

# Analysis of Death Polemics in Anger of Death by Ezeugo U. Ezeugo and Final Death by Fidelis Okoh

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**Historique de l'article** | Reçu : 13 juillet 2023 | Accepté : 21 mars 2024 | Publié : 27 Juin 2024

Cahiers Inter-Universitaires d'Etudes et de Recherche-Actions pour le Développement de l'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique (CIERAD-ACP)

Numéro° 17  
Varia

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## Abstract

Death is a phenomenon that occurs in every society. Talking about death and dying is evoking discomfort in many persons, resulting in avoidance of this topic. However, end-of-life discussions can alleviate distress and uncertainties in both old and young adults. The study evaluates the effective usage of both verbal and nonverbal cues by the bereaved to mourn. The data was collected from two selected Nollywood movies, such as *Anger of Death* (2022) by Ezeugo U. Ezeugo and *Final Death* (2022) by Fidelis Okoh.. The movies were studied critically to highlight linguistic and nonlinguistic aspects associated to death. Specific screenshots were made in order to capture both the language and the images (action and facial expressions). The analysis was done using the Multimodal Discourse approach and the Pragmatic approach. The selected films were read and 15 screenshots were taken and its contents were analyzed qualitatively. The results indicate that euphemistic expressions are used to announce death and those responsible for use to make it look sorrowful and innocent sorrowful to look innocent. In addition, characters use demonstrations and hidden language (implied language) to handle issues of death.

**Keywords:** polemics, death, proverb, discourse, pragmatics

## Resumé

La mort est un phénomène qui se produit dans toutes les sociétés. La mort suscite un malaise chez de nombreuses personnes, ce qui les amène à éviter ce sujet. Cependant, les discussions sur la fin de vie peuvent atténuer la détresse et les incertitudes chez les adultes et jeunes. L'étude évalue l'utilisation efficace des signaux verbaux et non verbaux par les personnages endeuillés pour faire leur deuil. Les données provenaient de deux films de Nollywood tels que *Anger of Death* (2022) par Ezeugo U. Ezeugo et *Final Death* (2022) par Fidelis Okoh. Les films ont été étudiés de manière critique pour mettre en évidence les aspects linguistiques et non linguistiques associés à la mort. Des captures d'écran spécifiques ont été réalisées afin de capturer à la fois le langage et les images (action et expressions faciales). L'analyse a été réalisée à l'aide de l'approche multimodale et l'approche pragmatiques. Les films sélectionnés ont été lus et 15 captures d'écran ont été prises et leur contenu a été analysé qualitativement. Les résultats indiquent que des expressions euphémiques sont utilisées pour annoncer la mort et que les responsables de leur utilisation semblent tristes de paraître innocents. De plus, les personnages utilisent des démonstrations et un langage caché (langage implicite) pour aborder les questions de mort.

**Mots clés :** polémique, mort, proverbe, discours, pragmatique.

## Introduction

One of the central tasks of media study as in media and in literature is to impose a structure on life and death, giving meaning to both. Indeed film study in language and cultural studies seeks to understand the world and observe human conditions. Life and dying are intertwined because they all express a process (Horn, 2012). Even though society experiences death, the circumstances are not the same. This is because some societies have good standards of living that boost their lifespan (Amartya, 1993). In the case of any death, euphemistic and metaphoric language should be used to soften the tense atmosphere because of the pains and shock that follows such scenes. This present study sets out to analyse how language is used in to talk about death in *Anger of Death* by Ezeugo U. Ezeugo(2022) and *Final Death* by Fidelis Okoh(2022). It focuses particularly on language manipulation, pretence, implied meanings and demonstrations. The non linguistic aspects (images) will also be considered in order to offer a complete understanding of language polemic in the selected movies.

## I-Statement of the problem

Everyone experiences death and it is a part of everyone's existence, the biological truth continues to change as a result of society and the search for meaning. It is impossible to exclude the role of language, literature, and culture or media in the representation of death. The main problem or scientific gap covered by this study is to discuss polemics in movies related to death, looking at it from many angles, together with the

need to redefine an appropriate language which can become a common symbolic and experiential heritage. Understanding mortality and the diction related to its discussions can help mankind live in love with one another

### *1-Research question*

This study focuses on the following question:

How is life and death represented in *Anger of Death* by Ezeugo U. Ezeugo(2022) and *Final Death* by Fidelis Okoh(2022)?

