Rediscovering Literary Treasures

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Representation of Human Rights Violations by the Security Agents in Agyei-Agyiri's *Unexpected Joy at Dawn*, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Ellison's *Invisible Man*

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Abstract

Purpose: Human rights violation is a universal phenomenon, a constant presence in the news and in daily lives. Such violations are occasioned by the powerful lording it over the powerless, infringing upon the victims' unalienable rights. Human rights violations by the security agents seem to be pervasive in the recent time, resulting in the ubiquity of protests against the security agents for their wanton violations of human rights. Just recently, there were protest against police security bill in Paris, the protest against the killing of Eyad al-Hallaq by Israeli police, the protest against the jailing of Kremlin Foe of Russia, the protest against the murder of George Floyd of America and the recent EndSARS protest in Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to explore the civil and political rights in the selected novels and how such rights have been violated by the security agents.

Methodology: The research adopted literary analysis, deploying the Marxist critical discourse which concerns itself with the struggles between classes. The reason for this choice is that literature as a major part of the superstructure is determined by the forces that make up a society's base.

Findings: Drawing from the selected texts and from the different reviews of literature, the research finds out, among other things, that the security agents are among the most active violators of human rights. The study also found that human rights violations are everywhere, and not an exclusive reserve of any nation, civilized or uncivilized.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Giving the importance of security agents in safeguarding lives and property of citizens, the governments should include courses on human rights issues in the curriculum/training of the security agents. Different governments of the world

should strengthen the aspects of fundamental human rights entrenched in their constitutions and give that hallowed section its pride of place to avoid chaos, anarchy, violent protests or even war that could result from violating the citizens' rights. Governments should set up independent and impartial judicial bodies to adjudicate on the cases of human rights violations by the security agents. The citizens need to be sufficiently sensitized on the operative mechanisms of the security agents to make them know when they are crossing their boundaries or initiating actions capable of compelling the security agents to violate their rights. Literature should be made a compulsory subject in schools and colleges.

INTRODUCTION

Conceptual Exploration: Human Rights, Human Rights Violations, Security Agents

Human rights are the fundamental rights that a person is entitled to enjoy by virtue of being a human being. In the words of Alan (1980, p. 1), "human rights are the ultimate legitimate basis for a universal human community." Human community here refers to an ideal association of human persons that is concerned for the individual and collective benefits of its members. Alan (1980) further states that human rights are "claims advanced by an individual or group and enforceable by law." For Ogbu (1999, p. 2), "human rights represent demands or claims which individuals or groups make on society, some of which are protected by the law and have become part of Exlata (positive law) while others remain aspirations to be attained in the future."

According to Ezejiofor (1964, p. 3), "fundamental human rights are moral rights which every human being everywhere at all times, ought to have simply because of the fact, in contradistinction with other beings, he is rational and moral." Henkin (1999) defines human rights as those liberties, immunities and benefits which, by accepted contemporary values, all human beings should be able to claim as of right in the society in which they live." For Dowrick (1979, pp. 8-9) "human rights are those claims made by men, for themselves or on behalf of other men, supported by some theory which concentrates on the humanity of man, on man as a human being, a member of mankind." It is on this basis that Andrew Clapham maintains that "human rights belong to all human beings and therefore cannot be restricted to a select group of privileged men" (Clapham, 2007, p. 6)

Human rights violation is any attempt by individuals or groups to obstruct the course of human rights. According to Clapham (2007, pp 17-18), "human rights are claims that automatically occur to one once one feels hard done by. A sense of injustice can breed a feeling that one has been denied one's rights." Human rights are usually invoked and claimed in the contexts of anticolonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-slavery, anti-apartheid, anti-racism, and feminist and indigenous struggles everywhere. Clapham (2007) further adds that:

"... a shared sense of grievance provides powerful succour for those claiming their 'rights'. When those of us who feel aggrieved stand together in protest, we find strength through solidarity. The law itself may be the target of the

protest. Outrage at law can somehow delegitimize such laws even in the eyes of law enforcers. Obedience to the law is a habit often related to the law's reasonableness. Invoking our human rights has become a way to challenge laws that we feel are unjust (even when the law has been adopted according to the correct procedures). In fact, human rights law has now developed so that, in almost all states, national law can be challenged for its lack of conformity with human rights (p. 18)."

Human rights need to be protected and it is the onus of the security agents to protect such rights. This calls in the issue of security which Phenson, et al. (2014) see as all measure, precaution, actions and personnel put in place that ensure safety to lives and assets and provide a peaceful atmosphere for citizens and government to pursuit their legitimate activities without fear, threats or hindrances in a given country. Berkowtz and Bock (1968, 40), see "security as encompassing not just the ability of a nation to protect its internal and external values from threats and external attacks but also the way and manner in which nations plan, make and evaluate decisions, policies and issues in order to lessen their vulnerability to threat and increase the stability". In line with the above, Ukpere (2012) notes that security is the protection of human and physical resources from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. It is the responsibility of the security agents secure the citizens' rights and property.

According to Nweke (1999, 36) security agents "are those officers and personnel on active duty or watches against threats to internal and external peace and unity of a country." For him, the security agents are made up of the military, para-military, police, security details etc. In line with this, Ogoh et al. (2013, p. 9) define security agents as "all the personnel responsible for the prosecution and security, such as the police, military, state security service (SSS), para-military organization, etc. They are the governmental agents saddled with the responsibility of surveillance and intelligence for the internal security of a nation. According to Ashaolu (2013, p. 1) *"surveillance and intelligence gathering are some of the sophisticated methods that law enforcement authorities use to tackle security challenges. These help them to gather information sufficient to prevent a crime that is yet to be committed, intervene in one that is being committed or investigate a crime that has been committed."* This suggests that the primary role of the security agencies is to maintain peace and order and to *en*sure the security of lives and property. Most of the time, however, these security agents turn out to violate the rights

they are supposed to secure. Andrew Claphem (2007) captures this succinctly when he noted that:

An assessment of human rights-based justifications for the use of military force is complicated by the following factors. First, in many situations there will be a danger that the necessary force used to intervene could do more harm than good. People get killed in military interventions; how many deaths are justified to save more lives? Even where human rights violations are actually ongoing, human rights activists have sometimes baulked at supporting the use of military force in the name of human rights (p. 63).

The above suggests that the security agents sometimes violate the citizens' human rights.

Categories of Human Rights

Human rights are categorized into three. They are the civil and political rights, economic and social rights and environmental, cultural and developmental rights. Michelle Parlevliet (2010) summarized the three categories thus, civil and political rights generally fall within the first domain, and protect citizens against unwarranted interference and abuse of power by the state; examples are the rights to life, to freedom of expression and assembly and to due process. Social, economic and cultural rights are concerned with the welfare and well-being of human beings, and generally belong to the second category; they include the rights to work, to an adequate standard of living, education and the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community (p. 3).

Civil and political rights are also called the first-generation rights. Civil and political rights include right to liberty and security of the person, right to equal protection before the law, right to freedom of assembly, right to be free from torture, right to freedom of expression, freedom from discrimination, access to the judicial system, participation in political life and so on. When protected, civil rights guarantee one's personhood and freedom from state-sanctioned interference or violence. Political rights include such rights as the right to speech and expression; the right to assembly and association and the right to vote and political participation. Political rights guarantee individual rights to involvement in public affairs and the affairs of the state. "Civil and political rights have been considered fundamental human rights for which all nation states have a duty and responsibility to uphold" (Forsythe, 2000, 28).

Economic and social rights are also called second generation rights. These are security-orientated rights. They include right to education, right to health and

wellbeing, right to a reasonable standard of living, food, shelter; the right to work and fair remuneration; the right to form trade unions and free associations, the right to leisure time and the right to social security. When protected, these rights help promote social and economic development, and self-esteem. Environmental, cultural and developmental rights are also called third generation rights. These include the rights to live in an environment that is clean and protected from destruction, the right to indigenous land, rituals and shared cultural practices and the right to speak one's own language and 'mother tongue.' Cultural rights are meant to maintain and promote sub-national cultural affiliations and collective identities. Any of the three categories of human rights can be violated. The different forms of human rights violation and the circumstances that constitute the violation of the rights are examined below.

What Constitutes Human Rights Violations?

A violation of human rights occurs when one's inalienable rights are constrained. On this, Egbeke (1996, p. 155) states that "if we are not able to act on our judgment, but are forced to do as others order us, then we are acting under compulsion, and this is the opposite of freedom". It is a situation where someone's freedom or right is refused him or her. A denial of human rights occurs when any person, state or non-state actor breaches any part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Treaty or other international human rights or humanitarian laws. The circumstances that constitute or lead to the denial of human rights are quite enormous but the ones to be examined here are those related to civil and political rights.

Human rights violation occurs in a situation where somebody is intentionally deprived of his/her life by an individual or the government. This constitutes the denial of the person's right to life guaranteed under Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Similarly, human rights violation occurs in a situation where a private person is prevented from establishing a school, press media and other institutions of learning or where already established ones are abolished by the government without cogent reasons for doing that. This constitutes the denial of the person's fundamental human rights to the freedom of expression and the press guaranteed under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Human rights violation also occurs in a situation where the privacy of somebody's home, family or correspondence is encroached upon. This constitutes the denial of the person's rights to arbitrary interference of one's

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privacy guaranteed under Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Equally, human rights violation occurs in a situation where aggrieved persons are against a particular policy of the government or against what happened to them and want to hold a peaceful rally or protest to show their grievances but are prevented by the police on the orders of the government or any other purported authority. This constitutes a denial of their right to peaceful assembly and association protected under Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Again, human rights violation occurs in a situation where a person is arrested for any criminal or civil offence and is detained without explaining to him or her the nature of the offence committed. This constitutes a violation of the person's right to freedom from arbitrary arrest guaranteed under Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Studies: Human Rights Violations and Literary Representation

Human rights violation occurs when someone's inalienable right is denied him or her. The research presents the struggles between the powerful and the powerless, between people who deny people their rights and those whose rights are denied. For this, Marxism is used to form the theoretical framework of the study.

Human rights are those rights possessed by a person as a result of the fact that he or she is a human being. According to Nagendra Singh (1986, p.1), "human rights refer to those fundamental rights to which every man or woman inhabiting any part of the world should be deemed entitled merely by virtue of having been born a human being." They are the rights and freedoms that relate to human beings who constitute members of a group, community, society or a state. Human rights issues as universal phenomena provide veritable tools for literary works. This is because the raw materials for literary representations are human actions or, better still, human experiences. Human rights issues represented in literature provide insights into the sufferings of human beings as a result of the violations of their rights. This implies that literary representation and human rights issues are almost inseparable. In his study on "The Deep Structure of Literary Representation," Joseph Carroll (2012) maintains thus, throughout the greater part of our history, our best psychologists have been playwrights, poets, and novelists. Literary authors have intuitively understood that the subject matter of literature is human

experience, that experience is grounded in common natural motives and feelings, and that sympathetic response to the depiction of experience in texts depends on the common shared experience among authors, the characters depicted, and the audience (173).

Human rights issues deal with human experiences which are products of literary representations. In his study of the relationship between human rights and literary representation, Chakrabarty and Beniwal (2012) studied the literary representation of Dalits or the marginal/tribal people in Indian fiction in English. The work studied human rights violations through Indian fiction in English. The study involves a critical dissection of the chosen literary texts that highlight and problematize certain human rights concepts embedded in them. The researchers maintain thus, the concept of human rights is as old as art. Being about life, art takes its substance from life and, as such, it is not only an artistic manifestation revealing a profound aesthetic construct but also a bearer of social and human significance. At one level, artistic explanation concerns itself through exploration and postulation of human rights. And perhaps, that which deals and depicts life in its spectrum manifestations is literature. Literature in this process not only engages itself with human rights concepts, their vicarious possibilities, but also paves way for interdisciplinary readings of these two interrelated disciplines. Literary works can, therefore, be seen as potent and rich resources to correlate and study the human rights concepts, as both literature and human rights become complementary to each other (1).

