A Textlinguistic Study of Lexical Priming in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*

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Abstract

This paper explores the functionality of the lexical priming theory in the autobiography of Nelson Mandela who portrays his cultural ideation as a black South African through primed expressions. Mandela's autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom, *was selected for the study which relies on the textlinguistic principles of language propounded by Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), using procedures in qualitative perspective. The study examines how Michael Hoey's lexical priming (LP) is deployed in expressing the sociocultural ideation of the autobiographer as a language user. The paper examines how excerpts purposively selected from sections of the book as primed lexemes enhance effective communication and discusses the priming strategies the autobiographer uses in influencing the perception of target readers about his personal experiences, group identity and sociocultural ideation — as a freedom fighter, black South African, political activist and social crusader. The analysis begins from a systematic observation of a linguistic phenomenon to a description of the corpora, sample expressions. The data include corpuses that reflect Mandela's use of LP in specific cultural contexts. The study juxtaposes the LP theory with the prosodies of textlinguistics—cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informatitvity, situationality and intertextuality. The study reveals that Nelson Mandela used LP discourse strategies to enhance the effective communication of his conversational intentions. In doing this, the author portrays members of his in-group, black South Africans and political associates, positively as a people fighting a just cause, but presents the white supremacists, the antagonist-other, negatively as oppressors.*

Keywords: lexical priming, textlinguistics, Nelson Mandela, culture, language

Introduction

Studies have revealed that most linguists study language in terms of its nature and social functions. That is, the intrinsic characteristics and how it works in the real world. Although many scholars are increasingly showing interest in non-fictional narratives such as biographies and autobiographies, little attention is paid to the linguistic devices the writers employ in composing such texts. Like most autobiographies, Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* revolves around the life of the writer who uses the genre to express his real life experiences, ideological disposition and socio-cultural realities. Nelson Mandela, an internationally known freedom fighter, celebrated opinion molder and the first black

President of South Africa was a high-profile politician from the Xhosa tribe of South Africa.

The autobiographic discourse is an interesting domain to explore the functionality of Michael Hoey's (2005) LP theory which was initially used in the domain of newspaper writing to investigate the way native speakers store up words in a naturally occurring language without relying on any set of rules. The Lexical Priming theory (henceforth LP) focuses is a lexical device that a language user employs when he encounters a word or sequence of words cumulatively in diverse contexts and uses same in composing or interpreting a new text.

The importance of priming in the composition and interpretation of a text can be imagined from L.R. Hubbard's view on how a "misunderstood word" can impede effective communication:

> The misunderstood word is the most important barrier to learning, misunderstood means not understood, wrongly understood...a misunderstood word can be a big word or a small word (Hubbard, 2005: 114).

Conversely, failure to understand a given word can lead to the misinterpretation of a whole text. In making the intended meaning clear, lexical priming eases the reader's understanding of expressions that would have been otherwise difficult. Explaining the indispensability of language to human existence and relationships, Murthy stresses that "Language is one of the best and most effective means of communication without which we cannot live a civilized life." (Murphy, 2007:4) This assertion implies that it is important to examine how the writer uses language to compose and relate his text to the larger society. The analysis provides a link between corpus linguistics and psycholinguistics because it involves the systemic observation as well as mental processing of some linguistic phenomena.

In most autobiographies, certain lexical items are specially ordered to enhance their semantic and pragmatic implicature in given contexts. The production of a text is a process akin to weaving. The producer combines words, phrases, sentences and clauses, stretching these units to create longer structures that make sense to the reader. Such ordering may be realised through the use of diverse linguistic processes, including lexical priming to mark the most crucial expressions in a given context. Lexical priming, in the context of this study, is a process through which the language user systematically makes lexical choices that impress certain words more prominently on the reader's mind than other lexical items.

Language use fundamentally revolves around the meta-functions, described

as the three major functional components –ideational (reflective), interpersonal (active) and textual meta-functions and that all languages are organised around these three perspectives (Halliday, 1978:48).

The theory of Lexical Priming is anchored on psycholinguistic analysis as it involves mental processing of verbal representations. Through the LP theory, Michael Hoey provides an explanation to language use based on how words are used in social interactions among interlocutors that share a common linguistic code. This theory of the lexicon anchors on the assumption that language users interact with one another, using words they encounter in diverse contexts creatively (Hoey, 2015:4). The main thrust of the theory is that it is a psychological concept as word combinations occur naturally when the language user re-encounters a previously internalised word or expression in a new linguistic or situational context. Michael Hoey postulates that "Lexical Priming assumes that language users store words they know in the context in which they were heard or read" (Hoey, 2009:4).

Most language users creatively couch their conversational intentions in texts, using language devices such as the LP to elicit the reader's active participation in textual interpretation. The study is designed to determine how the Lexical Priming theory functions in the communicative processes encapsulated in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. The specific objectives of the study are to identify the priming strategies in *Long Walk to Freedom*, discuss the functions of lexical priming in given contexts and analyse how LP contributes to the realisation of cohesion in the book.

