

Universality of the Functions of Nonverbal Communication: The Example of Yoruba Novels

Adesanya, Ahmed O., PhD

Abstract

Nonverbal communication is germane to the understanding of the culture of any society as it helps in decoding the hidden patterns of life embedded in such cultures. Scholars in the communication and allied disciplines have carried out various research works on this important aspect of human life, examining its origin, types, characteristics, usages and the likes but are yet to determine the universality of its functions in a specific culture. This paper covered the lacuna as it examined the functions of nonverbal communication with a view to establishing its universality using the lens of Yorùbá novels. The semiotic theories of Ferdinand De-Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce were adopted and twelve Yorùbá novels consisting of mythological novels, novels of realism and crime novels were purposively selected because they contain the nonverbal codes needed for the analysis of this study. Data were subjected to textual and semiotic analyses. Findings unveiled repetitive functions manifested in social and mythological novels, contradiction function reflected in realism and crime novels, complementation function revealed in mythological and novels of realism, substitution function realized in novels of realism, accenting function established in crime and novels of realism and regulation function conveyed in mythological and novels of realism. Functions of nonverbal communication are universal and not only occur in every culture but also help in the understanding of the culture.

Keywords: non-verbal communication: culture, semiotics, Yorùbá novels.

Introduction

Nonverbal communication performs various important roles in the understanding of the attitudes, expressions, passions, behaviours and the general lifestyle of a particular society. It can be regarded as the latent form of communication which guides the society. Nonverbal communication is an embodiment of the culture of any society by revealing the way of life of such society. Scholars in communication studies (Infante et. Al, 1990; De Vito 1992; Knapp & Hall 2002; Pearson et.al 2003) maintain in their different studies that nonverbal communication performs six major functions. Yorùbá novels have been subjected to analysis to determine the veracity of the universality of these given functions.

Literature Review and Theory

One of the earliest researchers of nonverbal communication is Darwin (1872) who observes the field from a scientific point of view. Darwin (1872: 8 – 11) considers

© *Òpàńbàtà: LASU Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 2, July 2021

eight items in his study. These are: “infants, who exhibit many emotions... with extraordinary force” (p.8) He also considers “insane... as they are liable to the stronger passions, and give uncontrolled vent to them”. Equally, he reflects on photography, painting and sculpture, observation of different races of the world and finally, observation of animals. Darwin (1872) investigates how different physiological features in man and animals are used to express emotions like excitement, pain, rage, joy, terror, astonishment, sobbing, anxiety, grief, dejection, despair, love, devotion, pride, determination, sulkiness, hatred, patience, contempt, self-attention, shame, shyness and a host of others.

Darwin (1872) is a scientist and approaches nonverbal communication from the angle of science, making a general global observation. This present study is from a literary point of view. What is more, attention is focused on characters (human beings) and rarely animals except where such characters have a relationship with animals that lead to nonverbal communication. Notwithstanding, Darwin has charted a path to toe in nonverbal communication study.

Another early scholar who contributes immensely to nonverbal communication is an anthropologist Edward T. Hall. Hall (1959, 1966) in separate studies, explores nonverbal communication in both human and animal behaviours. Hall (1959: xviii) avers that “before the days of written scores, people learned informally by imitation” and maintains that nonverbal communication consists of “the hidden rules that govern people” (p. 32.) Hall (1959: xiii) attributes all the negative traits of the Americans like ethnocentrism and high-handedness to their ignorance of nonverbal communication in what is expected of them in other countries and what they (Americans) communicate to other people by their own normal behaviour.

In this research, the researcher analyses the said hidden rules as it affects the Yorùbá society, using the novel as an example.

Ekman and Friesen (1969: 49 – 98) investigate nonverbal communication. Both authors, who are psychologists, observe the categories, origins, usage and coding of nonverbal communication. Five forms of nonverbal communication are identified. These are emblems, illustrators, regulators, affect displays and adaptors. In describing emblems, Ekman and Friesen (1969: 63) note:

Emblems are those nonverbal acts which have a direct verbal translation, or dictionary definition, usually consisting of a word or two, or perhaps a phrase. This verbal definition or translation of the emblem is well-known by all members of a group, class or culture. While we usually think of emblems as general, at least within a culture or language group, clearly for groups within a culture such emblems as secret signs for fraternal orders fit our definition. An emblem may repeat, substitute, or contradict some part of the concomitant verbal behaviour.

Ò PÁÑBÀTA

The work of Ekman and Friesen (1969), is useful in this study because it is in the category of the earliest research that charted the way for scholars in nonverbal communication.

Communication researchers also devote attention to nonverbal category. Examples of such are: Infante et al. (1990), De Vito (1992), Pearson et al (2003) and Adedina (2003) who have added their voices to nonverbal communication. Infante et al. (1990) identify seven forms of nonverbal communication. These are kinesics, eye and facial behaviour, vocalics, physical appearance, proxemics, touch and time. Devito (1992) pinpoints nine types of nonverbal communication. They are body movement, facial communication, eye communication, touch communication, paralanguage, spatial messages, territoriality, artifactual communication and temporal communication. Pearson et al. (2003) dichotomize nonverbal communication into seven. They are bodily movement and facial expression, bodily appearance, space, time, touching, vocal cues and clothing and other artifacts. Adedina (2003) classifies nonverbal communication into thirteen. They are body language, facial expression and oculesic, posture, body physiological shape, gestures, signs and symbols, spatial arrangements, chronemics, proxemics, paralanguage, body designs and wearing apparels, handwriting and colour symbolism. These works have analyzed various forms of nonverbal communication but with the functions passively treated. This research work has closed the gap by analyzing all the various functions of nonverbal communication and relating them to the Yoruba society.

The theory adopted in this study is semiotics. Semiotics is a communication/signification theory that investigates sign systems and the modes of representation that human beings and animals use to convey feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas and ideologies. Semiotics is rarely considered a field of study in its own right; however, it is used in a broad range of disciplines, including medicine, science, arts, literature, anthropology, sociology and mass media. Semiotics attracts cultural and psychological patterns that underlie communication and other cultural expressions. Eco (1976) avers that semiotics is the study of the action of signs.

