

THE PRAGMATICS OF PROCLAMATIVE CONVENTIONS IN FAGUNWA'S *IGBO OLODUMARE*

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Abstract

The African concept of Alá'bálólàse as derived from the belief in the potency of words is borne out of the science of language that allows for mere proclamation to result in the enactment of things in the real world. The semiotic evidence of the ingenuity of African science as evinced in the literary narrative of *Igbo Olodumare* shows that Africans have a long-standing innovative ingenuity in technology which includes medicine, physics, neuroscience, lunar science, pathology and artificial science even before the advent of colonialism in Africa. Studies in Linguistics, African Studies, Oral Narratives and Literature have explored the indigenous technology masterminded by Africans, especially on their uniqueness. Few studies have paid particular attention to *declaration* which is at the core of African technology; paying attention to how Africans move from *declaration*, to *enacting* and finally, *doing things* with words in the real world. The study adopts Austin's Speech Act and Mey's Pragmatic Act theories as analytical lenses. In some of the earlier studies, the essential role and efficacy of language usage has been recognised, though passively. The current study intends to reveal that language is at the core of African technology. The findings show that Africans use words in form of *declaration* as a major condiment for activating their technological innovations. Unlike modern technology, Africans have a dynamic-specific process that is based on three stages of *involvement*, *declaration* and *enactment*. The study compellingly argues and concludes that *declaration* is a major condiment in the innovation of African technologies.

Keywords: Afri-craft, Declaration, Alá'bálólàse, Polylogy, Speech Sequencing

Introduction

There have been compelling evidence of native African intelligence pertaining to modern technology before the advent of colonialism. The narratives of African development, especially in terms of modern technology can be accrued to the ingenuity of the African knowledge. Emeagwali and Shizha (2014) distinguish between African and Western science in their literature. They explain that African science serves as a basic reference point for the potentials of secret African knowledge and skills. African science occupies a place alongside the miracles of the Scripture and magic, of what is usually referred to as Western or White science in its ability to transform the world in mysterious ways. Emeagwali and Shizha (2014) aver that African science and White Western science constitute two distinct aspects of human power to understand and shape the world. Living in a world in which “technological miracles” of computers, the remote control, mobile telephones are everyday realities, and the devastating effects of nuclear explosions and the possibility of space travels are evidenced, no one doubts the power of Western science to effect action at a distance and transform the world. The African science though has such untagged laboratories such as the alcoves of herbal permutations by the medicine men and the workshops of intense iron and metal experimentations (i.e., metallurgy) by the blacksmiths. The narratives of African development especially in terms of modern technology have been debated among scholars. For instance, Heidegger (1977) differentiates between indigenous and modern technology by asserting that indigenous technology uses manual labour for operations while the modern technology uses the industrial and technology-powered machines. Rodney (2022) argues that what is known as the modern

European technology is an off shoot of indigenous technology. He clarifies that the fifteenth century European technology was not totally superior to that of other parts of the world, including Africa. Martin (1935) in his work titled, *Culture Areas of Nigeria* avers that the invention of iron works, one of the earliest metallurgy innovations discovered in Africa, originated in West Africa. Childs and Killick (1993) assert that the West only became aware of the technology of metallurgy after looting the Benin archives in the 1940s (page). Mawere (2014) rightly posits that Africans are endowed with indigenous materials and technologies that if harnessed could relieve the continent of its environmental, political, and socio-economic related problems, thereby enhancing human capacity development.

Oluwole (1992) concentrated on the Ifa oral tradition in Yoruba, situating the superiority of the Yoruba indigenous knowledge encoded by Orunmila as against the western philosophy pioneered by Socrates. Through her research, she discovered compelling evidence of ancient knowledge pertaining to modern computer science and particle physics. This further reveals that the Africans had their ingenuity and means of development even before the advent of the colonialism. For her, development is not defined in terms of modernity but as an improvement in a country's economic and social conditions. Her argument was that any people who have the basic things they need to live and the means of ingenuity that allows the rights to make choices of improvement are developed.

