

Contextual Beliefs in the Deployment of *Ilé* (Home) in Yoruba Proverbial Expressions

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Abstract

Studies have investigated the importance of contexts in different discourse types, but the role of contexts in the interpretation of *ilé* in Yoruba conversational discourse has not received attention. This paper, therefore, analyses the contextual deployment of *ilé* in Yoruba Interactions with a view to unearthing the communicative functions of the word in Yoruba conversational discourse. Attention is paid to how the word co-exists with other words to generate mutually understandable knowledge in conversations. A total of ten (10) proverbial expressions containing the word, *ilé*, were subjected to pragmatic analysis using Akin Odebunmi's theory of contextual beliefs. The analysis reveals four communicative contexts of the use of *ilé* in conversational discourse and these contexts are shared contextual belief of *ilé* as the moulder of cultural and societal values, shared contextual beliefs of *ilé* as metaphor of consequence, shared contextual beliefs of *ilé* as the final abode after sojourn, and shared contextual belief of *ilé* as the source of reprimand. The paper concludes that notwithstanding the knowledge of a language, context in its different forms is inevitable in the success of conversational discourse.

Keywords: Conversational discourse, Yoruba language, *Ilé*, proverbs, contextual beliefs

1. Introduction

Beyond the primary purpose of using words to convey meaning, they are equally used to explain worldviews, construct identities and promote ideologies; all of which are more implicit than explicit. Words, depending on the association they make in context, can be used literally or figuratively. This explains the essentiality of pragmatic import and context in the interpretation of words and utterances. Context has been given as the linguistic, social-cultural and psychological “background from which the meaning of a word springs” (Odebunmi, 2006: 25). Allott (2010) holds that context is the source of clues that aid the hearer in working out what the speaker intended to convey. Meaning is never guaranteed unless one understands the context of use. If for instance one finds the expression, “urinate here and win lot of prizes” in front of a public toilet, the sentence will pass as an awareness for the availability of a toilet in the environment. If the same expression is found on the wall of a police station, the main prize attached to the act could be imprisonment. This explains that notwithstanding that all words have meaning in isolation; such meanings are subjected to the situational reality of the words, which may retain the known denotative meaning of the word, or extend such meaning.

In the words of Ajayi (2021: 86), For as long as language continues to be a tool deployed for purposeful and meaningful human and interpersonal communicative interactions all over the world, its dynamism, particularly in relation to specific situations and contexts would remain fascinating to language scholars, and especially sociolinguists, pragmaticians and discourse analysts”. The academic venture of studying language in context will remain a relevant

scholarly engagement because the lack of contextual clues in communication has resulted in catastrophic situations in the history of our world. The example of the Hiroshima bombing in 1945 which was consequent upon the unintended interpretation of the Japanese expression *Mokusatsu* readily comes to mind (see Bamgbose, 2021). As further posited by Ajayi (2021), it is one thing for a speaker of a language to demonstrate their linguistic knowledge of the language in their ability to form logical sentences that follow the rule(s) of grammar of the language; it is another for the speaker to demonstrate their pragmatic competence in the language as evident in their ability to decipher in what context or situation a particular lexical item, phrase, formulaic and proverbial expression is required or appropriate. Even in everyday expressions, deciphering contextual meaning of words is essential to a successful communication process. Bamgbose (2016) explains everyday expressions as non-proverbial or idiomatic expressions.

Studies have considered the communicative functions of certain lexical items in different contexts. Fakoya (2008) investigates the pragmatic import of *orí* in Yoruba conversational discourse. Adeyanju (2011) attempts a pragma-sociolinguistic dissection of the word 'SEE' in Nigerian English. Ajayi (2021) reports the use of seven lexical items in the vocabulary of white garment church. None of the studies considered the contextual deployment of *ilé* (home) in Yoruba conversations. Closest to this study is Okeyinka and Amole (2012) that examine the meaning of home in Yoruba culture in Ogbomoso, a southwestern town in Nigeria. The study, which concentrated on the different kinds of home in the town and also conducted interview to determine the factors which determine the meaning of home to the people of the land, did not study the meanings derivable from the interactional uses of the word, *ilé* (home) in conversations. This paper, therefore, analyses the contextual deployment of *ilé* in Yoruba Interactions with a view to unearthing the communicative relevance of the word in Yoruba conversational discourse. This broad aim will be achieved with the following research objectives are to determine the contextual beliefs of *ilé* in Yoruba proverbial expressions; analyse the linguistic environments of *ilé* in meaning realisation in conversational contexts; and establish the relevance of context to successful communication in interaction through the varying pragmatic imports of *ilé* in interactions.

