

**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF OVERLAPS IN FEMI OSOFISAN'S *SUCH IS LIFE***

**AMASA SIDIKAT BIOLA**

**Abstract**

The aim of the study is to analyse overlaps in Femi Osofisan's *Such is Life* in order to examine the use of coherence in the text. The source of data for this research is a drama text titled: *Such is Life* written by Femi Osofisan. Overlap which forms the data for this study are selected randomly from the seventeen chapters of the play. The selected overlaps will be organized as individual number of texts that will be subjected to vigorous analysis using a conceptual approach. The data for this study are divided into ten number of texts each labelled as "datum". Each datum is analyzed using elements in Discourse Conversational Analysis as conceptual framework. Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework for studying discourse, and analysis of discursive events especially his combination of micro, meso and macro-level interpretation were adopted in the discussion of the data in this study. We find that the use of context in analyzing a text helps in determining the exact mind of the speaker. It was observed that we cannot understand the words spoken by the members of societies that are different from our own by merely considering the lexical composition in the text. Understanding the situation which surrounds the expression and the various relationship and activities that are in operation at the moment help in arriving at the definite interpretation of the text.

**Keyword:** Language, Discourse, Conversational Analysis, Micro, Meso and Macro interpretation

**Introduction**

Adegbija (1999) opines that "Discourses Analysis is concerned with a thorough examination of the different aspects of conversation in different social contexts and how they are organized and how meaning is encoded and decoded in particular social situations through interactional talks" (p.186). Adegbija views discourse analysis from the perspective that deals with any aspect of conversation as long as meaning is encoded and decoded in any verbal interaction. When you talk and someone interrupts, there is a seldom wait until you have finished speaking. Conversations thus tend to be some set of overlapping of speaking as one person starts before the other ends. An overlap in speech is when two or more interlocutors are talking at the same time. This situation may also be described as occurrences of two or more participants trying to take their turns at the same time after the previous speaker has finished or is about to finish his turn.

The real overlap occurs when two participants start their turn simultaneously and none of them relinquishes the floor for the other. An overlap in speech may arise in any of the following situation: when a speaker comes in while another speaker is having his/her own turn and when a speaker thought another speaker had finished with his turn and decides to come in. One key source of verification is what happens when some hitches occur. For example, when a conversation breaks down by a participant not behaving accordingly we may expect them either to try to repair the hitch or alternatively to draw strong inferences of a quite specific kind from the absence of the expected behaviour and to act accordingly.

Looking at a text from the perspective of meaning, a text may therefore, be defined as the visible evidence of a reasonable self-contained purposeful interaction between two or more writers

and one or more readers in which the writer controls the interaction and produces the language (Hoey 2001, p.12). The notion of text in discourse can be derived from the notion of language. Having understood what language is as a tool for the production of meaning, text can therefore be seen as essence of meaning itself. Text is often described as a long string of sentences, and this encourages the practice of drawing links from one bit from the text to another (Coulthard, 1994, p.19). A text is also a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit, like a clause or a sentence and it is not defined by its size. A text is best regarded as semantic unit; a unit not of form but meaning (Halliday & Hasan 1976, pp.1-2). The text under-study in this article is a dramatic text.

Significantly, drama as a genre of literature differs from other genres because it places a great emphasis on dialogue and brings to focus how the relationship among people is constructed and negotiated through verbal interactions. Thus, the problem which this research work seeks to find solutions to include: the inability to employ the appropriate lexical items in order to explicate intentional meaning in the text; the difficulty to examine the effect of overlaps in the negotiating of meaning in selected text, the inability to examine the interlocutor's manipulation of language by the playwright for dramatic effects, the difficulty to examine centrality of context to the understanding of selected text and the inability of the interlocutors to employ appropriate discourse tools to explicate the text.

One is curious to ask if the inability to employ the appropriate lexical items affects the intentional meaning or how the difficulty to examine the effect of overlaps affects the negotiation of the meaning in the selected text and particularly if the interlocutors affect the manipulation of the language for the dramatic effects. It is significant to be sure if the centrality of the content affects the understanding of the meaning of the text or if the interlocutors employ appropriate discourse tools in explicating a free understanding in the text. However, this study seeks to open a domain of discourse which will improve the effect of communication in any dramatic text.

BabafemiAdeyemiOsofisan the Author of the play (*SUCH IS LIFE*) was born in 1946 in Erunwon, Ogun State. He is a Nigerian dramatist and novelist, a writer known for his critique of societal problems and his use of African traditional performances and surrealism in some of his novels. He was inspired to some extent by Prof. Wole Soyinka, and respecting his achievement, Osofisan nevertheless departs from the older dramatist in providing more emphatic social and political commitment in his own plays. Osofisan attended primary school at Ile-Ife and secondary school at Government College, Ibadan. After his secondary school education, he attended the University of Senegal in Dakar and later university of Ibadan. He continued his post graduate studies at the University of Ibadan and his plays were usually premiered at University. A frequent theme his novels explore is the conflict between good and evil. He is a didactic writer whose work seek to correct decadent society. Some of his works include *Women of Owu* (2006); *A Restless Run of Locust* (1975), about political violence; *Who's Afraid of Solarin?* (2006), a satirical work adapted from Gogol's Russian political farce, the government inspector; *Kolera Kolej* (Opon Ifa Readers) satirizes post- independence politics in African; *Birthdays are not for Dying* and other Plays (1996) among many others.

