Pragmatic analysis of extracts from Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*

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ABSTRACT: This article investigates the idiosyncrasies of Shoneyin in her text, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives.* Some portions of Shoneyin's text were identified as sample data for analysis. The researcher made use of the theory of speech acts and implicature, propounded by Grice to investigate and analyse the text. The study shows that Shoneyin has employed a brilliant style with various sentence types to sustain readers' interests and maintains originality to the work. The language used by the writer is quite explicit and "vulgar" for example "grapped my breasts", "forced his penis" etc. The study assesses the pragmatic idiosyncrasies as uniqueness and not as deviances. Generally, Shoneyin's use of language in these two texts is point blank, which may be considered as vulgar. She presents her ideas in explicit terms and her choice of words is deliberate. The study concludes that Shoneyin's choice of words are distinctive.

Keywords: Co-referenciality, idiosyncracies, implicature, performative, vulgar.

INTRODUCTION

The study of pragmatics is an interesting one. Pragmatics started in the 1930s with philosophers like Morris, Carnap, and Pierce among others. Morris presented a threefold division of semiotics namely syntax which deals with relation between signs and their users interpreters. Analytic philosophy emerged in the 1950s and 1960s with ideal language philosophy by Montague Lewis, Davidson ordinary language philosophy with Austin, Grice, and Searle. The pragmatics turn in the late 1960s and 1970s with the generative semantics like Katz, Ross, Lakoff, works by Horn, Fillmore, Gadzar, Levison's pragmatics and pragmatics wastebasket.

The Anglo-American school sees pragmatics as a core component of a theory of language, on a par with phonology, syntax and semantics. The European continental school discusses pragmatics as constituting a general functional perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in the form of behaviour. Others relevant in the historic development of pragmatics include the functionalists like Charles Fillmore, George Lackoff and Jerrold Sadock. The Neo-Grecians are Steren Lavision, Lawrence Horn and Yan Huang while the relevance theorists are Dan Sperba, Deirdre Wilson and Robyn Carston.

Different scholars like Mey (2006), Huang (2007), Horn and Ward (2008) among others have different views as to the various domains or aspects pragmatics covers. However, there are central topics that cut across them all which are speech acts, reference, implicature, proposition, deixis and presupposition. Horn and Ward (2008) are of the view that the domain of pragmatics are: Implicature, Presupposition, Speech Acts, Reference, Deixis,

Definiteness and Indefiniteness. According to Huang (2007: p.2), "the central topics of inquiry of pragmatics include Implicature, Presupposition, Speech acts, and Deixis". It is worthy of note that, a regimented account of language use facilitates a simpler and more elegant description of language structure. Those areas of context-dependent, yet rule-governed aspects of meaning include: deixis, speech acts, presupposition, reference, information structure, implicature and so on.

This study analyses some texts from Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*; revealing their pragmatic idiosyncrasies. The text was published in 2010. It is a text full of vulgar or taboo words and expressions and explicitness.

Taboo words and expressions in public discourse in both Western and African cultures are severely censored. Britain, for example, have heavy sensorship of obscenity, legally coded as "obscene libel" or "matter tending to deprave or corrupt" (McArthur 1996: 187). The free expression of taboo matters exercised in postproverbials for instance, has elicited disapproval and disdain from a large section of the public. One of the major factors is because the public's taste has been fostered so much by religious experiences and by the traditional culture. Such taboos include sex, blood products, obscenity and vulgarity, suicide, defecation, menstruation, among many others.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual review

There are various domains that pragmatics covers which are central topics that cut across them all. They are speech acts, reference, implicature, proposition, deixis and presupposition. These will be briefly discussed below:

Speech acts

The speech act theory was foreshadowed by the Austian philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein's view about Language-game but is usually attributed to the Oxford philosopher, J. L. Austin (1962). The identification and classification of speech acts was initiated by Wittgenstein, Austin, and Searle. Austin believes that every normal utterance has descriptive and effective aspects: that saying something is also doing something. This, he calls *performatives.*

Implicatures

The idea or notion of Implicature was originated by H. P. Grice, an Oxford Philosopher. He views implicature as "the-meant-but-unsaid". This means that what a speaker intends to communicate is characteristically far richer than what he directly expresses.

