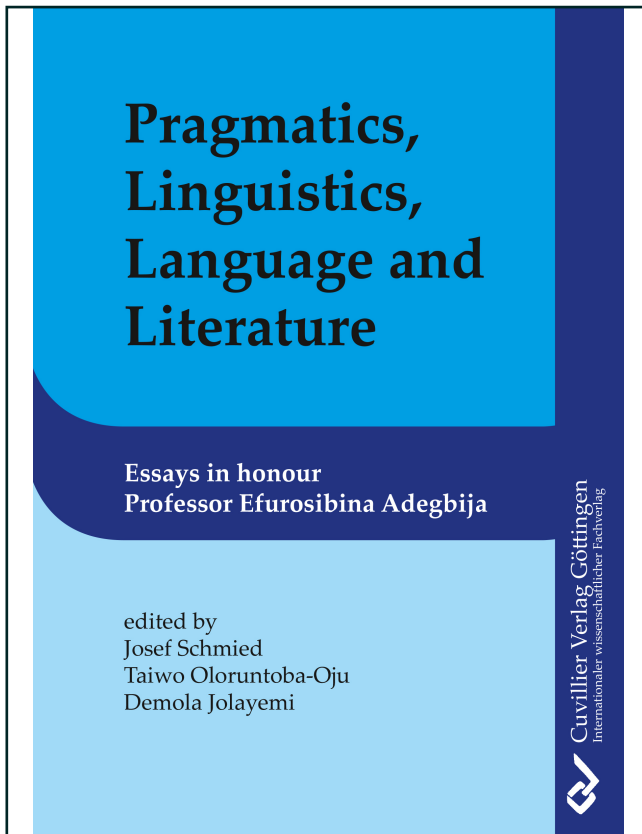




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Pragmatics, Linguistics, Language and Literature
Essays in Honour of Efurosibina Adegbija



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INTRODUCTION

Josef Schmied, Taiwo Olorunfoba-Oju, Demola Jolayemi

The late scholar Efurosibina Adegbija's special area of Pragmasociolinguistics resonates in many of the essays collected in this book, raising some nostalgia about his contribution to the discipline. One of his iconic contributions to the explication of the pragmasociolinguistic model is the article, 'My friend where is Anini?' was published in a variety of outlets including the *Journal of Pragmatics* in 1982. The article is published in this volume as a further tribute. The book is divided into four sections, as indicated in the table of contents. The division is guided by the dominant disciplinary orientation of the chapters (pragmatics and sociolinguistics, linguistics, applied linguistics, stylistics and literature). However, there would also be minor overlaps given the considerable interdisciplinary perspective that many of the contributors have applied to their contributions.

In the first part, Alebiosu's contribution explores the sociolinguistic significance of language prejudice as a social problem in Nigeria. Language attitude is a determining factor of both language development and language death. The attitude of the average Nigerian elite being apparently one of preference for English is therefore like a death knell for Nigerian indigenous tongues. Against this background, the yearly record of mass failure in English language is ironical. Alebiosu proposes a strategic programme of emancipation of Nigerian indigenous languages in order to turn them into strong and viable competitors on the global scene.

Funmi Olubode Sawe prefers the term 'global market' and describes globalization as involving of not only but also linguistic imperialism. The languages of Africa are reduced and relegated to exotic oddities as a result of a large scale shift of attention and loyalty to the languages of Europe. Sawe proposes a road map to insure and promote indigenous languages thereby turning them into the nation's hard currencies capable of competing with other international languages, for instance, English.

Prof. Pramod Pandey's chapter is one of those with a considerable overlap, in this case between linguistics and sociolinguistics. The chapter submits that a second language variety is not a mere interlanguage variety that we encounter only in the context of foreign language teaching but a lectal variety with features that relate to other *lects*. The significant phonological features of Indian English are examined in terms of Target features, Filter features and Novel features. Pandey urges researchers to carry out more investigation of second language variety of English in order to ascertain change and persistence of features in the respective linguistic systems.

