norms:

Someone (S) at home answers the door to an unexpected visitor (V) at meal time. The two are friends but not intimates. S invites V in to eat. V hesitates. S begins persuasion. Strategy 1 and strategy 2 offer two alternatives.

Strategy 1 (Moroccan)                                      Strategy 2 (English)
Please, do stay.                                           It’s no trouble at all.
It's not much, but accept us.                               There’s plenty of food.
Whatever we have, you share it with us.                    We’re used to people popping in.

Both strategies attempt to attenuate V’s embarrassment and fear of imposition, but they do this in different ways (lack of food vs. abundance of

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food). Besides, while strategy 1 instantiates positive politeness, strategy 2 instantiates negative politeness. The pragmatic force of strategy 1 is that any damage to S’s negative face is compensated by the intimacy of sharing with such an ‘important’ person. Enthusiasm at the prospect of the invitation and explicit repetition of the invitation are saying `you are important to me, I wish closer contact with you`. This is anointing of positive face, paying attention to V’s want to be recognised as belonging or in Brown and Levinson’s terms to be appreciated. Strategy 2, on the other hand, stresses that no damage to negative face is involved. It gives attention to the want to be recognised as an individuated person who would neither be imposing nor incurring a debt.

Let us consider the situation in a cross-cultural context. If V is used to receiving Strategy 1 in this situation but is given Strategy 2, it is their positive face that will be damaged. S/he will be affronted that S could treat them in such a casual avoidance-based manner. They may even interpret mention of abundance of food as boasting. If, on the other hand, V is used to receiving Strategy 2 but is given Strategy 1, it is their negative face that could be damaged. The visitor may not recognize the intention of the apology in the lack of food, and may interpret it as a debt. Whether, there is little food or the opposite, does not indeed matter much. A Moroccan host or hostess, who lays a variety of dishes on the table, will, while serving the dishes to the guests, still apologise for the lack of food and beg them to accept what they are offering.

One area of meaning that should be balanced in translation is the different strategies of politeness of politeness used in the source language and required in the target language. Comparing politeness strategies across the boundaries of speech communities should be considered by the translator who may find it necessary to operate a shift or switch between strategies in order to avoid getting the target reader confused.

7. CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of translation text is not lost, maintained, or enhanced solely on the basis of certain pre-set normative rules. It is a complex transaction of social values, beliefs and ideologies. It can become a more difficult task when it involves texts from widely distant cultures, conflicting ideologies and inherently varying degrees of (im)polite acts. The role of the translator is that of a negotiator in a highly complex political transaction. He has to diagnose the FTA, assess its gravity, and recommend the appropriate
solutions. Each situation requires a different path of action, and the translator cannot afford the luxury of being a neutral observer. S/he serves as an agent of a cultural practice where meaning is not easily mediated without the intervention of the translator. The translator’s task cannot be an exercise in neutrality but requires to a great extent an interactive mediation for which words and structures are never merely passive but active factors in a living and polite exchange.

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Translating from Arabic to English: How to do it Politely?

ON THE PLACE OF DIALECTS IN SELECTED YORÛBÁ VIDEO FILMS

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Abstract

Yorùbá language is a national language of over thirty million people that constitute the Yorùbá ethnic group in South West Nigeria. The language has a place of honour among its dialects as it is the only variant that is socially defined. It is used in education, religion, commerce, broadcast and print media, entertainment and other socio-political activities. Due to the status accorded the language and its commercial viability, the language has become the linguistic medium in contemporary Yorùbá video film productions. However, as one begins to watch some of these Yorùbá video films, the use of dialects becomes apparent from the first scene. Consequently, this paper explores the place of Yorùbá dialects in Yorùbá video films. The paper shows among other things that a handful of the numerous Yorùbá dialects are used in dialogue in the Yorùbá video films. The dialects are Òyò, Òwọ, Ògbá, Ìjèbú Ìkálẹ, Ìjèṣà, Ìgbómìnà and Òndó. Our findings show that majority of the film actors/producers are from these dialectal areas. The paper also reveals that these dialects are used for specific purpose in Yorùbá video films. These include (a) showing affection and sentiments; (b) dousing tension; and (c) showing that no Yorùbá community is linguistically homogenous. Among the dialects used in the video films however, only two (Òyò and Òwọ) have been used to shoot full-fledged video films. The paper therefore, examines the linguistic variables peculiar to these two dialects with the aim of documenting them, thereby preserving them in written form for posterity.
Keywords: Standard variety, language, Òyó, Òwò, Cluster.

1. Introduction

In contemporary Yorùbá nation, Yorùbá language (as opposed to its dialects) is generally used as a national language. The language was reduced to writing in the nineteenth century mainly through the efforts of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and by non-Yorùbá people with very little or no formal training in Linguistics or Language studies. Such people include Bowdich, Kilham, Clapperton, Raban, Norris, Graf, Gollmer and Crowther (Aróhunmọ́lase 1987, pp. 2-6). The publication of J.C Raban between 1830 and 1832, however, becomes the first volume on the language. Fábùnmi (2003, p.337) asserts that when Bishop Àjàyí Crowther translated a verse of the Bible into Yorùbá in 1843, he was speaking and reducing his Osogun (Óyó dialect) into writing, thus forming the foundation of the Yorùbá language standardization. However, our finding is at variance with Fábùnmi’s (2003) assertion as Aróhunmọ́lase (1987, p. 3) had reported that Clapperton, a notable explorer, had earlier collected and published Yorùbá vocabulary in 1829 after his visit to the palace of Aláàfin Òyó in 1826 where he spent six months. Sheba (2013, p. 166) also asserts that the standard Yorùbá language is an offshoot of Òyó dialect. If this assertion is completely correct, one may ask which of the Yorùbá dialects did Bowdich (1817), Kilham (1829), Raban (1830-1832), and Norris (1841) who had earlier reduced Yorùbá language into writing used in their works. It was not reported anywhere that these people visited or lived in Òyó linguistic area. As a matter of fact, majority of them lived outside the shores of Yorùbáland. Also, it is not on record that their informants are of Òyó extract. Besides, Àjàyí (1960, p. 250) reports that Raban’s published booklets were of great help to Crowther and others who tried their hands in reducing Yorùbá into writing. A critical examination of Òkó dialect (in Lagos State) shows that the dialect is relatively similar to Òyó dialect. Probably, that is the reason Awóbůlúyì (1998, p. 2) classifies the two dialects (Òkó and Òyó) under North-Western Yorùbá dialect group. Therefore, based on this, we would like to submit here that Standard Yorùbá may be an offshoot of the Òkó and Òyó dialects. The language however, incorporates several features and lexis from other Yorùbá dialects. The variation in spelling conventions in earlier writings gave rise to controversy over the rules for reducing Yorùbá language into writing. By 1847, Gollmer proposed an orthography that formed the basis of the Missionary Society’s 1848 “Rules for reducing unwritten language to Alphabetic writing in Roman characters”. The implication of these facts shows that the foundation of the Yorùbá language...
standardization should not be linked to Crowther’s translation of a verse of the Bible.

As it were, it is believed that Yorùbá language has a place of honour among its dialects because it is the only variant which is socially defined within the linguistic area. It is the Mother tongue of most of the children of urban dwellers. It is used in education, politics, religion, broadcast/print media, entertainment and other socio-economic activities, Olúmúyìwá (1994, p.p. 5-6). Yorùbá dialects are geographically and socially restricted. Less attention was paid to the study of these dialects until Awóbùlúyì’s (1998, p. 8) call on Yorùbá scholars to give much attention to the study of different dialects of the Yorùbá language. According to him, the study of these dialects have the potential of helping to clarify issues or points that are likely to, otherwise remain obscure in the standard variety of the language. Scholars have risen to Awóbùlúyì’s call by examining aspects of the phonology, morphology and syntax of Yorùbá dialects. Such works include Adéwolé (1999), Fábùnmi (2001, 2009, 2013), Sàlǎwù (2001), Oyè (2006), Olúmúyìwá (2006, 2010, 2014), Fǎdọ̀rọ̀ (2012), Ajibóyè (2013), Abódérint (2014) and Àríyọ̀ (2013). The present study, which is purely descriptive in nature, is also a response to Awóbùlúyì’s (1992, 1998) call. It however, differs from the previous studies that have only thrown light on what is permitted and what is prohibited in each Yorùbá dialect examined as its focus is on dialect use in Yorùbá video films.

A look at the sleeve of most of these Yorùbá video films shows that the producers are fond of writing Yorùbá language as language of communication. However, as one begins to watch some of the films, the use of Yorùbá dialects is apparent from scene one. The foregrounding of Yorùbá dialects prompted us to explore the place of Yorùbá dialects in some selected Yorùbá video films with the aim of exploring how and why the producers used them. Such endeavor, we believe, has immediate and long-time benefits for Yorùbá studies in general, and the production of Yorùbá video films in particular.

2. THE DATA

The data for this study were gathered randomly from the numerous Yorùbá video films’ stand in Ìbàdàn and Àkúrẹ̀, South West Nigeria. Ìbàdàn, the capital of Òyó State is the largest city in West Africa while Àkúrẹ̀ is the capital city of Óndó State where the researchers live. The sampling survey covers different taxonomic sets of Yorùbá video films. These include folkloric, comic, religious, love, and crime video films. Due to the epileptic supply of electricity which posed a serious challenge, it took nine months to watch through the over seventy video films selected for this study. These Yorùbá video films
On the Place of Dialects in Selected O. Adébòwálé & T. Olúmúyiwà Yorùbá Films


3. YORÙBÁ DIALECTS

Yorùbá language and its numerous dialects belong to the West Benue-Congo language family. The language and its regional dialects are language varieties since there is no linguistic distinction between them. What this implies is that Yorùbá language is realized in its dialects. This probably, informs Adètúgbò’s (1973, p. 183) view that ‘standard Yorùbá is not Yorùbá language: The Yorùbá language is an aggregate and not sum total of all the dialects it subsumes’. Yorùbá dialects have been variously classified by the scholars of the language. This is presented in Adètúgbò (1973), Akìnkúgbé (1976), Oyèláràn (1976), Awòbùlúyì (1998), Adènìyì (2005) and Oshodi (2011). Adètúgbò (1973, p.p. 184-185) groups Yorùbá dialects spoken in Western Nigeria into three, these are:

1. North-Western Yorùbá: Sákí, Ògbómòsò, Òyó, Ôsun.
2. South-East Yorùbá: Rémö, Ōndó, Ìkálé, Òwò, Ìjèbú.

In his classification, Akìnkúngbè (1976) included Yorùbá dialects spoken outside Nigeria and divided Yorùbá dialects into the following five groups:

5. South-East Yorùbá: Ìjèbú, Ìkálé.

In similar vein, Oyèláràn (1976, p.6) re-classifies Yorùbá dialects into four major divisions:

1. Western Yorùbá: Òyó, ìbàdàn, O hôri-Ìfòhin, Ketù, Sabèèç
2. Central Yorùbá: Ilé-Ìfè, Ìjèrè, Èkíti
3. South-East Yorùbá: Òndó, Ìwò, Ìjèbú, Ìkálè
More than two decades after, Awóbùlúyì (1998) came up with a new classification of Yorùbá dialects; he classifies Yorùbá dialects into the following five groups.

1. North-Western Yorùbá: Èkó, Àwóri, Ègbádò, Òyọ, Ònkò, Èbòló, Ègbómìnà
2. North-Eastern Yorùbá: Ìyàgbà, Ijumu, Òwọ̀rì, Owé
3. Central Yorùbá: Ifè, Èjèṣà, Èkítì and Mòbà
4. South-Western Yorùbá: Sábèjé-kètu (Anago) Ifè, (Togo)

Fádòrò (2012:66) claims that Adéníyi (2005) re-classifies Yorùbá dialects into the following seven groups:

1. North-Western Yorùbá: Òyọ, Ònkò, Òsun, Èbòló, Ègbómìnà.
2. Western Yoruba: Anago, Ketu, Ife(Togo), Òhòrí, Èsàbè (as well other Yorùbá dialects spoken outside Nigeria).
3. South-Western Yorùbá: Èkó, Àwóri, Ègbá, Èyàgbà, Èyàgbà, Òhòrí, Òjùnbú, Òjùjù, Èjùgbà, Èjùgbà, Èjùgbà, Òjùjù, Èjùgbà.
7. South-Eastern Yorùbá: Èjèbú, Ònkò, Èkàlè, Èlàjì, Èwò, Èjò (Apor).