### *1-1- Literature review*

### *Death announcement and communication*

Previous studies have discussed on death but from different perspectives, Crespo (2006) for instance, found that euphemism and metaphor can be used to reduce the taboo of death. He also noted that language can be twisted in a particular manner to describe issues related to death and shocking issues of the society. Moreover, the researcher discovered that death announcement is not something that has to be direct. The announcer must use indirect language or euphemism to talk about it. This will help to reduce the feelings that always go with such announcements

Streit-Horn(2011) made a systematic review on after death communication. He explained that after death communication is a spontaneously occurring encounter with the dead. The study focused on how gender, age, ethnicity, marital status,

religious affiliation and practices, financial status, physical health and educational factors affect after death communication. The findings showed that 30-35% have at least one after death communication in their life time. Regarding age, the researcher indicated that more inquiries need to be done in order to confirm the relationship between age and after death communication. Interestingly, the widowed population encountered after death communication (ADC) though the results were not compared to single, married or divorced people. For religious practice, those who adhere strongly to their religious experienced little ADC than those who opposed this view.

Enrica, Menendez and Rosengren (2021), carried out three studies in which they misunderstandings parent child conversation about death. They wanted to see how parents discuss the issues of death with their children, specifically in animated films. Two cases studies were conducted and the findings showed that death is represented in films. Out of the forty nine films, thirty seven contained death scenes. Concerning the second the study, four hundred short cases were treated. The study mostly reported on parents' attitudes and parent and parent child conversation in films. They realised that children questions about life are similar to death in general sense. Parents often watch the films with their kids and hence, discuss with them as the films progress.

## *1-2- Beliefs and causes of death*

Bautista, Herrera and Corona (2018) investigated on the psychological

differences and beliefs about life and death. A total of 913 inhabitants of the Merico City took part in the study of which 49.8% were men and 51.2% were women between 18 and 30 years. The researchers employed four scale factor as adopted by Silva and Corona (2017) such as religion (origin and life after death), Darwinism, death scientific advances, and conceptualization of death. The first factor has to do with the existence of a supernatural being called God. This supernatural being is responsible for the resurrection of man after death. Those who strongly believe and practice his doctrine will go to heaven after they die and live an everlasting life. The second factor considered in the study was Darwinism, which is related to the theory of the evolution of species. Darwinism stipulates that life is all about evolution and adaptation; the fittest will survive while the others will die. Concerning the third factor, death is an inescapable reality but scientific advances can help to postpone it indefinitely. The last factor use in the study was the conceptualization of death which is based on the principle that dying is the end of the existence of human beings. After using the factors to explain the various beliefs of the inhabitants of the metropolitan city of Merico, the researchers discovered that there is statistically significant disparity between averages of the four factors in relation to the different levels of education and religion. Basic education students believed that there is a supernatural being after death while only a few university students did so. Concerning the Darwinish approach, basic education students results were lower than those of the University students. For the other factors, the University students had very high averages as compared to students

who had not yet reached certain level of reasoning. This means that the more educated the population, the less likely they are to have religious beliefs about life and life after death. Two main beliefs about death and life after death can be deduced from this study. The first one is religion and the second one is Science.

Juma (2021) postulated that death is one of the difficult scenarios to explain, teach and even define. The data was collected from documents and interviews conducted with some selected participants. Through the diverse literature and interviews, the author explored multiple and varied concerns of death. The primary preoccupation was find out how it is detected, to find out how and why the dead are buried and what happens after death (that is where the dead go to), the cause of death, and to find out whether there is a remedy for death. The results revealed that medical experts prove death by measuring and assessing the signs including pulse rate, blood pressure, body temperature and respiratory rate. Concerning the causes of death the researcher cited diseases like, ischemia, chronic pulmonary obstructive disease, stroke, dehydration, pain and infection. Old age is also one of the main contributors of death. Although the study discussed issues of death ranging from sickness to death, it has not brought out polemics that emanates from such incidents. The current study will therefore hammer on the polemics of life and death.

