A Sociolinguistic Study of Fagunwa/Soyinka's *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons*

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Abstract

This study takes a sociolinguistic approach to analyze *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons*, a translation of the Yoruba text, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale* (1938) which was authored by Daniel Olorunfemi Fagunwa, the greatest Yoruba novelist and translated by Wole Soyinka, a literary icon cum Nobel laureate. The work is premised on the fact that many literary and linguistic attempts at Fagunwa's work have failed to benchmark the text with the speech act theory and the VARIES model simultaneously as we have done in this study. Fifteen excerpts from the text served as our data. Each datum is subjected to content and quantitative analyses based on relevant sociolinguistic variables of vocation (occupation), sex, age, religion, geography (ethnicity), age, education and socio-economic status. The data were further dissected according to the speech act theory by Austin (1962) in a bid to ascertain the validity of their illocutionary force(s). The study indicates that social institutions affect language (choice and use) a great deal and language, in turn, performs different illocutionary acts among various heterogeneous social groups in a speech community like the Yoruba, which is replicated in the text.

Keywords: daemons, speech acts, Soyinka, VARIES model, Yoruba

1. Introduction

The *Forest of a Thousand Daemons* is a translation of *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale,* a Yoruba novel written by Daniel Olorunfemi Fagunwa, one of the greatest Yoruba novelists. Though he authored other books, his *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale,* (1938) "was the first full-length novel published in the Yoruba language" (*Encyclopedia Britannica online*, 2012). The novel exhibits the rich aura of African culture from the Yoruba oral narrative perspective. In the characteristic manner of a hunter reminiscing on his past expeditions and exploits, Fagunwa has been able to deploy variegated nuances of his Yoruba African language and culture which Wole Soyinka, a nobel laureate and master translator, has therefore popularized in English such that the novel could enjoy a wider readership and criticism. But as rich as the text is, researchers have failed to benchmark it with the speech act theory and the VARIES model simultaneously. The present study is therefore designed to fill this gap. This is with the aim of bringing out the thematic cum cultural resourcefulness of the work and the different speech acts which the text exhibits contextually.

2. A Synopsis of the Text

The plot is about the saga of a hunter named Akara-ogun (Compound-of-Spells). The hunter enthuses, "I am indeed Akara-ogun, Compound-of-Spells; even as my name is, so am I. I am no morsel for the sorcerer.."(p71). The story commences with Akara-ogun in the house of the writer (p.8) whom he visits in order to get his story documented. The hunter does this in the characteristic manner of the illiterate traditional Yoruba men who always seek for the services of a public letter-writer. The hunter first intimates the reader/listener with his pedigree. His background story reveals that he was born to a polygamous home. His father was a hunter and his mother, a witch. He also had three step-mothers and nine siblings (p. 9). Unfortunately, his mother killed all the family members except the narrator and his father, who eventually died shortly after the mysterious death of the woman. From this point, the hunter digresses into a long narration of his epical journeys. These are divided into three: his first trip to "Igbo Irunmale" (the forest of a thousand demons), his second expedition to the forest and his tour to Mount Langbodo with six other brave hunters.

The first trip was momentary because of the hunter-narrator's inexperience. He was scared by the marketing ghommids who planned to kill him because he was relaxing on top of a "tree" which happened to be their leader. Therefore, Akara-ogun invoked his *egbe* (a catapulting spell) which eventually hurled him home. Getting home, he was ashamed of himself. He therefore commanded *egbe* to take him back to the forest. Thus began his second trip.

The second trip to Irunmale Forest was not only comical, but also fascinating. The hunter was forewarned of an ill-luck by his soothsaying kolanuts, an owl which cried round him and his left toe (mother's toe) which he stubbed against a stone. Despite these ominous signs (of impending danger), the hunter went ahead. Not quite long, the misfortune started unfolding. He had encounter with different forest spirits like the wall-nut troll, the wailing gnome, the dwarf gnome whose deer he shot and chased to the creature's cave and, moreover, Agbako (Misfortune).   The latter encounter took him to a torture chamber underground. And it took the assistance of Iranlowo (Helpmate) for him to escape. He eventually fell in love with the lady (Helpmate). However, he became famous and rich at the end of this trip.