Presupposition

According to Horn (1996), Gottlob Frege, a German mathematician and logician is generally recognised as the first scholar in modern times who (re)introduced the philosophical study of presupposition. It can be informally defined as an inference or proposition whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance of a sentence. Presupposition is usually generated by the use of particular lexical items and/or linguistic constructions called **presuppositional triggers.** Some properties of presupposition include: constancy under negation (which stresses that a presupposition generated by the use of a lexical item or a syntactic structure remains the same when the sentence containing that lexical item or syntactic structure is negated), and defeasibility or canceallability (which posits that presuppositions can be cancelled by inconsistent conversational implicatures or can disappear in the face of inconsistency with background assumptions or real-world knowledge). In semantic or logic, presupposition is a necessary condition on the truth or falsity of statements but a pragmatic presupposition is a restriction on the common ground, the set of propositions constituting the current context. Its failure or non-satisfaction results not in truth-value gaps or non-bivalence but in the inappropriateness of a given utterance in a given context.

Deixis

Deixis is directly concerned with the relationship between the structure of a language and the context in which the language is used. It is derived from the Greek word meaning "to point out" or "to show". Traditionally, three basic categories are discussed in the linguistics and philosophy of language literature namely: person deixis (I, Me, You etc), place deixis (here, there etc) and time deixis (yesterday, tomorrow, next Thursday etc). Linguistic expressions employed typically as deictics or deictic expressions include: demonstratives, first and second-person pronouns, tense markers, adverbs of time and space and motion verbs. Other types of deixis include discourse and social deixis.

Levinson (1983) posits that the pragmatic subdomain of deixis or indexicality for example seeks to characterize the properties of shifters, indexicals, or token-reflexives, expressions like *I, you, here, there, now, then, hereby,* tense/aspect markers, etc) whose meanings are constant but those whose referents vary with the speaker, hearer, time and place of utterance, style or register, or purpose of speech act.

Reference

Speech acts and presuppositions operate primarily on the propositional level while reference operates on the phrasal level. Reference is the use of a linguistic expression (typically an NP) to induce a hearer to access or create some entity in his mental model of the discourse. A discourse entity represents the referent of a linguistic expression, that is the actual individual (or event, property, relation, situation, etc) that the speaker has in mind and is saying something about.

In philosophy, there is a traditional view that reference is a direct "semantic" relationship between linguistic expressions and the real world objects they denote. Under this view, the form of a referring expression depends on the assumed information status of the referent, which in turn depends on the assumptions that a speaker makes regarding the hearer's knowledge store as well as what the hearer is attending to in a given discourse context.

If every natural language provides its speakers with various ways of referring to discourse entities, there are two related issues in the pragmatic study of reference. They are:

1. the referential options available to a speaker of a given language.
2. the factors that guide a speaker on a given occasion to use one of these forms over another.

Proposition

Stalnaker (1972: p.383) posits that pragmatics seeks to "characterize the features of the speech context which help determine which proposition is expressed by a given sentence". The meaning of a sentence can be regarded as a function from a context (including time, place, and possible world) into a proposition, where a proposition is a function from a possible world into a truth value. Pragmatic aspects of meaning involve the interaction between an expression's context of utterance and the interpretation of elements within that expression.

Synopsis of the text

Shoneyin weaved a story of love, betrayal and societal nuances in her text, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives.* Baba Segi, an uneducated trader marries Bolanle, an educated lady as his fourth wife. The other three wives are Iya Segi, Iya Tope and Iya Femi. Bolanle marries Segi to escape the trauma of her past, but his three wives are disapproving of the young, educated girl to the family. Baba Segi is smitten by Bolanle's fluency and poise in the English language. Trouble arised when Bolanle could not conceive. Although Baba Segi already has children from his other wives, he demands that Bolanle bears him a child. They set out on a quest to make Bolanle fruitful and rid Baba Segi of his constant "bellyache" from worry over Bolanle's barrenness. This quest uncovers a deadly secret.

Empirical review

This study is not the first to be carried out on this text. Some studies done on this text include the following: Ezekulie (2014), in her article entitled "An Investigation of the pragmatic deviance of metaphor in Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* used the theory of implicature, propounded by Grice to investigate the concept that speakers always say morethan is semantically coded. Ezekulie discovers that implicature is being pervasively employed in metaphoric language in the text which engenders "a semantic cum pragmatic symbiotic approach to the interpretation of tropes". Her paper investigates how metaphors in the text are pragmatically deviant by infringing the maxims of the Cooperative Principles literarily and how readers can work out the implicature.

