Bilingualism and Creativity: The Linguistic Spectacle of African Literature. Developing Africa through an Analysis of Wole Soyinka’s The Lion and the Jewel

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Abstract: This research attempts to examine how Wole Soyinka’s The Lion and the Jewel relates to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (that languages have special impacts on native speakers, in such a way that they are confined to express their beliefs and concepts by means of certain exclusive and restricted styles that are unlike those exhibited by speakers of other different languages (3); and how it translates in the context of contemporary the Yoruba society. A comprehensive study of the use of language and cultural tenets used in the book, (as well as the use of questionnaires), is studied to ascertain the context, culture, and language of the dramatic text so as to arrive at conclusions on the validity of the hypothesis, and to make recommendations as to different views which might not fully communicate the author’s intended cultural nuances to participants that comprise the native language speakers of the language community portrayed in the dramatic text (Yoruba language). This attempt at validation is to determine the level of cultural translatability/untranslatability maintained in the use of language, and its effects on human perception and hence, the African society; goal of which is to have a close view on the relationships that bind African languages to their cultures, linguistic and cultural influences/effects on Africans (as well as Africa as a corporate entity), and then a possible outlook of a multilingual Africa. This will be with views on both the feminist and structuralist points of view, which show the inherent basic linguistic (language usage), and cultural traits (Respect, love, virginity, bride price, rituals, wrestling, flash backs, song, mime, poem, marriage, dance, fashion, gender dominance, and myths) as shown in the text.

Theme: Bilingualism and creativity: The linguistic spectacle of African literature.

Keywords: Language, Culture, Sapir - Whorf hypothesis, The Lion and the Jewel, Yoruba.

I. Introduction

“Reference 9 notes that the linguistic relativity hypothesis maintains that the languages we use to communicate have an impact on our thought patterns about reality”. The argument about language and its influence on thought patterns started in the 19th century and it has since then been a bone of contention in the language fields. Similarly, “Reference 14 asserts that an Individual’s language goes a long way in influencing how he perceives the world and has an effect on a unilateral view and agreement to concepts with other people that don’t speak that language”. He goes on to explain that the world is essentially based on the language habits of different groups of language speakers and therefore they can never have the same thought about the world; that is, they are bound to think, interpret and perceive things differently. Buttering his points some years after is his student (5) who also comes up with the argument that even nature is dictated to us by the languages that we were born to know. He states that our minds organize our perception of reality based on the linguistic systems it is accustomed to, and therefore, unless people have similar linguistic systems in their minds, they cannot have the same thought pattern about reality. He explains further that people who have different grammatical systems must definitely think differently from other people with a different grammatical system; (which is similar to 14), when he says ‘even words influence the human mind’.

“Reference 20” and some other scholars however, rose up to challenge the linguistic relativity hypothesis, they undertook a study which tested the hypothesis and ruled it out as false. These and many other arguments which rose against the Whorfian hypothesis led to its irrelevance at some point. However, despite various oppositions against the hypothesis, some scholars have stated views that are in its support. For instance, (16) expresses a consideration that though thought may guide our languages; it is not as powerful as it is reflected in the assertions that have been made in times past.
According to (13) people’s opinions of color might be considered in various ways, emphasizing that impressions about colors are either inborn, cultured, or both. They give proof that defends the likelihood of cultured opinions that can impact color classifications. The facts they derived are identical to prospects that views of colors can be influenced by linguistic structures. This also falls in line with (3) work on the Igbo language and colors, where he asserts that the Sapir-Whorf’s assertion (that language owners are controlled by the models of thought specified by their languages) are invalid because they didn’t test their facts about the determining governance of thought on language. He, nevertheless, concluded (in page 66) that “language speakers of a particular language community are undeniably controlled by the thought pattern stipulated by their languages; that is, the usage of that particular language naturally binds the speakers to conceive things and reality in a certain way, which in that way, also makes them bonafide members of that language community”. In that same vein, (10) affirms that there is event clarification when some parts of the events are set in codes that are not written, since languages have different means of clarification. Language can guide the human thought when its means of clarification aids perceptive activities and then the beliefs and behaviors are made to be solely reliant on it. He explains further (in page 8) that while a language enables its speaker to understand reality, it will not wholly make its speakers ignorant of other sides of experience, it will also offer those speakers a logical preference in their usual reactions to events in the world. “Reference 7” in his study of the Pirahã language asserted that the language lacked terms for exact words for quantity, and so proposes that Pirahã language is likely the only language that lacks words for numbers ever recorded. “Reference 8” also conducted a number identification test using different language speakers of two villages and discovered that the performance of the participants gradually depreciated due to increase of numbers. Nonetheless (4) affirm that researches that are connected to perception of numbers and the theory of relativity concentrate more on languages that lack terms for numbers, or that are uncertain about these terms that they have. “Reference 17” claim that although they have not yet seen any evidence of language having the power to influence thought, it is proven that language can indeed create some peculiarities and also enhance some aspects of thought, based on a very cogent aspect of language, that is, numeric terms, which operate as basic instruments of perception. Facts derived show that language speakers find it difficult to identify numeric terms because they don’t have such terms in their jargon, and then the numeric terms enhance the speakers’ idea of numbers. “Reference 15” thus, resolve that the linguistic system that we use automatically cause distinctions in how we function. They emphasized also that activities that are language dependent are gradually reformed based on its existing arrangements. They explain further that when a particular communication conveying medium declines, its users are made to produce other structures that relate to it, in that way, they establish certain properties that are based on language constraints for events interpretation through discourse; in summary, variances in linguistic patterns are not related to variances of cognition or cultural tenets. Variances in linguistic forms cause connectedness between languages as well as variances in human choice of societal activities. Thence, (11) state that investigational inquiries have proposed that language’s impact on cognition is not permanent as it weakens slowly with time once language groups merge and one of the languages begins to dominate the other, in such a way that it gradually absorbs it. However, apart from the display of connections between linguistic structures and cognitive system, some basic mediation have demonstrated that the perfect understanding of a language is able to contribute to the modelling of non-verbal conceptual signs (6).

II. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical background of this research is Sapir Whorf’s hypothesis that started being argued since the early 90s. This hypothesis literally states that the way we view or think is influenced by the languages that we speak. So many controversies have risen based on this fact and so many researches have been done to either prove or disprove the hypothesis. It is from this many researchers that other scholars have speculated the notion of language universality, arguing that all languages have lots of similarities, and so different language speakers have the same thought patterns. Some of those researches have been mainly based on colour, numbers, and spatial studies. However none as yet been done in relation to full cultural and linguistic studies of different language speakers with the analysis of a literary work. It is with this intent that the researcher decided to use a culturally enriched African dramatic text whose culture has not really experienced too much of dynamicity since the time it was written up till date. This theory and the dramatic text are both appropriate for the evaluation of human language, culture and thought in the society; and which all are the basis of the data collection and analysis processes.

III. Background of the play

The play endeavors to merge some aspects of post-colonialism with little experiences of colonialism in order to express certain beliefs about peoples, and their tradition. Colonialism takes place when an alliance of imposition is expressed when other people take over a place, abuse the wealth possessed by the indigenes of that place, and then begin to rule over those people (1). “Reference 2” was a victim of this era, and this exhibited in the way that he writes explicitly its effects on tradition and its possible consequences if allowed to prosper over tradition.
Post-Colonialism is the after revelation of a group of indigences that that have experienced colonialism and then passed through the stage by gaining independence from the colonial masters. This post-colonial touch in the play specifically deals with getting back the lost African beauties which are mostly embedded in culture and which western civilization can cause Africans to lose if not well preserved and respected. Based on these various views about the relationship between language, thought and the world, a dramatic text, The Lion and the Jewel that exhibits the culture of an ethnic group in Nigeria will be analyzed.

The Lion and the Jewel is a play by Wole Soyinka. It was first performed and published in 1959 and 1963 respectively by the Oxford University Press. Wole Soyinka writes in such an artistic way to showcase Africa’s cultural richness in aspects of rituals, wrestling, flash backs, song, proverbs, mime, poem, marriage, dance, and myths; in this way, he always tries to announce Africa’s uniqueness. This, he efficiently excels at, in the recurrent narration of works that have to do with his culture, the Yoruba language. The dramatic text has a very simple and poetic structure. It fully demonstrates the author’s profound expertise and knowledge of the African culture with a view at the several ways in which the African mind is controlled or guided by the modern world (12). The play is situated in an imaginary village, ‘Illujinle’, where people speak the Yoruba language, and creatively centered on traditionalism as opposed to civilization. The author displays flawless nativity knowledge in the subjects of love, respect, virginity, bride price, deceit, betrayal, seduction and wits between Baroka (acknowledged as ‘The lion’), Sidi (the chief’s wife), Sido (the Village Belle, also known as ‘the Jewel’), and Sadiku (Baroka’s head wife).

