shall rise no more. All lizards crawl on their bellies .no one knows which of them suffers from bellyache. A local dirge was sang for the deceased Kaara. Pgs 52-53

Colonial interruption after the nomination of Kaara's son as the Balogun Gambari, who had become very outspoken in the face of the colonial master and Carter.

Members of the war council in persond of Alanamu, Ajikobi, Sarkin Slama, Gambari felt a slap on their faces when Amir decided to buy the idea of the 'King of the Batures' (Carter) on stopping all forms of warfare and withdraw troops for the purpose of peaceful coexistence and progress.

In the native council chiefs, peace compromise is an act of exposing the sovereignty of the Emirate to danger. The colonial intervention disintegrated them. The Baloguns refused to attend the turbaning of the the new Magaji Aderoju, this is an interruption of the required native practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. The Sociolingistic Theory

Schneider (2010, p 25) talks about culture-specific language situations with social factors such as: age, gender, social class, ethnicity, power and distance. And this research tends to agree with those of linguistic analysis.

Sociolinguistics is a very broad field, and it can be used to describe many different ways of studying language. A lot of linguists might describe themselves as sociolinguists, but the people who call themselves sociolinguists may have rather different interests from each other and they may use very different methods for collecting and analysing data. Miriam Meyerhoff (2006).

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THE SOCIO-LINGUISTIC BASE OF THE PERFORMANCE IN ISIAKA ALIAGAN`S *OBA MAMA*

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ABSTRACT

A Socio-linguistics text records the cultural credentials, artifacts, icons, myths, history, and nuances etc of a particular society of their focus. The reason been to decolonize the particular society from the much acclaimed foreign values spelt out in western religion and western culture. The African performer, the example of Isiaka Aliagan negates these values and go on to accentuate his own native values and aesthetics. It does this through the accentuation of the sensitive part serving as the roots of the African Man what Aliagan is saying for instance is that a society in this portrayal the Ilorin environs and aesthetics sensibilities cannot be ruled out in the face of modernity that Man can only be acculturated through the intuitive knowledge he has gained from his background. Hence, it is only cultural hybridization that can make Man adjust to nutrient and this point acclaims the dynamic essence of culture. A legendary replay of the personality of Oba Mama is to show case his might and importance among the people of his society. Oba Mama is symbolic of the struggle of his people against new forms of livelihood that has come to disturb their salient peace security and stability. Part of the discovery in this write up is that Aliagan`s Oba Mama can best be approached via the socio-linguistic approach of the Literature. This approach exposes the societal language composition as historical reflections of Ilorin geographical setting.

KEY WORDS: ACCENTUATION, NUTRIENT, HYBRIDIZATION, STABILITY, LEGENDARY.

INTRODUCTION

R.A. Hudson (2001) observes that "the difference between sociolinguistics and the *sociology of language* is very much that of emphasis, because there is a large area of overlap between the two. Rubén Chacón-Beltrán (2013) reviews that in sociolinguistics, "the stress is placed on language and its role within communication while sociology of language centers on the study of society and how we can understand the society through the study of language."

Aliagan uses the sociolinguistic approach to dictualise his techniques and thematic concerns in his drama text- *Oba Mama*. This paper examines the conflicting reports and documentations on Oba Abdulsalam Momolosho; the 5th Emir of Ilorin who hailed from the Abdulsalami lineage and reigned between 1891 to 1896. Historical oral accounts classify him as a disciplinarian and a totalitarian with the nickname *mama.*

Aliagan's play *Oba Mama* is a reconstruction of the Ilorin past through drama. The text is a "dramatic replication that fits perfectly into the tragic hero form in which the dramatic personae lives and dies for a cause, misunderstood and vilified" (Aliagan 2003).

Na'Allah (2003) observes Aliagan's *Oba Mama* as an Ilorin historical magnum opus. He goes further to state that:

> This is a pioneering play on Ilorin history and it ushers in a new generation of Ilorin literature from the earlier writings in Arabic and Yoruba languages to Literature in English… Isiaka Aliagan, with *Oba Mama* has now joined in the creation of Ilorin master pieces, with the first ever Ilorin indigenous play!

The Ilorin people welcome the performance platform to celebrate their brave and courageous warrior ancestor. Although the play is written in English language, it draws the attention and captures the interest of the people because it is their history and culture that is being captured. The Ilorin peoples' history is being explored and reconstructed in a true war context that led to peace and final settlement of the Ilorin people.