This study establishes a relationship or interconnectedness between literary representation and human rights violations. As human rights denial presents the ugly experiences of individuals who have been denied their certain inalienable rights, the above researchers see literary representations as better ways of expressing those feelings of denial. In this vein, the researchers see literary representations and human rights issues as being complementary to each other.

Also, Daniel Sip in his research on the literary representation of torture and torture experiences states that "the fictional accounts of torture like *1984* and *Waiting for the Barbarians* have been interpreted in such a way as to show why totalitarianism or apartheid was an inhuman practice" (Sip, 2012, p. 1). In George Orwell's *1984* and John M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the researcher explores the different facets of human rights denial and the agonies of the people whose rights are denied under the oppressive regime of

totalitarianism. The researcher sees human rights denial in literary works as tools for human rights activists and organizations. He asserts that "it is the responsibility of writers to carefully represent torture experiences and that the work of human rights organizations relies on the positive power of pain in literary representations" (Sip, 2012, p. 1).

Human rights violations sometimes elicit reactions from those whose rights are denied. As they struggle to regain their rights, their oppressors also intensify their efforts to have the oppressed perpetually subdued. This agrees with Ram Bhawan Yadav's opinion when he states that human rights demand arises as reactions to situations of exploitation, deprivation and operation. Here, the researcher states the forms of human rights denial the oppressed are subjected to and their struggle to be free from oppressions. According to him, the subjugated or subaltern people are subject to suffer culturally, socially, politically and professionally by the hand of bourgeois class. They have the instinct of rebellion, but keep them checked, by remaining in the service of their masters; they become well acquainted with the life style of their masters, their strengths and their vulnerability and then wait for the opportunity to strike back at the 'beast' in order to get the ultimate goal of being counted (Yadav, 2012, p. 6).

A fight for human rights violation is a fight to be counted, a fight to be recognized as a human being who has dignity. Commenting on this, Lipson (2012, p.1) states that "in the globalizing world we occupy, literature and film can be powerful tools for spreading the word about an ongoing conflict or galvanizing international opposition to human rights abuses." Reactions against human rights denial could be the major cause of the protests all over the world these days. Just recently, we have experienced the protest against police security bill in Paris, the protest against the killing of Eyad al-Hallaq by Israeli police, the protest against the jailing of Kremlin Foe Navalyn of Russia, the protest against the murder of George Floyd of America and the recent EndSARS protest in Nigeria. This research explores the civil and political rights in the selected novels and how such rights have been violated by the security agents.

Theoretical Framework

Human rights violation can be studied with Marxist theory. This is because human rights denial depicts the struggle and suffering of those who are subjected to torture by their supposed superiors. This type of struggle creates a sharp contrast between the oppressors (those who deny people their rights)

and the oppressed (those whose rights are denied.) In this type of study, Marxism, which is a theory concerned with class struggle, becomes an ideal to form its framework.

Marxism is a political and economic theory of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in which class struggle is a central element in the analysis of social change in societies. Ann Dobie states that in Marxist criticism, the researcher "will search out the depiction of inequality in social classes, an imbalance of goods and power among people, or manipulations of the worker by the bourgeoisie and will then point out the injustice of that society" (Dobie, 2009, p. 94). In the societies of the selected novels, injustices of different kinds pervade.

In *Unexpected Joy at Dawn*, the immigration officers extort the travelers, the corporal shoot the uncomplying traveler dead, Mama Akosua dies of the harassment from a soldier while Nii and his colleagues are enslaved by Paleo, one of the immigration officers. In *Purple Hibiscus*, the Head of State uses his power to silence Eugene's newspaper company, *The Standard,* so that he continues his discriminatory attitudes towards the citizens. The letter bomb that kills Ade Cocker has the Head of State's seal. The murder of Ogechi Nwankiti is also linked to the Head of State. Also, the ruthless General introduces a sole administrator in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka to discriminate against the university workers. In *Invisible Man*, the Marshals's treatments of the Provos and the gruesome murder of Tod Cliffton by the cops violate the victims' rights. The denial of the people's rights and the sufferings that such denials cause them carry a clear social commentary and Dobie maintains that "such a society is uncaring and unjust. It exists on assumptions that allow the powerful to keep the comfortable positions only if the powerless remain oppressed and convinced that it is right that they are oppressed" (95).

In the selected texts, there is unacceptable, oppressive and repressive leadership. This type of leadership in the texts creates an environment that generates struggles: struggle to be free from oppression, struggle to overthrow the oppressive government, struggle to fight for one's rights, struggle to sustain acceptable values in society. And literature as a part of superstructure is one of the major constituents of consciousness and should be studied within the framework of the history that creates it. For Marxism, literature can be viewed in two main ways: as a reactionary narrative that aims at enforcing the ruling classes' ideology and as a progressive narrative that champions the oppressed in their long and bitter struggle against the decadent social order. As one of the major goals of Marxism is to change the world, Marxist critics believe that

progress or change occurs in the struggle between different social classes. Olaniyan and Quayson state that "central to Marxist criticism of African literature has been the definition of literature as essentially a vehicle of class struggle" (2007, p. 461).

From the in-depth study of the selected texts, it is discovered that the struggles in the texts are between the dominated majority (the common and armless masses) and the dominating minority represented in the texts by different security agents. Such struggles are among the major concerns of Marxism and that is why the theory was considered appropriate for the study.

METHODOLOGY

Human Rights Violations by the Security Agents in Agyei-Agyiri's *Unexpected Joy at Dawn*

Though the security agencies like the army, the police and the immigration officers have vital roles to play in society, some of them are presented in this novel to being grossly corrupt and as agents of human rights violations. At the border, the immigration officer asks Nii and other travelers to pay a fine of ten naira each and if they do not pay the fine, they will be taken to the tribunal to be tried as dissidents. The travelers pay up, including Nii. Already, one of the uncomplying travelers is seriously wounded by the soldiers, probably because he resists paying the fine. And to add insult to injury, the corporal walks to the wounded traveler, examines him for a while, bends down and collects the wallet in the wounded man's pocket. Nii has wanted to protest but the corporal shouts at him saying: 'What are you looking at? Go!' (p.138). With this, Nii hurries away and soon, the man's moaning disappears. The corporal may have shot him dead for him not to expose them. This is a violation of the traveler's right to life.

Also, Mama Akosua dies of heart attack as a solder points a gun at her, a mere armless market woman. The narrator reports this thus: "The mustached soldier raised his gun and pointed at the crowd. People ran and fell here and there. Mama Akosua collapsed on the ground and fainted right where she fell, as the crowd surged away from the soldier's aim" (P. 114). As the armed soldiers drag the fallen woman away, Nii has to ask: "Does the government know this?" (p.114). When Nii and his colleagues are traveling from Lome to Benin, he asks the young man with whom he traveling whether he knows the one that was shot by the security agents. The young man shakes his head to indicate

that he does not know the person that was shot, adding thus: 'It happens all the time along this border, and there's nothing one can do. Let's move on' (P. 140).

Inspector Paleo enslaves Nii, Aaron and the carpenter in his Miliki home to his advantage. We see this in the way Inspector Paleo treats Nii and his colleagues. Instead of taking them to cell or deportee camp, Paleo diverts them to his Miliki home to work in his cassava farms and run other businesses for him. Inspector Paleo tells one of the soldiers thus: "If they get home, I'll employ them. I've got some farms at Ilere, and I need more hands" (p.148). He puts them under a caretaker who treats them just like slaves. Aaron complains of blisters on his palms and Nii replies: 'Damn it! We are now in slavery' (p.185). The caretaker complains of their laziness just because they take some time to rest, saying: 'No rest until you finish the day's work. That's that' (p. 187). Nii replies: 'You mean we should work like slaves?' (p. 188) Paleo uses his power as an immigration officer to enslave Nii and his colleagues. This violates their right to freedom from arbitrary arrest as well as their right to private life.

At the border in Nigeria, Kweku reports that "the army men took all the naira on me" (p.266). At Hajj camp a young lady who has followed the woman in labor comes to report that one of the security personnel in the camp attempts to seduce her. Someone in the crowd comments: "It's an abomination, a cowardly attempt at desecrating our people" (p. 283). This causes pandemonium in the camp as the crowd surge to the corporal for his action. The corporal's action violates the young lady right to private life.

Human Rights Violations by the Security Agents in Adiche's *Purple Hibiscus*

There are a number of human rights violations in Adichie's Purple Hibiscus. It starts with Ade Coker's death. Ade Coker is the editor of *The Standard*, Eugene's newspaper company. He is arrested on several occasions for his objective publications in *The Standard*. In one of such occasions of arrest, the soldiers invade the secret place where the workers of *The Standard* are, break down their equipment and lock up the staff members, Ade Coker included. The arrest of the workers has some connections with the story in the last edition of *The Standard*. The government agents do everything possible to dissuade Eugene and his editor from publishing something about Ogechi Nwankiti's murder because the Head of State is interested in the case. Eugene and his editor refuse and go on with the publication. After the publication in *The Standard,* Ade Coker is killed by a letter bomb with the head of state's seal. The narrator states this thus: "Ade Coker was blown up when he opened the

package – a package everybody would have known was from the Head of State …" (p. 206).

The death of Ogechi Nwankiti and Ade Coker are evidences of human rights violations, denying them of his rights to life. Ogechi Nwankiti and Ade Coker are all murdered. Because of the death of Ogechi Nwankiti, Nigeria is suspended from the Common Wealth. The military head of state himself is involved in drug trafficking. The letter bomb that kills Ade Coker has the seal of the military head of state. Again, the head of state himself pays some people to transport heroine for him. In the end, the people who are not the chief barons are killed. Eugen himself comments on this thus; " I knew his arrest was because of the cover story in the last *Standard*, a story about how the Head of State and his wife had paid people to transport heroin abroad, a story that questioned the recent execution of three men and who the real drug barons were (p. 38)."

At the beginning of the story in *Purple Hibiscus*, the citizens are protesting against the military government for their wanton violation of human rights. It starts with driving with leaves on one's car to signify peace, to people doing nothing as soldiers whip wantonly in the marketplace. This leads to protests, deadly roadblocks, and harassments by the soldiers. See pages 27-28. This is a violation of the right to be free from torture. The soldiers' action of censoring *The Standard* newspaper is a violation of their right to expression. Again, the institutional issues like installing sole administrators in universities also violates the civil servants' rights to expression. The police and the warders who are supposed to fight corruption are perpetuating it. The police collect money on the roads while the warders collect bribes in prisons. In the prison also, the inmates are unnecessarily detained without trial. According to the narrator, Oladipupo, the chief of the cell has been on awaiting trial for eight years. For Jaja's three years in prison, he is still on awaiting trial, *Purple Hibiscus*, (p. 300). This denies them their right to fair trial.

Human Rights Violations by the Security Agents in Ellison's *Invisible Man*

Most of the episodes in Ellison's *Invisible Man* borders on the fight for human rights. Ras the Exhorter is a human rights activist. When the narrator is about to take on his job for the brotherhood, Brother Jack is quick to remind him thus: "Brother, you have heard of Ras? He is the wild man who calls himself a black nationalist" (p. 336). Ras is a human rights activist who is struggling to organize the blacks as a body to fight the racist white folks. The Brotherhood

(before it deviates from its former agenda) is another human rights group formed primarily to fight dispossession of the colored people by their white counterparts. Apart from other human rights violations replete in the novel, a number of such violations are perpetrated by the security agents.