Oyinkan Medubi's chapter examines the functions and values of Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) in political cartoons. Like any natural language, NPE has the ability to adequately conceptualise meaning for its users. Using Huenig's cartoon typology and Bulher's language function types, political cartoons are analyzed to account for how pidgin readily achieves referentiality and plays a mitigating role in the Babel-like linguistic situation of the country. Political cartoons captured in pidgin reach the mass populace with information bordering on Nigeria's socio-political and economic situations thereby communicating more effectively than English and serving as a veritable source for the standardization of written Nigeria Pidgin.



Tope Omoniyi makes a poignant reference to Adegbija's pragmasociolinguistics model in arguing for an expansion of the theory of naming as a social practice. Drawing illustrations from Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, Omoniyi analyses politicians' use of names, logos and slogans in election campaigns. The study identifies ambiguity and reinterpretation as rhetorical strategies used by politicians to achieve political ends. Omoniyi concludes that the effectiveness of ambiguating and reinterpreting names, logos and slogans in election campaigns is based on appropriateness and indicate the socio-cultural and communicative competence of users.

Charles Ochieng' Ong'ondo and Christopher Joseph Odhiambo investigate the impact of drama as an educational co-curricular activity on learner's communicative competence in English language. Using Communicative Language Theory as the major theoretical framework, the chapter borrows from the Monitor Theory of language acquisition and learning. The findings of the study show clearly that drama students display better communicative competence than non-drama students. The chapter concludes that drama has a significant impact on learner's communicative competence in English. It also enhances the students' writing and speaking skills.

In the second part of the book, Christoph Haase analyses cause-effect relationships as the most important of all cognitive paradigms. Cause-effect relationships are grammaticalized in all languages as different aspects of causativity and hence universally constrained. For example, causation is anchored in the lexical-aspectual class of the verb. According to Haase, causativity gives the sense of a one-to-one mapping of perceived reality on to linguistic reality.

Professor Olatunde Awobuluyi's chapter argues that the genitive morpheme is an element of a prosthetic vowel which has no semantic contribution, but is used to restructure non-canonic nouns in Yoruba. Drawing data extensively from Moba dialects, the chapter demonstrates the assertion with NP1 NP2 noun phrases with NP2 headed by the element *ṣi*, being appositive anaphors. The chapter claims that phonology plays a significant role in the process, with the mid tone v-shaped syllable (MTS) marking the noun phrases following its possessor.

The following chapter by Francis Oyebade draws attention to optionality and variation as common facts of language that challenge the classical optimality theory that language does not admit of alternative forms and must choose a winning candidate amongst contending options. Evidence from a number of languages examined by the author, including Ika (Agbor), shows three-way variant forms of Ga CVLV contraction, etc through a process of constraint suppression. He therefore concludes that optionality and variation theory is privileged over other versions of optimality theory because they do not tamper with the basic order of constraint that gives strong stability to the grammar.

Johnson Ilori's chapter examines the established dual syntactic functions of *oun* in Yoruba language – as a 3sg pronominal item and as a nominal conjunction in a restricted utterance type. However, the chapter demonstrates that the traditional conjunction function of *oun* is invalid and argues rather that *oun* is a pronominal anaphor in a complex appositive construction. The chapter also debunked earlier claims of *oun* as an agreement marker because it lacks the power to perform such function in Yoruba.

The chapter by Foluke Adekeye attempts to mediate the raging controversy among Yoruba grammarians regarding the number of lexical categories of the Yoruba language.



The nominal modifier (adjectives) is one of the lexical classes which defies agreement as to its status as a distinct lexical class in the language. The chapter submits that there are three syntactic classes of modifiers: Nominal, Verbal and Detransitivised (nominalised) verbs and concludes that modifiers cannot be established as a distinct lexical class but as a functional class in Yoruba.

‘Computational philology’ by Martin Weisser is another example of the sometimes blurred lines between linguistics and applied linguistics. Weisser points out the relevance of linguistics in designing a course in computational philology, especially through the use of linguistic annotations in the analysis of data. The chapter guides the reader through relevant processes involved in the application of computational philology, including basic mechanisms such as part-of-speech tagging which serves as the building blocks for other types of annotations.