However, modern day semiotics can be traced to two important personalities according to Chandler (2006). The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) who is regarded as the father of linguistics, and the pragmatist philosopher and logician, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) are associated with semiotics of the modern day. Saussure uses the term “*semiology*” and the term is generally adopted by scholars who belong to the same school of thought with him. On the other hand, the American logician, Charles Sanders Pierce terms the general theory of the action of signs *semiotics*. This term, as expected, has been adopted

by the scholars who are his adherents. While Saussure emphasizes the social function of the sign, Peirce emphasizes its logical function. Both aspects are closely correlated and today, the two words ‘semiology’ and ‘semiotics’ refer to the same discipline with the Europeans using the former and the Americans using the latter.

Signification

Signification according to Saussure (1974:114) is the relationship between the two parts of the sign, which is the signifier and the signified. Barthes (1964:33) also agrees with Saussure that signification is not the ‘thing’, but the mental representation of the ‘thing’, which is the concept. He maintains that signification is the association of the signifier with the signified but points out that the association is arbitrary. Eco (1976:8) explains that “a signification system is an autonomous semiotic construct that has an abstract mode of existence independent of any possible communicative act it makes possible”. A synthesis of the author’s views above on signification shows that it is the outcome of the relationship between the signifier and the signified but it will be too hasty to jump to a conclusion that such a relationship is arbitrary as noted by Barthes. An examination of the three modes of the signification as postulated by Peirce and most commonly employed within a broadly Saussurean framework will shed more light on the relationship. They are symbol/symbolic, icon/iconic and index/indexical.

According to Chandler (2006:49), symbolic signification is a mode in which the signifier does not have any resemblance with the signified which is fundamentally arbitrary or purely conventional – that the relationship must be studied. Examples are language (alphabetical letters, punctuation marks, words, phrases and sentences), numbers, Morse code, traffic lights, national flags, etc. The symbolic signification does not have a natural link between the form and the thing represented, but only has a conventional link. The traffic sign of an inverted triangle is such symbol, as a matter of fact; it shares no natural link between its form and its meaning, ‘give right of way’. The link between its form and meaning is purely conventional. The same may be said of military emblems, the naira sign ₦, almost all flags and all languages. Thus there is no natural connection between the Yorùbá word *sá ló* (run away) and its meaning. According to William et. al. (2004:90), the term *symbolic* as used in linguistics is understood in the sense that, by general consent, people have “agreed” upon the pairing of a particular form with a particular meaning. This sense of *symbolic* goes back to the original meaning of the Greek word *symbolon* ‘a token of recognition’ used between two guests or friends, e.g. a ring broken into two halves, which allowed them to identify each other after a long time by matching the two parts and checking whether they fit

together. The two halves of the ring are inseparable, just like the form of a word and its meaning.

Chandler (2006:49) describes icon as a mode in which the signifier is perceived as *resembling* or imitating the signified (recognizably looking, sounding, feeling, tasting or smelling like it) – being similar in possessing some of its qualities: e.g. a portrait, a cartoon, a scale-model, onomatopoeia, metaphors, ‘realistic’ sounds in ‘music programme’, sound effects in radio drama, a dubbed film soundtrack, imitative gestures among others. Iconic sign is divided into three namely, images, diagrams and metaphors. According to Peirce (1931–58, 2.99) icons have qualities which ‘resemble’ those of the objects they represent, and they ‘excite analogous sensations in the mind’. However, Langer (1951:67) is of the opinion that “the picture is essentially a symbol, not a duplicate of what it represents only in some respects. What we tend to recognize in an image are analogous relations of parts to a whole”

Chandler (2006:49) describes indexical sign as a mode in which the signifier is *not arbitrary but directly connected* in some way (physically or causally) to the signified – this link can be observed or inferred: e.g. ‘natural signs’ (smoke, thunder, footprints, echoes, non-synthetic odours and flavours), medical symptoms (pain, a rash, pulse rate), measuring instruments (weatherclock, thermometer, clock, spirit-level), ‘signals’ (a knock on a door, a phone ringing), pointers (a pointing ‘index’ finger, a directional signpost), recordings (a photograph, a film, video or television shot, an audio-recorded voice), personal ‘trademarks’ (handwriting, catchphrase) and indexical words (‘that’, ‘this’, ‘here’, ‘there’).

In his own view of indexical sign, Danesi (2004: 31) states:

Indexicality manifests itself in all kinds of representational behaviours. Its most typical manifestation can be seen in the pointing index finger, which humans over the world use instinctively to point out and locate things, people, and events in the world... Indexicality is evidence that human consciousness is not only attentive to patterns of colour, shape, etc., resulting in iconic signs, but also to the recurrent relational and cause and effect patterns that are contingent on time and space.

Expressing their own viewpoint, William et. al (2004:93) maintain that index fulfils its function by ‘pointing out’ its referent, typically by being a partial or representative sample of it. According to the scholars, indexes are not arbitrary, since their presence has in some sense been caused by their referent. For this reason it is sometimes said that there is a causal link between an indexical sign and its referent. The track of an animal, for example, points to the existence of the animal by representing part of it. The presence of smoke is an index of fire. A very important kind of indexical sign, referred to as symptomatic sign is mentioned by Lyons (1977:108) and William et. al (2004:93-94). According to William et. al

(2004), symptomatic signs spontaneously convey the internal state or emotions of the sender and thus represent the sender in an indexical manner. For example, the fact that our body temperature rises when we are ill is a spontaneous reflection of our internal state. Equally, when someone steps on our foot and we cry out, the cry is a spontaneous reflection of our internal state (surprise and pain) and thus constitutes a symptomatic sign. The authors express that since symptomatic signs are spontaneous, they may be considered to be deliberately selected by the sender for purposes of communication. They note that people do not choose to cry out in pain in the same way as they might, for example, decide to name their dwelling place a house, home, dwelling, or residence in the appropriate circumstances (William, et.al 2004).

