

INTERTEXTUALITY IN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) AGREEMENT DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The paper examines the concept of intertextuality as a theoretical and a methodological strategy in the analysis of ECOWAS Peacekeeping Agreement Discourse (EPKA). The study, which is based on Norman Fairclough model of intertextuality, adheres to the principle of Kristeva (1986) and Bakhtin (1986) that every text is dialogical, in the sense that it gains its meaning in relation to other texts. The corpus of the study consists of ten purposively selected ECOWAS peacekeeping agreements which were analysed based on the frameworks of intertextuality of Fairclough (1995 a,b) and Bazerman (2010). The findings of the analysis reveal that intertextual relations were frequently expressed in the EPKA texts through the devices of paraphrase and citation. The study further reveals that intertextuality functions in the EPKA discourse to signal textual authority, to reveal the nature of the legal relationship that holds between two texts and to provide terminological definitions and explanations. Intertextuality in EPKA discourse is further used to signal textual coherence to the reader that text must be interpreted in the context of something expressed elsewhere; within or outside the text. The paper concludes that intertextuality in the data occurs at a relatively localised level; as such it is not concerned with the broader social voices, but rather with what Fairclough (1992a, p.104) termed manifest intertextuality.

Keywords: Intertextuality, ECOWAS, Peacekeeping, Agreement, Kristeva, Fairclough

1.0 Introduction

Communication through language plays a vital role in the conduct of human and organizational interactions or relationships. Communication, if not well-managed can generate conflict situations. Text grammars, and psychological theories are fascinating areas of study, but the time is ripe to work on more social and political issues. One of these fundamental issues, especially in Africa, is that of conflict and peacekeeping. Conflicts in Africa are either state or inter-state. They are all complex and have regional dynamics and security implications, creating transnational linkages, thus making them more difficult to resolve. Thus, it becomes important for language scholars to become interested in the ways conflicts and peacekeeping initiatives are expressed, reproduced or legitimated through text and talk.

This paper focuses on the study of intertextuality in relation to meaning in peacekeeping language with the hope that the study sheds better light on the dynamics of the discourse of peacekeeping. Intertextuality refers to the interrelations amongst texts that help to shape textual meaning. The echoes of other texts in a given discourse can intensify textual experience by adding layers of meaning that could lead to a breakdown in the communication process. This dynamic nature of intertextuality is important since elements of a text may be designed to be interpreted in different ways by different readers/listeners.

2.0 Intertextuality

Kristeva coined the term intertextuality on the basis of Bakhtin's (1981) work (Kristeva, 1986). She uses the term to describe the complex heterogeneous nature of discursive materials which

intersect in particular textual production. According to her, the term text is a kind of 'productivity' in which various semiotic codes, genres, and meaning relations are both combined and transformed (Kristeva, 1986). In the same light, Bakhtin (1986) argues that every text (or utterance) is dialogical, in the sense that it gains its meaning in relation to other texts.

According to Kristeva (1986), a given text is a permutation of texts, intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one other. She refers to texts in terms of two axes: a *horizontal axis* connecting the author and reader of a text, and a *vertical axis*, which connects the text to other texts. Thus, Kristeva (1986) and Bakhtin (1986), see all texts as being constituted out of, and understood in relation to, other texts in the same social formation.

Scholars in different fields consider the notion of 'intertextuality' from different perspectives for different purposes. These scholars can be categorised into two groups. The first group consists of the semiotics scholars such as Kristeva (1980) and Meinhof and Smith (2000). These scholars explore the complex and heterogeneous nature of literary works by appropriating the concept of intertextuality. Their studies range from the search for influences or antecedents for a particular literary work to the analysis of literary conventions and codes as prerequisites for literary communication. The second group is of the scholars of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis, such as Fairclough (1992b, 1995a, b), Scollon (2001), Bazerman (2010), de Beaugrande and Dressler (2002), Lemke (1995a, b) and White (2002) whose major concern is with non-literary works.