Therefore, some of his people became jealous of him, particularly, the chiefs. They then connived together and convinced the king to send Akara-Ogun on a state quest to Mount Langbodo, a dodgy town located at the end of the evil forest (i.e. Irunmale forest).   Akara-Ogun puts it succinctly:

> I had heard many tales of Mount Langbodo but had never yet encountered
>
> anyone who had made the journey and returned to tell the tale. Before anyone
>
> came into that city he would first have to brave the length of the Forest of
>
> Irunmale, and that is only the beginning of the journey… because the dwellers of
>
> Langbodo hear, in most distinct notes, the crowing of cocks from the heavenly vault.
>
> (p. 72)

This consequently brings to the fore the quest motif in the novel. It should be noted that the hunter had boasted initially to go to wherever he would be sent by the king. So, he demanded for the assistance of six other brave warriors to accompany him. Thereafter, the search began for Kako (a lion club wielder), Imodoye (wise man), Olohun-Iyo (Praise singer), Efoye (the man with feathers), Elegbede-Ode (the half human, half baboon man) and Aramanda Okunrin (miracle man).   Each of the six hunters had a special natural trait that proved useful each time they needed to. Thus began the third trip to the forest.

The third expedition took him and his colleagues through the Forest of Irunmale. They encountered different tribulations and trials. They passed through animal city and the city of birds where they were scanned and incarcerated awhile for having killed birds without any justified cause in the past. They also encountered Agbako (Misfortune) who was eventually killed by the joint efforts of Kako (a lion club wielder) and Aramanda (miracle man).   Along the line, some of the hunters wanted to go back. But oftentimes, they called on Iranlowo (Helpmate) who always came to their rescue. Eventually they got to Langbodo and they were taught seven different didactic lessons for seven days by Iragbeje (swamp accommodates seven) in his house which had seven wings. Unfortunately, not all the hunters could return home as they were drifted by different vicissitudes of life in the jungle. But Akara-Ogun was among the lucky ones who arrived safely.

The plot therefore is a replica of life journey and social development in which human sojourners are trying to attain a level of perfection (hence the seven, seven numbers). Every man has his or her Langbodo to climb for the common good of his society. To achieve this, however, good leadership quality as well as courage with mentoring is needed. This is demonstrated Akara-Ogun who determined doggedly to serve his fatherland while simultaneously mentoring his followers.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

Two theoretical schools of thought come to play as we consider the present study.   These are: the VARIES model and the speech act theory. The former is an offshoot of sociolinguistics. It therefore studies the interaction between society and language, using a set of acronyms. It aims to establish language as a phenomenon upon which social institutions are grounded. As observed by Lehman (1976, p. 275), the goal of any users of the VARIES model, i.e. sociolinguists is "to determine how social institutions affect language and how the varied users of language affect social groups." The import of this quote is that language and society are closely

interwoven and a separation of one from the other would prove absurd. Corroborating this idea, Hudson (1980) posits that the dual function of speech is to communicate and identify social groups. He concludes that any linguistic study that fails to recognize the socio-cultural group that produces it is vague. He submits, "to study speech without reference to the society which uses it is to exclude the possibility of finding social explanations for the structures that are used." (p. 275).

Trudgill (1983) approaches this issue from social stratification's perspective when he opines that differentiation in human societies is reflected in their languages. Since different social groups use different linguistic varieties, sociolinguists, "as experienced members of a speech community…have learnt to classify speakers accordingly" (p. 34).   The stance of these scholars is what later metamorphosed into the VARIES model, a set of acronyms that classifies language in use in society into: Vocational language, Age related jargons, Regional (and, or Religious) language, Informality/Formality, Educational Jargons and Sex language. Adeyanju (2002) summarizes the idea by positing as follows:

> The society is stratified into various segments along the variables of sex, age, region,
>
> Education, socio-economic status, occupation etc, sociolinguists are interested in
>
> Investigating and describing features of verbal interaction peculiar to each social class.
>
> (p. 528).