The current study examines the indigenous African technologies and the belief that Africans have always had their ingenuity before the advent of colonial masters as evinced in the selected work of Fagunwa's *Igbo Olodumare*. To do a critical exploration, aspects of Austin's Speech Act theory, Mey's Pragmatic Act and an aspect of Dopamu's religious concept of Alá'bálólàse (2003) are explored. Aspects of descriptive design are used to handle the qualitative nature of the research. Its usage allows the research to

identify categories of acts and allopracts, characterise declarations that result into actions and their functional meanings in the data.

Literature Review

Few studies have devoted their investigations to the power of the spoken word and its hidden symbolic and inexplicable implications or importations of the utterance of which can itself produce the desired effect without the use of magical objects or apparatuses. After the World Health Organisation's (WHO) declaration in 2002 that African traditional medicine is the most potent globally, there was a renewed interest in not only the field of African medicine, but also a wide range of other fields where the African ingenuity can be applied, including language studies. Linguists such as Odebunmi (2003), Faleke (2005), Adepoju (2005), Odugbemi, (2006), Igoli (2005), Egunyomi (2005), Jegede (2010), Nunn (1996) Olagunju (2012), Jegede (2021) and Abimbola (1976) have investigated the role of language in the practice of Yoruba tradition, considering the two main structures of polylogical and dialogical transmissions; Fadipe (1970) examines the use of spell and curse, considering *ohun* (word) as a major condiment of traditional preparation (p127), Bocoum (2004) looked at the origin of iron metallurgy in Africa as a pointer to Antiquity in West and Central Africa.

The researchers posit that Africans have had their native science before the coming of the Europeans. For instance, through oral and epistemological findings, in parts of Akoko, particularly Erusu Akoko in Ondo state, we discovered that witchcraft is used. The most recurrent of this and close to home was the afro-technology displayed in 1991 in Erusu Akoko, Ondo State (Oral source, 2024). A woman invented a craft, something that can be likened to an aeroplane that took her to and fro Europe to trade. She had tons of cassava enough to go round the whole of European farmers. Her hard work, and productivity

despite her gender made some emissaries from Europe visit Erusu Akoko to inspect her farm. Albeit, they discovered that she was a poor widow with only a small expanse of farmland. The Europeans were confounded as they expected more modern facilities and technologies on the farm. Meanwhile, the Erusu farmers had been said to suffer loss of their cassava plantation that year; the loss they ascribed to cassava moss. In her revelation, she confessed that she had harvested all the cassava in Erusu Akoko that year using her craft to make and transported them to Europe with a plantain leaf (Oral source, 2024). It is on this purview that the researcher intends to argue that proclamation in form of declaration is a major condiment of African technology.

Scholarly Reviews on Fagunwa's Works

The data for this study is derived mainly from a poignant literary work *Igbo Olodumare* (1949), considering its richness in African philosophy. The works of Fagunwa as a classical Yoruba author have been greatly reviewed and studied by scholars. His first novel, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale*, published in 1938, is considered a classic of Yoruba literature. Scholars such as Beier (1965), Irele (1979) and Olubumo (2013) have praised the unique blend of traditional mythology and storytelling techniques. Though they blame him for unrealistic plots. Ulli Beier, a German scholar, who faulted him for his disorganised fairytale and considered his works as mere rambling. Beier describes Fagunwa's work as a succession of adventure loosely strung together but commends him for his shrewd and detailed observation of everyday life (Beier,1965:10). Beier agrees that Fagunwa is still unsurpassed in putting the Yoruba mind to work. Irele's (1979) review proves that Fagunwa's work is a drastic and essential direction of modern African writing, with an imaginative apprehension and embodiment of an African spirit. Olubumo (2013) faults him for his inability to create character and improbability of plot but concludes