From the foregoing, it is clear that there is no single approach to analysing the complex phenomenon of intertextuality as approaches range from focusing on linguistic conventions such as White

(2002) to social conventions such as Lemke (1995a). An elementary type of analysis is to examine the intertextual composition of a single text, describing both the explicit (e.g., the direct quotation) and implicit (e.g., mentioning of a belief or issue of the context) (White, 2002). According to Fairclough (1992b, p.270), intertextuality "points to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones". It is concerned with how texts are produced in relation to prior texts and how texts help to construct the existing conventions in producing new texts.

Fairclough (1995b) puts forward a three-dimension framework for analysing intertextuality in media discourse. They include the analysis of 'discourse representation', generic analysis of discourse types, and an analysis of discourse in texts (Fairclough, 1995b). To Fairclough (1995b), 'discourse representation' is a form of intertextuality in which parts of specific texts are incorporated into a text and are usually, but not always, explicitly marked with devices such as quotation marks and reporting clauses.

In media discourse, discourse representation accounts for a major part of what news is: representations of what newsworthy people have said. Fairclough (1995b, p.76) also introduces the concept of 'discourse type' for configurations of genres and discourses. He suggests that analysing discourse types may involve complex configurations of several genres and several discourses. Discourse, in Fairclough's (1995b, p.76) words, is "a particular way of constructing a particular (domain of) social practice", and genre is "a way of using language which corresponds to the nature of the social practice that is being engaged in". His main interest is in analysing intertextual relations as power relations, suggesting that intertextuality can become a locus of

contestation and struggle (Fairclough, 1992b).

Scholars such as Devitt (1991) and Bazerman (2010), from the new rhetoric tradition, analyse intertextuality in non-literary texts. They approach intertextual relations as social practice, as more or less stable conventions of a particular discourse community. Devitt's (1991) study of the writing of tax accountants reveals that all genres that tax accountants use have strong intertextual connections with the legal tax code, but these intertextual connections are displayed and used differently in different genres. Bazerman (2010) compares the rhetorical presentation of cited articles in modern scientific articles to the texts of the original articles to uncover the ways in which the authors construct the intertextual field to position their own argument as a powerful antidote. He puts forward basic concepts and a procedure of analysing intertextuality. The basic concepts he describes include levels of intertextuality, techniques of intertextual representation, intertextual distance or reach, and translation across contexts/recontextualization. He also outlines basic procedure involved in intertextual analysis.

Bazerman (2010, p.94) states further that "intertextuality is not just a matter of which other texts one refers to, but how one uses them, what one uses them for, and ultimately how one positions one's self as a writer to make one's own statement". Lemke (1995a p.86) is "concerned with the recurrent discourse and activity patterns of the community and how they are constituted by, instanced in, and interconnected or disjoined through particular texts". The relationship between a specific text and a genre could be revealed by exploring intertextuality. The relationship between a text and its cultural context could be partially understood. For Lemke (1995a), it is through intertextuality that the text instantiates the context of culture. Intertextual analysis of

meaning, thus, is crucial to finding the meaning of a text. The reason for its central importance is that all texts gain their meaning not only intratextually but also, and in a more fundamental way, intertextually.

Intertextual relations transcend the context of situation and depend on the context of culture (Hasan, 1985). The immediate situation, while the most specific, is never the widest context for the meaning of text or discourse. The meanings made in different situation-types are connected in ways that are characteristic of a community's culture. Intertextuality, then, offers a bridge or interface between the context of culture and the text. In this study, intertextuality is crucial to understanding how cultural discourse patterns influence the production of a text (i.e., the use of lexicogrammatical resources). For the purpose of analysing intertextuality, Fairclough (1995a, b) frameworks are relevant to a linguistic consideration on intertextual analysis in this study.

3.0 Methodology

This study is a corpus based description and evaluation of the use of language in peacekeeping agreement documents. The research adopts both quantitative and qualitative methods in the analysis of the selected data. The quantitative analysis involves frequency count of the linguistic features under investigation to establish the regularity of occurrence of intertextuality in the corpus. The purpose of accounting for their regularity of occurrence in the text was to enable a discourse-based description of language in use.

The data for the study was purposively collected from the record or official files of the Mediation and Security Council arm of ECOWAS. A total of ten (10) peace agreement texts were used as the corpus for this study. The table below gives a brief description of the corpus.