Lakunle prides himself as a better man than Baroka based on the singular fact that he is educated; he claims that he can enlighten the villagers and then ensure a total transformation in the norms, values and principles of the village. All these boasting always start whenever the issue of bride price payment arises. He loves this ‘Jewel’, but detests the payment factor that stands between her love for him. On the other hand, Sidi, the most beautiful virgin in the village begins to nurse a strange love for this odd school teacher despite his preference to a foreign culture other than his own and annoying use of words; she thinks he is better than the old chief who is known for his unquenchable thirst for women, polygamy and power. Baroka’s is a wily man. He is known as a man who gets whatever he wants by any means possible. This he displays by defeating each of the characters that come his way with his psychological ability to solve puzzles, which in this case, is Sidi. Sadiku being the first wife of the chief is the first to be conquered in her husband’s battle of wits. She unknowingly gives room to Sidi’s eventual marriage to The Lion of the village by maliciously spreading the news of the chief’s supposed impotency to Sidi who also goes to the chief’s to mock him and in return falls into his trap by having a somewhat an unplanned sexual intercourse with him.

IV. The Feminist view

The Lion and the Jewel has often been viewed as demeaning the female sex. This is because of the cases of Sidi’s eventual marriage to the chief of the village despite through what some critiques of the book may call ‘rape’, The Favorite’s duty of having to remove the chief’s hair and the manner which she is excused from his presence, and the secret hatred Sadiku has for him due to some alleged maltreatment. And that women are viewed as sex toys and mere men’s servants only. In an attempt to contrast these views, Euba that women are beauty, love, and power personified instead in the literary work. Putting this succinctly, the Yoruba royalty is a wealthy, prestigious, well-regarded and powerful sect in the community. Anyone that comes from this group always gets whatever or whoever he wants, this not necessarily with force, could be with money or/and influence. Community members want to be known with this family, as it is a thing of pride and respect to be a friend of the prince at least. Particularly, every woman wants to be a part of this household, be it as a maid, a friend and more preferably, a wife. If Sidi has a mother in the text, she will undoubtedly make sure Sidi consents to be the chief’s wife the very first time Sadiku comes to tell her of Baroka’s request. Undoubtedly, the chief is able to finally win Sidi over by sweet talking her, in a way, such that she discards her former disgust for him and completely entrusts her whole being into his hands. It is however a case of mature seduction, not rape!

V. The Structuralist view

In this segment, we will be discussing the use of language forms in the play and how it exhibits an inherent influence on culture and thoughts of the characters. There are many instances of mental-play in the text, when the chief (who obviously hates to share a woman or her mind with Lakunle) asks:

Baroka:  It is a bad thing, then, 
   to sound like your school teacher?  (pg. 53)

Sidi feels bad that she has put him in this mood because she is already beginning to see a correlation between Lakunle’s and the chief’s goals for the village:

Sidi:  Perhaps after all, 
  As the school teacher tells me often, 
  (Very miserably)
I have a simple mind (pg. 53)

As soon as the chief realizes that she keeps referring to the teacher, he wittingly plays along by gently soothing her injured pride:

Baroka: (pats her kindly on the head).
No, Sidi, not simple, only straight and truthful
Like a fresh-water reed.
And carefully disagreeing with the school teacher, but respecting his views also:

Baroka: But I do find your school teacher and I are much alike.

The proof of wisdom is the wish to learn even from Children. And the haste of youth must learn its temper from the gloss of ancient leather.

…..The school teacher and I must learn one from the other.
Is this not right? (pg. 53).
The chief is an old man, filled with wisdom. An adage in Yoruba goes thus:

Ti aba fi owo otun bomo wi, ka fi to si famora
Literary translation: When u scold a child with your right hand, draw him close to you with your left hand.

That is: Scold a child and show love to him afterwards.

This obviously is what the chief does with Sidi after he has reprimanded her for coming into his room uninvited, and she appears hurt:

Baroka: Come, come, my child. You are too quick to feel aggrieved. Of course you are Welcome. But I expected to Ailatu to tell me when you are here. (pg. 41)

She seems to prefer this attitude to Lakunle’s who explodes at the slightest provocation and calls her rude names unapologetically:

Sidi: May I have the pail?
Lakunle: No. I have told you not to carry loads on your head. But you are as stubborn as an illiterate goat. It shortens your neck, so that very soon you will have no neck at all. Do you wish to look squashed like my pupils’ drawings? (pg. 2)

Lakunle: For that, what is a jewel to pigs?
If now I am understood by your race of savages, I rise above taunts and remain unruffled. (pg. 3)

When Sidi gets offended by this he goes ahead to heap more insults on her:

Lakunle: A natural feeling arising out of envy; For as a woman, you have a smaller brain than mine.