that Fagunwa may be described as a writer of adventure stories which are partly fantastic. He recognises his genius for vivid description and power to create an atmosphere. Bernth Lindfors, Ulli Beier and others have been able to address themselves to some thematic or structural aspects of his works. Bamgbose (1974) describes Fagunwa as a pioneer in the field of creative writing, using the Yoruba language. Before him, no other writer had had the same impact to the Yoruba literary sense, nor the same influence on modern creative writers. The publication of his earliest novel, *Ogboju Ode* makes an important phase in the development of written forms of Yoruba language. The likes of D. Murby have stated that the works of Fagunwa identify with the classical literature which constitutes another dimension of effect to his literary ingredients, notably "Homer's *Odyssey* and Greek myths" as well as a minor influence of Aesop's Fables and the ancient Arabian Nights (Murby, 2000:250-255). Olabimtan (1975) did a background review on Fagunwa and discovered that his grandfather, Asungaga Beyioku, was an astute *Ifa* priest in Oke-igbo, Osun state (1975:147). His father was also very knowledgeable in *Ifa* corpus while his mother, Osunyomi, was an adherent of *Osun*. His knowledge of Yoruba mythology can thus be traced to his parents who had been worshippers of *Osun* (a river goddess) and *Ifa* (the Yoruba god of divination and wisdom), and these influenced his works.

Synopsis of *Igbo Olodumare*

Fagunwa's *Igbo Olodumare* is the story of Olowo-aiye's adventure in the forest of the god. He sets out, out of sheer love for an adventure and a quest for an opportunity to prove himself as a powerful hunter who cannot be daunted by the awe of the unknown- a basic characteristic of the traditional Yoruba hunters. *Igbo Olodumare* (henceforth, *Igbo*) is woven around the character of a renowned hunter, Olowo-aiye, who left his village to hunt in the forest of the god. He lost

everything he had – charms, amulets and clothing, among others, due to many years of voyage and anguish in the course of his adventure. Over time, he devised a means of survival. Thus Fagunwa, in his characteristic vividness of imagination, artistic prowess, dazzling language, and a compelling descriptive skill, projects events and episodes around Olowo-aiye as he moves on his journey to, in and from *Igbo Olodumare*. The events and the episodes are those of Olowo-aiye's struggles with the trolls, gnomes, weird creatures and his visits to the Sage, Death, and Miss Disease. After his sojourning in the forest, he finally returns home to join his family and rejoice at the sight of his son, Akara-ogun.

Methodology

The work draws upon the seminal theories of Austin's (1962) Speech Act theory, Mey (2001) Pragmeme and Dopamu's concept of *Alá'bálólàse* (1977). Aspects of descriptive design are used to handle the qualitative nature of the research. Its usage allows the research to identify categories of acts and allopracts, to characterize and sequence the proclamative conventions in D.O Fagunwa's *Igbo Olodumare*. The descriptive approach enables the discussion of the three stages of enactment processes of technology in the African space which allows majorly for proclamation as a major condiment in the enactment of things in the real world. The semiotic evidence of the ingenuity of African science as evinced in the literary narrative of *Igbo Olodumare* is carefully chosen to show a longstanding history of technology which includes medicine and artificial science in Africa. The data for this study is derived mainly from a poignant literary work *Igbo Olodumare* (1949), considering its richness in African philosophy. The works of Fagunwa as a classical Yoruba author have been greatly reviewed and studied by scholars who praised the unique blend of traditional mythology and modern storytelling techniques, making it suitable for

this study. The consideration of an aspect of a religious theory as that of Dopamu's (1977) concept of *Alá'balólàse* to bear on a linguistic theory of speech act is to reveal the assertion of Frazer (1992) on the evolution of human development that began from magic to religion and finally, to science.

Speech Act Theory

There are many different things that speakers can do with words. In every utterance, a speaker performs an act such as stating, denying, confirming, promising, ordering, requesting, thanking, congratulating, advising, etc. More importantly, language can be used in performing actions. In his seminal paper, *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin (1962:12) establishes the notions that in an attempt to express oneself, one does not only produce utterances containing grammatical structures and words. Rather, one performs actions with those utterances. According to him, language is used to convey different kinds of meaning: propositional, stylistic, social, affective, and so on. He also affirms that language can be used in performing actions. Austin distinguishes between constatives which are utterances whose truth or falsity can be proven from the real world and performatives, utterances which imply doing an act with words. The performatives are considered as the core of Speech Acts as the term suggests. He differentiates between performative utterances and constative utterances. He asserts that utterances that perform actions are called performatives while constatives utterances express the truthfulness of falsity of the action an utterance performs.