Table 1: ECOWAS Peacekeeping Agreement (EPKA) Texts

Tag	Title of Agreement	Year	Words
T1	Agreement on Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities between the Government of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia.	June, 2003	355
T2	Joint Declaration of the Defence and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire and the Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles. (July, 2003)	July, 2003	1,112
T3	Peace Agreement Between The Government of Liberia (GOL), The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), The Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and The Political Parties.	August, 2003	1,318
T4	Agreement Defining the Operations, Composition and Status Of ECOMOG on the Territory of the (Republic Of Guinea Bissau between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Republic of Guinea Bissau.	March, 1999	1,853
T5	Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone.	July, 1999	2,627
T6	Ceasefire agreement in Guinea-Bissau.	August, 1998	1,785
T7	Agreement between the Government of Guinea Bissau and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta.	November, 1998	233
T8	Economic Community of West African States six-month peace plan for Sierra Leone.	October, 1997	234
T9	Abuja Agreement to Supplement the Cotonou and Akosombo Agreements as subsequently clarified by the Accra Agreement.	August, 1995	271
T10	Cotonou Agreement.	July, 1993	
	Total		22,316

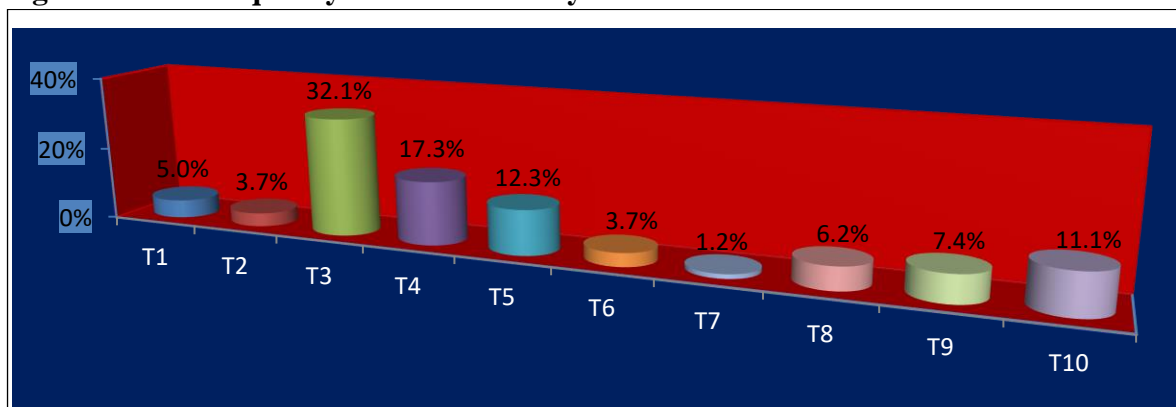
4.0 Analysis of Intertextuality in the EPKA Texts

The most basic notion of intertextuality is that texts do not appear in isolation, but in relation to other texts (Fairclough, 2003). The EPKA discourse contains references

to other articles or provisions and based on the data analysed, the analysis revealed that intertextuality occurred in the 10 selected peace agreements as shown in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2: Frequency of Intertextuality in EPKA Texts

Text Type	FQ	%
T1	4	5.0
T2	3	3.7
T3	26	32.1
T4	14	17.3
T5	10	12.3
T6	3	3.7
T7	1	1.2
T8	5	6.2
T9	6	7.4
T10	9	11.1
Total	81	100

Figure 1: Frequency of Intertextuality in the EPKA Texts

Legal language displays a variety and depth of intertextual and inter-discursive links rarely noticed in any other discourse (Bhatia, 2014). This is also true of EPKA discourse. On the basis of how intertextuality is patterned in the corpus, it was observed that there are two forms of intertextuality which discursively display social meaning in the corpus. The first type of intertextuality is expressed by the use of paraphrase as exemplified by the example below.