Oshodi (2011) however, departs from the culture of re-classification of Yorùbá dialects. He created additional group, namely North Central Yorùbá (NCY). He classifies the following Àkókó speech forms; Arigidi, Èrúṣù, Àfá, Ègù, Èdò, Èjè, Òjù, Èsù, Èrò, Èjò and Ègájì to belong to the North Central Yorùbá group. He based his classification on the linguistic features which the speech forms shares with Yorùbá language and some of its dialects. The non-inclusion of the NCY dialect group in the earlier works may be due to the non-availability of data to the scholars. We want to add, at this juncture that the following speech forms: Akpe, Èkàram, Èbàram, Èyànì, Èdò, Èsù, Èrì, Èjò and Ègájì belong to Akpes Clusters (Oshodi 2011, p. 2) or what Àgoyi (2008) regarded as Akpesi/Abèsilàbèsi.

4. YORÚBÁ DIALECTS IN VIDEO FILMS

Timothy-Asobele (2003:1) reports that the production of Yorùbá films sprang from the stage plays of the numerous Yorùbá Traveling Theatre troupes. According to Ogúndéjì (1988), these theatre troupes were pioneered by Hubert Ogunde in 1944 through the performance of the ‘Garden of Eden’ and the ‘Throne of God’. Ogunde’s performance was sponsored by the Church of the Lord, Èbùtè Mèta Lagos. The theatrical productions of Ogunde’s other contemporaries such as Kólá Ègùnómòlá, Dúró Ládìípò, Moses Oláiyá Adéjùmò...
and Oyin Adéjóbí later gave the group the sobriquet of ‘popular theatre’, (Jeyifo 1984). Alámú (2010) writes that the various churches where these theatre artists worshipped were the first patrons of the Yorùbá theatre movement. Yorùbá language which was the linguistic medium in most churches at that time was adopted by these theatre practitioners for commercial viability of their trade (Jeyifo 1984, p. 13). As such, all troupes are therefore obliged by this factor to perform in Yorùbá language to their teeming audience in urban areas. Jeyifo is of the opinion that it is a standard practice then with virtually all troupes to derive considerable dramatic or comic extemporization from playing of the major dialectal variants of Yorùbá such as Ègbá, Òyó, Ìjèbú, Èkitì and Ìjèṣà against one another or against the centralized standardized dialect variant derived from Òyó dialect. Our view however differs, as our investigation shows that one of the Yorùbá theatre troupes: (Aláwàdà International Ltd. led by Moses Òláiyá Adéjùmọ̀) actually pioneered the creation of a non-comic dialectal usage in stage personality- Bàbá l’Ègbáá (Sunday Ikúbọljájọ) who dialogue freely in Ègbá dialect in all Aláwàdà stage plays.

Just like the Yorùbá traveling theatre troupes, Yorùbá language is the linguistic medium in contemporary Yorùbá video films productions. The reason is obvious-commercial viability. However, a critical look at some Yorùbá video films shows that there is dialectal interference in form of accent of some cast, especially those of Òyó origin at one point or the other, even when the script is written in standard Yorùbá language. Example of such video films include Odíderé (2006), Àríké (2014), Mámá Insurance (2012), Fadérera (2012), Ìbàjé (2014), Ìmòran Ìkà (2014), Eyin ojú (2013) and Olálekan Ìráwò (2015). We also observed that some of the cast cannot sustain the delivery of their lines in standard Yorùbá without code-mixing with their dialects. Also, where the producers deliberately use Òyó dialect as linguistic medium for tradition/culture based film with plot set in the villages, it is common to see that some of the cast cannot sustain the dialogue in the dialect. This idiosyncrasy is due to the fact that these casts lack linguistic competence in the dialect. In recent time however, All For God Theatre Group led by Taye Oloro¹, not minding the commercial viability that propelled others to choose the standard variety as medium of communication, produced his first Yorùbá film titled Okúpe in Òwò dialect of Yorùbá. The 3-part film is the first Yorùbá video film produced in any other Yorùbá dialect aside Òyó and the Standard variety. The acceptability of the film by the people of Òwò at home and in Diaspora prompted Taye Oloró to produce another Òwò dialectal film-Okúpe Mr Káníṣẹ̀ in 2015. Other video films produced by Taye Oloro are ìkókó Ìjè (2010), Àgídìgbọ̀ (2012), Òwò Àsínwín (2013) and Pósí Ìdè (2014). In these video films, he also used Òwò dialect to dialogue in some scenes. Generally,
we note that Yorùbá dialects are used for some specific purpose in the selected Yorùbá video films. We shall discuss this in the next section below.

5. THE USE OF DIALECTS IN SELECTED YORÙBÁ VIDEO FILMS

Saeed (2009, p. 230) opines that learning to communicate in a language involves more than acquiring the pronunciation and grammar. There is need to learn the uses to which utterances are conventionally put if we are to use language in a realistic way. Understanding the meaning of an utterance is to know its social functions. Such functions are known in Austin (1975)’s theory as speech acts. Austin theory of speech acts emphasizes the role of language in communicating social acts of an utterance. This involves that the hearer combines the linguistic knowledge about grammatical marking with both cultural knowledge and knowledge of the immediate local context, (Saeed 2009, p. 251). Therefore, in this section, we shall focus attention on the intentions (Illocutionary force in Austin terms) of the producers/writers of scripts for Yorùbá video films in making use of Yorùbá dialects in the selected video films. Due to space constraint, we would not be able to cite from all the video films used as examples in our discussion in this section.

The first point that must be made is that the speaker of a dialect was generally considered uneducated, uncultivated and lacking in prestige. This belief is evident in some of the selected video films for this study. In some of the video films, the use of dialect is associated with illiterate guards, gateman, housemaids, cooks, gardeners, herbalists, labourers and other villagers/rural dwellers. For example, the gateman in Odïderé and the gate woman in Mama Insurance used Otú dialect to dialogue with other people. Likewise, in Isíákà Kògbérègbè, Isíákà, a powerful illiterate freedom fighter from the village dialogued with other casts throughout the film in Otú dialect. Example of such dialogue is extracted below when he was wooing a banker he just met.

Extract I

“Fòlasade, àní mọ nífèè rẹ, n è sié. Èmi Isíákà Kògbérègbè mọ fi dá o lójú, tí n ée kù, n ó sèkè ç….. Emi lo ri tó o fi sòrú órò tó o sò un?”

“Fòlásadé, I said I love you. I am not joking. I, Isíákà Kògbérègbè assures you that I will take care of you as long as I live…. What prompted you to say what you said?”

The use of Otú dialect in this instance to introduce the subject of love elicits laughter on the part of the audience. Also in Òladúnjìoyè, the use of Otú dialect is restricted to the gangan drummer and the palace cleaners/guards.
It is a general characteristic in majority of the selected video films to see Ifá priests/ herbalists dialoguing or rendering incantations and Ifá verse in Òyó dialect only. The assumption for such dialectal use by herbalists may be premised on the fact that probably the first Ifá priest used Òyó dialect for divination. Other priests who learnt the art from him also learnt the dialect for rendition.

Another point worth noting here is that dialects are used in the selected video films to show that no Yorùbá community is linguistically homogenous. In spite of the fact that dialect was considered provincial, it is no barrier to any person in any community in Yorùbá nation. This is possible because there is mutual intelligibility among the different speakers of Yorùbá dialects. Examples of this are seen in Ògbórí Èlèmèṣò where Bàbá Ìjèṣà communicates freely in Ìjèṣà dialect among Òyó dwellers. The extract below is taken from the scene at the palm wine seller’s sport in the film.

**Extract II**

Bàbá Ìjèṣà:  In pèlé li bèí o  ‘Hello there’
Someone:  È pèlé o baba  ‘Hello old man’
Bàbá Ìjèṣà:  Èmi lenì.  ‘I am fine’
Palmwine seller:  Òè è tã?  ‘How are your sales?’
Bàbá Ìjèṣà:  Mò tà o,...  ‘Sales was good’
  Òko ŋè sìkò?  ‘Where is your husband?’
Palmwine seller:  Ò lò okò ńdè ‘He went hunting’
(Bàbá Ìjèṣà faces Àkànkè his fiancé)
Bàbá Ìjèṣà:  Àkànkè, kò tì rì?  ‘Àkànkè, how is it?’
Àkankè:  È fi mì sìlè o jèe  ‘Please leave me alone’
È wà dà mì jójó ‘You kept me waiting since’
Bàbá Ìjèṣà:  Èè sèmì, ńn dà mì dúrò lójùnún nì.  Mọ̀ bínú.’’
  ‘It was not intentional. I got delayed over there. I am sorry.’

The dialogue shows the mutual intelligibility in the use of standard Yorùbá and the Ìjèṣà dialect by the duo involved in the scene cited. Likewise in the video film, the wife of Ogunlọlá, a powerful warrior hails from Èkìtì. The woman code-switched from Standard variety to Èkìtì dialect when she was reciting her orïkì ‘praise poem’ at the time her husband was going to war.

**Extract III**

“Ogunlọlá o! o ólọ re, o ó bọ re, o ó sì bémi náà lálááffìà ara.
Èmi tìka lòmo olòsè méjì takotabo
Ọmo olójà mejì kòn i nò kòn tì i nò toba ládò Èwí
Èyé mi tìka lòmo Èwí Òtu…”(Èkìtì dialect italicized)
“Ogunlọla! You shall go well and return to meet me well. I am from the descendant of those that possesses two markets Where Traders Trade before moving to Trade at the King’s Market in Adó” My mother is a descendant of Èwí Òtù...

The ease with which Ogunlọla’s wife switched from the standard form to the dialect shows her vast knowledge of both forms. The subject of the dialogue also makes it humorous particularly with the code mixing of standard Yorùbá and Èkìtì dialect. Also in Àkùkọ Òrlàn, different Yorùbá ethnic groups are seen in a market scene where transactions are done in different dialects without hindrance. Asides this, we observed in the majority of the video films that any character who speaks any of the Yorùbá dialects, dialogue freely with the speakers of the standard variety. This free flow of communication shows that the level of mutual intelligibility among the speakers of Standard variety and Yorùbá dialects is high. It should also be pointed out that dialects are used in some of the selected video films to persuade the audience on the need to speak their dialects irrespective of the negative attitude the people have towards it. The negative attitude towards Yorùbá dialects is made manifest in Ìyànjẹ where a driver was scolded by a gateman for speaking a variant of Òyọ dialect.

Extract IV

Gateman: Gbẹnu rè dáké, ará okay, àfi kó maa só èdè abúlé
Driver: Èwọ lo mọ. Èdè Ìsẹyín èé sèdè okay, ngbà n éé somò alè...
Gateman: Shut up bushman. You are fond of speaking local dialect.
Driver: That is your business. Ìsẹyín dialect is not local; after all, I am not a bastard.

The driver is proud of his dialect while he indirectly scolded the gateman who is metaphorically referred to as a bastard. It is common knowledge among the Yorùbá that anyone who fails to acknowledge his/her roots, language and people is a bastard.

Also in Jènìfà (2008), The return of Jenifa (2011), Jèlìlí (2010), and Èmi ni Ìre kan Layé (2009), the protagonists in these comedy video films habitually speak their dialects and they were scolded at different fora. For example in Jènìfà, Sulia was scolded by Tracy as shown in the extract below.
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Extract V

Tracy: Àwọn èdè tó máa n sọ yẹn, èmi ò like è.
O need látì máa fi àwọn ọyìn bó dièdè sínú òrò è.
Suliat: Kí ló ha dé?
Tracy: I don’t like that your local accent. You need to code-mix it with English
Language.
Suliat: Why that?