In their exploration of indexical sign, Johansen and Larsen (2002:32) provide a vivid example that since the wind affects the trees by bending them in the same direction, the slant of the trees can function as a sign of the dominant wind direction. This is regarded as a causal relationship whereby the dynamical object influences the sign; and without the bending force of the wind, functioning as the dynamical object, the trees would not function as a sign.

From the foregoing, it is noteworthy to mention that none of each of the three modes of signification has an independent quality but one quality is dominant over others, depending on the context. In the example given above, whereby the knock on the door in *Omọ̀ Òkú Ọ̀run* is referred to as indexical signification, the same signifier may also be termed as symbolic in another context where it is made a conventional sign of the presence of a person at the door.

Analysis

Pearson et. Al (2003: 104) assert that nonverbal communication performs repetitive function. The authors agree that this occurs when a message is sent both verbally and nonverbally simultaneously. This function is expressed in *Igbó Olódùmarè* when Olówó-aiyé and his wife arrived at the palace of the king:

Nígbà tí nwón dé àfin oba Igbó Olódùmarè òrò pa èsì jẹ. Nítorí àfin nà dára ju nkan tí ẹnu ma sọ. Nígbà tí nwón dé ita ibẹ̀ ọba pàpà wà nínú ilé, nígbà tí ó sì yọ sí bàbá mi, ẹrù ba bàbá mi. Wéré ó dọ̀bálẹ̀ ó bu erùpẹ̀ lé orí, ó sì yẹ̀ ẹ̀ sí bí ọba (p.44)

[When they got to the palace of the king of Olódùmarè's forest, it is a different story. Because the palace is very beautiful, more beautiful than a verbal description. When they got to its front, the king himself was inside his chambers and when he came out to meet my father, my father was afraid. Immediately, he prostrated, threw sands on his head and shouted: 'your royal highness' paying homage to him as a king.]

In the excerpt above, two nonverbal message codes and one verbal message are

Ò PÁÑBÀTA

simultaneously used by Olówó-aiyé. He prostrated, threw sands on his head and shouted. The act of prostration and throwing of sands on the head are nonverbal cues of paying homage to a Yorùbá king. This is symbolic signification which is repeated by the verbal homage – the shout of “your royal highness”

Equally, in *Ọmọ Ọkú Ọrun*, Mama Wálé, explaining her story to the judge in court, performs the repetitive function of nonverbal communication:

Kò sí ẹni tí ó mò pè mo lè wà láàyè nínú àwọn ará ilé, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni èmi náà kò rí ẹni-kan rán sí ilé ní iwọn ọ̀sẹ̀ méfà tí mo fi wà ní ilé Apeja náà pé mò ń bọ̀ títi mo fi yọ sí ilé. ẚ̀gbọ̀n nígbà tí mo dé ilé ni mo bá Àbèké yí. Ó na ọwọ̀ sí obinrin náà ní ibi tí ó da orí kodò sí. (p.44)

[Nobody knows that I could be alive among the people at home, also I couldn't find anyone to send home for about six weeks that I spent in the fisherman's house that I was coming till I got home. But when I got home, I met this Àbèké. She points to the woman where she bows her head.]

Mama Wale explains to the judge that she met Àbèké when she got home and points to her at the same time. This pointing by finger is referred to as indexical signification as observed by Chandler (2006: 49). Mama Wale uses indexical words and indexical sign at the same time. The indexical word used is Àbèké yí (this Àbèké) and the indexical sign is the pointing of her finger.

The repeating function of nonverbal communication is also seen in *Sisí Jetue*, when Mosúnmólá snaps her fingers at Kúnlé after her utterance:

Mosúnmólá sọ̀rọ̀ sí ara re lẹ̀yìn tí wọn bá wọn parí ìjà náà, ó ní hẹ̀n, kò burú, ẚ́mí ni Kúnlé ba tiẹ̀ jẹ̀ tó bá yí?... olóṣi, èmi ló pè lásẹ̀wó, kò burú bẹ̀ẹ̀ ló sọ̀ pé kí n lọ yọ oyún osù méta dā̀nù lójọ̀sí, ẹ̀ni ibi, ọ̀tá Ọlórun... gbogbo igi tó bá ti dāràn eye ègà kí í léwé lóri... Mosún tàka sí i. Ọ̀rọ̀ náà dùn ún púpọ̀, nítorí pé, Kúnlé ti se ilé rí ọ̀pọ̀ ǹhkan fún un. (p.33)

[Mosúnmólá speaks to herself after they have settled the fight for them, she says 'okay' Is it me that Kúnlé debased to this level?... a poverty-stricken person, it is me that he called a prostitute, no problem, that is how he asked me to go and abort three-month pregnancy the last time, an evil one, God's enemy... every tree that enters into the trouble of the weaver does not have leaves... Mosún snaps her fingers at him. The issue is so painful to her because Kúnlé has promised her so many things.]

The snapping of Mosún's fingers at Kúnlé in the excerpt repeats all the curses she has hurled on Kúnlé who just dumped her after luring her to abort a pregnancy. Snapping of fingers is a symbolic signification of nonverbal Yorùbá communication which indicates a desire to deal shrewdly with anyone who is snapped at. It repeats the verbal communication expressed by Mosún in the text.

The second function of nonverbal communication is referred to as

contradiction function by Pearson et. al.(2003: 104) say that “contradiction occurs when your verbal and nonverbal messages conflict”. The authors maintain that this often happens accidentally except in humour and sarcasm which are intentional. However, Knapp & Hall (2002: 13) aver that the conflicting function occurs when a person has a mixed feeling about something. They explain:

When do these conflicting messages occur? In some cases it is a natural response to a situation in which communicators perceive themselves in a bind. They do not want to tell truth, and they do not want to lie. As a result, their ambivalence and frustration produce a discrepant message... suppose you have just given a terrible presentation, and you ask me how you did. I may say you did fine, but my voice, face and body may not support my words.