Literature Review

Autobiographic writing evolved into a genre in the 18th century from early Greek literature which includes the autobiography of Isocrates, a Greek rhetorician (Misch, 2002:16). In Europe, the autobiographies then consisted of the works of voyagers, slaves, women and migrants, who were motivated by the need to share personal experiences and negotiate group identities (Berryman, 1999:71, Anderson, 2001:7). Some contemporary autobiographies are written by immigrants, persons from marginalised groups, the physically handicapped, sports personalities and those fighting against social exclusion.

Pace-Sigge et al (2017) note that a number of studies have applied the LP theory in areas such as corpus linguistics, discourse analysis (DA), stylistics, advertising and language teaching. Describing the theory as *a* completely new theory of language based on how words are used in the real world, they observe that extensive studies have been carried out on conversational features that exemplify lexical priming. These include: turn-taking, corpus-based research on lexical items, the prosodic and non-lexical pointers (Myers, 2009, Evison, 2012).

Hoey (2013) asserts the relevance of lexical priming in determining cohesion and coherence in content-specific corpus (Pace-Siege & Patterson, 2017:40). The study examined the relationship between cohesion and collocation lexis in corpus linguistics. Partington (1998) classifies collocation, a property of language in which two or more words seem to appear frequently in each other's company, into textual, psychological and statistical definitions. Collocation has also been described as "a cohesive device, a cover term for the kind of cohesion that results from the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another, because they tend to occur in similar environments" (Halliday &Hasan, 1976: 287).

Through the theory of dialogism, Bakhtin postulates that "discourse as a social practice is always oriented towards others"(Bakhtin, 1981: 172). Massi applied the theory in examining the multiple levels of linguistic and extra-linguistic context in autobiographical interviews with emphasis on how the speaker establishes "self-positive" and "negative antagonistic others" identities as well as the extent of the speaker's involvement or detachment (Olateju et al, 2007: 171). The study which focused on TV interviews of popular Argentinean artistes reveals that each speaker seeks to promote an attitude of acceptance and appreciation in the audience, despite his or her own identity display.

In a study that discusses metaphoricity as a distinctive linguistic phenomenon which differs from non-figurative language, Pace-Siege &Patterson (2017) observe that "adopting lexical priming as a means to exploring metaphor shifts the perspective of metaphoricity to the individual language user" (Pace-Siege Patterson, 2017: 147). The study reveals that metaphoricity is inherent in the language user and not the language itself. This assertion contradicts Hoey's earlier stance that "Priming is a property of the word." The study concludes that a metaphoric sense of a lexical item is dependent on the priming that triggers in the reader on encountering a given expression.

Using the LP theory, Gomez & Almela observe the colligational effects of collocations and lexically conditioned dependencies, revealing that dependency relations exist among diverse collocations of a word (Pace-Sigge et al, 2017: 151). The study examines the possibility of extending the notion of co-collocation to the analysis of aspects of Hoey's (2005) colligational priming with the hypothesis that the strength of attraction between a lexical item and a grammatical slot can be influenced by the instantiation of other colligations of the same node in the same syntagmatic environment."

In line with Michael Hoey's proposition that lexical priming is a natural phenomenon in language use, Berger and Luckman (1966) posit that "The grammatical resource prods the users of language to associate the categories

of grammar with the processes and participants respectively" (Berger & Luckman, 1966:27).

Baker et al (2017) agree with Hoey (2015) that a word is acquired through encounters with it in speech and writing and becomes cumulatively loaded with the contexts as well as co-texts in which it is encountered. Hoey (2013) asserts that Lexical priming has the potential to predict and prime users for register awareness due to the repeated encounters they have had with the lexical patterns.

Theoretical Framework

The study hinges on the lexical priming theory with the integration of de Beaugrande & Dressler's (1981) text-linguistic model. The study explores how Michael Hoey's (2005) lexical priming theory is applied in the autobiographic genre as exemplified in Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*. It also incorporates Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) principles.

Hoey (2009) describes lexical priming as the natural and psychological process by which language users encounter and acquire information in given contexts. He adds that "Priming is a property of the word and what is primed to occur is seen as shedding light upon the priming item rather than the other way round." Baker et al (2017) observe that the lexical Priming theory works as an important context within which priming may be acquired and that through exposure to word primings over time, words attract meanings which can be realised through the use of collocation.

Hoey's (2005) lexical priming theory and Halliday's (1985) postulations on the internal dynamics of language embedded in the metafunctions-- ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, provide a formidable theoretical basis for examining how the intrinsic and extrinsic qualities of the English Language combine to enhance the message encoded in the select autobiography.