### **The Notion of Discourse**

The word discourse comes from the Latin word *discursus*, which means "running to and fro". The definition of discourse thus comes from this physical act of transferring information "to and fro". According to Johnstone (2002, p.2) it is the actual instances of communication in the

medium of language. Discourse is a discipline that has stable definition. This because so many scholars have given varied definition to it based on their views on the subject matter. Discourse is the study of language in use (Ibid, p.3). The study of discourse is indeed the “study of many aspects of language use” (Fasold 1990, p.65) Discourse is essentially the study of “language in use” (Taiwo 2010, p.15).

The term discourse was first used by Zellig Harris in a paper presented in 1952. As structural linguist, he did not use discourse the same way that it is commonly used now. He used it only as sequence of utterances. It was in the late 1960s that scholars began to use the term as an approach to the study of social interaction. Discourse was fully developed in the 1970s as a critique and as a cognitive process in communication. It is based on the notion that language needs a context to function properly. Thus, it becomes very impossible to understand linguistic items used in discourse without a context (Ahmad 2016, p.1),.Brown and Yule (1983) simply define discourse as “ the actual instances of language use” (p.1) Paul Gee (2014) observe that “ when we study language-in-use, we study it not just an abstract system (grammar) but in terms of actual utterances or sentences in speech writing in specific context of speaking and hearing or writing and reading” (p.19).

We therefore conclude that discourse involves interchange of ideas; in form of conversation, which could either be spoken or written. To Du Gay (1996, p.43) discourse is a group of statement which provide a language for discussing a topic and a way of providing a particular land of knowledge about a topic. Thus the term refers discourse to the production of knowledge through language are representations and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practice and setting new practice into play.

Discourse is viewed as social performance or social action. It is a relative social phenomenon that depends solely on wide range of discipline such as psychology, anthropology, philosophy, anthropological linguistics, sociology, cognitive and social psychology. This fact is corroborated by Fairclough (1992) when he opines that “discourse constitutes the social, and three dimensions of the social are distinguished-knowledge, social relations and social identity and this correspond to the major function of language”. Flower (1981) narrows down the scope of discourse to the user. He is of the opinion that it is a write up from the perspective of the writer. He states that “discourse is a speech or writing seen from the point of the beliefs, values and categories which it embodies; these beliefs constitute a way of looking at the world, an organization or representation experience- ideology in the neutral non- pejorative sense (p.19).

Discourse analysis basically studies and examines how an addresser structures his linguistic messages for the addresses and how the addressee in turn uses some linguistic clues to interpret them (the message). The term “discourse” and “discourse analysis” in the opinion of Widdowson (2007, p xi) have become broad over the last three decades used to connote scholastic activity, spoken interaction, written text, grammar, lies beyond the confines of the sentences and intonation. Widdowson succinctly makes it clear that he is more concerned with discourse as a language in use rather than the more socio-political inclined discipline. Linguists have over time shown interest in discourse of different genres and how the meanings are generated from human conversations. The desire to deduce meanings from people’s conversation birthed the field of the discourse analysis.

Brown & Yule (1983) observe that Discourse Analysis examines how addressers construct linguistic messages for addressees in order to interpret them. Frohmann (1994) defines Discourse Analysis as a way of approaching and thinking about a problem; provide a tangible answer to problems based on scientific research, and enables us understand the conditions behind a specific problem and make us realize the essence of that problem, and its resolutions. Hamuddin (2012) posits that Discourse Analysis provides a basic methodology to describe and analyse how the structure and content of the text encodes ideas and the relation among the ideas that are present in the text systematically.

Discourse Analysis differs from grammar analysis. Grammatical Analysis focuses on the structure of sentences while Discourse Analysis focuses on the broad and general use of language. Grammarians in terms of textual analysis may examine texts in isolation for elements, while Discourse Analysis on the other hand takes into account social and cultural contexts of a given text. It also deals with real life usage of language (context) and not its forms or structures.

Elements of Discourse Analysis include coherence, cohesion, context, hedges etc. Coherence is the relationships which link the meanings of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text. According to Bussman (1998) coherence has to do with mental processes and cultural knowledge rather than any explicit discourse markers such as deictic words or linking words. Cohesion is the connection that results when the interpretation of a textual element is dependent on another element in the text. Renkema (2004) sees cohesion as the connection that exists between elements in the text. "Cohesion is produced by (a) the repetition of elements of the text, e.g. recurrence, textphoric, paraphrase, parallelism; (b) the compacting of text through the use of devices such as ellipsis; (c) the use of morphological and syntactic devices to express different kinds of relationships such as connection, tense, aspect, deixis, or theme-rheme relationships" (Bussman, 1998:199).