In *Ìka Àbámò*, after Toyin has seduced her tenant, Níyì, a younger man and Toyin had become pregnant, Níyì was sad and downcast:

Níyì kò sàì jẹka àbámò ìbálòpò rẹ pẹlú Mádààmù. Ó ní dá ara rẹ lẹbi. Ó nà kalẹ sí ori bẹ̀ẹ̀dì rẹ. Ó ro dódó bí ẹni tí ó sàgbákò ebi. Ọrẹ rẹ jókòó tí í létí ibùsùn rẹ. Ó ní bí í léèrè ohun tó sẹlẹ. Níyì, àní kín ló mú ọ? Nnkan kan kò mú mi. kín wá ló dé tó o ro nọ kalẹ bí ẹni ọfọ sẹ? ‘Kò sí.’ (p. 74)

[Níyì did not fail to regret his sexual relations with the madam. He kept condemning himself. He lied on his bed. He was downcast like someone who has been incapacitated by hunger. His friend sat beside him on his bed and kept asking him about what happened. ‘Níyì I say what happened to you? ‘Nothing happened to me’. ‘Why then are you downcast like someone who is bereaved?’ ‘Nothing’.]

Níyì’s verbal message contradicts his body language. His unusual coldness and downcast posture makes his friend Dayò to keep pressing and pestering him before he finally reveals to Dayò how his landlady seduced him to have a sexual relations with her which has resulted into a pregnancy. This makes Níyì’s nonverbal behaviour conflicts with his utterance because he neither wants to tell the truth nor lie to his friend (Knapp & Hall, 2002: 13).

Also, in *Àsírí Amòòkùnjalẹ Tú*, contradiction occurs between Filişia’s nonverbal communication and her verbal language when Akin and Tunde were cross-examining her about the thief that stole Orímóógùnjẹ’s money.

Ojúú Filişia rẹwẹ̀sì, wọn sì rí i kedere pé ìdààmú bá’a, bó tilẹ̀ jẹ pé ó ní gbiyànjú láti fi ìdààmú rẹ pamó. Ó dáhùn pé, “Njẹ wọn rí ẹ̀rì kankan sí èyíkẹ̀yì ní nínú àwọn ìyàwó rẹ? Ó lẹ̀ jẹ pé ọkan tàbí méjì nínú wọn ló wà níbẹ̀ nígbà tí nnkan yìí sẹlẹ̀, tó sì ní nnkan abàmì kan nínú ilée rẹ tí ènìyàn lẹ̀ fura sí. (p. 107)

[Felicia’s face became depressed and they see her clearly that she is troubled even though she is trying to hide her troubles. She answered that “did they see any evidence against any of his wives? It may be that one or two of them were there when this thing was happening, that has something strange in her house which could arouse suspicion.]

Ò PÁÑBÀTA

In the discussion, Felicia tries to distract the detectives by shifting the suspicion of the theft to the other wives of Orímóógùnjé, thereby absolving herself of any blame but her facial expression which indicates depression which is indexical signification spurs the detectives in their investigation.

Felicia confessed to Akin, in the end:

Bí èyin ọlọfin-ín-tótó ti máa n fa aṣọ ya mọ eégún lóri. È n tú àṣírí ayé sóde. È fẹ́ bayé jé. Kò dára bẹ̀ẹ́ ṣáá o. Mo gbà nísinsinyí pé ọgbón-ọn tiyín ti borí tẹ̀mi. Ẹ̀gbón báwo lẹ́ ẹ́ mọ pé owó náá ti sọ̀nù kí bàbá yẹ̀n tó kú? (p 109)

[That is how you detectives do! You do tear clothes off masquerade's head. You uncover the world's secret. You want to destroy the world. It is not good like that. I now agree that your wisdom has overcome mine. But how did you know that the money had been lost before that man died?]

Also, in *Owó Èjẹ*, Baba Wálé's nonverbal communication conflicts with his spoken words when Akin accuses him of the murder of Súlè:

Akín dáhùn, ó ní: 'Dájúdájú, Súàrá Owóyemí, tí è n pè ní Bàbá Wálé, òun ló pa Súlè' ó fa Bàbá Wálé lówó, ó fi I lé Tundé ọ̀gá ọ̀lọpáá lówó, ó ní, 'Èni tí è n wá niyẹn'. Ara Bàbá Wálé n gbòn látòkè dèlẹ̀. Ó wá n mí fikánfikàn bí ẹ̀wiri alágbèdẹ̀. Fún iṣẹ́jú méjì kò lé sọ̀rọ̀. Lẹ́yìn tí ara rẹ̀ balẹ̀, Tundé ọ̀gá-ọ̀lọpáá bèèrè lówó rẹ̀, 'Sọ́ fún mi, Bàbá Wálé, ẹ́ ̀wọ lo pa Súlè?' Bàbá Wálé dáhùn, 'Rára o; èmi kò pa Súlè, ọmọ ni Súlè jé fún mi. Rára kì í ẹ́ èmi'. (p. 86)

[Akin replied again, he says: 'Surely, Súàrá Owóyemí, that you call Bàbá Wálé, he is the one that murdered Sule'. He holds Bàbá Wálé's hand and hands him over to Tunde, the chief police officer, and says 'That is the person you are looking for'. Bàbá Wálé begins to breathe heavily like the blacksmith's bellow for two minutes, he could not talk. After putting himself together, Tunde, the chief police officer asked him, 'Tell me, Bàbá Wálé, did you kill Sule?' Bàbá Wálé answered, 'No, I did not murder Sule. Sule is a son to me. No, it is not me.]

Even though Bàbá Wálé denied the allegation of Sule's murder by the words he said, his body language which is indexical signification confirmed him culpable. This is in line with Burgoon (1980: 184) who believes that when verbal and nonverbal message conflict "the nonverbal channels carry more information and are believed more than the verbal band"

The third function of nonverbal communication is complementation. Knapp & Hall (2002: 16) agree that "nonverbal behaviour can modify, or elaborate on verbal messages'. The authors explain that the complementation function enables us to decode messages more accurately and may equally be of help in remembering the verbal message. The complementation function manifests in *Igbó Olódùmarè*, during a discussion between Bàbá-onírùngbòn-yéúké and Olówó-aiyé:

Nígbà tí mo wí bá yí tán, okùnrin náà wò mí tí títí, ó mi orí sókè sódò, ó ní “Ìwọ ọmọdẹ yí mà gbọn”. Nígbà tí ó wí bá yí tán, ó tún ní bá iyókù ọrọ rẹ lẹ... (p. 107)

[When I have said this, the man looked steeply at me, he shook his head up and down, and said “You this little boy is wise”. When he has said this, he continued with the remaining part of his speech...]