The study relies on de Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981) text linguistics (TL) model to explore the functional components of the language in the book. "Text-linguistics is a field of study where texts are treated as communication systems, focusing particularly on the context-extralinguistic information that goes along with what is said and written" (Carter & McCarthy, 2006:68). With advances in technology as evidenced in the emergence of social media, the notion of what constitutes a text has extended to include symbols of emotions or emojis (Barton& Carmen, 2013:17). Barton &Carmen opine that texts can no longer be thought of as relatively fixed and stable, rather they are more fluid with the changing affordances of new media and are becoming increasingly multimodal and interactive.

Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) define a text as "a communicative occur-

rence which meets the seven standards of textuality." (Catenaccio, 2010: 152). According to them, a piece of writing or an utterance may be classified as a text in any context that it makes sense to the participants. Texts are produced, interpreted and understood within given contextual situations that relate to the expectation of the receiver. Therefore, an utterance could be regarded as a text in any context that such utterance makes sense to the hearer. The study of textuality involves looking at works that function powerfully in our world, and considering both what they mean and how they mean (Scholes, 2011:68). According to Scholes, textuality has two aspects, one is the broadening of the objects we study which includes all the media and mode of expression while the other has to do with changing the way we look at texts to combine the perspectives of creator and consumer, writer and reader. The study relies on De Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981) Text Linguistics (TL) model to explore the functional components of the language in Nelson Mandela's (1995) *Long Walk to Freedom*. The TL model encompasses the seven standards of textuality which are Cohesion, Coherence, Intentionality, Acceptability, Informativity, Situationality and Intertextuality (De Beaugrande &Dressler, 1981:175).

Methodology

The study involves procedures in qualitative research, relying on the skills employed in inductive reasoning. The analysis encompasses the description of sample texts that have significant instances of lexical priming (henceforth LP). Using randomly selected samples, the study examines how the LP theory functions as a linguistic tool conveying the writer's personal experiences, relationships and socio-cultural realities. The theory is adopted in exploring the language of the autobiographic discourse as it functions in *Long Walk to Freedom* (Mandela, 1995) with a view to explaining how the text communicates the producer's intended message. The analysis starts from a systematic observation of a linguistic phenomenon to a comprehensive discussion on the observed patterns of the LP theory. The paper incorporates a simple word-count of primed lexical items to determine the frequency of their occurrence in given linguistic contexts. Long Walk to Freedom is chosen as the data base because of its significance as a compendium of the peculiar experiences of the author, Nelson Mandela of South Africa whose personal life, service to humanity and cultural ideations are relevant to the society. Select samples, representing given phenomena, are identified and analysed as a unified whole laden with a complete message. The study focuses on how Mandela tells the story in *Long Walk to Freedom*.

Analysis and Findings

Patterns of lexical priming in *Long Walk to Freedom*

Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* is characterised by diverse priming strategies and conversational features which perform grammatical, linguistic and extra-linguistic functions in the narration. The priming patterns include: metaphorical priming, creative priming, collocation priming, statistic priming, semantic priming, historical priming, colligation priming and repetition priming.

Some of the samples used in this analysis contain foregrounded topical headings, situating the text in specific socio-cultural contexts. *Long Walk to Freedom* covers a broad range of topics: the author's childhood and adulthood experiences, education and career life, marriage and family life, socio-cultural influences, political and religious affiliations and topical national issues such as the liberation struggle and apartheid. The analysis focuses on the linguistic and socio-cultural contexts and examines how the LP functions in the select text in relation to the textual and situational contexts.

Each excerpt in this section constitutes a sequence of words that combine to form a meaningful whole with the essential features of a text. The priming patterns contribute to the textuality of the samples. The samples excerpted from Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* are considered as texts because they constitute a sequence of sentences that belong together, combining to form a meaningful whole in given linguistic and situational contexts. The samples represent stretches of functional and communicative language, reflecting interconnectivity at the level of sentences. The sentences are cohesively tied through the use of lexical devices, including Lexical Priming to constitute a message at the level of ideas.

Psychological Priming

Sample 1

I have mentioned *many of the people who influenced me*, but more and more, I came under the tutelage of *Walter Sisulu*. *Walter* was strong, reasonable, practical, and dedicated. *He* never lost his head in a crisis; *he* was often silent when others were shouting. *He* believed that the ANC was the means to effect change in South Africa, *the repository of black hopes and aspirations*. Sometimes one can judge an organization by the people who belong to it, and I knew that I would be proud to belong to any organization in which *Walter* was a member. At the time, there were few alternatives. The ANC was the one organization that

welcomed everyone, that saw itself as a great umbrella under which all Africans could find shelter…Walter's house in Orlando was a Mecca for activists and ANC members. (Mendela, 1995:129)

