
Pragmatic Analysis of Invectives in Fela Anikulapo's Shuffering and Shmilling, Sorrow, Tears and Blood

Shote Adedapo Oladeji^{1*}, Kathryn Enwere²

^{1*, 2}Department of English and Communication Art, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Corresponding Email: ^{1*}stanleyordu12@gmail.com

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Abstract: *Invective is the critical, unmitigated, non-euphemistic and non-attenuating manner of casting aspersion on a recipient. While invective is generally considered a base, undesirable form of expression, its potential as the most direct form of satire has equally been acknowledged in certain contexts such as music genre. The deployment of invective as a tool of satirical criticism is axiomatic in Fela's songs. This study is concerned with the pragmatic interpretation of Fela's penchant to use invectives as a satirical tool to lampoon the government, and also with the potential of invective as an aesthetic form. Some pragmatic tools subsumed in a modified theoretical framework of Mey's (2001) "Pragmatic Act Theory", Brown and Levinson's (1987) "Politeness Principles", and the canonical classifications of context are used to analyse purposively selected Fela's songs viz., Sorrow, Tears and Blood and Shuffering and Shmilling. Findings from the analysis indicate that Fela overtly uses some high pejorative invectives as a direct-derogatory attack on the government as a result of the latter's bad policies. Results from the analysis indicated that Assertive, Expressive, and Directive are the kinds of instantiated pragmatic acts performed in the selected songs. These acts reflect the subject matters of the songs. Similarly, two types of face acts were identified in the data: face threatening without redress and face threatening act using off-record politeness strategies. These show that Fela does not mitigate the propositional contents of the message in his songs. In other respects, context is pivotal in helping readers understand the physical, sociocultural, psychological and linguistic scaffolds underpinning each song. The researcher concludes that the aesthetics of invective yields a multiplicity of analytical possibilities and more so, that the pragmatic analysis of songs is enriching, and can give important insights into how language is deployed in music lyrics.*

Keywords: *Pragmatics, Fela Anikulapo, Language, Invective, Songs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

What was the key to man's success? How did he conquer whole continents? How did he establish himself so quickly in so many remote and dissimilar habitats? The argument is still raging. The factor that allows for the argument is the most probable response: The globe was conquered by man. Especially grateful for his distinctive language. According to Cruse (1990), language is the customary use of signs, sounds, and written symbols for self-expression and communication. Thus, language serves as our main instrument for coping with the majority of life's challenges Ordu (2022). With it, we learn, fall in love, trade goods, and even do mathematical operations. Language has a significant role in every aspect of human existence. Every animal has some kind of "language." Even insects, like bees and ants, have developed complex means of communication that they use to share information with one another about the location of food. Many animals have vocal languages, including all ape and monkey species. The ability to generate different sounds is far greater in man than in green monkeys, but the talents of whales and elephants are similarly astounding. A parrot can replicate the sounds of phones ringing, doors slamming, and sirens screaming in addition to saying whatever Noam Chomsky could. Chomsky didn't have a voice edge over a parrot, if he had one at all. What then makes our language so unique?

The most typical response is that human language is very flexible. Man may create an endless number of sentences, each with a unique meaning, by connecting a finite number of sounds and signs. By doing so, he is able to take in, retain, and transmit an enormous quantity of information about his surroundings. Careful!, a green monkey may shout to its companions. The leopard! But a contemporary person may tell his friends that he observed a leopard pursuing a herd of bison this morning at the river bend. The precise location, as well as the many routes going there, may then be described. With this knowledge, the members of his gang may consult one another and decide whether to approach the river, fend off the leopard, or go after the bison. Harari (2014, p.33) asserts that "the most important information that needed to be conveyed was about humans", not about leopard and bison. Harari goes further to affirm that our language evolved as a way of interacting. According to Harari's theory man is primarily a social animal (Harari, 2014, pp.33-34). Therefore, social cooperation is our key for survival and reproduction. It is not enough for individual men and women to know the whereabouts of lions and bison. It's much more important for them to know who in their band hates whom, who is sleeping with whom, who is honest, and who is a cheat. The truly unique feature of language is its ability to transmit information. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) expanded this notion; they posit that the entire architecture of language is arranged along a triadic axis of ideation, interpersonal and textual functions. These they call metafunctions. The ideational metafunction is observed in our use of language to encode our experience of the world and to convey a picture of reality. This ideational metafunction is further divided into two modes of construing experience: experiential and logical. The interpersonal metafunction is realised in our use of language to encode interaction and show how defensible we find our propositions. So it allows us to encode meanings of attitudes, interaction and relationships as well as to establish and maintain social relation.