### **Approaches to Discourse Analysis: Ethnography of Communication**

Ethnography of speaking, which was later developed as ethnography of communication, is a significant approach to discourse analysis. According to Hymes (1981:31), "Ethnography of speaking is concerned with the situation and uses, the patterns and functions of speaking as an activity in its own right" Wardhaugh (2007, p.247) states that the framework was proposed by Hymes (1974) in his work, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*, to explain "the factors that are involved in speaking". The theory makes it clearer that certain factors are relevant in understanding how a particular communicative event achieves its objectives" (Wardhaugh *ibid*). These factors are represented in the acronym SPEAKING, which means *Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms of interaction and Genre*.

*Setting* is concerned with the environment which a communicative event takes place. Since language is not used in a vacuum; but in actual physical circumstances, the setting in which a speech is made will influence such a speech. Wardhaugh (2007) refers to setting as "the concrete physical circumstances in which speech takes place". This is attributable to the ability of speakers to attune their speech to the scene of the speech.

*Participants* refer to the people involved in a communicative event. This factor impresses upon us the fact that certain persons are usually actually involved in communication. According to Wardhaugh (2007:247), participants in a communicative event usually fit certain roles which reflect in the language they use. Therefore, using the ethnographic framework in analysing a

discourse, one will be interested in how the nature of participants in a discourse shapes the tenor of such a discourse.

*Ends* is the third factor in human communication catered for in ethnography of speaking. It is concerned with the purpose or expected outcome of a speech event. This factor is premised on the fact that when people talk or communicate, there are certain purposes that they seek to achieve in actual speech situations.

*Act sequence* is the fourth factor in ethnography of speaking. Wardhaugh (2007:248), describes it as “the actual form and content of what is said; the precise words used, how they are used, and the relationship of what is said on the actual topic at hand”. This factor portrays human communication as a patterned activity and that different communicative situations have peculiar forms of language use.

*Key* refers to the manner of rendering a particular speech. Wardhaugh (2007:248), more specifically defines it as “the tone, manner, or spirit in which a particular message is conveyed”. In actual fact, in human communication, certain meanings are communicated through the tone or paralinguistics that accompany the vocal sounds used to convey messages. Through the way someone speaks, one can decipher he or she is serious or not and so on. Key is thus the factor that caters for this reality in human communication in an ethnographic analysis of a discourse.

*Instrumentalities* refer to the resources used for the transmission of the message of a communication. It refers to the media of communication in a communicative event. Wardhaugh (2007:248) remarks that it can also refer to “the actual forms of speech employed or register chosen”. Therefore, one can account for features of language such as formality or informality in a discourse.

Coulthard (1981:47), describes *norms of interaction* as the normative structure of all the speech acts and events in a speech community. It is concerned with the actual linguistic and physical behaviours noticeable in the interlocutors involved in a communicative event. Different societies, for instance, have different norms of communication which are expected to be adhered to by members of such a community but which strangers to that community may find unusual. For instance, in the traditional Yorùbá setting, it is expected that a wife would kneel or at least genuflect significantly when welcoming her husband from an outing, whereas in other cultures, such performance might not be expected.

*Genre* is the last of the factors summarised in SPEAKING. According to Wardhaugh (2007:248), it “refers to clearly demarcated types of utterance; such as poems, proverbs, riddles, sermons, prayers, lectures and editorials”. A genre has its peculiar linguistic features which are usually recognizable. All the eight factors highlighted above are thus demonstrated in a discourse when the ethnographic framework of discourse analysis is deployed.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is also a useful approach to discourse analysis. Fairclough (1992) remarks that critical discourse analysis is concerned with the relationship between discourse and sociocultural change. According to Ayoola (2008:28), “researchers have used the tool of critical discourse analysis in their studies on racism, anti-Semitism, inequality, gender discrimination and injustices in Europe and America and Australia”. In recent times however, critical discourse analysis is ubiquitous as an approach to the analysis of discourses (Ayoola 2008; Abdullahi-Idiagbon 2010, etc). The current popularity of CDA as a theoretical approach to discourse analysis can also be attributed to the high level of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in scholarship in recent times and the greater attention being given discourses that yield to critical discourse analysis in human communication, such as political discourse.

Fairclough (1995, p.6) remarks that the approach is influenced by Halliday's (1973) systemic functional linguistics (SFL). The relationship between CDA and SFL gives CDA a completely social orientation. In the words of McCarthy, Matthiessen and Slade (2002:67), "genres in critical discourse analysis are seen as social actions occurring within particular social historical contexts". According to McCarthy, Matthiessen and Slade (2002:67), the difference between discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis is that while discourse analysts look at textual features of a discourse, critical discourse analysts go a step further to unravel the ideological bias the textual features incorporate and the social practices reflected in the text.

