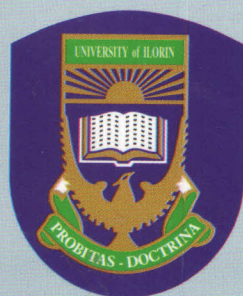


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THE PRAGMATICS OF EMOTION-BASED ACTS IN NGUGI WA THIONG'O AND MICERE MUGO'S *THE TRIAL OF DEDAN KIMATHI*

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Abstract

This paper is a pragmatic study of emotion-based acts in Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. The aim is to describe how these emotional acts reveal contextual issues in the play. Mey's (2001) theory of pragmeme serves as the theoretical framework. The emotions expressed in the text are identified and described with reference to their pragmatic use. Within the socio-economic and political contexts of the play, the playwrights deploy shared situation knowledge (SSK) and share cultural knowledge (SCK) to achieve the practs of aggression, fear, depression and hope. Image-evoking verbs, phrases and clauses are used for practs of lamenting, informing, challenging, encouraging, and persuading. These emotions and their contextual functions reveal issues of racial abuse, economic exploitation and loss of identity that characterize the existence of the blacks in the wake of colonization, as well as the readiness of the Kenyans to resist colonial domination, through aggressive revolutionary campaign, unity, loyalty and dedication to social struggle. The emotions are largely dependent on context for their expressions. The emotions of aggression, fear, depression and hope condition the thoughts and perceptions of the characters, and consequently influence the way they respond to the socio-economic and political realities around them.

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THE PROMINENCE OF CASSAVA PRODUCTION OVER YAM IN BOKI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, 1945 to 2015

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Abstract

Yam, like most other crops in Nigeria, is an indigenous food crop that is common among the Boki people of Cross River State, Nigeria. Yam, the chief food of Boki people, plays an important role in the socio-economic and cultural life of the people in the Eastern Niger Delta area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Right from inception, yam was a staple food in the area. In the process of yam production, farmers are faced with a lot of challenges such as insufficient labour due to the clamour for white collar jobs by the youths, poor preservation of yam seeds and the deleterious effects of rodents and pests on crops. In the light of these challenges, cassava began to gain prominence largely because of its higher economic and export potentials, its being more resistant to pests and vagaries of weather conditions, and because it requires less labour in its cultivation. Cassava was introduced during the colonial period, and by the 80s cassava gained a lot of prominence in Boki area of the Eastern Niger Delta. Using a multi-disciplinary approach and oral sources as the main methodology, this paper critically examined yam production, its decline and prominence of cassava production in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Yam, Cassava, Production

Introduction

Boki Local Government Area was created by the Federal Government of Nigeria on 28th of August, 1991. Its administrative headquarters is in Boje and it has more than fourteen major communities

such as Ntamante, Okundi, Bansan Osokom, Oku, Kakwagom, Isobendeghe, Orimekpang, Irrauan, Bumaji, Nsadop, Abo and Bateriko among others. It has a population of about 300,000 people (National Population Commission, 2006). Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria shares a boundary with the Republic of Cameroon to the North. Boki is a commercial centre where agricultural produce are available in large quantity, especially yam. Boki remains the largest yam producer in Cross River State till date. (<https://kcekerete.tripod.com/CRSG/boki.html>, 2016)