How do we organise the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions into a linear and coherent whole? This is where the textual metafunction becomes imperative. The textual metafunction allows us to encode meanings of text development; it is concerned with the use of language to create or construct a text through which a link is consistently and logically made between language and the situation. Thus, it enables or facilitates the ideational and interpersonal function, because construing experience and enacting interpersonal relations largely depend on being able to build up sequences of discourse, organising the discursive flow, and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along. (See also Halliday 1985; Halliday and Hasan 1985; Halliday 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). Brown and Yule (1983) simply identify two functions of language: the transactional and the interactional function. The transactional function is observed in the use of language to express intention (content), while interactional function is the use of language to establish social situation and personal attitudes. Adedimeji (2005) sums this up by submitting that language mainly serves to form (to create), deform (to censure), inform (to tell), reform (to correct) and transform (to change) man and his society. The use of language to deform is evident in invective. The word "invective" comes from the Latin phrase "oratio invective," which refers to the act of verbally disparaging, assaulting, and insulting an adversary either orally or in writing. It is an undesirable form of expression used to verbalise base instincts such as anger, malice, hatred, envy, sadism and sometimes candour. As such, it is a synonym for verbal abuse, that is, the use of words meant to convey insult or derogation. It may manifest as bland insult or vulgar abuse expressed in unadorned language. According to Olorutoba-Oju (1990, p. 14), "invective can be seen as the most direct form of satire—critical, unmitigated, non-euphemistic, non-attenuating. Its scope is limitless in terms of authorship and receivership". He goes further to elaborate that the grouse leading to the production of invective ranges from authentic provocation to critical malevolence and even virulence, while the conventional response is one of moral indignation.

Theoretical Framework

Language in use is liable to illocutionary indeterminacy (Leech, 1983): it is not always plausible for a hearer to easily come to conclusion about what speaker means. So to account for the inherent meaning in an utterance made by a participant in a discourse, several theories were propounded by pragmatists. Prima-facie among these theories is the speech act theory. The speech act theory was propounded by J. L. Austin (1962) as a reaction against logical positivism, the theory of language meaning that existed at that time. According to Austin, the semantic concept of "truth condition" is insufficient to describe language. Since its debut in 1962, the speech act theory has influenced numerous academic fields, including linguistics, psychology, literary theory, and many more. It has enabled language in use to be seen as performing different functions in addition to just expressing reality.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research analytically surveys the use of invectives in Fela Anikulapo music and the specifics of their rendering in the English language translation with the aim of interpreting these using elements of pragmatics. The goal is to use pragmatic tools to analyse inherent

invectives in the selected songs and how aesthetics of invective yields a multiplicity of analytical possibilities. The researcher will make use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data analysis. This implies that effort will be made to analyse the linguistic content as well as employ statistical methods to provide a cursory interpretation of the analysed data.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Pragmatic Acts and Invective Markers in Fela's "Shuffering and Smiling"

