 Bulletin of Advanced English Studies (BAES)  
Vol.3, Issue.2, Dec 2019

Chief-Editor  
Dr. Ibrahim F. Huwari  
Zarqa University- Jordan

Editorial Assistant  
Eng. Suzan Al-Salaijeh

Editorial Board

Prof. Dr. Abdul Majeed Al-Tayib Umar  
Umm Al-Qura University, KSA

Prof. Dr. Hany Mohammad Helmy Hanafy  
Tanta University, Tanta, Egypt

Prof. Dr. Misbah Mahmood AL-Sulaimaan  
Lebanese French University, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

A.P. Dr. Eissa Al Khotaba  
Tabuk University, Tabuk, KSA

A.P. Dr. Noor Hashima Binti Abd. Aziz  
University Utuara, Malaysia

A.P. Dr. Abd-Alqader Btoush  
Mutah University, Jordan

A.P. Dr. Mohammad Shaukat Ansari  
L.N. Mithila University, India

Dr. Murdhy Radad Alshamari  
University of Hail, KSA

Dr. A. TamilSelvi Madurai  
Kamaraj University, India

Dr. Fadi Maher Saleh AL-Khasawneh  
King Khalid University, KSA

Dr. Muslim Eidan  
University of Kufa, Iraq
Bulletin of Advanced English Studies is an academic journal published by Refaad. Due to the fact that English has become an international language for different reasons, this journal has been established to fulfill the needs of such topics. Arab countries are considered as a Foreign Learners of English language, so this journal wishes to increase the number of value research on EFL, ESL learners, and native speakers of English language. This journal has a clear vision about the importance of research in the field of English language and literature and through this journal we hope to establish a forum of professional discussion to promote the development of links between the researchers.

Mailing Address:

Bulletin of Advanced English Studies (BAES)

Refaad for Studies and Research

Building Ali altal-Floor 1, Abdalqader al Tal Street – 21166 Irbid – Jordan

Tel: +962-27279055

Email: editorbeas@refaad.com, info@refaad.com
Website: http://www.refaad.com/views/BAES/home.aspx
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Paper Name</th>
<th>Page #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>About The Issue</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Role of Input in Second Language Acquisition: An Overview of Four Theories</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Negligence of decoding the Implicatural Insinuations led to a Drastic End: A Case Study of Iago’s Monologues in Othello</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Implications of the Sociocultural Theory on Students’ Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Pragmatics of Proverbs in Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Editorial Board of Bulletin of advanced English Studies is pleased to put into its readers the 2nd issue of the volume 3, December 2019. This issue included four thematic papers that were come from different countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Nigeria. The subjects included one paper from literature field, two papers under teaching field, and one paper from Linguistics filed. The Editorial Board of Bulletin of advanced English Studies is keen to continue its policy of seeking to remain a leading journal at the local and regional level, and to be classified among the most famous global rules. The Editorial Board of Journal of Bulletin of advanced English Studies to keep interacting with their readers through its website and e-mail by giving their comments and presenting their suggestions, which they believe that readers can have a good impact on the development and upgrading of the journal.

Chief-Editor
Dr. Ibrahim F. Huwari
The Role of Input in Second Language Acquisition: An Overview of Four Theories

Nesreen Saud Alahmadi a1

a Faculty of Art and Humanities, English Language Centre, Taibha University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Various theories of second language acquisition (SLA) attribute significant importance to the role of input in second language (L2) learning. The current paper attempts to explore the role of input through an overview of four theories of SLA. These theories highlight different views on the value of second language input to learners’ linguistic abilities. These theories are: the Input Hypothesis (Ellis, 1994, Krashen, 1985, 1989, Doughty & Long, 2003; Mackey & Gass 2015), the Input-Interaction-Output Hypothesis (Gass, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997), the Input and Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1980, 1985, Brown, 2007, Long, 2016) and the Autonomous Induction Theory (Carroll, 1999, 2001, 2007, Loewen & Sato 2017). Also, the role of interaction for L2 input will be discussed. In fact, learners’ acquisition of L2 depends on different factors, either external or internal as well as on learners’ experience of the language. Therefore, accounts of successful SLA have emphasised the influence of the quality of the input provided to learners, as it counts as one of these external factors. However, input alone cannot facilitate L2 learning, as learners cannot develop full linguistic ability in the target language without processing and practicing the transmitted information through interaction. The present paper is a brief review of the significant role of language input in SLA. Accordingly, the role of input is discussed from the perspective of different theories of language learning.

Keywords: Comprehensible Input; Language Input; Language intake; L2 Learning; Second Language Acquisition.

1. Introduction

As a concept, the importance of input has been extensively acknowledged in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). According to Long (1996, 2017), input is considered to be one of the most significant components of the process of SLA. As Gass (1997) states, input is considered the primary source of data to second language (L2) learning and learning cannot simply occur without input, for learners, input is the only source available to construct their language competence. Researchers in the field regardless of the theoretical approach have generally supported this statement. The input received by the L2 learners may be oral or written, which may or may not always be ‘comprehensible’ (Krashen, 1985), ‘comprehended’ (Gass, 1997), ‘modified’ or ‘pushed’ or ‘negotiated through ‘negotiation for meaning’. Therefore, the role of input in SLA will be discussed, outlining four theories of SLA, namely the Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985, 1989), the Input-Interaction-Output Hypothesis (Gass, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997), the Input and Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1980, 1985) and the Autonomous Induction Theory (Carroll, 1999, 2001, 2007). This paper aims to explore how each theory impacts (theoretically and/or practically) upon SLA.

The importance of the language input in SLA is given great emphasis in the literature, which indicates that many studies in this area of research have been conducted to investigate the important role and processing of linguistic input. From this plethora of research, it can be summarised that SLA simply cannot take place without

1 Corresponding author
Email address: Nesreen.s.uni@hotmail.com (Nesreen Saud Alahmadi)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.31559/baes2019.3.2.1
Received Date: 13/10/2019
Accepted Date: 30/11/2019
exposing the learners to the target language through input (Gass, 1997, Mackey & Gass 2015). For example, (VanPatten & Williams, 2007, Patten and Benati, 2010, Shimanskaya, 2018) have highlighted that language input is significant for language learners to build their L2 competence as well as is considered to be a primary source of mental representation of the language. Therefore, the significance and the role of language input have been supported by a number of language learning theories such as the behaviourist, mentalist, and interactionist theories, Ellis (2008). According to Bahrami (2013), the necessity of language input is conceded for learners’ linguistic competence, although not all SLA theories attribute the same level of importance to the role played by input in the process of language acquisition. However, in many SLA theories, language input is considered to be an essential factor for learning, while in other theories it is given only a minimal role. In fact, what has been argued by some researcher such as (McLaughlin, 1987, Zhang, 2009, and Carroll, 2007, Ellis, 2019), concerning the role of input in language learning from the perspective of many language-learning theories is the conceptualisation of how language learners processes linguistic information through input. (Doughty & Long, 2003)

However, as mentioned earlier, language input is defined as the major source of linguistic data to which a learner is exposed (Long, 1982). According to Ellis (1994), in order for SLA to occur, there are two prerequisites: ‘L2 input that is obtainable to the learners and a set of internal mechanisms to account for how L2 linguistic features are processed’ (p.14). Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the role of input from the perspective of various theories on language learning, as some overlapping theories argue about the role between interaction and input (Krashen, 1985; Gass, 1997). Nevertheless, there are many other factors that impact upon SLA and influence the role of input, which are also investigated. These include, for example, biological factors, cognitive factors, social factors and environmental factors. This paper will give an overview of the role of input in SLA. Four theories of SLA will be presented as a means for focusing attention on the role of input and output on SLA. The role of input will be discussed and summarised within each model of SLA.

2. The Input and Interaction Hypothesis

According to Long (1996,2016,2017), SLA theories need not to account for all the facts in every description to be workable. Long (1996) asserts that theories of SLA seldom address every aspect of the topic. Therefore, theories do vary in scope. Long (1980) stated that in order to understand the process of L2 learners’ internal grammar, the role of comprehensible input must be recognised by any theory of SLA. In addition, according to Krashen’s hypothesis (2009) of acquisition through comprehensible input as cited in Akan (2018), "Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding."(p.120). Thus, due to the important role of comprehensible input in SLA, it can be comprehended as sets of processes in acquisition. According to Fang (2010), the first set of processes (I) is to turn input into intake. This is generally referred to as ‘input processing’. The learner thus receives knowledge from input but still must develop an acquired system, as not all the information from intake is automatically converted into the acquired system. The second set of processes (II) includes those linguistic features that stimulate the knowledge of intake and restructure the development of the learner’s linguistic system (Fang, 2010). The third set of processes (III) consists of certain aspects of language production, for instance, the monitoring, accessing and controlling of knowledge. Accordingly, input processing involves the first set of processes, which basically focuses on turning language input into intake. Although input processing can be examined from various perspectives, the notion of form-meaning connections is used to discuss the processes involved in the conversion of input to intake (Sun,2008).

As a matter of fact, Long’s (1980) argument of the importance of comprehensible input was as follows: First, there is a need to prove that comprehension promotes acquisition, and second, more investigation needs to be conducted to prove that conversational modifications in ‘language input’ will probably lead to better comprehension. From this, according to Long’s (1980) claim, we will be able to determine whether ‘conversational modifications’ promote acquisition. However, the influence of interaction will remain controversial in the field of SLA despite the encouraging findings of Long's research. Long (1996) claimed that in many learning situations, comprehensible input was not always necessary nor sufficient to promote the acquisition process. Therefore, a learner’s L2 competence can not only rely on interactional modifications cannot be the only this mechanism to be developed. Accordingly, it became increasingly evident that linguists would need to search for further interactional processes that could support learners access to an L2; this can be achieved not only through language forms that are generated in the comprehensible input but also, interaction through conversation (Gass,1998).

Moreover, Long (1996), in his updated version of the Interaction Hypothesis, points out that ‘negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interaction adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways’ (p. 451, 452). Therefore, through negotiation, according to Fang (2010), a learner’s additional resources of learning may be placed to: (a) a particular link between what experience do the learners have about the L2 and what the L2 really is; and (b) the limited knowledge of a particular area of in L2 in which the learner has no previous knowledge or limited information. Here, interaction can be described according
to Fang (2010), as an ‘attention-drawing device’, which means the role of interaction is to draw the learner’s attention to the unknown features of a language. In other words, the acquisition of certain elements of a language may take place during interaction.

3. Krashen’s Input Hypothesis

In the early 1980s, the American linguist Stephen Krashen (1985, 1989) explained that language cannot be learnt through endless repetition, but, on the contrary, it can be learnt as the result of interior factors, such as the mental processing of linguistic features based on the input that learners received. Krashen (1989) asserted that input should be as thorough as possible in order for language learning to occur. In his input hypothesis, he claimed that the language that we acquire subconsciously, especially when it is received in an anxiety-free environment, could be effortlessly used in spontaneous conversation due to the availability of linguistic elements to L2 learners.

Krashen (1985, 1989) also claimed that the successful acquisition of an L2 depends on the nature of language that L2 learners received. For instance, for learners to acquire a language, it needs to be comprehensible even if it is vaguely above their production level. He called this comprehensible input, which he defines as the information that learners already know plus the next level up, and the learners have to be exposed to the L2 in a relaxed setting when their affective filter was lowered. As Krashen stated,

The best methods of language learning are therefore those that supply ‘comprehensible input’ in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are ‘ready’, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production. (1989, p.22)

This input; however is roughly tuned in order to deliver less language instructions in any L2 input, where only specific language features are selected for conscious-explicit-learning. Therefore, roughly tuned input assists SLA. As Krashen (1985) also argued, highly tuned input when combined with conscious learning does not necessarily increase L2 learners’ competence.

Krashen’s ‘Input Hypothesis’ claims that learners acquire language by one way only that based on; understanding the messages they receive or by exposure to a comprehensible language input. This model emphasises that in order for acquisition to take place there must be a period of time that allows learners to process input without any pressure to produce output (Krashen, 1985). However, this model shed lights on the idea that the ‘affective filter’ must also be ‘low enough to allow the input “in”’ (Bahrani, 2013, p.22). Furthermore, Krashen’s model also places great importance on different forms of language aspects to function as comprehensible input.

In addition to Krashen’s suggestions concerning the effectiveness of input, he states that ‘insufficient quantity of input’ or ‘inappropriate quality of input’ both count as possible causes of fossilisation (1985, p.44). Hence, one can conclude from Krashen’s model of SLA that input should not be repetitive in nature in order to facilitate SLA (1985). In summary, Krashen’s theory of SLA claims that constant access and regular exposure to language input should facilitate SLA only when it is comprehended by the L2 learners with a low affective filter, which might have been modified in one way or another to the learners’ level or above, as well as rich in various language forms.