Despite this, Suliat refused to be deterred by such criticism in the video film. Allied to this is affection and even sentimentality about dialects. Some producers/script writers are so sentimental about their dialect. This kind of feeling or attitude makes one assume an air of superiority about his dialect or culture over others. This assertion is evident in Ìyòmí Ayébo’s Òkọ Èja (2014) where he features his Ìkálẹ̀ dialect briefly in a dialogue with the sole aim of promoting the dialect. Also in Jimoh Alíù’s Fópómọyọ, whose language of communication in the film is the standard variety, his intention to showcase his Èkíti dialect is apparently demonstrated in the sound track of the video film which is rendered in Èkíti dialect. Example of such song is in the excerpt below:

Extract VI

Ó mó wèrí è́́í nù (2ce) ‘wash the head of this one’
Awèléwèrìsà ‘Awèléwèrìsà’ (name of a deity)
Aláwè á wèrà rè ‘Aláwè will wash himself’
Awèléwèrìsà ‘Awèléwèrìsà’

Likewise, in Òkúpè and Òkúpè Mr Káňselọ, the sole intention of the producer in using Òwò dialect to shoot the two films is to promote the dialect in order to prevent its extinction and also to show that the dialect is not inferior to either the standard variety or other Yorùbá dialects. The sentiment about Òwò dialect is made manifest in the epilogue of Òkúpè Part II. Another ethnocentric attitude observed in the use of dialects in some of the selected films occurs in Isé owó mi (2013) where a Party Chairman, in annoyance, code switched from standard variety to Òjèbú dialect when he received a death threat. He uses Òjèbú dialect to brag that as an Òjèbú indigene, no one can easily kill him.
On the Place of Dialects in Selected O. Adébòwálé & T. Olúmúyiwà
Yorùbá Films

Extract VII

Chairman:  Ṣé èmi sò fún è pé mo fè kú ni? Mádàrìkàn gidi nára mi o.  Ijèbú em wá o. Ijèbú i dodo o, è sòra rèn o...Ènì bá pori mi sìbi, òrò bí ẹkùn em bọròkù. Ijèbú em wá o. È sòra rèn!

Chairman:  Did I tell you I want to die? I have a powerful charm on me. I am an Ìjèbú man to the core, Ìjèbú is brave. Please be warned. Whoever wants evil for me will regret it. I am an Ìjèbú.

Be warned! Be warned!

Another obvious thing to note on the use of dialects in the selected video films is the use of Òyó dialect cluster to shoot almost all the Yorùbá epic video films. As a matter of fact, the dialect is accustomed to Yorùbá epic video films and some other films that are traditionally based and set in the village. One of the reasons for this may be due to a general belief that Òyó dialect serves as inter-dialect communication in Yorùbá linguistic area. Such epic and traditionally based video films include Jagun-òkè (2001), Àfọnjá (2001), Basórún Gàà (2003), Efùnṣétán Aníwùrà (2005), Omi Alálé (2008), Ògùnmólá Basórún Ìbàdàn (2010), Ogùn Àgbékojòyà (2010), Ayè Òloba (2010), Ikú Èwà (2010), Òlòfin Àdìmùlà (2011), Òmi Èrò (2011), Kùjénrà (2011), Kòrìkòtò (2011), Oba Arábánbì (2011), Tangírì (2011), Àjàn Èwúré (2011), Àáre Àpáṣẹ (2012), Gbakoṣò Köyà (2012), Jagun Afijaló (2012), Ìgbá Èwà (2012), Filà Èbóra (2012), Èpò-èrù (2012), Elèwénjèlè (2013), Ayè Àròní (2013), Èyà àgbà (2013), Èyà Òba (2014) and Àkọ pepeye (2015). However, standard variety is used in the video films set in the city. Example of such video films include Fádérera (2012), Wósìwókoko (2013), Òlálékan Èrùwò (2014), Èdaran (2015), Èhà mì (2015), Labara (2015), Èládíré (2015) and Òba Àlàyò (2015). In some Yorùbá comedy video films such as Àláfà Kögbérégbé (2012), Òmọ pupa (2012), Èyàwó gbajúmọ̀ (2012), Pèlé Modínà (2013), Òyó dialect is used to dialogue in some funny scenes. Also in these hilarious Yorùbá video films: Àwa méjè (2012) and Bíliámlùnù (2013), Ìjìṣà, Ìjèbú and Òyó are used to dialogue. Likewise, in Maako fun è (2012), the writer, Èdúnładé Àdekolá used Ègbá accent to dialogue throughout in the film. The use of dialect in this way added colour to his theatrical performance. Lastly, in some selected Yorùbá video films, such as Òmọ Èlémesò, Òyó dialect was used by a new wife brought from the village to the city for one of the major cast in the video film. The use of the dialect in the scene was to douse the tension for the audience. Likewise, in Èsè, one of the policemen that waylaid a criminal suddenly answered his superior in Èjìṣà dialect during a telephone conversation. Such dialogue also was used to serve as relief in areas of high tension in the course of a story.
6. DIALECTAL VARIABLES IN YORÚBÁ VIDEO FILMS

The investigation into Yorùbá dialects classification done in section (3) above shows that only a handful of the dialects are used in dialogue in the selected Yorùbá video films. These dialects include Standard variety, Òyó, Ògbá, Òwọ, Ìjébú, Òndó, Ìkálẹ, Èkiti, Èjésà and Ègbómìnà. The bulk of these dialects belong to South East Yorùbá group. This is a reflection of the fact that majority of the film producers/actors are from these linguistic areas. As we have shown in section (5) above that aside the Standard variety, Òyó and Òwọ that have been used to shoot full-fledged films, other dialects are used by individuals with different sobriquet which is attached to their dialects’name, such as Bàbá Ìjébú, Bòbà Èjésà and Bòbà l’Ègbáà. In most times, some of these so-called dialects users speak adulterated dialects which are known in some quarters as ‘Yorú-Ìjébú, Yorú-Èkiti, Yorú-Èjésà’ Such adulteration may be a mixture of standard Yorùbá and a dialect lexicon/accent or speaking standard variety with a dialectal accent. Examples of such casts in Yorùbá video films are Lánre Omíyinká (Bàbá Èjésà) which uses Èjésà accent to speak Standard variety in Ìyáwó Gbajúmọ and Ôdúnladé Adékólá which uses Ègbá accent to speak Standard variety in Maa ko fún ẹ.

Finegan (2004, p. 363) says dialect is a language variety in its totality-including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, pragmatics and any other aspect of linguistic system. Dialectal variation deals with varieties of a language with their own peculiarities of grammar, phonology, phonetics or lexicon associated with different regions, (McGregor 2009, p. 158). One can infer from the dialect classification in Section (3) above that different ethnic groups in Yorùbá nation speak different varieties of Yorùbá language, showing divergences in phonetics/phonology, lexical items and or grammar. It is against this backdrop that we proceed to examine dialectal variation in Yorùbá video films using linguistic variables such as phonetics/phonology and lexical items only. We are not delving into grammatical variation (morphology and syntax) in this study because it requires larger samples of data which is not enough, convenient or even possible to collect by usual methods in the selected video films. The data we used in this section are scattered in the dialogue of majority of the selected video films mentioned earlier in our discussion. They are gathered for analysis here in order to show some of the linguistic features peculiar to some of these dialects as they are used in the selected video films and thereby be preserved in written record for posterity.

6.1 Phonetic/Phonological variation

According to Adétùgbó, (1973, p. 189), phonetics/phonology is the level that shows the most complex divergence among Yorùbá dialects. In this section,
On the Place of Dialects in Selected O. Adébòwálé & T. Olúmúyiwá Yorùbá Films

we shall limit ourselves to a discussion of only a few phonological features. The sounds in Standard Yorùbá variety can be classified into two: the consonants and the vowels. The consonants sounds are: \[b, t, d, k, g, kp, gb, f, s, ṣ, h, m, n, j, r, l, w, y\]. The vowels are of two types: oral and nasal. The oral vowels are: \[i, e, ẹ, ọ, a, o, u\] and the nasal vowels are: \[in, un, an, ọn, ẹn\]. Using these as a base, we shall only examine the phonetics of Óyó dialect cluster and Òwọ dialect which have been used to produce full-fledged video films. There is dearth of data on Ìjèṣà, Èkitì, Ìjèbú and Ègbá dialects as they are used briefly by individuals for specific purposes in the selected video films. However, for the sake of comparison, we shall use examples from them where necessary.

6.1.1 Óyó Dialect Cluster

The dialects in this cluster include Ìbàdàn, Óyó, Ìlorin, Òsun, Ògbómòṣọ and Òṣogbo. This linguistic area produced the majority of Yorùbá video film actors. Just as the standard variety, the dialect cluster displays eighteen consonants, seven oral and five nasal vowel system. What distinguishes the dialect cluster from standard variety and most other dialects used in the selected video films is connected with the use of the sibilants /s/ and /ṣ/. In the selected video films, it is apparent in the speech of the casts to use /s/ and /ṣ/ interchangeably. This is manifested in the following examples below.

1. **Óyó dialect cluster**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Standard variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. isu</td>
<td>'yam'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. kìi sòpin rẹ</td>
<td>'not your end'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. kì i s ọkọ dáradára</td>
<td>'you are not a good husband'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. taní ran ẹ ní sè?</td>
<td>'who send you on errand?'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. ẹ seun iyá mi</td>
<td>'thank you my mother'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. o ọ ní sìjá rà</td>
<td>'you won’t buy wrong goods'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. kí ní se ọ gan?</td>
<td>'what is wrong with you?'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No cast from other dialect areas of Yorùbá uses [s/ṣ] this way in the selected video films. Also, deletion of some consonants is a regular feature in some domains in the dialogue of some of the casts of Óyó dialect cluster. These consonants are [w, y, r]. This is exemplified below.

2. **Óyó dialect cluster**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Standard variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. tia /w/</td>
<td>'ours'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the Place of Dialects in Selected O. Adébòwálé & T. Olúmúyiwá Yorùbá Films

ii. kí a /w/ → [wa] kí wa ‘greet us’
iii. bóó /w/ → [bá] báwo ‘how’
iv. láti jó o /w/ → [látí ojó wo] láti ojó wo ‘since long time ago’
v. ti ín /y/ → [yín] ti yín ‘yours’
vii. kábíyèsí o /y/ → [kábíyèsí o] ‘your highness’
ix. dáadáa /r/ → [dáradára] ‘very good’

In (i-iv) above, [w] is deleted. Consonant [y] is deleted in (v-vii) while [r] is deleted in (viii-ix). It is only the deletion of [w] that is noticed in some lexical items in Èkìtì songs in Fópomóyọ. Examples of such lexical items are:

3. Èkìtì Standard variety
   i. eó éwó ‘money’
   ii. àọ àwọ ‘colour’
   iii. ọọ ọwọ ‘broom’
   iv. ọ̀n ọ̀n ‘prison’

6.1.2 The Vowel Systems
Just like standard variety, Òyó dialect cluster makes use of seven oral vowel contrast and three nasal vowels. The vowels are: oral [i, u, e, o, ẹ, a, u] and nasal [in, un, ọn]. The linguistic variables which characterize the use of vowels in Òyó dialect cluster have to do with the use of vowel ọ for o when o occurs as second person pronoun in subject position in standard variety. Consider the examples in (4) below.

4. Òyó dialect cluster Standard variety
   i. ọ ó yè ọ ó yè ‘you will live’
   ii. ọ ó gbádùn ọ ó gbádùn ‘you are sick’
   iii. ọ ponú ọ ponú ‘you are stupid’
   iv. ọ ó a sòrò ọ ó wa sòrò ‘speak up’
   v. ọ ó gbɔ ó ọ gbɔ ó ‘you will live long’

Likewise, the Òyó dialect cluster uses [ɔ] of the negator marker má ‘not’ for [a] in standard variety. Witness example (5) below.
On the Place of Dialects in Selected Yorùbá Films

5. **Ọyọ dialect cluster**

   i. ọ mó pẹ ẹ́
   ii. mó binú
   iii. mó wá un wálé o
   iv. mó wí fẹ́ní Kankan

   Finally, the standard variety verbal (habitual) formative máa ‘will’ is rendered móó in Ọyọ dialect cluster as in (6) below.