Since one of the two functions of language is to communicate (Hudson, ibid.), Austin (1962) believes that words are not just uttered anyhow, people do things with words. Thus in his posthumous publication, *How to do things with words* (1962), Austin develops the speech act theory. He first distinguishes between constative utterances and performative utterances. The former are mere utterances used to make statements (He is going), describe (the typist is a fair lady) or illustrate (lion belongs to the cat family) and they have the quality of being true or false. But the latter (i.e. performative utterances) are used to perform actions (I pronounce you husband and wife; I hereby name this ship Queen Elizabeth) and they do not possess any truth values.

If a cleric or a court registrar says to a man and a lady, 'I pronounce you husband and wife,' he is not describing what he is doing, nor stating that he is doing it, but actually performing the action of joining the couple. From that moment, the marriage is contracted. By uttering such a sentence(s) in the appropriate circumstances is not to describe what one is doing, but rather, a performance of the real action (of doing it).   Such utterances, according to Austin, are called performatives or performative utterances. Furthermore, Austin believes that before a performative utterance can hold and be regarded as being valid, certain conditions (which are called the felicity conditions) must be met. Bloomer, Griffths and Merrison (2005, p.86) summarize the conditions as: "the act must be recognized by convention, the person performing the act must have the authority to do so, the occasion of the utterance must be right in certain cases and the act has to be executed correctly and completely."

From the foregoing, we have discussed the theory of speech acts on the basis of the distinction between saying something and doing something. But Austin soon came to realize that this is an untenable distinction. In his further development of the theory of speech acts, Austin drew a three-fold distinction among locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act is an act of saying something, the production of meaningful utterance. Austin (1962) submits that a locutionary act is: **"**The utterance of certain noises, the utterance of certain words in a construction and the utterance of them with a certain "meaning" in the favourite philosophical sense of that word, i.e. with a certain sense and a certain reference." (p. 94)

An illocutionary act is an act performed in saying something i.e. making a statement or promise, issuing a command or request and asking a question. Thus the illocutionary act of the utterance "where are you coming from?" is questioning. A perlocutionary act is the effect of an utterance on the hearer/audience/reader. It is an act performed by means of saying something i.e. getting someone to believe that something is so, moving someone to anger, consoling someone in distress.

It should be noted that Austin's pupil, Searle (1969, 1979a), popularizes speech acts by drawing a distinction between the speaker's (utterance) meaning and sentence meaning.   He believes that figurative terms or tropes (irony, metaphor, hints, euphemism) are indirect speech acts.   Therefore, when the three syntactic forms (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and pragmatic function(s) coincide, the effect is called a direct speech act. For example:

> (a)   The kingdom of man is here. (Declarative form functioning as an assertion)

(b)   Are you sure it is here? (Interrogative form functioning as a question)

(c)   Get out of here. (Imperative form functioning as an order.)

In the examples above, the sentence structures and illocutionary functions overlap; hence, they are categorized as direct speech acts.   Conversely, in indirect speech acts, the utterance meaning subsumes the sentence meaning but extends beyond it (Searle 1979a). Osisanwo (2003, p. 65) lends credence to the above with the following indirect speech act examples:

I hereby request of you that you pay your debt.

(Declarative used for a command/request.)

Do you have to stand on my head?

(Interrogative used for a command.)

You are blocking my view.

(Declarative used for a command.)

From the foregoing, we may deduce that while Austin takes a conventional approach to the speech act theory, Searle popularizes it by his introduction of the direct and indirect speech acts dichotomy which is a subtle means of integrating grammar into the theory.

4. Literature Review

Balogun (2002), in a related study on African literature, discovers that "African literature explores the realities of human condition in Africa in totality" and sensitizes the mind of people towards necessary change (p. 504). Citing the women's trek in *God's Bits of Woods,* the researcher believes that the action is an historic method of causing psychological embarrassment to a constituted authority. The trek, as a revolution, therefore calls for an inevitable change. Similarly, he opines that in *Xala,* Ousmane is able to blend variety of contents which are largely ritualistic and archetypal; such as marriage, sex relationships and religion. He concludes that art and society are closely intertwined to the extent that a work of art can be manipulated to fight oppressive socio-political ideologies like capitalism and fascism on one hand. On the other, literary works can be used to correct social ills and teach moral lessons. The work is similar to the present study which takes a sociolinguistic approach to study Fagunwa/Soyinka's *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons,* another African novel which uses didactic method to correct social ills. But while our study is linguistic in approach, Balogun's is purely literary.