However, the Input Hypothesis firmly claims that SLA can only occur when language learners are exposed to certain L2 features that they can fully comprehend. Krashen (1990) associated comprehensible language input as being both contributory and variable in SLA. According to Krashen (1990), SLA can take place, when L2 learners are exposed to a kind of comprehensible language input that contains linguistic forms that are higher than their language competence.

4. Critiques of the Input Hypothesis

Nevertheless, the Input Hypothesis was criticised strenuously in the field of SLA, despite the major impact it has on emphasising the significant role of input in L2 learning. In fact, various researches challenge the effectiveness of Krashen’s hypothesis by providing plentiful evidence indicating that exposure to comprehensible input on its own is always sufficient for L2 learning (McLaughlin, 1987. Liu, 2015). Indeed, the type of implicit language learning in ‘input’ does not always work with L2 acquisition as the learners have already developed a language system, which is difficult to change in the later stages of life, unlike the acquisition of one’s first language, which has been learnt and acquired since childhood. That means L2 acquisitions require more than an input to be abundantly mastered.

Also, researchers argue with Krashen’s theory that ‘processing of comprehension is different from processing of production. And the ability to understand meaning conveyed by sentences differs from the ability to use a linguistic system to express meaning’ (Zhang, 2009, p.92). However, McLaughlin (1987) expresses major concerns in regard to the effectiveness of the input hypothesis. He claims that it is not an easy task to identify the ‘concept of a learner’s level’. In fact, other factors such as individual differences should also be considered, as the application of rules in any language classroom will be limited due to these differences. In other words, determining the accurate level of every L2 language learner and providing the right input accordingly is a challenging task to fulfil.

Nesreen Alahmadi, BAES, 3(2)2019, 70-78
As a result, some issues should be taken into consideration and with caution in regard to many other factors, such as individual differences, before we fully apply Krashen’s theory of language comprehensible input to SLA. Indeed, in spite of the significance of input gained by researchers in the field of SLA, the evidence of the effectiveness of Krashen’s hypothesis of comprehensible input falls short of identifying the quantity and quality of input that should be provided to L2 learners in order for language acquisition to take place. Thus, comprehensible input is of course, necessary for learners when it is included in line with other learning factors that affect learners’ language competence.

5. The Input-Interaction-Output Model (Gass, 1997)

Another model that addresses the role of comprehensible input, in addition to the hypothesis of Krashen, is the Input-Interaction-Output model. As proposed by Gass (1997, Mackey & Gass 2015, VanPatten, 2017), in this model, learners receive language as input that supported by interaction; they manipulate and produce as output, thus establishing the basis to acquire a second language. As a matter of fact, Krashen’s comprehensible input hypothesis, which he proposed in 1981 cited in Bahrani (2013), asserts that SLA takes place simply by different means of comprehensible input, which are revived by the language learners. In other words, L2 input can be described as practical and effective if it is only beyond the learners’ language competence.

Gass (1997) supports this hypothesis and asserts that language input is significant for learners but only when it takes into consideration both the internal and external factors that facilitate language acquisition. For example, L2 learners must receive enough exposure to the input to be able to ‘formulate a conceptual representation’ (Sun, 2008, p. 4). This can be done through certain linguistic forms that can be compared with the learner’s current competence through an apperceived structure, such as the learner’s existing knowledge, which helps them to acquire the target language. (Gass 1997, Mackey & Gass 2015) also emphasise this aspect of the model, which is related to input and interaction, and identifies it as ‘the information processing model’ in which the learner’s attention is drawn to the form of language to be learnt; only then are the unrecognised parts of linguistic forms provided through language construction in order not to overlap the learners’ existing knowledge of the L2.

Furthermore, Gass (1991, 1994, 1997,) & (Mackey & Gass 2015) emphasised the role of input, which she considered to be significant not only for the comprehended input but the conception of a comprehensible input. According to Gass, what counts in the language input is the level of comprehension of that input, as it should be involved in the L2 learning process. As a result, language input has broader scope for SLA that cannot be contributed to the limitation of comprehensible input. The level of the effectiveness of language input depends on turning it into a comprehensible form. This can be achieved only when the learners process information from (intake) into (input). Indeed, L2 learners are exposed to different language inputs, which will not always be within their language competence. For example, some linguistic features are more noticed for some learners more than others, due to different factors such as previous experience and knowledge they have, the frequency of some features among others and the amount of attention learners have towards the new L2 features (Gass, 1997). Hence, in her theoretical model for SLA, Gass (1997) attributes the qualitative of language input not to its ‘comprehension’ but rather emphasises the learner’s level of language proficiency.

In Gass’s (1997) view, the Input-Interaction-Output Hypothesis is a major component of SLA. As she describes the acquisition process, first, ‘the learner notices incoming data in line with individual affective, attitudinal and linguistic filters (apperception stage)’(McCarthy, 2014, p.8).In this stage, the learner starts to process and analyse the available data in the ‘comprehended input’ prior to the ‘intake’ stage of learning. In this stage, L2 learners start to formulate the hypotheses received about the L2. In fact, the ‘intake’ stage is defined, according to Gass (1997), as ‘the vital stage between receiving information through input and forming grammar’ (P. 44). Learners will then be able to bridge the gap between received and existing knowledge of the rules. This stage is called ‘integration’, where the linguistic rules of the target language are shaped and strengthened. This process, which leads the learners to move from ‘input’ to ‘output’, is crucial in this model. Consequently, learners are able to modify the information and linguistic features of L2 through input modification in the ‘form of negotiation and native-speaker modification, that is, interaction’ (Gass, 1997, p.34).

Nevertheless, in the stage of the ‘negotiation of meaning’, learners are involved in the learning process through the information provided in the input, and they may be able to request clarification for certain linguistic aspects using the target language. These requests modify their linguistic abilities to allow them to comprehend. This process, according to Gass (1997), is called ‘learners receive modified input’, and those learners then ‘modify their output’ until an adequate level of competence are reached (McCarthy, 2014, VanPatten, 2017). In fact, ‘Implicit forms of feedback include negotiation strategies such as confirmation check, clarification requests, comprehension checks and recasts’ (Gass, in Van Patten &Williams, 2007: 182). However, this model of SLA emphasises the importance of interaction through a modified language input in order for learners to acquire the target L2, thereby strengthening their language competence.
6. Carroll’s Autonomous Induction Theory

Another theory to be discussed relating to the role of input in SLA is Carroll’s Autonomous Induction Theory (1999, 2001, 2007), and (Rezabeigi & Shakouri, 2015). This theory outlines how the input is processed for parsing (linguistics analysis). According to Carroll (1999), it is necessary to provide integration through input to process linguistic features in SLA. Basically, this theory claims that ‘linguistic faculty is comprised of a chain of representations, with the lowest level interacting with physical stimuli, and the highest with conceptual representations’ (Carroll, 1999 cited in Sun, 2008, p.6). In fact, Carroll (2007) argues that there are two different but related sub-theories to the rule of input in explaining the mechanism of SLA, as both of these sub-theories combine the rule of input. The first one is called (1) a ‘processing theory, i.e., how input enters the system of learner’s language such as the speech signal (bottom-up) or from the conceptual system (top-down)’, and (2) a ‘learning theory, i.e., how novel information gets created to resolve learning problems’ (Rezabeigi & Shakouri, 2015, p. 2). Therefore, in order to constrain the nature of SLA, the processing and the learning theory should be taken into consideration. Also, Carroll (2001) provides a general approach to the ‘representation of knowledge and by specifying the way in which linguistic information is processed by parsers’ (Hulstijn, 2013, p. 12).

Furthermore, Carroll (1999, 2001, Maftoon, 2015) points out that a distinction between learning the language through processing information for acquisition and for parsing. In regard to the notion of comprehensible input, the acquisition mechanisms accrue when parsers fail to be triggered. This agrees somewhat with the notion of insufficient language input, where acquisition cannot take place (incomprehensible input). However, according to Carroll, it is somewhere difficult to notice the gap between the input provided for the learners and acquisition of the cognitive comparison of the process information. In other words, successful parsing occurs when representations are combined in any L2 features for each processor. Thus, failures in this process usually happen when the rules are not available in the input, being either missing or misplaced. Consequently, the rules nearest to effective parsing, for example, a ‘particular unit’ would be chosen in order for the process of the information to be checked and only then would the most incremental review be considered. However, the process of parsing should be continuedly repeated until acquisition takes place. Therefore, failing in acquiring the parsing could be attributed to the incomprehensible input.

However, Carroll (1999, 2001) stated that any attention to new linguistic features in the input should take into consideration the relation between the interaction of learners’ attention and their existing and current knowledge of L2 rules. In her view of the role of input, attention is aroused after the learner has a base for processing linguistic features, which are processed preliminarily but at the same time is not a precondition for the production of the new rules. Yet within Carroll’s (2001) processors of language input, there is also a mention of cognitive processing that is defined as the selections of certain functions that restrict the number of a learner’s structures that undergo language analysis through input.

Furthermore, in regard whether the role of input is ‘comprehensible or incomprehensible’, Carroll (2000) opposes the theory of Gass (1997) that defines the mechanism of sequences input as a sequence of processing linguistic rules. On the contrary, Gass conceptualises intake as a result of detachment from the comprehended input. However, according to Carroll's view of input, comprehension input involves conscious reflection of cognitive processing of information in L2 that cannot be predicted as a result between intake and input. According to Jackendoff (2002), if any stage of intake follows a comprehended input, the mental comparison between the two can be opened for observation in terms of the conscious production of L2, although the unconscious process is difficult to trace and mark between input and intake.

However, in Carroll’s theory of language input, intake and input cannot be considered as acquisition stimulation, but rather SLA input works as a mental construct. In fact, Carroll’s theory provides distinctive insights into SLA and differentiates between the role of input and language stimulation. According to her theory, language stimulation is more important than input, which is considered to be an external factor of SLA. Thus, to Carroll, previous research on language input did not explain exactly how language stimulus becomes a language ‘intake’. Hence, the nature of signal processing and linguistic parsing, from a conceptual viewpoint, needs to be accounted for in the field (Jackendoff, 2002). From this perspective, a distinction and a reflection of the difference between ‘input to language learning’ and ‘input to processing’ will be needed to verify each of these input roles (Maftoon, 2015).

However, the conceptual views of Carroll’s theory of input are divided into three types of input that play an important role in SLA. According to Maftoon (2016), the first type of input is identified as ‘Input-to-processing mechanisms’, which are defined as the actual data provided in the input that work as stimuli for L2 learning. The second type of input is ‘input to language learning mechanisms’, which serve only the acquisition of the phonetic features of L2. According to Maftoon (2016), this is a ‘phonetics processor which creates a structured prosodic representation as output using the speech signal as input. The resulting representation activates a lexical entry of the word in the mental lexicon. Then, the morphosyntactic processor uses the information in the activated lexical entry in the structure of the sentence’ (p. 426). The third type of input is ‘input to the Language Acquisition Device (LAD)’, which is used to improve the system of L2 and gives further restructuring to the L2 learning process.

In other words, Carroll (2000) identifies learning as input driven, which means that when the learners fail to analyse the language data provided in the input, acquisition of L2 language is triggered. Although learners do not
completely fail to acquire all the linguistic features of the L2 through input, some part of that input will be analysed and translated and some will be ignored. Therefore, total failure to acquire the linguistic parts of the L2 will block learning and consequently lead to the ‘fossilisation’ of that language (Sato & Ballinger, 2016). Moreover, it would be possible for L2 learners’ learning processes to be blocked, which will stop the process of learning an L2; the acquisition of L2 will fail and learners will rely on their L1 linguistic system instead.

In summary, although Carroll’s theory of the role of input is described as convoluted, it still involves many important purposes in SLA (Gass, 2010). In Carroll’s theory, input and intake are not considered to work as stimuli; rather, on the contrary, both are considered part of a mental and unconscious process that constructs the L2. In contrast to many theories related to the importance of input in SLA, Carroll differentiates between input and stimuli, as the latter is more important in explaining how the language is a process in the learner’s mind, rather than the input, which is represented as the external environment. In fact, in Carroll’s theory, previous research on input processing has not justified how a stimulus turns into intake.

7. The role of interaction in L2 input

Nevertheless, input is unquestionably necessary for language learning, and there is no approach or theory in SLA that goes against the significant role that input plays in enhancing language competence (Zhang, 2009). Indeed, input is important to learners because it feeds the innate system of that language through the conscious process of language learning, which aids the growth of that language (Rahimi, 2014). But, on the other hand, input by itself cannot facilitate SLA. As a result, learners’ language competence in SLA cannot be sharpened and developed without being involved in interaction. Therefore, interaction refers to the exchanges of some language elements in which there is some indication of uncomprehend L2 utterances used and thus, in order to understand what that conversation (in a particular L2 context) is about, participants usually attempt to interpose the stream of the ongoing conversation (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Rahimi, 2014).