6. **Ọyọ dialect cluster**

   i. ọ ọ ha mó lọ
   ii. móó gbe sá lọ
   iii. móó dé hàhín

   Just like Ọyọ dialect cluster, Èkìtì and Ìjéṣà dialects used in Fópomóyọ, Ògbóribélémésó, Ọko ẹja and Èṣè also use ọ for o when it occurs as second person pronoun (subject) and negation marker máa as shown in (7) below.

7(a) **Èkìtì/ Ìjéṣà**

   i. o lọ
   ii. o gbe
   iii. o yọ́ọ sọ́rọ́ jù talkative
   iv. o yóò mó gbe á
   iv. ọ́ráyé mi lóde à

7(b) negation marker

   i. móó jẹ́ ẹ́ dùn mí
   ii. móó sì ké
   iii. móó jà lúlé mi
   iv. móó já nílé mi

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In contrast to Òyó dialect cluster, the use of ọ for o as described in (7) above has variants. The choice between the two variants depends on the tongue height of the vowels of the following verb. For instance, ọ is used when the vowel of the verb that follows is open or half open as shown in (7a: i, iii, iv; 7b: i, iii) above. Vowel o is used when the vowel of the verb that follows is half close or close.

6.1.3 Lexical Items Peculiar to Òyó dialect cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. Òyó</th>
<th>Standard Variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. baàà mi</td>
<td>bàbá mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. báun</td>
<td>báyẹn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. nù-un</td>
<td>níyẹn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. erí</td>
<td>orí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. rèé</td>
<td>lọ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. ihàhín</td>
<td>íbí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. dákun</td>
<td>jòwó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii. èè, kèé</td>
<td>kí í</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix. kà</td>
<td>kò’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x. emi</td>
<td>kí</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Òwò Dialect

6.2.1 Phonological Features

We shall start our description of the phonological features of Òwò with the consonants.

6.2.1.1 The Consonants

The consonant in Òwò are represented in the orthography by the following symbols: b, d, f, g, gh, gb, gw, kw, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, ʧ, t, w, y. These consonants are used by most of the dialects of South East Yorùbá (SEY). Adétùgbọ (1973:189) says ‘many areas of the SEY preserve the proto-Yorùbá voiced velar fricative ‘gh’. Òwò dialect is one of such areas, as we observed in Òkúpé and Okúpé Mr. Kánsélo the following words which have the consonant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. Òwò</th>
<th>Standard Variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. éghen</td>
<td>ẹyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. itóghò</td>
<td>ẹgùnsí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. ughóghò</td>
<td>akèrèngbè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. éghen</td>
<td>ẹyin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. oghò</td>
<td>òwò</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another consonant in Òwò noted in Òkúpè but not frequently used in the video film is the labial velar plosive gw as in gwè ‘bath’ ègwà ‘beauty’ and ègwá ‘ten’. The voiceless counterpart kw is not used in the video film. One other feature that characterized Òwò dialect is ṣ which the dialect uses in place of ḋ which occurs in standard variety. The occurrence of ṣ in the dialect as recorded in Òkúpè and Òkúpè Mr Kánsèlò is exemplified in (10) below.

10. Òwò Standard variety
   i. ṣuṣè  ṣeṣè  ‘work’
   ii. aṣọ  aṣọ  ‘cloth’
   iii. iṣu  iṣu  ‘yam’

6.2.1.2 The Vowels
Like the standard variety, Òwò dialect has seven oral vowels and five nasals vowels. The vowels are: oral: [i, u, e, o, ẹ, ọ, a,]; nasal: [in, un, en, an, on]. The distribution of the vowels shows that unlike Òyó dialect cluster which does not permit vowel u to occur in word initial position, vowel u can occur word initial position in Òwò and in other dialects such as Èkìtì, Ìjèṣà, Ìjèbú and Ondó that has been used in one way or the order in the selected video films. Examples in Òwò as recorded in Òkúpè is highlighted in (11) below.

11. Òwò Standard variety
   i. ọụụ  ọsu  ‘yam’
   ii. ọgún  igún  ‘vulture’
   iii. ọná  iná  ‘fire’
   iv. ọlí  ilé  ‘house’
   v. ọgbà  igbá  ‘calabash’
   vi. ọwọ  iwo  ‘you’

   We also observed in Òkúpè that phoneme /n/ nasalizes every oral vowel segment occurring immediately to its right, as in

12.  i. ẹé nọma < ẹé nẹ ọma  ‘he did not have children’
   ii. ẹé náyà < ẹé nẹ ạyà  ‘he did not have wife’

The behaviour of phoneme /n/ in standard variety and Òyó cluster dialect is the exact opposite. The phoneme occurs before nasal vowel i in the varieties and changes to /l/ when it occurs with oral vowels through n~l alternation rule.
6.2.2 Lexical Items Peculiar to Òwò Dialect

13.

i. kawa ‘come’
ii. iye ‘mother’
iii. yèrè ‘remember’
iv. ẹrun ‘mouth’
v. ùbọ ‘buttock’
vi. sùre ‘curse’
vii. kòró ‘stand up’
viii. igin ‘wood/tree’
ix. ita ‘pepper’

x. ọma ‘child’
xi. iba ‘father’
 xii. ofò ‘word’
xiii. ẹmọ ‘palm-wine’
xiv. ọdéègbè ‘goat’
 xv. àpàjá ‘catapult’
xvi. èrùbọ ‘welcome’
 xvii. ọnẹ ‘person’
xviii. mọ ‘drink’

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, we have been able to examine the place of dialects in selected Yorùbá video films. In the course of doing this, we are able to show that the foundation of Yorùbá language standardization should not be traced to Ajayi Crowther. Contrary to the view that Standard Yorùbá is an offshoot of Òyó dialect only, the study submits that standard Yorùbá is an offshoot of Èkó and Òyó dialects. The paper also shows that Yorùbá dialects are not given prominent place in dialogue of the selected video films as only Òyó and Òwò among the numerous Yorùbá dialects have been used to shoot full-fledged films. Other dialects such as Ègbá, Ìjèbú, Èjèṣà, Ikálẹ, Ègbómìnà and Èkìtì that have been used in the selected video films are restricted in use for some specific purposes. The reasons for this restriction are not far fetched. First, commercial viability; and second, the crop of new generation of actors in the Yorùbá film industry are not vast in speaking Standard variety and or any of its dialects as most of them do not have sufficient knowledge of the language and or its dialects. This is evident in these Yorùbá video films Òmọge Facebook (2013), Kado (2014), Àrike tó posh (2014), Kání (2013), Nnkan mi ni (2014), Şetemi (2015), Òmọge Eko (2012), Èyìn Ojú (2012), Ibájé (2014), Fẹẹísọlá (2013), Şekèrè (2010), Àdàbà (2015), Fijaṣbemi (2015), Yèwándé (2015), Ôga Akòrin (2012), Òmọ Èsu (2013), Wasiṣemi (2013), Wasila Coded (2014), Keecce (2014), Wunmi Onilegogoro (2012) and Inspector Ayínkẹ (2013) as Yorùbá language is well code-mixed with English language during dialogue in the video films. It even becomes worse as majority of these new actors cannot speak their dialects. This poses a great threat to the use of the language in general and its dialects in particular as Yorùbá movies are seen in some quarters as one of the custodians of Yorùbá language. The trend, if allowed to continue unchecked may endanger the language and its numerous dialects which can eventually lead to their extinction.
On the Place of Dialects in Selected Yorùbá Films

O. Adèbójúwálé & T. Olúmúyiwá

ENDNOTE

1. Taye Oloro was born to Chief and Mrs. Jimoh Oloro Èdìbokùn in Òwò, Òwò local government area of Ondó State, Nigeria. A University graduate, who is currently on his Masters programme in Yorùbá language, is married to Mrs. Modupe Oloro and is blessed with children.

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VIDEOGRAPHY


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On the Place of Dialects in Selected Yorùbá Films

On the Place of Dialects in Selected O. Adébòwálé & T. Olúmúyiwá

On the Place of Dialects in Selected Oyorúbá Films

Abstract

Like their predecessors, the thirties generation of poets and writers responded to the problems of their age. Writing at times of political crisis was the only weapon to maintain some sort of human values against the forces of evil. The writers thus reasserted the primacy of literature as a guide to the moral confusion their age entailed. From Stamboul Train (1932) onwards, Graham Greene’s work displays the chaotic nature of the new world. In this paper, I shall analyse Greene’s A Burnt-out Case (1960) to throw light on what the author saw as the core of alienation and fragmentation in Western contemporary society.

Keywords: Africa, Colonialism, Civilisation, Barbarism, Alienation, Modern Man

1. Introduction

Greene’s examination of contemporary life and the sickness that affects the world is conspicuous not only in the novels of the Thirties but in nearly all of his subsequent fiction. Greene’s A Burnt-Out-Case (1960) is most explicitly apocalyptic in bringing forth the death of Western civilisation and Western imperialism as well as the perversion of idealism. It is a study of disillusionment and meaninglessness in the face of success.

Greene uses the Congo as a setting for A Burnt-Out-Case and explains his choice in the dedicatory letter of the novel. ‘The Congo,’ he says, ‘is a region of the mind.’ It appealed to him because of its remoteness from ‘world-politics and household preoccupation,’ and from the brutality of the world.
However he realizes that this Edenic land offers no real alternative to the decadence of Europe since corruption and destruction are everywhere.

2. THE MUTILATED MIND

In *A Burnt-Out-Case*, Greene reveals that the contemporary situation is not simply the outcome of socio-political forces but the result of something deeply ingrained in human nature. Greene’s title, which is taken from medical jargon, echoes with diverse levels of physical, emotional and spiritual meaning. Medically speaking, a burnt-out-case is a mutilated person in whom the leprosy has run its course and left him toeless and fingerless and totally insensitive. Taken as an emotional symbol, a burnt-out-case represents modern man emptied of all human values; and spiritually, it is ‘the mutilation of the natural man’ (*ABOC*, p.197) by worldly success and pride which inflict their ‘secret wound’ (Greene).

Querry, the protagonist, more than any other character in the novel, represents the condition of modern man. He is a burnt-out-case. His disease is more spiritual than physical. He is a hollow man. Like Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, *A Burnt-Out-Case* presents a double picture: on the one hand, there is a tortured mind – Querry’s – and on the other hand, we are faced with an arid world. Its sense of sterility, its failure to cope with the ‘machine age’ recalls T.S. Eliot’s.

Greene’s novel is about the escape from the modern world and from the self. Querry is a world famous architect whose life had been spurred by professional ambition. However despite his success, he is haunted by a sense of vacuity. He is bored. His inner hollowness, ‘nothing. I want nothing...I suffer from nothing. I no longer know what suffering is. I have come to an end of all that too ... to the end of everything,’ (*ABOC*, p. 16) symbolises the spiritual hollowness of modern civilisation. The extract from Wardekar’s pamphlet on leprosy, which Greene uses as a symbol also initiates *A Burnt-Out-Case*’s consideration of egoism, and self-disgust. And like the lepers Wardekar depicts, Querry suffers from self-loathing for what he is and for the hero his society has made of him. He thus gives up his old life and embarks on a lonely journey to Africa to run away from the glamour of worldly success.
The ‘Hermit of the Congo’ (132) stands in the midst of this vast landscape of malevolence and decay. He feels unsatisfied. Just as illness has run its course in the leprosery, leaving the patients mutilated, Querry feels mutilated if not physically, at least spiritually. All his worldly success is inane, unhelpful. This is the import of the parable he tells Marie Rycker at the hotel, in the town of Luc: a clever man left family. He transgressed all the rules he could think of and became very rich. He made beautiful jewels for the king. It was a good time then. But in the end, he became very bored and realized that his life lacked any piquancy and that his heart was swollen with pride. He also realized that ‘there was no other King but his’ (p. 154).