Searle (1969, 1976) improves on Austin's categorizations of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. He gives a clearer classifications of Speech Acts as: representatives (i.e., how a speaker expresses her belief about the truth of a proposition), directive (i.e., how a speaker tries to get the hearer to act in such a way as to fulfil what is represented by the content of the proposition), commissive (i.e., how

a speaker becomes committed to act in the way represented by the propositional content), expressive (i.e., how a speaker expresses the sincerity and condition of their illocutionary act) and declarative (i.e., a speaker's utterance results in a change in the external non-linguistic situation). The declarative is germane to our analysis.

Declaratives are interactional acts by means of which utterances realistically bring into existence immediate changes to the world and bring about a correspondence between propositional content and reality (Searle, 1979, p. 19). They are also acts that are virtually conducted if only the utterer adequately possesses the authority not only to issue declarative utterances; but to turn the utterances into facts in correspondence to the world reality. The interactional achievement of utterances with the belief that utterances can be lexicalized as declaratives if the criteria are legitimately brought into performativity; officially binding and changing things in the situation. Mey (2001:117) avers that declaratives are acts that institutionally change the world through utterances in which the utterer assumes a special institutional role in specific context. Searles (2002) says declaratives are feasibly sub-classified into linguistic declaratives and extra- linguistic declaratives, both subclasses are linguistic speech acts. However, linguistic declarative acts are sufficiently performed by the institution of language and need no further non- linguistic elements for validating their execution; thus, anyone can state, order, and announce at any time. Conversely, extra - linguistic declaratives are insufficiently empowered by means of language alone; but instead, fairly stipulated by non-linguistic institutions of authority, conventional occasion, rituals, etc. For declarative acts to be validated, these conventional conditions must be met:

1. The right context must be matched with the right form of words.

2. A person duly authorized and recognized as authorized by audiences must utter constitutively declaratives for bringing them as facts in real world.
3. A more formal occasion is causally entailed for some declaratives in which the speaker must utter the right expression in its special ritual phase.
4. Extra socio-linguistic institution along with utterance production for putting declaratives in continual performative status in bringing about the desired changes.
5. The speaker's intention must connotatively own a declarative status that plausibly creates the world's immediate changes as it is availed in the propositions.

Pragmatic Act Theory

Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory emerged from the Speech acts theory. It is concerned with interactional situations in which both speakers and hearers achieve their aims. It does not start with what is said and looking for what such could mean. Rather, it is concerned with the situation in which the utterance will be considered as appropriate. It does not emphasise rules of speech acts but focuses on characterizing pragmatic acts based on situations. The theory could be summarized as language constrained by the situation, not as defined by syntactic rules or by semantic selections and conceptual restrictions. Pragmatic acts are situation-derived, and situation constrained; determined by the broader social context in which they happen, and they realize their goals in the conditions placed on human action by the context (Mey, 2001, p.228).

The Concept of *Alá'balólàse*

The current work explains how the Yoruba people advance in technology and development using words. It explains that declaration, according to Austin (1962) can change the course of reality in the world. The Yoruba belief in the efficacy of words according to Dopamu

(2003), a religion scholar, explains that words are magical and potently embedded in a culture, especially, the religion, of a people. The concept of *Ala'balolase*, is embedded in the belief that the desire of a person can translate to reality. In the literature, *Ohun* (Adegbite, 1991), *incantation* (Idowu, 1962), *Afose* (Adegbidin, 2017) are all examples of declarations through which Africans enact their desires for development. *Doing things with words* is part of the Yoruba religious apparatus that are connected to the five pillars of beliefs in the African traditional religion. These are belief in God, belief in divinities, belief in spirits, belief in ancestors and magical belief and practices. Frazer wrote a book titled *The Golden Bough* (1992) in which he explained the synergy and evolution of human development that began from magic to religion and, finally, to science. According to him, magic was the earliest form of human means of catering for man's needs. Along the line, they realised it could not meet all their desires, and so, they reverted to religion, and to science. Dopamu (2003) takes an almost different stance from Frazer when he asserts that it is not a matter of evolution from the magic through religion to science, but parallel evolutionary stream, each influenced by the other subject to its own laws of development. Even today, when science has conquered the world, magic, religion, and science, are still dominant factors, particularly in Africa. Idowu (1962) identifies a close link between the religion of the Yoruba and their magical beliefs and practices. He explains the foundation of magic as the belief in the unseen and in the possibility of establishing contact with the unseen power and obtaining favours from them through prayer or force of charms or incantations. It has also been observed that the term 'science' cannot be limited to the western world. This is because every group or nation has a unique way of meeting their needs. "The African account of nature and how it works" has been identified by Ezeabasili (1977). This account contains hypotheses, many of which are not acceptable to Western culture. Parrinder (1969:196)

opines that- a medicine man (i.e., a traditional doctor) is a scientist who seeks discovery and uses the laws of the universe, not only of nature but also spiritual forces, believing there are hidden powers that can be tapped to meet various ailments.