To start with, the eviction scene by the security agents called the marshals portrays the violation of human rights. The marshals, acting on the order given to them to drive the Provos out of their apartment without prior notice, engage in the violation of human rights. In surprise, the narrator asks: "You mean they're putting them out of their apartment?" (p. 249) When Sister Provo wants to force herself into the apartment to pray, one of the marshals threatens: "I'll jug you, by God, I'll jug you" (p. 254). When the marshal later strikes the old woman, a West Indian woman screams with shock: "He struck her. The filthy brute struck her" (p. 254). At the top of the stair, the marshals are pushing the Provos violently to the extent that the old woman falls backwards. At this point, one of the marshals threatens as he draws his gun: "Stand backward or I'll shoot you. I swear I'll shoot you. You don't know what you're doing but I'll shoot you!" (p. 254) For the maltreatments the marshals have given to the Provos, the crowd descend on them. This later escalates into a fullblown riot as more cops are invited to calm the situation. The marshals' actions towards the Provos violate their right to respect for private and family life and their right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The gruesome murder of Tod Clifton by the cops is a violation of his right to life. Commenting on the illegal killing of Tod Clifton, the narrator states *"But the cops would be Clifton's historian, his judge, his witness, and his executioners, and I was the only brother in the watching crowd. And I, the only witness for the defense, knew neither the extent of his guilt nor the nature of his crime (p.*

406)." In reaction to Tod Clifton's illegal killing by the cops, the people begin to protest. The narrator tells us that a group of civil-liberties workers is circulating petitions demanding the dismissal of the guilty policeman and that a familiar woman street preacher is shouting a sermon about the slaughter of the innocents (p. 442). Towards the end of the story when violence has engulfed Harlem, one of the looters asks how the mayhem started. One of them replies: "A cop shot a woman or something." Another says that it is caused by people's reactions on Tod Clifton's murder" (p. 499).

Again, one of the looters dragging a safe is killed by the police during which a stray bullet hits the narrator's head. One of the men tells the narrator: "Man,

you lucky you ain't dead. These sonofabitches is really shooting now" (p. 497). In further reactions on the violations of human rights by the security agents, a group of young men organize themselves to fight the police. One of the young men says: "We aim to stop some of this head-whupping they been doing" (p. 455). All the above amount to the violation of the victims' rights to life.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Human rights violations depict the sufferings and struggles of people whose rights are constrained by their superiors. In this study, civil and political rights and the various ways such rights could be denied were examined. Such rights include the rights to life, freedom of expression and assembly, right to fair hearing, right to respect for private and family life and right to political participation. The denial of these categories of human rights was examined in the selected texts chosen from Ghana, Nigeria and America, suggesting that human rights violations are everywhere, and not an exclusive reserve of any nation, civilized or uncivilized. The study maintained that human rights violations are representable in literature and could be engaged using the Marxist critical discourse. The study concluded that human rights violations are unacceptable and that the security agents could be oppressive, repressive and destructive despite their acclaimed responsibility of securing the people's lives and property.

Recommendations

1. Giving the importance of security agents in safeguarding lives and property of citizens, the governments should include courses on human rights issues in the curriculum/training of the security agents. This is because some security agents seem not to be aware of such rights or take them for granted, thereby trespassing on the fundamental rights of the citizens. Such courses on human rights issues will help to equip the security agents in intelligence gathering and in the management of the complex situations in securing the citizens' rights and property.

2. Different governments of the world should strengthen the aspects of fundamental human rights entrenched in their constitutions and give that hallowed section its pride of place to avoid chaos, anarchy, violent protests or even war that could result from violating the citizens' rights.

3. Sequel to the above, governments should set up independent and impartial judicial bodies to adjudicate on the cases of human rights violations by the security agents. These independent, unbiased and corrupt-free bodies will see to it that justice is done concerning cases of human rights violations by the security agents. Such unbiased judgements on the cases of human rights violations by the security agents could serve as deterrents to others.

4. The citizens need to be sufficiently sensitized on the operative mechanisms of the security agents to make them know when they are crossing their boundaries or initiating actions capable of compelling the security agents to violate their rights. This is because certain actions like resisting arrests, aggressive behaviors or violent protests could receive counter attacks from the security agents which may lead to the violation of the citizens' rights.

5. Lastly, this paper maintains that literature could be a veritable instrument in the ideological struggles of classes and then recommends that literature be made a compulsory subject in schools and colleges. This is because unlike any other subject, literature could provide an avenue for the exploration of human rights violations, the traumas, the struggles for freedom, and the demands for justice against the oppressive individuals, groups or agents. This could be a possible way of minimizing human rights abuse by the security agents.

Emerging Issues and Controversies

The representation of human rights violations by security agents has become a topic of significant concern and controversy in recent years. As instances of abuses and misconduct by law enforcement and security agencies have come to light, questions have arisen regarding the accuracy, impartiality, and transparency of the way these violations are portrayed. This has led to several emerging issues and controversies in the field.

Firstly, there is a growing skepticism about the reliability and objectivity of official reports and statements released by security agencies regarding human rights violations. Many argue that these reports are often biased and downplay the severity of the abuses committed, aiming to protect the reputation of the agency involved. The lack of independent oversight and accountability mechanisms further fuels doubts about the accuracy of these representations.

Secondly, the use of technology, particularly social media platforms and citizen journalism, has played a significant role in exposing human rights violations. While this has provided a platform for victims and activists to share evidence and raise awareness, it has also given rise to the spread of misinformation and manipulation of narratives. Security agencies may employ tactics to discredit or suppress valid claims of violations, including spreading false information, hacking accounts, or launching online harassment campaigns.

Thirdly, the issue of victim representation and agency has gained prominence. Historically marginalized communities, such as racial and ethnic minorities, face systemic challenges in having their experiences accurately represented. The underrepresentation of these groups in the media and the criminal justice system can perpetuate stereotypes, further eroding trust in the representations provided by security agencies.

Fourthly, the issue of transparency and access to information is a significant concern. In many cases, security agencies restrict or heavily control access to relevant documents, footage, and testimonies, making it challenging to independently verify the facts surrounding human rights violations. The lack of transparency hampers accountability efforts and makes it difficult for affected individuals and organizations to seek justice.

Lastly, the role of international human rights bodies and organizations in monitoring and documenting violations is subject to controversy. Some argue that these entities have their own biases and agendas, leading to selective reporting and skewed representations. Others maintain that these organizations

play a crucial role in shining a light on abuses and advocating for justice, even if their efforts are not always perfect.

In conclusion, the representation of human rights violations by security agents is a complex and contentious issue. Doubts about the accuracy and impartiality of official reports, the influence of technology and misinformation, the underrepresentation of marginalized communities, the lack of transparency, and debates surrounding the role of international organizations are all key areas of emerging concern and controversy. Addressing these challenges is vital to ensure accountability, promote justice, and safeguard human rights.

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Helon Habila and the Trauma of Disposable People in Oil on Water

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined the complex relationship between socio-cultural influences and intimate personal relations portrayed in a trauma fiction as Helon Habila's *Oil on Water.*

Methodology: Specifically, how does these depictions in Habila's fiction direct the awareness of the catastrophic effects of war, poverty, hostage taking, domestic abuse on the individual psyche? How do traumatised people respond? To what extent can one theorize trauma studies and ecocritical studies? How traumatized is the physical landscape portrayed in Habila's fiction?

Findings: Trauma studies is no doubt a burgeoning area of discourse that has captured the literary imagination of academic scholars for a few decades running.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study concludes by insisting that government of nations and relevant international organisations, owe the people the responsibility of intentionally committing to rearticulating and rehabilitating the social conditions, voices; indeed, the lives of marginalized people.

Keywords: *Trauma, War, Psyche, Environment, New Slaves*

INTRODUCTION

The term, "trauma" has been used in many ways and has found a place in several disciplines and lexicons. Traumatic events can include physical and sexual abuse, neglect, bullying, community-based violence, disaster, terrorism, and war. Thus, there is national trauma, historical trauma, psychological/emotional trauma and ecological trauma. The original meaning of "trauma" is wound, but used as such, it only conveys the idea of an injury inflicted on the body. Trauma can be explained as wound inflicted not on the body, but on the mind. Unlike the wound of the body, which is simple and healable, the wound of the mind is often difficult to heal. According to Cathy Caruth (1995) "the wound on the mind is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly to be fully known and it's therefore not easily available to consciousness until it imposes itself repeatedly through nightmares." (p. 6).

There are people who are often pulled back by unpleasant memories: a betrayal by a best friend, the heartache of the last relationship, that unrequited love, or the loss of the first romantic partner in school. Others find themselves retreating even farther into childhood memories of being lonely, unprotected, denied, uncared for and abused. What is unmistakable is the fact that these realities seem to be repetitive, and individuals continue to feel them. They permeate people's experiences and stories. But the big question is: do people want to get rid of them? If the answer is a resounding *"yes,"* then why not?

Literary Trauma

Tracing the history of trauma, Joke Dey Mey (2021) submitted that, "Trauma as a field of study goes back to the early twentieth century which is the time when Sigmund Freud developed his theory of psychoanalysis. It was Freud who changed the meaning of 'trauma' from indicating 'physical injury' to 'psychological injury.'" (p, 34). Ruth Leys (2000) also agreed that "Freud is the founding figure in the history of the conceptualization of trauma" (p. 18). Trauma theory started with Freud's study of the cause of neurosis in hysterical women whose examination parallels that of French neurologist Jean Martin Charcot (as cited in Bessel Van Der Kolk and Onno Van Der Hart, 1995, p. 158).

Specifically, Charcot's carried out an investigation on hysterical women which resulted in the comparison between mental illness and trauma but with concentration on the exclusivity of traumatic symptoms like sudden paralysis,

amnesia, sensory loss and convulsions. The study however maintained that these hysterical women were victims of rape, domestic violence and sexual abuse which underlined the agonizing experiences they were subjected to.

On her part, Cathy Caruth's argument hinges on what happens to a victim as a devastating event, happens so quick that such victim is unable to understand it, but after a while, this event begins to haunt the victim. This directly puts the understanding of trauma as the immediate experience of the wounding, and the belated effects of that wound, manifesting in the form of dreams, hallucination, flashbacks, repeated actions which are the hallmark of trauma theory. Following this, literary works possess the capacity to record events in their belatedness. What Kai Erikson (1995) called, "stories of wounds or blow to the tissues of the mind" (p.183) is what literary trauma discusses. These stories cry out in an attempt to inform the readers of a reality that they do not have access to.

By the late twentieth century, as efforts to further understand the intricate nature of trauma increased, the American Psychiatric Association came out with what was referred to a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) because of the related symptoms they shared with the theory of trauma. Cathy Caruth's puts it thus:

The field of psychiatry, psychoanalysis and sociology have taken a renewed interest in the problem of trauma. In 1980, American Psychiatric Association finally acknowledged the long-recognized but frequently ignored phenomenon under the title, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)", which included the symptoms of what had previously been called shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis, and referred to responses to both human and natural catastrophes (1995, p.3).

The above details show the connection between PTSD and trauma revealing the imposition on the mind, frustrating events that are inexorably linked with trauma. In postcolonial discourse, the common themes of trauma studies include displacement, dispossession, segregation, political violence, genocide, reparation, rehabilitation, healing, and recovery. Following this, a traumatised individual or group can afterwards experience psychological healing or material recovery. Material recovery, refers to issues such as reparation or remediation, restitution, rehabilitation, the transformation of a wounded political, social, and economic system. Originally situated in the domain of medicine and then psychology, the study of trauma has since 1990, become relevant in literary and cultural studies. Indeed, as trauma has become a

prominent theme in life writing and fiction, its studies has emerged as a new field within the humanities.

Prominent among the publications in this field since the 1990s, are such works as Cathy Caruth's essay collection, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and her monograph, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). These works were subsequently followed by several studies on trauma in fiction, non-fiction, film, and culture. As one writer emphasized, "the growing attention devoted to trauma in academic discourses is closely intertwined with its rising recognition in general and media discourses" (Vickroy, 2002, p. 2). Basically, trauma and memory have emerged as key cultural categories and concerns. Thus, scholars like Luckhurst (2008) has identified trauma in the light of an "exemplary conceptual knot" in contemporary networks of knowledge (p. 14), while Whitehead (2004), on her part, identifies trauma as a "'memory boom,' diagnosing widespread 'cultural obsessions' with both individual and collective memory" (*Memory,* pp. 1-2). The concept of trauma has expanded beyond its original disciplinary ground and crossed boundaries between various fields and discourses; thus, it has become increasingly, even notoriously, complex, and slippery.

