



SPEECH ACT SEQUENCING AND PROCLAMATIVE CONVENTIONS IN D. O. FAGUNWA'S *IGBO OLODUMARE*

By

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Abstract

They that make the wish possess the command- 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 and artificial science even before the advent of colonialism. Addressing this lacuna, essential in mapping the place of African ingenuity in the 21st century, the paper draws upon the theory of J.L Austin's Speech Act theory, scrutinising the literary narrative of “Igbo Olodumare” - offering a deep dive into the technological ingenuity it encapsulates. 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. It compellingly argues that the African technological enactment unlike those of modern technology have a dynamic declarative-specific process.

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

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Introduction

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 reckonings of the potentials of secret African knowledge and skills. For them, 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 where the “technological miracles” of computers, the remote control, mobile telephones are everyday realities, and where images of nuclear explosions and space travel are commonplace, no one doubts the power of Western science to effect action at a distance and transform the world. And all who live in it because of the physical existence of science laboratories attest to this. 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 (metallurgy) by the blacksmiths. The story of African development especially in terms of modern technology has been a debate amongst scholars. Heidegger (1977) differentiates between indigenous and modern technology by asserting that indigenous technology uses extensive human hand for operation while the modern technology uses the power of machine. Rodney (2022) argues that what is known as the modern European technology is an off-shoot of indigenous technology. He clarifies that the 15th 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” averred that the invention of iron work, one of the earliest metallurgy innovations discovered in Africa, was 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 posited 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 and advance development. Oluwole (1992) concentrated on the Yoruba Ifa oral tradition, 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. These

further reveal that the Africans had their ingenuity and means of development even before the advent of the colonial masters. 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 that 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 arrival of the colonial masters as evinced in the selected work of D.O. Fagunwa's *Igbo Olodumare*. To do a critical exploration, aspects of J.L. Austin's Speech Act theory 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.

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. 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) examined 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 researcher identifies that the Africans had their 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 extensive 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 industriousness, in spite of 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 farm land. The western farmers 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 transport 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.

Methodology

The work draws upon the seminal theories of JL Austin's (1962) Speech Act theory 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'bálólàse* 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.

Scholarly Reviews on D.O. 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 have praised the unique blend of traditional mythology and modern storytelling techniques. Though some blame him for unrealistic plots, one of which was 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.

Abiola 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 (1973) describes Fagunwa as a pioneer in the field of creative writing in Yoruba. Before him, no other writer has had the same impact to the Yoruba literary sense, nor the same influence on subsequent writers. The appearance of his earliest novel, *Ogboju Ode* makes an important stage in the development of Yoruba written language. The likes of D. Murby has stated that the works of Fagunwa identifies 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 parents who had been worshippers of *Osun* (a river goddess) and *Ifa* (the Yoruba god of divination and

wisdom) and these sure influenced his works. These critics agree that Fagunwa's rhetorical prowess is evident in his esoteric use of Yoruba, a technique which saturates his entire novels.

Synopsis of *Igbo Olodumare*

D.O 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* (now Igbo) is woven around the character of a renowned hunter, Olowo-aiye, who left his village to hunt in the forest of the god. For several years, he was lost in the forest and voyaged around looking for his way home. 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 along 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 to rejoice at the sight of his son, Akara-ogun.

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 a fact, stating an opinion, 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', J.L. Austin (1962) 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 via 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 proved 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 or falsity of the action an utterance performs.

Searle (1969, 1976) improves on Austin's categorisations of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. He gives a clearer classification of speech acts as: representatives (how a speaker expresses her belief about the truth of a proposition), directive (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 (how a speaker becomes committed to act in the way represented by the propositional content), expressive (how a speaker expresses the sincerity and condition of their illocutionary act) and declarative (a speaker's utterance results in a change in the external nonlinguistic situation (p.117). The declarative is germane to our analysis.

Declaratives are interactional acts by means of which utterances realistically provide 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 lexicalised as declaratives, if the criteria are legitimately brought into performativity; officially binding and affecting changes in the state of affairs. Mey (2001, p.117) avers that declaratives are acts that institutionally change the world via utterances in which the utterer has to have a special institutional role in specific context. Searles (2002) says declaratives are feasibly sub-classified into linguistic declaratives and extra-linguistic declaratives, both of the subclasses are linguistic speech acts. However, linguistic declarative acts are sufficiently performed by the institution of language and need no further non-linguistic institutions 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 and rituals. For declarative acts to be validly materialised, these conventional conditions must be met:

1. The right context has to be matched with the right form of words.
2. A person duly authorised and recognised as authorised by audiences has constitutively to utter declaratives for bringing them as facts in real world.
3. A more formal occasion is causally entailed for some declaratives in which the speaker has to 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 a change in the world.

The Concept of *Alá'balólàse*

The current work explains how the Yoruba people advance in technology and development through the use of words. It explains that declaration, according to J.L. 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, 1963), *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 explains 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 (1968) 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 by prayer or by force of charms or incantations. It has also been observed that the term 'science' cannot be limited to western world. This is because every group has a unique means of meeting their means. "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. The testing ground of all sciences (Africa and Western) is utility. Parrinder (1969) opines that a medicine man (doctor) is a scientist in that he 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 in order 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.

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 cosmic experiment. Long before then, Africans with their ancient civilisations 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. Such related planets depicted in the data include 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 (the dead, spirits and gnomes) inhabited. Before the adventure of Olowo-aiye, the author describes the forest as a dreaded one that no known hunter had ever returned from. Making Olowo-aiye, one of the greatest astronauts to have 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.