As usual with the autobiographic discourse, the excerpted piece is presented in the first person narrative point of view and characterised by lexico-semantic features that indicate that the speaker is an active participant in the interaction. There is for instance, a preponderance of the personal pronounss "I" and "he" in the subjective positions. But, beyond this, the writer engages lexical priming as a device in communicating his view about one of the *many people who influenced* him. The priming begins with *many people who influenced me* as the speaker refers to a previous communicative event in which he" had mentioned" his social influencers in the book. The conversational implicature of this anaphoric reference is that the reader had encountered the words before and is being psychologically primed for the target *Walter Sisulu*. Using the textlinguistic language principle, the writer expands the text as he keeps referring to the referent by using either the proper noun (Walter), pronominal (he) or other word combinations such as *the repository of blacks hopes and aspirations.* This form of repetition is a cohesive device which significantly contributes in making the various parts of the text a unified and meaningful (coherent) whole.

Metaphorical Priming

The next priming pattern under review, metaphorical priming, is introduced through intertextuality, another of the language principles in textlinguistics. Intertextuality is the seventh standard of textuality in the prosody propounded by de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). It relates to the factors that make the interpretation of one text dependent upon the knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts. The autobiography under review is replete with instances of intertextuality. Mandela makes exophoric references to social interactions he had participated in and also imports texts from previous speakers or writers, including his own earlier comments in the course of the narration. He deploys this textlinguistic concept in his description of Oliver Tambo in the following excerpt:

> **Sample 2**
>
> In Plato's allegory of the metals, the philosopher classifies men into groups of *gold*, silver and lead. Oliver was pure *gold*, there was *gold* in his intellectual brilliance, *gold* in his warmth and humanity, *gold* in his tolerance and generosity,

> *gold* in his unfailing loyalty and self-sacrifice. As much as I respected him as a leader, that is how much I loved him as a man. (Mandela, 1995: 837)

Intertextuality enhances understanding in text interpretation because it enables the receiver to draw from the knowledge of a related text to interpret the new one which he or she is already psychologically primed to recognise some features of the previous text in. The exophoric reference to Plato's previous writing is used to relate the textual material to not only another text, but to the real world where "men" are assessed based on certain criteria. Mandela uses the device to select his topic, "Oliver Tambo" and develops the topic by expanding the text through lexical priming. The lexeme "gold" is metaphorically primed to present the topical theme, "Oliver" in the clause: "Oliver was pure gold." The author expands the textual content by combining the primed word with other words to portray the target with the new information that will enable the reader to perceive him as an admirable personality. The inclusion of other priming patterns further triggers semantic extension. While the dominant priming pattern is metaphorical, the preponderance of the primed lexeme "gold" in the text characterizes creative and statistical priming. The writer's deliberate choice of referring to Pluto's work in the new context clearly instantiates intetextuality in the autobiography.

Creative Priming

Creative or forced priming in *Long Walk to Freedom* is realised in the interplay with a language principle in textlinguistics model known as situationality. Creative priming-classified as forced by Duguid & Partington (2017) occurs when the text producer (speaker or writer) creates a linguistic environment that allows for the collocation of words that rarely co-occur as collocates. Expressions in the excerpt that exemplify forced priming include, "politicized" which Mandela uses in different word combinations to intensify the pragmatic and semantic implicatures. The word combination, "liberation struggle" is a fixed expression with semantically autonomous and semantically dependent lexical items (Siepmann, 2005: 50). "Forced Priming" occurs in the autobiography through the repetitive use of expressions such as: "politicized," "an African" and "an African only." The primed word sequences suggest Mandela's conversational intention of emphasising his avowed objection to racial discrimination and other repressive policies of the apartheid regime against the black population in South Africa. The prevalence of unconventional word combinations within a given text constitutes creative priming. Mandela also deploys the LP as a lexical de-

vice in portraying the sociocultural context that surrounds the events and experiences captured in the following text.

> **Sample 3**
>
> To be an African in South Africa means that one is politicized from the moment of one's birth, whether one acknowledges it or not. An African child is born in an *Africans Only hospital*, taken home in *an Africans Only bus*, lives in an *Africans Only area*, and attends *Africans Only schools*, if he attends school at all. When he grows up, he can hold *Africans Only jobs*, rent a house in *Africans Only townships*, ride *Africans Only trains*, and be stopped at any time of the day or night and be ordered to produce a pass, failing which he will be arrested and thrown in jail. (Mandela, 1995:132)

In the above text, Mandela uses lexical priming in selecting and expanding the topic as he shares his knowledge of the gruesome experiences a typical African faces in their supposed homeland where there is intense racial discrimination and segregation. He begins with a familiar word combination "to be an African," specifying the situational context, "in South Africa" and then introduces unusual collocations. Creative priming occurs with the inclusion of the new word orders laden with the intended message about the unfair treatment black South Africans are subjected to. Mandela subtly expresses the unpleasant experiences through semantic expansion as he associates "an African in South Africa" with words that trigger other meanings, relating to racial discrimination in the apartheid era. The creatively primed word combinatorial patterns include: an Africans Only hospital, an Africans Only bus, an Africans Only area, Africans Only schools, Africans Only jobs, Africans townships and Africans Only trains.