While Speech act explains that language can change the course of things in the real world, the concept of Ala'balolase explains the science of magic that the Africans use to enact things that work in the world of reality.

Data Analysis

Declarative-Innovation in *Igbo Olodumare*

The research submits that the modern technological ingenuity claimed by the west has been used in Africa, long before the western invention. These innovations are properly documented and preserved in the African-Yoruba literature of *Igbo Olodumare*. The paper analyses the technologies in *Igbo Olodumare*, compares them to modern science, and sequences the Africa-Yoruba use of enactment as a major resource for technological invention.

In 1610, modern scientists discovered and observed new planets for the first time. It was around the time that they re-invented the solar system known as the Geological Record which was the earliest evolution of the rocky planets and the near earth cosmic. Long before then, Africans with their ancient civilizations had discovered the existence of deities that inhabit far places in several other spaces and even communicated with them. As early as the Stone Age, the African astronomers and travellers had discovered planets like their Western counterparts. While the Western astronomers discovered: Mars, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Uranus, Saturn and Pluto, Africans had discovered similar spaces without the aid of telescopes where lives were preserved as depicted in the data. These include places like the Forest of the Impenetrable Silence, the Home of the Furry-bearded-one, the

Backyard of heaven, the Land of Boa Constrictors and the Abode of Seven Mobile Women. In *Igbo Olodumare*. Olowo-aiye in his adventure discovered new planets where living things, non-living things, and other aliens (i.e., the dead, spirits, gnomes, and ghommids) inhabited. Before the adventure of Olowo-aiye, no human being had voyaged to such places and returned alive. Olowo-aiye discovered the Mid-heaven that contained healing water that also housed every kind of being the Dead, the Living, the Gnome, the Spirits and the Cursed. This is evident in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1

People from my village call the forest the forest of Olodumare because it is a fearsome place.

Hunters dreaded the forest of god than the forest of the daemons, it was a law in our village that a hunter that has not killed an elephant should not venture into the forest, because it is the forest of wonders – birds spoke like human, animals sold wares, many trees do not have roots yet they blossom and their leaves are greenish and fresh. Rats are bigger than squirrels, snails are bigger than tortoises. . . (pp. 8-9).

The discovery of the Forest of gods was the greatest discovery of humans as represented by Olowo-aiye. Not only did he discover and dwell in the forest for a long time, but he also invented some new technologies that made the forest habitable. He discovered new spaces like the: Silent Forest, the Boa land and the land of the running women. One of his greatest findings was Baba-onirugbon-yeuke (the furry-bearded-one), who took him to the house of Death at the backyard of Heaven and showed him many more technologies which include: electrocution chair for silently killing offender, cloning machine to reproduce beings in their numbers, remote sensor to activate things on earth from the mid-heaven and affords Death to see every living creature from the comfort of his home and sent for anyone at any time, the medicine for

longevity to keep some persons alive forever, and Google maps for description of places. As Olowo-aiye was leaving home for the forest, he spoke of the potency of his father's gourd in locating and mapping roads thus:

Excerpt 2

He almost left one of his important gourds as he was rushing, without which he would have lost his way in the forest ...our ancestor killed a cobra and found the gourd inside. this our grandfather was the first man to hunt in the forest of daemon. As one says incantations and says where he is going to, quickly the wind would face the direction... (Pgs.10-11)

This seems to be the earliest invention of Google maps and compass. According to him, he could not have located his way in the forest without the aid of the gourd. The gourd was a great invention and discovery found in the stomach of an unusual cobra that was killed by his grandfather. To activate the gourd, there was the need for activation which is in form of declaration.