Alabi (2007) invokes the use of imprecations among a Yoruba speech community known as Ijesa. She argues that Ijesa's imprecations are constructed in sentences as opposed to the European's imprecations which are formulated in words and phrases. She finds out that curses have both economic and social implications for the users. Economically, they serve as instruments of money retrieval from debtors. Socially, they are used to curse individual's bad luck, correct and control children, warn against bad habits. Furthermore, imprecations are used to banter at home and in social gatherings. She submits therefore that "Ijesa curses are idiosyncratic, harmless and beautiful and means to blessing" (Alabi 2007, p. 185). The work is similar to ours in theoretical framework because it uses sociolinguistic approach to study a group among the Yoruba. In contrast, while Alabi's work is generic, the present study is textual in that it takes sociolinguistic approach to study a specific literary text authored by Yoruba men.

Yunus (2007) takes a linguistic approach to study the global religious crises. He discovers that the crises being witnessed by the different religious sects in the world are traceable to communication problems and the 'images' which the adherents of the religions hold. He accentuates that man-God image which "is characteristically 'unnegotiated' and so undemocratic" (p. 260) is a major challenge that triggers and fans the embers of misunderstanding among the heterogeneous group of believers. He however points out that the man-others part of religious discourse consists of the moral codes which the two principal religious groups in Nigeria (Islam and Christianity) profess and preach. The study advocates for religious tolerance among Nigerian faithful while simultaneously cautioning them to avoid the "temptation to be sacrilegious towards others' cherished religious concepts (or images)" (p. 261).

The study is similar to the present because Fagunwa/Soyinka advocates for religious harmony in our primary text. However, there are certain variations in the two studies. First, while Yunus (2007) uses the organic theory of knowledge/image (which is psychological) as his theoretical framework, the present study adopts the speech

act theory (which is philosophical) and the VARIES model (sociological) as its theoretical approaches. Finally, while Yunus uses stickers, wall inscriptions and posters, religious creeds, the Quran as well as The Holy Bible as his corpus, the present study dwells largely on a literary text by Fagunwa/Soyinka.

Behnam and Rassekh-Alqol (2012) investigate the sociolinguistic parameters and the use of metathesis in Azeri language. Metathesis according to the researchers is "the process whereby in certain languages, under certain conditions, sounds appear to switch positions with one another."(p. 57). Their study affirms that there is a symbiotic relationship between society and language and that a significant relationship exists between extra-linguistic variables and the use of metathesis as a linguistic phonological process. Furthermore, the study indicates that the social plus high (+high) rarely use metathesis as against the minus high (-high) who are fond of its usage. The study is related to the present in theoretical framework because it takes a sociolinguistic approach to study the Azeri language. It differs from our study however because the present study is considering sociolinguistics in a novel based on the Yoruba linguistic community.

Odebode (2012) takes a socio-pragmatic look at characters' anthroponyms in Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*. He focuses on the VARIES model largely among the theoretical frameworks used in analyzing the study. He finds out that names are meaning potentials in the universe of Soyinka's text and that naming transcends the illocutionary act of labeling to bring into play the social indices of occupation, age, geography, ethnicity and religion. The study is related to the present in two perspectives. First, the two studies are similar in theoretical frameworks, having integrated the VARIES model into their theoretical approaches. Coupled with this is the fact that the studies have a lot to do with the African author, Wole Soyinka. However, while the former study deals with a play, the present studies a prose fiction.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Religious Language

5.1.1 Text 1

"Let the masquerader worship the mask for as long as he pleases, he must return to render account to you; let the follower of Sango serve and serve Sango, he must render account to you; let the devotee of Oya bow to Oya, he must return in the end to you and render accounts. The Moslems worship you as Anabi, the Christians offer you every minute of their existence. I implore you rescue me, I cannot alone save myself, God almighty, save me from my plight!" (P.42)