Burt(2014) revisited previous works about life and death. His investigation revealed that each writer, person and even countries think about death in their own manner. He also discovered that discussions about life and death have never ceased to be part of human

discourse. Scientist have scientist **and** theologians have always tried to explain it in various way. But what is intriguing is that life and death are the only constant and surest things that will happen to each human being. The greatest suspense and belief is where people die and go to. This has been the ultimate battle of science and religion. This present studies looks at the polemic discourses that surround life and death.

Horne (2012) maintained that the institutionalisation of death in the Western countries rendered it unfamiliar with the actualities and banalities of dying. Accordingly, the study was concerned with the place where the dying individual is encountered (visual culture), how the victim is seen and screened, the structures that come into play in the framing process and the viewer's ethical relationship with it as well as responsibility towards the dying individual. The study concluded that human beings are dying. Dying in his context means that time is limited and the end is guaranteed. To him, politics and ethical grounds cannot refute and see dying as the opposite of living because living and dying both express process and should not be treated dismissively.

### *1-3- Legal and economic understanding of death*

Smolesky (2006) was preoccupied about the legal understanding of life and death in the society. He maintained that life and death should be defined legally as moments in time because process based explanation will trigger unnecessary misunderstanding and also because the legal consequences of death are enormous. In essence, Smolesky wanted to unearth

some of the contradictions about the existence of man, adding that clear legal definitions will guarantee useful debates about abortion.

Amartya (1993) treated the issue of life and death from the economic perspective. He argued that life and death cannot be separated from the economic factors in that the well-being of man's depends on how booming the economy is. Despite unprecedented prosperity in the world, famine, and chronic hunger persist in many areas. To this effect, diseases and preventable deaths remain widespread in developing countries. In addition, a country can high GDP, but with a low rate of life expectancy as a result of poor access to health and some basic necessities.

#### ***1-4- Portrayal of death in films***

Hennepe (2018) observed that entertainment has been tilted towards amusement and thrill in the past years. This old way of entertainment has moved beyond gratification and sensation-seeking and fun has added emotional description of media experience. Hennepe's (2018) study set out to affirm that eudemonic entertainment paints life as a process that leads to an inevitable death. The participants of the study were asked to watch eudemonic video in which the protagonist lost the love one. The protagonist later on showed worries for losing an important person. In fact, Hennepe wanted to know whether mortality salient and emotion videos can actually trigger positive and negative feelings. The results showed that little evidence for both type of mortality salience and type of video. This results show that life and death is has been and will always been a sorrowful thing for

human beings, especially when it concerns a love one. Dying and death are therefore unavoidable and remains a burning issue in each society.

Niemec and Schulenberg (2011) think that the portrayal of death in movies is usually unrealistic promoting misunderstanding to the public. They authors discussed pivotal elements in popular, independent and international movies, laying emphasis on the use of movies as a crucial adjunct for teachers and students. They found that movies are one means of positively influencing death attitudes with the role of increasing death acceptance reducing death anxiety. Thus, movies play a role in depicting death which in turn downplay on the emotion of the audience. Apart from the purgation of emotions, the researchers added that movies have a moral lesson to teach. This may provoke the audience's perception of the world and drag him or her to order. Hence, movies should move beyond entertainment to teaching. This present study goes further to discuss how language is use in movies to paint life and death.

A bulk of studies has been carried out about life, death, but most of these studies have mostly concentrated on religious and scientific beliefs. This present study sets out to verify how linguistic and non-linguistic factors are represented in movies to describe human issues, especially those related to death.

#### ***1-5-Theoretical review***

This section discusses two interrelated theories, such as pragmatics and multimodality.

## 1-6- Pragmatics

Pragmatics looks at how context contributes to meaning. The origin of the theory is often associated to the work of Austin in the 1960s. The socio-cultural interactional approach to pragmatics will be adopted and employed in this study. Mey's (2001) theory consists of a super-ordinate term, *Pragmeme*, which anchors activity and textual components of discourse. The activity part shows the roles of the participants of discourse (interactants) while the textual part concerns the various contextual variables that interplay in discourse situations. Mey contends that his theory concentrates on the environmental constraints which determine what can be said, what is being said and what cannot be said in communicative events. The *ipra* or *pract* initiates a pragmatic act to realize a *pragmeme*. The knowledge which interactants have on a communicative event as well as the effects of such an event on them in that particular context constitutes a "pract". During communication, Mey further explains, interactants produce speech acts, conversational acts, physical acts, psychological acts and prosodic acts which are all articulated in varied contexts: INF (inference); REF (reference); VCE (Voice); SSK (Shared Situation Knowledge); MPH (Metaphor); and M (Metapragmatic Joker). The metapragmatic joker refers to certain metapragmatic activities. Indexical expressions which are context-sensitive (repeating indexical expressions in discourse does not determine what they mean, as their meanings depend on who utters them and the situations that inform their production) and so necessitates adequate mastery of the