When Sidi cannot take it again she decides to leave, Lakunle manages a little apology and then goes on to buttress his point of women being the weaker sex:

Lakunle: (holds on to her) Please don’t be angry with me. I didn’t mean you in particular. And anyway, it isn’t what I say; women have a smaller brain than men The scientists have proved it. It’s in my books. Women have a smaller brain than men That’s why they are called the weaker sex (pg. 4)

This is opposed to Baroka’s anger management in pg. 28 when Sadiku returns with the news of Sidi’s refusal. As soon as he expresses his anger he begins to think up another solution to the puzzle. This he does by deceiving the unsuspecting Sadiku about his loss of manhood, who then, in turn goes to ensure his heart desire. Unlike Baroka, Lakunle dwells on his anger and uses all sorts of words to get Sidi off her mind:

Lakunle: Wasted! Wasted! Sidi, my heart bursts into flowers with my love. But you and the dead of this village trample it with feet of ignorance. (pg. 6)
Lakunle: (wearily). It’s never any use. Bush girl you are, bush girl you will always be; Uncivilized and primitive – bush girl! (pg. 9)
Baroka, who is supposed to show an unrepentant hatred towards Lakunle while Sidi is in his room, lowers his pride and agrees with Lakunle’s view about life:

Baroka: Our beginnings of course be modest.
We shall begin by cutting stamps for our own village
alone. As the school master would say—Charity
begins at home. (pg. 54)

He not only shows his love for his village, (which is the only place Sidi loves and is familiar with, and which Lakunle insults all the time); he also accommodates Lakunle’s beliefs. This places him in the father position. He finally captures Sidi’s heart in pg. 54:

Baroka: Yesterday’s wine is alone is strong and blooded,
child, And though the Christians’ holy book
denies the truth of this, Old wine thrives best
within a new bottle. (pg. 54)

This he says to explain to Sidi that he is the best man for her, as he has the qualities of a father, a friend and a husband as debated in pg. 46:

Baroka: (more and more desperate)
Does he not beget strength on wombs?
Are his children not tall and stout limbed?

Of which Sidi decides to throw the story of his rumored at his face in a sarcastic manner:

Sidi: Just once upon a time. Perhaps his children have of
late been Plagued with shyness and refused to come
to the world….. (pg. 46).

And then answers later:

Sidi: (giggling. She is actually stopped, halfway, by giggling
at the cleverness of her remark)
To husband his wives surely ought to be
A man’s first duties—at all times. (pg. 47)

Even when he detects that Sadiku already told her of his impotence, he doesn’t use the anger on her, he instead diverts his anger on his strength and wins the match. This is so unlike Lakunle who reacts on every word he hears. One may ask then why she is filled with tears at the occurrence of her disvirginity! I’d say it is only natural that a girl feels somewhat insecure at the loss of virginity whether she is in love with a man or not. She is bound to have an unsure mindset as to whether she lost it for the right person. In Sidi’s case perhaps, she feels her ego has been busted, most especially on the
unfortunate grounds that she orchestrated with the
 naïve Sadiku’s help.

The researcher is then able to conclude that Sidi prefers a fatherly figure as a husband to a youth who has little or no experience of issues of life but instead makes noises about developments that he single-handedly will facilitate in Illujinle. She decides to stick to the tradition that she has known all her, as opposed to the new gospel of civilization that the brainwashed ‘Yoruba-English’ man preaches.

With a look at the rich display of Nigerian cultural values in the text, it is only proper to analyze the roles they played in making the story truly African via enunciating various ways in which the human mind gets influenced by changes that may range from environment to civilization and vice versa.

**VI. Major Themes in the Play**

**Bride price payment**

This happens to be the bone of contention between Sidi and Lakunle. The play opened and closed on the issues surrounding this theme; and as a result of Lakunle’s refusal to pay the bride price, and Sidi’s insistence on it.