The linguistic base of the play indicates the richness of Ilorin Yoruba language. The characters are used to exhibit the traits of the Ilorin descendants.

> Kaara comes out of his tent. He meets Mama filling the hoof of his horse. He whistles as he works on the horse. Pg 32

This is a reference to the typical Ilorin setting. There are references to the Islamic religion being the religion of Ilorin populace. Sarkin Salama for instance says to Amir Mama:

> Sarkin Salama: Thank you. Your Highness. May Allah grant
> you the wisdom of Anabi Sulieman and the
> humility of Anabi Ibrahim. Great people of
> the Emirate, peace be unto you all. (P 43)

A typical Royal traditional setting is exhibited, the chanting, dancing, flute blowing, inhaling of snuff, drumming etc. are used to accompanist the requirements of the setting. Oba Mama for instance is dressed in a heavy alkimba with the turban to match "Trumpet blowing and drumming herald his emergence on stage with 20,000 horses and 20,000 horsemen. Organization of Janazah bath for Kaara on his death. Also the use of proverbs live: A big tree has fallen in the forest. The elephant

Emphatically, sociolinguistics can be defined as the study of the relationship between language and society (Holmes, 2001). This implies that as soon as we embark on the study of WHY we speak in CERTAIN ways we are already within the realm of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics is that academic discipline which examines the way a social identity of a particular people is signaled through language. (Holmes, 2001). It probes into various functions of language in accordance with social functions. To Hymes (1974), spoken language is primary.

This view prompts him to evolve ethnography of communication model of sociolinguistics to study interdependence of language and society. He believes linguistic tools are sufficiently capable of studying a society and various societal activities.

Variables like sex, status, literacy level, exposure, setting, idiosyncrasies and socio-cultural values, and how they influence a person's linguistic behaviour lie within the scope of sociolinguistics (Grice, 1975). Through one or more of these factors, an individual identity of a speaker or a cultural practice in a community is signalled. A culture is better understood and promoted through language because language serves as a mirror to a society and its cultural practices.

b. **Ilorin Language Transference and Linguistic Codes in Aliagan's Oba Mama**

The constituent's language reveals the identity of its users. As second language users (L2) of English the Ilorin maintains the nuances of his native language and translates it directly into English with word insertions, coinages and borrowings. Adetunji A. (2013) observes that linguistic coding involves the use of

Nigerian indigenous languages, Standard English as well as Nigerian ethnic English. He submits that due to the linguistic complexity of the multi-lingual Nigeria. Nigeria English is freely used in the deliveries of messages, direct commands in offensive expressions, in anger and in making polite requests.

Contextually, both the speaker and the listener involved in the utterances have pre-knowledge of communication and intention. A look of Sigmund Freud's (1954) theory of the unconscious mind becomes relevant here. Freud (1954) maintains that:

The human psyche is made up of language. Our conscious and sub-consconcious minds are born into language, a system of signifiers. From infancy to adulthood, we grow toward what we think is a secure and coherent identity. But at the heart of the human psyche is an unbridgeable gap between the signifier and the signified. Our psyche is never fully coherent without our identity.

The following aesthetic aspects help to reveal the messages of the playwright in his blends of oral and written sources to reconstruct a much valued ancestral rope of the 19th century Ilorin Kingdom.

CHARACTERISATION AS A STRATEGIC LINGUISTIC CODIFICATION

Amir

Amir is Oba Mama, the courageous and brave king of Ilorin who innocently accepted the peace mission of the Whiteman with the aim of abolishing war and settling his people in peace. However, he paid dearly for his love for his peace. Amir

conspirators rose against him including including his blood brother – Alege who helped to effect the success of the coup plan against Amir.

None of Amir's conspirators; the Baloguns and Alege gained from their conspiracy. They died soon one after the other while Amir died with dignity and intact honour. Alanamu one of the conspiring Balogun's was for instance banished by the Whiteman who soon evaded the Emirate after Amir's death. Amir can be said to be a visionary king as he soliloquises at death point as follows:

> "… what is in this world but pains and shame. Death is worth more than disgrace for the honourable man. O Allah, accept my soul. Forgive my trespasses. No one is free from sins. I'm not evil as they think, nor am I a saint. You are the ultimate judge over this matter. Let my detectors realize their errors. Let the people see the truth."