Professor Schmied and Dr Mkemleke in their chapter examine the issue of academic writing in Africa in relation to three EAP communities or groups, which they identified as Student EAP, Doctoral EAP and International Research EAP communities. Focusing on the Student EAP group, the chapter discusses strategies of assisting the group with its established problems through a paradigm of reference, coherence and complexity. Using material from African corpora drawn from Cameroon and from East Africa, the chapter illustrates how the stated paradigms can help to highlight writing problems in the corpora and be used to improve students’ academic writing.

Bosede Similola Sotiloye examines the evidence in support of a student-centred approach to teaching English through literature. Using students of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) Nigeria as her study group, Sotiloye examines the impact of variables such as “change in course content,” “literary texts,” “reversed truancy,” and teaching methods on the students’ output. The study demonstrates that students’ perception of and attitude towards literary texts used in ESL class, literature play an important role in their performance output and that “student-centred teaching records better participation and greater interest.

Dontcheva-Navratilova, Hůlková and Povolná survey the recent developments in language teaching and learning methodologies, particularly the e-learning method. The chapter treats the teaching and learning of grammar as a dynamic interaction process with the teacher and the student engaging in various active and creative roles and with regards for contextual factors, uses of language corpora and the World Wide Web. Using the experience of LMS Moodle e-learning courses in Masaryk University the chapter concludes that e-learning support courses give students the advantage of using the World Wide Web and prepare them to use the educational communication technologies in their future profession as teachers.

The last section of the book comprises articles in stylistics, literature, drama and theatre. Prof. Olukayode Omole’s ‘Language and literature in transition in African literature’ focuses on the transitional character of African literature and the fact that, stylistically, the literature is still undergoing linguistic experimentations. Noting that literary expressions whether in the oral or written forms are conveyed via the agency of language, the chapter examines different phases or periods of African literature and prominent linguistic phenomena associated with these phases.

In her chapter, Yetunde Oluwafisan draws on decades of experience of teaching Stylistics to students of French in the University to propose the urgent action of re-



thinking the French Stylistics syllabus. The chapter relates the notions of style and stylistics to the students' level of exposure, or lack of it, to draw attention to the gaps and dents in their learning credentials. She decries the coercive and unproductive compulsoriness of Stylistics in the undergraduate and graduate classes, insisting that aptitude should be a factor in determining who to admit into the Stylistics class (in French as in English).

Samson Dare's 'Demystifying "mysteries" and "miracles" of exotic technology' links the works Soyinka's stylistically to the traditional world view and socio-cultural values of the Yoruba amongst whom most of the works are set. The analysis examines the accommodation of emerging new technology within the rubric of traditional folklore and eulogy associate after an initial view of the technological as exotic and mysterious. In doing so, Dare evokes frameworks established within linguistics for relating language to society and culture.

In his stylo-semantic appraisal of "Black culture", 'Demola Jolayemi extracts contrasts between African and Western cultural orientation from the lines of the poem written in honour of the late Mary Tinuoye who was a colleague in the discipline of Applied Linguistics. The aim of the chapter is to find whether or how the stylistic findings agree with the psychological state of the poet in the appropriate expression of his deep emotion. The writer selected a number of lexemes and phrases markedly used by the poet and analyses them in terms of the sense relations they contribute to the total meaning of the poem. The chapter evokes the pragmasociolinguistic concept whereby Adegbiya had defined the decoding of utterance meaning as "a decision making process of a cognitive sort." The chapter then analyses language elements in the poem in terms of the sense relations that they contribute to the overall meaning of the poem.

Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju's "Linguistic Framing and Unconscious Identities: Africinity and Psychosis in the Works of Bessie Head" employs the perspective of linguistic framing to elicit an Africanist consciousness in relation to literary psychosis in the works of the late South African writer, Bessie Head. Observing that Head in her life time had constantly denied the adoption of these paradigms, Oloruntoba-Oju demonstrates how a linguistic analysis helps to lay bare the unconscious ideology, unconscious identities and unconscious styles in political, ethnic and gendered texts such as Bessie Head's.