2. Literature Review

The study of words in contexts has enjoyed scholarly attention due to the important role of lexical items in the realisation of meanings in utterances. Wilkins (1972) posits that without grammar, little can be conveyed but without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed. The conveyance of messages through vocabulary, however, demands contextual attention.

Fakoya (2008) observes that the conversational worth of *orí* has been greatly overlooked in scholarship and attempts the study of the socio-pragmatic significance and discourse functions of the word in randomly collected interactions among Yoruba interlocutors. The study takes an ethnomethodological and descriptive analytical perspective within the ambit of conversational analysis. Paying attention to the use of *orí*, specifically in discourse opening and closing within the Yoruba worldview, Fakoya identifies some broad uses of this culturally loaded lexical item. In the first instance he identifies *orí* as conversational resource, and *orí* as both discourse marker and expletive. Again, the study shows that *orí* as tokens of various

invocations. Fakoya mainly emphasises the conversational relevance of *ori* as an extension of the already established spiritual cum metaphysical usage of the word. The study concludes that there is a need for native and second language users of Yoruba to understand the cultural dynamics of meaning in the language, especially in relation to certain culturally loaded lexical items.

Working within the ambit of Adegbija's pragma-sociolinguistic theory, Ajayi (2018) analyses the impact of the Nigerian socio-cultural context on the semantic realisations of three prominent words, 'dress', 'meet' and 'toast' in their deployment in the English spoken by Nigerians. The paper shows that there is an extension in how these words are used in the context of Nigeria as a second language community of English speakers. These words convey meanings that reflect the worldviews of Nigerians. As an instance, the author reports that "dress" as a verb carries meanings such as to adjust, to slap, and to position. The paper concludes that an improper understanding of the contexts of use for these words will result in a misinterpretation by native language users of English. Ajayi's paper shares similarity with the present one given its interest in how words function in context but the words analysed are not lexical items in Yoruba.

Also, Ajayi (2021) explores the use of seven commonly used words in the Christian denomination popularly referred to as White Garment Churches in Nigeria. Some of the churches in this category are Celestial Church of Christ, the Cherubim and Seraphim (C & S) and the Christ Apostolic Church. The study shows how contextual beliefs facilitate meaning construction and deconstruction in interaction involving the use of these seven words among other lexical items used in these churches. The study deploys Odebunmi's contextual beliefs to analyse data gathered through the ethnographic method of data collection. The seven Yoruba words analysed in the vocabulary of the white garment churches are *ètò*, *iṣé*, *wọlé*, *ìmó lẹ*, *idà iṣégun*, *imò ó pẹ*, and *ìpèsè*. The study finds that shared knowledge of language (code), doctrinal practices like the cultures of the churches, experience and situation are the primary factors that aid the different layers of interpretation that discourse participants, who are members of these churches, infer when these words are used. Ajayi's study is similar to the present ones because it deploys contextual beliefs and analyses words in context, but it is different from it because the present study is not limited to a religion but the use of a particular word among the Yoruba. Most similar to the present study is the work of Okeyinka and Amole (2012) who investigate the meaning of "home" in Yoruba culture in Ogbomoso; a southwestern community in Nigeria. An aspect of the study evaluates "home" from its literal perspective and reports that there are five kinds of houses or apartments in Ogbomoso which are family house, single family dwelling, apartment, duplex and rooming houses or "face me i face you" with a statistical report of their varying rates in the town. With data collected using an in-depth interview with selected residents of the town, the researchers report that the home means the cradle, a place of comfort, shelter, a place of abode and safety, and a house with facilities that gives comfortable living. The research concludes that the kind of house wherein people live is a determinant of what home means to them. While this work has also investigated "home" like the present study, it differs from it in that it does not pay attention to how the word *ilé* (home) is discursively interpreted from the contexts of use in spontaneous interactions. This study is therefore a

contribution to knowledge in general and pragmatics in particular by deciphering empirically the contextual uses of the word *ile* in communicative situations.