Interestingly, theorists like Cathy Caruth, Donnick Lacapra, Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman, have engaged Freud's approach as the base upon which they have developed their thoughts on trauma. Sigmund Freud had argued for what he termed "the conscious/unconscious functioning." (1920, p. 11). Trauma, therefore emerged following Freud's conscious/unconscious functioning-- which can simply be explained to mean, the immediate experience of the wounding, and the belated effects of that wound in form of dreams, hallucination, flashbacks, and repeated actions which aggravates or opens up the wound. Therefore, several areas of social concern such as the recognition of the prevalence of violence against women and children (rape, battering, incest), the identification of the phenomenon of post-traumatic stress disorder, as we find in war veterans who fought in wars, the awareness of the psychic scars occasioned by the Holocaust, becomes the points of departure in conceptualising the concept of trauma. The scholars earlier mentioned in this paragraph, argued that trauma is an overwhelming condition which affects the psychology of people who were confronted with an injury—either bodily or psychologically.

Trauma theory states that "traumatization occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threats" (Van der Kolk,

1995, p. 23). The way people think, learn, feel, remember, and cope with the world are affected by traumatic experiences which affect the human brain by lessening its capacity. What exactly has literature got to do with trauma? In trying to offer an answer to this question, it is important to highlight what Vickroy observed, "literary and imaginative approaches [to trauma] provide a necessary supplement to historical and psychological studies" (*Trauma & Survival,* 2002, p. 221). Literature, through imagination and forms of symbolization, provide approaches that can effectively express many extremes of human experience that often may not be correctly expressed and comprehended verbally.

The fictional worlds offer trauma narratives the much-needed space, where the phenomenon of trauma can widely be explored, despite the multiplicity of perspectives any writer chooses to write from. Put in other words, literary text, and the fictional world in which they are created offers opportunities for nuanced engagements with the subject or theme of trauma. This theme can be personalized, contextualized, or historicized. In addition, the synergy between literature and trauma can produce engaging texts, such texts that can engage readers' powers of emotional identification, sympathy, and critical reflection. Worthy of note, some of these texts can serve important socio-cultural and political functions.

Following this, trauma writings, especially through the lenses of fiction, is not only "to make terrifying, alien experiences more understandable and accessible" (Vickroy, p. 222), but also to provide a means "of witnessing or testifying for the history and experience of historically marginalized people" (Vickroy, p. 222). This position was however amplified by Ann Whiteman, who reasoned that trauma fiction often bring as major theme, "the denied, the repressed and the forgotten" (*Trauma Fiction,* 2004, p. 82); thus, contemporary literary writers within and outside Africa, can now explore the theme of trauma, incorporating its structures into their writings. This linking of trauma theory and literary texts does not only sheds light on works of contemporary fiction, it also highlights the inherent connections between trauma theory and the literary, which have often been overlooked. Although trauma has been explained to mean "an incomprehensible event that defiles all representation" (Leys, p. 253), yet many literary writers have found means of representing trauma in fiction in a way that conveys these challenges, and at the same time, facilitate its understanding.

Ecological Trauma

What exactly is eco-trauma or ecological trauma? Since the advent of eco-criticism, there has been increased interest, indeed, intellectual attempts, among scholars from different disciplines to attempt a marriage between ecology various disciplines. To this effect, we now find concepts such as eco-sahara, eco-feminism, eco-cinema, eco-linguistics and many others. Among literary scholars, eco-trauma is becoming common especially for those with interest in trauma theory and ecology. By eco-trauma, they refer to the many forms of harm or devastation humans inflict on their natural surroundings and the injuries and loses they (humans) sustain from the polluted and damaged ecosystem. When there is an outbreak of war, natural disaster or death, the adverse effect doe not only affect human lives, but non-human life too. Thus, for shell-shocked people, rape victims, the horrors are often not immediate, but afterwards. They undergo what Rob Nixon (2011) calls, "slow violence" (p. 10). In shedding light into the concept of "slow violence" Nixon (2011), noted:

By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility. We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales (p. 2)

Although it occurs slowly, ecological violence, ranging from climate change, toxic drift, deforestation, oil spills and the environmental aftermath of war, are the greatest undoing of the human race. It is really not peculiar to any region, but a global trauma. However, owing to poor governmental legislation, enforcement and perhaps, remedial responses, the poor regions of the world, those helpless victims of environmental despoliation, are the worst hit. Oil spill or blowouts from oil pipelines destroy large farm and fishing settlements, and the devastating effect of this on the members of those communities is unarguably traumatic.

To further explain the concept of ecological trauma, Chris Onyema (2011) describes it as "political and environmental devastation, as well as the anguish that impacts directly on the masses as victims of political emasculation and ecological pillage." ("Jungle and Oil Green" p. 205). Onyema's definition

reminds us of one of the unique benefits of the synergy between literature and ecology, which is, "to redirect human consciousness to a full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world" (Love, p. 237). So, when there is a "disturbance" of this consciousness, trauma becomes the aftermath. Ecological trauma is often witnessed by the poor masses, the helpless and voiceless who have been compelled to live in the midst of gross ecological pillage or in the face of open environmental devastation even to the detriment of their health and economic well-being.

As expressed in the fictional work under review, the game of double standards and government's insincerity are commonplace. This practice undoubtedly, leaves the hopes of the masses dashed. Garricks' *Tomorrow Dies Yesterday,* used as a representational text, among the body of literature of the Niger Delta, is replete with situations where the Niger Delta people are denied developmental projects, job opportunities; their rivers and farmlands are constantly being eroded by oil spill and blowouts, leaving them helpless and hopeless, indeed, traumatised. These and many other traumatic situations are some harrowing experiences of the Niger Delta people. For Cathy Caruth (1995), this kind of traumatic condition cannot be interpreted. She noted that:

...the traumatic symptom cannot be interpreted simply as, a distortion or reality, or as the lending of unconscious meaning to a reality it wishes to ignore, nor as the repression of what once was wished, but the literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits. (p. 5)

Put in other words, this "literal return of the event against the will of the one it inhabits" occurs most disturbingly within the very knowledge and experience of the traumatised. Using the above to interpret the condition of the Niger Delta people, as the loss of their farmlands and fishing settlement to oil exploration persist, as their educated and skilled youths suffer employment and loss of opportunities, as poverty remain unabated, as infrastructures are neglected and decay owing to government's inertia, the more traumatised the people would become in the face of these social ills. In other words, ecological trauma is the consequence of years of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region which has neither translated into poverty reduction nor increased infrastructure development. Sadly, oil wealth has not resulted in the reduction of unemployment for the Niger Delta people, it has not fostered the reduction of social conflicts and the ecology of the region has not fared any better.

Helon Habila and the Disposable People

Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* is a 2010 novel published by Harnish Hamilton, UK. As an ecocritical text, its preoccupation is to reveal the corruption, under-belly oil-politics endemic in the Niger Delta region; the reasons behind the continued under development of the oil-rich region and to chart a path for the speedy redemption of not just the region, but the nation's socio-economic life. And like a good work of literature, it has its own peculiarities in content, form, and structure. As Wellek and Warren would express it, "each work of literature is both general and particular; or better, possibly – is both individual and general. Like every human being, each work of literature has its individual characteristics" (p. 7).

In *Oil on Water*, Habila tells the story of the kidnapped British woman by a group of militants in the creeks of the Niger Delta. The search for the kidnapped Mrs. Isabel Floode, her driver, Salomon as well as the "real kidnappers," becomes the point of departure for the lengthy and complicated journey embarked upon by two great journalists: Zaq and Rufus. As this journey progresses, Rufus uncovers the decay, moral degradation, ecological ruins and protracted violence prevalent in Nigeria in general and the Niger Delta region in particular, following years of environmental abuse and neglect.

Using the first journey motif which featured two journalists, Zaq and Rufus as the point of departure, Habila's narrative paints a vivid picture of the trouble and the trauma of *disposable people.* By *disposable people,* we refer to a concept that was first used by Kevin Bales in his book, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (2012). This journey, for Zaq is not just a search for a kidnapped woman, but a journey that will result in different forms of transformation and enlightenment. As they journeyed, Rufus observed "thousands of oil floating on the water" (Habila, p. 227). Basically, this observation is symbolic of the widespread pollution of land, water and air occasioned by "suspended stench of dead matter". (Habila, p. 8). Even as Rufus and his team leader, Zaq proceeded in the journey despite the stench, they were further greeted by "dead bird draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fish bobbed white-bellied between tree roots" (Habila, p. 8). With this imagery of rot and putrefaction, one can rightly judge that an already sick journalist like Zaq would be further exposed to a polluted environment, which will certainly devastate his already troubled health condition.

In describing the gravity of hazards these polluting conditions pose on the health and safety of the people, it is estimated that "over 100 flares sites in the Niger Delta belch 400 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent into the atmosphere annually" (Simon et al., 2014). Beyond the polluted physical landscape, there are poor, less-advantaged people whose living condition is comparable with the deplorable environmental condition. They are the disposable people to borrow Kevin

Bales' coinage; an expression used to describe new slaves, who are not like Olauada Equaino or Friedrick Douglas; but slaves who are cheap, needing little care and are disposable. Niyi Osundare offers a graphic illustration of the *disposable people* in his poetry collection, *The Eye of the Earth:*

They too are the earth

The swansongs of beggars sprawled out

In brimming gutters

They are the earth

Under snakeskin shoes and Mercedes tyres.

They too are the earth

The sweat and grime of

Millions hewing woods and hurling water

They are the earth

Muddy every pore like naked moles --(Osundare, "They Too Are The Earth").

For Bales, although slavery is considered illegal throughout the world today, yet several millions of humans are caught in the web of one of history's oldest and ugly social institutions, known as slavery. And preoccupied with the conditions of poor and down-trodden members of society, Osundare makes a case for these *disposable people* in his poetry. Following accounts available from Kevin Bales' book, the disturbing story of slavery today has confirmed a growing statistic of new slaves, also referred to as disposable people across Africa, Europe, the Americas, Asia, and other parts. Bales engaged in a pathetic investigation into the conditions of "new slavery," one intricately linked to the global economy. For Bales, three interrelated factors that have sponsored the proliferation of "new slaves" across the world:

- *The enormous population explosion over the past three decades has flooded the world's labor markets with millions of impoverished, desperate people.*

- *The revolution of economic globalization and modernized agriculture has dispossessed poor farmers, making them and their families ready targets for enslavement.*

- *Rapid economic change in developing countries has bred corruption and violence, destroying social rules that might once have protected the most vulnerable individuals.*

In Habila's *Oil on Water* (2010)*,* an example of "new slaves" or *disposable people,* is Michael, the little son of the old man in the novel. In the dialogue where the old man makes an emotion-laden plea for Zaq and Rufus to take his son along to Port Harcourt to keep the little boy away from vices that commonplace in Irikiefe and its surrounding villages, one can vividly see the desperation and the frustration that would have overwhelmed the man had his plea not granted. The helplessness, the hopelessness and the despondency were visible from the old man's countenance. By closely examining Irikiefe Island and her adjoining creeks, it will be easy to apprehend and justify the fears of this old man.

While the social condition he finds himself, has put him forward, if not permanently, as one of the disposable people, this old man has resolved to pull as many strings as he can, even if it will require his last strength to change, indeed, move his son out of such living condition. Through the dialogue which ensued at that scene where the old man makes a plea for his son to be taken to the city, his fear of the unknown can be substantiated as a possible reason why he wants his son to leave the volatile island:

Rufus: *He wants us to take the boy with us when we go back to Port Harcourt. You better tell him yourself, old man.*

Old Man: *Yes, He no get future here.*

Na good boy, very sharp. He go help you and your with any work, any work at all, and you too you go send am go school. (Habila, p.36).