Regarding the theories that link input and interaction, there are generally three views in the literature: behaviourist, mentalist and interactionist. Each of these theories gives a different emphasis in explaining SLA. In the behaviourist view, language learning is treated and accrued in environmental input; the process of language acquisition is therefore controlled from the external factors, which represented by the stimuli to which the L2 learners are exposed, plus, it grows by the reinforcement they receive in that input (Ellis, 2008).

On the contrary, the mentalist theory gives a minimal role to external factors such as input and highlights the significant role of (mental ability) which related to the learner’s ‘black box’. Thus, Mentalist theory claims that the learners’ brains are the only tools that are especially equipped with certain abilities to facilitate language learning. Thus, with a minimal exposure to input, a learner’s language competence can be triggered and acquisition can occur (Pica, 2005). The third view is represented by the interactionist theory (Swain, 2005), which emphasises that language learning can be reached both through input (external factor) and internal language processing (internal factor through the learner’s mental abilities), which emphasises the role played by the contribution of the learners’ inner mechanism of language learning and external environment, as both factors are involved in the interaction activities.

However, according to Krashen’s theory of input, input has a significant impact on SLA (Zhang, 2009). Based on Krashen’s input hypothesis, SLA can take place only when the L2 learner recognises the language input, which, consequentially, consists of various L2 rules that are more advanced in level than the current language level of the learner, such as grammatical forms of L2. (Ellis & He, 1999). Krashen suggests that ‘the right level of input is attained automatically when interlocutors succeed in making themselves understood in communication’ (Krashen, 1985, as cited in Zhang 2009, p.92). In Krashen’s view, in SLA the Input Hypothesis is crucial for language learning, as L2 acquisition is contingent on comprehensible input (Zhang, 2009). For example, interaction takes place in the classroom, and the learners receive comprehensible input from the teachers, whose main role is to facilitate language learners through this input. However, when negotiation occurs in any language input, learners’ production of language, which is defined as ‘output’, will enhanced and monitored (Pérez-Vidal, 2017). The process of linguistic information from ‘input’ to ‘output’ can only happen through interaction. According to Krashen, in this case learners selectively take in ‘portions of comprehensible input and choose correct linguistic form to express themselves. This process makes it possible for the learners to internalise what they have learnt and experienced’ (as cited in Zhang 2009, p.93).

In addition to Krashen’s theories of input and interaction, Gass (1997) particularly stressed the importance of input acquisition and processing of L2 linguistic components through negotiated interaction. As a matter of fact, learners are pushed to negotiate for meaning in L2 input when they fail to communicate using the target language. Also, according to Sun (2008), when learners receive further and usable input, through the act of elaboration and clarification for comprehension, some specific problematic features in L2 might draw those learners’ attention. As a result, through this input, learners will make a conscious comparison between their current level of language and the information they received; thus, the chances of interaction using the target language (L2) will increase. Accordingly, Gass (1997) asserts that input could be conceivably enhanced through negotiated interaction for L2 learners by three different approaches. First, if input is ensured to be more comprehensible that is essential for the development of L2. Second, in order to achieve effective L2 communication, linguistics forms that are
problematic for learners should be identified and forced to be processed by learners in order to impede comprehension. The third approach claims that ‘through negotiation, L2 learners receive both positive and negative feedback that are juxtaposed immediately to the problematic form, and the close proximity facilitates hypothesis-testing and revision’ (Sun, 2008, p.7). In light of this, the interaction role of Gass’s model and its influence on L2 acquisition should be described as a facilitator of learning, ‘not a mechanism for learning’ (Gass, 1997, p.242).

However, interaction is a fundamental component of any communicative L2 environment. In fact, in any comprehensible input, such as ‘language classroom’, the process of information through interaction is fatal to L2 learning. Allwright (1984) refers to interaction as the ‘fundamental fact of classroom pedagogy’ (p.156). Thus, through interaction L2 learners are engaged in using the target language, which as a result creates comprehensible output. These kinds of learning attempts will become conscious learning sources of input for other learners. Nevertheless, through interaction, L2 learners may misunderstand some linguistic forms of the target language, which may arise frequently due to different factors, either internal or external, or on different language occasions such as contextual, syntactic, phonological, or cultural (Zhang, 2009, Duff, 2019).

In fact, for L2 learners, to interact means to deliver the message using the target language, and in order to do that they may use different strategies to convey their intended meaning by interaction only and within a language input. To sum up, input and interaction are crucially related and play a critical role in the development of SLA. By all means of interaction, L2 learners develop their language competence through the comprehensible input where language acquisition takes place.

8. Conclusion

The current paper has aimed to present a brief review of the role and prominence of language input in SLA. Accordingly, the role of input in L2 was discussed from the perspectives of different theories in SLA input. Also, how input is processed by L2 learners and assimilated in SLA is discussed and explored in the light of four models related to language input.

The study also shed light on the most significant theories that focused on the impact of input in SLA development and acquisition. Learners and linguists require to acknowledge these L2 theories and use them as a source of input to assist the learning process. In fact, the role of input has provided the main hypothesis for the research development in SLA. For instance, Krashen long ago (1985, 1989) argued that ‘comprehensible input’ is crucial and sufficient for effective SLA. He designated language input to be comprehended in meaning in relation to the different linguistics forms of L2 that are different from learners’ current language proficiency. To this point, however, what can be concluded and summarised from Krashen’s Input Hypothesis is that language input is crucial for SLA. In other words, regardless of its type, input is indisputably required for SLA. Accordingly, various types of input are debated in the literature, including modified input, internationally modified input, and modified output, comprehended input and incomprehensible input; all of these fit under the definition of the comprehensible input for SLA. In point of fact, although different studies conducted either to support Krashen’s input hypothesis or criticise it, most research emphasise and highlight the significant role that comprehensible input plays in language input and SLA.

On the whole, the four theories discussed in this paper are vital to SLA, either through interaction or the cognitive abilities of L2 learners. Input works in most theories as facilitative rather than as a hindrance to language learning, although how input turns into intake is still debated, according to Carroll’s theory. According to Carroll’s Autonomous Induction Theory (1999, 2001, 2007, Saito&Akiyama, 2017), the level of representation in the processing system of L2 is discussed within the scope of different types of input such as input learning or input to processing. However, as this goes in line with the role of input, investigation in the field is still conducted by a plethora of scholars on input and learners’ knowledge, and on the significance of interaction for the development of SLA. In addition, some recent studies that focus on the cognitive abilities of individual learners of L2 have examined a variety of interpretations in SLA process (Patten & Benati, 2010; Banati, 2005; Nekoueizadeh, 2014; Baddeley, 2003). These studies on cognitive and unconscious learning may provide additional evidence, while further investigation of the models reviewed in this research may provide more understandable views on the process of SLA.

Bibliography

Dr. Nesreen Alahmadi is an Assistant professor at Tibah University. She received her P.hD in Applied Linguistics, School of Languages, Cultures, and Societies at Leeds University, United Kingdom. Her research interests include, second language acquisition and English language teaching and learning.

References:


[38] Patten. V. B., & Benati. A. G., Key terms in second language acquisition, *Continuum international publishing group*, (2010)


The Negligence of decoding the Implicatural Insinuations led to a Drastic End: A Case Study of Iago’s Monologues in Othello

Sikander Ali *†

* Assistant Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, The University of Lahore

Abstract

Additional conveyed meaning can be harmful in the certain contexts which may lead the listener to a drastic conclusion. This dictum is quite applicable to the villainous character Iago in Shakespeare’s play ‘Othello’. Iago is master enough to deal with this implicatural insinuations – additional conveyed meaning indirectly – which desolate the life of at least five characters of the play including the life of his own wife as well. This research deals with the analysis of the certain monologues of Iago to check if there is any flouting of the maxim of quality. Iago is the main villain of the play who wanted to avenge by double knavery. He is the vicious character who flouts the maxim of quality for his certain motives. Grice (1975) is of the opinion that communicational contribution of the participants should be true. This research is descriptive in nature. Qualitative method has been used, by the analysis of a published document i.e. ‘Othello’ written by Shakespeare. After analyzing the data the result shows that whenever Iago deals with others he flouts the maxim of quality by using implicatural insinuations but he observs it when he is alone.

Keywords: Flouting; Implicatural; Maxims; Monologues; Quality.

1. Introduction

It is generally assumed that speakers and listeners, involved in conversation, cooperate with each other, and if there is no cooperation that will lead to the non-observance of the Grecian Maxims which ultimately creates Implicature. It is an additional conveyed meaning which is directly link with non-observance of Grecian Maxims, especially the quality maxim – to make communicational contribution that is true (Thomas, 1995). When the play starts two characters – Iago and Roderigo – are in discussion. Both of the characters are talking about the General Othello. Iago is a lower ranked soldier who hates the general because he is not promoted. When he is inquired by Roderigo, either he hates the moor or not? Iago says:

"Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city, in personal suit to make me his lieutenant".

He also mentions that he is capable enough to be promoted as three high ranked officials desires that he should be promoted, because he thinks himself capable for promotion. He is of the opinion that this is part of service, the servants are not promoted by age and service but by the preferences, liking or disliking of the high authorities.

IAGO: Preferment goes by letter and affection, And not by old gradation, where each second Stood heir to the first

Whereas another lower ranked soldier Cassio was promoted. Due to the seed of jealousy which he implanted in himself, started hating both the moor and newly promoted officer. In the consequence Iago started planning to avenge Othello either by hook or crook. That is why; we can see, in most of his dialogues he uses off record –
indirect conversation while talking to others to manipulate his vicious plans (Searle, 1975). Iago is a symbol of extreme destructiveness. He wanted to get his place by double knavery. As he said, 'how, how? Let me see'. There are other dimensions, in his monologues, which can be explored i.e. the role of inferences, presupposition and entailment as well. But it would be difficult to manage to all these aspects of Othello in this attempt. Having these considerations in mind, this research deals only analysis of the monologues of Iago with reference of Gricean maxim of quality to explore the hidden motives of Iago. There is no doubt that linguistics and literature are interlinked domains. This research deals with the unification of these two areas i.e. deals with Othello a famous play ever written by Shakespeare and its relation with pragmatic analysis of different situations. This research may be beneficial to both of the literature and linguistics students to improve their vision in this entirely new perspective. Along its new dimension may be explored, because this research deals with the few aspects of pragmatics as well as few fragments of the play Othello.

The focus of this research is only one type of Implicature that is 'conversational implicature' to see how much and why additional conveyed meaning given by Iago to achieve his goal.

2. Literature Review

Othello is one of the tragic plays ever written by William Shakespeare. In this play a character named Othello; a highly well-regarded general is in the service of Venice. Iago is Othello’s ambitious friend (so-called). To achieve his ultimate goal, Iago has to pretend himself the well-wisher of Othello. There is another character named Michael Cassio promoted by Othello which made Iago deadly jealous of this act. Delusions of infidelity affect all of the characters (Todd, & Dewhurst, 1955). Here starts a rivalry between the hero and the villain of the play but the surprising fact the hero was unaware of this enmity. The plot moves forward when the tragic characters Othello and Desdemona elope, where Iago threw his net to catch fly. Ultimately being poisoned by Iago, the seed of jealousy started growing in Othello.

“The other man in each case is a potential threat to the sexual security and social status of the hero, a threat that is made more real by his being endowed with virtues well known to the hero’s wife” (Cohen,1985).

He plans to kill Desdemona but suggested by Iago to asphyxiate her. So the plot reaches at its climax when returns to the citadel in order to kill his guiltless wife. Even supplications of Desdemona couldn’t conciliate his wrath. Eventually when the story was exposed to him, the arrow had been slipped from the command (Adamson, 1980). Ultimately when Othello came in his consciousness he wounded Iago, and then killed himself.

As mentioned earlier, this research deals with the pragmatic analysis of the monologues of Iago. Pragmatics is the study of second meaning, not the meaning given by text but by the speaker. It is the study of contextual meaning, when, where and under what circumstances. The term ‘Implicature’ deals with additional conveyed meaning by referring to what is suggested in an utterance, either expressed or not by the utterance. There are certain types of implicature,

2.1. Conversational Implicature

In order to convey an additional meaning, the speaker consciously flouts the maxim/s. For example, a response given by a speaker to a question, "Would you like to go for hunting with us?" with the following utterance:

Well, I have paper tomorrow.

If there was observance of the maxim, the reply would be, simply ‘no’. But in spite of the flouting of the maxim of quantity which leads to the flouting of the manner maxim as well, the utterance has an additional conveyed meaning.

Sometimes when the speaker wants to observe the both of the contrary maxims that leads to flouting of any one of the maxims. For example, in a response to a reply, “where is Ali”? the respondent was told the following utterance:

He may be in his room or in the ground.