Text 1 showcases the language of religion as used in the text, by indicating the three principal religions in Nigeria. These are: the traditional religion (represented by the following deities: masquerade; Sango, thunder god and Oya, the river goddess), Islam (represented by Anabi, the Moslem's Holy Prophet) and Christianity. It should be noted that although the authors grew up in Christian homes, they did not lose touch with their Yoruba traditional religion. This background could have probably informed the allusion to these religious groups in the text. As a corollary, this merger attests to the popular Yoruba saying "Awa o s'oro ile wa, esin kan ko pe k'awa ma s'oro, awa o s'oro ile wa" (we will do our traditional ritual, no religion can hinder us from performing our home's ritual). The text also harmonizes the three religions by indicating that their adherents are calling on the same God, to whom they are accountable. Contextually, Akara-ogun has been captured by the fin-bodied man who is torturing him because he shot his antelope. After his magical power has failed to free him from the man, the hunter resorts into prayer. He speaks: "I began to understand where I had erred. I realized that I indulged in magical arts but had failed to reckon with god." (p. 41). The illocutionary act of the utterance therefore, is praying.

5.2 Language and Occupation

5.2.1 Text 2

"But no, I did hunt again, for it is in the profession to which a man is trained that he must serve; the goods which he truly understands are what a trader sells, and it was not fitting that I should leave my profession at the prime of day and turn to masonry or wood-carving (p. 36)

5.2.2 Text 3

"Fourth was Olohun-iyo, the Voice of Flavours, he was the most handsome of all men on earth, the finest singer and the best drummer." (p.79)

5.2.3 Text 4

"…he simply grabbed his club, stuck his matchet in its sheath and walked on briskly as when the office clerk hurries to his place of business" (p. 76).

5.2.4 Text 5

"Even if you are educated, even when you become a doctor twelve times over, a lawyer sixteen times over; when you become thirteen types of Bishop and wear twenty clerical stoles at once, never condemn your father."(p. 105)

Texts 2 to 5 present the occupational variable. In Text 2, Akara-ogun refers to his hunting profession as well as trading, brick-laying (masonry) and wood-carving. He further emphasizes on singing and drumming in Text 3. It should be noted that these are the dominant professions in the ancient Yoruba land. The Yoruba believe in dignity of labor and commitment to one's profession. Similarly, they appreciate mentoring and praise a child who takes after his father's profession. This is attested to by the hunter-narrator that "By the time I was ten I had begun to accompany my father on his hunts and at fifteen I possessed my own gun." (p.14). The hunter, therefore, uses the professions to emphasize on faithfulness and commitment to one's vocation. That is why he does not want to leave hunting for another job in Text 2. Furthermore, Olohun-iyo (Praise-singer) is brought in as one of the six hunters who accompany Akara-ogun to Mount Langbodo. His profession is significant because the Yoruba believe that *orin ni siwaju ote* (songs precede intrigues). It is a common knowledge that hunters dance and make sacrifice to the Ogun (god of iron) before embarking on any expedition. This is why most of Soyinka's plays *(Kongi's Harvest* (1967)*, Death and the King's Horseman* (1975)*, King Baabu* (2002)*)* have Praise-Singer(s) in their cast lists.

Unlike the primitive jobs in the preceding examples, Texts 4 and 5 present the white collar jobs (clerical officer, medicine, law and clergy). The authors use this to draw a parallel between the old and modern professions. However, the narrator recognizes the tendency for pride in young men. That is why he quickly warns them not to condemn their fathers regardless of their fortunes in the white collar jobs. Based on the above, we may submit that the principal illocutionary act of the texts is warning with a blend of comparing and describing.

5.3 Language and Ethnicity

5.3.1 Text 6

"…And I request you to adjust your *agbada,* toss its sleeve properly over your shoulder, prepare yourselves for dancing…I can dance and you can drum; this is the meeting of two grubs." (p.8)

5.3.2 Text 7

"The arm of the human kind accompanies the pounded yam when you dine, their fleshly breasts provides the meat for your eba." (p. 16)

5.3.3 Text 8

"When our masquerade dances well, our heads swell and do a spin. Forgive my forwardness, it is the proverb which speaks." (p.7)