The study shows that most metaphors in the text flout the maxims of quality, manner and relation. She concludes that however, the utterance meaning derived from enriching the conventional content of the expressions with contextual details ultimately preserves the coorperative principles. This paper is related to the present study because it is a pragmatic assessment of the same text, however, the present study concentrates on a portion of the text using the theory of implicatiures and speech acts for the analysis. The present study also assesses the pragmatic idiosyncracies as uniqueness and not as metaphoric deviance like Ezekulie's assessment.

Another research related to the present article is "A Stylistic Reading of Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* by Pam (2012). The study assesses the pertinent linguistic and literary peculiarities adopted by Shoneyin in portraying the societal mishap leveled on women in an African setting. Pam reveals how the author uses the first and third person points of view in the narration. The findings reveal that Shoneyin employs a simple diction and a diversified register. The researcher concludes that the author uses obscene words and expressions which gives the work pornographic perceptions.

Ademowo and Balogun (2015) wrote an article entitled, "Postproverbial constructions and selected sex-related Yoruba proverbs/proverbial expressions". Their paper examines postproverbial constructions involving sex-related Yoruba proverbs and proverbial expressions, and their effects on the original meanings of these proverbs. Fifteen randomly selected sex-related proverbs and proverbial expressions, as well as their postproverbials

constructions were selected as data. After subjecting the data to critical analysis, their study reveals that while sex-related Yoruba proverbs are essentially meant for communicating frank, stark and direct situations, postproverbial constructions of the proverbs have distorted the use of sex-related proverbs and proverbial expressions in communication most especially because of the sex-image that were made more emphasized and given increased visibility in the sex-related postproverbials.

The study observes that, other than for visual symbolism, the mention of sex organs in sex-related Yoruba proverbs have no implications on original meaning of proverbs. They discover that this is not the case with postproverbials as the sex image and sexual performance become the main focus. The paper, therefore concludes that Yoruba language speakers should be conscious of the influence of these postproverbials on the use of the sex-related Yoruba proverbs and their distorted meanings which are quite different from the original, intended philosophical, meanings.

Other studies on this text are on semantics and ideological perspectives of the text (Oni Funke, 2020), narratological study of the text (Bawa 2022), among others. This makes the present research unique and apt in filling an academic gap.

Theoretical framework

The researchers employ the speech act theory and implicatures as analytical tools for this study. They are discussed briefly below:

Speech acts

The Speech act theory was foreshadowed by the Austian philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein's view about Language-game but is usually attributed to the Oxford philosopher, J.L. Austin (1962) engaging a monograph, *How to do Things with Words.*

The identification and classification of speech acts was initiated by Wittgenstein, Austin, and Searle. Austin believes that every normal utterance has descriptive and effective aspects: that saying something is also doing something. This he calls *performatives* and he distinguishes them from assertions or statement-making utterances which he called *constatives.* In an explicit performative utterance (e.g. *I hereby promise to love you*), the speaker does something, which is that he performs an act whose character is determined by her intention, rather than merely saying something. Austin (1962) regards performatives as problematic for truth-conditional theories of meaning, since they appear to be devoid of ordinary truth value.

Austin identifies three categories of acts: *locutionary* act (basic act of speaking or acts involved in the construction of speech), *illocutionary* act (purpose the speaker has in mind or acts done in speaking) and *perlocutionary* act (effect of an utterance on the hearer, or the consequence or by-product of speaking whether intended or not).

Searle's typology of speech acts include: assertive or representatives, directives, commissives, expressive and declarations. For a speech act to be said to be felicitous, its felicity conditions must be fulfilled. These felicity conditions are the constitutive rules.

According to Stalnaker (1972), if pragmatics is 'the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed, speech-act theory constitutes a central subdomain'. He says it has long been recognized that the propositional content of utterance U can be distinguished from its illocutionary force, the speaker's intention in uttering U.