Agriculture is the major occupation in the area and the production of yams is largely carried out by indigenous farmers. Yam was seen and regarded as a major staple food by the people of Boki in Cross River State of Nigeria. If a farmer failed to cultivate yam, he would be seen as lazy and would not be respected. The economic and cultural influence yam has on the Boki people made it important among other crops. Yam is a staple food that can be prepared in different forms: It could be boiled, roasted, fried or made in form of pounded yam. Because yam is produced in large quantities and because it is a staple food in every part of Nigeria, its production and sale has contributed to the economic growth of the study area. Most times, buyers came from far and near to buy yam, in fact, traders came all over Nigeria to Boki, even from Akwa Ibom and Benue states to buy yam. It is on record that upper Cross River, Boki LGA in particular, were the chief suppliers of yam to the Efiks, Ibibios, Ijaws Igbos part of Benue State and other parts of Nigeria (Njoku, 2001, PP 10-11). During the process of cultivation, both adults and youths usually got themselves involved actually. But with passage of time, the young people could not be found to support the work on the farmland, due to the quest for white collar jobs. As a result, farmers were faced with challenges in the production of yam. Some of the major challenges were degradation of the soil, lack of adequate preservative facilities which can prevent diseases, rodents and pests. All these challenges eventually led to low harvests over the years, and consequently encouraged farmers to shift to cassava cultivation, (personal interview, October 16th, 2015).

Cassava, known as *Manihot esculenta* or *Manihot utilisim*, originated from South America, and spread to other tropical countries. It

was introduced in the late sixteenth century, to the Southern part of Nigeria during the slave trade era by the Portuguese explorers in Warri, the former Bendel State of Nigeria. From there, its cultivation spread to other parts of Nigeria like the present day Cross River, Abia, Benue, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Enugu and among other states. It became very important in the nineteenth century, but it was in the 80s that cassava began to gain popularity and prominence in Boki Local Government Area, (Dajie Obi, personal interview, June 12, 2015). However, cassava, over the years, gradually integrated into the economy and became a major economic crop in the area because of its increasing yields. A large population of Boki people in recent time depends so much on cassava production. Cassava is processed into different finished products such as garri and *Akpu* and these are the most popular food items among the communities in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia).

Yam Production in Boki

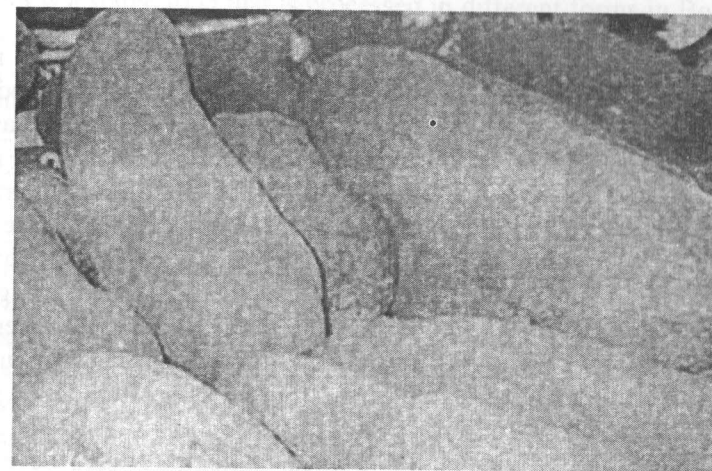
Yam produce played a vital role in the economy of Boki in the pre and post colonial eras. In Boki area, yam cultivation was their main area of specialisation, because other crops were given little attention. Right from inception, Boki has been known as the major producer of yams in Cross River State. Yam production was an occupation of both the men and the women (Paul Shara's personal interview, September 24th, 2015). In Boki, yam is planted between the months of December and February and the harvesting usually starts from August 17th, which is the eve of the Boki New Yam Festival day. The process of cultivation of yam begins with the clearing and tilling of the farmland which are mostly done by the men (Rose Akam's personal interview, July, 4th, 2016). Most times, individuals employed labourers to clear or till the soil for them. Communal labour also augmented paid-labour in the process of getting the land ready for the cultivation of yam. The women are involved in the planting of yam and they also get involved in the weeding (Anthony Agbor's personal interview, September 24th, 2015). One major form of labour that has helped the people is the age grade system, whereby a particular age group is mobilized to work in an individual's farm. This form of labour usually helps to increase the size of the farm and the

income of such individuals as the production of yam is a major source of income in the area, (Kelvin Nku's personal interview, February 4th 2016).