Language mastery is evident in the data. Fagunwa predicts the essence of recording and documenting oral literature and tradition like history, medicine, and technology. Olowo-aiye avers that without proper documentation, some of the knowledge of Africans will be lost. To prevent a total erosion of the culture, Olowo-aiye appealed to his friend thus:

Excerpt 3

The story I told you the other time that I had you documented for the world, they are my stories, I only told a little about my father (pg7).

This corroborates Olson (2010), that in time past, 'craft know-how' was virtually always transmitted orally, as such, knowledge was associated with the term "local knowledge" or "ethnoscience," indicating

knowledge systems that are specific to cultures or groups historical or social contexts and soon loses its originality.

Also germane is the importance of language mastery. In a computerized modern world of technology, modern scientists are learning new computer languages such as: Python, Java and Onion, etc. so also was Olowo-aiye admonishing that humans acquire the languages of gnomes and animals to function well. This is evident in the story of the palm-wine tapper that came into wealth by decoding what the hen told its chicks about tons of money buried just beneath their feet. The tapper, understanding their language, dug, found the money and became wealthy.

Another innovation in the data is the success of medicine in elongating human lives. In recent times, modern science has invented organ-harvesting tools that allow for active body organ from sample A to be harvested and given to sample B who may need it. Some of these possibilities include kidney, heart, eye, bone marrows harvesting, and gene implantation known as mutation. But these have been discovered by Africans longer before now, as depicted in the data:

Excerpt 4

My mother, being a kind, walked to the backyard of heaven and cut from the fruit of life and gave me to eat to live forever. and God declared that the angels should bring me to the entrance of heaven after living for 80 years among man... (pg96)

Excerpt 5

Stand up, you son of man, I am the man with long beards, the one that lives in the stones. I have lived here for a long time more than a millennium. where I am is the terminal of the earth, the wall around my house is the only barricade between my house and heaven (pg.75)

Excerpt 6

You cannot understand my person neither can you know my kind unless I tell you. I am half human, half gnome. My father is human, he is a hunter too...my mother is not a human being at all, she is a gnome (pg. 95)

The mother of the man with the fur, a demi-goddess, made sure that her son who is born to a mortal and so mortal, live forever. Olowo-aiye described the furry man as basically a wonder of science; a fusion of man and ghommid.

Excerpt 7

By my word, times are changing that a sheep will be pregnant of a goat, a cat will be pregnant of a cockerel (pg.96)

Also evident in the data is the use of medicine. The medical ingenuity of Olowo-aiye's father to heal all forms of sicknesses through herbs and invocations are evident in the data:

Excerpt 8

My name is compound of spell truly, my father is a traditionalist, he is also an herbalist, charms fill our house to the brim, there are also fearful things at the corners of our room, there are potent barks on our cupboards, there are numerous living things at our backyard. my father healed those that suffer from epilepsy. My father healed those that suffered from rheumatism, several leprous have been made famous in the village. My father punished soponna, spoilt the name of guinea worm, stomach pain became a thing of the past, migraine became little, worms ran... (pg5)

Every form of sickness was nothing to Olowo-aiye's father, a seasoned medical practitioner who understood the uses of leaves and barks. He knew the treatments for just every form of disease. Other forms of medical ingenuity are sedative and hemostasis. The ruler of the

kingdom of the Golden fish slept deeply every time his wife used a kind of sleeping substance in his water. She added the substance and then declared that the substance becomes effective without a reversal.

Excerpt 9

If a log sleeps, it doesn't awake, you sluggard must remain asleep till my return (pg.124)

Another innovation in the data is the use of African science to cause blood clotting. A woman who flirted and deceived seven different men without agreeing to marry one of them was invoked to become a statue, causing her blood veins to stop transmitting blood to the heart (p.87).

Also, like what modern Medical Scientists in charge of infectious diseases do in predicting diseases and devising preventive measures, the character Death predicted incurable viral diseases that would start and stop suddenly and would cause an-almost-extinction of mankind and set nations against one another. In modern days, there have been diseases like Ebola and covid-19 that shook the world and caused global unrest:

Excerpt 10

He would have suffered a lot from an ailment that was never before that would cause a big rift that would cause a state to rise against another and a country against another...(pg.88)

A form of technological invention in *Igbo Olodumare* is transformation. It involves a particular creature taking on the form of another to fight a war.