Implicatures

The idea or notion of Implicature was originated by H. P. Grice, an Oxford Philosopher. Horn (3) says: "Implicature is a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is **meant** in a speaker's utterance without being part of what is **said**". He views implicature as 'the-meant-but-unsaid'. This means that what a speaker intends to communicate is characteristically far richer than what he directly expresses. Gazdar (1979) offers implicatures as an alternative mechanism in which the potential presuppositions induced by sub-expressions are inherited as a default but are cancelled if they clash with propositions already entailed or implicated by the utterance or prior discourse context.

The speech acts theory and implicatures are apt for this analysis. This is because the researchers concentrate on both actions explicitly carried out by the speakers and those meant, but are unsaid in the texts.

METHODOLOGY

The entire text; Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* was read by the researcher. After the first reading, two portions from the text were selected to be used as a sample texts for pragmatic analysis. They are obtained from the third and fourth paragraphs on page 130. These are selected and used for the analysis. The selection of these two texts is deliberate because of the many pragmatic devices employed by the writer in them, which made the texts very rich.

The research design employed for this research is qualitative, given that the research is interested in meaning (Osuala 2005). Thus, the chosen design is employed in describing and analysing the meanings of the phrases and sentences in the texts. It is important to note that the study does not consider the meaning of every lexical item in the

texts but only those intuitively seen by the researcher as exhibiting more saliently, pragmatic meanings. The justification for using this design is as follows: first, it allows for the selected data to be adequately described and analysed. Second, descriptive design provides qualitative, insightful understanding of the collected and analysed data. This makes the research very lucid and comprehensible as it helps in presenting the true picture of the two varieties of the English Language.

The selected texts were analysed using pragmatic principles. Thereafter, discussions are made and conclusions drawn.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data presentation

Pragmatics deals also with the contribution of context which includes syntax and other areas to the meaning of a language. These two extracts, though short are very rich, interesting and pregnant with so many hidden meanings. The texts are presented below:

Text 1:
That night, Baba Segi came to me.
He sat on my bed and grapped my breasts.
I thought it was all quite amusing
until he jumped between my legs and tried to force his penis into me.
"I am still wearing my pants", I told him (p. 130).

Text 2:
He wasn't like Tunde at all.
There was no sucking. No licking, no nuzzling, no moistening.
Baba Segi was heavy, everything about him was clumsy and awkward.
He heaved and hoed, poured out his water into me and collapsed onto my breasts.
Tunde never did that; he always shook his water onto my belly.
I looked forward to the day our paths would cross again at a junction.
I knew I would find Tunde when the time was right (p.130).

Data analysis

Data analysis 1

"That", in "that night", is a deictic word (demonstrative). Its syntactic role is a demonstrative pronoun. Even though it does not give detailed information concerning the night, it specifies the particular night (not just any night). The speaker is telling us what happened on that particular night

and not necessarily what happens every night.

The performative or motion verb "came", got from the root word "come" shows that the explicit performative is absent because it describes a state of affairs that has happened already, and marks movement towards the deictic centre. People use language within a context which includes time and place. The time has been specified as night and the place is most likely a bedroom ("...sat on my bed").

From the name "Baba Segi", one could conclude the culture is Yoruba. The Yoruba people hail from the Western part of Nigeria. Other Speech Act Verbs (SAV) used in the text like grapped, jumped, force, collapsed etc. indicate action (doing something). They are "performatives" as Austin (1962) calls them and sound forceful, thereby impolite. They are also explicit performatives, since they perform something directly and not impliedly.

Bearing in mind that the non-linguistic factors like time, place and social relations between interactants affect language use, from the first clause, "that night Baba Segi came to me", one could imagine what the reason or purpose of his coming is, since it was at night, which is to have sex with the speaker. The relationship between the interlocutors seems to be that of lovers or a couple who share a cordial relationship.

This expression, "He sat...grapped my breasts...jumped between my legs...forced his penis into me" sound impolite and implies that Baba Segi took no time for "presequences" (foreplay) before he began to act "forceful". "Jumped" is figuratively used and does not imply the literal jumping.

From the context, one could infer that the clause, "between my legs" means vagina. Also, the "me" in "...into me" implies vagina. There is co-referenciality between "into me" and "between my legs"-they mean the same thing.