This is quite interesting; the flouting of one maxim invokes the flouting of the other maxim. For instance, flouting of quantity may invoke the flouting of quality as well rather. In this case, both of the maxims – Quantity and Quality – are in divergence. Here the speaker does not want to be vague as he does not like to give wrong information by giving an exact reply in spite of his indecision (Simon, 1996).

In another case the speaker raises a maxim as a basis for understanding the statement. In the following exchange:

If you please tell me where is the petrol pump?
There is a petrol pump around the street.

Here we see the reply given by the second speaker raises the maxim of relevance which results in the implicature of “the petrol pump is open and one can perhaps get petrol”
2.2. Scalar Implicature

This Implicature deals with certain scales e.g. few, all, some, nothing, entire, etc. For instance,

I ate some of the apple.

This signifies that "I did not eat the entire apple."

2.3. Conventional Implicature

This maxim is not dependent on the cooperative principles or its maxims. A speech always takes its straight implicature.

Adnan is poor but happy.

This signifies that both happiness and poverty are in contrast but still Adnan is happy. Here the word 'but' creates the sense of contrast.

3. Research methodology

Qualitative method has been used, by the analysis of a published document i.e. 'Othello' written by Shakespeare. For the analysis purpose the researcher has evaluated the certain extracts of Othello considering in the focus the relevant examples of additional conveyed meaning to see the hidden motives. Few extracts from the monologues of Iago of the play 'Othello' have been taken and investigated through content analysis. According to Holsti, (1969) content analysis is best method for the social sciences and humanities. The analysis of the text of the paper is based on Pragmatics, and more specifically, on the different unspoken devices that help construct conversation, such as implicature.

For the elaboration of the paper different approaches on the implicature have been followed: the principle of Grice (1975) and Bach Kent (1994).

4. Data Analysis

The very first line of the play by Iago ‘my noble lord’ to Othello was said consciously to implant the seed of uncertainty in Othello’s mind. This additional conveyed meaning, irrelevant in that context, was given consciously to achieve his vicious goal. The data provided by Iago is not enough to get the communicative intention or the implication of the utterance, when he is in conversation with his general Othello e.g.

IAGO: My noble lord—[94]

There is the use of ‘off record’ utterance as this utterance is not directly addressed to Othello. In conversation each participant should contribute appropriately. In the following infinitesimal line one can see Iago is less informative than the requisite quantity.

IAGO: Indeed! [101]

We see the information provided by Iago is insufficient, as communicative contribution should be in certain prescribed limit according to the context (Grice, 1975). Whereas in the following quoted line,

IAGO: Think, my lord! [106]

After putting Othello in trouble, Iago was inquired what he was thinking; the reply was quite ambiguous, ‘think, my lord’. The question was asked about Desdemona (Othello’s wife), either she is honest with Othello or not, what he thinks? But the reply was quite troubling for Othello. In the following dialogue once again there is implicature used by him. And the following example is quite relevant in this context.

IAGO: Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,

When Iago says the most precious thing in one’s life is the reputation of man and women, actually he wants to refer something to Othello. He is, by using off record utterance, conveying that the name of Othello is at stake, which Othello is unable to infer. His illocutionary act is not decoded by Othello. This complete dialogue shows indirectness used by Iago. He is giving an example of money as in the quoted example “who steals the money steals nothing but who steals reputation he steals everything”. This use of additional conveyed meaning via indirectness and off record conversation shows the cunningness of the villain of the play. This is very clearly in this following dialogue of Iago, as once again he wants to inculcate jealousy in the mind of Othello by giving additional meaning which is not required at all.

IAGO: Poor and content is rich and rich enough, But riches fineless is as poor as winter [173]

He is not using truth even if it is truth it is used with bad intention and in wrong context. Further there is no relevance here what he is talking about but he is uttering this for his some specific purposes, to avenge from Othello, which is avenging not revenging according to him. Further, he says ‘Oh God, please defend his tribe from jealousy’. There wasn’t any need of this example which Iago quoted just to perplex Othello that his name is at stake and at the same time he should not be jealous, though that word ‘Jealousy' was out of the context.

IAGO: Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend From jealousy! [175]
Here in the first monologue of Iago one can easily find out that how much direct he is in his monologues. Here he is not using off record conversation rather he is using on record conversation. And further there is no additional conveyed meaning in his monologue here. He is confessing how he befools others for the sake of his purse, amusement and for his revenge.

**1st Monologue**

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse: For I mine own gain’d knowledge should profane, [380]

Here quantity, manner and relevance maxims have also been observed by him e.g. he is brief, clear and to the point as well and what he is talking about is relevant as well (Grice, 1975).

**1st Monologue**

I hate the Moor [384]

In the above quoted line it can be observed when Iago is talking with himself he is lucid and there is truth in his conversation. Further there is bald/on record conversation used by Iago. If he would be in the presence of Othello he never dare to say so.

**1st Monologue**

And it is thought abroad, that ’twixt my sheets

He has done my office: I know not it be true; [386]

Iago has made up his mind that Othello has illicit relations with Emilia (Iago’s wife). Othello has replaced Iago on his bed while having relations with Iago’s wife. Here there is the case of presupposition when Iago presupposes that Othello has enjoyed illegitimate relations with this wife. At the same time there is flouting of the quality maxims, because he is not sure about this but still believes in self fabricated assumption. This shows that the whole tragedy is based on the presupposition of Iago. In the following monologue, he is making plan to trap Cassio because, according to him, he can be easily trapped.

**4th Monologue**

Two things are to be done: My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress; I’ll set her on;[355]

Two things he has planned, his wife (Emilia) will send Cassio to beg Desdemona (Othello’s wife) for his reinstatement whereas he will bring Othello there who has already been poisoned by his injected poison. In this monologue we can see how straightforward he is, as it has been discussed earlier whenever he is in conversation with others there is use of implicature/off record conversation but when he is alone there is ‘on record’ conversation as he tries as simple as he can.

5. Conclusion

As discussed earlier additional conveyed meaning can be harmful as it leads the listener to a drastic conclusion. The tragedy of Othello is based on this implicatural insinuations used by Iago as how he manipulated the situation by using this technique. This act desolated the life of many of the characters. So, the analysis of this study shows that, whenever Iago is in the company of others he flouts the maxim of quality by using implicature, as mentioned in data analysis each and every time he tells lies to Othello and even all of the other characters even his own wife is not safe from him. And further we see there are specific motives behind this use of implicatural insinuations— he wanted to avenge from Othello and to displace Cassio. So it was obligatory for Iago to use it for specific gains. After analyzing the data the result proves that whenever Iago deals with others he flouts the maxim of quality by using implicatures, but he observes it when he is alone.

**Biography:**

Dr. Sikander Ali got his doctorate degree from National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan. His research interest lies in Pragmatics, with a special focus on interface between Linguistics and Literature.
References:


Implications of the Sociocultural Theory on Students' Reading Comprehension

Muhammad Mukhtar Aliyu*†, Halimah Sadiyah Yakubu

* Department of English and Literary Studies, Bauchi State University, Gadau, Nigeria
† Corresponding author

Abstract

In the Nigerian classrooms, teachers focus much attention on the linguistic aspects of the text neglecting the other aspects such as readers and background knowledge in teaching reading comprehension. Therefore, this paper discusses the sociocultural views on reading comprehension and reports students' views of a Problem-based learning approach (PBL) on their reading comprehension. Second-year 18 ESL undergraduates were involved in the study for a period of 12 weeks. Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit the participants' views on the use of PBL in reading comprehension. The findings revealed that PBL has a positive impact on participants' reading comprehension. It increased their interests and engagement with texts during reading. The study provides some implications for teaching reading comprehension in the sociocultural context and encourages further research to investigate the effectiveness of instructional approaches that incorporate the sociocultural perspectives on reading comprehension.

Keywords: ESL classroom; Nigeria; PBL; reading comprehension; sociocultural theory.

1. Introduction

Reading is a language skill that is important in coping with challenges in everyday life. For students at all levels, reading skill is considered as a necessity because it is a tool with which learning takes place and thus, determines the students’ success. Therefore, proficiency in reading is required for the students during and after their studies. Despite the importance of reading, many studies reveal that Nigerian students at all levels of education: primary, secondary and tertiary, face various challenges with reading skills. For instance, in secondary school, studies show that the students perform poorly in their reading comprehension examination (Julius, 2015; Yusuf, 2010). Researchers attributed the students’ poor performance in reading comprehension to various factors such as poor reading habit among the students, lack of reading libraries material, lack of motivation and poor teaching method adopted by teachers in reading classrooms (Julius, 2015).

The poor teaching method adopted by the teachers in the reading comprehension classrooms is the concern of this paper. Studies have shown that most of the methods adopted by Nigerian teachers while teaching reading comprehension are ineffective. For instance, many of the teachers adopt the traditional method of teaching which is criticised of rendering the students as passive in the reading comprehension classroom (Udosen, 2011). Some teachers have the wrong notion that students’ ability to pronounce words is what reading is all about. They assume that students’ reading ability is improved once they can pronounce all the written words correctly, that is, translate writing into speech sounds (Yusuf, 2011). Other teachers only teach the students about reading, that is, increase the students’ awareness of the importance of reading comprehension rather than improving their reading performance. In real sense, reading is beyond the ability to pronounce words correctly but includes the recognition and interpretation of the written symbols (Yusuf, 2009).

* Corresponding author
Email address: mamukhtar@basug.edu.ng (Muhammad Mukhtar Aliyu)
DOI: https://doi.org/10.31559/baes2019.3.2.3
Most of the studies conducted on reading in the Nigerian context do not provide sufficient guidelines for the effective teaching and testing of reading comprehension. Many of the research carried out in reading focus on identifying students’ problems in reading comprehension (Don-zenne, 2014). Researchers like Huwari (2019) reveals some strategies used by Jordanian EFL Jordanian teachers in teaching reading comprehension such as teaching vocabulary and preparation for reading materials. Although other studies have tried to provide solutions to the problems of teaching reading comprehension, developing students’ reading comprehension is still one of the main problems faced by teachers in ESL classrooms. There is still a need for approaches that would enhance students’ reading comprehension ability. Therefore, this study reports students’ views on Problem-based learning approach on their reading comprehension in order to make suggestions for reading comprehension teachers. The study also reviews reading comprehension from the sociocultural perspectives so as to encourage researchers to conduct more empirical studies in order to provide effective methods for reading comprehension instructions in the Nigerian context.

2. Research Question

The following is the research question of the study

How does the PBL approach influence the participants’ reading comprehension?

3. The Sociocultural Theory

The sociocultural theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978) explains human cognitive development based on social and cultural development. According to the theory, cognitive development is connected with culture and society. Learners construct new knowledge through social interaction and collaboration with others. They construct their new knowledge with the help of other learners, the learning context and the environment. Thus, learners’ cognitive development depends on the tools provided by society. According to Vygotsky, cognitive development is a process through which learners develop more systematic, logical and rational concepts from their social interactions with the help of a teacher or a peer who is more skilled in the subject. Through the interactions, the learners acquire new knowledge of the world and culture, and strategies for learning.

To further explain the theory, the concept of the zone of proximal development for learning (ZPD) was introduced by Vygotsky (1978). The concept includes two levels of learning based on the theory. The first level is the one already reached by a learner, the actual development level. At this level, a learner is capable of solving a problem independently. The second level is the one yet to be attained by a learner. It is a level of potential development (ZPD) where a learner is capable of reaching with the help of a teacher or more capable peer. Thus, ZPD is described as the range of tasks that are too difficult for a learner to master alone but with the guidance and assistance of a teacher or a more capable peer. The assistance is provided to help the learners to get into their zone of proximal development for learning (ZPD).

In order to facilitate learning to attain the zone of proximal development, Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) introduced the concept of scaffolding which is related to the ZPD. Wood (1988) defines scaffolding as a ‘tutorial behaviour that is contingent, collaborative and interactive’. It is contingent because in the learning process actions (of learners and teachers) influence one another or are influenced by one another. It is also collaborative because learners jointly achieve the result. Finally, because two or more people who are mutually engaged in the activities, it is regarded as interactive. Thus, the support given to a learner, by either a teacher or peers, in a learning process in order to attain ZPD is referred to as scaffolding.

In the reading comprehension, scaffolding refers to any support given to a learner which helps him/her to obtain meaning and get the overall understanding of the content of a text. For example, before a reading comprehension lesson, a teacher can teach the meaning or pronunciation of a difficult word used in a text. Teachers can also give background knowledge of the text in order to facilitate the students’ understanding of the meaning of a text. At the end of the lesson, teachers can also ask the students some questions which would also enhance their reading comprehension.