Semantic Priming

The writer also engages lexical priming in reconstructing his childhood experiences and highlighting the dichotomy that exists between African children and their white counterparts. Themes of social inequality, cultural conflict and value system are embedded in the grammatical, semantic and pragmatic perspectives of the lexically primed word sequences in sample 4. The autobiographer deploys semantic priming pattern as he combines sequences of semantically related words and uses exophoric references that naturally trigger associated meanings.

Sample 4

Like all Xhosa children, I acquired knowledge mainly through observations. We were meant to learn through imitation and emulation, not through questions. When I first visited the homes of whites, I was often dumbfounded by the number and nature of questions that children asked of their parents-and their parents' unfailing willingness to answer them. In my household, questions were considered a nuisance; adults imparted information as they considered necessary. (Mandela, 1995:14-15)

As seen in the excerpt, the following words have semantic associations: acquired, /knowledge observations, children/ parents, children/adults, questions/ answers, homes/household and imparted/information. Besides the preponderance of hyponyms, antonyms and synonyms in the text, context markers such as "Like all Xhosa children..." and "...homes of whites..." are used to relate the textual message to the society which the author lived in. Moreover, some of the word sequences are repeated for emphasis, enabling the reader to internalize the expressions. The situational context is delineated with word combinations such as "when I first visited...," "the nature of questions," "adults imparted information," "In my household," "Xhosa children" and "'home of the whites." Situationality relates to factors that make the text relevant in a situational context.

Drift in Priming

The topical theme "education" is primed because it was mentioned earlier in the book. This time it is an anaphoric reference to the subject matter of that previous interaction. The lexeme, "education," is further primed through repetition, fronting and emphasis as it is placed in different syntactic positions. The importance of education is also systematically highlighted to emphasise its meaning relations with other words, "doctor" and "president." The primed lexical item is metaphorically referred to as "the engine of personal development" with the underlying message that education is very important. Besides the semantic extension, the effect of the priming includes the pragmatic perspective as the text is related to the society of which the writer shares a common background knowledge with the reader. Conversely, the priming pattern contributes in establishing the relevance of the text to both the reader and the sociocultural environment.

Sample 5

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through *education* that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another. (Mandela, 1995: 229)

The speaker selects the topical theme "*education*" and rheme "is the great engine of personal development" through a declarative statement. Thereafter, a thematic drift is observed as he uses lexical priming to introduce the co-hyponyms, emphasising, the importance of the subject matter and triggering a semantic shift in: "It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor." There is also the inclusion of ellipsis, a cohesive device as the writer deliberately omits" through education…" in two subsequent clauses. By repetition-a type of priming which also functions as a cohesive device, the text achieves emphasis, enabling the reader to understand the intended message or target of the priming: The importance of education. Although the exact physical location is not explicitly stated, the reader can infer through the priming pattern that education, being a universal phenomenon, can be related to any other environment and field of endeavour.

Historical Priming

Another priming pattern in *Long Walk to Freedom* is historical priming. The author primarily realizes historical priming by stating dates and mentioning certain events that connect the text to the real world, embodying experiences that the reader could relate with through recall. As shown in sample 6, specific historic events, including the birth of the author and the phenomenal World War 1 are stated. The inclusion of such past experiences enables the reader to understand the message embedded in the communicative event, relying on the background knowledge he shares with the autobiographer and situational context.

Sample 6

I was born on the eighteenth of July, 1918, at Mvezo, a tiny village on the banks of the Mbashe River in the district of Umtata, the capital of the Transkei. The year of my birth marked the end of the Great War; the outbreak of an influenza epidemic that killed millions throughout the world; and the visit of a delegation of the African National Congress to the Versailles peace conference to voice the grievances of the African people of South Africa. Mvezo, however, was a place

apart, a tiny precinct removed from the world of great events, where life was lived much as it had been for hundreds of years. (Mandela, 1995: 1-8)

Historical priming is a form that makes reference to dates, and/or states memorable incidents (Hoey, 2013). The text producer uses the dates and events that evoke feelings of nostalgia, excitement, etc that cause the reader to recall past socio-cultural and political events. Mandela reconstructs his experiences as a social crusader, prominent member of the African National Congress (ANC) and prisoner. Using Historical Lexical Priming approach and other related linguistic strategies, the author shares his knowledge of the mass actions he had participated in, with details such as dates, participants and place of occurrence. This is exemplified in sample 7 which focuses on the enactment of the 1958 Bantu Education Act and the subsequent strike against the draconian law:

Sample 7

In 1953, the Nationalist-dominated Parliament passed the Bantu Education Act, which sought to put apartheid's stamp on African education. The act transferred control of African education from the Department of Education to the much loathed Native Affairs Department. Under the act, African primary and secondary schools operated by the church and mission bodies were given the choice of turning over their schools to the government or receiving gradually diminished subsidies; either the government took over education for Africans or there would be no education for Africans. African teachers were not permitted to criticize the government or any school authority. It was intellectual "baasskap" a way of institutionalizing inferiority. (Mandela, 1995:230-231).