context of an utterance is a good example of metapragmatic activity. Explaining the metapragmatic activity, Mey (ibid.) cites that the repetitive structure "What I do I do" is implicit (the meaning has to be worked out); the indexicality (indexical context) will produce the meaning through textual analysis that shows the users, receivers and contexts of communicative elements. Invariably therefore, the metapragmatic indexicality explains how pragmatic acts generate discourse. Hence this theory will facilitate the taking of the various utterances and structures of the chosen films and figure out what they actually mean. Proverbs used in the films have implied meaning; hence Mey's approach will be used to interpret such hidden meanings and the intentions of its speakers.

## 1-7-Multimodality

Multimodality refers to many modes (visual, gesture, linguistics, spatial and aural) aural. Multimodality was coined around mid to late 1990s based on Charles Goodwin's article in 1998. The article featured Multimodal Discourse which was indicated to be an article that had been in the making for several years. While multimodality was not called as such until the 1990s, humans used various modes to interact (Jewitt Carey, Beemer, Jeff and O'Halloran). As a result, gestures can be combined with facial expressions, body language, gazes and postures. Thus, a mode is a means of communicating. And it occurs in various mediums, from face-to-face communication, theatre and videos. A medium is the channel or system through which communications are conveyed. The plural form of medium is media. Back

to multimodality, it is a combination of either or all of these modes in the diagram below, followed by their brief explanations (Kristin, Sheppard and Cheryl E., 2004):

### *1-8-Visual*

The visual mode refers to the moving images and characters or people. It is sometimes possible to find compositions that almost, if not completely, rely on a single mode. Such images include diverse cultural connotations, symbolism and portray different practices. Examples of visual resources include: framing, vectors, symbols, perspective, gaze, point of view, colour, texture, line, shape, casting, saliency, distance, camera angles, form, power, involvement/detachment, contrast, lighting, naturalistic/non-naturalistic, camera movements and subject movements.

### *1-9- Aural*

The aural mode is focused on sound including, but not limited to, music, sound effects, ambient noises, alerts, silence, tempo, pitch and tone of voice in spoken language, volume of sound, emphasis and accent

### *1-10-Gestural*

The gestural mode refers to the way movement is interpreted. Facial expression, hand gestures, body language, and interaction between people are gestural modes. This is quite vital in theatre and has become more apparent on the web lately written or spoken to be removed. The aural mode works with linguistic, visual, aural and sometimes

even spatial modes in a bid to create more details and communicate better to the reader or consumer of the gestural text.

### *1-11- Linguistic (Alphabetic)*

This mode refers to written or spoken words. The mode includes word choice, the delivery of spoken text, the organisation of words into sentences and paragraphs, and the development and coherence of words and ideas. It is the best mode to express details and lists.

### *1-12- Spatial*

The spatial mode as the name implies, refers to the arrangement of elements in space. It involves the organisation of items and the physical closeness of people and objects. This is conveyed through design of spaces, using choices spatial resources including: scale, proximity, boundaries, direction, layout and organisation of objects in the space. This space extends from framing of shots in moving images.

From the definitions and examples of the modes above, it is certain that media is crucial to multimodality because it enhances the use of all the modes together with language for more effective communication. To note, there have been several distinct eras that can be used to understand the progression of multimodality. The oral language era was the first. According to Li (2020) oral language appeared about 300,000 years ago. At that time, people used simple language words with gestures or body language to communicate which could as well be considered as multimodal ways of interaction. Oral expression

was unarguably the dominant mode of communication. It was the immediate communication mode save for the people from the western culture who, between 1850 to 1980 C.E, thought that writing was the absolute communication means (Clivaz C, Sanker. M, 2016). It is worthy to mention the Print Era whenever it comes to the development of multimodality. Thus, multimodality is an inter-disciplinary approach that considers meaning from communication and representation to be more than just about language (Kress, 2009). It is pertinent in this work, as it permits the systematic study of debated issues about life and death, which are common denominators in our society especially in relation with the advent/emergence of new media and technologies. Hence, it provides concepts, methods and a framework for the collection and analysis of visual, aural, embodied, spatial aspects of interaction, environment and the link that exists between all these modes.