The chapter by Adeyemi Adegaju examines the effectiveness of the use of indigenous languages in HIV/AIDS awareness campaign in Nigeria. It studies selected episodes in a Yoruba radio drama series with specific attention paid to the discourse strategies used to effectively sustain the audience's attention. Among these strategies are the use of humour to communicate serious messages on the nature, prevention and control of the deadly disease. The chapter submits that indigenous languages are a very potent medium in reaching the people at the grassroots and particularly in fighting the continuous spread of HIV/AIDS in non-literate societies.

"New Female Dramatists in Nigeria" is the title of the contribution by Prof. Mabel Ewrierhoma. The chapter draws insights from feminist criticism and methodologies in its survey of women's drama in Nigeria over the past two decades. The survey covers the historicity and ideology women writers' struggle for a representative voice in the fields of art and particularly in the field of drama. The chapter notes that deliberate activism is "a clear pose" of new generation female Nigerian writers in their bid to make a mark and influence social consciousness in their environment.



Olufemi Ibukun Dumade's chapter is a comparative examination of the poems of Wole Soyinka – *Idanre* and John Milton – *Paradise Lost*. The study posits that epic forms are associated with certain conventions, though there are different forms of epic. The differences in the forms of the poems manifested in their length and their presentation of mythology. However, Dumade points out that the similarities are foregrounded on the two poets' preoccupation with war and military actions and epic heroism, in addition to such characteristic devices as varying the adjective-noun patterns in both *Paradise Lost* and *Idanre*, which add to the magniloquent effect of the language used by both authors.

"Pragmatism, history and aesthetics in the drama of Ola Rotimi" is the title of the contribution by Omotayo Olorunfoba-Oju. The chapter explores the concept of pragmatism and how this has impacted Ola Rotimi's search for a dramaturgy and language that would best reflect the situation in his immediate society. The chapter notes that Rotimi's plays are characterized by a pragmatist blend of history, drama and contemporary reality or exigencies, thus bringing historical experiences to bear on his drama and bending historical realities to serve pedagogical or didactic purposes in his drama.

Afolayan Kayode's "Proverbs and the thematic thrusts of selected poetry of Wole Soyinka" grapples with the issue of the alleged inaccessibility of Soyinka's works. The chapter asserts that proverbs are the pathfinders of meaning in the works and lays bare the pattern of introduction of proverbs in the works through explicit and non-explicit means. Afolayan concludes that Soyinka's use of proverbs is peculiar due to the multiplicity of sources beyond his local environment. He observes that while the local forms are universalized, the poet's admixture of forms and resort to elliptical models may pose a challenge to readers who are not accustomed to his style.

Christopher Odhiambo Joseph's analysis of Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Prisoner* employs the deconstructionist theory. The chapter argues that it is only through the inherent principles of the deconstructionist theory and criticism that the appreciation of the diverse meanings of the text can be reliably appraised. Deploying such spatial deconstructionist concepts as "the outside of inside: centre without centre," "readings of misreadings" and "interpretations of misinterpretations" the chapter extracts hitherto unremarked significances from the poetry of p'Bitek thus exposing the inadequacy of earlier non-deconstructionist readings of the work.





SECTION I:
PRAGMATICS AND SOCIOLINGUISTICS





1. ‘MY FRIEND, WHERE IS ANINI?’: DECODING THE MEANING OF UTTERANCES*

Efurosibina Adegbija

Introduction

Extracting meaning from an utterance is a complex process akin to fishing in a river: Different fishermen bring to bear on the act of fishing different experiences, use different methods, baits, and nets; these differences exert an impact on the types and sizes of fish caught. The depth of a river may also influence the nature of the catch. Similarly, utterances possess varying depths of meanings: while some may be understood immediately at the primary layer of meaning, others need a penetration to the secondary layer; some others still require a probe beyond the secondary layer into the deep, tertiary, master speech act layer.¹ The depth arrived at by a decoder is often directly proportional to the extent to which all necessary background information to an utterance is accessible. Consequently, every utterance is theoretically capable of depth in meaning.