There are some instructional implications of the sociocultural theory. The main implication is that learning occurs through interaction, negotiation, and collaboration among learners. Therefore, supporting students to engage in the activities, talk, and use of tools in order in the learning process should be the goal of teachers. For instance, with the advent of technology, researchers propose that media, like video games, word processors could be used as analytical tools to create new skills and habits in the learners. Thus, teachers can use the technology to facilitate the teaching of reading comprehension through creating asynchronous learning networks. In the learning process, teachers should identify learners’ abilities that need to be developed and predict what the learners are capable of doing independently in the future in order to give appropriate supports (Scott & Palincsar, 2013). In this study, ill-structured problems which are related to their real-life situations were given to the participants, thus providing background knowledge. They were asked to collaboratively work in groups and propose viable solutions to problems.
4. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is broadly described as a process of understanding a written message. In other words, it is a process whereby a person reflects and engages with written texts, in order to achieve some specific goals such as developing his/her knowledge, potentials, and participating in society (OECD, 1999). Other researchers define reading as an 'interactive process in which readers construct a meaningful representation of text using effective strategies' (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). For Wixson, Peters, Weber, and Roeber (1987), reading is the process of creating the meaning of a text.

According to these scholars, reading is a process that requires the integration of (a) the reader's existing knowledge (b) the text information and (c) the reading context. They highlighted that the good readers must in cooperate their knowledge and skills, according to various reading conditions, in the process of constructing meaning for different texts. In addition, good readers must be knowledgeable of various purposes for reading. They should also be aware of effective skills and strategies to be employed in their reading, and how different texts and contextual factors can influence their reading. Finally, good readers should develop positive attitudes about reading and positive perceptions about him/her self as a reader. According to Kintsch (1998), reading comprehension is the process of 'creating meaning' from the text in order to get an 'understanding of the text rather than to acquire meaning from individual words or sentences'.

5. Sociocultural Perspectives of Reading Comprehension

From the sociocultural perspectives, reading comprehension is described as the 'process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language' (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002 p. 11). According to Duke (2003), reading comprehension is a process of making meaning through interaction with a text by combining readers' prior knowledge and previous experience, the information in the text, and the readers' views. In the reading process, the readers evaluate the accuracy of the text to see if it fits their personal agenda by moving through the text and finally arrive at a self-selected location.

Within the sociocultural context, Snow (2002) identifies areas that have an impact on the students' reading comprehension. Thus, teachers should consider them while teaching reading comprehension. These include the text, the activity, and the reader. These areas revolve around the purpose of the reading and interrelate in dynamic ways in the reading process. Snow's (2002) model is presented in Figure 2.1. Although reading comprehension is influenced by these factors, another factor that plays an important role in guiding them is the instructional process adopted by teachers.

![Figure 1: Variables that affect reading comprehension (Snow, 2002)](image)

In the model, Snow views reading comprehension as the product of a complex combination of several interactive factors that need to be considered either individually or in combination in designing reading instruction (Woolley, 2011). Each of these variables/factors is explained in detail in the following section. According to the model, the first factor is the socio-cultural context which contains all cultural practices within the learning context such as the learners, classroom, learning objectives of the lesson. The classroom setting and the objectives of a lesson provide a socio-cultural context within which meaning is constructed. Based on the model, readers play an integral role in effective reading comprehension to take place.

Learner' personal experiences and prior knowledge, as well as social/cultural identities, are also part of the socio-cultural context that play a role in shaping learners' understanding of a text (Woolley, 2011). For example, researchers claim that readers' cultural beliefs and values may influence their comprehension of a text (Kendeou & van den Broek 2005). Readers' socio-linguistic group, religious or political affiliation may also influence their views, thinking, and comprehension of a text. Thus, for the readers to effectively comprehend a text, there are factors that need to be considered by instructors such as, cognition, motivation, domain and linguistic knowledge. For example, teachers should pay attention to the learners' ability to retain and recall ideas, their interests in reading, knowledge of the topic and familiarisation with the words used. All these factors also depend on the texts in use and the specific activity in which one is engaged.

The texts is another variable that affects reading comprehension according to Snow's model. Texts have two features which affect reading comprehension. The first aspect is what readers bring to the reading task in terms of their ‘reading skill, language, cognitive processes, background knowledge, interests, goals, and understanding of
the requirements of a reading task (Fletcher et al. 1990). The second part is textual features such as 'content, style, linguistics, and cognitive features'. These also play an important role in determining comprehension in reading (Fry 2002). Mostly, the difficulties encountered by readers in reading comprehension could be as the result of the interaction of these elements. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to them, as a text may be difficult, depending on its relationship with the learner's knowledge and abilities and its requirements.

When a reader engages in a reading activity, he/she does it for a purpose which he/she intends to achieve at the end. Thus, a reading activity involves the reader's purpose(s) which determines its success. The general purpose can be either externally imposed such as preparing for the examination. The reader's purpose could be influenced by other motivational variables, such as his/her interest and prior knowledge. According to Free body and Luke (1990), in reading comprehension, readers assume four different roles: (1) a code breaker, (2) a text-participant, (3) a text-user, and (4) a text analyser. To break the code, a reader is required to understand the conventions of written and spoken language as well as the visual multimodal of the surface features of the texts. To participate in a text, a reader should make meaning by drawing from his/her social and cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge within literate contexts. As a text-user, a reader should understand the purposes of using texts in different ways for different cultural and social functions. The text analysing role focuses on the ideas within the literacies.

From the discussion so far, it has been seen that reading comprehension is an active process where by readers construct meaning through with a text by combining their prior knowledge and experience, the information in the text, and their views of the text. Learning generally according to the sociocultural theory is a process through which learners acquire knowledge from interactions with peers and experts that are more knowledgeable. With the guidance and support of their peers and experts, learners become more capable of performing tasks that are slightly beyond their own independent knowledge and ability. As such, they become more knowledgeable and experienced with the task, the supports are withdrawn while they internalise the acquired knowledge and experiences (Vygotsky, 1978).

Therefore, Pardo (2004) provides some suggestions which teachers should adopt in their classrooms to support their students’ reading comprehension. Teachers should 'teach decoding skills, help students build fluency, build and activate background knowledge, teach vocabulary words, motivate students, and engage them in personal responses to the text'. For instance, students’ interests, choices, fields of study and culture should be considered while selecting a reading text. This would motivate the students and allow them to have more background knowledge and make connections with the previous knowledge in order to create meaning and make sense of what is being read. Visual or graphics could be used to make the students activate their prior knowledge. Teachers should also ‘teach text structures, model appropriate text selection, and provide regular independent reading time for the students’. This would make the students’ comprehension of the text more easily. They should also ‘teach students to monitor and repair, use multiple strategy approaches, scaffold support, and make reading and writing connections visible to students’.

6. Current Study

Based on the previous discussion, this study employs the PBL approach in order to obtain students’ views on reading comprehension. The rationale behind using PBL because the approach takes Sociocultural theory and Snow’s (2002) model into consideration. The approach developed based on the constructivist theory of learning. Learning is contextualised into a real-life situation where students learn collaboratively while solving a real-life problem (Jonassen, 1997; Mardziah H. Abdullah, 1998). The goal of PBL is to encourage learners to develop essential skills such as problem-solving skills, flexible knowledge, intrinsic motivation, collaborative and self-directed learning (Barrows, 1996). The students take the major responsibility for their learning while teachers only facilitate, guide and monitor the students’ learning through open-ended questioning, stimulating the students’ abilities to analyse information, focus on the learning objectives, assist the students in identifying appropriate resources to obtain the required information and apply new information to their problem-solving work and finally withdraw their support when the students could do it alone (Hmelo-silver & Barrows, 2006).

The students work in small groups, deliberate, discuss, share expertise, support one, discover for themselves and agree on what and how to learn it to solve an ill-structured problem (Mardziah H. Abdullah, 1998). They would also consult sources such as textbooks, library and online material to get more information about the solutions to the problems. An ill-structured problem is a problem related to their real-life situation but its descriptions are not clearly defined and are complex enough to stimulate the students’ thinking (Jonassen, 1997). There could be various solutions to the problem based on students’ perceptions and interpretations (Shin, Jonassen, & McGee, 2003).

7. Methodology

7.1. Participants

Eighteen (18) second-year undergraduates in an English composition class in North-Eastern Nigeria were selected for the study. They are an intact class of mixed-gender with ages from 24 to 38 years old. They share the
same first language and culture and had no prior experience of group learning. For the purpose of the study, they were assigned into three groups through self-selection.

7.2. Procedures
The whole PBL process was given in 12 weeks, which were separated into two cycles. In both cycles, the participants were given an ill-structured problem and asked to collaboratively work under tutors’ facilitation and propose viable solutions in three weeks. The first and second weeks were preliminary. In week 3, an ill-structured problem was given to each group and they were asked to propose viable solutions following Savery and Duffy (1995) model of PBL. The stages are as follows:

- ‘Generate working ideas or possible solutions;
- Identify available information related to the problem;
- Identify learning issues (things they need to find more information about);
- Identify resources to look up or consult;
- Assign tasks to the various group members (i.e. share the learning issues);
- Gather information (conduct self-directed learning);
- Propose solution(s)’.

The problem is related to Boko Haram insurgency which caused some students to transfer their studies to other areas while some abandoned school completely. The second ill-structured problem is on undergraduates’ poor academic performances and studies attitudes mainly due to excessive engagement with social media. Through interactions, the participants brainstormed and generated possible solutions to the problem. They also identified learning issues, namely, things they need to find out more information about. Thereafter, they divided the learning issues among them and identified resources to look up or consult (reading materials). They gathered the information through self-directed learning and reading. Finally, each group proposed viable solutions problem and presented orally to the class, and eventually submitted the written to the lecturer. The process lasted from weeks 3-5. In week 6, a debriefing session was conducted by the researchers and discussed unclear issues related to the procedures with the participants. The procedures were repeated in the second cycle in weeks 7-10. At the end of the PBL process, the participants were interviewed to get perceptions and opinions.

7.3. Instruments
A semi-structured interview was conducted at the end of the treatment to collect data for the study. Ten participants were interviewed for 15-20 minutes each until data saturation was achieved. They were interviewed in order to obtain information on how the PBL process help to develop their reading comprehension. Specifically, self-directed learning and group reading. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and categorised into themes based on the emerging themes to answer the research question.

8. Findings
From the responses of the interview, all the participants revealed that the use of the PBL approach helped them in their reading comprehension. To answer the research question, two major themes were identified: PBL approach increases the participants’ interest in reading texts during the self-directed learning. It is also discovered that the approach helped to increase the participants’ engagement with the text during reading.

PBL Approach Increases the Participants’ Interest in Reading Texts
It is revealed that the use of ill-structured problems helped the participants to develop more interest in reading. This is mostly because the ill-structured problems are related to their real-life situations and they really wanted to have lasting solutions to the problems. They also related what they read to what they already knew about the problems. For instance, one of the participants, Binta explained that the ill-structured problems stimulated her interest in reading because she wanted to know more about the problems and find a solution to the problems. The issue Boko Haram is a problem everyone would like to find solutions to it. Therefore, she consulted many materials in the library and online in order to propose viable solutions to the problem.

Actually, it increases my interest in reading because the problems affect my life, my state and my country. So, I want to read many materials in order to find solutions.

Another participant, Abubakar also revealed that some of his friends and relatives were kidnapped by the terrorists. As such when they were given the ill-structured related to that and were asked to propose solutions to the kidnapping problems, he was so motivated to different materials to help them proffer the solutions.

The Approach Helps to Increase the Participants’ Engagement with the Text
It is further discovered that the group interactions helped the participants to develop not only interest in reading but to be more engaged with the reading materials. According to Habib, PBL did not only stimulate his interest in reading but also make him engaged with the texts. He explained that because he would be asked in the subsequent meeting to brief his group members about his findings, he paid more attention during the reading process and made sure he understood the text very well.

Really, I am expected to report my findings to my group members. So, I was very careful and make sure I understand what I read. If not, I cannot explain it to them.

Umar on his part added that his background knowledge and experience on the topic not only help to be more engaged with the text but also allow him to read faster and understand easily. The findings have supported the
Sociocultural theory of learning which suggest that relating learning to students’ background knowledge and interactions during the learning process help students to achieve their learning goals.

Another participant, Yunus explained that the approach encouraged him to think critically during the process. A number of things encouraged the participants to think of more ideas related to the writing content. According to Yunus that the ill-structured problems given to them during the PBL activities motivated him to think and have many ideas while reading relevant materials. This is because the ill-structured problems were related to the participants’ real-life. It was easy for everyone to contribute his or her ideas in the discussion. Also, due to the complexity of the ill-structured problems, the participants viewed the problems from various perspectives. This prompted their thinking and allowed them to build from one another's idea.

9. Discussions

The findings of the study confirm Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development for learning (ZPD). Through peer and teacher supports, the participants became more engaged with the text and developed interest unlike when working alone. The findings also concur with the assertions of Woolley, (2011) that learner's experiences, background knowledge play a role in shaping their understanding of the text as the ill-structured problems given in this study are related to the participants' real-life situations.