S/N	Linguistic Act	Pragmatic Act	Pragmatic Force	Invective Marker	Face Threatening Acts (FTA)
1.	You Africans, please listen to me as Africans And you non-Africans, listen to me with open mind.	Directive	Appealing	Low	FTA without Redress: Bald-on-Record
2.	Suffer, suffer, suffer, suffer, suffer Suffer for world Na your fault be that Me I say: na your fault be that.	Assertive	Alleging	High	FTA without Redress: Bald-on-Record
3.	I want you all to please take your minds Out of this musical contraption And put your minds into any goddamn church Any goddamn mosque Any goddamn Celestial Including Seraphoom and Cheruboom. Now, we are all there now Our minds are in those places Here we go.	Directive	Ordering	High	FTA without Redress: Bald-on-Record
4.	Suffer, suffer for world Enjoy for Heaven Christians go dey yab "In Spiritum Heavinus" Muslims go dey call "Allahu Akbar".	Expressive	Imprecating	High	FTA without Redress: Bald-on-Record
5.	Open you eye everywhere	Assertive	Advising and	Low	FTA without



	Archbishop na miliki Pope na enjoyment Imam na gbaladun		Admonishing		Redress: Bald-on-Record
6.	Archbishop dey enjoy Pope self dey enjoy Imam self dey enjoy	Expressive	Mocking	Low	FTA without Redress: Bald-on-Record
7.	My Oga wetin you say? My brother wetin you say? My sister wetin you go hear? My sister wetin you go hear	Directive	(Rhetorical) Questioning	Low	FTA Using Off-Record Politeness Strategy
8.	My people them go dey follow Bishop (amen) Them go follow Pope Them go follow Imam Them go go for London Them go go for Rome Them go go for Mecca Them go carry all the money Them go juba Bishop Juba Pope Juba Imam Then them go start to yab themselves: [Fela starts chanting in mock-Latin/Arabic]	Expressive	Mocking	High	FTA Using Off-Record Politeness Strategy

Pragmatic Acts Analysis

Fela starts the song with an interlude: a directive pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of appealing:

You Africans, please listen to me as Africans. And you non-Africans, listen to me with open mind.

Africans listen in what ways? Or how does an African listen? Why is it necessary for Africans to listen in a certain manner, and what does that mean? And how does it vary from the "open minds" that people from other continents are expected to listen with? This question will be attempted to be answered later. In any event, this indication that there is important work to be done might support the need for the current acoustic arrangement, which exudes both oomph and restraint. The adverb "please" helps to lessen the inherent imposition in this poem, which lacks an invective marker.

This is then followed by an assertive pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of alleging:

Lyrics Translation

Suffer, suffer, suffer suffer for world If you suffer in this world
na your fault be that that is your own fault
Me I say: I say:
na your fault be that that is your fault

In the linguistic act 2 above, Fela alleges that the blame for the sufferings of his people can solely be apportioned to them. In other words, they are the ones responsible for their own sufferings and travails. This is a high invective casted at the poor masses whom Fela believes have been misled by their religious leaders. Fela further use similar high invective to command his listeners:

“I want you all to please take your minds
Out of this musical contraption
And put your minds into any goddamn church
Any goddamn mosque
Any goddamn Celestial
Including Seraphoom and Cheruboom.
Now, we are all there now
Our minds are in those places
Here we go.”

This is an instantiated directive pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of ordering. The word “goddamn” is a vulgar word used to express anger, surprise or frustration—it is a high invective marker. Fela wants his listeners to transmute their minds from the psychological melody of music to the vivid mental picture of churches and mosques where his attacks are aimed at. This he believes will enable his listeners to understand the pragmatic imports in his song.

Having captured and sustained the attention of his listeners, Fela then delved deeper into his imprecation:

Lyrics

Suffer suffer for world
Chorus: Amen!
Enjoy for heaven
Christians go dey yab
“In spiritus hevinus”
Moslems go dey call
“Alaahu Akbar”

Translation

Suffer in this world
Chorus: Amen!
And enjoy in heaven
Christians will fool you:
“In spiritus hevinus”
Moslems will dupe you:
“Alaahu Akbar”

This linguistic act 4 is an expressive pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of imprecating. Evidently, this is a high invective overtly directed at Christians and Muslims worshippers. Fela believes that the teachings of these two faiths are fraudulent. “In spiritus hevinus” and

“Alaahu Akbar” as used in the lyrics denote gibberish phrases that the two religious groups use to cajole their followers.