### **Conversation Analysis**

This is central to our analysis of overlaps in Femi Osofisan's *Such is Life*. Conversation analysis is an approach to discourse analysis. This approach to the study of discourse started with the work of Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel Schegloff and Gabriel Jefferson (1974). According to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974:1-2), the idea of conversation analysis was motivated by their observation of the poverty of scholarship on the "systematics of the organisation of turn-taking for conversation".

Therefore, conversation analysis is an approach to discourse analysis that focuses on the organisation of turns in conversations. McCarthy, Matthiessen and Slade (2002, p.60), capture the fact above when they remark that "conversation analysis places a lot of emphasis on the interactional and inferential consequences of the choice between alternative utterances". According to Coulthard (1981:, p.51), the earliest conversation analysts explored conversation analysis because "they saw conversation analysis as a first step towards achieving a 'naturalist observational discipline' to deal with details of social interaction in a rigorous, empirical and formal way". Olateju (2004, p.13) gives the following as some of the major concerns of conversation analysis:

1. Mechanism of turn taking
2. Opening and closings
3. Adjacency pairs
4. Topic management and topic shift
5. Conversational repairs
6. Showing agreement and disagreement
7. Introducing bad news and processes of trouble making

According to Coulthard (1981, p.52), "one of the basic facts of conversation is that the roles of speaker and listener change", This is what is meant by turn-taking. According to McCarthy, Mathhiessen and Slade (2002, p.61), a "turn is each occasion that a speaker speaks and a turn ends when another speaker takes a turn". A conversation analysis of a discourse focuses on how speakers take turns smoothly and how the rules of conversation are observed by the participants in the discourse. Therefore, a conversation analysis of a discourse will give finite information about the structure of such a discourse.

### **Overlaps in Discourse**

Overlaps is simultaneous talk by two or more conversation participants, irrespective of the status in the participants' minds as an interruption. Analysts consider an overlap to result from factors such as the following: the desire to start a turn before another so as not to miss the opportunity, the desire to make a particular contribution while it is relevant, uncertainty to

whether the current speaker intends to continue, an overlap in speech may arise in any of the following situation: when a speaker comes in when another speaker is having his or her turn and when a speaker thought another speaker had finished with his turn and decides to come in.

### **The Notion of Text**

The word text, coming from the Latin term *texere*, originally meant that something woven. The notion of the texture was introduced by Halliday and Hasan to express the property of a text. A text has texture and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. A text derives its texture from the repute it functions as unity with respect to its environment. In literary theory, a text is an object that can be “read”, whether this object is a work of the literature, a street sign, an arrangement of buildings on a city block, or styles of clothing. It is a coherent style of the signs that transmits some kind of informative message. This set of symbols is considered in terms of the informative message. This set of symbols is considered in terms of the informative message content, rather than in terms of its physical form or medium in which it is represented. Halliday and Hasan define text as “a unit of language in use” a text is view not as a grammatical unit (clause or a sentence) but as the semantic unit, so a unit of the meaning, not a unit of the form. This notion of what is ‘with the text’, however, goes beyond what is said and written: it includes other non-verbal signs-on- the total environment in which a text is unfolds. (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p.5).

According to Halliday, text is a sign representation of a socio-cultural event embedded in the context of the situation, context of the situation is a semio- socio-cultural environment in which the text unfolds. Text and context are so intimately related that neither concept can be comprehended in the absence of the other. Quirk says that “we communicate in text” and we offer as explanation of the notion “text” a rather impressionistic definition which refers to “stretches of language-spoken or written, short or long- “(1986, p.25). In the sketchy statement, Quirk crosses the boundary from the previous grammar-centered linguistic studies to beyond-the-sentence and communicative discourse studies, and manage to combine two elements which have proved to be turning point in the study of text and discourse. A text is made up of the sentences, but there exist separate principles of the text-construction, beyond the rules for making sentences.”

Text is a set of mutually relevant communicative functions, structured in such a way as to achieve an overall rhetorical purpose (Hatim & Mason, 1990). A text is the extended structure of the syntactic units [i.e. text as super-sentence] such as words, groups and clauses and textual units marked by both coherence among the elements and completion... (whereas) a non-text consist of the random sequences of the linguistic units such as the sentences, paragraphs, or sections in any temporal and/ or spatial extension” (Welch , 1976, p.23).

### **Method of Data Analysis and Theoretical Framework**

The data for this study are divided into ten number of texts each labelled as “datum”. Each datum is analyzed using elements in Discourse Conversational Analysis as conceptual framework. This research work tries to find solutions to the following questions: the inability to employ the appropriate lexical items in order to explicate intentional meaning in the text; the difficulty to examine the effect of overlaps in the negotiating of meaning in the selected text; the inability to examine the interlocutor’s manipulation of language by the playwright for dramatic effects; the difficulty to examine centrality of context to the understanding of the selected text and the inability of the interlocutors to employ appropriate discourse tools to explicate the text. With the data,

discussions of the conversational elements were done and findings were documented. However, the theory for the study is a cue from Fairclough (1995). He developed a three-dimensional framework for studying discourse, where the aim is to map three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of socio-cultural practice. (cf. Fairclough 1995, 2001).