The findings are also in line with that of Kunaviktikul, Klunklin and Williams (2008) who discovered that that PBL promotes students’ critical thinking skills. Thus, it is not surprising that the approach helps students in reading comprehension because reading involves critical thinking. In addition, Jones, Epler, Mokri, Bryant, and Paretti (2013) reveal that PBL motivates students to learn engineering capstone courses. Therefore, it could be easier in motivating other students in reading comprehension. In other language skills, studies have shown a positive influence of PBL on students’ performance. Norzaini Azman and Shin (2012) discovered its positive impact on the students’ language skills particularly on their speaking skills. Othman and Ismail Ahamad Shah (2013) also observed its positive effects on the acquisition of the course content and language development of the students.

10. Implications

A number of theoretical and pedagogical implications can be derived from this paper. Theoretically, the study reaffirms the sociocultural theory that learning occurs within a sociocultural setting through interaction with peers and more knowledgeable fellow(s). Specifically, the paper confirms that the sociocultural theory could be incorporated in the reading comprehension classrooms particularly in the ESL contexts. The paper shows that students can be supported to attain their ZPD levels in reading comprehension. Therefore, researchers should investigate the effectiveness of instructional approaches that incorporate the sociocultural theory in order to provide teachers with alternative methods.

From the pedagogical perspectives, incorporating the sociocultural theory in the reading comprehension classroom might help in solving some of the problems of teaching and learning reading classrooms in the Nigerian context as mentioned previously. The ill-structured problems help them to create the meaning of what the read by integrating their knowledge and skills as they construct meaning for different texts under a variety of reading conditions. It also helped them to develop positive attitudes about reading and positive perceptions about him/herself as readers.

For the teachers, the study creates teachers’ awareness of the need to adopt instructional approaches that would engage and encourage their students to support one another in the reading comprehension classrooms. The approaches would also allow the teachers to support and monitor the students reading process and assess their reading performance. For instance, teachers should focus more on the students during the reading comprehension instruction. While selecting a reading text, they should consider the students’ understanding, background, educational level, and complexity of the text. They should also allow the students to work in pairs and small group while providing supports in the process. Teachers can give other activities such as pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading activities which are believed to effective in developing students’ reading comprehension (Huwari, 2019).

11. Conclusion

The objective of the paper is to examine PBL’s influence on the participants’ reading comprehension. The findings show that the approach increases the participants’ interest in reading texts. It also encourages them to be more engaged with the text. The study is limited to a small number of participants and did not measure their reading comprehension ability before and after the study. Thus, future studies can use a larger number of students and can adopt an experimental research design. The student concludes that students could be motivated and become more engaged with the text when it is related to their prior knowledge. Their interests may also be easily stimulated when they are supported by peers and teachers in the reading process, and when their choices, fields
of study and culture should be considered while selecting a reading text. Eventually, they develop their reading comprehension skills.

**Biography:**

**Muhammad Mukhtar Aliyu** is a lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bauchi State University, Gadau, Nigeria. He earned his PhD in English and Applied Linguistics from Universiti Putra Malaysia. His research interests include applied linguistics, collaborative learning and ESL writing.

**Halima Sadiya Yakubu** is also a lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bauchi State University, Gadau, Nigeria. She holds an M. A. in Applied Linguistics. His research interests include applied linguistics, reading and writing.

**References:**


[34] Yusuf. H. O., Towards improvement in the teaching of reading comprehension in primary schools: The need to activate pupils’ relevant schema, *Theory & Practice in language studies*, 1(1)(2011), 16-20, https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.1.1.16-20
The Pragmatics of Proverbs in Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi

Olusegun Oladele Jegede, Eniola Omotayo Osoba

a, b Department of English and Literary Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined the pragmatics of proverbs in Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi. The study focused particularly on the interpretation of the proverbs used in the text, based on the contexts in which they were used. The study used content analysis as its design, which gave room for a critical analysis of the proverbs in the text. Thirty proverbs were extracted from the text and interpreted based on their contextual use. The findings revealed that the contextual use of proverbs in the text served different roles such as warning, commending, insulting, encouraging, abusing, advising, correcting a wrong doing and asserting. The study concluded that proverbs can be best understood when interpreted according to the contexts of their use. Thus, the context of culture and situation help to inform the true meaning of Yoruba proverbs when used in interactions and the knowledge of pragmatics can help linguists, especially pragmatists, to understand and interpret proverbs from any culture.

Keywords: Pragmatics; Proverbs; Context; Pragmatic Acts.

1. Introduction

Proverbs arise as a result of human experiences in a particular cultural setting (Odebunmi, 2006). Proverbs are very concise, and embedded with philosophical meaning (Ogbulogo, 2002). The cultural background of a people can easily be determined through their proverbs. It helps explain a people’s historical development, perspectives about life, and attitude. Proverbs help to control social behaviour and ensure mutual intelligibility among interlocutors (Yusuf & Methangwane, 2003). They are used to disseminate sensitive or vital messages in a liberal way. Proverbs, being highly philosophical in nature, attract the attention of Nigerian writers such as Chinua Achebe, Zulu Sofola, Zainab Alkali, T. M. Aluko, and Ola Rotimi among others.

As good as proverbs are, their meanings and applications can best be determined in context (Odebunmi, 2008; Fashina, 2011; Raji-Oyelade, 2004). Context is the situation or events surrounding the use of the proverbs. Thus, pragmatics is very important in the analysis and interpretation of proverbs. Pragmatics deals with the study of meaning based on context. Put succinctly, the meaning of an utterance, in this case, proverbs, is determined by the situations surrounding the utterance (proverbs).

Examining the interrelatedness of proverbs, pragmatics and context, this study aims to examine selected African proverbs used by Ola Rotimi in Kurunmi. The contexts in which the proverbs are used are considered in order to determine the meanings of the proverbs. The functions of the proverbs are also discussed and the relevance of the proverbs to the messages of the text is also established.

§Corresponding author

Email address: jegedeolusegun@yahoo.com (Olusegun Oladele Jegede)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31559/baes2019.3.2.4
2. Literature Review

2.1. The Pragmatics of Proverbs

According to Birner (2013), pragmatics may be roughly defined as the study of language use in context. He observes that the study of pragmatics looks at such interpretive regularities and tries to make explicit the implicit knowledge that guides us in selecting interpretations. Mey (2001) observes that pragmatics is the science of language seen in relation to its users. That is to say, not the science of language in its own right, or the science of language as seen and studied by the linguists, but the science of language as it is used by real, live people, for their own purposes and within their limitations and affordances. According to Huang (2007), pragmatics is the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language. Similarly, Verschueren and Ostman (2009) view pragmatics as the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered. Leech (2014) defines pragmatics as the study of meaning in relation to speech situations. The speech situation enables the speaker use language to achieve a particular effect on the mind of the hearer (Yule, 2002). Ariel (2008) also sees pragmatics as the study of those aspects of the relationship between language and context that are relevant to the writing of grammars. Yule (1996) defines pragmatics simply as the study of intended speaker meaning in relation to context.

We will observe in these definitions that focus is on the inter-relation of language and principles of language use that are context dependent. We will also notice that there some common features in the definitions that will help us understand better the principles of pragmatics in relation to proverbs.

The first feature is language use. This has to do with language in actual speech situations. Proverbs involves the use of language in actual speech situations (Ehineni, 2016a; Ehineni, 2016b). They are less meaningful outside speech situations. Thus, what is important is how language users use proverbs to communicate in oral conversations or in writing to achieve their communicative goals.

The second feature is the context of the speech. This involves the physical location of participants in a conversation, the time of the conversation, the language of communication, the socio-cultural setting, the psychological state of the interlocutors, and the institution of discussion. These features of context are very important to our use and understanding of proverbs. They help us interpret proverbs and apply them to our daily activities.

The third feature, goal of utterance or speaker’s intention, is very important to the interpretation of proverbs. Proverbs are products of the goals of utterances or speaker intention (Alimi, 2012). In other words, what a speaker wants to achieve with a particular utterance will determine the kinds of proverb he will choose.

The fourth common feature points to the participants in a conversation or discourse situation. The roles of the participants in the communicative process are very important. In the African setting, when a conversation is going on between an adult and a young person, the adult alone has the right to speak in proverbs. It is considered rude for a younger person to speak in proverbs before an adult. However, adults can speak freely to other adults in proverbs. The relationship between participants and their identities are also very important in the use of proverbs since these have influence on how meanings are encoded and interpreted.

The fifth common feature of pragmatics is shared knowledge, culture, or conventions of participants in communication. This feature is very important in the understanding of proverbs. The participants must both have a good knowledge of the proverb; they must be from the same cultural background and share the same life style (Gogoi, 2017). Our knowledge of pragmatics is very important to our interpretation and understanding of proverbs.

2.2. Review of Studies on Proverbs

Odebunmi (2006) examines three recent dramas by Ahmed Yerima - Attahiru, Dry Leaves on Ukan Trees, and Yemoja. He finds that Yerima uses proverbs primarily as communication tools within culturally defined contexts, such that a function-based, rather than a structure-based, approach must be taken to properly understand their role in the dramas. He uses a modified model of pragmatics for understanding the role of the proverbs, based on Mey’s 2001 model of a pragmeme. His study demonstrates that Yerima’s plays employ proverbs with topic/comment, fixed/non-fixed, and poetic/non-poetic structures, and that they include all three types of proverbs—weather, flora/fauna, and cultural. Most importantly, it is found that the proverbs are sensitive to contexts of interaction. Through proverbs, the speakers in the dramas use pragmatic acts, or practices which counsel, accuse, pronounce, and/or assure. The proverbial propositions are reformulated by the speaker to unveil their meanings, allowing readers, whether or not they are members of the culture, to fully access the dramas. This study on Yerima’s plays aims to shift the literature on pragmatics forward while simultaneously providing new insights into contemporary African drama.

Odebunmi (2008) examines the pragmatic functions that crisis-motivated proverbs play in Ola Rotimi’s The Gods is not to Blame. It picks its inspiration from the little attention hitherto paid, in the linguistic literature, to both the specific proverbs that are spurred by crisis in the play and the pragmatic roles of such proverbs. He
chooses only the proverbs that are necessitated by the crisis-situations in the text as samples, and these are analysed, using Mey's (2001) theory of pragmatic acts. The study reveals that crisis-motivated proverbs in The Gods are not to Blame, which are of two types: social and political, are characterized by practices such as those of counselling, cautioning, challenging, veiling, persuading, prioritizing, encouraging, threatening and admitting. These are psychological acts which exploit contextual features such as reference, metaphor, inference, shared situation knowledge, shared cultural knowledge and relevance. The study concludes that studying literary proverbs used in crisis situations, from a pragmatic perspective, both throws additional insights into the paremiological pool and promises to provide a veritably helpful tool for language teaching.

Fashina (2011) carries out a counter-discourse that hopes to subvert the critical mediations that deify the 'mid-wifery' role of proverbs in narrative communication, especially in Achebe’s fiction. Although, he recognizes the place of historical and philosophical truth, archetypal wisdom, and rhetorical 'force' in proverbs, he argues that this numeric density of figurative residents of proverbs is a burden of semantic ambiguity and narrative sublimation. Annexing the resources of critical theory, logic and linguistic analysis, his study takes intrinsic look at Things Fall Apart, and diagnoses the relations of proverbs to the narrative in terms of their categories of sublimation devices of Exclusive/Diacritical, Inclusive/Taxonomic and Intersectional/Semantic values. Thus, proverbs have overt aesthetic and affective functions; but they are never the less meta-narrative/meta-poetic discourses on the borderline of nonsense and grammar, and as such their nuggets of wisdom and logic may blinker us from the reality of their 'states' as neuro-psychic specimens requiring the services of neuro-linguists to decipher. The study, however, insulates itself from value judgment by not being prescriptive or legislative about the negative or positive values of proverb usage in discourse and necessity for proverbial listing in narratives and other communication. Rather, it is descriptive, stressing that proverbs are strategic instruments of semantic deflection, diffusion, and distraction from the pseudo-temporal nature of language. To the speaker of proverbs, they are verbal, nuclear weapons of rhetoric, style and communicative 'force' with telepathic functions. They are a meta-force that disarms the hearers from resisting the verbal order (and pragmatic authority) and internal 'law' of reason that govern discourse or communication. His study concludes that proverbs compel psychic and philosophical obedience from their hearers; for the latter is seemingly bound by their mega discursive power to succumb to the speaker's ideational proposition, logic and the otherwise prescriptive rules encapsulated in the proverbs.