In the excerpt above, *Bàbá-onírùngbòn-yéúkẹ’s* nonverbal message – *okùnrin náà wò mí tí títí, ó mi orí sókè sódò* (the man looked steeply at me, he shook his head up and down) complements what he later said – *ìwọ ọmọdẹ yí mà gbọn* (you this little boy is wise). Aside the complementation, the look and the approving nod which are symbolic signification modify the wisdom he finds in *Olówó-aiyé*.

Also, the complementation function is seen in *Àdìtù Olódùmarè* when *Àdìtù* goes to the palace to visit *Àrẹmọ*:

Şùgbón ní ọjó gan tí Àdìtù lọ sí àfin tí ó dá ọrò náà sílẹ, bí ó ti fi ẹnu bà á tí ó dárúko Èşù-lẹhìn-ibejì ní Àrẹmọ tí ó lọ kí ju ọwọ sí I pé kí ó pa ẹnu rẹ mọ àwọn ní fẹ mú u ní àfin ní àkókò náà, ó ti bá ọkan nínú àwọn iyáwó Àrẹmọ şe ètò pé òun ní bọ wá sí ọdọ rẹ, ó mọ pé ọba kò gbọdọ rí ọkùnrinkọkùnrin pẹlú obinrin àfin. (p. 90)

[But on the day that *Àdìtù* got to the palace, he opened up the issue, as he started and mentioned *Èşù-lẹhìn-ibejì* that *Àrẹmọ* that he went to greet waived his hand at him that he should keep quiet because they want to arrest him at the palace at that time, he has planned to visit one of *Àrẹmọ’s* wives and he knows that the king must not see any man with a woman that dwells in the palace.]

In the excerpts above, before the arrival of *Àdìtù* at the palace, plans have been in top gear towards the arrest of *Èşù-lẹhìn-ibejì* who has been causing confusion in *Ajédùbùlẹ*, especially between *Àdìtù* and *Iyùnádé* his fiancé. *Àrẹmọ*, who does not want *Àdìtù* to talk so as not to scare away the victim *Èşù-lẹhìn-ibejì* uses nonverbal cue – *Àrẹmọ tí ó lọ kí ju ọwọ sí i pé kí ó pa ẹnu rẹ mọ, àwọn ní fẹ mú un ní àfin ní àkókò náà* (*Àrẹmọ* that he went to greet waved his hand at him that he should keep quiet because they want to arrest him at the palace at that time). The waving of hand, a symbolic signification is therefore used by *Àrẹmọ* to elaborate the idea of quietude on the part of *Àdìtù* so as not to disrupt the plan of arrest of *Èşù-lẹhìn-ibejì*.

The complementation function of nonverbal communication equally manifests in *Iyán Ogún Odún* between *Mámá* (a chief matron) and *Bímólá* a young medical doctor. *Mámá* advises *Bímólá* against discussing her domestic affairs in the office among workers in the hospital, luring her to take a secret action:

Mámá wòtún-wòsì pé bóyá ẹniyàn ní bọ. Ìgbà tí kò rí ẹnikẹni, ó fọwọ tọ Bímólá, ó ní “Bímólá, wò ó, fẹnu mẹnù; fètè métè lawo ilé ayé. Orúkọ tá o sọ ọmọ ẹni, inú ẹni

Ò PÁÑBÀTA

ní í gbé.... Bí ẹnu rẹ kò bá ní máa jó bélébélé bí iná inú oyé, n ó mú ọ lọ sí ibi kan. Wọ̀n yóò s̄j̄jú ọ̀kọ rẹ lára Mopé ọ̀mọ rẹ bọ sára tirẹ ni, kò jù bẹ̀ẹ̀ ọ. (p. 28)

[Mamá looked at the right and left side to see whether anyone is coming. When she sees no one, she touched Bimbólá and said “Bimbó, look, keeping sealed lips is the way of life. The name that one will give to one’s child, lives inside one... If your mouth will not be dancing like wildfire in the harmattan, I will take you to somewhere. They will shift the attention of your husband away from Mopé his daughter to you and that is all.]

Bimbólá, a medical doctor becomes envious of her step-daughter at home and discusses with her colleagues about the full attention given to the step-daughter by her husband. Mámá, the chief matron, takes Bimbólá to a lonely place, using the nonverbal medium of touch – *ó fowó tó Bimbólá* (she touched Bimbólá), a symbolic signification mode, not only to gain her full attention but also to complement the advice given to her to be secretive and visit someone who will help in diverting her husband’s attention from her step-daughter to her.

The fourth function of nonverbal communication is substitution. According to Pearson et. al. (2003: 105)

Substitution occurs when you use no verbal language at all. You roll your eyes, you stick out your tongue, you gesture thumbs down, or your shrug. In most cases, your intended message is fairly clear.

In *Àfowófà*, the substitution function of nonverbal communication is seen when the vehicle which S̄j̄ji boards to Jos takes off at the garage.

Ní déédé agogo méfà iròlẹ̀ ni ọ̀kọ̀ tí S̄j̄ji wọ̀ sí ní ibùdókò. Àmòkẹ̀ wá bú sẹ̀kún gidi bí ẹ̀ni tí ọ̀fọ̀ sẹ̀. Bí ẹ̀ni pé S̄j̄ji kò ní wálẹ̀ mọ̀ ló rí lójú rẹ̀. S̄j̄ji n̄ juwọ̀ sí àwọ̀n èrò tó sìn ín wá sí idíkọ̀ àwọ̀n náà sì n̄ juwọ̀ sí i títí tí ọ̀kọ̀ fi bọ̀dì mọ̀ wọ̀n lójú. (p. 14)

[The vehicle that S̄j̄ji boarded takes off at exactly six p.m. from the garage. Àmòkẹ̀ then bursts into great tears like someone who has been bereaved. It seems to her as if S̄j̄ji would not return home again. S̄j̄ji is waving to those that saw him off to the garage who are also waving to him until the vehicle gets out of their sight.]