Baba Segi made a request, though impliedly with his actions, which is to have sex with the speaker. She says "I am still wearing my pants" which sounds like a protest even though politely done; thereby upholding the politeness principle. The statement is also a "hedge" which has an underlying meaning. She does this in order to mitigate the illocutionary force on her interlocutor, (Baba Segi). She (Bolanle) indirectly passes across her message to her interlocutor with the intention to either stop him from further action, or to pause and remove her pants (since the act of sex cannot be done with pants on). However, her words, as Mey (2006: p. 112) puts it "do not contain any overt or hidden expression of negation, denial or rejection, or even a mention of the rejected offer".

The indirect speech is also an imperative statement and Levinson (1983: p. 275), says "imperatives are rarely used to command or request". The speaker wishes her interlocutor stops his actions. Her statement also seems like a request (directive) as Searle (1977:3) calls it. He also

says "the 'locus' of the obligation created by the request is that the request creates an obligation in the requiree" (p.121).

Yan (2007), quoting Austin (1962) says directives are those kinds of speech acts that represent attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. Her expression also seems to be a complaint done off-record (indirectly) and complaints intrinsically threaten face. Bolanle uses indirect speech so as to be polite and mitigate the effect of her utterance on her interlocutor (Baba Segi), thereby saving his face. She tries to minimize face-threats and cater for his negative face, even though she recognizes she is interrupting her interlocutor. There seems to be no direct relationship between her sentence type and an illocutionary force, thereby making it an indirect speech act. The presence of quotation marks implies the speaker's words directly to her interlocutor and not the readers.

Data analysis 2

This extract begins by a comparison by the speaker (Bolanle). The speaker brings in a third party, Tunde, through a flashback, who is likely to be her ex-lover or someone she has extra-marital affairs with and compares him with Baba Segi. She also uses performative verbs like "...no sucking, no licking, no nuzzling, no moistening etc. to express her displeasure and disappointment with her sex life with Baba Segi. From her complaints, it could be inferred that Tunde used to suck, lick, nuzzle and moisten her sensitive body parts before the penetration. This portrays him as a better lover than Baba Segi and someone whom she enjoys sex with.

Also, there are two "water" used in the passage. One is from Baba Segi and the other from Tunde. This shows clearly, coreferentiality between the two waters. The two are referring to the same thing (semen/sperm). However, one is poured "into her" and the other "unto her belly". Expressions like "into me", "water", "between my legs" are euphemisms. However as euphemisms, they violate the maxim of manner by not being clear, being brief and by being ambiguous.

The speaker also violates the maxim of quantity by giving too much information needed but at the same time, upholds the same maxim by making her contribution relevant and as informative as required. One could conclude that many words are lewd/bawdy but according to Dooga (2008:p. 1), one also needs to consider the "socio-cultural issues" in carrying out a text analysis.

The speaker/writer comes from a Yoruba background, a people who are commonly known for being "raw" and expressive. Mey (2006: p. 76) also says "there are significant intercultural differences in cooperative behaviour". Huang (2007: p. 119) says "many speech acts are culture specific...Some cultures are more positive-

faced oriented while others are negative faced oriented". The speaker is politely trying to express openly, her feelings even as against the African tradition of seeing or tagging such issues as being sacred or taboos.

When certain features or words are predominant in a text, it adds to the general understanding of the text, for example "into me", "water" etc. These words have contextual clues to help the reader understand their meanings. Since analysis is done in context (as doing that out of context could mislead or lead to misinterpretation of the meaning), interpreters or analysts must go beyond the semantic (conventional) meaning to the pragmatic (non-literal or contextual) meaning of words to understand these.

Dooga (2008: p. 1) asserts that "analysis must contextualize and problematize the socio political issues that gave rise to the texts in order to provide deep insight into the goals and themes of such texts". The text is talking about sexual intercourse and so terms like "penis", "breast", "sucking" etc. should not be strange.

In the expression "Tunde never did that to me", "did that" implies "heaved, hoed,...collapsed unto my breasts". The speaker praises Tunde as being more gentle and romantic. Tunde is portrayed implicitly as one who always takes his time to satisfy the speaker, and not like Baba Segi. "He" in line ten is an anaphoric pronoun, referring to Tunde.