There are three interrelated theoretical assumptions that underpin multimodality:

First, multimodality assumes that representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which contribute to meaning. It focuses on analysing and describing the full repertoire of meaning-making resources that people use (visual, spoken, gestural, written, three-dimensional, and others, depending on the domain of representation) in different contexts, and on developing means that show how these are organized to make meaning.

Second, multimodality assumes that resources are socially shaped over time to become meaning making resources that articulate the (social, individual/

affective) meanings demanded by the requirements of different communities. These organized sets of semiotic resources for making meaning are referred to as modes which realize communicative work in distinct ways – making the choice of mode a central aspect of interaction and meaning. The more a set of resources has been used in the social life of a particular community, the more fully and finely articulated it will have become. In order for something to ‘be a mode’ there needs to be a shared cultural sense within a community of a set of resources and how these can be organized to realize meaning.

Third, people orchestrate meaning through their selection and configuration of modes, foregrounding the significance of the interaction between modes. Thus, all communicational acts are shaped by the norms and rules operating at the moment of sign making, and influenced by the motivations and interests of people in a specific social context. Consequently, these three assumptions will be verified in the course of reading the films under study.

## *2-Methodology*

### *2-1- Presentation of the Corpus*

The data of this study was collected from two selected Nollywood movies, such as *Anger of Death* and *Final Death*. The first film is produced by Izuchukwu Udenwa, directed by Ezeugo U. Ezeugo and sponsored/licensed international wise by the company, Seed of Grace Productions in 2022. The second film *Final Death* is a Nigerian film, legally

produced by the Nollywood filmmaking industry, Real nolly TV ©. It is directed by Fidelis Okoh (Osenlege). These films are representations of contemporary arguments and or verbal accusations that emerge when someone dies. In a socio-cultural perspective, linguistic contents of both films provided several instances of polemics that seek to accuse or justify one's hand in the death of another.

### 2-3- Data collection and analysis

This is a qualitative content analysis that operated with the aid of a non-participatory method. It enabled the watching/reading of the films from beginning to end with full attention on some specific scenes, aspects of verbal and nonverbal language that results in polemics when one is dead. Hence, the specific screen shots taken were explored, explained and interpreted in order to have a complete understanding of the utterances of the actors and hidden messages filmmakers aim to communicate to the audience(s). In the cases of screenshots, yellow arrows were used to clearly indicate the specific portions under analysis. It is worth noting that discourses produced by these actors were transcribed into excerpts in order to facilitate textual analysis of modes as required by the theories: pragmatic and multimodality.

### 2-4- Presentation of Findings

A reading of *Anger of Death* by Izuchukwu Udenwa and *Final Death* Ezeugo U. Ezeugo indicates that language is used in various ways to portray life and

death. This language is direct and indirect depending on the situation. In addition, there are both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of death in the movies. The data investigated is presented below:

### 2-5- Discourse on Vengeance

On normal circumstances, death is a touching experience that causes pain to the bereaved. And most often, those who mourn genuinely always express their anger and yearn for justice. In *Anger of Death* there a handful of utterances, Jidenna, Sharon, Ichie Onukwube and Ichie Maduka make against their in-law. Some of these discourses are numbered and stated in point forms as follow.

You must produce those who killed our daughter or.., 11:56:21

Come to the shrine and swear..,1:58:31

He must take an oath...1:59:4

They must tell us what happened to our daughter..., 2:34:"35

It shall never be well with you, you will continue to suffer like this,3:34:4

Excerpt 1 above, is an imperative statement made by Ichie Anozie to Chief Livinus Odigwe. It is an order that accuses Chief Livinus, in order to know the cause of his wife's death. In the statement, there is the subject pronoun, "You." This is an index use to point directly at Livinus to be guilty as charged. Also, "must," which follows the subject pronoun is a modal auxiliary verb of obligation, which is effectively used to mount pressure on him to confess immediately void any option.