Excerpt 11

That was last my father saw of the woman. Not long after, a fly perched on his wound, the wound he had during the fight

with Esukekereode, my father chased the fly only for it to turn to a snake...(pg.30)

The act of transforming to fight wars can be likened to the task to be performed by the first electronic autonomous robots with complex behaviour created by William Grey Walter of the Burden Neurological Institute in Bristol, England in 1948 and 1949. The first digitally operated and programmable robot was invented by George Devol in 1954 and was ultimately called the Ultimate. In 1954, what was considered the first industrial robot was developed in the USA. Like the robots, Eniasepele, one of the friends of Olowo-aiye when being caught in the web of the fiery cobra devised a means of making grains of sand transform into robot-like ants to combat the snakes in their number. This was exposing the use of robotics in accomplishing the tasks human beings cannot achieve.

Not only is Olowo-aiye a renowned inventor, but he also worked with other eggheads in the forest of gods to achieve ingenious tasks. These include: Ijambaforiti, a skilled elephant-hunter; Eniasepele, a robot master who can make grain of sand into red-hot ants; Aguntan-inaki, a result of the fusion of the genes of a lamb and a gorilla (one of his kind), Ewadaiyepo was skilled in barks and leaves. The author acclaims that:

Excerpt 12

The inhabitants of the earth have wisdom, so also do people in heaven (pg. 134)

The assertion in the excerpt above lends credence to the extent of ingenuity of mankind in making technological innovations for development. All these show the native intelligence and ingenuity of the Africans in development and technologies. The next section explains the importance of proclamation/declaration in connection with African technology.

Acts Sequencing in *Igbo Olodumare*

The data reveals that declaration is the core of every technological innovation in African science. Leveraging on Austin's Speech Act theory that states that we create and change reality in the world by mere declaration; and the afro-traditional concept of Alá'bálólàse that states that the word is potent in creating things that never was, the researcher explained the innovative creations in Fagunwa's *Igbo Olodumare* to reveal that African ingenuity are created and activated by *aba* (desire) and *ohun* (proclamation). Through such practs as: commanding and invoking and the allopracts of supplicating and demanding the sequencing is explained.

Excerpt 13

Take this, I have shown you how to use it and you can see its potency, whenever there is a harm, throw it in your mouth, mention what you want to turn to, you shall become the thing instantly. (p.30).

Olowo-aiye received a gourd that can transform him to whatever creature of his desire during any fight. The gourd could not be activated unless one specifically spoke one's wish to it. The excerpt above shows the processes of activating an African technology. The transformation gourd was not useful unless its user first made a wish and proclaimed the desire. This shows the pract of declaring. And the allopracts of commanding, invoking, supplicating, and demanding. The context shows a shared cultural knowledge through such verbiage as *Mention, want, '...you shall become the thing instantly. . .'*

Excerpt 14

If a log sleeps, it doesn't awake, you sluggard must remain asleep till my return (p.124).

The queen through the pract of declaring and the allopracts of commanding and proclaiming and the allopracts of asserting and

commanding, directed that her husband should sleep soundly without waking whenever she went out to meet her concubine, thereby having recourse to natural law of motion that nothing naturally moves unless moved by an external force through the phrasal 'Remain asleep'. This same sequencing was also deployed to transform him to a log in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 15

I command that a change should come upon you that scorns my lover, transform from your leg to the buttocks and become stone, and sit forever where you are seated until I am willing to unbind you. . . (p.127).

Through the pract of declaring and the allopracts of commanding, acclaiming, and affirming, she finally freed her husband from the bondage after the ploy to waking her lover through such verbiages as command, change, transform, become, and sit. In '...I command you...', '... transform from your leg to the buttocks...', '...become stone...', and '...sit forever where you are seated...'

Excerpt 16

I command you to stand and walk around. No matter how big a head is, the neck is strong enough to carry it, no matter how heavy a body is, the body-bearer is strengthened to carry it (p.128).