Amir was quite a spiritual king: though a great warrior from youth. Amir did not want to confront his kinsmen even after seven (7) days of the sieze in the palace which brought about the suffering and hunger to his family and followers and since "the carnivals will devour them if they step out." (P84)

Amir is fearly of threats because of his high relative power. Amir's linguistic codes can be decoded according to contextual use. For example, Amir addresses Sarkin Salama thus:

Amir: Let us hear what you have put down (p.47)

This was in the second scene of Act 1 when Amir wanted Sarkin Salama to read over the letter he has written on behalf of the kingdom. The idea of putting down is an ethnic conception of laying something crucial on ground.

And similarly when Kaara, the General of Ilorin Army commands that soldiers should be organized to escort the new king (Amir) home he puts it in the following sentences.

> Kaara: Organise 20,000 soldiers, the calvary and the footmemen, fully armed with the paraphernalia of warfare. You should lead the convoy that follows the Amir back home… find out what brings the royalty to the domain of fire and blood. P.29
>
> …please guage what comes out of your leaking mouth. P.24

General Kaara

Kaara is very offensive in his addresses to *Oba Mama* and this is resposnsible for the hot arguments that ensue between the two of them. Kaara disagrees a lot with the Amir (*Oba Mama*) and therefore makes use of impolite addresses to the Oba (king). This attitude of Kaara is however acceptable to the understanding king who believes that as a General, Kaara has to be fearless to all. The two therefore became friendly on the advice of Jimba (p.25). the reunion of the two great warriors was sealed with inhaling of some snuff passed on by Kaara to mama.

> Kaara: (inhales some snuff and passes the rest to Mama) Take some snuff. it clears the head off cobwebs. Our spy among the Ikun soldiers brought it. It will work on your mood (Mama takes some snuff)

The Baloguns (Warriors)

The Baloguns include Alanamu, Gambari Ajikobi and Fulani. All the Baloguns were in support of the Amir before the intrusion of Carter (the Bature; Whiteman). Foreign intrusion brought about chaos among them. Alanamu Ajikobi and Gambari are fast to anger and confronted the Amir directly while Fulani acted with caution:

> Fulani: (sighs) Let us apply caution, my dear warriors, The Barture king is heavily armed with weapons of instant death. Let us pretend we are with them. We will withdraw the warriors and wait for the time to strike.

The above is a more thoughtful reasoning than the way of the Baloguns (warriors) like Alanamu thought the King had reduced them to puppets.

Carter & His Aides

The Whiteman who wanted to stop the expansion of Ilorin sovereignty at all course otherwise use forces to fight the Emirate. He is the force behind the cause of commotion that was generated in the political setting of Ilorin where structures were well spelt out with belief in Islamic Religion. Carter passes a note of warning to Amir thus:

Well, Your Highness. It is time we got going. Send words to your soldiers. Our forces will supervise the withdrawal of troops from the disputed region in two days' time. I wish you well (He leaves with his aides.)

This final note action by Carter made Amir to desire for peace as the condition for the progress of the Emirate. But then this amounts to being cowards for the Baloguns and surrendering their freedom to the enemy. The peace move cannot therefore work externally but internally.

Other Performance Devices as Plot Schematization

Other performance devices used for the plot construction include: proverbs, drumming, singing, dancing, chanting and blowing of trumpets. The war gadgets cannot be left out of this aesthetic category. Such as swords, cutlasses, axes, spears and clubs (P21). Warriors keep brandishing their weapos to indicate endof a war.

"Enter Oba Mama, dressed in a heavy alkimba with turban to match. Trumpet and drumming herald his emergence on stage. He addresses an unseen audience." (p21)

The devices help to cushion the effect of performance as it showcases the reality of a proper Ilorin Royal house with its attendant human and non-human artifacts. The use of the riding horses is also part of the royal presence.

CONCLUSION

From the play, we have been able to identify some themes such as the colonial intervention and cultural conflict, political tussle among the power holders as is typical in modern day political establishments in Nigeria. The historical past therefore reveals the archetypal trend in human nature. The Ilorin royal plaza is imagised in its full form with traditional pomps and pageantry exhibited in costuming, drumming, trumpet blowing, singing etc. from the discussions as well it is evident that certain ethnographic linguistic codes are put in place to reflect Ilorin setting. And this fact makes it easy for any layman to reconstruct Ilorin Society from drama of *Oba Mama* by Aliagan.

The persisting tendencies in Adrican drama has therefore remained the evaluation of the African society for the purpose of heralding it's cultural virtues and attacking the vices trivalent in the society in other to enhance the socio transformation of the society.

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