Particularly, he combines micro, meso and macro-level interpretation. At the micro-level, the analyst considers various aspects of textual/linguistic analysis, for example syntactic analysis, use of metaphor and rhetorical devices. The meso-level or "level of discursive practice" involves studying issues of production and consumption, for instance, which institution produced a text, who is the target audience, etc. At the macro-level, the analyst is concerned with intertextual and interdiscursive elements and tries to take into account the broad, societal currents that are affecting the text being studied (see Alvesson, 2000; David 2006). The discussion of the data in this study will be discussed according to the provisions of Fairclough (1995).

### **Data Presentation and Analysis of the Text (*Such is Life*)**

The datum have been discussed one after the other as follow.

Datum 1: chapter two: p.19

Obioma: okay, I'll show you (opens notebook) Let's see.

For your board meeting now, I open to - - - ah, here we are, letter B- - -

Juokwu: Letter B!

In this datum, the speaker makes an overlap statement which can be found in chapter two p.19 'Letter B'. an overlaps statement can be seen as a tool of the conversational analysis. He used overlaps to intrude in the first speaker discussion which says...ah, here we are, letter B..., according to Schegloff (cited in Santada p.52, 2013) overlaps refer to talk by more than one speaker at a time. Going by this definition, overlaps can be said to be an interruption in a discussion.

Datum 2: chapter three: p.24

Obioma: then- (gestures for him to do so) (1.1)

Juokwu: then what? I am in no hurry. (1.2)

Obioma: I see! It's because I'm here, isn't it? You're waiting for me to go away! There's something in it you don't want me to find out... (1.3)

Juokwu: Oh stop it, for God's sake! It's obstreperous! I though just now you

We're asking me to pardon you , and promise to behave yourself! And in any case, what would there be in the letter? (1.4)

Obioma:(reading) "my dear friend, please know that I haven't forgotten the four hundred naira I am owing you. My writing you like this is



to prove to you that I do intend to pay you back... (1.5)

Juokwu: you see now! It's only someone I lent money, returning it (1.6)

Obioma: ..." Pay back at the end of next month. The delay is unfortunate but it is due to SAP. So please pardon me meanwhile, I would like you to lend me another Six hundred, to round it up a thousand, which I promise to pay back promptly on first day of.... (1.7)

Juokwu: Hear that! Another six hundred indeed! He must think I am a fool!

The bloody rouge!

Juokwu has been given a letter by his mistress and he does not want to open the letter in front of her and she is eager to know what is inside the letter. She read the letter finding out that is one of her husband friends owing him four hundred naira.

In datum two, an overlap was made by the first speaker and the second speaker, the first instance of the overlap is seen in (1.5) "my dear friend, please know that I haven't forgotten the four hundred naira I am owing you. Indeed, my writing to you like this is to prove to you that I do intended to pay you back..." and Juokwu interrupted her saying that is someone that he lent money writing to him. In the instance of the overlap Juokwu quickly interrupted her so that his wife will not get the meaning of the letter.

The second instance of overlap is seen in (1.7) "... pay back at the end of next month the delay is unfortunate but it is due to SAP so please pardon. Meanwhile, I would like you to to lend me another six hundred naira, round it up a thousand, which I promise to pay back promptly on the first day...." She was also interrupted saying that "Hear that! Another six hundred indeed! He must think I am a fool! The bloody rouge!".

Datum 3: chapter two. P.26

Chinwe: But madam, it was you yourself who told me to... (1.1)

Obioma: it's okay! I ve changed my mind. Give the letter to prof. (runs inside. Chinwe makes to Follow, but Juokwu detains her). (1.2)

Chinwe: Anwualam! So prof knows! - - - it's true, I confess. For you know

Sir, how faithful I am to you. Without the money, I swear I would never have..... (1.3)

Juokwu: how much did madam give you? (1.4)

Chinwe: fifty-naira sir! (1.5)

Obioma told Chinwe not to give Juokwu the letter someone brought for him and later told her to give the letter to her because she has changed her mind. We can see an instance of the overlap in

the second speaker, Obioma, who gave an instance of the overlap when Chinwe is still taking her turn. "but madam, it was you yourself who told me to... "and she was interrupted by Obioma saying "it's okay! I have change my mind. Give the letter to prof." (1.2). she interrupted because she has changed her mind.

There is also an of overlap in (1.3) and (1.4) .“ : Anwualam! So prof knows! - - - it's true, I confess. For you know Sir, how faithful I am to you. Without the money, I swear I would never have....” And an instance of the overlap occurs when Juokwu asked “how much did madam give you”. The overlap occurs because he is in a hurry to know how much did madam gave her to keep the letter. In this datum there is also an element of the coherence in (1.4) and (1.5). how much did madam give and she response fifty naira

**Datum 4:** Chapter Ten, p.58

Obioma: stop lying, why would my husband lock the... (1.1)

Iberibe: but he did! Because - - - well, I can't tell you the reason, I'm afraid! It's a

top secret, male secret! (1.2)

Juokwu has been locking the window whenever he wants to see his mistress in the night. He told his friend, Iberibe, how he does lock the window in the night to see his mistress.