From the dialogue above, the old man, Tamuno puts his son, Michael forward as a deposable person with the hope that through becoming a servant to the journalists, he could get a chance at education, which would serve as

springboard or an escape route from the unsafe and extremely poor conditions characteristic of *disposable people.* Hence, when verbal appeal was not producing the expected outcome from the Port Harcourt-based reporters, the little boy who probably had been primed or properly taught by his aged-father, resorts to weeping, an extended means of appealing to pity; of course, weeping did the magic: Zaq was compelled to take the little boy, Michael along to Port Harcourt. Zaq's response to the old man's appeal and Michael's tears was in the affirmative: "I will take him. I'll find a way…Now, you stop crying. Let's go" (Habila, p. 38).

Another category of *disposable people* that peopled Habila's fictional world, *Oil on Water,* are the numerous abductees of the many militant groups whose stock-in-trade is to kidnap oil company workers, and other categories of citizens for ransom. Many of these abductees are either re-sold or killed by their abductors when the ransom is delayed or not paid at all. Their helpless situation leaves them at the mercy of these ruthless kidnappers. Isabel Flood found herself in this condition for a longer period, until she was rescued. For the militants, therefore, this socially condemnable practice of "stealing people", puts them forward as "new slave owners". Additionally, the clandestine nature of their "business" makes them enemies of the law and society. In his response to the question of identifying his group, Henshaw, one of the hoodlums arrested by Major speaks of his own militant group which is different from the one headed by Professor:

-*Does your group have a name?*

-*No! We used to have a name, but no more. That is for children and idiots. We are the people, we are the Delta, we represent the earth on which we stand.*

-*Are you with the Professor?*

-*No! I have never met the Professor. We are a different group. (Habila, p. 154)*

From the foregoing, it is clear that the numerous militant groups and their nefarious activities pose a huge threat to lives and property in the region. Some of them are: The Black Belt of Justice, The Free Delta Army and The A.K-47 Freedom Fighters. A disturbing factor among these militant formations is that they are too many and "so confusing" (Habila, p, 31), such that family and friends of the kidnapped, together with security agencies are thrown into further trauma trying to identify "the real kidnappers" (Habila, p. 31).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Slavery is not one of such horrors peculiar with the past; slavery continues to exist throughout the world, even in developed countries like France and the United States. Across the world, slaves work and sweat, build, and suffer. On the other hand, trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster. However, a person may experience trauma as a response to any event they find physically or emotionally threatening or harmful. Poor and lessprivileged people often feel overwhelmed, helpless, shocked, or have difficulty processing their experiences. This sometimes pushes them to make themselves available as objects for use by the rich or the more economically-stable members of the society. In some ugly situations, these helpless members of society are exposed to hazards, witness barefaced denial of their rights and in some extreme cases, they are compelled to engage in some inhuman activities, which leaves them vulnerable or at the mercy of their "slave owners" or benefactors. To curb this, government of nations and international organisations such as the UN should deploy certain percentage of their tax or revenue generation, towards providing welfare opportunities or social securities for the less privileged members of the society. The channels these amenities or programme can be distributed should be drawn from the less privilege groups, the disposable people themselves, not through any governmental agency.

Emerging Issues and Controversies

Helon Habila is a renowned Nigerian author whose novel, "Oil on Water," delves into the trauma experienced by the people living in the Niger Delta region due to the activities of the oil industry. The book raises several emerging issues and controversies, shedding light on the complex relationship between the environment, the local communities, and the multinational oil corporations.

One major issue highlighted in the novel is the environmental degradation caused by oil exploration and exploitation. Habila portrays the devastating impact of oil spills and pollution on the delicate ecosystem of the Niger Delta, leading to the destruction of farmlands, rivers, and aquatic life. This depiction raises concerns about the ethical responsibility of the oil companies and the need for stricter regulations to prevent further damage.

Another emerging issue is the dispossession and displacement of local communities. Habila exposes how the pursuit of oil wealth disrupts the lives of indigenous people who rely on the land and water for their livelihoods. The forceful eviction and destruction of their homes, coupled with the loss of traditional occupations, create a deep sense of trauma and disposability among these marginalized communities.

Furthermore, the novel explores the role of the media in shaping public perception and the controversies surrounding their reporting. Habila's protagonist, Rufus, is a journalist assigned to cover the kidnapping of an oil company executive's wife. As he delves deeper into the story, he uncovers a web of corruption and complicity, challenging the mainstream narrative propagated by the media and revealing the power dynamics at play.

The issue of human rights abuses and the lack of accountability also feature prominently in the book. Habila sheds light on the violent tactics employed by both the oil companies and the militants, as well as the collusion between them and the government. This exposes the vulnerability of the local population and raises questions about justice, accountability, and the role of multinational corporations in developing countries.

Lastly, Habila explores the psychological impact of living in a region plagued by conflict, pollution, and constant upheaval. The trauma experienced by the characters, their fears, and the lasting scars left by the disposability imposed upon them highlight the urgent need for support and healing for these marginalized communities.

In conclusion, "Oil on Water" by Helon Habila brings to the forefront several emerging issues and controversies surrounding the trauma of disposable people in the Niger Delta. Through his vivid storytelling, Habila addresses environmental degradation, displacement, media bias, human rights abuses, and psychological trauma. By shedding light on these pressing concerns, the novel urges readers to reflect on the far-reaching consequences of industrial exploitation and the need for sustainable and equitable solutions.

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Effects of Intergroup Contact in an Official Bilingual Language Teaching Context on Mutual Stereotypes

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Abstract

Purpose: This paper reports findings of an investigation of the effects of intergroup contact in a bilingual language teaching context on stereotypes of each group towards each other. The pre and post intergroup contact attitudes of Cameroonian Anglophone Bilingual Teachers (ABT) and those of Francophone Bilingual Teachers (FBT) towards each other were determined and compared.

Methodology: A mixed method research design that relied on a two-phase explanatory sequential strategy was employed to collect the data. It comprised an anonymous self-report survey of 97 bilingual teachers and a follow-up interview of 6 of these teachers. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data and content analysis was used to explore the textual data.

Findings: The study revealed that while ABT indicated negative attitudes towards FBT, prior to starting their training, FBT on their part, expressed positive considerations of Anglophones (they saw them as polite, hospitable and hardworking people). In the end, ABT moved from seeing FBT as arrogant to calling them simple and assiduous learners. Nevertheless, they scorned the FBT's insolence. The contact reinforced FBT's prior training positive attitudes towards ABT whom they found to be friendly, convivial and courteous.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study concludes that intergroup contact positively influenced ABT attitudes towards FBT, while FBT maintained their pre-training positive attitudes towards ABT. Intergroup contact in an official bilingual teacher training classroom, therefore, can be a fertile ground for the elimination of stereotypes and promotion of the spirit of living together.

INTRODUCTION

The Dominance of French and Emergence of Stereotypes

There is prima facie evidence that since Cameroon's independence, the French language has enjoyed a 'de facto' dominance over the English language in the dispensation of public services, in education, in the media as well as in day-to-day contact situations (Echu, 2003; Biloa, 2012; Chiatoh, 2012). The status quo birthed a number of mutual stereotyping of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians.

Given that eight out of the ten regions, amongst which is the nation's capital, are predominantly French-speaking, the Anglophone minority feel the weight of marginalisation much more. The ordeals of Anglophones include being expected to express themselves in the French language, irrespective of their knowledge of the language in public offices (Mforteh, 2005). Even attempts at using the language ends in betrayal, usually by the accent, thereby causing such Anglophones to be referred to as 'Anglo-fou'. This term is a contraction of Anglophone and the French word 'fou' meaning an idiot or a senseless person, indexing the uselessness of Anglophones' habitual difference in opinions about political issues (Mallet, 2016). Of course, this must be traumatizing for the Anglophone Cameroonian.

Conversely, Anglophones manifest their antipathy for Francophone Cameroonians by typecasting their manners (Nkoum-Me-Ntseny, n.d.). Anglophones perceive their Francophone counterparts as lazy, tribalistic and arrogant, summarized in the appellation 'Franco-frog' (Aroga Bessong, 1997). This appellation, used alternatively with 'francofools' franco-fous', is used to collectively refer to French-speaking Cameroonians (Mallet, 2016). The latter finds this language offensive as it connotes arrogance, talkativeness, arguing aimlessly, emptyheadedness and arrogance.

It can be deduced that as far as Anglophone and Francophone relationships is concerned, the policy of bilingualism has created a cultural identity issue (Echu, 2004). Anglophones cling to the English language as a 'symbol of in-group solidarity' (Echu 2004:25). This attachment arises from the use of the same official language. Smith (1996, cited in Arjun and Jelte, 2015) relates this attachment to the 'Anglophone culture' to a coping strategy in the face of marginalization. Ngome (1993: 28 cited in Anchimbe 2005) provides a plausible justification for the Anglophone and Francophone typecasting. To Anglophones, Francophones are fraudulent and good at bending rules. This

can be seen in their cheating in exams, jumping queues and rigging elections. It is the reason why they are referred to as 'frogs'. The Francophones, on their part, criticize the Anglophone air of self-righteousness and intellectual superiority. It can thus be inferred that the Anglophone-Francophone cultural rivalry is an ethical one.

Problem Statement

From the foregone, it can clearly be seen that the'de facto' dominance of French over the English language in the dispensation of public services, in education, in the media as well as in day-to-day contact situations in Cameroon (Echu, 2003; Biloa, 2012; Chiatoh, 2012) has birthed a number of mutual stereotyping between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians, thereby threatening Cameroon's dream for national unity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Prejudice and Stereotypes: Definition of Terms

In the study of intergroup attitudes, researchers in the field usually distinguish between an ingroup, which is described as the group that one associates with or aspires to join, and an outgroup, which refers to all the other groups outside the in-group. Focus, in this field of study is usually on social bias, precisely: prejudice and stereotypes. Prejudice has to do with affective evaluations of a group or its members, while stereotypes are cognitive evaluations, that is, mental representations of an out-group member. Both biases are formed through personal experiences, one's own emotional needs and by what one is told by others. An ongoing debate rests on which of these two biases come first. In an intergroup context, Yzerbyt & Demoulin (2022) argue that stereotypes are an originator of affective responses and discriminatory tendencies. People start by ascribing traits to out-group members, from this point certain feelings proceed and these feelings show up in the peoples' behaviour. In essence, stereotypes precede prejudices and both biases influence behaviour. Dovidio, Schellhaas & Pearson (2018) rather see prejudice as the forerunner to stereotyping that results in discriminatory behaviour. Whichever is the case, a consensus remains that prejudice and stereotypes give birth to positive or negative behaviour.

Dovidio, Schellhaas & Pearson (2018) argue that prejudice is not always antipathy. On the contrary, it can elicit both positive and negative responses. Like prejudice, stereotypes were earlier thought to be only negative, but this is no longer the case. Lammers and colleagues (2008, cited in Yzerbyt &

Demoulin, 2022) purport that in an intergroup context, both groups tend to stereotype each other positively and negatively. However, those in a minority status tend to do so more. The latter does so in a bid to protect themselves against exploitation. Stereotypes amongst in-groups or people aspiring to belong to that group are in most cases biased towards positive stereotypes. In recent times, it has become trendy to consider stereotypes as a framework for confirming or refuting a held position towards a group. Stereotypes, thus, play the role of an attitude marker. It tells if a person is evaluatively positive, neutral, or negative towards the target group.

Another bone of contention rests on subjective as opposed to generalized evaluations. This can be seen in Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, and Esses (2010:9) definition of prejudice as "an individual-level attitude (whether subjectively positive or negative) toward groups and their members that creates or maintains hierarchical status relations between groups". Two interesting aspects come up from this definition: prejudices are subjective and are connected to the wielding of power. Individuals' responses to group members can vary. This can be seen in situations where (in cases of negative evaluations) people who deviate from the held group evaluations arouse positive reactions, whereas those who exhibit the preconceived behaviours reinforce the negative response. This further confirms the stance of prejudice and stereotype as an evaluative frame that permits us to assess conformity with intergroup bias, not necessarily to generalize the bias, rather to understand it.