Querry moreover thought that in Africa, man is preserved from the manipulations and torments of a civilisation. But the so-called unspoilt environment he has come to, continues the exposure to selfishness started in Europe before the novel begins. The irony in the first section of the novel is biting: the European world Querry escaped from is ever-present in the Congo. It is a sordid replica of Europe. The hypocrisy Querry flees lives in the colon world of the Congo. In addition, Deo Gratias’s yearning for the Edenic ‘Pendélé’ is not a romantic delusion. Pendélé did exist before the colons broke in and turned Africa into the heart of desolation, the ‘heart of darkness.’ Greene moreover makes it very explicit that the European kind of egoism far outdistances the harmless African brand: ‘Hola Camp, Sharpeville and Algiers have justified all possible belief in European cruelty,’ says Greene (ABOC, p. 39).

Yet, Querry goes through a process of re-insertion into life. After he refutes the hypocrisy of society which doggedly pursues him to Africa, he seeks and finds an honest and useful outlet. The depiction of an individual finding redemption in life through life efforts, dedicated to a collective good, is a humanistic premise in Greene’s work. Furthermore the society Querry escaped, in its being the source of general corruption, is the true field of conflict where hypocrisy will ultimately be fought.

In A Burnt-Out-Case, the emphasis remains on the importance of reality. When Querry says ‘I am happy here,’ Parkinson reappears on the scene. He becomes another agent of Querry’s ruin. Parkinson stands for the Great Lie of civilisation, and personifies egoism. The depiction of Western agents and Congo hangers - on as murderous people is an important cultural
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perception in the novel for Greene shows egoism in the individual and in society as a perverse historical force.

Querry’s sense of renewal after he tells Marie the parable of the jeweller is significant. He moves from the Cartesian ‘I’ feeling of egoism – with which he left Europe – to communal feeling. *A Burnt-Out-Case* preserves certain features of the Faustian tragedy. Throughout the narrative, the Faustian theme of false power obtained at the cost of destruction and death is maintained. Both tales are dramatisations of the ways in which civilised men’s desire to conquer the world leads to destruction on the environment, to self-destruction and to an absurd death.

Greene’s protagonist indeed recalls Faustus. He is a man of great repute, a man whose heart is swollen with pride and self-love. Like Faustus, Querry has sacrificed his soul for worldly gratification. But unlike him, Querry flees worldly success. He goes to Africa, to ‘the heart of darkness,’ to find some peace of mind. Despite such resemblances with Faust’s drama, Greene partly reverses the Faustian narrative. In *A Burnt-Out-Case*, suspense is generated by our hope that Querry may be saved. In Greene’s novel, Parkinson whom we may consider as Lucifer’s agent ie. Greene’s Mephistopheles, and later Mr. Rycker destroy that hope for salvation. Mephistopheles summons the devil in the shape of Marie Rycker. Like Faustus who has embraced Helen of Troy, Querry’s embrace of Marie Rycker proves fatal. As the Old Man confirms to Faustus that he is lost forever, Querry too is damned. It is indeed his relationship with Marie that causes his demise. Thus in *A Burnt-Out-Case* lust has proved more dangerous than love. It has destroyed Querry in Europe and in Africa. His quest for identity has thus been interrupted not only Mr. Rycker, but also by Parkinson, the journalist, Querry’s alter-ego.

3. THE DOPPELGANGER

Critics and literary historians of the nineteenth century attributed the use of the ‘doubles’ (Doppelgangers) in prose fiction to the writer’s desire to depict traits of himself. The Doppelganger also overstates in characters, the divisions inherent in a culture. The ‘double’ is found, for instance, in Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) but the most psychologically profound handling of the double theme is Dostoevsky’s early novel *The
Double (1846). And both Stevenson and Dostoevsky, one must point out, had a serious impact on Graham Greene.

Furthermore the literary representations of the double-motif, which describe the persecution complex, confirm not only Freud’s notion of the narcissistic tendency towards paranoia but they also reduce the main pursuer to the ego itself. The person of the pursuer often represents the father or his substitute (brother, teacher etc...). In Greene’s work, ‘the double’ represents the father, a man who left an indelible mark on him. The dual image of his father emerges: on the one hand, the loved family father; on the other hand, the authoritarian school headmaster and it is the latter that traumatized the young Graham most. References for instance, to Andrews’s ‘other self’ in The Man Within, or his ‘inner critic’ are but interiorized interpretations of his father. Thus it is not surprising that Greene strove to get rid of the ‘shadow’ of his father. The creation of the ‘double’ to another person functions as a way of separating loved and rejected aspects of that person. From this attitude of rivalry, the death wish and the drive towards murder of the ‘double’ become quite understandable.

Greene himself is a Jekyll and Hyde character who has not succeeded in bringing together the two sides of himself into any sort of harmony. There is a continuous conflict within him. Greene was a dual man: He was a moralist and a sceptic, a pessimist and a humanist, a romantic and a realist, a catholic novelist for some commentators, a Jansenist writer for others. And the epigraph Greene has chosen for his first published novel, The Man Within (1929) is very telling: ‘There’s another man within me that’s angry with me’ (Sir Thomas Browne). It reveals the inner conflict within Greene, a struggle which is suggested by the ‘cloning’ of characters.

In a ‘double’ narrative, two contrasting characters who may prove to be but one being, interchange roles. This pattern fits A Burnt-Out-Case where the dédoublement is an obsessive theme. It is therefore worth dwelling on this aspect of Greene’s novel for it highlights the inner divisions the writer suffered from.

Greene’s handling of the theme of the divided self starts with his account of modern’s man capacity to sustain various attitudes. The divided self becomes a reflection of the divisive qualities of the age. Just as society is
losing its cohesion, so the individual feels that his own mind is coming apart. The characters whose minds are cast in the image of the new society are prone to mental disorder for when they come under stress; they are quite unable to cope. As in Dostoevsky’s *The Double*, Greene’s characters often come to confront some ‘double,’ a ‘secret sharer’, who resembles them, and reminds them of the complexity of the world and the incompleteness of the self.

In *A Burnt-Out-Case*, there are in effect two ‘real’ Querrys: the one who lived in Europe without any moral conscience and the one who is ultimately reborn after he joins the community of lepers and makes himself useful in the hospital. These twin identities are joined. The protagonist comes to terms with a part of himself, by confrontation with a character representing his own destructive alter-ego.

From the moment of Parkinson’s arrival to the leprosery, Querry recognizes him as his double. When they meet, Querry says, ‘you are a man like me,’ and ‘we are two of a kind’ (p. 110). He also adds: ‘You are my looking-glass - I can talk to a looking glass, but one can be a little afraid of one, too - It returns such a straight image’ (p. 116). Soon, Querry suspects that his image is his main foe and tries to protect himself against this threat. The loathsome fellow pursues Querry even in his dreams, in which fleeing from his double, he sees him standing on his way. This is mostly revealed in the protagonist’s second dream from which he ‘woke with terror.’ But even in his waking hours, this uncanny relationship haunts him.

The ‘doubling’ perspective, which derives from this view of self-division, extends through other relationships in the story. Marie Rycker for instance, is a child-like wife but within her lays a ferocious doppelganger: she does not shrink from lying about her pregnancy, in order to escape theiasco of her conjugal life. Even her husband is a double man. At first, he appears as someone who has a certain superiority of intellect, but soon after he hears the gossiping about his wife’s pregnancy, he becomes blinded by the idea of revenge. The evil instincts that lay dormant in him come to the surface; he becomes a murderer.
4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, one can say that in *A Burnt-Out-Case*, the leper, his deformity and mutilation are used as emblems for modern man and the long disease that affects modern life. The novel conveys the writer’s disenchantment with Western civilisation. Greene expresses an acute rage against material, industrial and technological society and the self-destructive propensities of the modern world. He reveals the sordidness that lies behind the surface appearance of civilisation.

Greene also shows that anxiety is at the core of man’s relationship with others. Moreover the existential view that man suffers alienation and anguish through his life with others is seen in this novel. Alienation is illustrated in the isolation of the protagonist.

Isolation in Greene’s fiction is indeed more than a striking image. It is the condition of the test which each of their main characters must undergo. It is the main cause of their failure. They are loners because they do not care about others. Isolation, corruption, a pervasive sense of evil, and the ugly aspect of modern life are displayed in Greene’s novel like symptoms of an epidemic. Another characteristic of the disease is absurdity, the absurdity of human truth, the truth of *La Condition Humaine*.

REFERENCES


The Germ of Corruption in Graham Green’s A Burn- out Case

M. R. Maamri


The degree to which varieties of English emerging from multilingual settings and users in societies like Nigeria, Singapore and India exhibit peculiarities distinguishing them from those established varieties of British and American English has been shown to differ from one variety to another (Platt, Weber and Ho 1984, and Gorlach, 1999). Combining corpus-linguistic methods on data drawn from Nigerian component of the International Corpus of English (ICE), this paper investigates the extent to which structural simplification hypothesis is manifested in the Nigerian English determiner system, and how variables of proficiency levels, text types, register, and determiner form influence frequency distribution of structural types found. Applying a revised principle of accountability (Labov, 1972; Tagliamonte, 2012), together with relevant concepts in New Englishes and test statistics on extracted 105,262 noun phrases, we showed that structure of determination in Nigerian noun phrase follows a specific one-word pattern (97%), irrespective of proficiency levels, text types, register, and determiner form initiating the determination process. Simultaneously, two or three-word pattern is found to be almost non-existent (3%), given same variables above. It follows that one-word ordering pattern develops from scenario of overuse of definite article at the expense of demonstratives and quantifiers. Given such strong preferential pattern irrespective of factors tested, we can then conclude that cognitive processes engaged with construction of determination in Nigerian English strongly reflect influences of cross linguistic performance transferred from local languages operating syntactically unique determiner system from that of English.
Structural Simplifications in New Englishes: The case of the determiner structural pattern in the Nigerian English

M. Akinlotan

Keywords: determiner structure pattern, oversimplified structure, noun phrase, Nigerian English.

1. Introduction

New Englishes, which refer to varieties of English emerging from multilingual settings like Nigeria, Singapore and India, have been shown exhibiting structural peculiarities that mark them off from established varieties like British and American English (Gorlach, 1999). Such peculiarities include simplification of structure, and irregular marking of number agreement, among other features widely reported in the literature (Foley 1988, Bamgbose, 1982; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008). Specifically, structural simplification has been shown arising from omission, underuse, and overuse of certain determiners, scenarios which are linked to whether language output is written or spoken (Platt, Weber and Ho, 1984, Babalola, 2010). Substantial amount of research has been dedicated to this field, revealing varying degree of exhibition and inhibition of different specific or shared features. However, considerably little empirical evidence manifesting peculiarities in Nigerian variety has been provided in the main literature, such that comparison with peculiarities provided in similar varieties could not be readily undertaken.

By combining corpus-linguistic methods on natural language drawn from Nigerian component of the International Corpus of English (ICE), the present paper examines the extent to which simplification is attested in the structure of Nigerian determiner system, and how variables of proficiency, register, and determiner form influence distribution of structural patterns found. Given its sociohistorical status (Kachru, 1983), we expected more structural variability representative of Outer English and not of Expanding English. Thus, we expected proficiency, as reflected in the expected language output of the annotated corpora texts, to influence distribution of structural patterns, irrespective of whether output is in spoken or written. More specifically, we expected advanced texts, when compared to basic texts, to manifest higher structural variability and complexity. Given Schmied’s (1991) hypothesis of African Englishes as underusing definite article, we then expected definite article not only to be underused but also that demonstratives, which are alternatives in achieving definiteness, will compensate for this. Following

Platt, Weber and Ho 1984, we expected influence of register in that quantifiers like ‘a few’, ‘a little’, ‘a many’, ‘a bit’, and ‘a number’ reducing their structural complexity by dropping indefinite article more in spoken
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than in written texts. Overall, we predicted these different expectations to shed some light on the scenarios underlying structural pattern of the Nigerian English determiner system.