Àmòkẹ̀’s attitude at the garage – *Àmòkẹ̀ wá bú sẹ̀kún gidi bí ẹ̀ni tí ọ̀fọ̀ sẹ̀* (Àmòkẹ̀ then bursts into great tears like someone who has been bereaved), an iconic signification is a substitution for her sad state. Also, S̄j̄ji’s reaction to those that saw him off to the garage – *S̄j̄ji n̄ juwọ̀ sí àwọ̀n èrò tó sìn ín wá sí idíkọ̀ àwọ̀n náà sì n̄ juwọ̀ sí i* (S̄j̄ji waving to those that saw him off to the garage who are also waving to him), a symbolic signification exhibits substitution. The waving of hands is a substitute for the verbal message – good-bye.

In another text, *Ayò Mi Dé*, Jàndùkú and Ológbìn-ín displayed nonverbal substitute:

Jàndùkú jó lọ sí ibi tí Ológbìn-ín tí í ẹ̀ba orílẹ̀ Ọ̀gbín jókòó sí. Ó foríbalẹ̀ fún Kábíyèsí. Onítòhún ju irùkẹ̀rẹ̀ sí i, ó sì dídẹ̀; ó n b́a eégún jó lọ sí ibi tí ètùtù yóò tí wáyé. Onílù kò dákẹ̀, bèè ni kò pa ohùn ilù dà. (p. 4)

[Jàndùkú danced to where Ológbìn-ín who is the king of Ọ̀gbín nation sat. He bowed to the ground before the king who reciprocated by waving his horse-tail at him; he then got up and danced along with the masquerader to where the ritual would take place. The drummer did not stop; neither did he change the tone of the drum.]

The behaviour of Jàndùkú—*ó foríbalẹ̀ fún Kábíyèsí* (He bowed to the ground before the king), a symbolic signification is a substitute for verbal greeting and paying of homage before the king. Equally, the king's reaction—*Onítòhún ju irùkẹ̀rẹ̀ sí i* (the king waved his horsetail to him), an indexical signification is also a substitute for verbal greeting. The horse-tail is a symbol of authority for a Yorùbá king and when he waves it to anyone, it signifies greetings, love or approval of the person's attitude by the king.

In *Ojú Olórò*, in reaction to Chief Olówójeunjéjé's speech, the manager and his accountant substituted their reply with an approving nod:

Olóyè Olówójeunjéjé ẹ̀ wà lódò Mọ̀nìjà àti Àkàúntàúntì tó n fi ilé ayé hàn wọn ... olẹ̀ òun jàgùdà kan ò lè dùn ikookò mọ̀ wa mọ̀; lójú àwọn gbanigbani; lójú kinní kan abẹnu gòhngò... Mọ̀nìjà àti Àkàúntàúntì fi ori mími jẹ́rìí sí ohun tí Olówójeunjéjé sọ. (p. 47)

[Chief Olówójeunjéjé is still with the Manager and the Accountant, showing them the way of life No thief or robber can harass people like us again; in the presence of those who deliver; in the presence of charm... *Manager and the Accountant gave an approving nod to what Olówójeunjéjé said.* (Emphasis, mine)]

The Manager and his Accountant's reaction to the utterance of Chief Olówójeunjéjé – *Mọ̀nìjà àti Àkàúntàúntì fi ori mími jẹ́rìí sí ohun tí Olówójeunjéjé sọ* (Manager and the Accountant gave an approving nod to what Olówójeunjéjé said), a symbolic mode of signification are substitution for the verbal language – yes, which answers the Chief.

The fifth function of the nonverbal communication is emphasis or accenting function. In their description of accenting behaviour, Knapp & Hall (2002: 16) declare:

Nonverbal behaviour may accent (amplify) or moderate (tone down) parts of the verbal message. Accenting is much like underlining or italicizing written words to emphasize them. Movements of the head and hands are frequently used to accent the verbal message... the intensity of a facial expression of emotion, for example, may be revealed by observing other parts of the body.

In *Aṣenibánidárò*, the accenting function of nonverbal communication manifests:

Ò PÁÑBÀTA

Adéògún dáhùn wí pé, “Mo sọ fún ọ, iwọ Ilésanmí, nígbà tí afẹ́fẹ́ òjò dé lálẹ́ ọjọ àisùn, pé mo gbágbé kí n ti fèrèsé ilé mi, àti pé mo fẹ́ lọ sí ilé kí n lọ ti àwọn fèrèsé kí òjò má baà fẹ́ wọ ilé, àbí?” Ilésanmí kò lè fọhùn, şùgbọ́n ó mi orí rẹ́ láti jẹ́rìí pé òtítító ni. (p. 62)

[Adéògún replied that, “I told you, you Ilésanmí, when the rainstorm arrived on the night eve that I forgot to close the windows of my house and that I wanted to go home and close the windows so as to prevent the rain from entering into the house, is that no so?” Ilésanmí could not answer but he shook his head to confirm that it was true.]

Even though Ilésanmí was speechless after Adéògún’s elaborate and explicit speech, yet he accented to Adéògún’s speech by shaking his head - şùgbọ́n ó mi orí rẹ́ láti jẹ́rìí pé òtítító ni (but he shook his head to confirm that it was true). This is a symbolic signification mode.