Iberibe told Obioma how her husband do go out in the night and how he do lock the window.

In this datum, we can see an overlap statement in (1.2) when he did not allow his fellow interlocutor to finish her turn. The overlap statement in this datum is “But he did! Because ... well, I can't tell you the reason, I'm afraid! It's top secret. Male secret”. This statement occurs because he wants to convince her,

**Datum 5:** Chapter thirteen, p. 73

Juokwu: (seeing the window open). Good heaven! Look, the window's open!

That it's! the scoundrel must have come through there! And yet,

I could have sworn that ...

Iberibe: it couldn't be the window! You locked it.

Juokwu has noticed that the window is open after he has come back from his mistress that someone has entered through the window and Juokwu was wondering who the person could be and if he caught the person he will the person.

In **Datum 5**, we can see the instance of the overlap by the second participant where he overlaps “: it couldn't be the window! You locked it”. The participant here wants the other participant to be sure that he locked the window.

**Datum 6,** Chapter thirteen p.74

Juokwu: (rushing quickly to lock the door on his wife). Ehn! It's you again!

---

You! What the hell do you want again? Am I the only man in this

World to have had affair with... (1.1)

Akubundu: Shi! Shiii!( Indicating Iberibe) I told you not to... (1.2)

Juokwu: Oh the hell with it! What do you want. (1.3)

Akubundu came to his house again and Juokwu quickly lock the door on his wife so that his wife will not hear what he is saying.

In datum six. We can see an example of the overlaps in (1.1) to (1.3). from the above presentation, the second speaker did not let the first speaker to finish his turn before he was interrupted. For instance, one said "... What the hell do you want again? Am I the only man in this World to have had affair with..." and he was interrupted by the second speaker saying "Shi! Shiii! I told you not to..." "and then he was also interrupted by the first speaker "Oh the hell with it! What do you want". The speakers overlap each other because they did not want other party to hear what they are saying.

**Datum 7:** Chapter five: p.36

Iberibe: they are in a locker at the airport. But really, I ... (1.1)

Juokwu: Fine, I'll send the driver for them right away. Give me the key to

Locker, come on! (1.2)

Obioma: (Aside) is he mad? (loud).but dear, you have forgotten, that room, it's

Not habitable at all because... (1.3)

Juokwu: Of course it is! I mean, he can manage it. All it need is just to clean

up a little (1.4)

Iberibe: Still, my friend, I beg you just let me... (1.5)

Juokwu: Not one word more, Iberibe! The matter's decided. We won't let you go back to Rio. At least not just yet! Just wait here while I give the orders for your bags to be brought from the airport. (1.6)

In the datum 7, we have instance of the overlap in (1.2), (1.4) and (1.6). in (1.2) instance of overlap was seen when he interrupted the first speaker "Fine, I'll send the driver for them right away. Give me the key to Locker, come on!". In this statement we can see that the speaker does not want the first speaker to go back to Rio.

The second instance of the overlap is seen in (1.4) when he did not let the speaker taking her turn to finish. "Of course it is! I mean, he can manage it. All it need is just to clean up a little "he interrupted because he wants his friends to stay with them.

The third instance of overlap in this datum is (1.6) “Not one word more, Iberibe! The matter’s decided. We won’t let you go Back Rio. At least not just yet! Just wait here while I give the orders for your bags to be brought from the airport”. He also interrupted Iberibe because he does not want him to go.

**Datum 8:** Chapter fifteen: p.90-92

Chinwe: In black?... Oh yes, the vendor came wearing a black shirt today, and ... (1.1)

Juokwu: Will you stop joking who’s talking about vendor? (1.2) P. 91

Chinwe: Sorry sir! I’ll stop laughing. (she tries, but bursts out laughing again).

It’s just that... I can’t imagine Prof fighting, even like a Nigerian, not  
To talk of ... (1.3)

Juokwu: Enough! Who has asked you to imagine anything? It’s obstreperous!

Now listen. I’m into the garden. Stay around and call me as soon as they arrive.  
(1.4) P, 92

Chinwe: It’s Mr. Akubundu, ma. He wants to... (1.5)

Akubundu : (Bursting in). forgive me, madam, I am the 2nd one who... (1.6)

Obioma: you here, sir! - - - with what you are going to do (1.7)

After Obioma has woken up from her sleep she called her house maid, Chinwe, if anyone has come to the house wearing a black shirt. Chinwe replied that it is the vendor that came wearing a black shirt that day.

In datum 8, we can see two instances of the overlaps. The first instance of the overlap is (1.2) when he did not allow the first speaker to finish her turn. He interrupted her by saying “will you stop joking who’s talking about vendor”. This interruption was made because he is anxious to know if the vendor came or not.