Sidi: I have told you, and I say it again
I shall marry you today, next week
Or any day you name.
But my bride-price must first be paid….
But I tell you, Lakunle, I must have
The full bride-price. Will you make me
A laughing-stock? Well, do as you please.
But Sidi will not make herself
A cheap bowl for the village spit….
They will say I was no virgin
That I was forced to sell my shame
And marry you without a price. (pg. 8)
The play completely describes the bride price principle in the Yoruba community, where it is seen as a matter of compulsion for a man to give some money to the bride’s parents in appreciation for taking care of her since she was a little child. Any man that doesn’t pay this money is seen as irresponsible and any girl that moves into a man’s house without the monetary gift is seen as wayward and not a virgin anymore. This is a huge disgrace to not only the girl, but her parents and family as well. Lakunle on the other hand stays faithful to his newly acquired western views and calls the tradition ‘barbaric and archaic as he wouldn’t be buying her like some household stuff (pg. 8). In the same vein, every disvirgined girl feels the very need to only get married to the man that disvirgined. This then causes Sidi to resolve to be the chief’s wife after she had been seduced by him.

Sidi: Marry who …? You thought … Did you really think that you, and I … Why, did you think that after him? I could endure the touch of another man? (pg. 57)

Apart from the need to protect her pride, she as the young girl that she is, knows that her position as the chief’s youngest and newest wife is other girls’ envy in the village; in addition to the fact that she so cherishes the tradition that the village school teacher untiringly rubbed.

VII. Gender issues: Polygamy

The play brings back to mind, the things that used to be in place before, during and after the emergence of the colonial masters. However, some researchers have asserted the play tends to agree to and promote some sort of feminine maltreatment, based on the characters of ‘Sidi, Sadiku, and the Favorite’. The researcher neither objects to, nor supports this criticism. Rather it the play is credited for its knowledgeable showcase of culture’s richness before what we now refer to as ‘enlightenment’ came through; and it was very much enjoyed and preserved by these so called ‘ill-treated’ women. Fact also being that none of the chief’s wives or women in the play is maltreated.

Polygamy has been in the root of African cultures generally for a long time now. It is however dependent on the husband’s capability to cater for every wife he marries and every child produced in such marriages. In this play, there is no account of any feminine maltreatment; it is only a portrayal of the popular accepted norms and cultures of the Yoruba people.

Myths

Ogun is the god of iron and of war in Yoruba community. He was known to be very temperamental according to narrated myths. This makes him one of the gods the Yoruba are made to swear with to ensure truth, and anybody that swears by this god is believed to be aware that death is the consequences of falsehood. An example can be seen in page 11 when one of the village girls tell her about the magazine and Sidi is in the doubt of the position of the chief’s picture:

Sidi: Is that the truth? Swear! Ask Ogun to strike you dead.

Girl: Ogun strike me dead if I lie.

Idioms

According to (18), “most African languages, especially those of the Kwa group, are well known for their use of reduplication for grammatical purposes, such as intensification and change of grammatical category. In this paly, there is a generous usage of idioms and proverbs to express meaning. They are however translated into the English language for foreign readership ease, but maintain their deep meanings still; this is exhibited in the conversation between Sidi and Baroka in pg.42.

Sidi: No, but – [Hesitates, but boldness wins.]

If the tortoise cannot tumble

It does not mean that he can stand.

She says this as a pitied assurance of support for the wrestler who seems to be less powerful than Baroka; she is indirectly saying that the wrestler shouldn’t be underestimated. Another instance is:

Baroka: Who knows? Until the finger nails

Have scraped the dust, no one can tell

Which insect released his bowels.

He insinuates secrecy here. Proverbs are used to express words that wouldn’t rather be spoken directly, in a bid to avoid offending the recipient. Proverbs can also be used as a means of sarcasm. As in:

Lakunle: That is what the stewpot said to the fire.

Have you no shame – at your age

Licking my bottom? But she was tickled

Just the same. (pg. 2)

Lakunle literally means that Sidi is only pretending that she is not happy with him. This variation of English language does not break the grammatical rules of English language but the meanings are usually indirect, as in the speech of Baroka:

Baroka: you call at his house hoping he sends for beer,
but all you hear is guru morin.
Will guru morin wet my throat? (pg. 16)

The use of the word ‘guru morin’ as ‘good’, and ‘misita’ as ‘mister’ (in the same page), is an imitation of the pronunciation of the word by most uneducated Yoruba people. This is an example of linguistic adaptation or borrowing. As in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good morning</th>
<th>Guru Morin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mis ter</td>
<td>Mis i ta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statement by the chief however means that serving beer as a form of welcoming a guest is better than mere greetings.