In classroom contexts, stereotypes and prejudices are reported to be automatic and unconscious at the beginning of contact situations. No sooner than later, they become explicit and conscious. It is like at first instances of interaction, some feelings and images are created of the out-group.

These created images and feelings are then verified and validated as contact increases. Cluver (2000) posits that prejudices and stereotypes are usually directed both at the language and at the members of a different speech community. The attitudes, Cluver (2000) argues, are usually inherited, and had been held in the long-term, such that they have become more specific over generation. The longer these attitudes exist, the more resistant they become to change. Negative attitudes are particularly dangerous for language learning. They "become obstacles in the way of language learning" (Ross 1990: 26). Like prejudice, they were earlier thought to be negative, but in recent times they are considered to be a framework for confirming or refuting a held

position towards the group. Stereotypes and prejudices, thus, play the role of attitude markers.

They tell if a person is evaluatively positive, neutral, or negative towards the target group. For the purposes of this study, we shall retain that attitude is a combination of a person's cognitive, affective and behavioural evaluations. Stereotypes shall refer to any held beliefs, associations or attributions of specific characteristics to a group. It shall involve labelling or categorizing out-group members, be it in a positive or negative way, according to preconceived ideas or broad generalisations about them. Affective evaluations shall relate to prejudices and conative evaluations to discrimination.

Theoretical Framework

The analytical framework adopted for this study is informed by the following theories.

Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

The intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) states that interpersonal contact between groups, in appropriate conditions, maximally reduces prejudices. The quest for the effects of intergroup contact on the relationships of the groups in contact began since 1903 on a very negative note (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Contact at this time was seen as a breeding ground for conflict and hostility. It was not until 1940 that the possibilities of contact to result in improved relationships began to be thinkable. This was first brought to light by Williams (1947) monograph, The Reduction of Intergroup Tensions.

It is worth noting that these prior studies were in the light of racial issues at the time. Studies within this framework indicated that sometimes prejudice was reduced but at other times it was exacerbated. Drawing from this groundwork, Allport (1954), taking an optimistic stance, held that reduced prejudice was a result of four positive features of a contact situation: (a) equal status between the groups, (b) common goals, (c) intergroup cooperation, and (d) the support of authorities, law or custom.

Allport's four conditions helped determine the choice of the population of this study: bilingual teachers. These teachers, be they Anglophones or Francophone, share a common goal, that is, to gain professional training. Their courses are structured in such a way that those learnt in one language are taken up in the other language. As such, the learners are interdependent. They get to carry out group activities and other learning exercises that keep them

journeying towards a common goal. Competition is minimal as each person's job is guaranteed at the end of the training. What's more? Official language bilingualism enjoys a pride of place in the country's language policy. All these make their choice very strategic.

Nevertheless, Allport's hypothesis is highly acclaimed, and it has generated much research works with positive results on reduction of negative intergroup attitudes and stereotypes. As noted by Pettigrew (1998), it was however found wanting on two counts: it did not address the processes underlying contact effects nor specify how the effects generalize to other situations, the entire out-group or uninvolved out-groups. Pettigrew (1998) took this up and developed four interrelated processes through which a contact operates and mediates attitude change: learning about the out-group, changing behaviour, generating affective ties, and in-group reappraisal.

Three of Pittigrew's (1998) four interconnected processes of intergroup contact are linked to the three dimensions of attitude. Learning about the out-group, or reappraising how one thinks about one's own in-group relates to cognitive attitudes; changing one's behaviour owing to new knowledge of the out-group relates to behavioural attitudes and generating affective ties and friendships as a product of reduced anxiety towards the out-group touches on the affective component of attitudes. This yields the premise on which the relationship between intergroup contact and attitude are explored in this study.

In all, intergroup contact hypothesis offers conditions for enhancing favourable contact experiences and the processes through which these experiences transform negative attitudes into friendships. This makes it a suitable approach to examine bilingual teachers' experiences in the light of groups in contact.

Stereotype Reduction in Bilingual Classrooms

The primordial potential of Bilingual classrooms in enhancing intergroup relationships is seen through the way it fosters the optimal conditions under which intergroup attitudes prosper. Wright and Tropp (2005) expatiate on this by contrasting the perceived status of the language of instruction in an English-only class and in a bilingual class. In an English-only instruction class, the English language and those who speak it are placed in a higher status position than other languages and those who speak them. This is because the learners are made, either directly or subtly, to see that access to knowledge is tied to English language proficiency and so they may side-line other languages.

On the other hand, bilingual instruction highlights the value and status of the co-language in the sense that it equalizes access to classroom resources for both language groups. Also, in bilingual classrooms, cross - group friendships are facilitated. Both language groups share the experience of struggling to learn in a language that they do not fully understand. As such there is a perceived similarity that may breed pleasant relationships. These friendships lead to oneto-one interactions that result in generalized attitudes towards the whole group.

In the same light, unlike in monolingual language of instruction classrooms where cooperative activities (like group works) are likely to be dominated by speakers of the language of instruction, in bilingual classrooms these activities require interdependent cooperation. In the latter scenario, both language groups exchange dominance, in the light of command of the language, thereby minimizing any ethno-linguistic status inequalities. Lastly, in bilingual classrooms, instructional use of both languages is a clear statement that the authority is sanctioning positive, equal-status in both group interactions. Unfortunately, research on intergroup contact with focus on language learning is scant. Studies of intergroup attitudes mostly focus on anthropological concerns like racism and migration. Wright and Bougie (2007) explain that this little attention is owing to little recognition of language as a key distinction between social groups. They contend that bilingual language learning contexts offer favourable conditions that have been shown to facilitate positive intergroup relations. Therefore, the question this study raises is:

Does contact between Anglophone bilingual teachers and Francophone bilingual teachers in an official bilingual language learning context positively or negatively influence their relationships? Specifically, what is the nature of Anglophone and Francophone bilingual teachers' out-group stereotypes at the beginning of training? What are the outcomes of intergroup contact between Anglophone and Francophone bilingual teachers on their out-group perceptions at the end of their training?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed method research design. It relied on a two-phase explanatory sequential strategy (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018) to gather data on the attitudinal changes that occur when Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians come into contact in an official language learning context. The first phase consisted of a survey of the sample. This was aimed at getting the pre and post contact effect trends that cut across the total population under

study. The quantitative data was analysed and significant intriguing areas constituted items that the researcher used to elaborate, clarify and expand on the findings of the quantitative phase.

Population

The consultants for this study were graduate bilingual teachers of the Higher Teacher's training colleges (HTTC) of Cameroon. Three state universities produce these graduates: University of Yaounde I, University of Maroua and The University of Bamenda. These colleges have both first and second cycles. Graduates from both cycles are posted to work in different locations across the nation. It is worth noting that bilingual teachers were thought appropriate for this study because they represent a group of Cameroonians who have undergone at least three years of learning in an English and French bilingual classroom setting. Thus, they have had sufficient contact to be able to talk about their experiences.

Methods

This section presents the sampling, instruments and administration process. It should be recalled here that the data collection was done in two phases: quantitative and qualitative. The first phase of the study focused on providing a numerical description of participants' pre and post contact experiences. It also manipulated the relationship between variables and gathered information on the respondent's backgrounds. Phase two of this study involved exploring further, understanding and clarifying the information gathered from the quantitative phase of this study. Since the concepts of prejudice and stereotypes are multidimensional and fluid, this phase sought to get a fuller picture of these variables under study.

Sampling and Sample

The multistage sample design was used for the quantitative phase of this study. This design was chosen since it was impractical to compile a list of the teachers composing the population. The first stage entailed mapping out a group of graduate bilingual teachers to include in the study. Considering the key role of contact in this study, it was imperative to get participants from the same batches. With this in mind, the researcher estimated that each class shall have at least three Anglophones who were willing to take part in the study. As such, the target sample was six teachers per batch, that is, three Anglophones and three Francophones of the same batch.

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Unfortunately, because of an on-going socio-political crisis in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, physical contact in classroom settings was restricted. Hence, it was only possible to select the last batches before the crisis for this study. As such, the first and second cycle graduates of the 2015 to 2017 batches made up the target sample population of the study. This gave a total target sample population of 108 teachers (six per class for each of the schools).

Seeing how dispersed the population was, the researcher decided it was best to get to the respondents through their various social media fora. Group members received a link to complete the questionnaires via Survey Monkey. Every first three Anglophone and Francophone respondent per batch were selected.

The second phase of the study employed voluntary and then criterion sampling to get participants. Volunteers were selected based on stated criterion. A common criterion was those who have lived the official language bilingual class experience. They, however, varied in terms of their individual characteristics and experiences (educational, linguistic background, gender and context of study). Of the 97 participants of the study, six took part in the qualitative phase. They were selected through voluntary indication to participate. The survey (both online and face-to-face) yielded 97 responses. This gives an 89.9% return rate. Table 1 summarises the sample and their demographics.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	ANGLO N=55		FRANCO N=42		TOTAL N=97	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
GENDER						
Male	10	10.3	8	8.2	18	18.5
Female	45	46.4	34	35.1	79	81.5
BATCH						
2015	17	17.5	16	16.5	33	34.0
2016	26	26.8	14	14.4	40	41.2
2017	12	12.4	12	12.4	24	24.7
SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM ATTENDED						
Anglosaxon	22	22.7	15	15.5	37	38.1
Francophone	10	10.3	35	36.1	45	46.4
Both	4	4.1	11	11.3	15	15.4
PREVIOUS CONTACT						
Yes	22	22.7	2	2.1	24	24.7
No	9	9.3	64	65.9	73	75.2
HTTC						
HTTC BAMBILI	26	26.8	21	21.6	47	48.5
HTTC MAROUA	21	21.6	15	15.5	36	37.1
HTTC YAOUNDE	8	8.2	6	6.2	14	14.4

Table 1 shows that 55 Anglophone bilingual teachers (ABT) and 42 Francophone bilingual teachers (FBT) took part in this phase of the study. Most of the respondents (48.5%) had their training in HTTC Bamenda, most of whom were Anglophones (26.8%). This meant an imbalance in the ratio of Anglophones to Francophones. A close look at the secondary school background shows that fewer of the respondents studied in a purely Anglo-Saxon system of education (22.7%). The same percentage attested to having Francophones in their high school classes.

Usually, it is the Anglo-Saxon system that allows for mixed Anglophone and Francophone students in a high school class. This suggests that more of the respondents identified as Anglophones even though English was not their first official language. As such, the envisaged sample plan of six per batch cannot be claimed to have been realized. Also, some batches had more participants and others less. Most respondents (41.2%) were of the 2016 batch, majority being Anglophones (26.8%). HTTC Maroua had the best distribution with a ratio of 15:15. However, all batches had at least two Anglophones and two Francophones per class. This gave a 2:2 ratio of direct contact experiences. So, for every item analysis at least four people shared some degree of similar lived experiences. The higher number of Anglophones, is explained by the fact that HTTC Bambili had more participants, most of whom identified as Anglophones. More probing will be required to clarify the identity positioning of the participants.

In all, the participants' linguistic background was quite varied. The population predominantly identified as Anglophone, female, first cycle. This population had a strong pre-training intergroup contact. Hence, a good premise on which to study language learning experiences in an intergroup contact context.

Instruments

As has already been highlighted, data for the quantitative phase of this study was collected using a closed-ended self-reported questionnaire. As noted by Macinnis and Page-Gould (2005), literature on intergroup contact studies focuses on long term contacts with out-group members, where the participants provide a retrospective self-report about their interactions. The questionnaire items were drawn from the Generalized Group Attitude Scale (Duckitt, Callaghan & Wagner, 2005). This scale is used to assess out-group attitudes. It usually consists of eight five-level Likert-type items, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Data, for the qualitative phase of the study, was elicited using a semi-structured interview protocol. The researcher opted for

interviews given that the participants were no more in school and so could not be observed. Also, the target information was to be provided in retrospect and from long-term memory. Besides, experiences can be quite emergent, so the researcher needed to keep track on the line of questioning.