Ehinieni (2016a) attempts a discourse and structural analysis of Yoruba proverbs collected from oral interviews and native Yoruba texts. First, based on a theory of the proverb as a discourse medium, the study reveals that proverbs are used to achieve different discourse acts and communicative goals by speakers. Native speakers use the proverb as a linguistic strategy of negotiating deep ideas and intentions. Second, the study avers that the Yoruba proverb is structurally characterized by some lexical and grammatical devices which help to reinforce its communicative intelligibility and textuality. Thus, it examines the Yoruba proverb both functionally and formally and underscores that it is a culturally and linguistically rich significant part of the Yoruba speech community.

Ehinieni (2016b) examines the pragmatics of Yoruba proverbs in Ahmed Yerima’s plays, Igatibi, Ajagunmale, and Mojagbe. The study is motivated by the ingenuous deployment of Yoruba proverbs to facilitate effective communication and interaction in the plays. The proverbs are analyzed using the theory of pragmatic acts (Mey, 2001) and the theory of proverb praxis (Yankah, 1989). The study reveals that proverbs are used in the selected plays for different pragmatic purposes including supporting, warning/cautioning, questioning/querying, reassuring, defending, and accusing, which exploit contextual features such as relevance, reference, metaphor, inference, shared situation knowledge, shared cultural knowledge, and voice. The study concludes that the context of culture and situation help to inform the true meaning of Yoruba proverbs when used in interactions.

Gogo (2017) studies Chinua Achebe’s use of proverbs in Things Fall Apart and No Longer at Ease. He finds that Chinua Achebe creatively uses oral cultural elements such as proverbs, folktales and myths to convey different messages. His use of Ibo proverbs reveals his strategy to make a foreign language his own and his endeavour to make it express African sensibilities. His dexterity in the use of proverbs lies in the way he manipulates their application to suit the different social, cultural and political contexts portrayed in the novels. He uses them skillfully and in a restrained manner so that they do not appear imposed and forced. Proverbs used in Things Fall Apart, a novel set in a rural oral society and in No Longer at Ease, a novel set in an urban literate society mark how Achebe’s handling of the African oral cultural element is not mechanical, but strategic and highly manipulative.

Alimi (2012) studies the use of proverbs as a literary device in Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. He studies how Chinua Achebe uses proverbial language to describe his character’s appearances, actions, habits, inner feelings and thoughts. He performs a critical appraisal of the proverbs in the novels and submits that Achebe uses proverbs as a tool for delineating his characters in the two novels.

3. Methodology

The study adopted content analysis as its analytical method. Content analysis is based on interpreting opinions and perspectives of various subjects. Content analysis helps to examine patterns in communication in a replicable and systematic manner. Applying this method enabled us to interpret opinions and perspectives presented
through proverbs in Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi. Through this method, we were able to examine the patterns (functions and dimensions) of proverbs used in the text. All the texts written by Ola Rotimi are rich in proverbs. However, Kurunmi has the most proverbs. The text was critically read and thirty proverbs were extracted from it. The the proverbs were then interpreted based on the context in which they were used in text. The analytical framework used for the analysis of data was Mey’s (2001) Pragmatic Acts theory.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Analysis of Proverbs in Ola Rotimi’s Kurunmi

**PROVERB 1:** “When an Elder sees a mudskipper, he must not afterwards say it was a crocodile” (p. 42).

Generalissimo Kurunmi utters this proverb in his Ogbole (palace of a kind) to some of his warriors. Kurunmi’s fellow warriors complain about his autocratic and overbearing attitude. They complain about his unilateral decisions to take them to war instead of seeking their opinions. This time in particular, he has resolved to resist Prince Adelu’s plan to succeed his father as the Alafin of Oyo without consulting them. They threaten to dump him as their leader and send some warriors to take the message to him. In response, he promises them a change of attitude and by this proverb he impresses on the men to take him at his word and convey exactly what he has said to the other warriors. The proverb is reassuring in tone and teaches that an elder, by virtue of his age should not lie.

**PROVERB 2:** “It is a foolish daughter who thinks she knows so much that she can teach her own mother how to bear children” (p. 64).

In an atmosphere of despair resulting from the defeat of Ijaiye and Egba fighters by Ibadan warriors, Kurunmi, reprimands one of is warriors for disregarding his commander’s instruction. Ijaiye soldiers were warned by their commander, Ogunkoroju, not to pursue their enemies but the warrior gave a contrary directive which led to the loss of many Ijaiye warriors. As a mother is naturally more experienced than her daughter in child bearing, so is a military commander necessarily better trained and more tactical in war strategies than a mere soldier. Spoken in the presence of Ogunkoroju and other warriors in Ijaiye war camp, the tone of this highly didactic proverb is strong and it instructs that wisdom is greater than strength.

**PROVERB 3:** “The bull-frog that rivals the size of the elephant will burst” (p. 29).

As the news is heard that Adelu succeeds his father as Alafin of Oyo, Kurunmi expresses his displeasure before warriors Balogun, Areagoro and Ogunkoroju. The warlord is not happy that Oyo broke tradition by making Adelu to succeed his father when tradition demands that he (Adelu) should die with his father. To worsen the matter, Ibadan that should know better, supports Oyo in the abominable act. The elephant in the proverb is Kurumi while the bull-frog is Oyo. Spoken by Kurumi in his Ogbole, the tone of the proverb is sarcastic and implies that when you challenge somebody stronger or bigger than you to a combat, you must be prepared to face the consequences.

**PROVERB 4:** “The young palm tree grows tall rapidly, and it is proud, thinking, hoping that one day it will scratch the face of the sky. Have its elders before it touched the sky?” (pp. 35-36)

Rev. Mann meets Kurunmi in his Ogbole to complain that the people of Ijaiye are not responsive to the gospel, unlike their counterparts, Oyo and Ibadan. He therefore appeals to Kurunmi to lend his support so that the gospel can make headway in Ijaiye. In response, Kurunmi directs this proverb at him (Rev. Mann) to warn him against joining others to uproot the tradition of his (Kurumi’s) fathers. The young, proud, growing palm tree that hopes to scratch the sky in the proverb symbolizes the gospel that Rev. Mann talks about. The tone of this proverb laden with philosophical ideology is threatening. It cautions that when one tries to do something forbidden or unprecedented one must be wise and ready to first make proper enquiry.

**PROVERB 5:** “The Gabon ripper dies; its children take up its habit, poison and all. The plantain dies; its saplings take its place, broad leaves and all. The fire dies, its ashes bear its memory with a memory of white fluff” (p. 15).

Kurunmi is displeased that Adelu is to succeed his father as the Alafin of Oyo. In fury, he speaks this proverb in his Ogbole to some elders, warriors and a crowd. By this proverb, Kurunmi sensitizes the people on the importance of tradition and the need to maintain and preserve it. The proverb is both philosophical and analytical and the tone is strong. The opinion of Kurunmi expressed in the proverb is cruel, proud and recalcitrant but does not realize it. Ibadan warriors who are fellow warriors of Kurunmi in the Oyo kingdom are therefore in a position to “...see his (Kurumi’s) ugly buttocks” (show him his weakness) by humbling him in a fierce battle. The message communicated by the proverb is that one cannot correctly assess his character. Instead, it requires another person to do that objectively and correctly.

**PROVERB 6:** “When five little hyenas combine strength they crush the father of lions” (p. 38).

In Kurunmi’s Ogbole, the Ijaiye warriors express their dissatisfaction with Kurunmi’s unilateral decision to go to war against Oyo for the proposed succession of the late Alafin by his son, Adelu, who Kurunmi insists should die with the father according to the tradition. Epo, one of the Ijaiye warriors, warns Kurunmi by this proverb, that he (Kurumi) could be defeated by the combined efforts of the warriors who are displeased with his autocratic leadership. The tone of the speech is serious and the atmosphere is tensed. This proverb, which is analogous to the English maxim “United we stand, divided we fall”, means that a people become very strong and indomitable when
they combine their resources and strength. It serves the communicative purpose of preaching unity and singleness of purpose among groups of individuals.

**PROVERB 7:** “Does the aged he-goat have to be told that his present long beard is no more proof of sexual strength?” (p.18)

As Kurunmi’s opposition of late Alafin’s succession by his son, Adelu, draws the attention of Oyo kingdom elders, they send elders Timi, Asegbe, Arawole and Oluyole to come around to Kurunmi’s palace to warn him not to do anything against the kingdom. Kurunmi is however defiant and utters the proverb in response. By this rhetorical proverb, Kurunmi disdains the elders for supporting Adelu’s ascension to the throne of Alafin instead of standing against it. The speech means that age loses its value with time especially if it is afraid of standing for truth and right. The expression is a proverb that slams presumption, pretentious and overconfidence.

**PROVERB 8:** “The cow defecates and thinks she is soiling the pasture; we shall see whose buttocks get soiled first” (p.21)

The proverb is the parting word of Oyo elders to Kurunmi in his compound. Uttered by Timi, one of the elders, and in an atmosphere of bitterness and anger, the proverb warns Kurumi of the repercussion of doing anything to stop Prince Adelu from becoming the next Alafin of the kingdom. Timi cautions that as the cow in the proverb defecates and soils its own buttocks, so will Kurunmi harm himself if he attempts to oppose Adelu. The speech is an adage spoken with a harsh tone and means that one who throws the mud comes out with a soiled hand. The proverb then serves the purpose of warning people against attempting to hurt others because they may end up harming themselves.

**PROVERB 9:** “A cow is about to be shipped to Whiteman’s land and she is happy. Very happy Ehn ... let the cow go. When she gets to Whiteman’s land, what will she become? C-o-r-n-e-d b-e-e-f!” (p.22)

Still in Kurunmi’s compound, Kurunmi and elders Timi, Asegbe, Arawole and Oluyole trade words. Kurunmi insists on his resolve to resist the emergence of Adelu as the next king even as the elders fail to convince him not to oppose the plan. Kurunmi insists that tradition must be maintained so that when a king dies, the prince dies with him. The tone of this proverb by Kurunmi is cynical and it implies that one may be heading for his doom and yet think he is on his way to paradise. The cow that is about to be shipped to a Whiteman’s land and is happy is Prince Adelu who is about to be made king contrary to tradition and he is happy. The expression is a dictum that warns against false hope and self delusion.

**PROVERB 10:** “A man with fire on his hands welcomes no delay” (p.28)

Prince Adelu, on ascending the throne as the new Alafin of Oyo Empire, sends to Kurunmi to choose between peace and war. Kurunmi chooses war in the presence of two Ijaiye warriors, Oje and Lakusa, who were with him in his Ogbole when the messenger came from Oyo. Now in a war mood Kurummi sends Lakusa to Egba to ask for their support in the imminent war. He utters this proverb to impress on the messenger the urgency of the message. The tone of the speech is urgent. It means that one does not lazy about when war or trouble is at his doorstep. It is a cliché calling for urgency in the face of trouble.

**PROVERB 11:** “A man who does not want strange foot-prints in his backyard must fence it up” (p.29).

In Kurunmi’s compound, preparation for the looming war is ongoing. Kurunmi spurs his co-warriors, Balogun, Areagoro and Ogunkoroju to action. Ogunkoroju is persuaded to fight in the war against Alafin Adelu. The tone of the proverb is persuasive. It implies that preparation is necessary for any good thing one is expecting. Kurunmi and other Ijaiye war lords must make proper preparation to prevent poor performance in the imminent war. Just as the meat of an antelope tastes good, but while it is cooking something must be eaten, so is peace good, but while it delays to come, something must be done-war must be fought! The proverb communicates the need for one to be proactive.

**PROVERB 12:** “The meat of an antelope tastes good, but while it is cooking what do we eat?” (p.30)

Still in Kurunmi’s compound, preparation for the looming war is ongoing. Kurunmi spurs his co-warriors, Balogun, Areagoro and Ogunkoroju to action. Ogunkoroju is persuaded to fight in the war against Alafin Adelu. The tone of the proverb is persuasive. It implies that preparation is necessary for any good thing one is expecting. Kurunmi and other Ijaiye war lords must make proper preparation to prevent poor performance in the imminent war. Just as the meat of an antelope tastes good, but while it is cooking something must be eaten, so is peace good, but while it delays to come, something must be done-war must be fought! The proverb communicates the need for one to be proactive.

**PROVERB 13:** “A goat gets wiser after an ear is cropped off” (p.32)

As the preparation for the war is gathering momentum, news come to Kurumi in his Ogbole that Ibadan will fight on the side of Oyo. Kurunmi assures himself that he will defeat the combined forces of Oyo and Ibadan. The proverb is a monologue spoken in a cynical tone. It insinuates that unwise persons learn their lessons after suffering for their stupidity. Kurunmi assures himself that impudent Ibadan and Oyo will learn the lesson of their lives after he (Kurunmi) will have dealt with them in the war, just as a foolish goat gets wiser only after its ear is cropped off. An English proverb close to this in meaning is “Once bitten, twice shy”. The proverb communicates the need for prudence in life.