3. Theoretical Framework

Being a study within the ambit of pragmatics, this paper is anchored on Akin Odebunmi's contextual belief. Paramount to the field of pragmatics is context. Context is what differentiates pragmatics from semantics as two fields of meaning. While the former is interested in ad-hoc meaning as the linguistic elements reveal, the latter navigates meaning through contextual cues which are connected to an instance of language use. It is in line with this explanation that Allott (2010) explains context as a source of clues that aid the hearer in working out what the speaker intended to convey. While expressions carry meanings at all times, context helps to determine the felicity and sincerity of the utterance on the one hand, and intentionality on the part of the language user, on the other hand. If a signboard says "urinate here and win lot of prizes", this meaningful expression can still be open to different interpretations depending on who utters it, why it is uttered and where it is uttered. If such expression is found in front of a public toilet, then it will be considered an awareness creation even if paying to use the toilet comes with no prize. If, however, the expression is found on the wall of a police station, then the prize could be a synonym for imprisonment. Such possibilities of multiple interpretations are the crux of context as the basis of any pragmatic inquiry. In a succinct language, Mey (2001: 39) conceptualises context as "the continually changing surroundings...that enable participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expressions of their interaction become intelligible."

Context has been classified in different ways by different scholars. For instance, Odebunmi (2006) splits context into linguistic context and social context while Allot (2010) divides context into physical context and co-text. Although Odebunmi gives another name for linguistic context as co-text but his explanation of co-text differs from that of Allot. While Odebunmi (2006) gives co-text as other linguistic structures around a particular word, co-text, to Allot (2010), refers to the knowledge of both previous and subsequent discourse. In the words of Ajayi (2021:92), Odebunmi's social context, "...has to do with the socio-cultural, religious, political and historical aspects of an interaction".

Contextual belief as postulated by Odebunmi (2006) rides on the common ground that is shared by the interlocutors in an interaction. For Odebunmi, context "presupposes mutual contextual beliefs on which participants relate and make inferences (2006: 39)". Contextual belief is the knowledge of the world or a situation which an interlocutor brings into an interaction and with which they navigate the discursive path of the talk. Contextual belief can also be momentary as it may build up in the progression of talk. In his postulation, Odebunmi argues that contextual belief hangs on two levels of belief; namely: language level belief and situation level belief. Unuabonah (2014) holds that the language level beliefs are indicated by interactants' understanding of the language of communication. No two persons can successfully interact in any language except they share the linguistic codes of the language in common. This makes the language level belief a prerequisite for any successful interaction between persons.

The situation level works on the assumptions that "are held on the basis of interactants' shared code (linguistic and nonlinguistic) and experience" (Odebunmi, 2006: 28). Language

variety and other situational cues are brought to bear at this level. For instance, an undergraduate student who calls his father to ask for his monthly allowance on getting to know that his father's company has paid salary is working within situation level belief. If the father too is compelled to send the money with the knowledge that the son is aware that he has been paid, this shared knowledge is a clear instance of situation level belief. The situation level belief can, therefore, be information, orientation or even enculturation that is mutually shared by discourse participants. The crux of situation level assumption according to Odebunmi (2006) is that it covers interlocutors' shared knowledge of subject/topic, shared knowledge of word choices, referents and references, and shared knowledge of previous and immediate socio-cultural experiences. This study finds this theory suitable as it will help to decipher the pragmatic import of the word *ile* in line with the language level and situation level beliefs of the interlocutors in the available data.

4. Methodology

This study is ethnographic in its approach; it adopts the observation method. Data was collected surreptitiously through the researcher's personal observation for a period of one year, spanning between June 2021 when the insight of this paper was conceived and June 2022 when the researcher began to write the paper. Three major settings (homes, pubs and offices) were the primary environments of data collection. A total of sixty utterances featuring the use of *ilé* in conversational contexts were penned down by the investigator. The sixty utterances were, afterwards, studied for their communicative uses which resulted in the identification of four major patterns constituting the contextual beliefs in the use of *ilé* in the observed interactional contexts. Some interactive examples are selected and analysed under each contextual belief and a total of ten excerpt were analysed in all. The analysis is qualitative and descriptive in approach. The interactions that are not in English are glossed, and the ones involving code switching are also glossed for clarity. It should be mentioned that the communicative translation where the essence of the data is captured in the gloss is adopted rather than a literal or word for word translation. Odebunmi's contextual beliefs serve as the theoretical anchor for the study.

5. Data Analysis

A careful study of the data gathered revealed that the use of *ilé* (home) in the expressions can be classified into four contextual beliefs. These beliefs typify different realities of the Yoruba worldview. The shared beliefs identified in this analysis are *ilé* (home) as the moulder of cultural and societal values, as the final abode after sojourn, as the source of reprimand, and metaphor of consequence. Each of these contextual beliefs is discussed in detail with interactive excerpts revealing belief.

(a) Shared contextual belief of *ilé* as the moulder of cultural and societal values

One essential function of *ilé* as revealed in the recorded interactions is that home is the place where a child or any person at all is moulded into being a cultured and disciplined member of the society within the Yoruba cultural worldview. The home, beyond being a family, is understood as where values and virtues are being deposited into a child's psyche just so that such child does not deviate from such societally important ways of life all lifelong. Note that

some of the values entrenched by the expressions wherein *ilé* is found may not be universally acceptable beliefs, but they are so entrenched in the Yoruba culture. The excerpts below show this contextual belief.

Excerpt 1

Femi: Mumcy, what'up? *Şe wà?*

Iya Femi: *Àwọn wo ni what's up? L'áyé ẹ má kí mi bèè mó*

Ilé la tí n kó èşọ ròde. *Wón á rò pé olúwa rè ò kọ ẹ ni to bá*

Lọ şe sí iyá oní iyá.

Femi: *Ẹ má bínú mummy. Ẹ káàsàn-án ma.*

Iya Femi: *Káàsàn-án, ọkọ mi.*

Gloss

Femi: Mumcy, what's up? Are you good?

Femi's mum: Who are you saying what's up to?

Do not ever greet me that way again.

Charity begins at home.

They will assume that one didn't raise you well

When you do that to someone else's mother.

Femi: I am sorry. Good afternoon, ma.

Femi's mum: Good afternoon, my husband.

Excerpt 1 reveals a situational context which makes it possible for the interlocutors to achieve a common ground. There is a shared knowledge of topic between the mother and the son and the topic in this case is acceptable mode of greetings in the culture wherein the interlocutors exist. The shared knowledge of word and reference enables Femi to understand the pragmatic import of home in the mum's line as not just the building inhabited or the residents therein but as a place where a child must learn the virtues needed to relate with others as a member of society. After the mother utters the proverbial statement, *charity begins at home*, she enacts a shared knowledge of sociocultural experience among the Yoruba where it is believed that an ill-mannered child is one that is most likely not well trained by the parents. This explains the reference of the pronoun *wón* (they), referring to the members of the society who will assume that the child does not pick values such as the expected way of greeting an older person from the family. One sees a shared knowledge of the immediate environment on the part of the child who, after the mum's lamentation, immediately did the needful by replacing his earlier utterance, *what's up; şe wà*, with a more culturally acceptable utterance, *e káàsàn-án ma* (good afternoon ma). At the language level, the choice of *ma* on the part of the child and *ọkọ mi* on the part of the mother is a cultural gesture which is necessitated by the shared cultural knowledge. Just as Unuabonah (2014) observes that that the term 'wife' does not only mean a man's female partner in a marriage but also extends to mean the wife of a brother, cousin or male relative in the Yoruba/Igbo culture, the word, husband, too takes that connotation of "son/daughter/child" when used by a mother. This happens when the child has done the mother's bidding and the mother deems it necessary to appreciate the child. The referent of

“husband” in the mother’s last line is her son who she commends for showing a good disposition to her correction.

Excerpt 2

Femi: Why didn’t you give Kunle the job?

After all he is your cousin.

Tobi: I am not sure he can do it well *jare*.

I have not seen any work he did before.

Femi: Tobi, **A kì í ta ará ilé ẹni l’ópò.**

(You don’t trade your housemate for chickenfeed)

If anyone will benefit from your good offices,

Then it should be your relatives. You should have tried him out.

Tobi: Well, maybe next time then.

The discussion in the excerpt ensues between two friends wherein Femi questions Tobi for not having his cousin do a job for him rather than having someone else take the job. Femi replies that he is not sure of his cousin’s expertise because he had not seen any work done by him. To this, Tobi reacts with a Yoruba proverb which features the word, *ilé*. The standard form of this proverb is *a kì í ta ará ilé ẹni l’opo ka ri rà ní òwón* (If you trade your housemate for chicken feed, you cannot buy them back at any expensive rate) but it is paraphrased and used in part because of the interactive context of the usage. The reference of the noun phrase, *ará ilé*, as used in the proverb is anyone with whom one shares a family tie or any close relationship. The shared knowledge of the Yoruba socio-cultural experience in terms of the need to promote the family tie through support to one another makes Tobi to process Femi’s thought that he could have patronised his cousin. The last sentence from Tobi shows a consideration for Femi’s proposition even though the adverbial, *well*, may suggest reservations. While Femi’s suggestion that Tobi should have given his cousin the job may not be considered a universally logical counsel, it falls within the Yoruba cultural value as the proverb insinuates.

Excerpt 3

Tunji: Guys, so have we all paid for the get-together?

Yisa: Get-together? Ibo ni kín ti ri owó ẹ? Garri ni mo mu sùn làná.

(Get-together? Where do I get the money for it? I drank garri last night)

Segun: O need gbogbo àlàyé yẹn. **Inú ilé ẹni la tí ń jẹ èkúté onídodo**

(You do not need all of those explanations. It is in one’s house that one eats a rat with a navel).

Excerpt 3 is an extraction from an exchange among friends who gathered to drink in a pub and raised a discussion on a get-together that was being planned. The first speaker asks the others if they had all paid for the party and Yisa replies that he could not have paid when he had even had *garri* (granulated cassava) the previous night. The third speaker replies him with a popular Yoruba saying which features the word *ilé*. Significant to the interpretation of this exchange is the shared knowledge of word choices. First off, *garri* as used in Yisa’s turn metaphorically

implies lacking the wherewithal to even eat a good meal as it is portrayed here as the common man's food and one to settle for at night if only one is financially handicapped. This is not to say that garri is forbidden at night or cannot be someone's choice. It is, however, the most easily affordable meal when a person does not have money. This shared knowledge of word choice prompts the counsel on the part of the third speaker, Segun, who counsels against such self-exposure on the part of Yisa through the proverb, *Inú ilé ẹni la ti ñ jẹ èkúté onídodo*. The first thing demanding demystification in the proverb is the noun phrase, a rat with a navel. First off, a rat has no navel. The choice of that noun phrase in the proverb is, therefore, a metaphor for absurdity, prohibitions, illegalities, and anything untoward. There is a shared cultural belief among the Yoruba that oddities are not brought to the open. One should keep to himself or herself unpleasant experiences. This can be likened to the English idiom which says *don't wash your dirty linen in public*. Segun, therefore, enlightens Yisa on this important cultural value of not exposing oneself unnecessarily in the public.

(b) Shared Contextual Beliefs of Ilé as Metaphor of Consequence

In the data gathered, a number of expressions were also found which feature *ilé* as a metaphor of consequence. This contextual belief revolves around the notion that while one might be at liberty to choose one's action, such actions are followed by commensurate outcomes that justify humans' deeds. The contexts of use buttress the pragmatic import of such expressions as the excerpts below show:

Excerpt 4

Iya Bola: Ñjẹ ẹ mò pé wọn ò jẹ kí Aunty Tólá kó àjọ ní oṣù yìí?
 Iya Lati: Ah, kí ló ló ṣẹlẹ? Ó mà fẹ fí san owó school ọmọ ẹ mà ni
 Iya Bola: Wọn ní àwọn tí ẹni tí wọn múwá kò bá tí tètè dá ò ní kó
 Ọun náà sì ló bèrè òfin ọhún nígbà tí ọrẹ Ìyá Stella ò tètè dá.
 Ọfin tí wá mu báyí, kò lè rí owó ilé-iwé ọmọ rẹ san.
 Iya Lati: Ìyẹn ni pé **Tí a bá sọ òkò sọ'jà, à máa ta bá ará ilé ẹni.**
 Iya Bola: Bẹ̀ni o.

Gloss

Bola's mum: Are you aware Bola was not allowed to get thrift this month?
 Lati's mum: Ah what happened? She needs it for her child's tuitions.
 Bola's mum: The rule is that whoever has brought a defaulter will not get the thrift, and she introduced the rule when Stella's mother's friend defaulted. Now the law has caught up with her so she cannot pay her child's fees.
 Lati's mum: That is to say that when we throw a stone into the market it hits a member of one's household.
 Iya Bola: That's right.

The excerpt is an exchange between two women who are involved in an informally coordinated thrift where individuals pay a given amount at some intervals and each person gets the total sum in turns. The first woman, Bola's mum, informs Lati's mum that another partaker in the

thrift was denied access to the total sum at a time she needed it and expected it. Evidently it was because she flouted a rule of the thrift which she had spearheaded at a time someone else was in a similar situation. To this, Iya Lati initiates the Yoruba saying that **Tí a bá sọ òkò sọ'jà, à máa ta bá ará ilé ẹni** (when we throw a stone into the market, it hits a member of one's household). The reference of market in the saying is anyone with whom one does not have a relationship. The saying foregrounds that when one chooses to be difficult or make life difficult for others, such gesture can return to one someday in an unknown way. As the interaction of the women revealed, the law facilitated by Bola's mum eventually deprived her of access to a thrift resulting in her inability to pay her child's fees. The inability to pay her child's school fees is the shared cultural experience decipherable from a stone thrown to the market hitting someone at home. This is similar to the English proverb that says what goes around comes around. In other words, everyone bears the consequences of their actions, sooner or later.

Excerpt 5

Tunde: Wọn mà ní wọn ti mú nínú àwọn ọmọ tó n jàlè yí.

Hassan: A dúpẹ. À á ti ẹ sinmi diẹ láàdúgbò.

Tunde: Ọmọ eèyàn gidi dè ni bàbá ọkan nínú wọn láàdúgbò.

Ìpátá rẹ kàn pọ ni.

Hassan: **Ọmọ tí a ò kọ, á gbé ilé tí a kọ tà nàà ni.**

Won sa le ni awon o mo pe ko kin sun le.

Gloss

Tunde: Learnt some of these robbers have been arrested.

Hassan: Adupe. We will at least have some rest in the area

Tunde: And one of them is the son of a notable person in the area

Hassan: A child we refuse to train will someday sell the house we built

They cannot say they are not aware he does not sleep at home.

The exchange in excerpt 5 is between two brothers who were having a chit-chat on the insecurity in their neighbourhood. Tunde informs his brother, Hassan, that some of the robbers tormenting the area had been arrested and the brother expressed his pleasure at the fact that the neighbourhood would enjoy some peace. Tunde mentions that one of those caught was a son to a notable member of the community and as a reaction to this statement, the proverb, Ọmọ tí a ò kọ, a gbé ilé tí a kọ ta, was uttered by Hassan. The noun phrase, *ilé tí a kọ*, which means *the house we built* is a metaphor understood in this proverb among the Yoruba through shared cultural knowledge. *Ilé* (house) as implied in the proverb can be anything ranging from legacy to dignity, integrity or any known value or virtue which a family is known for and which a member of the family violates through a socially unacceptable behaviour or act. Hassan, therefore, implies that the son's death and the ignominy suffered by the family is the consequence of a failed parenting on the part of the father. The association of *ilé* with other words in this proverb therefore creates the contextual belief of the word as the metaphor of consequence.

Excerpt 6

Jide: Ó dùn mí fún òrẹ wa o.

Wón ní ó ti ta ilé, ó ti ta motor

Afiz: Èwo ni ó wá dùn ẹ sí. Iṣẹ kí ló ṣe r'ówó tẹlẹ?

Jide: Hmmm, ìyẹn ni pé **ilé tí a fi itọ mọ**, ìrì ni yóò wo.

Afiz: Ó ṣè ṣè yé ẹ ni.

Gloss

Jide: I feel bad for our friend

I learnt he has sold his house and car.

Afiz: Why does it make you feel bad?

What was the source of his wealth in the first place?

Jide: Hmmm, that is to say a house whose building blocks are plastered with saliva will be brought down by dewdrops.

Afiz: Now you get it.