Structures in One hundred and five thousand, six hundred and twenty-six (105,626) noun phrases were annotated into one, two, three, or four-word ordering. Determiner categories including indefinite and definite article, interrogative, demonstratives, and quantifiers, which are expected to show some relative structural variability and complexity, were tested. Details about excluded and included determiners are provided in method section. Applying a revised principle of accountability (Labov, 1972; Tagliamonte, 2012), together with relevant concepts in sociolinguistics and test statistics on frequency distribution scores, different scenarios characterising Nigerian determiner system are shown. Surprisingly, we found a rather oversimplified one-worded determiner structural pattern arising from overuse of definite article. Given that definite article is central determiner capable of combining with another determiner such as cardinals and some quantifiers, we such syntactic positioning to develop into use of multiple determiners. Also, the one-word ordering pattern is found to be unaffected by register. This above scenario simultaneously reveals underuse of demonstrative. It is found that definiteness, which could be performed by demonstratives (or even some quantifier), is extremely more likely to be performed with definite article than with demonstrative, thereby reducing function of demonstratives and guaranteeing low frequency.

2. Structural features of New Englishes

Walsh (1967), cited in Ogu (1992) & Ajani (2007), was the first to identify and acknowledge the emergence of peculiarities in the form and functions of English among the Lagos educated elite, especially those returning after university education in England. Since correlation exists between advanced education, and competence/performance, Walsh therefore expected inhibition of interference, and exhibition of constructions representative of British English. Walsh, according to Ogu, noted that “the varieties of English spoken by educated Nigerians, no matter what their language, have enough features in common to mark off a general type, which may be called Nigerian English”. Walsh’s observation shows stronger influence of cross-linguistic interference
than proficiency, which may also be reflected in our data. Walsh’s observation of peculiarities may have been limited to the educated variety. However, the following diagram shows the extent to which such peculiarities have grown from the peculiar linguistic repertoire of Nigerian English users, which cuts across different levels of education, and social status.

![Diagram showing linguistic repertoire of Nigerian English speakers]

Following Platt et al (1984), New Englishes constitute a body of (socio)linguistic peculiarities that clearly mark them off from the ‘Old’ and established ones. Supporting the idea of ‘newness’, Platt et al provided, among other features, evidence of nonstandard pluralisation, usage of non-count nouns as countable, and preference of demonstrative to definite article in expressing definiteness as a sub-system characterising form and functions in Singaporean, Nigerian, and the Philippine Englishes. (1), (2), and (3) are such instances of irregular pluralisation (cf. Platt, Weber and Ho 1984: 50-70):

1. All our rices we have to import (Hong Kong);
2. I lost all my furnitures and valuable properties (Nigeria);
3. He has many luggages (the Philippines)
According to Platt et al, the use of definite article within the noun phrase structure is likely to be used not only in the traditional sense of definiteness versus indefiniteness, but also in the sense of known versus unknown, which, often results into overuse of the definite determiner form. Lamidi (2007) also showed that similar feature is present in Nigerian English. Furthermore, Platt et al rightly argue that such disparity arises from influences of local languages, which operate different definiteness and specificity systems, from that of British English. Platt et al also argued that some of these local languages lack explicit definite article system, thereby leaving the users with what Bamgbose (1999) described as creative innovations and inventions. In (4), Platt et al provided instance of when demonstrative rather than definite article is applied to achieve definiteness.

4. This handbag you wanted to buy the other day. Buy already or not? (Platt, Weber and Ho 1984: 57).

Additionally, Platt et al reported that pre-determiners such as a few, a little, a lot, a bit, a lot of, a number, a couple, are more likely to be split, resulting into the indefinite article being omitted. Such deletion has significant implication for the structure and interpretation of the NP, Platt et al argued further. Similarly, Lamidi also reported that such feature of article deletion is attested in the structure of Nigerian noun phrase. Perhaps such structural deletion might have influenced the simple structural pattern found in the present study. In (5-7), Platt et al showed instances with which indefinite articles are deleted.

5. I applied couple of places in Australia (Indian English);
6. I did bit shopping.
7. He got little bit of knowledge about acupuncture (Malaysian English) (Platt, Weber and Ho 1984: 60)

Furthermore, Lamidi (2007, p. 3) reported another peculiar construct found in the Nigerian noun phrase, which is a structural combination of two determiners that belong to the same category. In British English, determiners belonging to same category rarely combined to perform same function, but such syntactic structure is a recurrent feature in Nigerian noun phrase. In (8) and (9), such feature is attested.
I like this your shirt.

That my brother does not take nonsense

Following British Standard English, one would expect a syntactic restructure of the demonstrative *this* and possessive determiner *your* to be combined with *of*, which will then read: ‘I like this shirt of yours’ or ‘that brother of mine’. As Lamidi noted, such pattern is frequently the preferential order in Nigerian English. Lamidi argued that the resultant pattern is evident of structural influences from the various indigenous languages in Nigeria. Specifically, (9) can be traced to Yoruba language, which usually combine two forms of definite determiner. As found in Asian samples by Platt et al, Lamidi also reported recurrent pattern in the use of semantically empty definite, as (10) and (11) show.

10 I am going to the mosque
11 He went to the bank

In (10) and (11), the definite article suggests that the speaker and the hearer share the knowledge of the mosque and bank being referred, which is not the case in these constructions. Lamidi rightly stated that both the speaker and hearer understand that no specific, known, or definite mosque or bank is being referred or identified. Rather it refers to any (indeterminateness, unspecified, unknown) mosque or bank in the real world.

Although Lamidi provided some evidence exhibiting structural peculiarities of Nigerian noun phrase, the present study is still different from Lamidi in many ways. Rather than focusing on entire noun phrase with small evidence combined from literary, edited, and natural language, the present study relies mainly on new empirical evidence from wider domains, showing frequency of structural pattern and how different variables contribute to the patterns found. Also, the structure of Nigerian noun phrase could not be said to be its structure of determination, which the present study shed lights on. Additionally, the present study does not only describe one or two constructions as reliable evidence but also provided quantification of sufficient evidence that reliably show frequency of occurrence and impact that variables play.
3. METHOD

Data were drawn from the 1.1 million word-length of Nigerian component of the International Corpus of English (ICE) which is divided into spoken (400 words of 15 subcategories) and written (609, 586 words of 17 subcategories), with the written texts already Penn Tree POS tagged. The spoken texts were then POS tagged using tagger built on the Penn Tree guidelines to ensure uniformity in extraction results. C7 tagger had been compared but rejected because of its elaboration that made it too different from Penn Tree. The 32 texts were then subjected to text processing by extracting forms of determiners used for the study. The three tagsets DT, WDT, and PDT, as listed in ICE manual note, were used for extraction. According to the manual note, DT, means determiner, and includes determination initiated by formal categories such as definite and article, demonstratives, and quantifiers. Similarly, WDT implies Wh-determiner and includes wh-determiners such as ‘which’, ‘that’, and ‘when’, while PDT refers to predeterminer, and includes instances when determiners such as ‘all’, ‘both’, ‘half’, ‘many’, ‘quite’, ‘rather’, ‘such’ precede another determiner in the form of indefinite article or possessive. Full detail of what is and not included in these three tagsets are provided in Santorini (1990, 1991). Furthermore, cardinals (e.g. one, two), and possessive (his, her) which are not extracted using the above three tagsets provided by Penn Tree, are excluded, but not when combined as second or third determiner with those identified above. This implies that noun phrase which is preceded by a cardinal like ‘two’; asin ‘two men’ is excluded but not when cardinal is preceding definite article; as in “the two men”. We have individually extracted cardinal and possessive to check whether their inclusion would significantly affect results, but no such effect was found. While cardinals are a post determiner likely to be combined with others, possessives are central determiner much likely to be used alone. Therefore, their exclusion is insignificant. AntConc, version 3.4.3, (Anthony 2014) was used for the extraction, a guide of which is available on (http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc_index.html). AntConc is a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordance and text analysis.

4. INITIAL ANALYSES

Following the above procedures, 112, 678 determined noun phrase1 were found and extracted. The extracted structures were then cleaned, resulting
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into 105, 626NPs, which were annotated as having one, two, three, or four worded determiner structure. One-word is coded as 1DT, two-word 2DT, and three word 3DT. No four-word construction is found. Recall that PDT category is a combination of at least two determiners, therefore they are split and annotated accordingly. We decided to follow this method because PDT excludes use of multiple determiner not started with all, half, many, quite, rather, and such. Furthermore, in order to provide insight into preferential scenario characterising the system, each determiner is then classified into their categories as DD (definite article; the), DI (Indefinite article; a, an), DN (demonstratives; this, these, those, that), and DQ (quantifying determiner; some, any, few, little, many, both, every, etc.). Since determiner ordering sequence is not within the scope of this paper, only the forms of first determiner in 2DT and 3DT are reported. This is because the combined frequency scores of 2DT and 3DT are insignificant when compared to 1DT. Recall that 2DT and 3DT include instances when cardinals and possessives (not classified as determiner by Penn Tree tag sets, thereby requiring independent tagset for its extraction) are combined with those identified above. For clarification, the two men and a few of my favorite are coded as having two-worded (2DT) determiners (the + two) and three-worded (3DT) determiners (a + few + my) respectively. We expanded DQ to include a wider list of determiners, which results from lose definition as determiner used preceding noun in such a way that it is intended to quantify or specify number or amount for the identification of referent in the noun phrase. A sample list of what constitutes this category is provided in the appendix page.

Also, an analytical regrouping of the texts is carried out. The written category, which consists of 17 sub-registers, is subsequently categorised into six related groupings; (1) academic (2) popular (3) media (4) administrative (5) student, and (6) casual. The academic grouping retains the actual four academic journal article in humanities, technical, social science, and natural sciences. Popular grouping adds novel to the corpus’s four sub-texts of popular humanities, popular natural sciences, popular social science, and popular technical. The media grouping consists of editorial and reportage sub-texts, while administrative consist of business letters and administrative. Student grouping consists of student essays and exams, while casual consists of social letters and skills and hobbies. Table 1 shows resultant frequency scores from each textual grouping.
Table 1. Written register regrouping and NP frequency distribution per subtexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word-length</th>
<th>No of text</th>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80,045</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>9,167</td>
<td>11.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,086</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>7,371</td>
<td>12.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,208</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>4,990</td>
<td>12.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,148</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>4,105</td>
<td>8.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120,175</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>12,557</td>
<td>10.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,134</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>Administratio -</td>
<td>5,740</td>
<td>11.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400,796</td>
<td>510</td>
<td></td>
<td>43,930</td>
<td>10.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the spoken category, which consists of 15 subtexts, a regrouping is achieved applying revised Joos (1961)'s grouping of formal/advanced, intermediate/less formal, and casual/intimate. Formal category consists of broadcast interviews, talks, discussion, and news and cross examinations. Intermediate (less formal yet not casual) category consists of parliamentary debates, non-broadcast talks, commentaries, class lessons, business transactions, and unscripted speeches, while the last casual (or intimate) category includes demonstrations, conversation, and phone calls. Table 2 shows resultant frequency scores from each textual grouping.

Table 2. Spoken register regrouping and NP frequency distribution per subtexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word-length</th>
<th>No of text</th>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Frequency (NP) scores</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>182.667</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>19,446</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204.912</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>22,711</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222.007</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>19,175</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>609.586</td>
<td>392</td>
<td></td>
<td>61,332</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1. Results: pattern of structural type

In this section, results of frequency distribution of structural types in written and spoken registers are presented. Results comparing distributions in the two registers are then presented, showing role of register.

Table 3. written text types * structural type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Preferential frequencies of structure type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1DT</td>
<td>2DT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>8858 (97%)</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8866.30</td>
<td>297.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>7168 (97%)</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7129.22</td>
<td>239.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>4807 (96%)</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4826.32</td>
<td>162.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>(96%)</td>
<td>(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3970.35</td>
<td>133.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>12138 (97%)</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12145.10</td>
<td>407.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administra</td>
<td>5569 (97%)</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5551.72</td>
<td>186.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text type and structural type are not related in that 1DT structural type occurs significantly higher than 2DT and/or 3DT. Also, this pattern occurs irrespective of text type ($\chi^2 (10) = 14.6, p = .14$).