Excerpts 2 and 3 are also imperative statements that urge the accused to prove his innocence by swearing before the great

deity of the land. This shows the strong belief the villagers have for the deity. The fact that Chief Livinus finally turns down the option is an implied indication that he is guilty. Also, the deity is immortal, just and cannot be corrupted. It is a symbol of justice that deal with controversies above man's thinking.

Excerpt 4 starts with the subject pronoun, "they." This is an index that does not only point out Chief Livinus as being guilty, but his entire family too. Thus, the accusation extends from particular to general and result in tense debates between the Ichies (elders) of both families.

Excerpt 5 commences with the auxiliary "shall," which denotes the wish for misfortune to befall Livinus in the near future as his form of punishment. The complete sentence is in the negative, "it shall never be well with you." This is a curse uttered by Sharon against Chief Livinus. From her cries, she exudes the deity to deal with the issue accordingly.

### *3-Use of proverbs*

The declarative and imperative statements used to accuse Chief Livinus for the death of Theresa, makes him to frequently use proverbial expressions in order to sound innocent.(Arvo, 1994). A proverb (from Latin: *proverbium*), is a simple and insightful, traditional saying that expresses a perceived truth based on common sense or experience. They are often metaphorical in nature and use formulaic language. Below is a list of some proverbs used in Anger of Death. They are identified in contexts where actors discuss issues related to the death of Theresa, jointly grouped according to

their semantic correlations and briefly discussed thereafter with the aid of the pragmatic approach of Mey.

1) A cockroach is never innocent in the gathering of fowls., go back or you will die! 3:31:40

2) The child who is stung by a bee, is always afraid of a tsetse fly 3:14:10

3) An elephant walking upturn does not have to leap 2:34:16

4) The very thing that kill the mother hen is still there and can't allow its chicks to rest." 1:57:17

5) The protection of chickens depends on the mother hen. 2:36:49

6) If you look at the dark, something from it will consume you. 2:31: 51

7) "When the fish comes out from the river and says that the crocodile has one eye, who can argue?" 2:43:13

8) The fall of a dry leaf is a warning to the green one 2:45:46

9) A man does not stand straight when his pants are on his ankles 2:42: 44

10) When a stubborn child drinks water it stinks to his teeth," the water will pull out your teeth.

Jidenna, I will consume you. 2:43:22

Proverbs 1 and 2 above, are utterances made by Grand Master to Chief Livinus Odigwe. They are declaratives that warn the latter not to swear before the deity if he does not want to die. This implies that the deity is superior to their brotherhood.

Proverbs 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 10 are uttered by Chief Livinus to Jidenna. They are declaratives that express threats and warnings for him to keep his mouth shut

if not, he would be killed to follow his late sister. Such statements imply that his life is in danger if caution is not taken.

Proverb 4 is uttered by Ichie Anozie to Ichie Ikolo and Ichie Maduka. This is an affirmation that accuses their son to be responsible for the death of their daughter. The implied meaning is understood as by Ikolo, who replies angrily by stating that, it is their entire family that are ritualists. The accusations heighten and extend from one place to another.

Proverb 7 is made by Jidenna to Chief Livinus. It is in form of an interrogative statement. It is an implied way of saying that whatever argument Chief Livinus gives is false and should not be believed by anyone.

### *3-1- Discourse on Condemnation*

In both films, actors and actresses engage into dialogues that express their anger and condemn the guilt by themselves. This is obvious in the pejorative names they attribute to one another because of the differences in their views. Excerpts from such instances are numerated below with their timeframe.

You people are ritualists 1:55:48

Enemies of progress 1:53:19

You kill my sister," there is nothing like burial. Take her back. 1:49:10

It is you and your entire family that are ritualists 1:55:50

It is your grandfather that is a ritualists 1:55:54

I know he has a hand in her death 2:20:1

You have three days to explain what led to the death of my sister, 1:59:59

What is this? Don't you have regards to your wife? 2:32:16

You kill our daughter and you are here, you want to run away, chie Anozie, 1:55:31

If I discover that you did not do it, I would stone you to death, Prince Jamike, 0:25:19

This thing, this Jezebel. 6:34:20

Excerpts 1, 2, 4, 5, and 9 are uttered by the Ichies from Theresa's family. All these are assertive statements made to apportion blame on the family of Livinus. They seek for condemnation in a bid to punish the guilty. This is to avoid a similar situation in their family. Nevertheless, the other group of elders are angry to an extent that their conversation results in a cacophony, given no one is willing to listen to the other hence, controversy.