In *Ìka Àbámò*, the conversation between Níyì and Sadé is emphasized by nonverbal communication:

Şadé dìde lórín àga tó wà ó lọ bá Níyì léti bẹ̀èdì tó jókòó sí. Ó fowọ́ tọ ọ lẹ̀kẹ́ ó ní; ‘Níyì, Níyì, ojú rẹ́ n dán o’. ‘Mo fepo ra á ni’ Şadé gbé ọwọ́ méjèjèjí lé Níyì léjìkà. Níyì náà wò ó pẹ̀lú ifẹ́. Ojú wọn se méré́n papọ́. Wọn fẹ́nu ko ara wọn lẹ́nu. (p. 64)

[Şadé stood up from the chair she sat on and went to Níyì on the tip of the bed he sat on. She touched him on his cheeks and said; ‘Níyì, Níyì, your face is really shining’. ‘I used oil to rub it’. Sadé rested her two hands on Níyì’s shoulders. Níyì also gazed at her with love. Their four eyes met together. They kissed each other.]

After the close distance seen in Şadé and Níyì, she touched him and a conversion ensued. This conversation is emphasized by the lover’s nonverbal behaviours. First, Şadé gbé ọwọ́ méjèjèjí lé Níyì léjìkà (Şadé rested her two hands on Níyì’s shoulders) second, Níyì náà wò ó pẹ̀lú ifẹ́ (Níyì also gazed at her with love). Third, Ojú wọn se méré́n papọ́ (their four eyes met together) and finally, they sealed it up with a kiss. Touch and eye gaze are indexical signification and, as such, play prominent roles in nonverbal behaviour especially among lovers and that is why the lovers used them to emphasize their love.

Also, in *Àkèngbè Èmu*, emphasis is exhibited through shaking head:

Arábinrin Ìyábòdé jẹ́rìí sí ọ̀rọ́ Bádéjo yí, ó ní, ‘òótọ́ lẹ̀rọ́ yin. Bí ọ̀lọ́páá kan bá kó ọ̀ta mẹ́wáá sínú ibon rẹ́ lọ sí ita, nígbà tí ó bà dé, tì ó jẹ́ ọ̀ta méjọ pére ni ó kó wálé, yóò sàlàyé ibi tí ọ̀ta ibon méjì tó kù wà, àlàyé rẹ́ gbọ́dọ́ múná dóko. Şùgbọ́n tí ó bá jẹ́ àlàyé rẹ́ kò bójúmu tó, àtimólé ni yóò máa gbé. Mo rò pé, èyí ní bà wọn náà lẹ̀rù láti yin ibon wọn ní iyin-kú-yin. Bi Ìyábòdé ti n sọ̀rọ́ bẹ̀ ni mo n fi orí jẹ́rìí sí ọ̀rọ́ rẹ́... (p. 56) (Emphasis mine)

[The woman, Ìyábòdé confirmed this Bádéjo’s speech, she said, “Your speech is true. If a policeman puts ten bullets in his gun while going out, when he returns

and has only eight bullets remaining, he will explain the whereabouts of the two remaining bullets, his explanation must be valid, if not, he will be in detention. I think this instils fear in them which cautions them against indiscriminate shooting'. As Ìyábòdé speaks, so do I testify to her speech with my nod.]

In the excerpt above, Chief Bòbagbégá accents to Ìyábòdé's speech by nonverbal behaviour. Bi Ìyábòdé ti n sòrò bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni mo n fi orí jẹ́rìí sí ọ̀rò rẹ̀... (As Ìyábòdé speaks so do I testify to her speech with my head). The nodding of the head of Chief Bòbagbégá, which is symbolic signification confirms and emphasizes the authenticity and genuineness of Ìyábòdé's speech.

The sixth and the last function of nonverbal communication is regulation. Nonverbal behaviour is used to regulate verbal behaviour. According to Knapp & Hall (2002: 17).

We regulate the production of our own messages in a variety of ways. Sometimes we use nonverbal signs to segment units of interaction. Posture changes may demarcate a topic change; a gesture may forecast the verbalization of a particular idea; pauses may help in organizing spoken information into units.

In *Àgékù Ejò*, the porter tries to regulate the behaviour of a man that enters into the church:

Ohun tí ó ya àwọn tí ó wà nítòsì ibi tí ọ̀kùnrin yí jókòó sí nígbà tí ó wọ̀le lẹ̀nu ni pé kò sí filà rẹ̀ nígbà tí ó wọ̀nú sọ̀fọ̀sì. Àwọn kan àti adènà ẹ̀nu ọ̀na àbájáde sọ̀ fún un, kò tilẹ̀ ẹ̀e bí ẹ̀ni pé ọ̀un ni wọ̀n n bá wí... Adènà rò pé ó ní láti jẹ̀ adítí, nítorí náà ó sọ̀ fún àwọn ẹ̀niyàn bẹ̀ẹ̀ pé kí wọ̀n má sòrò sí I mó. Ọ̀ fúnra rẹ̀ fi ọ̀wọ̀ tọ̀ ọ̀kùnrin náà, ó fi ọ̀wọ̀ ẹ̀e àmì sí I pé kí ó sí filà rẹ̀... (p 25)

[What amazed the people that sat near this man when he entered was that he did not remove his cap when he entered the church. Some people including the porter near the exit door told him, he did not behave as if he is the one they were addressing... the porter thought he must be deaf, therefore, he told the people not to talk to him any longer. He himself touched the man, and used his hand to make gesture to him to remove his cap...]

The porter's nonverbal attitude – Ọ̀un fúnra rẹ̀ fi ọ̀wọ̀ tọ̀ ọ̀kùnrin náà, ó fi ọ̀wọ̀ ẹ̀e àmì sí i pé kí ó sí filà rẹ̀ (He himself touched the man and used his hand to make a gesture to him to remove his cap), which is indexical signification. According to Pearson et al (2003: 105) "regulation is used to monitor and control interactions with others". This is exactly what the porter did to the man by controlling him to conform to the acceptable norm of removing caps in the church.