**PROVERB 14:** “When a rat laughs at a cat, there is a hole nearby” (p.38)
In Kurunmi’s compound, apprehension pervades the air. Some Ijaiye warriors register their displeasure to Kurunmi. They are not happy about his unilateral decision to fight Oyo. The warriors declare that they are not afraid of him. Kurunmi is dumbfounded by their effrontery and concludes that as a rat laughs at a cat because a hole is nearby, so have the warriors challenged his authority because they rely on help from somewhere. The tone of the proverb is confirmatory. It means that when a weak person challenges someone stronger than him to a duel, then there is help around the corner. The expression is an adage that explains that there is always a reason for audacious behaviour.

**PROVERB 15:** “He who despises smallness let him step on a needle” (p.41)

In his compound, Kurunmi expresses his confidence in the Ijaiye warriors. He speaks this proverb to assure the warriors that Ijaiye will without fail defeat Oyo and Ibadan in the impending battle. Ijaiye may be small compared to the large size of Ibadan and Oyo combined. After giving gifts to the warriors to win them to his side, Kurunmi speaks to convince them that the decision to go to war will not be regretted. The tone is reassuring and implies that someone or something can be small but dangerous. Ijaiye may be small but you do not step on a needle because it is small; if you do, you regret it. Are-ona-kakanfo Kurunmi boasts that Oyo and Ibadan must regret fighting small Ijaiye. The proverb is philosophical. It serves the purpose of warning people against despising smallness.

**PROVERB 16:** “A man cannot be so angry with his own head that he seizes the cap from that head and dons his buttocks with it” (p.46)

In Ibadan camp, the council of elders and warriors hold discussions on whether to go to war against Ijaiye or not. Some of the warriors favour war while others disapprove of it. In particular, Elder Ibikunle advises against war, because, according to him, Oyo, Ibadan and Ijaiye are one and therefore, the option of war is ruled out; but Ogunmola insists on war. The tone of the proverb is mild and teaches that one does not hurt himself because he or she is angry. Ibikunle feels that Oyo, Ibadan and Ijaiye are like the eyes, nose and mouth on the same face and fighting Ijaiye is tantamount to fighting oneself, the degree of provocation notwithstanding. The proverb serves a communicative purpose of recommending brotherhood and condemning schism.

**PROVERB 17:** “No matter how high the swallow flies it must at last come down to earth”(p.47)

Still in Ibadan camp, intense discussions continue on whether to go to war against Kurunmi or not. Ibikunle tries to dissuade the elders from considering the option of war but Ogunmola and some other warriors refuse to be dissuaded. The Ibadan warriors are angered by Kurunmi’s rude insistence on fighting Alafin Adelu. The tone of the proverb is mild. It means that what goes up must come down just as the swallow that flies up must at last come down to earth. This is an allusion to the law of gravity. By this proverb, Ibikunle advises peace because he believes that Kurunmi’s anger which is high now will certainly abate. The proverb proclaims the need for patience with fellow men as what is up today will be down tomorrow and what is hot today will be cold tomorrow.

**PROVERB 18:** “Secrets of the mouth are first known to the chewing stick. Secret of the palm wine are first known to the fly. Secret hidden in the footpath are felt by the sole of the feet” (p.59)

In Ijaiye, the warriors are set for war against Ibadan. Balogun Ogunkoroju appeals to the gods for help in the pending war. He prays to Ogun and Sango for their support before the war begins. The tone of the proverb is soft. Traditional African people believe that the land of the living is not far removed from the domain of the ancestors who are said to be omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. As the secrets of the mouth are known to the chewing stick; secrets of the palm wine known to the fly and secrets hidden in the footpath felt by the sole of the feet, so is the result of imminent war known to the gods. The proverb underscores the necessity of submission and recourse to supernatural powers.

**PROVERB 19:** ”Because of the deaf, the clouds blacken before it rains; because of the blind, thunder rumbles” (pp.59/60)

In Ijaiye camp, Balogun Ogunkoroju continues his appeal to the gods for help in the looming war on behalf of the rest of Ijaiye fighters. The warriors offer prayer to the deities, Ogun and Sango, for their support in the forthcoming war. The proverb has a mild tone. The gods are believed to be merciful; so, needy persons ask for help from them. In particular, the gods are disposed to showing their mercies to handicapped persons and they ensure there are clouds before it rains to warn the deaf and thunder to alert the blind. Apart from that, they also reveal future events, good or evil to those who consult them. This is the focus of the warriors’ prayer-to catch a glimpse of the outcome of the war. The proverb brings to the fore the benevolence and omniscience of the gods.

**PROVERB 20:** “Sharp though a knife, it cannot cut its own handle”(p.60)

In a war mood, Ijaiye warriors continue to pray to the gods. It shows that the warriors do not rely on their own strength or on the sophistication of their weapons for victory in the forthcoming war. The tone of the proverb is mild. It implies that it is difficult and perhaps impossible for one to harm himself deliberately. By this speech, Balogun Ogunkoroju reminds the gods that they (the people of Ijaiye ) belong to them (the deities) and as a knife cannot cut its own handle no matter how sharp it is, so will the gods not harm the Ijaiye warriors, no matter how angry they are with them. The proverb stresses divine ownership of humans and the need for total dependence on providential care.

**PROVERB 21:** “There is no god like the throat; it takes sacrifice daily” (p.60)

Warrior Areagoro takes his turn in the prayer to the gods. He takes over from Balogun Ogunkoroju to solicit for divine help in the upcoming war. The tone of the proverb is soft. The speech is metaphoric as it compares the food
that passes through the throat daily to the food and other items given in sacrifice to the gods in traditional African society. It is believed that the gods can be appeased with gifts varying from money to food items and cloths when they are displeased with humans. Gifts are also used to solicit their help in times of need, in this case, the need for victory in war. The proverb is a rhetorical presentation of the prayer of a traditional African worshipper seeking divine assistance.

**PROVERB 22:** “A man with grass on his buttocks must not forget himself when he goes to put out a neighbour’s fire.” (p.74)

Egba warriors arrive Ijaiye to help in the war against Ibadan. Somoye, one of the Egba warriors, impresses on Kurunmi the need for urgency in executing the war. He asserts that Egba is like a man with grass on his buttocks who must not forget himself when he goes to put out a neighbour’s fire. The Egbas have their own challenges; the people of Dahomey have threatened to invade their land. So, it will be foolishness on their part to come to help Ijaiye and stay unnecessarily long. The tone of the proverb is persuasive and implies that those susceptible to danger must always be wary. The proverb serves a communicative purpose of teaching wisdom and watchfulness even in helping others.

**PROVERB 23:** “When a one-legged man needs help, he must not say that the friend who carries him on his back stinks; even if that helper does stink” (pp.83-84)

In Kurunmi’s Ogbole, the battle grows sore against Kurumi and Ijaiye fighters. The two groups suffer a huge loss in the ongoing war as thousands of soldiers lose their lives. A Bodyguard blames the Egbas for the poor performance of the Ijaiye and Egba soldiers. Kurunmi, however, advises the Bodyguard by this proverb, not to criticize the Egbas. The tone of the proverb is solemn and states that it is unreasonable for a helpless person to find fault with one who only offers to help him or her. Ijaiye needed help and so requested Egba to help out. The fact that the war is not in their favour is not reason enough to blame their helpers. The proverb is didactic and teaches that one should not blame his sincere helper for his woes. Also, you must tread with care when you have something at stake.

**PROVERB 24:** “A man called upon to be a hawk must catch chicken”. (p.85)

Ogunmola telling Ibikunle that they came to fight not celebrate he is saying it so that They can fight and get victory and he said let them fight what there is to fight and return to Ibadan at once Ibikunle told him he expects too much, my brother you forget it is Kurunmi himself we fight. The Areonakakanfo’s quick victory by arm is not so easy.

**PROVERB 25:** “When a child is a failure in life, the mother bears the blame; when the child succeeds, the credit naturally goes to the father”. (p.74)

Ogunmola swears to get victory wiping Out Egbaland after levelling the land of Ijaiye Sanoye to Ogunmola. The proverb is used to motivate Ogunmola. Because they have always had victory whenever they go for war and this particular one seems to be very difficult because Kurunmi was involved and they pray for the war not to be a curse of mothers so that they can get victory.

**PROVERB 26:** “The hawk yearns for the taste of the snail but it forgets the shell of the snail is no food for Hawks”. (p.87)

The warriors talking to each other to motivate themselves and referring to the Oyos that even if the Oyo and Ibadan think they can have victory over them because they have more soldiers but unknowingly to the Oyo and Ibadan soldiers the Ijaiye soldiers have a better weapon that will not allow the Oyo and Ibadan soldiers have victory over the Ijaiyes.

**PROVERB 27:** “Ten eyes, twenty eyes, countless eyes of others are not the same as a single eye of your own”. (p.88)

“Our failure is not for sharing with others, our failure is our own, our shame, our death,” Kurunmi tells the warriors. He continues, this is a day we know whether we live or die, It is our task. Kurunmi said the soldiers of Egbas cannot help the Ijaiye save the Ijaiye land that they can only support but cannot fight like the true blood of Ijaiye soldiers so they should not count on Egba warriors and fight to victory.

**PROVERB 28:** “When an elder sees a mudskipper he must not after words say it was a crocodile”. (p.42)

Kurunmi says his word is his word nothing changes he stands by his own words and swears that he shall seek the elders of Ijaiye for counsel in any action he wants to take and ask the elders to forgive his actions. The elders agreed and approved what he said and they said nothing shall again separate them from oneness. They all lean forward and grab the sword, sanctifying their oath.

**PROVERB 29:** “The baby who cries to stop its mother’s sleep too will suffer the anguish of not sleeping”. (p.49)

Ogunmola says the above proverb to the crowd of the young warriors addressing them to Ogunmola. The proverb serves as a warning; Ogunmola is warning that if they are looking for who to be forced to go to war with Kurunmi, they should go and look for scape goat somewhere, and that no one should call his name into the matter again because he has nothing to do with it anymore. And that anyone that talks evil against him, it is unto his own head the evil will return same goes to he who plot with another to bring him harm.

**PROVERB 30:** “A stick already touched by fire is not hard to set ablaze”. (p.48)

Ibikunle to the warriors that they must deal softly with Kurunmi because of his anger Ibikunle continued by saying they must deal softly with Kurunmi, that must try to win him not by violence, not through battle songs. Just peace to rain in the land and the people’s heart. The warriors are still not satisfied with what Ibikunle has said
because they know how dangerous Kurunmi can be. Then Osundina said they should be patient with Kurunmi because he is a man full of years and not long from now, he will be gathered into the land of the silence. Then they can have in Ijaiye another leader whose ear will receive their words and pay homage to the new Alafin.

4.2. Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal that the proverbs used in the play expressed intellectual and emotional attitudes. They performed roles such as giving advice, approval, disapproval, appreciation, apology and regret. They also performed socialising and persuasive functions. Some of the proverbs were used to congratulate, attract attention, advise, offer suggestions, request and warning. The meanings generated by the use of these proverbs usually depended on the situations or circumstances in which they were used. That supports the fact that proverbs are context dependent, and it is difficult to determine the meaning of a proverb without the context in which it is used.

The study also shows that the use of proverbs relies heavily on tribes, races and cultures. Therefore, proverbs are rooted in a people’s philosophy, religion and cosmology. In the text, Rev. and Mrs. Mann do not use any proverb throughout in the text because they do not share the same socio-cultural context with others. Another obvious result of this investigation is that, although proverbs have usually been considered the preference of the elders in the society because they are seen as the repository of the wisdom of the race, the elders may not necessarily mean those who have advanced in age. There are those who have responsibilities and positions of elder entrusted on them by status and they discharge such duties as such. Young kings and chiefs fall into this category.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, proverbs, as used in the play, depict wisdom, practicality and efficiency in speech. By their nature, proverbs portray politeness in cases where a direct speech may sound offensive or rude. The linguistic effect of proverbs reaches deeper into the human mind than mere words. They also show the maturity and experience of the speaker because their use calls for a measure of patience and decorum. Proverbs are not used for aesthetic purposes alone but also to improve the overall comprehension of what is said. Ola Rotimi uses proverbs in the text to garnish discourse, foreground issues, emphasize points, project the culture and portray the worldview and philosophy of the Yoruba race. Thus, the context of culture and situation help to inform the true meaning of Yoruba proverbs when used in interactions and the knowledge of pragmatics can help linguists, especially pragmaticians, to understand and interpret proverbs from any culture.

Biography:

Olusegun Oladele Jegede is a lecturer in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria. His research areas include Pragmatics, Syntax and Applied linguistics. He has a number of publications in these areas.

Eniola Omotayo Osoba is a member of the Department of English and Literary Studies, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria. Her research areas include Pragmatics and Semantics.

References:


