

(IN)SINCERITY IN APOLOGY: CONTEXTUALISING APOLOGIES IN WOLE SOYINKA'S *ALAPATA APATA*

Sunday Kehinde Odekunbi,
&
Dele Adeyanju

Abstract

Analysis of apology has been considered by scholars from different perspectives with little attention paid to the damage done by insincere apology. This paper was therefore designed to investigate the use of apologies in Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* (AA) with a view to examining their sincerity or otherwise. John Gumperz's theory of interactional sociolinguistics was adopted and descriptive design was used. Wole Soyinka was purposively chosen because of his literary prowess and prominent deployment of apologies in his plays while *Alapata Apata* was purposively selected because of its thematic relevance. Eleven of the forty-four apology instances in the text were subjected to pragmatic analysis. It is revealed that unlike sincere apologies that are characterized by acknowledgement of offence, humility and remorse, insincere ones are characterized by attack, challenge, mockery and ironical statements. The paper concludes that insincere apologies are worse than non-apologies; they compound rather than remedy situations. It is recommended that parents should inculcate the culture of apology into their children right from childhood.

Key words: Insincere apologies, *Alapata Apata*, Wole Soyinka, interactional Sociolinguistics

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the apologies in Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* with the specific objective of establishing their sincerity/insincerity. The paper is informed by the role apology plays in human society. As it benefits individuals, it does business companies, organisations and nations. In law, for instance, scholars like Bianchi (1995) and Braithwaite (2000) believe that people resort to legal disputes in the absence of apology. These restorative justice apostles believe that even after a case has been taken to court, a sincere apology might lead to forgiveness and reconciliation. Mead (2005) makes a reference to the case of an offender, Mr Cushing, who caused a serious damage to the face of Ms. Ruvolo. In the court room, Mr Cushing cried so uncontrollably that he apologised profusely to Ms. Ruvolo that she went to and hugged him. While this was going on, most people in the court, including the court officers and prosecutors, could not hold back their tears.

While talking on the significance of apology in the field of medicine, Friedman (2006) submits that patients are less likely to sue doctors who sincerely apologise for mistakes committed on their job than those who refuse to accept their mistakes. Similarly, Blanchard and McBride (2003) have demonstrated in their study that the ability to apologise is an important skill for leaders, managers and all individuals in an organisation to possess. In the same vein, Kim, Ferrin, Cooper and Dirks (2004) in their study on the effect of an apology versus denial in repairing a violation of trust, discover that apologies are very effective in repairing a violation of trust.

The point being made here is that it is only a sincere apology that achieves the desired goal. But unfortunately, not all apologies are sincere. There is for instance an adage in Yoruba that “*pele lako, o labo*”, meaning literally “apology has both negative and positive sides”. This paper is therefore out to examine the apologies in Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* with a view to establishing their (in) sincerity and consequently their effects on their victims.

Studies on apology, a remedial act performed by an offender to restore a broken relationship, have been considered from the sociological (Lazare, 2004 and Friedman, 2006) and pragmatic (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989; Ilic, 2014 and Ahmed, 2017) perspectives. Most of them emphasise the benefits of apologizing, different apology strategies used and their pragmatic functions but only mention insincere apology in passing. The fact is however that an insincere apology is worse than not apologising at all. It worsens relationship rather than strengthen it; it destroys rather than builds. In the same vein, most of the previous studies on apology are situated in foreign cultures and languages, a situation that makes it difficult to establish culture-specificity of apology. This paper now considers apology in Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata*, a drama text of English expression situated in Yoruba culture, to examine the (in)sincerity of apologies performed by its characters.

The study will expose parents to the benefits inherent in sincere apology, the damage or destruction insincere apology could cause and the need to inculcate the act of apologizing sincerely into their children right from childhood. Curriculum planners will see the need to introduce the teaching of apology into the primary and secondary school curricula. Lecturers in pragmatics will also see the necessity for the teaching of apology not only as a concept but as a topic. Those in law and peace and conflicts resolution will also benefit significantly from the study. They will discover that most civil cases can be resolved with the use of apology. Finally, those working on Soyinka's plays may also find it resourceful.

The Concept of Apology

Apology was originally derived from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning an argument made in defence of one's actions (Ahmad, 2017). It was then seen as something offered to vindicate oneself from an accusation. Ahmad also claims that it has also been seen as an excuse or justification offered for taken an action or doing something which

offended another person. Neither of these definitions contains the element of remorse or acknowledgement of offensive behaviour toward another person. Apology, in the definitions above, benefits the offender rather than the offended person because they give explanations, excuses or justifications for the actions committed. In other words, the apology vindicates them or justifies their performance of the actions. This implies that rather than make the offended person feel good, it makes them feel foolish and unreasonable for accusing the offender.

Some scholars have however contended that it is better defined as “an acknowledgment” of an offence committed by one person with the intension of correcting the offensive behaviour or remark to another person, accompanied by an expression of regret (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989; Lazare, 2004; Friedman, 2006 and International Centre for Transitional Justice, 2015,). Two important elements which make an apology authentic are embedded in this definition: the acknowledgement of offence and an expression of regret or sorrow for committing the offence. This implies that for an apology to be authentic, the offender will accept that they committed the offence for which they are accused and have no defence, excuse, or justification to put forward for committing it and they will express remorse for committing the offence. This is likely to have informed Tavuchis’s (1991) limitation of features of an authentic apology to two: (1) feeling sorrowful for the harm caused to another person; and (2) saying so. Our operational definition of apology in this study is therefore a speech act sincerely expressing sorrow to a victim and pleading for forgiveness having admitted offending them.

Some scholars also contend that apology is hearer supportive, because they benefit the hearer at the expense of the speaker (Goffman, 1972; Leech, 1983) while some like Holmes (1995) argue that apologies are face supporting generally. That is, they benefit both the apologisee and the offended person. This might be the reason scholars like Friedman (2006) submit that apology causes the aggrieved party to have more empathy for the offending party since the offending party feels

guilty over the pain that their actions have caused. The aggrieved party will therefore have less of need to retaliate and is more likely to forgive.

Related Studies on Sincere Apology

Scholars have given a number of conditions for an apology to be sincere. As submitted above, there is a general consensus that a sincere apology involves an acknowledgement that the incident in question actually happened and that it was wrong; an acceptance of responsibility for the act; the expression of regret and a feeling of remorse; and the declaration of an intention not to repeat similar acts in the future. It must however be said that authors differ on the requirements to be met for an apology to be valid. Some posit lax requirements while some give very stringent requirements. Price (1998) captions the conditions he suggests as five R's: Recognition, Remorse, Repentance, Restitution and Reform. O'Hara (2004) comes out with four elements of a sincere and effective apology, namely i. identification of the wrongful act; ii. Expression of regret and remorse for committing the act; iii. Promise to forbear from committing the wrongful act in the future; and iv. Offer of repair. Goulston (2004) like O'Hara also suggests four elements which are: remorse, restitution, rehabilitation and request for forgiveness. Lazare (2004) also believes a sincere apology will have four parts: i. acknowledging the offence, ii. Communicating remorse and the related attitudes and behaviours such as regret, shame, humility and sincerity; iii. Explaining why the offence was committed; and iv. Offering reparation or restitution.

Smith (2008), who provides the theoretically most systematic and normatively strictest account of the interpersonal apology, lists twelve conditions for an apology to be valid and "categorical", namely:

1. a corroborated factual record, (ii) the acceptance of blame (to be distinguished from expressions of sympathy as in "I am sorry for your loss"), (iii) having standing (only those causally responsible for the offence can apologise), (iv) identification of each harm separately, (v) identification of

the moral principles underlying each harm, (vi) endorsement of the moral principles underlying each harm, (vii) recognition of the victim as a moral interlocutor, (viii) categorical regret (recognition of the fact that one's act constitutes a moral failure), (ix) the performance of the apology, (x) reform and redress (post-apology), (xi) sincere intentions (lying when apologizing would only double the insult to the victim), (xii) and some expression of emotion (sorrow, guilt, empathy, sympathy).

He then concludes that an interpersonal apology fails if it does not satisfy all these criteria. We want to argue here that though Smith's conditions are unusually comprehensive, they are equally confusing. As a matter of fact, some of his conditions are implied in others. Also, it does not necessarily mean that all the conditions have to be met for an apology to be sincere and successful. It will therefore be contended, like the previous scholars, that acknowledgement of the offence, sincere expression of sorrow for committing it and a plea for forgiveness (in any form) are the key elements of a sincere and successful apology.

Good though all the studies reviewed above are, they only stretch out the conditions for successful/sincere performance of apology without making effort to identify sincere/insincere apologies either in naturally occurring conversations or conversations literary text for analysis in to highlight the danger inherent in insincere apology. This is the gap this paper is out to fill. It does a pragmatic analysis of the apologies in *Alapa Apata* with the objective of identifying their sincerity or otherwise.

Methodology

Wole Soyinka was purposively chosen because of his literary versatility and his international recognition while the text was selected because of prominent deployment of both positive and negative apologies, the data needed for the study, in it. It has a total of forty-four instances of apology out of which eleven, which constitute one quarter,

were purposively selected for the study. Five of the apologies are sincere while six are insincere. These were subjected to pragmatic analysis using John Gumperz's Theory of Interactional sociolinguistics.

Theoretical Anchorage

The theory employed for the analysis of the data is John Gumperz's theory of interactional sociolinguistics (IS). The theory was chosen because apology cannot be successfully interpreted without engaging the key tenets of interactional sociolinguistics namely, intention, inferences, common ground and contextualization cues. According to Gumperz (2001), interactional sociolinguistics seeks to explain participants' intention in everyday communication. He is of the opinion that human communication is governed by intention and built on common ground and culturally constrained inferences rooted in discourse and the local context in which they occur. Verschueren (2010) believes that without these three, adequate interpretations of conversations will be difficult. He is of the opinion that interactional sociolinguistics borrows from other disciplines like ethnomethodology and conversation analysis.

The theory is centred on observable phenomena like intonation patterns, rhythm, stress, choice of code and register, certain lexical and syntactic options as well as opening, closing and sequencing strategies. Prosody and accent betray ethnic backgrounds of participants in a discourse. The theory also uses moment-by-moment approach of conversation analysis to work out inferences. It sees common ground, otherwise known as background knowledge or shared knowledge as being highly germane to the process of meaning explication, apart from the visible lexical items. Contextualization cue, another tenet of IS, "is any verbal sign which, when processed with symbolic, grammatical and lexical signs, provides the contextual ground for situated interpretation and thereby affects how constituent messages are understood". Contextualization cues represent speakers' way of signalling and

providing information to interlocutors and audiences about how language is used in a discourse.

Synopsis of the Play

The play *Alapata Apata* revolves round Alaba, a retired butcher who decides to turn a mountain in front of his house to his rest house. His bosom friend, Teacher, bent on celebrating him, engages in planting a board with the inscription of Alapata Apata, meaning the butcher on the rock. But, because the students commissioned to write the inscription are not grounded in Yoruba tonal marks, with the assistance of Alaba who is equally half educated, they write Alapata Apata, meaning the king who rules on the rock, the title that equates him to a king, and consequently sets him against the king of the village and his council of chiefs.

Analysis of Data

The analysis is done based on the objective of the study, which is to demonstrate that not all apologies are sincere depending on how they are performed. This is in line with the belief in the Yoruba community that “*pele lako, o labo*” which literally means that “apology can be both negative and positive”. Both sincere and insincere apologies are therefore examined here, within the ambit of the theory of interactional sociolinguistics to establish this fact. We start with the consideration of sincere apologies.

Extract 1

1st Farmer: From daybreak to sunset. I've never known him miss a day, not since it all started- four weeks going.

2nd Farmer: Forgive me. At first I thought it was Esu setting up his market place of confusion.

1st Farmer: You're not the first to think so. But no, he is no orisa—Esu or anyone else. He's just the Alapata. (P. 25)

From the 1st Farmer's statement: "I've never known him miss a day" in the extract above, it is inferable that they had had a discussion in relation to "him" (Alaba) before coming there. It is also clear that the person about whom they discuss has been doing what he is known for getting to four weeks without missing a day. Similarly, for 2nd Farmer to have apologised here, it can be inferred that he disagreed with 1st Farmer when the utterance was issued. He therefore sees his utterance here as a condemnation of his action which requires an apology. Ordinarily, one would be thinking that the extract is meaningless since there is no coherence in it. The common ground shared by the characters in interaction makes it meaningful. 1st Farmer had told 2nd Farmer that Alaba is always on the rock but he disagreed with him. It is this that facilitated their coming there. His presence there makes 1st Farmer stress it that for four weeks now he (Alaba) has never ceased coming there. The 2nd Farmer's apology is sincere. One, it can be inferred that he acknowledges that he is wrong. Two, there is humility and remorse there even when it is obvious that the two are likely to be of the same age, since they are friends. Three, he pleads for forgiveness. He begins with the explicit strategy and ends it with his reason/justification for his earlier disagreement with 1st Farmer. 2nd Farmer's response: "You're not the first to think so", shows that the apology is effective, the strained relationship is restored.

Extract 2

Senior Boy: Vowels sir. (Demonstrating) The accents go this way.
Or that way. Or...

Alaba: I am not illiterate! I have seen them before. So that's what they're called.

Painter: The accents change the meaning, depending on...

Alaba: Did I ask you for a lesson? If you know so much why are you coming to me?

Both: Vey sorry, very sorry. (P.64)

In the extract above, Senior Boy and Painter are sent by Teacher to go and erect a signboard with the inscription Alapata Apata (Butcher on

the rock) on the rock where Alaba rests. But they have problem accenting the inscription correctly. Senior Boy, believing that it is the vowel letters that take accents then says: “Vowels sir” and demonstrates the ways they go. Painter also emphasises that accents change the meaning of words and, by extension, expressions. This infuriates Alaba to whom they go for assistance. Taking the remark as a mark of rudeness and an affront on his personality, he retorts: “Did I ask you for a lesson? If you know so much why are you coming to me?” Painter and Senior Boy could understand Alaba’s intension in this utterance because they share the same culture with him. Accepting that they have offended him, both of them apologise. It can be contended that this apology is also sincere. They acknowledge their offence, regret committing it and humbly tender an apology. The strategy used here is also explicit because words/ expressions that clearly demonstrate apology, “very sorry, very sorry”, are used. The use of the intensifier, “very”, before the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID), “sorry” and the repetition of the expression further reinforce the sincerity of the apology. The resultant effect is that Alaba’s anger is doused.

Extract 3

Painter: Baba, please, we are both very sorry. (Both prostrate themselves)

Alaba: Just shut your ungodly mouths and work fast... (P. 82)

Painter and Senior Boy are still with Alaba desperate to know the right accents to the inscription on the board. Noting that Alaba that they see as their saviour is only making uncertain efforts at arriving at the right accents, Painter carelessly and innocently says they appear like guess work. This ignites anger in Alaba. Acknowledging that they have offended him, Painter thus apologises on behalf of the two. This is also an instance of sincere apology. The acknowledgment of offence, regret and humility as well as the giving of apology are there. In the words of Sadeghl (2013), two internal intensifiers are used here to strengthen the IFID, sorry. “Please” is used after “Baba”, the offended, while the

second one “very” is used before “sorry”. The tone of the apology is also soft. Finally, non-verbal strategy is used (both prostrate themselves). This form of non-verbal apology is particularly peculiar to the Yoruba community. Males prostrate while the females kneel down while apologizing to elderly people. Ahmed (2017) contends that non-verbal behaviours involve a higher degree of politeness; the apologisers believe verbal form will not be strong enough to convince the offended persons to accept the apology. The sincerity and effectiveness of the apology makes Alaba to urge them to be fast in the work. The tone of his reaction is harsh not because the apology is not accepted but to make them see that it is uncultured to challenge elderly people.

Extract 4

Alaba: Se o si o?

Mother: Ra ra. We came to pay our respects. We are from Abule Itosi, visiting our in-laws. Oh, here Baba. (Takes parcel from Daughter). We brought you a present.

Daughter: We hope you won't take offence. It's not much. This is from my mother and myself. My husband will be bringing more things for you.

Alaba: Now that is nice. I cannot wait to receive him. Omo! (P.116)

The apology in **Extract 4** above also passes the conditions for sincerity. A woman and her daughter are at Alaba's rock to pay him homage and present a gift to him. One of the inferences that can be drawn here is that the woman and her daughter have either drunk from Alaba's wealth of knowledge before and have come to see him again, or have heard about his uncommon wisdom, which attracts them to him. And, in the Yoruba society, in particular, people do not go empty handed to consult a sage. Thus, they bring him a present. But after the gift has been given to him by Mother, Daughter remarks apologising: “We hope you won't take offence. It's not much”. Even when they have come to honour him, they still apologise to him. This form of apology reinforces the belief that apology can be used to demonstrate humility (Ahmed,

2017). He submits that in certain Eastern cultures, even when a worthwhile gift is presented to a person, apology can be tendered to express the speaker's humility. Here, the apologisee did not commit any offence; she willingly offers her host the gift. So, there is no reason for pretentious and insincere apology here.

Extract 5

Teacher: It's all my fault. Me and my big plans...

Alaba: ...You are warned it is going to fall and you keep looking in front of you. ..(P. 169-170)

Teacher's apology here is also an instance of sincere apologies. He accepts responsibility for the offence. His resolute determination to celebrate Alaba the butcher makes him to decide to plant a signboard on which Alapata of Apata (Butcher on the rock) is wrongly accented as Alapata Apata (King on the Rock) on the rock in front of Alaba's house. This sets him (Alaba) against the king and his council. They come to his abode, and accuse him of making himself a king within the domain of another king. The tone of the apology, choice of words and the time of the apology here show that it is sincere. In addition to the acknowledgement of his fault, it can be inferred that Teacher regrets and is ashamed of his action which lands Alaba into a problem. The tone with which Alaba responds to it shows that the apology has achieved its desired effect on him.

Extract 6

Alaba: That man is not for you. Don't take on more than you can chew.

Daanielebo: Don't ever repeat that—ever! You really are beginning to give me—very serious headache.

Alaba: Serious headache, My Excellency. A nobody like myself? Small fry like me?

Daanielebo: (Screaming) Don't say that!!! Don't let me hear that one more time. I'm warning you, stop making fun of me!

Alaba: Ah, sorry o...

Daanielebo: I didn't come here for you advice.

Alaba: Sorry sah, sorry sah. (Pp. 139-140)

In **Extract 6** above, Daanielebo, the state governor, visits Alaba and in the course of their discussion, he makes it clear to Alaba that he will throw justice and fairness into the wind to surpass his master, the former governor, in enriching himself dubiously. He sees Alaba's counsel against the decision as an insult. He therefore retorts screaming: "Don't say that!!! Don't let me hear that one more time. I'm warning you, stop making fun of me". Working on the shared common ground, Alaba sees it as a condemnation and rejection of his advice. He therefore apologises: "Ah, sorry o..." Burning with anger, Daanielebo warned that he is not there for his advice. This informs Alaba's second and final apology: "Sorry sah, sorry sah". Alaba's apologies here are insincere. In Yoruba language, Alaba's "Ah, sorry o..." though has apology form, it is an indirect way of saying that "having rejected a good piece of advice, you are free to carry out your intension". Similarly, the second one: "Sorry sah, sorry sah", is used in Yoruba language to blame oneself for wasting one's time advising a stubborn and obstinate person. In Yoruba community, "sorry sah" is a derogatory form of English's "sorry sir", and it is sometimes used to dissociate oneself from the evil intension of a person that comes to one for advice. This form of apology is ironical in that it is only those who share the culture of the language that will understand it. According to Ahmed (2017), apologies of this nature break the cooperative principle (CP) and politeness principle (PP) because their meanings are not direct.

Extract 7

Daanielebo: You are not yet sorry. I shall make you sorry. You don't know what it is to be sorry. Don't make me let you taste sorrow!

Alaba: To o. (Pressing his lips together) Phe-em. P.140)

Like **Extract 6**, this extract also has insincere apology. In continuation of the discussion in **Extract 6**, though they share the same culture, because hot anger does not allow him to get the full message in Alaba's apologies, Daanielebo continues to vent his annoyance on Alaba for counselling him against his decision. He therefore remarks: "You are not yet sorry. I shall make you sorry." Alaba, realising that Daanielebo is resolutely stubborn in executing his evil intension and he is bent on destroying anybody that stands on his way, he therefore tenders another apology: "To o. (Pressing his lips together) Phe-em." In the Yoruba community, the expression, "To o" simply means: "Don't be annoyed, I'm sorry for advising you appropriately. You can go ahead and carry out your bad intension." When it is accompanied with the paralanguage, pressing of one's lips together and "Phe-em", the speaker is indirectly saying that he will never counsel the person involved against his decision again and he is therefore left to sink or swim. In summary, the two apologies here, as a matter of fact, cannot be referred to as apologies but permission to do one's will. This is the more reason the apology is not accepted by Daanielebo.

Extract 8

Osi: Have you no eyes in your head to see that the royal umbrella has been unfurled? How dare you leave yours there in competition!

Otun: Abasa!

Alaba: (Struggles between his agbada and umbrella. His son helps out) Forgive me. It shall be done. How was I to expect, in broad daylight, no advance warning, no town crier.

Otun: Talk down and look down on His Majesty? Your father did Not dare. Your ancestor on ancestor did not dare... (P.158-159)

Alaba's apology in **Extract 8** above can also not be said to be sincere. The king and his council of chiefs visit him on the rock to accuse him of turning himself to another king in the territory of a king, going by the title Alapata Apata (The King on the Rock) ignorantly inscribed on

the signboard. Without making him to realise his offence, all the chiefs start raining insults on him. Osi accuses Alaba of leaving his umbrella unfurled like the royal one. Making effort to apologise, Alaba struggles between wearing his agbada and folding the umbrella and finally coughs out: “Forgive me. It shall be done. How was I to expect, in broad daylight, no advance warning, no town crier...” It is an indirect attack, accusation and condemnation of the king and his council. The apology is a multiple form. The first one “Forgive me” is formulaic IFID that pleads for forgiveness. This is followed by offer of repair, “It shall be done”. These two seem to be sincere. But the last one is an attack or what scholars on apology call blaming the offended (Cohen and Olshtain, 1981; Ahmed, 2017). He indirectly accuses them that it is not customary for the Oba and his council to visit a person in the Yoruba society without prior information. He thus remarks: “no advance warning, no town crier...” The ellipsis that ends the apology shows that the list is endless. This is clearly an instance of insincere apology, since he does not acknowledge his offence, regret, remorse or humility is not there and he does not know what to correct or redress. Because Otun shares common ground with him, he appropriately takes it as a challenge to the king. He thus asks: Talk down and look down on His Majesty?

Extract 9

Oluwo: Imagine it. He up there, Kabiyesi down here. Are you mad?

Alaba: (Finally jettison trousers, having put on his agbada, leaves umbrella to his son and rushes down. Throws himself flat before the oba) Ah, Chief Araba, my ancient teacher, I am so relieved to find you here. At least you can vouch for me—I meant no disrespect. I was so excited about seeing His Majesty that I forgot I was standing on the rock. (P. 159)

This extract continues the event in **Extract 8**. Oluwo also accuses him of being mad for remaining on the rock when the Oba is down the rock.

He then rushes down and falls down flat before the Oba. This is one of the non-verbal apologies in the Yoruba community. As said earlier, men prostrate while women kneel down while apologising to elderly persons and an oba. But in this context, it can be argued that Alaba's prostration is not a polite non-linguistic behaviour but as argued by Chaemsaitong (2009), politic, because whether or not it is sincere, a man is expected to prostrate full length with their caps removed from their head when greeting an oba in the Yoruba community (Adeleke, 2010). It is therefore not surprising when, in self-defence, he uses one of the chiefs, Chief Araba, his ancient teacher, to testify to the fact that it was not his intent to be disrespectful, but was so excited when he saw them that he forgot he was standing. The inference here is that it is odd to him that they could come there without prior information.

Extract 10

Otun: Guilty of what? So you're aware of your crime? You know the gravity of what you have done?

Alaba: Garaviti! Garaviti! What is that one again? If teacher were here I would ask him. But giliti—that one I know. And I swear by Ogun, swear by my father's ancient butcher's knife that I am giliti. The moment I heard the royal drum, I should have jumped down the rock and broken my neck. (P. 161)

The incident in **Extract 9** continues here. Otun, one of the chiefs now asks Alaba if he knows the offence he is accused of and its gravity. In response, Alaba says he is not familiar with the meaning of "Garavity" and his friend, Teacher who could help him is not there, but he claims to accept his guilt. He then swears using his father's butcher's knife, an object associated with Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron. Yoruba actually use oath-taking similar to that in Kurdish and Persia (Sadeghi, 2013), but in this context, it is used as a mockery. Believing that they share the same cultural knowledge, to make his message clear, he then ironically, in insincere acceptance of his guilt, says the moment he heard the royal drum he ought to have jumped down from the rock and broken his

neck to show respect to the king, which is a sort of indirect condemnation of their action. It is only a person who is not grounded in Yoruba culture that will see it as a sincere apology. It is rather a mockery of the king and his council. Because his co-interlocutors share the same culture with him, they could get his intension and see all he says as an indictment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

So far, apologies in Soyinka's *Alapata Apata* have been studied within the ambit of the theory of interactional sociolinguistics to examine their sincerity or otherwise. It has been demonstrated that there are two sides to apologies in the Yoruba community. They can be positive or negative, sincere or insincere depending on how it is said. This study agrees with some scholars' submission that acknowledgement, recognition or admittance of offence/fault and expression of remorse, regret or guilt, humility and soft tone are key elements of sincere apologies (Tavuchis, 1991; Lazare, 2004 and Friedman, 2006). An utterance may perform a function different from its form. Here comes the pragmatics in insincere apologies. What is said may be different from what is meant (Austin, 1962; Odebunmi, 2015; Akinwotu, 2016 and Akhimien, 2019). Mostly, insincere apologies take the form of genuine apologies which, as shown in this study, are used to attack, challenge or mock. It is also revealed that apologising insincerely has implications for social relationship. It does more damage than not apologizing at all. It strengthens the root of anger and hatred in the offended and may put permanent gulf between them and the offenders. It is therefore recommended that parents should inculcate the culture of apologizing sincerely into their children/wards right from childhood and curriculum planners should incorporate the teaching of apology into primary and secondary school curricula.

References

- Adeleke, D. 2010. Communication in the Yoruba court: reflections from Yoruba video films. *Africa Revista Do Centro De Estudos Africanos* 27(28) 115-134
- Ahmed, A. 2017. The pragmatics of apology speech act behaviour in Iraqi Arabic and English. PhD Thesis. Dept. of English, De Montfort University. Xiii+309pp.
- Akhimien, P. 2019. On defining pragmatics. Bello, O. and Hunjo, H. (Eds.) *Sociolinguistics, (Critical) Discourse, Pragmatics & Nigerian English: A Festschrift in Honour of Dele Samuel Adeyanju*. Lagos: Digitech Creative Press House. 538-551
- Akinwotu, S. 2016. Utterance acts: Some theoretical approaches to the study of utterance meaning. Odebunmi, A., Osisanwo, A., Bodunde, H. and Ekpe, S. (Eds.) *Grammar, Applied Linguistics and Society A Festschrift for Wale Osisanwo*. Ile-Ife: OAU Press. 81-98
- Bianchi, H. 1995. *Justice as sanctuary: Toward a new system of crime control*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Blanchard, K and McBride, M. 2003. *The one-minute apology: A powerful way to make things better*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J. and Kasper, G. (Eds.). 1989. *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Braithwaite, J. 2000. Repentance, rituals and restorative justice. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 8(1), 115-131.
- Chaemsaitong, K. 2009. A historical pragmatic study of apologies: A case study of the Essex pauper's letters. *Journal of Humanities*, 17(1), 83-99.
- Cohen, A. and Olshtain, E. 1981. Developing a measure of sociocultural competence: The case of apology. *Language learning*, 31(1), 113-134.
- Friedman, H. 2006. The power of remorse and apology. *Journal of College & Character* 7(1) 1-14.

- Goffman, E. 1972. On Face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. J. Laver & S. Hutcheson (Eds.) *Communication in Face-to-face Interaction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 179-196.
- Kim, P., Ferrin, D., Cooper, C. and Dirks, K. 2004. Removing the shadow of suspicion: The effects of apology versus denial for repairing competence versus integrity-based trust violation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(1), 104-118.
- Lazare, A. 2004. *On apology*. New York: OUP.
- Mead, J. 2005. Deal in turkey-throwing case after victim calls for leniency. *New York Times*. Pp. B1, B6.
- Sadeghl, M. 2013. A cross-linguistic investigation of language apology speech act: a case of Persian and Kurdish children. *Journal of Languages and Culture* 4(3), 30-38.
- Tavuchis, N. 1991. *A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press