*Respect*

“Reference 19” asserts that ‘certain features are usually moved into a target language from the source language because every language possesses a unique set of suitable principles that speakers abide to in their different cultures and languages. The principles serve as guidelines that aids in social relationships that range from adult to peer group relationships. Among the Yoruba, direct confrontation is wrong per age, class and situation. As in page 16, when the chief interrupts the dance:

> Everything comes to a sudden stop as Baroka the Bale, wiry, goated, tougher than his sixty two Years, himself emerges at this point from behind the tree. All go down, prostrate or kneeling with the greetings of ‘Kabiyesi’ ‘Baba’ etc. All except Lakunle who begins to sneak off

And Sidi: [recollecting she, she curteys quickly] I saw no one Baroka…[retreating] The house seemed…empty.

(pg. 38)

The chief appears to have gained a mastery of appropriate language use. This is unlike Lakunle, who shows his disgust for the chief at every opportunity, and even at the mention of his name:

*Lakunle:*

> [bounds forward, dropping the wood.]
> What! The greedy dog!
> Insatiable camel of a foolish, doting race;
> Is he at his tricks again? (pg. 19)

With this statement he has insulted all the villagers, including Sidi the girl he is still trying to impress and himself, because like it or not, he is a part of ‘that race’. He displays his utmost disregard for the culture again in his address to Sadiku, who is old enough to be his grandmother in pg. 21:

*Lakunle:* [retreating] Keep away from me old hag

And pg. 34:

*Lakunle:*

> The full moon is not yet, but
> The women cannot wait
> They must go mad without it. [The
dancing stops. Sadiku frowns.]

*Lakunle:*

> [stamps his foot helplessly] Foolish girl…And
> this is all your work …Must every word leak out
> of you As surely as the final drops
> Of mother’s milk oozed from your flattened
> breasts Generations ago? (pg. 35)

Can we thus say that Lakunle has a pragmatic problem based on his persistent inappropriate language usage? Speaking theoretically is wrong also, as respectful expressions are usually preferred. Lakunle is so confident of the big words he has learnt that he doesn’t care if he is actually passing across a clear message or not. Language is a tool of meaning depiction, and then the exact point of communication is defeated when the communicatee does not understand what is being expressed. This is evident about Sidi who does not know the meaning of the big words the village teacher uses and then she has to ask him if ‘the bag is empty’. He then goes further to call her different biblical names (pg. 20), even when he is aware that she doesn’t have an idea what the bible is, talk more of the names in it. We see that Lakunle merely speaks, he doesn’t communicate. Lakunle is completely ignorant of the effects of words on the mind, and that people tend to respond to the way they are addressed. He deliberately annoys the woman he is trying to make his, by referring to himself as a ‘jewel’ and her, ‘a pig’:

*Lakunle:*

> For that, what is a jewel to pigs?
> If now I am misunderstood by your race of savages,
> I rise above taunts and remain unruffled. (pg. 3)

And as also belonging to ‘a race of savages’ because he feels they are against him; ‘civilization’ personified. The villagers are useless to him because they don’t reason along his line. Lakunle is more concerned with speaking than actually making meaning:

*Lakunle:* Do you call it Nonsense that I poured the water of
my soul to wash your feet?
This he says after he has said a somewhat confusing personification to Sidi, 'a village girl' who obviously hasn’t been to a college.

**Song**

Asides the usage of dance and mime in the play, they are critical aspects of the Yoruba culture. They symbolize joy and love in the society, and its richness as narrated in this play cannot be over emphasized. After Baroka wins the match, Sidi tries all she can to get him angry with the song she sings to taunt the loser. It does seem to me anyway, that she isn’t actually referring to the wrestler. Losing a mere match of wrestling is far less ridiculous than losing one’s manhood, isn’t it? This is reflected through the song:

Yokolu Yokolu. Ko ha tan bi
Iyawọ gb’oko san’le
Oko yo’ke….

[She repeats this throughout Baroka’s protests. Baroka is pacing angrily up and down….]

Translated as:  Shame shame, isn’t it finished?
The wife has overthrown the husband
The husband now has a hunch back….

This, Baroka understands but continues to play along with her; the play of pretenses. Although swords can coerce and threaten us, nothing is more powerful than a tool which can shape our opinions. Throughout his encounter with her from the beginning of the text to the end, Baroka displays a complete hold of authority (as a leader), an absolute control of temper (as a husband), a store room of wisdom (as an old man), a fox’s cunning (as a ….) Seducer? Maybe. But absolutely not a beast or a rapist!

**IX. Conclusion**

Now, we have been able to analyze an African play that exonerates African tradition and cultures with a view at the rich usage of language and basic literary elements that make Africa such an interesting continent of exploration.

**References**