In *Àjà ló lerù*, during Tàfá and Lápàdé's interactions, the regulating function of nonverbal communication shows:

Lápàdé ni, 'Ó yá ká lọ sibẹ̀'. Ó dide nilẹ̀, ó wọ̀ yàrá rẹ̀ lọ, ó sàré gbé agbádá kan bá yí wọ̀. Ànkará pupa ni, ẹ̀yí tí kò lè hàn tó bẹ̀ẹ̀ lóru, nítorí ọ̀jọ̀ tí n rọ̀ diẹ̀dìẹ̀, ilẹ̀ kò sì lè

Ò PÁÑBÀTA

pé sù. Nígbà tó padà dé pàlò, Tàfá bi I pé, 'Owó tí a óò fún Jàmpàkò lóhùn ún òkò?'
Ó tàka, ó nawó síwájú. (p. 30) (Emphasis mine)

[Lápàdé said, 'Let us go there'. He stood up, entered into his room and quickly put on a type of agbádá. It is a red ànkárá which would not be too clear at night because evening is fast approaching and it will soon be dark. When he returned to the parlour, Tàfá asked him, 'where is the money which we are going to give to Jàmpàkò there? *He snapped his fingers and pointed forward.* (Emphasis mine)]

Lápàdé's reply to Tàfá's request is that of regulation. Lápàdé's nonverbal behaviour which answers to Tàfá's verbal utterance indicates that the money which Tàfá is requesting for is already with him - *Ó tàka, ó nawó síwájú* (He snapped his fingers and pointed forward), which is indexical signification. Equally, the pointing forward is a pointer to the direction which both of them would go.

The regulation function also occurs in *Igbó Olódùmarè* between Bàbá - onírùngbòn-yèùkè and Olówó-aiyé:

Ikú míbò lèdò wa, Bàbá - onírùngbòn àti èmi náà sì ní tọ ọ lọ. Nígbà tí a pàdé rẹ, ó kí Bàbá - onírùngbòn sùgbòn kò kí mi. Léhin èyí, ó bá ònà ilé rẹ lo àwa náà ní tẹlé, béè ni òn àti Bàbá onírùngbòn ní sọrọ bi nwọn ti ní lọ nwọn kò sì sọrọ sí mi. nígbà tí a dé ilé rẹ lóhùn tí mo fẹ jókò, Bàbá onírùngbòn sẹ ọjú sí mi pé kí nmá sẹ béè. (p. 81)

[Ikú is coming in our direction, Bàbá onírùngbòn and myself are approaching him. When we met him, he greeted Bàbá onírùngbòn but he did not greet me. After this, he moved to his house and we followed him, so he continued to talk to Bàbá onírùngbòn as they journeyed but they did not talk to me. When we got to his house and I wanted to sit down, *Bàbá onírùngbòn winked at me that I should not do that.* (Emphasis, mine)]

Bàbá onírùngbòn who does not want Ikú to hear the secret conversation between him and Olówó-aiyé, makes use of nonverbal behaviour - Bàbá onírùngbòn sẹ ọjú sí mi pé kí nmá se béè (Bàbá onírùngbòn winked at me that I should not do that), a symbolic signification mode to regulate the attitude of Olówó-aiyé who was restrained from sitting down at Ikú's house.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the universality of the functions of nonverbal communication in Yorùbá novels, using the theory of semiotics. All the twelve novels that were analysed contained nonverbal cues performing the functions raised by scholars in their different works. Six major functions were seen in the novels which are repetitive function, contradiction function, complementation function, substitution function, accenting function and regulation function. Through the paper, we have established that like every other culture, Yorùbá

culture also performs all the functions of nonverbal communication which also helps in deeper understanding of the culture.

REFERENCES

- Abégúndé, Doyin 2001: *Sisí Jetue*. Lagos: Arísíléjòyè Publishers.
- 2007: *Akèngbè Èmu*. Lagos: Láboyin Publishers
- Adédínà, F. 2003. *Man, know thyself: understanding self and others through nonverbal communication*. AOCOED distinguished lecture series, Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Otto/Ijanikin, Lagos State, Nigeria.
- Adéwólé, Lásún 2003: *Ayò Mí Dé*. Ìbàdàn: Rasmed Publicaitons Ltd.
- Akínládé, Kǫlá 1986: *Owó Èjè*. Ìbàdàn: Paperback Publishers Ltd.
- 2004: *Àṣírí Amòòkúnjalè Tù*. Ìbàdàn: Vantage Publishers Ltd.
- 2007: *Aṣenibánidàrò*. Ìbàdàn: Hebn Publishers Plc.
- Chandler, D. 2006. *Semiotics for beginners*. <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/documents/S4B>.
- Danesi, M. 2004. *Messages, signs and meanings: a basic textbook in semiotics and communication*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc.
- Darwin, C. 1872. *The expression of the emotions in man and animals*. London: John Murray.
- DeVito, J. 1992. *The interpersonal communication book*. 6th edition. New York: Harper Collins.
- Eco, U. 1976. *A theory of semiotics*. London: Indiana University press.
- Ekman, P. and Friesen, W. 1969. The repertoire of nonverbal behaviours: categories, origins usage and coding. *Semiotica*. 1(1) 49-98.
- Fágúnwà, D.O. 1982: *Igbó Olódùmarè*. Lagos: Thomas Nelson Nigeria Ltd.
- 2005: *Àdítú Olódùmarè*. Ìbàdàn. Nelson Publishers Ltd.
- Hall, E. 1959/1973. *The silent language*. New York: Anchor Books
- 1966/1969. *The hidden dimension*. New York: Anchor Books
- Infante, D., Rancer, A., Womack, D. 1990. *Building communication theory*. Illinois: Waveland press inc.
- Knapp, M. and Hall, J. 2002. *Nonverbal communication in human interaction*. Australia: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Langer, S. 1951. *Philosophy in a new key: a study in the symbolism of reason, rite and art*. New York: Mentor.
- Lyons, J. 1977. *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Òkédòkun, A.A. 1996: *Ìka Àbámò*. Ìbàdàn: Evans Brtohers (Nigeria Publishers) Ltd.
- Oláifá, M. 1997: *Àṣṣwófá*. Ìbàdàn: Topdam Educational Publishers Nigeria Ltd.
- 2007: *Ojú Olórò*. Ilésà: Elyon Publishers.