Yam production is significant and important to the Boki people, because without the new yam, there will be no New Yam Festival. Yam is usually harvested when the vines are dried, but in Boki, the eve of the new yam festival marks the beginning of the harvesting of yams. The 18th of August of every year marks the beginning of the New Yam Festival for the year, and this date is sacrosanct to the people of Boki in Cross River State, Nigeria and in the Diasporas. Yam was so significant in Boki because it was used during naming ceremonies, marriages and funeral ceremonies, (personal interview, August 18th, 2015). Large quantities of yams are produced to meet the needs of the people and for sale. The people of Boki love to eat pounded yam, and it is their favourite meal. Yam is an item of trade, it is taken to the various markets far and near, for sale. Traders come from Calabar, Oron and Akampa among other places in Nigeria to buy yam in Boki. Yam cultivation and trading in Boki Local Government of Cross River State was lucrative until about 1985 when cassava gradually began to grow in popularity and its derivatives took over most of the markets in Boki, (Columbus Bayim's personal interview, March 1st, 2015).

The Decline of Yam in Boki

In Boki Local Government Area as a whole, there has been a general decline of yam production, and this has been the situation for over 20 years. Yam was more profitable than any other crop in Boki, that most farmers had only yam farms as their source of livelihood. There are combinations of factors why the production of yams declined and giving way to the prominence of cassava in Boki Local Government Area.



Yam Tubers

One of the major factors for the decline in yam production is the soil infertility and the limited land space for cultivation. Regular cultivation of yams over the years had rendered the soil infertile for good harvest. Another reason for the decline of yam production in Boki Local Government Area is massive urbanization, which has led to influx of youths from the rural areas to the cities, searching for non-existing white collar jobs (Otu Odey's personal interview, August 14th, 2015). It was also discovered by the researcher that even though farmers in Boki would have preferred the use of fertilizers to improve their yield, the cost and the non-availability of the fertilizers were other factors responsible for the setback in the production of yams, (Offum Odu's personal interview, August 18th, 2015).

Another major factor affecting the production of yams in the area is the cost of labour. Because of globalisation and modernisation, labourers are few, as most Labourers are now into Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) business and trade, (Agbor Etta's personal interview, August 29th, 2015). Some of these factors gave rise to the prominence being enjoyed by cassava at the expense of yam.

Cassava Production in Boki Local Government Area

In Nigeria and some other parts of Africa, cassava is an important staple food. In Africa, Nigeria is the largest cassava producer, and in Nigeria, Cross River State is the largest producer of cassava (Edodi, 2015). Nigeria has a huge agricultural potential with many hectares of land and she is a major player in the global cassava market which has added value to the economy of the country. Other places like Ewekoro in Ogun State are also big-time farmers in cassava production and have improved the livelihood and income of farmers. Nigerian governments at different levels encourage farmers to form cooperative groups which will receive assistance from government and agricultural agencies like International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and such assistance comes in form of cassava stems and funds (Adeleke, 2013, pp.1-3). International Institute for tropical agriculture have developed and released varieties of cassava species that supersede the local species, these new species have also assisted other African countries like Zambia and Malawi to boost their cassava production. The increase in cassava production has also opened avenues for more discoveries like the production of cassava biscuits (Arega, Khataza, Chibwana, Ntawuruhunga and Moyo, 2013, pp.2-5).

Boki is one of the largest producers of cassava in Cross River State. Cassava is one of the leading crops in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State and this has assumed a high level of importance in recent times. Some years ago, cassava was a subsistence crop for mostly the poor and was used as feed for some domestic animals like goats and pigs. This crop was also produced by farmers who were involved in the production of yams. Cassava is a root crop planted among other crops, like yams, Mellon, vegetables and maize among others. This was common in almost all the cassava producing countries in West Africa (Nweke, 2002, p23). Cassava processing involves several operations. Cassava is best planted during the raining season and it is planted in the lower part of the heaps that had been made on the farm. In recent time, people have plots of land mainly for cultivation of cassava without mixture of other crops or yams. The planting usually take place in April and June yearly. The olden day's farmers did not apply fertilizer, because the soil was naturally fertile for the production of cassava.