Also, "...at a junction" in "I looked forward to the day our paths would cross again at a junction" is not a specific place. This implies that the junction is not named by the speaker. Her tone expresses disappointment and frustration. This statement expresses her desire to have sex with Tunde when they eventually meet again. In her final statement, the speaker is optimistic they will surely meet again at the right time.

DISCUSSION

In the analysis of a conversation, not only the immediate context or co- text is considered but also the environment of circumstances surrounding the text. Mey (2006: p.135) says "the restricted co- text of utterance is insufficient for our understanding of the words that are spoken, unless it includes an understanding of the actions that take place as part of, and as a result of those words. Similarly, the issue in this context presents a situation where a husband (Baba Segi) "forces" his wife into sex, and the wife who has been engaging with another man (Tunde) draws comparison between her husband's sexual cues and that of her assumed ex-lover.

Though politeness as presented in Mey (2006: p. 79) centres on "a rational philosophy of language use to describe rational means for conducting co-operative exchanges, the moral aspect of the matter is relevant in this analysis. Illocutions like bidding a woman into sex is

inherently and morally supposed to be polite. As Leech (1983: p. 83) puts it, "some illocutions...(e.g offers) are inherently polite". In the text given, Baba Segi is not as polite as he should because he uses directives. Huang, quoting Austin (1962) says directives are those kinds of speech acts that represent attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. This is demonstrated by the use of the speech act verbs (SAV) like "grapped", "jumped" and "force". The use of the expressions "grapped my breast", "jumped between my legs" and "forced his penis into me", present an imagery of rancour against the order of pleasant love making. Sex, as it is supposed to be, needs a complimentary effort where two individuals contribute unanimously in making it a pleasure.

On the other hand, contextual factors and social positions of speakers are issues to also put into consideration in this analysis. Examples are in the military where commands are neither polite nor impolite, a priest imposing penance after hearing one's confession and so on. In the typical African traditional society, the woman has no space to commune in sex. Most or almost all the time, she performs the bidding of the man anytime he needs her or faces his wrath. Again, the text below suggests this assertion:

...grapped my breast...
...jumped between my legs...
... Force his penis into me...

Somehow, Baba Segi (from a typical Yoruba setting) could be ignorant of the modern system of love making. He has therefore flouted the cooperative principle and of course violate the politeness principle. The cooperative principle as Mey (2006: p.71) puts it "requires people to cooperate: the bare facts of conversation come alive only in a mutually accepted, pragmatically determined context". Mutuality as mentioned above lacks ground in Baba Segi's encounter with the woman (his wife).

Nothing is said about his prior conversation with the wife. This implies that there are no pre-sequences (which is typical of such encounters) before his actions. He never allows her bring in her consent before the act. Considering his intercultural peculiarity, seeing him in the woman's room speaks for itself. Here, saying or luring the woman is flagrant. The man (Baba Segi) is rather non-perspicuous. Similarly, Sacks (1995) sees turns as "the basic unit of the conversation". A shift in the direction of the speaking "flow" he says, is characteristic of normal conversation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the texts analysed, there are no junctures (TRP) that allow for turn taking. Though the text is in a narrative form, the scenario under discussion is typical of a conversation where individuals should take turns.

The woman on her part is very familiar with her interlocutor and so tries to mitigate face-threats and cater for his negative face. She therefore upholds the maxim of politeness by indirectly requesting that her interlocutor either stops his action or helps remove her pants before he continues his forceful sex. She hedges her statement which seems polite but having an implied meaning which mitigates the illocutionary force on her interlocutor.

Summarily, the conversation begins with a deictic "that night...", which points the time and place of action- "sat on my bed". However, the night is not being specified as such. She (Bolanle) violates the maxim of quantity (insufficient information). The address is likely to be the bedroom because beds are customarily located in sleeping rooms. There is also a co-reference between "into me", and "between my legs"; "water" (in the case of Baba Segi) and "water" (in the case of Tunde). The former means "vagina" while the latter means "semen". The use of the expressions above violates the maxim of manner by being obscure.

The woman who was left at the mercies of her husband's actions had no choice than to draw a contrast between him (Baba Segi-her legimate husband) and Tunde (her other husband or lover) who does better sexually.

On a general note, Shoneyin's use of language is point blank, which may be considered as vulgar. She presents her ideas in explicit terms and her choice of words is deliberate and distinctive.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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