Example 1: “*Ceasefire Agreement*” means the *Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed by the **GOL**, the **LURD** and the **MODEL** on 17th June 2003;* (T3)

The underlined paraphrase reveals clearly which part constitutes the texts being intertextualized while the emboldened part of the extract indicates the source (or voice) of the intertextuality. In the corpus, this form of intertextuality is pervasive in the EPKA discourse. The meanings of certain words and expressions are taken from outside texts and systematically imposed into the agreement texts through the use of paraphrase. The second type of intertextuality observed in the corpus is expressed through citation of the sources. This form of intertextuality is contrary to the paraphrase; the text being intertextualized or cited is outside the agreement texts. In other words, the texts are not overtly present in the agreement

but the sources are explicitly indicated; the intertextuality is perceived on the basis of the presence of the intertextual voices in the agreement texts. This can be seen in example 2 below:

Example 2: *Reaffirm the ceasefire agreement signed in Praia on 26 August 1998;* (T7)

In example 2, the voice of the text is explicitly stated (*ceasefire agreement signed in Praia...*); but, the content of the ceasefire agreement is not. The reader will have to refer back to the source to get the information on the ceasefire agreement. While this technique of encoding intertextuality may help the EPKA drafters to achieve dramatic reduction in the space consumed by references, it can create difficulty for lay readers.

From the data analysed, the frequent sources (voices) of intertextual references in the EPKA discourse include constitutive acts of AU (T1, Line 9), UN (T1, Line 6), ECOWAS (T3, Line 12), other peace accords and agreements (T6, Line 12) and the constitutions of nations involved in the peace negotiation process (T3, Line 25).

That intertextuality has a certain social-interactive function in any discourse has been in the theory; the analysis of the data revealed that intertextuality performs three basic functions in the EPKA discourse. Firstly, the device of intertextuality is used

to achieve textual authority in the EPKA discourse and this textual authority is often signalled by the use of complex prepositional phrases. A typical example of this kind of intertextual signalling can be seen in the following provisions in T9 and T3:

Example 3: *Enforcement of violations of cease-fire shall be in accordance with the terms of the Cotonou Accord.* (T9)

Example 4: *If any member of ECOMOG is apprehended pursuant to paragraph 8 of this Article for violating the criminal laws of Guinea Bissau; or if the Republic of Guinea Bissau considers that any member of ECOMOG has committed a criminal offence, pursuant to paragraphs 23 and 24 of this Article, the Force Commander shall immediately:*

(a) *Court-martial in the Territory such a member of ECOMOG in accordance with the criminal laws of his Participating State of origin; or* (T3)

The two examples above indicate how intertextuality functions to signal textual authority in the ECOWAS corpus. In example 3, the use of the complex prepositional phrase 'in accordance with' signals a link to an outside text: the *Cotonou accord*. It shows that the reader/audience may expect some form of sanctions against anyone who violates the ceasefire as detailed in the *Cotonou accord*. It also reveals the nature of the legal relationship that holds between the two (agreement) texts. This legal expectation is met by the use of the legally binding modal verb *shall*. Often EPKA document draws on bits of texts that appear earlier in the texts, echoing and building on it, in what Bazerman (2004) calls intratextual reference and this is evident in example 4 where there are three intertextual references as underlined in the extract. The first two intertextual links are indicated by the use of the prepositional phrase 'pursuant to' which links the texts to other paragraphs within the same agreement (*paragraph 8* and *paragraphs*

23 and 24). The third intertextual link is indicated by the use of the complex prepositional phrase 'in accordance with' which links the text to an outside authority: 'the criminal laws of his Participating State of origin'.

Bringing articles from other sources to the EPKA discourse is a standard practice in legal genre. The aim of this practice is to bring authoritative voices into the agreements. The social function underlying this discursive practice is to create a legal sense in the peace agreements. However, this strategy often creates intertextual distance in the EPKA discourse. According to Bazerman (2004), the use of texts whose interpretations lie outside the texts creates intertextual distance or reach in the discourse. He further explains that intertextual relations are also usually most easily recognizable when the textual borrowings involve some distance in time, space, culture, or institution. The intertextual distance that frequently occurred in the EPKA discourse is that of time. This phenomenon can be observed in the examples given above. In example 2 for instance, the agreement text was drawn up in 2003 however, the intertextual source is in 1998. Another intertextual distance observed is that of institution. The sources of some references in the EPKA texts are taken from the constitutions of nations participating in the peace negotiating process. The extract below explicates this:

Example 5: *The Parties further agree that the transitional Government shall operate as closely as practicable under the Constitution and laws of Liberia.* (T10)

The second function of intertextual devices in the corpus is to provide terminological definitions and explanations in the corpus. Definition and explanation of terms are central to legal writing; the most common and ordinary everyday expressions can take on special values in the context of law. Following this generic characteristics of legal discourse EPKA drafters use the device of

intertextuality to provide terminological explanations wherever certain expressions are assumed to have deviated from their ordinary meaning. This function is evident in the extracts below:

Example 6: “*Ceasefire Agreement*” means the *Ceasefire and Cessation of Hostilities Agreement signed by the GOL, the LURD and the MODEL on 17th June 2003*; (T3)

Example 7: “*Executive Secretary*” means the *Executive Secretary of the Community appointed under Article 18 of the Treaty*. (T4)

The terms *ceasefire agreement* and *executive secretary* for instance, have ordinary meaning. But in the context of EPKA discourse their meanings are explicitly codified, rather than assumed to be known. Common understandings of such terms are often vague, flexible and less precise, but legal interpretation needs more precise definitions.

The third function of intertextuality in EPKA discourse is to signal textual cohesion and coherence to the reader that the text must be interpreted in the context of something expressed elsewhere, within or outside the text. In this sense, the concept of intertextuality allows the reader/addressee to verbalise the webs of meaning that link together the otherwise individualised texts, and see them in the greater context of one another. This function is evident in the examples given above. Through the function of textual coherence, the EPKA discourse evokes past agreements and other legal texts in order to contextualize ‘new’ ones. In the same light, textual coherence achieved through the device of intertextuality makes readers aware of the historicity of the agreement texts (Bakhtin, 1986, p.94). It helps the reader to understand the intended message of the passage more clearly and interpret it in the context of the knowledge provided by other texts. For example, it would be very hard to interpret the extract in example 3 without prior knowledge of

the *Cotonou Accord*. Such intertextual referencing means that agreement texts are not suddenly produced at a certain time but have a history. Texts contribute to existing history by responding to existing texts and thereby transforming the past into the present.

Despite the functions and roles of intertextuality in the corpus, its usage in the EPKA discourse signals complexity in the interpretation and negotiation of meaning. The intertextual references can create confusion for those who are not legal experts and for those who do not keep in mind a specific legal frame. When approaching EPKA text readers have only one option; they cannot read the agreement texts as simple texts and stay oblivious to the intertexts; they must decode the hidden meanings that the references bring into the agreements. For example, in order to fully comprehend the meaning of the extract in example 3, the reader needs to know both the present agreement text and the *Cotonou Accord* referred to in the extract. According to Van Dijk (1993), one of the social resources on which power and dominance are based is the privileged access to discourse and communication. If peace agreements are presented in a language that cannot be fully interpreted and comprehended by the people to whom it applies, this can render some members of the audience disadvantaged in the peace negotiating process and in the long run powerless.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, it is clear that intertextuality is a distinctive feature of EPKA discourse. Two forms of intertextual relations were frequently expressed in the EPKA texts through the devices of paraphrase and citation. The sources (voices) of intertextual references in the EPKA discourse include constitutive acts of AU, UN, ECOWAS, peace accords and agreements and the constitutions of nations involved in the peace negotiation process. Intertextuality

performs three basic functions in the EPKA discourse. It is used to signal textual authority and to reveal the nature of the legal relationship that holds between two texts. It is used to provide terminological definitions and explanations. Intertextuality in EPKA discourse is used to signal textual coherence to the reader that the text must be interpreted in the context of something expressed elsewhere; within or outside the text.

Intertextual relations in discourse are complicated and could create obstacles to communication; so, when approaching EPKA text, readers must decode the hidden meanings that intertextual references bring into the agreements. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that intertextuality in the corpus occurs at a relatively localised level; as such it is not concerned with the broader social voices, but rather with what Fairclough (1992a, p.104) terms manifest intertextuality, where other specific texts are 'manifestly' cued by features on the surface of the text, such as quotation marks, paraphrase and citations.

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