**Table 4. Spoken text types * structural type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Preferential frequencies of structure type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1DT</td>
<td>2DT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>18513 (95%)</td>
<td>90 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>21690 (96%)</td>
<td>98 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>18078 (94%)</td>
<td>10 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58281 (95%)</td>
<td>2928 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like in written register, text type and structural type are not related in that 1DT structural type occurs significantly higher than 2DT and/or 3DT. Also, this pattern occurs irrespective of text type ($\chi^2 (4) = 11.18, p = .0000$).
Table 5. Comparison between spoken and written register and their frequencies of structural types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register</th>
<th>Preferential frequencies of structure type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1DT</td>
<td>2DT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>42489 (97%)</td>
<td>1427 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42055.31</td>
<td>1817.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken</td>
<td>58281 (95%)</td>
<td>2928 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58714.69</td>
<td>2537.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10077</td>
<td>4355 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Register and structural type are not related in that 1DT structural type occurs in about the same proportion (97% versus 95%), and is significantly higher than 2DT and/or 3DT. Additionally, this pattern occurs irrespective of register ($\chi^2 (2) = 103.82$, p = .0001).

4.3. Results: Distribution of determiner forms
In this unit, the distribution of determiner forms leading to the scenarios in results in section 6.1 is presented. Recall from method section, five determiner forms are studied here.

Table 6. Distribution of determiner among text types in written register
Structural Simplifications in New Englishes:  

M. Akinlotan  
The case of the determiner structural pattern in the Nigerian English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Popular</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5848 (64%)</td>
<td>1381 (15%)</td>
<td>762 (8 %)</td>
<td>5 (7)</td>
<td>606 (7%)</td>
<td>9167 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5597.02</td>
<td>1543.97</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>735.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5108 (69%)</td>
<td>996 (14%)</td>
<td>458 (6 %)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>471 (6%)</td>
<td>7371 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4500.45</td>
<td>1241.48</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>591.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2985 (60%)</td>
<td>807 (16%)</td>
<td>525 (11 %)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>313 (6%)</td>
<td>4990 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3046.71</td>
<td>840.45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>400.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2082 (51%)</td>
<td>888 (22%)</td>
<td>431 (11 %)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>477 (12%)</td>
<td>4106 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2506.97</td>
<td>691.56</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>329.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7127 (57%)</td>
<td>2515 (20%)</td>
<td>986 (8 %)</td>
<td>8 (0)</td>
<td>1127 (9%)</td>
<td>12556 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7666.22</td>
<td>2114.77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1008.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3672 (64%)</td>
<td>812 (14%)</td>
<td>459 (8 %)</td>
<td>2 (6)</td>
<td>533 (9%)</td>
<td>5740 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3504.63</td>
<td>966.77</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>460.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4990</td>
<td></td>
<td>43930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5740 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text type and determiner forms are not related in that definite article occurs frequently in all of the text types, \( \chi^2 (20) = 37.52, p = .0000 \). The likelihood to achieve definiteness is between use of definite article and demonstrative, which, from the table, shows that definiteness is more likely to be achieved with definite article than with demonstratives (88% versus 12% respectively) \(^4\), \( \chi^2 (5) = 34.57, p = .0000 \). Also, likelihood of definiteness or indefiniteness is tested, and, as the table shows, determiner form is thrice likely to be definite than to be indefinite (69% versus 21% respectively) \(^5\), \( \chi^2 (5) = 89.10, p = .0000 \)
Table 7. Distribution of determiner among text types in spoken register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Frequency distribution of determiner forms</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definite article</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>10295 (53%) 9247.73</td>
<td>2799 (14%) 3127.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>11057 (49%) 10800.43</td>
<td>3941 (17%) 3652.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>7815 (41%) 9118.85</td>
<td>3123 (16%) 3083.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29167 (48%)</td>
<td>9863 (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like in the written register, text type and determiner forms are also not related. Across all text types, definite article is extremely more likely to occur than any other determiner ($\chi^2$ (8) = 118.41, $p = .0000$). Also, the likelihood to achieve definiteness, which is between use of definite article and demonstrative, is, according to table 6, that definiteness is more likely to be achieved with definite article than with demonstrative (71% versus 29% respectively) $^6$, ($\chi^2$ (2) = 106.54, $p = .0000$). Furthermore, likelihood of definiteness or indefiniteness is tested, and, as the table shows, determiner form is thrice likely to be definite than to be indefinite (66% versus 34% respectively) $^7$, ($\chi^2$ (2) = 214.31, $p = .0000$).
Table 8. Comparison of distribution of determiner forms in spoken and written register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register</th>
<th>Frequency distribution of determiner forms</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definite article</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken</td>
<td>29167 (48%)</td>
<td>9863 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32622.57</td>
<td>10057.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>26822 (61%)</td>
<td>7399 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23366.43</td>
<td>7204.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55989 (53%)</td>
<td>17262 (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table, occurrence of determiner forms are not related with whether language output is produced in spoken or written texts. Specifically, definite article is likely to occur in the same proportion in both spoken and written texts ($\chi^2 (4) = 787.61, p = .0000$). Also, the likelihood to achieve definiteness (definite article versus demonstrative) is four times likely to be achieved with definite article than with demonstrative (79% versus 21%), ($\chi^2 (1) = 2738.00, p = .0000$). Additionally, the likelihood of definiteness or indefiniteness is tested, and, as the table shows, determiner form is thrice likely to be definite than to be indefinite (67% versus 33% respectively), ($\chi^2 (1) = 116.35, p = .0000$).
5. DISCUSSION

As Tables 3 and 4 show, there is high frequency for one-word ordering determination pattern, which simultaneously results into low frequency for two and three worded orders. This pattern is unaffected by text type or proficiency level, register, and determiner form. Additionally, it is found that this specific one-word pattern arises from overuse of definite article in syntactic solitary position (syntactic scenario in which multiple use of determiner is possible). Given that studied factors have been shown contributing to exhibition and inhibition of structural patterns (Sharma 2005, Mukerhejee & Gries 2009), it therefore suggests that our results reflect strong manifestations of cross linguistic influences. Thus, the local influencing languages may not only be operating syntactically different determiner systems from that of English, but also imposing such subsystem on users, irrespective of internal or external linguistic factors.

The results also shed light on the correlation between sociohistorical status and manifestation of peculiarities. Given Kachru’s model as a predictor of manifestation of peculiarities, then Nigerian English, an Outer Variety, is expected to somewhat reflect closer proximity to Inner English, in this case its lexifier British English, than any Expanding Variety would reflect. However, this seems not to be the case. Although the result corrobates the simpler structure hypothesis (Schmied 1991, Mesthrie & Bhatt 2008, Housen & Kuiken 2009), it did not meet our expectation of Outer circle varieties being more complex and variable than Expanding circles, such that it can be argued to be oversimplification of structural variability and complexity. In other words, such pattern reflects Expanding variety in that its structural pattern could not be much simpler than what we found. Therefore, given
its sociohistorical status, the resultant patterns reflect a surprisingly too simple and predictable structural pattern unrepresentative of Outer circle variety.

Furthermore, the pattern is unaffected by proficiency or text type in that advanced, intermediate, and basic writers/speakers of different text types exhibit same preference for one-word ordering. Sharma (2005) has found positive relationship between proficiency levels and agreement among speakers of Indian English in the US, which is unsupported by our findings. The negative relationship in our data reaffirms Gut (2011)’s claim that multilingual users are bound to manifest certain specific structural pattern even after high proficiency. Similarly, the effect of register is not found. Same structural pattern follows whether output is in spoken and written texts. The influence of register has been widely shown in the literature (Bybee 2003, 2006, Rosenbach 2015). However, our finding shows such influence may be neutralised by another factor. For instance, effect of cognition on processing complexity has been shown (Hawkins 1994, 2004, Housen et al 2009) exerting strong influence on interlanguage production. Thus, pressure on cognitive processes become evident in interlanguage production, and may have neutralized role playing of register, leading to little effect of register in this case. Nevertheless, the tradeoff or functional compensation hypothesis (Hochberg 1986a,) implies that such oversimplified determiner structural pattern might be compensated for in another grammatical category of the variety. That suggests that more variable structural types and relative complexity might be operating the adjective phrase, which is for future research.

The relatively stable distribution of definite article suggests a possibly overuse of this determiner form, which disagrees with Schmied’s underuse hypothesis. Our results, however, correlate with Huber (1999), Master (1987) and Ionin (2003) who have reported overuse of definite article in the language of second/third learners of English in similar multilingual settings. Although only the student texts in our data could directly compare with L2 users, the evidence of correlation is still visible in other texts and proficiency levels tested. Also, Saunders (1999) has argued that not only are advanced users of English from multilingual background likely to overuse definite article, they are also likely to overuse proper noun. Relying on Saunders (1999) and Gut (2011)’s claim that manifestation of peculiarities may not be completely inhibit by proficiency, our findings, then could well be interpreted within Huber, Master, and Ionin’s overuse hypothesis, unvalidating Schmied’s
underuse hypothesis. Additionally, the fact that demonstratives, which can as well function as definiteness, are used infrequently for this purpose implies that its function as definiteness is rarely activated. That then suggests a possible scenario of underuse of demonstrative at the expense of definite article.

6. CONCLUSION

The paper has shown that determiner structure in Nigerian English is more likely to be ordered in one-word form than in two or three word structures (97% versus 3%), irrespective of certain factors. It is also shown that this specific pattern is likely to manifest irrespective of text types, proficiency levels of users, register, and determiner category/form. Conversely, this simultaneously shows that two or three worded determination is unlikely to occur with definite article, demonstratives, indefinite article, and quantifiers, all of four determiner categories tested. Given such strong preferential pattern irrespective of variables given, we can then conclude that cognitive processes engaged with construction of determination in Nigerian English strongly reflect influences of cross linguistic phenomena from local languages operating syntactically unique determiner system from that of English. This scenario might change given different variables from those tested here.

Additionally, the found structural pattern reveals two further scenarios; overuse of definite article at the expense of demonstratives being rarely used to achieve definiteness, and that definite article is more likely to be used in syntactic solitary position than to be combined with other determiner, even when syntactic positioning offers such complexity and variability. Overall, we have provided insights into structure of determiner system operating Nigerian English, which, given its sociohistorical status, is unexpectedly oversimplified. The implication is, therefore that identifying referent in such noun phrase may require more contextual clues, as it is with influencing indigenous languages, which rely on situational and contextual clues for the same purpose.

ENDNOTES

1 This refers to a noun phrase which has a determiner preceding either adjective or noun head of the phrase.
2 Accordingly, values in the table follow this order: observed frequency scores, their percentages, and expected frequency scores.
As previously stated, values in the table follows this order: observed frequency scores, their percentages, and expected frequency scores.

In this case, we conducted a chi square test comparing observed frequencies of definite article versus demonstrative, which gives resultant statistic result.

Here, a statistic test is conducted on the sum of the observed frequencies in definite article and demonstrative, taken as definiteness here, and sum of the observed frequencies of indefinite article, interrogative, and quantifier, taken as indefiniteness here. The same procedure is used for spoken distribution in table 6. The resultant statistic results are reported accordingly.

In this case, we conducted a chi square test comparing observed frequencies of definite article versus demonstrative, which gives resultant statistic result.

Same as in the earlier procedure. Here, a statistic test is conducted on the sum of the observed frequencies in definite article and demonstrative, taken as definiteness here, and sum of the observed frequencies of indefinite article, interrogative, and quantifier, taken as indefiniteness here. The same procedure is used for spoken distribution in table 6. The resultant statistic results are reported accordingly.

In this case, we conducted a chi square test comparing observed frequencies of definite article versus demonstrative, which gives resultant statistic result.

Same as in the earlier procedure.

In this case, a statistic test is conducted on the sum of the observed frequencies in definite article and demonstrative, taken as definiteness here, and sum of the observed frequencies of indefinite article, interrogative, and quantifier, taken as indefiniteness here. The same procedure is used for spoken distribution in table 6. The resultant statistic results are reported accordingly.

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Structural Simplifications in New Englishes:  
M. Akinlotan

The case of the determiner structural pattern in the Nigerian English


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THE FRAME ‘A LEARNER’ IN THE BRITISH CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

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Abstract
Education is a very diverse and arguable subject of study by a number disciplines, such as Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, Philosophy, Cultural Studies etc. In current research, based on cognitive linguistics approaches, educational is regarded as a domain built up by frames. One of the frames, ‘A Learner’, is analysed as a linguistic and cultural entity. Basing on cognitive and semantic characteristics, three thematic groups of lexical units representing the frame ‘A Learner’ have been distinguished. In the course of the analysis it has been discovered that these units cooperate and interact within and outside a group on syntagmatic and paradigmatic levels.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, domain of education, thematic group.