Statistic Priming

Hoey (2013) defines statistic priming as the type of lexical priming that is determined by a word count, showing that a particular word or word sequence has occurred more frequently than other lexis within the text. Examples cited below instantiate a preponderance of the words "hunger," "free" and "freedom." Mandela repeats this pattern as he primes "free" and "freedom" thereby reinforcing the message in *Long Walk to Freedom*:

Sample 8

I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born *free- free* in every way that I could know: *Free to play* in the fields near my mother's hut, *free* to swim in the clear stream that ran through my my village, <u>*free*</u> to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father

and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or God. It was only when I began to learn that my boyhood *freedom* was an illusion, when I discovered as a young man that my *freedom* had already been taken from me, that I began to hunger for it. At first, as a student, I wanted *freedom* only for myself, the transitory *freedoms* of being able to stay out at night, read what I pleased, and go where I chose. Later, as a young man in Johannesburg, I yearned for the basic and honorable *freedoms* of achieving my potential, of earning my keep, of marrying and having a family-*freedom* not to be obstructed in a lawful life. (Mandela,1995:857).

The primed lexical items "free" and "freedom"-along with the variant freedom occurs more frequently than other words in sample 8. A simple word count shows that "free" and "freedom" appeared 12 times within 15 lines of the text. Statistic priming is realized through the use of the primed lexical item to flood the discourse. The priming pattern strongly impresses the word "free" on the reader's mind as the most important. The lexical priming results in psychological priming which validates the view that priming is a mental construct (Hoey, 2005).

This occurs as some lexical items, sentence components, and other linguistic elements are repeated within the text. Repetition is one of the cohesive ties that bring about a natural flow of the communicative sequence. The repetition of the primed word sequence "education" in some clause complexes connects the various sentences to form a unified text. This feature is also observed where other primed lexical items are repetitively used in association with a number of varying combinatorial patterns.

Through the combination of grammatical and lexical items, the writer reveals the situational context of a typical black family life in apartheid South Africa. The linguistic elements combine to portray his cultural ideation, political affiliation and family background. The priming pattern relates the textual content to social realities of black South Africans during the apartheid era when the white minority wielded political power. Anyone who had followed the story of Mandela's struggles towards the liberation of his people in South Africa before the collapse of the apartheid regime will easily understand the thematic pre-occupation of his book, *Long Walk to Freedom*. It is observed that the LP is one of the conversational strategies that feature prominently in the autobiography.

As instantiated in Sample 8, the word "free" is primed and used denotatively and connotatively, in a recurrent manner. Then, its colligation, "freedom" is also featured recurrently to express the speaker's experience and attitude.

There is also the recurrence of some clauses in the declarative mood, expressing the speaker's desire, purpose or intent within a socio-cultural context, mutually shared with the reader. Recurrence in the clause complexes is also realised through reiteration as some word sequences are reframed for emphasis.

Contextuality in Long Walk to Freedom

Conversational features and linguistic elements used in the autobiography to determine situational context include names of places, deictic or demonstratives, dates, historic events and incidents. Mandela uses language to depict the socio-cultural environment in which black African children are raised. Lexico-semantic features such as Xhosa children, home of whites, my household, their parents and an African are prevalent in the select text. The description reveals the dichotomy between the world of the whites and that of the blacks. Mandela refers the text to the situational context in his "household" and the "home of the whites" when he narrates the personal experience of a culture during his visit to a white family. He describes how discipline is enforced in a typical African home or community as opposed to that of the whites, In these texts, he noted that unlike their white counterparts, African children learn more by observation than by questioning the adult members of the society.

Mandela's classical allusion to Plato's writing on ancient Greek mythology, as he describes his compatriot, Oliver Tambo, exemplifies intertextuality. Metaphoricity is realised in the as the primed word "gold" undergoes a semantic change from meaning a precious metal to being Oliver Tambo, an admirable character. Further semantic extension occurs as "gold" is metaphorically used to describe Oliver's sterling attributes: "...there was gold in intellectual brilliance...gold in his warmth...gold in his tolerance...gold in his unfailing loyalty..." The initial classification of *gold* alongside silver and lead fronts it as the most precious of the listed metals. "Oliver was *gold*" is therefore connotatively used to mean that he was among the best of men.