Cassava is a staple food that is processed in different forms in Boki (Otu Ben's personal interview, August 18th, 2016). Cassava as a crop has toxin, and that is the reason why cassava is processed before consumption. The processing of cassava is to remove the poison and to reduce its toxicity before consumption. (Okorji, E.C., Eze C.C, Eze, V.C., 2003, p.85).

One of the commonest products of cassava processing is garri. Garri is mostly done by women and young adults. Women play a central role in the process of cassava production. They are almost entirely responsible for the sum total of cassava processing which enhance their income in their families (Adeniji, A. A., Ega, L.A., Akoroda, M. O., Akoroda, Aeniya, A. A., Ugwu, B. O., Balogun, A, 2005). Cassava is harvested by the men and the women as well, but mostly peeled by the women and children, grated with the cassava engine and the water pressed out either manually or by the engine until it was dry and fried by the women (Anna Bisong's personal interview October 16th, 2016). Garri, which is the commonest and most popular by-product of cassava, is then taken to the market for sale after all the processing. Cassava is rich in carbohydrate, and it could even be processed in different colours. The yellow garri is considered to be the best, and when palm oil is added to it during processing, it gives it the yellow colour (Maria Offum's personal interview, September 17th, 2016). Traders came from Oron, Calabar, Enugu and some other neighbouring towns to buy garri from Okundi, Kakwagom or Ntamante markets among others. Cassava is also processed into chips and could be pounded for food just as pounded yam. Cassava has also been used by bakers to produce cassava bread. It is expected that as this bread becomes more popular with Nigerians, it will also give a big boost to the cultivation of cassava in Boki Local Government Area. The peels of cassava are used to feed goats and pigs, among other animals. Cassava stems can also be used for making fire for cooking.

Factors Responsible for Prominence of Cassava in Boki

Cassava is enjoying more prominence than yam as a result of several factors. One of the major reasons is the increasing demand for cassava and cassava by-products in the world today. Cassava was a

subsistence food for the less privileged in Boki Local Government Area, but in recent times, it has grown to be a crop of a very high demand by a lot of countries for industrial use and consumption (Esther Okon: personal interview, October 16th, 015). The Nigerian governments, at different times, encouraged the production of cassava for export trade. In 1986, when Mariam Babangida, the then first lady of Nigeria, introduced the Better Life for Rural Women Programme, the first equipment that was donated to the women of Ntamante in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State was cassava processing machines. This equipment was an encouragement to the women to further increase cassava production in the area. The demand for cassava then became very high, and over 30 percent of processed cassava was exported from Boki, through Lagos to outside Nigeria (Mary Bisong: personal interview, October 16th, 2015).

Cassava has gained prominence to an extent that in Boki local Government area, the 16th October of every year is set aside as Cassava Day celebration. These celebrations attract traders and visitors to Boki and as they mark the Cassava Day business network are also established to enhance cassava production and sale (Eyare Agan: personal interview, October 16th, 2015). This popularity and prominence has, to a large extent, dampened the glamour and excitement usually associated with the Boki New Yam Festival. Cassava, as a tropical crop, is also more resilient to the problems of the weather, pests and pollution of the land through the industrialisation and oil exploration activities we are going through as a developing country. The yam seeds for planting are also more expensive and less available than the cassava stem which is planted for cassava cultivation. A combination of factors has brought cassava into prominence and traders come from all over Nigeria to transact cassava business in Boki and more income is generated from the production of cassava in the area. Other factors are the demand for cassava outside Nigeria, government support for cassava cultivation and the fertile soil, in Nigeria (Peter Edoko: personal interview, March 1st, 2016).