The second instance of overlap is seen in (1.4) when he interrupted Chinwe “: Enough! Who has asked you to imagine anything? It’s obstreperous! Now listen. I’m into the garden. Stay around and call me as they arrive”. This statement was made because he did not want her to make jest of him.

**Datum 9:** Chapter six: p.39

Obioma: Oh that useful too! I mean, in these days of the SAP! It meant that i

Would not have to change all the embroidery on my bed sheets and...

Iberibe: Excellent! A marriage for the sake of bed sheets! Chineke! I have heard

Of marriage for love, marriage for money, marriage for security!

But this one, for embroidery! Just so you won't have to change your bedsheets!

Very good!

In datum 9, we have an instance of the overlap by the second speaker when the first speaker was saying she should have changed all the embroidery on her bed sheet and she was interrupted by the second speaker saying "Excellent! A marriage for the sake of bed sheets! Chineke! I have heard of marriage for love, marriage for money, marriage for security! But this one, for embroidery! Just so you won't have to change your bedsheets! Very good! "

Datum 10: Chapter Eleven: p.62

Akubundu: It's an even greater offence against the law that has brought me

Here, sir! Yes, at least I have caught you, and you can't get away!

My wife...

Juokwu: Sh!, Shiii! Wait a minute! Speak softly (he switches the light on, inspect, his wife and sighs). Well, what do you wish to tell me, sir? As far as I can tell, I have never seen you before! Your wife...

Akubundu: Shii, softly, sir! Someone else is present as you can see! So there is

No need to shout. I am going to tell you what brought me here!

But first tell your mummy to go out and leave us alone.

In datum 10 we can see an instance of the overlap from the second speaker when he interrupted the first speaker. " Shii, softly, sir! Someone else is present as you can see! So there is no need to shout. I am going to tell you what brought me here! But first tell your mummy to go out and leave us alone." The speaker interrupted because he did not want the conversation to be heard by the third party.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings are to be discussed by providing answers to the Research Questions asked or meant to clear doubts at the beginning of this paper. We find in the course of this study that the inability to employ lexical items will affect the explanation of the intentional meaning in the text. In the analysis we have the instance of the overlaps in the datum and the example can be taken from datum 4 where the second speaker made an overlaps statement "but he did! Because... well, I can't tell you the reason, am afraid! It's top secret, Male secret!

Secondly, the difficulty of the meaning affects the overlaps in the selected text because overlaps in the text depict different meanings and this can be an issue between two interlocutors in a conversation. Discourse analysis has to do mainly with conversation which is the principal means of communication between interlocutors which have been showed as an evidence that the participant was involved in one or the other discourse by overlaps

Context and its centrality to the meaning construction and negotiation is well stressed in the data. The use of the context in analyzing a text helps in determining the exact mind of the speaker. It was discovered that we cannot understand the words spoken by the members of societies that are different from our own by merely considering the lexical composition in the text. Understanding the situation which surround the expression and the various relationship and activities that are in operation at the moment helps in arriving at the definite interpretation of the text.

The inability of the interlocutors to employ the appropriate tools will affect it because understanding the situation which surrounds the expression will determine various relationship of having a conversation and this can affect their understanding of the text.

### **Conclusion**

This research work is a Discourse Analysis of Femi Osofisan's *Such is Life*, with specific focus on overlaps in the text. From the texts we find a number of incessant overlaps in the expressions of major and minor characters in the text. It is quite appropriate to conclude that the inability to employ lexical items affects the explanation of the intentional meaning in the text. In the analysis we have the instance of the overlaps in the datum and the example can be taken from datum 4 where the second speaker made an overlaps statement "but he did! Because... well, I can't tell you the reason, am afraid! It's top secret, Male secret!

We also can conclude from the text that the difficulty of the meaning affects the overlaps in the selected text because overlaps in the text depict different meanings and this can be an issue between two interlocutors in a conversation. We have also observed that discourse analysis has to do mainly with conversation which is the principal means of communication between interlocutors. This has been shown as an evidence that the participant was involved in one for the other discourse by overlaps. Context and its centrality to the meaning construction and negotiation is well stressed in the data. The use of the context in analyzing a text helps in determining the exact mind of the speaker. It was observed that we cannot understand the words spoken by the members of societies that are different from our own by merely considering the lexical composition in the text. Understanding the situation which surrounds the expression and the various relationship and activities that are in operation at the moment help in arriving at the definite interpretation of the text.

Moreover, the inability of the interlocutors to employ the appropriate tools affected it because understanding the situation which surrounds the expression will determine various relationship of having a conversation and this can affect their understanding of the text. Finally, the study of overlaps has helped to reveal that people overlap in speech because they are curious to know what happened. There is also the use of participants before one overlap or communicate through speech.

### **References**

Osofisan, F. (2014). *Such is Life*. Ghana: University of Education, Winneba

Adebija, E.E (1999). Tidbits of discourse analysis and Pragmatics. In E.E Adebija ( Ed.),

English language and literature: an introduction Handbook, pp.186-205.