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

The notion of education brings forth diverse associations among different national, social and cultural groups. When take linguistics and related disciplines such as psycholinguistics, country studies, pedagogy etc., education offers a vast field for exploration, the approaches and methods options varying significantly.

Before touching upon the key point of this article, which is the frame of the person in the process of gaining knowledge, the importance of education in the society on the whole should be taken into consideration. The education vocabulary, especially metaphors, has been gaining interest among academic
community. There is a number of academic sites where you can learn, find explanation and even contribute to the education metaphor. Refer, for instance, to the Annenberg Learner (https://www.learner.org), Learning/Teaching Metaphors (https://www.pinterest.com), the Oxford University Press Blog (http://blog.oup.com/2015/02/education-metaphorically-speaking) as well as a number of individual researches (James Lawley-Penny Tompkins, Dominik Lukes, Susan Wallace 2015 etc.).

The main goal of this survey is to reveal the place of a person, especially the one who learns as opposed to the one who teaches, as it is perceived by the Englishmen. This study adopts the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, standing that encyclopaedic information is congruent with mental perception of concepts within certain entities (Carston, 2013, p. 185; Evans-Green, p.5-6). The mechanisms of verbal and non-verbal interaction between mental entities and their sign characteristics has so far been explored in no other way but through semantic properties of notions.

But to conduct a competent study of a certain group, either non-verbal or verbal, researcher should apply appropriate methodology for classification or/and categorization of the units under study. In cognitive linguistics, the pioneering work ‘Principles of Categorization’ by Eleanor Rosch is taken for the basis (Rosch, 1978). The ideas of Fauconnier, Johnson, Lakoff, Langacker, Talmy, Turner (Fauconnier and Turner, 1998; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Langacker, 2002; Talmy, 2000), and of many other followers have only improved the verification and polished the methods of categorization, inspiring young researches to new discoveries.

2. PRINCIPLES OF CATEGORIZATION OF LEXICAL UNITS OF THE FRAME ‘A LEARNER’

Since ‘A Learner’, on the hand, is viewed as an independent entity, but on the other hand it is one of the components of the education domain, all its linguistic and extralinguistic features will feel the impact of the dominant domain notion.

The first step taken was processing the English Corpora, with further systemic organization of the received data. To classify lexical units into the appropriate groups, their semantic meaning was taken into account as well as the sense relations of synonymy, homonymy, hyponymy between these units. The procedure has been well developed by such linguists as V. Starko, A. Dzioeva, L. Muntian, A. Bieliayeva, N. Pasichnyk and others (Starko, 2007; Dzioeva, 2006; Muntian, 2015; Bieliayeva, 2008; Pasichnyk, 2008). Thus a cognitive-linguistic entity (a frame) of ‘A Learner’ has been defined, among
other conceptual groups of the education domain, encountering 54 lexical units.

Next step was to define linguistic and extralinguistic relations within the entity, in the course of which three thematic subgroups, namely ‘A Beginner’, ‘A Student’ and ‘A Successful Learner’, have been obtained.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE FRAME ‘A LEARNER’

Analysis of the English Corpora data has shown that ‘A Student’ in the British culture is associated with the nouns bookworm, disciple, educatee, junior, learner, pupil, senior, scholar, schoolboy, schoolgirl, sophomore, student, truant, undergraduate, adjectives bookish, educable, undergraduate, verbs train, studious, docile, trainable, play hooky. While some of the words bear direct and single-valued meaning, others have a somewhat controversial character, both in the language and culture of the speakers.

Among the latter, the socio-cultural phenomenon of student possesses such extralinguistic characteristics as “a member of socially influential group”, which is confirmed by the expressions mature student, student body, student government/council/union.

Another interesting observation concerns the role of a scholar in the English-speaking society. On the one hand, we recognise scholar as giant of learning, learned man, a man of wisdom, a scientist, the one who has made a bright academic career. But scholar may also name the person who is just on his way to obtain some knowledge, the one who studies; and is associated with amateur, dilettante, educatee, student, trainee, undergraduate.

For example*: (1) Of course, a literary scholar may not be satisfied with such an incomplete understanding of a text, but the ordinary reader often will be.

As to the words docile and trainable, they are used to denote people mentally able and psychologically predetermined for the process of training, learning, usually result-oriented.

For example: (2) But practically everyone is trainable, which is why colleges and universities, as enrollment has increased, have turned themselves more and more into training schools. (3) While this opportunity of educating and training a docile people was in the main neglected, savage abuse of power by their chiefs was prevented.

Another thematic group, ‘A Successful Learner’ is composed of 10 lexical units: nouns alumna / alumnus, bachelor, class, diplomat, examinee, graduate, master, postgraduate, and words-forms to graduate, n – postgraduate, adj and graduate, v. In the British culture, nouns bachelor, master and
graduate characterize a person who has achieved a certain position in the society by obtaining a degree. Besides, British university graduates refer themselves to one of the three groups, or classes, ‘into which candidates for honors degrees are divided according to merit on the basis of final examinations’ (Dictionary.com). The notion of diplomate in this case concerns the holder of a diploma, as synonym to graduate. The word graduate itself as the representative of the cultural phenomenon, has a widely developed structure. Besides it can act as a verb, a noun and an adjective, thus naming a person, the action done by this person and characterizing this person, it also serves the root to the derivatives postgraduate, n, postgraduate, v, undergraduate, n, and undergraduate, v, indicating the degree of reaching/failing to reach academic success.

Here are some sentences to illustrate ‘A Successful Learner’ group: (4) A survey presented at the meeting showed that half of undergraduate and graduate science students think lecture notes and photocopies are enough to pass their course examinations. (5) Women still made up a small proportion of postgraduate IT students in 1983–84 — just 13 per cent.

The group ‘A Beginner’ in the process of learning is the most versatile. Apart from a number of nouns coined in English to describe a beginner learner, such as neophyte, novice, trainee, tyro, beginner, freshman/fresher, abecedarian, apprentice, amateur, catechumen, there are a lot of metaphors for the person beginning to study or learn something new, for instance babe (in the woods), callow, colt, (not) dry / wet behind the ears, fish, fledgeling, greenhorn, in embryo, in its infancy, in the bud, hayseed, nestling, new kid on the block, raw recruit, tenderfoot.

Curious, however it may seem to a linguist, but the words beginner, abecedarian, amateur, neophyte, novice, tyro are defined as synonyms on the denotative level, bear very little if no differentiating features; on cognitive level they may be assumed as representative of one and the same notion, precisely the person at the initial stage of learning. Compare the specific features each of these synonymy-related concepts adds to the following sentences: (6) You are never too young or old to learn and the skills you need to learn as a beginner are the same no matter what your reason for taking lessons. (7) That made it easier for Perry and abecedarian to put together a skilled, committed team. (8) Both institutions — for what else is the Patrick Moore show? — have their roots in the tradition of the Victorian gentleman amateur scientist. (9) He must understand how these are taught to the neophyte and inculcated into the consciousness to be transmitted across time. (10) The system used is not particularly user friendly for novices or inexperienced staff: this could be improved with more modern software facilities. (11) Both the tyro and the more
experienced should be able to select their electronics with ease and obtain better and more reliable use from them.

The differing features between *beginner*, *abecedarian*, *amateur*, *neophyte*, *novice*, *tyro* are rather intricate, even obscure. This variety of lexical units denoting a man eager to obtain new knowledge may signify the importance of learning something new, the appreciation of a person who is striving for personal development, in the English-speaking society.

The etymology of the word *catechumen* reaches the times when it denoted a person who was starting to learn church dogmas, but in the course of time the initial meaning got eliminated, naming thus in modern society a novice, that is a person who has just taken up an activity. Cf: (12) *She wore the expression of a catechumen, raw and as yet uninitiated, who dimly sees the advantages of the otherwise disagreeable course before her.*

‘A Beginner’ metaphors are also an interesting subject for a socio-linguistic analysis. Among its associative threads, references to ‘green’ = ‘unexperienced’, or ‘raw’ = ‘unexperienced’ are found (like *greenhorn, raw recruit*): (13) *One hundred and twelve days before, the nine of us greenhorns, just out of training schools, took our first combat crew training flight together at Dyersburg Army Air Base, Tennessee. Also, certain groups of ‘A Beginner’ metaphors may be distinguished, accumulating around key concepts containing:

1) somatic elements: *babe (in the woods)*, *(not) dry / wet behind the ears*, *in embryo, tenderfoot*, as in the following sentences: (14) *I’m not a babe in the woods, and I know very well that saying these things is taboo in American political culture.* (15) *Tell me son have you ever cut turf before, following up with, it’s just that you look a bit wet behind the ears for this job.* (16) *Not a change that he worked up himself, but rather one that has seen in embryo on all sides of himself, and has picked it up, reported it, added to it and polished it.* (17) *Glassie leads tenderfoot readers through this virtual sierra of story in the only way humanly possible, that is, by following his heart.*

2) zoomorphic and flora elements: *callow, colt, fish, fledgeling, greenhorn, nestling, in the bud, hayseed*, as can be viewed from the following examples: (18) *Merritt Wever is adorable and believable as Zoey, a nervous first-year nursing student so callow she has bunnies on her smock.* (19) *Both are products of the Ilkley mini, junior and colts sections.* (20) *It was kind of bad for awhile till we got to know people and speak the language and quit being called greenhorns.* (21) *At hockey he’s still a fledgling and needs to work on his basic skating skills.* (22) *a Shakespeare in the bud.* (23) *Tom Parsons, a "hayseed," makes good on the scrub team of Randall College.*
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Here should be added, that describing a person like a fish not only his lack of experience, but also the lack of aptitude is explicated: (24) The guy’s a fish. He can’t do anything right.

Thus once again it has been proved that metaphor is the means of expression of the hidden knowledge, identifying cultural thinking, mental landscape and leading us deep into national cognition (Carston, 2013, p.183; Lakoff, Johnson, 2005, p.4). Actually, metaphorical expressiveness seems to perform several functions. It serves the tool of extension of meaning (Cruise, 2000, p.202), contributing much to the emotional characteristics of the expression, but it also shows the way the speakers perceive the world, bringing about the diversity of associations. Metaphorical expressiveness extends the range of ways to name a concept; conversely, if a concept is named by a number of lexical units, it is important in the culture of native speakers. Thus the frame ‘A Beginner’, expressed via various lexical units, takes a significant place in the British culture as a component of the domain of education.

There is one more peculiar characteristics of ‘A Learner’ who studies at university. As far as we know, there are names for students from their first to fourth years in English, freshman - sophomore - junior - senior. While freshman coincides with the notion of beginner, and thus refers to the corresponding thematic group, the other three, constituting the group ‘A Student’, denote the student who is gradually improving his knowledge, going up the stairs of education. Among these four lexical units, sophomore is interesting as to the coinage of its meaning. The word, and correspondingly the notion it represents, consists of two stems, sophos "wise" + moros "foolish, dull." The original reference might be to the dialectic exercises that formed a large part of education in the middle years. At Oxford and Cambridge, a sophister (from sophist with spurious -er as in philosopher) was a second- or third-year student (OED). Thus sophomore in the British culture has the intermediate value between a beginner (freshman) and a more experienced (junior to senior) student. The process of transition to a higher level is not easy, sometimes students fail in gaining next grade: (25) As a result students were having trouble making the transition from sophomore to junior year, and some were leaving school.

4. CONCLUSION

Cultural worldview of a national entity is caused by a specific way of thinking and attitude to the surrounding. This extra-linguistic layer has significant impact on its lexical equivalents in the language. Thus lexical units tend to possess both, non-linguistic and linguistic properties. In the
British culture, great attention is paid to education. That is why the domain of education, as it is perceived in the British culture and language, presents a great interest for researchers. It can be studied either on the whole, or in particular segments. Current article reveals the role of a person who is eager to gain new knowledge on the both linguistic and cultural levels.

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