Cassava Tubers

Cassava as an Economic Crop

Cassava production continues to play an important role in the economic growth and development of Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State. Cassava is exported in large quantities to many other states in Nigeria. Nigeria is currently the largest producer of cassava in the whole world with an annual output of 34 million tonnes of cassava tubers (Adeniji, et al). It should be noted that places like Kakwagom, Ntamante and Nkim have long been noted as great Garri producers in the area. Most of the markets in Boki Local Government Area, such as Okundi, Kakwagom, Ntamante, are predominantly dominated by Garri producers. Traders from Benue State, Akwa Ibom State and Calabar in Cross River State among others have always traded with the Boki garri producers (<http://kcekerete.tripod.com>, 2016).

Cassava *manioc* is also used in the making of starch which has domestic commercial usefulness and relevance to the society (Yakasai, 2010, pp216-215). Most times the method commonly used is to reconstitute the starch by boiling water and mixing with the boiled water and eventually spraying the starch on the fabric. This method is mostly used for laundering and starching the clothes. In some other parts of the

Niger Delta area, it is used in making *fufu*, a popular staple food in Nigeria. The demand for cassava became very high in the early 80s that it has become difficult to meet the consumer's demand. In Nigeria, agriculture has accounted for two thirds of the gross domestic product (GDP) before the oil boom. Cassava has launched Nigeria into the league of economically viable nation of the world. Cassava is also one of the foreign exchange earners for Nigerian government. It has become an alternative source of income to both the government and individuals. With the rapid increase and expansion of cassava production, it has become a great potential for generating employment for individuals and variety of raw materials to assist local industries in Nigeria (The Nigeria economy and Cassava Investment, 2016). Cassava production has improved the lives of farmers in Boki and places like Ewekoro area of Ogun State in Nigeria (Odunaya, 2012). In other African countries like Zambia, cassava has been regarded as a famine-reserve-crop; each household was encouraged to have a piece of land to cultivate cassava as a fallback plan in case of any economic recess, and this has also applied in other African countries. There has been a lot of cassava planting material and new technology to support the desire to meet the increased demand for cassava, and government in Nigeria and other African countries have been designing programmes to aid the farmers to boost the economy (Arega, pp1-10). Cassava has also played a unique role in reducing poverty in families and the society at large. Most poor people engaged in the production of cassava to alleviating poverty, garri for example is easily affordable by many people because it is seen as the cheapest way of survival (Adofu, shaibu, yakubu, 2015, pp65-66).

Challenges in Cassava Cultivation

In the process of cassava cultivation and production, there are a lot of challenges faced by the farmers. Some of these numerous problems include poor accessibility to credit facilities, inaccessible roads and poor road networks, poor mobility of the farmers, lack of appropriate technology, and lack of good communication network. The inaffordability and inaccessibility of chemicals to control pests and diseases has always been a problem (www.iproject.com.ng, 2016). The processing enterprises are in large quantity, but the supplies are limited

because of bad road network making it difficult to convey the products to the markets. The state of production has undergone a lot of changes; approximately 40 per cent of the processes have become mechanized. Initially every step taken to process cassava was manual with a lot of labour required, but with the available equipment and mechanization of the process the output of the farmers increased. Because of new innovation and interest of farmers in cassava processing, farmers lack the capability to produce the desired quantity, because of lack of loans from the government to assist farmers for more production. This has also affected the economy of the country (John Owan: personal interview Dec 20th, 2015).

Conclusion

In conclusion, right from inception, the historical importance of yam cannot be overemphasised, as yam in Boki is attached to the Boki culture, but then, the production of cassava in Boki Local Government of Cross River State, Nigeria has become so prominent to the extent that it has contributed to the economic growth and development in the state and Nigeria at large. Cassava has become popular as a result of its economic importance, this is as a result of the yield and tonnage of cassava that have increased over the years as well as the consumption rate, both for domestic use and for industrial purposes, even in other countries. Cassava is therefore very significant to the economy and cultural life of the people of Boki in Cross River State of Nigeria.

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