Through intertextuality, the autobiographer relates the textual content to the South African society of the apartheid era. This brings about the realization of the textual metafunction of language (Halliday 1985) as the text is made to relate to the socio-cultural environment The referential function of language (Jakobson, 1960) is also expressed as references are made to occurrences in the real world. This helps to establish the relevance of the text to the reader and reveals the situational context. Intertextuality as presented in this paper, instantiates practical application of the Lexical Priming theory in text production.

Hoey (2013) cites Halliday and Hasan (1976) as describing collocation as "a cover term for the kind of cohesion that results from the co-occurrence of lexical items that are in some way or other typically associated with one another,

because they tend to occur in similar environments." The scholars referred to psychological priming through which words are associated in the mind due to how they are usually encountered in similar textual contexts. Hoey (2005) observes that "The importance of collocation for a theory of the lexicon lies in the fact that at least some sentences are made up of interlocking collocations such that they could be said to reproduce, albeit with important variations, stretches of earlier sentences."

There are two main forms of collocation: Lexical and Grammatical collocations. Lewis (2000) opines that lexical collocations are the combination of two equal lexical components while grammatical collocation combine a lexical word such as a noun, a verb or an adjective with a grammatical word. The creation of a natural, but unconventional collocation results in "forced priming." Forced Priming refers to the creative use of a word or a word sequence in a linguistic environment that provokes unconventional collocational behavior such as free word combinations.

Duguid and Partington (2017) posit that words that would normally not associate with certain other words within a given context are combined to constitute word combination patterns, resulting in collocations contrary to the conventional types. For instance, *Hunger* conventionally collocates with "strike" to produce *hunger strike.* That is, a form of protest. The combination instantiated in sample 8, *hunger to be free* is a product of the writer's creativity. There are many examples of "forced priming" in *Long Walk to Freedom*.

Contextually, the excerpt is set against the backdrop of Mandela's resistance to the unpopular policies of the white separatist government that promote racism in the apartheid era. The highlighted words attract extended meaning as they combine with other words to express the situation. The forced lexical priming pattern enables Mandela to persuasively impress the reader with a justification for his decision to join in the "liberation struggle."

Foregrounding

The author deliberately highlighted certain linguistic elements in order to make them prominent in the text. This priming device known as foregrounding is mainly realized in Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* through capitalization. The morphological and syntactic features of the primed word sequences help to highlight the structural function of LP in the text. Precisely, the LP is used to structure the information presented into given and new information. Mandela uses the foregrounding method as a stylistic device to indicate select topics, front the thematic focus and achieve emphasis. The morphological features are accentuated through capitalisation. The writer capitalises the first three to four

words of the topic sentences. The reader's mind is primed on the background knowledge revealed at the beginning of most of the chapters and waiting to receive the new information as in:

> **Sample 9**
>
> "TIME MAY SEEM to stand still for those of us in prison…" (Mandela, 1995:610).
>
> Foregrounding is used to highlight the topical theme in sample 9 and prepare the hearer or reader for the new information. The LP strategy also contributes to the aesthetic value of the text due to its peculiar morphological features and appeal as the most crucial part of that figurative language use. Other such expressions that characterise the text include: "It IS SAID that the mill of God grinds slowly…," "I CANNOT PINPOINT a moment when I became politicized …" (Mandela, 1995:129), "APART FROM LIFE, a strong constitution, and an abiding connection to the Tembu royal house, the only thing my father bestowed upon me at birth was a name, Rolihlahla" and "THE VILLAGE OF QUNU was situated in a narrow valley crisscrossed by clear streams, and overlooked by green hills." (Mandela, 1995:9)

Discussion of Findings

Modern trends in corpus linguistics and psycholinguistics as observed through the LP theory view the human vocabulary as a dynamic system consisting of words which form a fundamental unit of the linguistic structure. The theory thrives on the creative use of words by individual language users as revealed in this study. Words play an integral role in human ability to use language creatively because they can be added at will, reordered or have their meanings expanded into new domains (Kothari & Garg, 2014:13).

As an autobiographic discourse, Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* is replete with functional lexico-grammatical features that significantly enable the writer to construct his personal identity, experiences, ideological disposition and other socio-cultural realities which constitute the conversational intentions he communicates to the reader.

Specifically, the study explored how Hoey's (2005) lexical priming theory is applied to Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*. The analysis focused on the functionality of the lexical priming theory (LP) with reference to the book. The LP theory was examined in view of language as a medium for expression, using the de Beaugrande and Dressler's textlinguistic model to explain the identified phenomena. The study applied the LP principles in determining what constitutes a text and explained each observed phenomenon in

line with the principles of language that account for textuality. The excerpts from the book were examined with emphasis on how the LP theory was applied to ensure appropriate use of language resources in their composition, expression and interpretation.