Excerpts, 3, 6, 7, and 8 are made by Jidenna to Chief Livinus. These are declarative statements that categorically expose Livinus as a killer. His argument is supported by the fact that the accused had shown little or no attention to the wife when she was alive. In other words, his sister died as a result wickedness.

Excerpt 10 is an utterance from *Final Death*. It is a conditional statement of Prince Jamike to the female maiden in the palace. With the application of the first rule of conditional statement "if.. I would," the prince complements it with the first person singular pronoun, "I." There is an aspect of language inclusion used to threaten the maiden as her failure to poison the juice will serve her a dead sentence by stoning.

Excerpt 11 is a declaration made by Igwe Ezeka II of Ezeko Kingdom. He uses the demonstrative adjective "this" to qualify and liken the wicked character of one of his wives, Lolo Achalugo, as a "thing" and the biblical allusion of Jezebel. This expresses his disregard for the atrocities this queen encouraged in the palace. Her unfaithfulness and wickedness caused her instant death, as her own son strangles her to death in the presence of everyone.

### 3-2- Nonverbal modes of polemic

A film is an emotional picture that projects a narrative with the aid of multimodal means of communication. In other words, it is an audio-visual technological device that relies on the combinative use of sound, light waves to represent messages. The different media it uses are:

Verbal auditory channel, including dialogue, background voices and sometimes lyrics, nonverbal auditory channel, including music, natural sound and sound effects, verbal visual channel, including superimposed titles and written signs on the screen and the non-verbal visual channel including picture composition and flow. (Gottlieb, 1998, p. 245)

The focus of this section is to examine nonverbal cues used in the context of language polemics in the two purposively selected films: *Anger of Death* and *Final Death*, analyses will therefore emphasise the fictional characters (Ortega, 2011, p.20). These are channelled through microphones, cameras or other suitable sensors (Vinciarelli & Mohammadi,

2012, p.2). In this perspective, principal nonverbal modes of expression in the films that enable the actors and actresses portray their intended meanings: or message to the viewers include: "Physical appearance, sound effects, postures/gestures, face/eyes behaviour, vocal behaviour, cultural signs, epistolary, space and environment," (Hecht, DeVito & Guerrero, 1999; Ortega, 2011). These shortlisted cues make up the subsequent analyses.

### 3-3- Physical Appearance

In film analysis, this includes the built-size and form of the individual, colour of skin, hair, height and objects used by the person, their costumes/clothes and body atonements (Hosseyini 2012, p. 256; Vinciarelli, Salamin & Pantic, 2012). The films under study display several instances that define the personalities of actors. First, in *Anger of Death*, Chief Livinus, the wealthy and cultist man, has a typical way of dressing that identifies him with his brotherhood. The symbolic red cap, the black piece of cloth over a long red gown, surrounded by some red loins in the background are indicators of mystical powers and the dangerous ventures he and his Grand Master embark on. The clay pot in Chief Livinus hands represents his wife's life (Theresa), which is at stake. In other words, it is a pot of both life and death because it is used for the redemption of man and the killing of man as well. Grand Master on his part, is holding a white tusk in his right hand punctuated by four (4) lighted red candles placed before him. The white tusk is an imagery of an elephant that is the biggest and one of the most dangerous animals in the jungle. Thus, he is the leader of the

secret cult, reason he is known as Grand Master as seen below:



### Part Two; Anger of Death, 1:20:48

These scenes represent a repository of devilish practices that result in death in the film. This therefore implies that death is sometimes an end product of a spiritual attack from a cultist group. That is, life can be spiritually monitored. Also, it can be concluded that such evil practices require three measure colours: red, black and white. Among these colours, the red colour dominates. This is because it is a connotation of the bloody ritual cultists' groups usually engage in.