Excerpt 6 is an interaction between two friends wherein the first speaker, Jide expresses his sympathy for a mutual friend of his and the second speaker who had sold his house and car, apparently due to some challenges. First off, Afiz shows a shared knowledge of topic by making an intelligible and coherent response to Jide's turn even when no name was mentioned. This shows that the referent of the noun phrase, *our friend*, is known to both interlocutors. In his turn, Afiz had a contrary view from Jide and he shows that through the interrogative speech act with which he inquired the kind of job that had enabled their friend to acquire such money to build a house and buy a car in the first place. The pragmatic import of this interrogation is to establish that their friend had acquired an ill-gotten wealth, perhaps because he was involved in a shady business. Jide shows a shared knowledge of previous and immediate sociocultural experience by enacting the proverb which says *a house whose building blocks are plastered with saliva will be brought down by dewdrops*. *Ilé* which literally translates into house in the proverb is a metaphor for any kind of human endeavour. The co-text in the proverb helps convey the meaning that there is a consequence or repercussion for any illicit, immoral or evil act done by anyone. Despite that the interlocutors are not explicit about their friend's wealth; there is the implicature that the doom is experienced due to the improper means of acquiring the wealth. This evidently justifies the proverb containing the target word, *ilé*, as one that shows the metaphor of consequence.

(c) Shared Contextual beliefs of Ile as the final abode after sojourn

In this section, attention is paid to how *ilé* features in proverbs where it is used to emphasise that there cannot be anywhere like a person's home. The use of home in the contexts of the target expressions could be a reference to one's nation or family as the excerpts below show.

Excerpt 7

Abayomi: I learnt your brother is back to Nàìjá (Nigeria)

Is he on a visit or he's fully back?

Titi: Well he got in last week but he's been planning his return since about a year. I'm not sure he's going back
Abayomi: Oh great then. *Ilé làbò ìsinmi oko*
(Home is where to go after a journey/hard labour)
Abayomi: Nowhere like home, *ore* (friend).

This excerpt is an exchange between two persons where one confirms that the other's sibling had just returned home after a long stay abroad. Abayomi seeks to know if Titi's brother would still return and the latter reveals that the brother is not likely to return abroad. To this, Abayomi introduces the Yoruba saying where the home is portrayed as the final abode after a sojourn. The response from Titi, *nowhere like home*, foregrounds the notion of the house as a place one must return to especially after going in search of greener pasture as a shared knowledge of the Yoruba sociocultural experience. It is believed among the Yoruba that the home will always be a place to return to irrespective of the experience outside of one's shore. This excerpt and the proverb therefore show that there is the contextual belief of the home as the final abode after a sojourn among the Yoruba.

Excerpt 8

Bayo: I am not sure Henry plans to return home.
Kayode: Would he then make someone else's land his country
Bayo: If it makes him enjoy a good life, why not?
Kayode: Well, *àjò ò ní dún kó n'ilé má r'elé*. Bi o wa laye; won a gboku re wa.
(no matter how enjoyable a foreign land is, one must return home
(If he does not come alive, his corpse will be brought home).
Bayo: Well, well, maybe then, but no one should return to this country.

Excerpt 8 is a chit-chat between two friends who were contemplating whether or not their friend will return home. Bayo expresses his doubt about their friend's return to Nigeria and Kayode in a retort asks if he hopes to become a citizen in someone else's country. Bayo suggests through his response that Henry could choose to live abroad if that guarantees him a good life, and Kayode enacts a Yoruba proverb which means that a journey should never be so fun that one forgets to go home. To buttress that, he adds that if one does not come back home while alive, their corpse will be returned home when they die. To this rather harsh assertion, Bayo uses the exclamatory remark, *well well*, which suggests that it is a shared cultural knowledge between the duo that expectedly one should return home, in this case one's country, after a sojourn, and chances are that even when some persons die there, there is the cultural belief that their corpses should not "sleep outside"; that is be buried in a foreign land, except when such persons have lost their Yoruba ancestry or when the family lacks the wherewithal to bring the corpse home. The exchange in the excerpt buttresses the pragmatic import of *ilé* as the final abode after a sojourn.