Fela then advises his listeners to open their eyes and see the hypocrisy of their cult leaders:

Lyrics	Translation
Open your eye everywhere	Wake up and see reality
Archbishop na miliki	Archbishop lives lavishly
Pope na enjoyment	Pope basks in opulence
Imam na gbaladun	Imam revels in abundance

The above excerpt from his lyrics is an assertive pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of advising and admonishing. Fela advises his listeners to wake up and face reality. The reality of the Archbishop living lavishly, while the Pope basks in opulence. What about the Imam? He revels in abundance. This is a low invective targeted at the religious leaders of both Christians and Muslims. The invective is blurred by the indirectness of the pragmatic act.

The next stanza of the song makes mockery of the followers of this cult leaders:

Lyrics	Translation
Archbishop dey enjoy	Archbishop lives in luxury
Pope himself dey enjoy	And pope in maximum comfort
Imam self dey enjoy	Imam too in great splendor

This stanza is an instantiated expressive pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of mocking. The invective inherent in this act is low. Fela subtly makes mockery of the poor cult followers of religious for their ignorance and short-sightedness. To accentuate the point being made, Fela then employs rhetorical questions:

Lyrics	Translation
Oga na wetin you say?	Master, what do you say to that?
My brother wetin you say?	My brother, what do you say?
My sister wetin you go hear?	My sister what do you hear?

Fela has used rhetorical questions as a technique to connect with his audience. "Oga" refers to members of the upper classes who serve as overseers for the pope in Rome, the bishop in London, and the imam in Mecca, the three foreign head gatekeepers, in Africa. These individuals include wealthy African alhajis, imams, reverends, pastors, and a plethora of other members of the tangled hierarchy of God's gatekeepers. On the other hand, "My brother" and "My sister" are general words of reference that allude to the lower classes, the working classes, and the impoverished, who have been reduced to serving as the religious authorities' "sheeples.". In this excerpt from the lyrics, he deploys a **directive** pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of questioning but with a low invective marker. This is because Fela indirectly cast aspersion on the gullible followers.

Fela is the king of sarcasm. In linguistic act 8, he sarcastically drags all the sheeples who follow religious leaders blindly, revealing their folly:

LYRIC

Fela: My people dem go dey follow bishop
Chorus: Amen!
Dem go follow Pope
Dem go follow Imam
Dem go go for London
Dem go go for Rome
Dem go go for Mecca
Dem go carry all the money
Dem go juba bishop
juba Pope
juba Imam dem
Dem go start to yab demselves
“In spiritus hevinus”
[Fela starts chanting in mock-Latin/Arabic]

TRANSLATION

Fela: My people follow bishop
Chorus: Amen!
They follow pope
They follow imam
They flock to London
They swarm to Rome
They troop to Mecca
They carry all their money
They worship bishop
worship pope
worship imam
They begin to delude themselves
“In spiritus hevinus”

The above excerpt from the lyrics is an instantiated expressive pragmatic act with the pragmatic force of mocking and lambasting. Fela overtly mocks the cult followers of the religious leaders. He exposes the incredulity of the flamboyant and ostentatious lifestyle of the leaders, while implying that their followers wallow in misery and poverty. He lambastes the followers who “yab”, that is, delude themselves but worship (‘juba’) the Bishop, the Pope and the Imam who live posh lifestyles. Fela’s targets the Bishop, the Pope and the Imam because they represent the leaders of the main religious leaders of the Pentecostal, Catholics and Islam. These were the major religious groups in the 1970s and the 1980s when Fela was alive. The invectives inherent in the speech act is low. There is no vulgar word but the intended meaning inherent in the lyrics carry some subtle jab aimed at the people he perceives as deluded followers.