And second, in the film *Final Death*, the physical appearance of Prince Jamike is worth analysing. From his dressing code, he is of royalty. The diamond crown he puts on his head, the two white beads he wears on his neck, right hand and his royal gowns of different colours on several occasions are symbols of wealth and royalty in Ezeko Kingdom. The white beads are symbols of riches and authority in places like Yoruba and Igbo in Nigeria. Also, the height and the voice of Prince Jamike together with his dream to become king at all cost makes other people in the palace and a council of elders in the land to be afraid and duly respect him. As such, he is an ironical character whose appearance does not match his innate personality/character. The first shot below shows how he kills the sick/paralysed King Ezeka II with a pillow for the second time. The second image, on the other hand, shows how he stranded his own mother, (Lolo Achalugo) to death with his bare hands.



Image 3: Igwe Ezeka II Chambers Image 4  
Part Two; Final Death, 2:39:45 & 6:35:28

These two scenes are representations of deadly gestures; they show how the love for more power intoxicates man to an extent that he does not value the life of others around him or in the society at large. The fact that he uses his bare hands to kill his father and mother implies that life can also be taken through physical means. Also, Prince Jamike plans the death of Rev Father Declan, with a mechanic engineer, who off sets the normal functioning of the brakes of his vehicle. This results in the accident the Rev. Father has on his way back to the Cathedral that leads to his sudden death. However, this complements in a contrastive manner the cause of death, in *Anger of Death*, where spirituality is at the core. In both cases, one understands that death is an act that is planned and carried out secretly without the knowledge of a third party, unless executors are caught red handed. This explains why the chosen setting/time for such acts is at night when innocent ones are deep in sleep.

## Discussion

Death studies have been conducted in Cameroon and beyond, but the studies have focused only on particular aspects. Crespo (2018) worked on the language use on newspapers to announce death and discovered that the language used to talk about death or emotional issues is euphemistic. He argued that announcing death in a direct manner can be very damaging to the concerned. The main disparity between his results and the present results lies on the fact that he talked on language twist when reporting about death. This study looked at the polemics of death. Bautista, Herrera and Corona (2017) sampled people's opinion of various age groups about death and discovered that they had different beliefs. It was noted that the more educated people are the more they believe that there is no destination after death and the less educated they are the more they believe in the existence of a supernatural God (Heaven). Another study to be discussed is that of Juma (2021), who pointed out that death is inevitable but it

can be prolonged. Among other reasons that cause death, the author cited old age and disease as the most prominent. The main disparity with current study is that it focuses on the polemics and accusation resulting from death. Amartya (1993) viewed death from the economic perspective. The researcher argued that death cannot be separated from the economy because in good economies people experience low death rate than people from low economic countries. This argument was based on the premise that good economy leads to long life. The study is similar to this study in that in *Anger of Death*, for instance, hardship and the desire to gain immediate riches and honor are the main causes of death. However, this study concentrated on the controversies emanating from the death situation in the selected films. Burt (2014) revealed that the discourse of death has never been clarified. People believe that there is a place where people go to when they die (theologians) while others do no (scientists). Enrica, Menendez and Rosengren (2021) reported on the child conversation about death films and noted that students' reaction and interrogation after watching death scenes are the same. They are always inquisitive to ask their parents why people kill others, where people go to when they die. Furthermore, Niemec and Schulenberg (2011) opined that the portrayal of death in movies is usually unrealistic. He added that death scenes need to be treated with special attention in movies in order to drag people to order. Hence, movies should move beyond entertainment to educating. In addition the results Yalom (1989) were far from depicting the polemics of mortality. Most of these studies have often seen death as damaging and dangerous, promoting greed and violence. As presented in this

section, Studies have handled death in different manners, notably death announcement, ideologies about death and perceptions about death, destination, expanding life span and a host of others.

## Conclusion

As observed in the findings issues of polemics are deep-rooted in *Anger of Death* and *Final Death*. Death is represented as something that triggers disagreement and polemics. Interestingly, in *Anger of Death*, life is construed as challenging and tempting. In the face of such challenges, characters are poised to seek for other means notably joining a secret group to overcome the financial constraints. Ironically, the joining of occultist groups means sacrificing for redemption, leading to death and polemics. Moreover in *Final Death*, death comes as a result of succession. Those characters involved in sacrifices, killings use proverbs and demonstrations to prove their innocence.

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