This chapter aims at providing further insight into the crucial factors which come to bear in the decoding of the meaning(s) of utterances. The complexity involved, the chapter implies, should always make us weigh the potential impact of our words and their contexts against our intentions for uttering them.

Background

The utterance ‘My friend, where is Anini?’, which will be used as an illustration of the points made in this chapter, was made in October, 1986 by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to an Inspector-General of police who had already indicated his intention to retire from active service. It was made at a meeting of the highest decision-making body in Nigeria, the Armed Forces Ruling Council.

Layers of meaning

Essentially, decoding utterance meaning is a decision-making process of a highly cognitive sort. At the basic, primary layer of interpretation, a decision has to be made concerning the meaning being borne by, or assigned to, linguistic elements. This layer concerns ‘sense’ as distinct from ‘reference’ and is intra-linguistic rather than extra-linguistic. Doubtlessly, some form of micro-decomposition at the phonological, grammatical, lexical and pragmatic levels of language occurs in a swift and cinematic manner at this stage of decomposition. For most utterances, the meanings harboured at the higher order and deeper secondary and tertiary layers cannot be arrived at without this basic penetration of intra-linguistic meaning.

Thus, given an utterance like ‘My friend, where is Anini?’ a search machinery is generated within the addressee; this proceeds simultaneously, it seems, at different levels of language. For instance, at the phonological level, a considerable amount of meaning is carried by the prosodic features of stress, intonation, rhythm, and loudness. Let us illustrate this point with stress and intonation.

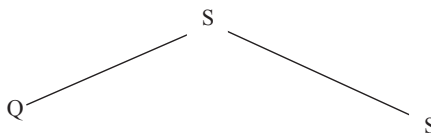


In the utterance, ‘My friend, where is Anini?’, emphatic stress on different lexical elements could suggest a speaker’s intention to convey a shift in meaning. Thus, a stress on *where* would probably compel the addressee to infer that the speaker’s principal interest and focus is on the *place* where the referent presently is. When the stress is shifted to *is*, however, it could signal the speaker’s intention to query whether or not the referent exists in any possible world. Furthermore, when the proper noun *Anini* is stressed, the implication could be that the author desires to compare Anini to another human being. Although the ‘total’ meaning of the utterance would be somewhat the same with each stress shift, yet the shifts convey different nuances and shades of meaning. The moral of this discussion is that stress on a single lexical element in an utterance is capable not only of changing meaning but also of tilting it in one direction rather than another.

Even more significant for the decoding of meaning is the contribution that intonation, another domain of the phonological level, is capable of making. Whereas stress mainly affects the meaning of individual lexical elements in an utterance, intonation penetrates the propositional element. It can indicate not only the speaker’s attitude, but also what is important in an utterance; often, it does this in collaboration with paralinguistic, non-verbal cues. In this unity with non-verbal cues principally lies the strength of intonation in conveying and modifying meaning. Hence, ‘Is this the girl you want to marry?’ could, uttered with varying intonation and paralinguistic cues, signal different meanings. An addressee’s interpretation of non-verbal cues affects the meaning ascribed to the propositional content of a particular utterance. Thus, ‘My friend, where is Anini?’ could, with different intonations and paralinguistic cues, tentatively suggest the following interpretations:

- (a) Do you really think such a person exists?
- (b) Am I Anini’s keeper?
- (c) What have you done about Anini?
- (d) Where are you keeping Anini?
- (e) Do you know the place where the person called Anini lives?

Also capable of bequeathing a particular semantic aura to an utterance is its underlying grammatical structure. Thus, at the grammatical level, the utterance in question has the structure of a WH-question sentence. At the deep structural level, the question presupposes the existence of an entity by the name *Anini*. Thus, the question could be derived from the simplified assertive utterance: ‘Anini be somewhere’ as follows:



Syntactically, the answer to the question must contain a place noun.

So far, our analysis has been at the linguistic micro-decomposition, primary level. However, rarely does the interpretation of an utterance end at this layer. Essentially, then, meaning at this basic layer is often incomplete and unsatisfactory. Any theory of meaning