The study revealed that lexical priming encompasses psychological, syntactic and paradigmatic relatedness of language use and society. Lexical priming is found to have linguistic and extra-linguistic functions. For instance, it enhances the connectedness of sentences within a text, thereby ensuring cohesion and coherence. The relationship between the socio-cultural function of language and the reality expressed in the book was also examined with reference to the TL model and Halliday's (1985) meta-function principles of language.

The priming patterns identified in *Long Walk to Freedom* include: psychological, metaphorical collocation, creative, statistic and historical priming. Each of these was explicated with copious examples from the select text. Foregrounding was also examined as a priming strategy used by the author. Moreover, the study examined some basic functions of LP in texts and revealed that priming performs structural, grammatical and extra-linguistic functions. It helps in connecting the text to the real world and in doing so, make the textual material relevant to the receiver. It was also observed that Lexical Priming could affect language use in terms of semantic and pragmatic implicature as it influences the meaning potential within and outside the text.

As found in the study, Leech's (1974) assertion that collocation 'consists of the associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of words which tend to occur in its environment', suggests a causal connection between psychological and statistical realities. This connection is exemplified in *Long Walk to Freedom* in many instances such where the reader's mind is primed on the lexis, "free" and "freedom" which are randomly distributed through the selected text, thereby realizing the psychological aspect while the statistical realisation is accounted for based on the number of times the primed lexeme occurs.

The research shows that Mandela applied lexical priming in the autobiography which is characterised with priming strategies such as intertextuality, collocations, creative or forced priming, foregrounding, repetitions, infusion of local lexical items – expressing his African identity and worldview, as well as a number of other conversational features. The LP theory is one of the very useful linguistic devices Mandela deploys in the book to express his personal experiences, ideological dispositions and social realities. One major effect of the priming strategies in *Long Walk to Freedom* is that they help to achieve the two text centred notions of textuality, cohesion and coherence.

As seen in most of the samples, the relationship between the surface elements results from their following certain grammatical rules and dependen-

cies. Cohesion is realized in each select text through recurrence of lexical items and the use of pronouns in anaphoric and cataphoric references, conjunctions and substitutions with pronominal forms. The cohesive devices that illustrate the functionality of Hoey's (2005) Lexical Priming theory in the autobiography include recurrence and referencing. Coherence occurs at the level of reception as the reader relates the content of the text with the knowledge of the context and other connected circumstances to comprehend the intended message.

The discussion pinpoints how this unique model relates with LP in text production and interpretation. The priming effects were found to include extension of the semantic implicature of the primed lexis and their co-texts, helping in topic selection and development, thematic focusing and emphasis and contextualization.

Summary and Conclusion

The study explored the functionality of the lexical priming (LP) theory in Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, using the textlinguistic (TL) principles of language as a parameter. The paper essentially investigated how language functions in linguistic and situational contexts, revealing that Lexical Priming contributes to the realization of textuality as it enhances the relevance of the select autobiography to the socio-cultural environment. The study identified the priming patterns that characterise the text and analysed how they connect the textual content to the society, thereby reinforcing its relevance to the reader.

Unlike previous studies in corpus linguistics, psycholinguistics and conversational analysis that tested the LP theory in genres other than the autobiography, the study extended its scope to the autobiographic discourse. It observed that the autobiographic discourse is an interesting area of linguistics that encompasses conversational features.

Relying on the TL model propounded by de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981), the study focused on content analysis and related the textual material to the situational context. The study revealed that there is a prevalence of diverse LP patterns in *Long Walk to Freedom*. As lexical devises, the LP conversational features enabled the text producer (writer) to organise his "talk" within the linguistic context of the select autobiography and to ensure that the text connects to his socio-cultural environment.

It is also revealed in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* that the autobiography summarises the achievement of the writer in the context of culture which may be entwined with the making of a nation state (Mukherjee, 2013: 55). Moreover, the recreation of experiences in the text involves interplay of personal, social and cultural identities which affect the positive and negative aspects of the evoked world of references (Olateju et al, 2007:171).

The paper explicated the TL model in functional terms, noting how the LP integrated the principles to enhance effective communication in the autobiographic discourse at the levels of composition and interpretation. Language principles such as cohesion and coherence were examined with copious reference to *Long Walk to Freedom*. Cohesive devices such as referencing, repetition, reiteration and substitution are deployed to achieve emphasis and expatiation of the meaning potential of the linguistic elements.

The study revealed that the autobiographer may prime certain lexical items in order to ensure effective communication as such LP strategies help to achieve cohesion as and related grammatical functions, thereby tying the various units of the text together as a unified whole (Halliday, 1985). The unity of the textual content facilitates coherence as it enables the reader to understand the text and relate it to his or her own socio-cultural environment. The extension of this linguistic strategy contributes in unifying the subsets of the text as one flows seamlessly into the other, implying that the LP also performs pragmatic and semantic functions. The repetition of certain lexis in diverse linguistic environments etches them on the reader's mind, thereby enhancing effective comprehension of the intended message.

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