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 man's greatest discovery. Not only did Olowo-aiye discover and dwell in the forest for a long time, he also invented some new technologies that made the forest habitable. In his voyage, he discovered new planets like: The Silent-forest, the Boa land and the land of the running women. One of his greatest findings was in the meeting of Baba-onirugbon-yeuke (the furry-bearded-one) who dwells at the backyard of heaven. Through him, a-half-man-half-ghommmid, he was able to discover many more planets like the house of Death at the backyard of Heaven where he revealed to him novel technological innovations such as the electrocuting chair for silently killing offender, a cloning machine to reproduce beings in their numbers, a remote sensor to activate things on earth from the mid-heaven and afford the person of Death to see every living creature from the comfort of his home. Also, the medicine for longevity which is potent to keep humans alive till eternity, and the google maps for description of places. The efficacy of the google map was evinced by Olowo-aiye when he described one of the gourds of his father in mapping and locating roads:

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. . . (pp.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. This is evident in *...as one says incantations and says where he is going to, quickly the wind would face the direction. . .* Olowoaiye describes the map as only effective after the proclamation is made. The proclamation affects the wind. The wind, one of the major instruments the gourd needs to function hears the *word* in form of proclamation and changes its course. This has been described as waves in physics. A kind of dynamic oscillation of repeated equilibrium value at some frequency.

Olowo-aiye relates the future and importance of language mastery to his audience by charging them earnestly to write it down. It seems Fagunwa was predicting the essence of recording and documenting oral literature and tradition like history, medicine and technology without which vital knowledge of African science will be lost. In order 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 (p.7).

This corroborates Olson (2010) which states 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 in particular historical or social contexts and soon loses its originality. The science of documentation did not begin with the west. Obviously, Africans have always had the science of recording and preserving history. Close to this is exploring more languages. Fagunwa predicted that the world development would be hinged on the science of language. In today's 21st century, the modern scientists are learning new computer languages such as:

Python, Java and Onion, among others, so as to encode development. This is related to the admonition of Olowo-aiye that his friends acquire the languages of all creatures; gnomes or animals to function better. 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.

Excerpt 4

One day, as he sat at his backyard enjoying the breeze, he heard a mother-hen warning her chicks to leave a particular spot, because if they dug longer, they would dig up a bag of gold and the landlord may find out. . . (p. 99).

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. Some of these possibilities include kidney, heart, eye, bone marrows harvesting and gene implantation known by modern science as *mutation*. But these have been discovered by Africans longer before now, as depicted in the data:

Excerpt 5

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. . . (p. 96).

Excerpt 6

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 (p.75).

Excerpt 7

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 (p. 95).

Excerpt 8

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

From excerpts 4 to 7, the furry man describes the African ability to tamper with man's genetic order. He described her mother as a very powerful scientist who can do wonders with the human body. She, being a demi-goddess, made sure that her son who is born to a mortal man would never see death. In Excerpt 4, the demi-goddess made ready a fruit . . . *cut from the fruit of life and gave me to eat to live forever.* . . In Excerpt 5, the number of years he had lived before he was found by Olowo-aiye showed that the fruit was potent. *I have lived here for a long time more than a millennium.* . . and Excerpt 6 shows the mutation of a ghommid and human. *I am half human, half gnome.* . . all these representations now found in modern science have long been practised in Africa.

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 9

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 sponna, 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. Not only do Africans use herbs to heal, they also make other things happen. These include sedating and hemostasis.

Excerpt 10

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

The queen of the kingdom of the Golden fish, who was also a witch, used a substance in form of sedative to make her husband sleep deeply whenever she was going to meet her concubine. She added the substance and then declared that the substance becomes effective

without a reversal. . . *If a log sleeps, it doesn't awake, you sluggard must remain asleep till my return.* . . This went on for many years until he heard from some of his subjects that his wife was using a powerful substance to make him sleep every night. That got him enraged. He trailed his wife to her concubine's house and beheaded him. When eventually the wife found out what he had done, she made him pay for the death of her concubine by make him half stone, half human and transforming all his subjects to golden fishes. Her ability to cause clotting in the blood is called homeostasis.

The prediction of infectious diseases and devising preventive measures are evident in the text. The character Death predicted incurable international diseases that would start and stop suddenly and cause an-almost-extinction of mankind, setting nations against one another. In modern days, there have been cases of Ebola and covid-19 that shook the universe and caused global unrest.

Excerpt 11

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. . . (p.88).

Another form of technological invention in “Igbo Olodumare” is transformation. This involves a particular creature taking on the form of another to fight a war.

Excerpt 12

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. . . (p.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 turn 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, he 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), Ewadayepo was skilled in barks and leaves. The author states that:

Excerpt 13

The inhabitants of the earth have wisdom, so also do people in heaven (p. 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 intelligence and ingenuity of the Africans in development and technologies. The next section explains the importance of proclamation/declaration as a major rudiment of African technology.

Acts Sequencing in Igbo Olodumare

The data revealed that declaration is the core of every technological innovation in African science. Leveraging on J.L. 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 D.O 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 14

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 is capable of transforming 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 15

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 recouring 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 16

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 17

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 pract of declaration and the allopract 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 1 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 2, 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 the African science is both epistemological and empirical.

Also in Excerpt 3, 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 4, 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.

Conclusion

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 that deals with declaration – a situation where something that is not in existence is made to be by merely declaring them. 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; Azenabor (2007) on the golden rule of African ethics and coordination; 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. J. L. Austin's Speech 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.

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Endnotes

- **Alá'bálólàse**- 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

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