Data Collection Methods

The process of data collection for the quantitative phase took place over a period of approximately four months (September 2021 to January 2022). The collection was initially done online using survey monkey. First the researcher contacted colleagues of the target batches within the Bamenda municipality. These colleagues introduced the researcher to the WhatsApp group administrators. She issued the questionnaire to them first. Then, got their permission to administer the survey to the whole group. Unfortunately, this yielded only 35 responses as opposed to the 108-target sample. The researcher thus had to resort to face-to-face administration. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers in various schools in the North West, South West, Centre and Extreme North regions.

The researcher adopted the phenomenological design of inquiry (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018) in the qualitative phase of the research. It enabled the researcher to explore the participants' description of their lived experiences about intergroup contact as they perceived them. The focus was to make meaning of the participant's experiences, which are rather subjective and do not lend themselves to direct generalization. This study proceeded in the four steps of phenomenological research, that is, bracketing (identifying and putting aside trends in the quantitative study; to inform what the researcher expected to discover), intuiting (harmonizing the variance in the data to obtain a common understanding of the trend, analyzing (categorizing and making sense of the significant meanings) and describing; capturing the themes that run across the data.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion Quantitative Data

This section presents results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire data. The researcher analysed the questionnaire data using IBM SPSS statistics package version 20. Given that the data was ordinal (ranked Likert scale responses), the researcher used descriptive statistics and cross tabulations to analyse the data and opted for frequency distributions to capture the results.

Anglophone and Francophone Bilingual Teachers Official Language Out-group Attitude at Enrolment

This section presents attitudes of ABT and FBT towards their out-group, before they came in contact in a common language learning environment. We shall begin with the attitudes of the ABT before presenting those of FBT.

Table 2a: ABT Pre - Enrolment Perceptions of Francophone Cameroonians

Variable N = 55	Negative		Positive		Neutral	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
This country will be better off without Francophones	28	28.9	15	14.4	12	13.4
Anglophones should get more recognition.	18	18.6	10	10.3	27	26.8
I understand people's negative thoughts about Francophones.	20	20.6	15	15.4	20	20.6
Francophones have very bad characteristics.	21	19.6	17	17.5	17	17.5
Francophones have done much to make the country successful.	6	7.3	23	23.7	26	25.8
There is little to admire about Francophones.	19	19.5	18	18.6	18	18.6
I get upset on negative talks about Francophones.	27	27.9	7	7.2	21	21.6
I visited Francophones.	10	10.3	44	43.9	1	1.0

The results in Table 2a reveals that, prior to their training ABT's attitudes towards Francophone Cameroonians was negative. This is attested by the higher percentages registered by the negative categories. The only component that stood out in a positive direction was the affective component (I get upset on negative talks about Francophones.). These results indicate that, at the onset of their training, ABT conformed to the prevailing negative stereotypes of Francophones. The results resonate with the findings of previous studies (Aroga Besong, 1997; Messaanga, 2014) in relation to negative stereotyping of Francophone Cameroonians by Anglophone Cameroonians. The stereotypes are both ethnocentric (favouring in-groups and castigating out-groups) and ethical (expressing dislike for Francophone manners). However, the results also underscore that the ABT did not hold any antipathy against Francophones.

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Thus, the prejudice levels were not so high and so the context was favourable enough for a positive intergroup experience.

Table 2b: FBT's Pre-Enrolment Perceptions of Anglophone Cameroonians

Variable N = 42	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
This country will be better off without Anglophones.	14	14.4	14	14.4	13	13.4
Anglophones should get more recognition	12	12.3	11	11.3	19	19.6
I understand people's negative thoughts about Anglophones.	12	12.4	15	15.4	15	15.5
Anglophones have very bad characteristics.	17	17.5	13	13.4	12	12.4
Anglophones have done much to make this country successful.	21	21.6	7	7.2	14	4.4
There was little to admire about Anglophones	10	10.3	22	22.7	10	10.3
Get upset on negative talks about Anglophones	24	24.7	5	5.2	13	13.4
Visited Anglophone classmates	11	11.3	30	30.9	1	1.0

The results in Table 2b indicate that overall, prior to direct contact, FBT perceived Anglophone Cameroonians positively. This can be seen in the higher scores registered in the positive category. However, there was a clear manifestation of antipathy towards the FBT's out-group as can be seen in the high percentage registered in the negative category for the item 'There was little to admire about Anglophones'. This told of negative prejudices towards Anglophones. What this meant was that the FBT did not conform to the negative stereotyping of Anglophones, but didn't admire them neither. This is rather contradictory, given that prejudice and stereotypes tend to move in the same direction.

Table 3: Relationship between Contact Rate and Contact Experience with Classmates

	Good	Very Good	Neutral	Bad	Very Bad
All the time	13.40	20.60	0.00	1.00	0.00
Often	13.40	11.30	19.60	1.00	0.00
Rarely	0.00	3.10	4.10	0.00	1.00
Sometimes	3.10	4.10	4.10	0.00	0.00

Source: Computed by Researcher Using SPSS 20

Table 4a: ABT Post Training Perceptions of Francophones

Variable N = 42	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
This country will be better off without Francophones	21	21.7	23	23.7	15	15.5
Anglophones should get more recognition	14	14.4	17	17.5	24	24.7
I understand people's negative thoughts about Francophones.	16	16.5	15	15.4	24	24.7
Francophones have very bad characteristics	17	17.5	19	19.6	17	17.5
Francophones have done much to make this country successful	24	24.8	8	8.2	23	23.7
There was little to admire about Francophones	22	22.7	16	16.4	17	17.5
Get upset on negative talks about Francophones	23	23.7	10	10.4	22	22.7
Visited Francophones classmates	42	42.3	13	13.4	1	1.0

As seen in Table 3 above, the intergroup contact relationship between ABT and FBT was a positive one. The respondents who reported that they met most regularly equally consented to having very good relationships with their classmates (20.6%). This implied that the greater the quantity of contact, the better the relationship between ABT and FBT. This echoes Pettigrew (1998) stance that repeated positive contacts enhance positive relationships. This is thanks to knowledge of the out-group, changes in behaviour, affective ties and

in-group reassessment. We shall now explore the extent the direction to which this positive contact.

The results in Table 4a indicate an overall positive tilt in ABT perceptions of their Francophone classmates at the end of their training. Although their evaluations were still globally negative, comparatively, there was an average 5% drop for each component. One item that stood out positively was that on 'I visited my Francophone classmates'. This tells of a significant growth in friendships between the group members, thereby reaffirming the claim of Pettigrew (1998) that in the course of favourable intergroup contacts, friendships are birthed, resulting in reduced prejudice. Unfortunately, the neutral category registered the highest percentages. This made it difficult to draw a conclusion. So, the respondent's dispositions towards the other official language group remained uncertain. This suggested that a good number of the respondents did not want to open up on their opinions. Hence, further inquiry is required to confirm these results.

Table 4b: FBT Post-Training Perceptions of Anglophones

Variable N = 42	Positive		Negative		Neutral	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
This country will be better off without Anglophones	21	21.6	15	15.5	6	6.2
Anglophones should get more recognition	14	14.5	14	14.4	14	14.4
I understand people's negative thoughts about Anglophones.	8	8.2	20	20.6	14	14.4
Anglophones have very bad characteristics	17	17.5	13	13.4	12	12.4
Anglophones have done much to make this country successful	19	19.6	4	4.1	19	19.6
There was little to admire about Anglophones	16	16.5	7	7.2	19	19.6
Get upset on negative talks about Anglophones	22	22.7	10	10.3	10	10.3
Visited Anglophone classmates	30	30.9	1	1.0	11	11.3

The results in Table 4b indicate that, at the end of their training, FBT maintained positive evaluations of their Anglophone classmates. This is evident in the higher percentages registered in the positive categories. These

percentages also recorded an average 4% increase per component as compared with their pre-training scores. As with the results for ABT, there was a significant increase of 20% in the item 'I visited my Anglophone classmates. This means that contact in an official bilingual classroom yielded a good number of intergroup friendships. These results rhyme with those of Wright & Tropp (2005). Thus, intergroup contact does not only bring about prejudice-reduction, but also increases positive perceptions.

Results of the Qualitative Data Analysis

This section presents a description of the textual data collected. It aims at shedding light on confusing, contradictory or unusual responses found in the survey results. Before getting to the results, it is important to understand the background of the respondents, given that this background information proved to be crucial in fully grasping the perspectives of the respondents. The background is used to draw correlations for a better understanding of the results.

At the end of the quantitative data analysis, the following perplexity remained:

1. Why were the attitudes of a good number of both groups of respondents towards their official language out-group imprecise at the beginning and at the end of their study?

2. Why did the FBT express positive opinions of Anglophones as well as negative feelings towards them?

The qualitative data elicited and presented here answers these questions.

Pre-Training Out-Group Attitudes

Given the challenge in determining the attitudes of both ABT and FBT towards each other both at the beginning and at the end of their training, this analysis set out to shed more light on this area. The following results were obtained.

Anglophones are Hospitable and Committed French Language Learners

Firstly, the data revealed that the attitudes of FBT towards Anglophones, prior to training in an OL learning context were positive. The intention was to elicit FBT attitudes towards Anglophones prior to contact, but the respondent chose to talk about the contact experiences before training and at their early days in contact instead. Nevertheless, this revelation painted a positive image of Francophones' attitude towards Anglophones; one that is characterized by admiration for their steadfastness in the learning process and hospitality. For

example: *I love Anglophones because they are not shy. When they are studying and having difficulties, they are not shy like Francophones. (Bil 2)*

I loved Anglophones because they are very welcoming and when you have difficulties and you approach them, they welcome you (Bil 2)

It indicated that FBT admired the ABT's openness to them. It gives an image of a humble, polite Anglophone people. This attitude has always been evoked in the literature (Nfi, 2014). It is depicted as a culture that transcended from the colonial masters. Though a tough language to them, Anglophones remained dedicated to learning the French language. These results, therefore, clarify the contradiction in the quantitative results, which gave the impression that FBT thought positively of Anglophones, but had negative feelings about them. As such, it can be confidently concluded that, overall, FBT's attitude towards Anglophones at the beginning of their training was positive.

Stereotyped Mind-Set about Francophones

A second revelation from the dta was that ABT brought with them preconceived mentalities about Francophones. They held that Francophones were troublemakers who looked down on Anglophones:

Before meeting them as classmates, I thought they were proud people, like a proud set of people and they feel like English means nothing to them; that they are enough with their French; that they wouldn't need English, like they wouldn't need us. (Bil 3).

This position was held by those ABT who had not have contacts with Francophones. It is worth recalling that two of the interviewees had not come in contact with Francophones before enrolment. This suggests that their views were thus picked up from their environment. Unfortunately, even for those who had had contact with them, the picture was not painted favourably. They were presented as stubborn and disrespectful. This clearly indicates that ABT's attitudes towards Francophones at enrolment were negative. It resonates the position of the literature on Anglophone/Francophone Cameroonian relationship that the Angophone Cameroonian majority feel marginalised (Echu, 2003; Anchimbe, 2005; Arjun and Jelte, 2015)

Limited French language Competence: An Intimidation to Anglophones

Thirdly, a look at the ABT affective responses to Francophones at the onset of their training indicated that the respondents had negative feelings towards Francophones. It is worth recalling that ABT displayed high rates of negative

prejudicial feelings towards Francophones. So these results confirm those of the quantitative phase and also provide justifications for those feelings. It indicated that ABT felt lacking in linguistic competence in the presence of Francophones:

I felt Francophones were kind of superior because they could manpipulate the English language better than we the Anglophones could use French.(Bil 5)

We are the ones with the problem, because I thought my English was small and their French is big, just because I did not know the language. (Bil 3)

The limitation made the ABT to feel minor and insecure. It goes without saying that Anglophones linked their feelings about the language to the people and all that they represented; political leadership. Thus, a glaring example of the interplay between attitude towards a language and its speakers. Both are intricately interwoven. These results confirms the position of Musumpa (n.d.) that the official English / French bilingualism in Cameroon is not the main source of conflict between the two groups. Rather, it is the competition for resources that creates an asymmetric relationship that is displayed by the stereotypes. This highlights the need for official bilingual intergroup contexts, where such prejudices can be minimized.