Texts 6 to 8 indicate the ethnicity variable as far as language use is concerned. Certain words are fore-grounded in the texts. These are *agbada, pounded yam* and *eba*. Agbada is a flowing gown worn by the adult Yoruba particularly on special occasions like wedding, naming and funeral ceremonies. That is why Akara-ogun uses a performative clause (I request you…) in Text 6 to prepare the mindset of his audience for his proverbial dance. Pounded yam and eba are reputable delicacies which are not far-fetched during such occasions. Meanwhile, the Yoruba cherish pounded yam so much that they have different poems for it. One of these is "Iyan l'onje, oka loogun, airi rara lan je'ko, k'enu ma di'le ni ti guguru" (Pounded yam is food, yam cassava is medicine, it is when we cannot get anything that we take pap, pop-corn is meant for keeping one's mouth busy). From the panegyric, we may deduce that only pounded yam is recognized as authentic food among the Yoruba. Both pounded yam and *eba* (a delicacy made from processed cassava) are taken with stew and meats. This is why the forest's head in Text 7 is being eulogized for being powerful to the extent of using human flesh as meat on *iyan* (pounded yam) and *eba*.

Consequently, Text 8 presents a local proverb by the hunter-narrator. The hunter's apology, after saying the proverb, is significant to the present study. He does so because it is a taboo for a young person to give a proverb in the presence of the old or wise men. Giving of proverbs is therefore a marker of age. However, three

illocutionary acts can be gleaned from the texts: requesting (Text 6), eulogizing (Text 7) and apologizing (Text 8).

5.4 Language and gender

5.4.1 Text 9

"May God in his infinite mercy not leave you men to encounter such a woman" (P. 47)

By locution, this is a statement made by a man (i.e. the narrator). The illocutionary act of the statement is praying. The motivation of the prayer is a social belief that most African women are treacherous and incorrigible. This is epitomized in the ghommids' king's wife who conspires with the king's enemies to get rid of her husband (see pages 46-47).

5.4.2 Text 10

"What can the matter be, my husband? What trouble have I stirred awake? What offence have I committed to warrant this? In what manner have you been aggrieved? Did you discover me with another man? Have I ever spoken in an unseemingly manner to you? Have I neglected to show my love sufficiently? Were you told I brawl in public? Am I vain? Or is it that I am unclean in my habits? Are my manners careless or disrespectful towards you?" (p.76)

The above illustrates an illocutionary act of questioning. It is a direct speech act because syntactically, we have a case of interrogative mood(s) performing the speech act of questioning. The questions are presented in persuasive language (which is characteristic) of a woman entreating her husband, Kako, not to leave her. It should be noted that Akara-ogun has gone to the forest home of the Kakos to invite him for the expedition to Mount Langbodo. But Kako does not want to take his wife along because she is a ghommid. Kako in response makes reference to a Biblical allusion that there is a time for everything under the sun (see Ecclesiastes 3, verse 1-7). Kako concludes by advising the woman that "if you find another husband, wed him; but do not count on Kako anymore. (p. 76). When the former would not give up, Kako eventually kills her saying, "Before God adjuges me guilty I shall pass sentence on your guilt" (p. 77). Thus the theme of wickedness with treachery is stressed in the text. The text indicates the persuasive language of women as opposed to the aggressive and sharp tongue of men. It further establishes the primitive African patriarchal system that views a woman as an ordinary property which can be dispensed with at any time.

5.5 Language and Social Class

5.5.1 Text 11

"I went and when I was close to him and saw that he was a king, I prostrated myself full-length on the ground, poured earth on my head, and saluted him 'Kabiyesi'" (p.44)

5.5.2 Text 12

"I had no sooner come within sight of him than he called out, his cheeks burstling with pleasure, 'Akara-ogun', and I in turn replied, Kabiyesi, it is indeed I. May God give you a long life.' Then he sang out to me the second time, 'Akara-ogun', and I answered him, live long, live honoured; we are all children under your fold.'" (p.71)