Face Threatening Acts in Fela’s “Sorrow Tears and Blood”

The song starts with a bald-on-record politeness strategy. Fela, using a very plain and direct language, tells the tale of the incursion of security outfits in his famed Kalakuta Republic shrine by 1,000 armed members of the Nigerian army and police. Using a face-threatening act without redress approach is really imperative. It helps to create a vivid picture in the minds of the listeners. This bald-on-record approach was also deployed in the next stanza:

Linguistic act 2: Huh, huh, seven minutes later

All don cool down brother

Police don go away

Army don disappear

to explain the aftermath of their bloody invasion. Fela clearly explains that the intrusion lasted for seven minutes. Things cooled down after the exit of the police and the army. What legacy did this invaders leave behind? Your guess is as good.

Linguistic act 3: Dem leave sorrow, tears and blood.

Dem regular trademark.

Using the same bald-on-record politeness strategy, Fela asserts that the invaders left tell-tales of sorrow, tears and blood which Fela says is their regular trademark. This implies that this is not the first time the intruders will come to his Kalakuta shrine, and this is not the first time they will leave in their wake tragic stories of sorrow, tears and blood. In linguistic act 4, Fela uses off-record politeness strategy (that is, the use of sarcasm), to accuse Nigerians of having the tendency to fear. The use of pidgin assuage the face threatening act inherent in it. This same off-record politeness strategy was also sustained in linguistic 5, 6 and 7.

The use of both bald-on-record and off-record politeness strategies in the song Sorrow Tears and Blood, shows that Fela is conscious of the linguistic elements in his song. His intended meanings are projected carefully.\

Contextual Variables in Fela's "Sorrow Tears and Blood"

i. Physical Context

Following a raid on Kuti's Kalakuta Republic complex on February 18, 1977, by armed personnel of the Nigerian security forces, including primarily the Nigerian police and the Nigerian army, Fela's song "Sorrow, Tears, and Blood" was composed. The initial phrases perfectly describe the scenario.:

"Everybody run run run!

Hey yah!

Everybody scatter scatter

Some people lost some bread

Someone nearly die

Someone just die

Police dey come, army dey come

Confusion everywhere."

"Everybody" mentioned in the song refers to people who gathered at Fela's shrine at that material time. Some were his backup singers and instrumentalists, other were spectators who had come to watch him. Most of them suffered in the tragic invasion. The people began fleeing erratically as soon as the security personnel arrived, Fela said. Some of them lost some bread (a metaphor for food or money), some of them almost perished in the subsequent tumult, and regrettably one person passed away. However, "My people" in linguistic act 4, refers to not just who suffered from the invasion but Nigerians in general who do nothing to fight for their freedom, liberty, justice and happiness. Fela also made references to Rhodesia (former name for Zimbabwe) and South Africa. This particular reference is pertinent because these two countries were also suffering from state sponsored police brutality just like Nigeria.

ii. Sociological Context/Mutual Contextual Beliefs. The song "Sorrow, Tears, and Blood" was first composed as a critique of the atrocities carried out in the townships against black Africans by the South African apartheid authorities. The immediate goal was exceeded by events in Nigeria before the song was released into the public. When the Kalakuta raid took place on February 18, 1977, not only the inhabitants of the home but also the nearby residents were subjected to every kind of horrible government assault. Without mentioning Lagos at all by the time the song was published later that year, it had developed into a condemnation of the brutal governmental rule that was prevalent in the postcolonial metropolis. Who among

the residents of Lagos—or any other major African city—has not seen, experienced, read about, or heard about an incident comparable to the following:

“Everybody run run run!

Hey yah!

Everybody scatter scatter

Some people lost some bread

Someone nearly die

Someone just die

Police dey come, army dey come

Confusion everywhere.”

The upshot of this invasion was Fela breaking his leg. However, let's go back to the start of the narrative so that you can completely understand the significance of these statements. The blistering anti-militarist satire "Zombie" by Fela was published in 1976. This song portrays the Nigerian army as a horde of zombies, complete with decrepit mechanical troops. Part of the lyrics goes thus:

“Zombie o, zombie (Zombie o, zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (Zombie o, zombie)

Zombie no go go, unless you tell am to go (Zombie)

Zombie no go stop, unless you tell am to stop (Zombie)

Zombie no go turn, unless you tell am to turn (Zombie)