(d) Shared Contextual Belief of Ile as the source of reprimand

Among the Yoruba, it is assumed that the home is where a person gets chastised notwithstanding the age. The communal existence in Africa makes collective chastisement a social phenomenon; hence, the portrayal of the home as where a child gets reprimanded for violating cultural norms. Note that the reprimand may not be physical; it could be in form of rejection. The excerpts below show this:

Excerpt 9

Soliu: Ó ga o. a ò ti è rí Honourable lá ti èyìn election.

Segun: Wón ti wolé. A ò lè rí wọn. Ó tú di ìgbà ibò

Soliu: Ó da bẹ̀ẹ̀. Ilé làpótí n' jókòó dé ìdí.

Segun: À tún wá l'orúkọ wọn

Gloss

Soliu: This is serious. Honourable didn't even come around since after election.

Segun: He has won already. We can't see him until there is another election.

Soliu: That is nice. It is at home that the stool waits for the buttocks.

Segun: hey shall come again.

Excerpt 9 is a discussion between two friends who share their resentment about a public office holder they had voted for during election and who has not acted as expected. In the opening turn, Segun laments that they had not seen the Honourable since after election and Segun's response shows a shared knowledge of topic and shared knowledge of referents. The response by Segun that *he has won already* tells that he understands the topic raised by Soliu and also knows the referent of the common noun, *Honourable*. In Soliu's next turn, he mockingly says that the Honourable had acted well and used the proverb, *it is at home that the stool waits for the buttocks*. The stool in the proverb is a metaphor for the aggrieved person and the buttocks refers to the person being reprimanded. In the context of the exchange, the home is the electoral constituency of the office holder and the proverb has the implicature that the officer would not enjoy the support of his or her people in the next election. The last line by Segun shows a shared knowledge of the socio-cultural environment of the proverb and the pragmatic import of reprimand that such proverb conveys.

Excerpt 10

Femi's dad: So you have now grown to the level
that you now beat your siblings, Femi?

Femi: Dad, it's not so. Akin and Tunde are very stubborn.
They don't take to instructions.

Femi's dad: And who beats you that much
when you don't take to instruction, Mr Disciplinarian?

Àìsì n'ílé ológbò, ilé dī Ìlé èkúté

(because the cat is not at home, the rat now acts like landlord).

Do not ever touch anyone again when I am not around.

Femi: I'm sorry, Dad.

Excerpt 10 is an exchange between a father and his son and the former complained about the latter beating his younger siblings. Femi justified his action to his dad by explaining that his siblings did not take to instructions. The father frowns on such justification and asked if anyone so beat him when he acts same way. The referent to Femi as *Mr Disciplinarian* is a pragmatic strategy of mockery as the father implies that he has no right to beat his siblings. In the next line, Femi's dad uses the expression *Àìsì n'ílé ológbò, ilé di ilé èkúté*. The statement literally means that the home becomes the rat's when the cat is not around, but the communicative essence of the statement is to reprimand Femi for also trying to act like an elderly person because the father was not around. The cat is the metaphor for the person in a position of authority and the rat refers to the one who tries to confer authority or leadership on him or herself in the absence of someone else. The saying therefore achieves its purpose of reprimanding Femi and also shows *ilé* as where anyone could be reprimanded.

6. Conclusion

The paper is an exploration of popular Yoruba proverbs or sayings which feature the word, *ilé*. The research was driven by the knowledge that words are instrumental in the realisation of meanings and the ability to decode the meaning of words in context is an essential condition for the success of a communicative exchange. Drawing data from naturally occurring speech situations, the study gathered popular proverbial expressions that feature the word *ilé* and deciphered the communicative contexts of such expressions in interactions. Working within the ambit of Odeunmi's contextual beliefs, the analysis reveals four communicative contexts for the use of *ilé* in the data collected. These contexts are: shared contextual belief of *ilé* as the moulder of cultural and societal values, shared contextual beliefs of *ilé* as Metaphor of Consequence, shared contextual beliefs of *ilé* as the final abode after sojourn and shared contextual belief of *ilé* as the source of reprimand. It can be inferred from the study that beneath the lexical collocations of words is the contextual knowledge of topics, reference and referents, and shared knowledge of previous and immediate sociocultural experiences all of which are crucial to the interpretive ability of the listeners and the communicative success of a discourse or text. The study concludes that notwithstanding the knowledge of a language, context in its different forms is inevitable in the success of conversational discourse and any form of discourse.

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