In Texts 11 and 12, Akara-ogun is reporting his encounter with the ghommids' king in Irunmale Forest (p. 44) and the Mount Langbodo king (p. 71). The speech act of the statements is, therefore, reporting. Furthermore, the texts depict deference or respect which operates in a situation of social distance like the official high and low relationship(s). This is what Odebunmi (2002, p. 181) refers to as "face act." It should be noted that socially, among the Yoruba, it is a taboo for the elder to bow before the younger person irrespective of the situation or circumstance. It is also uncooperative for the –high to address the +high by the latter's first name. Rather, title must be used. Ervin-Tripp (1972) also lends credence to this by observing that address system (names in use like first name or title plus first name) can reveal status marked situations, rank and identity. This is why Akara-ogun (-high) prostrates before the kings in texts 11 and 12, while using the title *Kabiyesi* (meaning he whose authority cannot be questioned, the ultimate) for the kings. In contrast, the kings (+high) address the hunter by his first name which is a matter of politeness. Being polite therefore consists of a deliberate attempt to save face for another. Odebunmi (2002, p. 181) defines face as "the emotional and social feeling of self which an individual has and expects others to recognize." He recognizes two types of face acts. First is respect or deference which operates in a situation of social distance like the official high and low relationship as explicated in texts 11 and 12. The second type of face according to Odebunmi (2002) is friendliness or solidarity which exists between people of horizontal relationship. This is the case in Text 13 below.

5.5.3 Text 13

"I am happy to see you all, friends sitting here-young and old, male and female. Were it not for the great affection you bear my friend, I would not find you here. When I came here yesterday, I did not meet anyone of you, there was only this friend of mine, he bade me welcome, took good care of me, and behaved towards me with the nature of courtesy itself. My prayer therefore is may God let this kind of conduct remain among us black races forever" (p.35)

The underlying speech acts in the extract above are eulogizing/appreciating, reporting and praying. First, Akara-ogun appreciates his audience (sentences 1 and 2). Subsequently, he gives a brief report of what happened to him in the same setting the previous day (sentence 3). Finally, he offers a word of prayer for his black race (sentence 4). It cannot be overemphasized that the social relationship existing between the participants in this context is horizontal i.e. equal status. Therefore, the address system does not give room for protocol or official form of interaction.

5.6 Language and Age

5.6.1 Text 14

"I wish to tell you, child, it is your character at home which follows you outside; you who fail to give honor to your father can do no honor to the race of black people, and what then is the meaning of your existence?" (p.105)

The presupposition of the statement above is that the speaker (Iragbeje) is an adult. The seven brave hunters have gone to his house at Mount Langbodo to spend seven days in order to receive seven different didactic teachings. One of the moral lessons is being taught in this context where a child is enjoined to honor his parents. The Yoruba believe that *ile ni a ti n ko eso r'ode* (charity begins at home). That is why children are being warned to take care of their character at home. As a corollary, the Yoruba also believe that *enu agba ni obi n gbo si* (kolanut stays long in the mouth of the elderly ones), socially, it is an adult who possesses such audacity and word-power to instruct the young ones. The last clause in the excerpt poses a rhetorical question to the listeners based on the moral lesson invoked in the context. Thus the text demonstrates the patriarchal system of authority in Africa where the father gives unquestionable instructions to his many wives and children (notice the preponderance of the second person plural pronoun "you, you"). He also possesses the power to question them at will. Therefore, the illocutionary act of the excerpt is instructing with questioning.

5.6.2 Text 15

"When we entered the city we knew nothing of this and had we not all stoned birds in our childhood and killed them without a purpose at some times in our lives?" (p.86)

Unlike the situation in Text 14, we have a preponderance of the first person plural pronoun (we) in this text. Although, the language is still that of an adult speaker, it reports a collective action and indicates a mature presenter and adult listeners. Contextually, the narrator is emphasizing that they are no longer children because aimless bird hunting characterizes the African child, particularly among the Yoruba. And having passed through that stage, they are found guilty in the city of birds where they are being entrapped. This is in consonance with a Yoruba proverb that *agba wa bura bi ewe ko ba se e ri* (the elderly one, come and swear if you have never been childish). The first sentence thus reports their perceived innocence while the last is a rhetorical question convicting them of the offence. The underlying speech acts from the text are reporting and questioning.