Positive Stereotyping of ABT

As regards perceptions of the behaviours of ABT after three years of contact, the FBT ascribed positive traits to the ABT. These included friendliness, conviviality and courteousness. So desirable are these attributes that Bil 6 expressed a desire for all of Cameroon to become an English-speaking nation:

Anglophones are well-mannered. Their system of life is easy-going. I would rather like Cameroon to turn into an English-speaking country. (Bil 6)

He also underscores that these qualities originated from contact with the British. Thus, relating their characteristics not to African ethnicity, but to the Anglo-Saxon culture. It is worth noting that this position is constant. It resonates with the opinion of the pre-training phase. This goes to say that intergroup contact augmented positive characterizations of Anglophones. These results resonate with Zingora, Vezzali and Graf (2020) findings that in the case of negatively stereotyped groups, positive contacts do not have any attitude-improving effect. However, this study goes a step further to show that stereotype-inconsistent contacts actually augment the positive stereotypes. Hence, it improves attitudes positively.

Insolent but Humble FBT

The analysis of ABT perceptions of FBT at the end of training revealed that ABT considered FBT to be cheeky and not watchful with their words:

To a larger extent, they are arrogant; they just speak without minding if somebody feels hurt. (Bil 1)

This must be a shock to ABT who have grown up to be polite in their ways, as have been seen above. This notwithstanding, thanks to their contact experiences, ABT saw a positive side to these people. The FBT were said to be simple in dressing and assiduous learners:

After I came in contact with Francophones, well, there were some things I admired about them: their simplicity in the way they dress, I admired their zealousness, the way they study. They could use the whole night just to study.(Bil 5)

Initially, mingling was not easy, but eventually, Francophones turned out to be friendly. They were good. I even had friends and even after that, we remained friends. We have good relationships. (Bil 5)

As such, these results confirm that of the quantitative phase of this study that mingling had a positive outcome on the attitude of ABT towards FBT. As stipulated by Pettigrew (1998) the attitudes of the ABT changed thanks to learning about the out-group that is the FBT, in everyday interactions. At the end, the ABT deviated from the institutionalized stereotypes that Francophone Cameroonians are lazy and arrogant (Nkoum-Me-Ntseny, 1996; Arroga Bessong, 1997; Massanga, 2014; Mallet, 2016). Thus, this finding underscores the importance of official bilingual intergroup contexts.

Discussion

The aim of this paper was to examine the effects of intergroup contact in an official bilingual language learning context on stereotypes of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians towards each other. The results of the study indicated that bilingual contexts are favourable spaces for positive intergroup contacts with a great potential of building friendships and thereby reducing negative prejudice and stereotypes. For both groups under study, friendship ties increased by up to 20% after the groups came in contact. These results are similar to those of Messanga (2014), who found bilingual universities to be more favourable in building friendship ties than monolingual universities, thanks to more frequency of contact. Thus, official language bilingual contexts

are suitable environments, where positive relationships between the two groups are fostered.

Also, pre-training attitudes towards out-group members varied between the groups. While ABT evaluated Francophones negatively both cognitively and affectively, FBT evaluations were cognitively positive, and affectively negative. For ABT, negative affective evaluations and labelling of Francophones were stronger at the beginning of their training. This goes to say that ABT attitudes were prejudice and stereotype-consistent, contrary to that of FBT. For those with indirect contact with Francophones, (who had studied French, but had not had face-to-face interactions with Francophone) the stereotypes emanated from negative prejudice towards Francophones. Francophones were judged based on what the ABT had heard about them. This group held that Francophones were arrogant and they looked down on Anglophones. Those who had come in direct contact with Francophones (mostly family members and classmates) described Francophones as rude, stubborn and disrespectful. Thus, ABT conformed to negative attitudes towards Francophones at the beginning of training while FBT went contrary to the established negative dispositions.

On the contrary, at pre-training, FBT's affective and cognitive evaluations of Anglophone Cameroonians were positive. FBT thought that Anglophones were polite, hospitable, humble and hardworking. These results resonate with those of previous studies (Aroga Bessong, 1997).The FBT conformity with positive stereotypes was accounted for by the source of their motivations to learn the English language. A look at the background information of these groups of participants revealed that most FBT were either from official language bilingual homes, in an official language intermarriage context or had lived with relatives of an Englishspeaking background. What's more most of these relatives or their values were the ones who oriented them. All the interviewees attested to have been encouraged by their parents or relatives to take up bilingual studies. This underscores the relationship between motivation and attitude in language learning. In this case, motivation birthed favourable attitude towards the language which mirrored into attitudes towards users of the language.

Another interesting finding was that the source of Anglophone prejudice towards Francophones lied in lack of competence in using the French language. The respondents found the French language to be difficult to learn. The challenges they faced in using the language evoked anxieties. When

Francophones stereotyped instead of being sympathetic with Anglophones, this only led the Anglophones to be negatively judgemental about them.Here, we see the interplay between attitudes towards a language and the speakers of a language. The former mirrors into the latter. Hence, the need for bilingual programs to take intergroup contexts into consideration. As championed by Allport (1954), such contact situations allows for cooperation as both group serve as resource and support for each other in the quest of a common goal, which in this case is learning the second language.

At post training, both ABT and FBT's attitudes towards the other group had improved. For ABT, negative prejudices as well as stereotypes reduced considerably, while for FBT their admiration and positive evaluations increased. ABT moved from seeing FBT as arrogant to describing them as assiduous in studies, simple in dressing, but still disrespectful and disputatious. FBT, on their part, increasingly appreciated their ABT classmates for their friendliness, conviviality and courteousness. Both findings go contrary to existing literature on Anglophone and Francophone stereotypes. Anglophone stereotypes are mostly negative criticisms of their tendency to oppose in political matters. Mallet (2016) found that traits like 'Anglofools' connotes foolishness, mainly referring to the fact that, when it comes to politics,

Anglophones reason differently from Francophones. This is glaring in the expression 'vous les Anglo-fou, vous raisonnez a gauche' [you Anglophones look at things from the left side]. In other words, Francophones saw Anglophones claims to marginalisation as senseless. In recent times, 'un(e) anglo' connotes one who behaves stupidly, with stupid retaining its denotative meaning (Tchouanmou Henang, 2011). Such a pejorative expression evokes the Francophone air of superiority. But, FBT, as revealed in this study, do not share this view. Rather, they positively appreciate Anglophone resourcefulness, social and moral values. This confirms the findings of Arroga Bessong (1997) that Francophones admire Anlophones for being hardworking, polite and honest. Negative labels like 'les ennemis de la nation' [the nation's enemies], referring to Anglophones as secessionists or 'opposants' [opponents] did not come up in this study. This makes it indisputable that both direct and indirect contact with their second official language group reduces Francophone prejudices and stereotyping.

Francophone stereotypes, on their part, has always been a moral critic. A term like 'frogs' is an offensive language in Cameroon used by Anglophone Cameroonians in response to their typecast as 'anglofools' by their counterpart.

Mallet (2016) links the term 'Franco frogs' to arrogance, talkativeness and empty-headedness. This is new, as opposed to previous scholars who identified Cameroon Francophone stereotypes to include arrogance, laziness and tribalism. Nevertheless, a feature that cuts across both studies is arrogance. Unlike, anglophone stereotypes that are mostly political, Francophone stereotypes are both political and ethical. In this study, ABT only castigate Francophones along the lines of ethical values. This suggests that direct, as well as indirect contact with official languages significantly reduces political stereotypes directed at Francophone Cameroonians, but has little effect on negative moral evaluations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our discussion so far has made it clear that intergroup contact between members of the official language groups in Cameroon, be it direct or indirect, positively reduces negative prejudice, positively transforms negative political stereotypes (secessionists, tribalism), minimizes negative moral judgements (arrogance, disrespect, verbosity) and increases favourable categorizations (hospitality, politeness and humility). Therefore, bilingual official language learning contexts, one in which Anglophones and Francophones share the same classroom, is a potential space to engender peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. The Cameroon educational authorities may want to consider this option as an alternative to monolingual special bilingual classes, private bilingual primary educationists, especially those in cosmopolitan cities could take up this approach in their schools. Also, adds its voice to that of many others to call for the incorporation of intercultural aspects in existing school curricular. More specifically to our context, Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonian intercultural topics should be included in school programmes across all levels of education. In this way, school could serve as a melting pot for both cultures, thereby making tiny strides towards national integration.

Also, negative stereotypes are nourishments to conflicts in communities. They have been identified by scholars of hate speech as a global threat to peace and security (Nwenfor, N.D). It is high time the perpetrators of derogatory remarks start being held accountable for their actions. The powers that be might have to begin meting out sanctions on the promoters of hate speech. This study focused on face-to-face contact situations only. It would be interesting to also find out what obtains in indirect contact situations

This study has highlighted the potential of intergroup official bilingual classrooms in facilitating peaceful co-existence between Anglophone and

Francophone Cameroonians. The state could engage in a pilot study, especially to find out the attitudes of Cameroonians towards intergroup study spaces.

Emerging Issues and Controversies

The effects of intergroup contact in an official bilingual language teaching context on mutual stereotypes have become a subject of emerging issues and controversies. Official bilingual language teaching refers to educational settings where students from different linguistic backgrounds are taught in both official languages of a country. While this approach aims to foster linguistic diversity and promote understanding between different language communities, it also raises several concerns.

Firstly, one emerging issue is the potential reinforcement of stereotypes through intergroup contact. Despite the intention to promote mutual understanding, students may inadvertently perpetuate existing stereotypes about each other's linguistic and cultural groups. These stereotypes can be reinforced when students rely on simplistic generalizations or fail to engage in meaningful dialogue and cultural exchange.

Secondly, controversies arise regarding the quality and depth of intergroup contact. Superficial interactions and token representation of different language communities may not effectively challenge stereotypes or promote genuine understanding. To address this, educators and policymakers need to ensure that intergroup contact is meaningful, authentic, and encourages participants to engage in open-minded conversations that challenge stereotypes.

Thirdly, power dynamics within the official bilingual language teaching context can contribute to emerging issues. Imbalances in linguistic proficiency or cultural capital between different language groups may influence the nature of intergroup contact and exacerbate stereotypes. Inequitable access to resources and opportunities for interaction can perpetuate unequal power dynamics and limit the effectiveness of intergroup contact as a means to challenge stereotypes.

Fourthly, the role of social identity in intergroup contact cannot be overlooked. Students may identify strongly with their linguistic and cultural groups, and intergroup contact alone may not be sufficient to bridge the divide. It is important to recognize the complexities of individual and group identities and create spaces for dialogue that acknowledge and validate diverse perspectives.

Lastly, the evaluation and measurement of the effects of intergroup contact on mutual stereotypes remain a contentious issue. The impact of intergroup contact is not always straightforward to quantify, and different stakeholders may have divergent views on what constitutes successful outcomes.

Methodological challenges in assessing changes in attitudes, beliefs, and behavior further contribute to the controversies surrounding the effectiveness of intergroup contact in an official bilingual language teaching context.

In conclusion, while intergroup contact in an official bilingual language teaching context has the potential to challenge mutual stereotypes, there are emerging issues and controversies surrounding its implementation. Addressing these concerns requires careful attention to the depth and quality of intergroup interactions, power dynamics within the educational setting, the role of social identity, and the development of appropriate evaluation methods. By addressing these challenges, educators and policymakers can work towards creating an inclusive and transformative learning environment that fosters genuine understanding and breaks down stereotypes.

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