The act of declaration and the force of commanding was used to invoke that the man should stand and walk around like a normal human through the verbiage command, stand, walk around. The sequences above have shown the afro-craft conventions of the African science in *Igbo Olodumare*. In Excerpt 13 of the sequence, Olowo-aiye's fiancé, who has the power of witchcraft, told Olowo-aiye to do three things to be able to transform: throw a substance in his mouth (which shows an active involvement of doing a thing; say a thing what he wants to

transform to (in form of proclamation); and it shall be done (enactment) instantly. These reveal the three stages of African science: involvement, proclamation, and enactment. Olowo-aiye did something by throwing a substance in his mouth; Olowo-aiye proclaimed what he desired to become; Olowo-aiye became whatever he desired. In excerpt 14, the queen that possessed the witchcraft power in the Fish kingdom invoked the first natural law of motion that: "A body remains at rest, or in motion at a constant speed in a straight line, except insofar as it is not acted upon by a force" by declaring that the king becomes inactively asleep until she returns to free him. This reveals that African science is both epistemological and empirical. Also in Excerpt 15, the queen invoked the second law of motion, punning on shared cultural knowledge: at any instant of time, the net force on a body is equal to the body's acceleration multiplied by its mass or, equivalently, the rate at which the body's momentum is changing with time. She did this by declaring that the body transforms to a stone. In Excerpt 16, she acted on the object, thereby invoking the third law of motion: "If two bodies exert forces on each other, these forces have the same magnitude but opposite directions. At this time, she declared that the king be returned to his natural self, alluding to the first law of Inertia and second law of Acceleration, thereby performing the allopracts of commanding, invoking, creating and changing. The sequencing reveals that 80% of the acts generated in the innovative technologies are mainly proclamatory. As noted in the sequencing of verbiage frequency, the data reveals that the pract of declaring cuts across every act, so as the allopract of commanding.

Findings

The work has demonstrated that Africans have always had their means of scientific ingenuity which involves three stages of: proclamation, enactment, and involvement. This shows the power of

the Yoruba belief in proclamation which has a direct semblance to an aspect of the theory of Speech Act and Pragmatic act that deal with declaration- a situation where something that is not in existence is made to be by merely declaring them; and Pragmeme- the situation derived by the dynamism of the situational context. Our findings' reflection on afro-craft conventions: technological sequencing in *Igbo Olodumare* bears semblance to Adegbindin (2017) on the phronesis and the universality of Ifa in African philosophy; Ferguson (2002) on African philosophy and tradition; Oluwole (1992) on the craft of witchcraft as an essential technology in Africa and Adegbite (1991 & 1995) on the role of language in the practice of traditional medical discourse. The study explores the afro-craft conventions and speech act sequencing in *Igbo Olodumare*. It reveals their sequencing through the processes of proclamation, enactment, and evolvement. Austin's Speech Act Theory, Mey's Pragmatic Act Theory and Dopamu's (2003) *Alá'bálólàse* cater for these sequencing. The study reveals that, among other things, words in form of proclamation are germane in evoking technological development in African science.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Africans do not only believe in the efficacy of words, but they also use words to change things in the world. The work reveals that Africans have a long-standing innovative ingenuity in technology which includes medicine, physics, neuroscience, lunar science, pathology, and artificial science in their native way before the advent of colonialism. Thereby showing how Africans enact technologies using the science of words- evolving from *declaration*, to *enacting* and finally, to *doing things* in the real world. While the Theory of Speech Act handles the declarative aspect, the Theory of Pragmatic act caters for the practs and allopracts generated in the work, the concept of *Ala'balolase* serves as the force of word (i.e., something

like the illocutionary force) that makes the desires and technological sequences visible and active in the real world. The study compellingly argues and concludes that *declaration* is a major condiment in the innovation of African technologies.

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Endnotes

- Alá'bálóláse - They that desire possess the command.
- Afri-craft - It is an operational coinage to mean indigenous African technology.
- Igbo Olodumare - The Forest of the God.
- Ifa - The Yoruba god of divination and wisdom.
- Osun - a river goddess that gives children.
- Ipin Iseda - fate
- *Ako'ole* - predestination
- Ijambaforiti - violent-domiciled
- Eniasepele - humans be patient
- Aguntan-inaki - the lamb gorilla
- Ewadaiyepo - extant beauty