6. Summary of Analysis

The following statistical breakdown can be gleaned from the analysis so far: Religious language attracts one text (1) with one corresponding illocutionary act (of praying). Under occupational variable, we deployed four texts (2,3,4,5) which eventually culminated into one major illocutionary act of warning (with a blend of comparing and describing). The Regional (Ethnicity) variable attracts three texts (6, 7, 8). These equally attract three illocutionary acts of requesting, eulogizing and apologizing respectively. The (language and) gender variable features two texts (9 and 10) and two illocutionary acts (praying and questioning). Furthermore, the variable of language and social class has three texts (11, 12 and 13) .The speech act function of Text 11 and 12 is reporting. Conversely, Text 13 is a complex excerpt that produces three illocutionary acts of eulogizing, reporting and praying. Finally, the age related variable (with language) attracts two texts (14 and 15). Text 14 has the illocutionary acts of instructing and questioning while Text 15 has reporting and questioning as its speech acts. The illocutionary acts deployed can therefore be statistically represented in a table (Table 1) and a line graph (Fig. 1) as follows:

Table 1: A table indicating the frequency and percentage distribution of illocutionary acts studied

Illocutionary Act	Frequency	Percentage
Praying	3	20
Warning	1	6.67
Requesting	1	6.67
Eulogizing	2	13.32
Apologizing	1	6.67
Questioning	3	20
Reporting	3	20
Instructing	1	6.67
Total	15	100

From Table 1, three columns are marked out. The first column indicates the illocutionary acts distributed; the second indicates the frequency of the illocutionary acts while the last gives the percentage of the frequency.
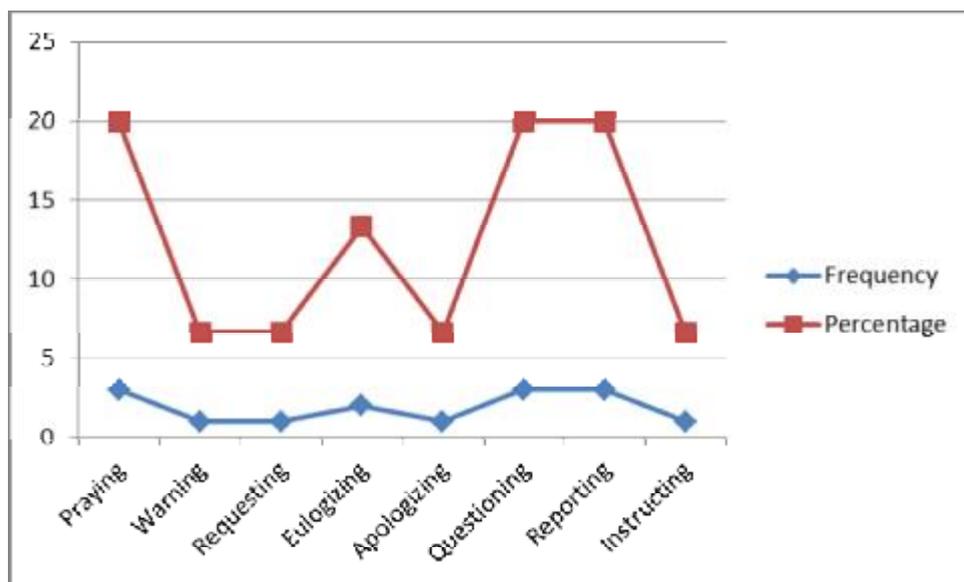

Fig. 1: A graphical representation of frequency and percentage of illocutionary distribution

In summary, it should be noted that eight illocutionary acts are deployed. Among these, praying, questioning and reporting occur three times each; hence a frequency of 3 and 20% respectively. There are two cases of eulogizing. This translates to a frequency of 2 and 13.32%. Finally, the illocutionary acts of warning, requesting, apologizing and instructing have 1 frequency each and 6.67% respectively. Fig. 1 gives a graphical illustration of this distribution.

7. Conclusion

This study has considered a sociolinguistic study of Fagunwa/Soyinka's *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* from the speech act theory's and the VARIES model's perspectives. Fifteen excerpts from the text served as our data. The study indicates that there is a kind of symbiotic relationship between social institutions and language. The former affect language (choice and use) a great deal while the latter, in turn, performs different illocutionary acts among the various heterogeneous social groups in a speech community. Language therefore becomes the DNA of a society through which we can determine vocation, age, sex, religion, politics and other socio-cultural variables both textually and extra-textually.

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