Zombie no go think, unless you tell am to think (Zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (Zombie o, zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (Zombie o, zombie)

Zombie no go go, unless you tell am to go (Zombie)

Zombie no go stop, unless you tell am to stop (Zombie)

Zombie no go turn, unless you tell am to turn (Zombie)

Zombie no go think, unless you tell am to think (Zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (Zombie o, zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (Zombie o, zombie)”

Fela chanted, enraged with a sense of irony. The Nigerian military was smeared, bruised and effeminate. The military junta did not pardon Fela for his arrogance and his desire to denounce police and military violence, the misuse of authority, pervasive corruption, poor administration, and the related dysfunctions that had become the standard operating procedure. Not to mention Fela's choice to skip the Lagos government-hosted FESTAC '77 (World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture), the second edition of the World Festival of Black Arts. Even more impudently, Fela would start his own counter-festival. The musicians themselves, as well as foreign media, would swarm to the Africa Shrine to witness Fela's concerts and visit his own Kalakuta Republic after the official appearances of Stevie Wonder, James Brown, and other notable performers.

This was the junta in power's greatest moment of humiliation. Then, Olusegun Obasanjo, the president of Nigeria at the time, profited from a conflict between the police and a member of

Africa '70, Fela's band. The police showed up in front of Kalakuta, where he had sought sanctuary, and they intended to arrest him. However, Fela refused to let them inside his jurisdiction since he had no warrant to show him. As a result, General Obansajo dispatched the army and police to attack the Kalakuta Republik. Then, as things spiralled out of control, stories of grief, tears, and blood were left in the sands of time!

iii. Linguistic Context. The lyrics for “Sorrow Tears and Blood” was written chiefly in Pidgin English. Fela might have done this for two reasons: first, he wants the song to have a wider outreach in terms of audience: both educated and uneducated Nigerian can understand his intended message. Second, for melody and flow. The song’s flow in Pidgin English is quiet seamless. The flow would have been incongruous if it were written in pure British English.

Quiet remarkable in the song is the repletion of some content words. Words such as “run” and “scatter” were repeated in the opening verse. This is not just for emphasis but to also create a vivid picture of people running helter-skelter to avoid police brutality and arrest. The use of parallelism is also significant. Parallelism is the repetition of the same structural pattern, commonly between phrases and clauses. In the song the parallel structure:

“We fear for the thing we no see
We fear for the air around us
We fear to fight for freedom
We fear to fight for liberty
We fear to fight for justice
We fear to fight for happiness
We always get reason to fear”

Helps to reinforce the intended message in the lyric. Another example of parallel structure can be found in:

I wan build house
I don build house
I no want quench
I want enjoy
I no wan go

This was also used for emphasis, that is, reiterate the point being made. In any case, the entire lyrics was written in a near-metrical parallel verse. This gives both meaning and melody to the prosodic structure of the lyrics.

4. CONCLUSION

A cursory look at the linguistic acts in the two songs indicates that lyrics in songs appear to be loosely organised: they are peppered with unwieldy, non-fluent and non-sequitur expressions. Nevertheless, they have underlying linguistic implications. The analyses of the two songs in this study are attempts to explain these linguistic implications. Some of these implications are highlighted thus:

Music lyrics are forms of linguistic acts. These linguistic acts generates pragmatic acts with intended pragmatic forces. The pragmatic acts, following Searle’s classification of illocutionary acts are assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative acts.

However, in Fela's songs, the assertive, expressive and directive acts are the kinds of instantiated pragmatic acts that were performed. This answers the question to one of our research questions: "What types of pragmatic acts are in Fela's music? Meanwhile, these acts are mainly influenced by the propositional content of selected the songs. From the analysis, we noticed that instantiated assertive pragmatic acts are used when Fela wants to narrate, allege, inform, advise, admonish and imprecate. Expressive pragmatic acts are used when Fela is mocking, lamenting and appealing. Elsewhere, instantiated directive pragmatic acts are sparsely used. They were only obtainable where Fela is giving an order or in the other instance where he asked a rhetorical question.

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