- Ahmad, Z. (2016). "Stylistics and discourse analysis. A contribution in the analyzing literature". North America: the Punjab
- Brown, G. & Yule, G. (1983). Discourse analysis. New York: Arnold Hodder
- Bussman, V.K. (1998). "The Cohesion and Coherence of the Editorials in the Jakarta Post". In *Ahmad Dahlan Journal of English Studies* 3(2) p. 30
- Carley, K. (1993). *Coding choice for textual analysis: a comparison of the content of the analysis and map analysis*. In P. Marsden (Ed), *sociological methodology* ( pp. 75-126). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Chapman, S. (2011). *Pragmatics*. Basingstoke. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cook, G (1990). *Discourse*. Oxford: OUP.
- Crystal, D. (1992). *Introducing linguistics*. Harlow: Pengiun.
- Coulthard, M. (1994). On the use of corpora in the analysis of forensic texts. In *International Journal of Speech Language and the Law*. 1(1): 27-43
- David J. H. (2006). *Discourse Analysis. Qualitative Research Methodology*. University of London
- Du Gay, P. (1990). *Consumption and identity at work*. London:SAGE
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fasold, R. (1990). *Sociolinguistics of Language*. Oxford Blackwell
- Flower, R. (1981). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. London: Routledge
- Frohman, B. (1994). Discourse Analysis as a Research Method in Library and Information Science. *LIS Research* 16(2): 3
- Halliday, M.A.K & Hasan, R. (1976) *Cohesion in the English*. London: Longman.
- Halliday M.A.K. (1986). Notes on Transitivity and Themes in English. In *Journal of Linguistics*. 3, 37-81
- Hamuddin, B. (2012). A Comparative study of politeness strategies in economic journals. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Malaysia
- Hatim, B. and Mason, I. (1990). *Discourse and the Translator*. London and New York: Longman
- Hoey, M. (2001). *Textual Interaction: An introduction to Written Discourse Analysis*. Language Arts and Disciplines: Psychology Press
- Hudson, R. (1996). *Sociolinguistics*. (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchby, I & Wooffitt, R. (1999) *conversational analysis: principle, practice and applications*. Cambridge: Polity press

- Hutchby, I & Wooffitt, R. (2008) *conversational analysis* (2<sup>nd</sup> eds.) Cambridge: Polity press
- Hymes, D. (1974). Ways of Speaking. Explorations in the Ethnography of SPEAKING, 1, 433-451
- Hymes, D. (1981). Hymes's Linguistics and Ethnography in Education. An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language, Discourse & Communication Studies, 29 (3), 347-358
- Johnstone, B. (2002). *Discourse analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.
- Johnstone, B. (2008). *Discourse analysis*, Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.
- Jorgensen, M & Philips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: sage publication
- Lidicoat, A.J. (2007). *Introduction to conversational analysis*. New York: Continuum
- Lomax, H. (2006). *The handbook of applied linguistic*. in A. Davies and C. Elder (Eds.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mc Carthy.M. (1991). *Discourse analysis for language teachers*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Mc. Carthy. M. (1991). *Discourse Analysis for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mc. Carthy, Matthiessen and Slade (2002). *An Introduction to Applied Linguistics* United Kingdom: Arnold
- Mills, S. (1997). *Discourse*. London: Longman.
- Olateju, M. (2004). *Discourse Analysis: Analyzing Discourse in the ESL Classroom*. Ile Ife: OAU Press
- Osofisan, F. (2006). *Women of Owu*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press
- Paltridge, B. (2006). *Discourse analysis: An introduction*. London: Continuum.
- Paul Gee (2014). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. USA: Routledge (4<sup>th</sup> ed)
- Renkema, J. (2004). *Introduction to Discourse Studies*. New York: John Benjamins Publishing
- Schegloff, E. Sacks, H. & Gail Jefferson (1974). A Simple Systematic for the Organisation of Turn Taking in Conversation. In *Language* 50 (4) 696-735.
- Stubbs, M. (1983). *Discourse analysis: The sociolinguistics analysis of natural language*. United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell.
- Taiwo, R. (2010). Discursive Feature of Online Discussion Forum. In *Interpersonal Relations and Social Patterns in Communication Technologies. Discourse Norms, Language Structures and Cultural Variables*. USA: Information Science Reference



**A discourse analysis of overlaps in femi osofisan's *such is life***

***(IJOH) VOL. 13, NO. 18., 2020***

---

Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An introduction*. London: Penguin.

Van Dijk, T. (1996). *Discourseas social interaction*. London: Sage Publication.

Wardhaugh, R. (2007). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Werlich (1976). *Discourse Analysis and Text Linguistics*. Researchgate.net

Widdowson, H.G. (2007). *Exploration in applied linguistics.2*. Oxford University Press.

Zellig Harris (1952). Discourse Analysis. In *Language*. Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 1-30 USA: Linguistic Society of America