

## Discursive Psychology Interpretation of Inmates' Wellbeing in Olokuta Prison Counselling Interactions, Akure

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### Abstract

*This study is a discursive psychology interpretation of inmates' wellbeing during prison counselling sessions in the Olokuta Medium Security Prisons (MSP), Akure, Ondo State. To achieve this, the study investigates phonosyntactic elements in prison counselling discourse, and addresses interpretation of codes under utterance forms as a strategy that enhances inmates' overall wellbeing during PCI. The Prison Counsellor and/or Clinical Psychologist (PC/CP) employ interactive devices such as elicitation in talk, punishment distancing and encouragement/motivation; the inmate clients construct scripts like self-revelation, offence confession and behavioural change. These interactive responses were drawn from such counselling issues as relating, understanding and changing. Social, physical, psychological, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing, as well as life satisfaction are wellbeing components mined from PCI. This study emphasized some counselling issues with psychological insinuations which PCs, CPs and ICs construct in the discourse of prison counselling, their linguistic interactive responses and phonosyntactic implication on wellbeing*

**Keywords:** discursive psychology, wellbeing, prison counselling interaction, inmate client

### 1 Background to the study

This study examines psychologically-based linguistic indices emanating from counselling interlocutors and the interactive responses ensuing from such interactions in the Olokuta Medium Security Prison, Akure, Ondo State. It looks at prison counselling interaction as a means of creating social bonding between two socially unequal hierarchies (prison officials functioning as either prison counsellors or counselling psychologists and prison inmates functioning as inmate clients), enhancing wellbeing components, eliminating stress-induced factors in a prison setting, and establishing peace in the prison society which may extend to the world outside the prison walls.

Prison counselling interaction as a subset of prison discourse provides a channel for prison counsellors to challenge and upset those psychological factors that inhibit inmates' processing of the prison environment as a rehabilitation home, thereby motivating inmates' coping abilities. For the inmates, it offers an opportunity to debunk those inhibiting factors challenging their overall wellbeing and affecting their ability to process the prison environment as a rehabilitation home. One very important function of prison counselling is the linguistic construction of positive psychological themes that initiate change from one situation to another.

The prison is conceived as a panopticon, where inmates' behaviour are observed and monitored and recompense made on all contravening behaviour noticed. Werret (as cited in Schott 2004), explained a panopticon as a circular building with the prisoners occupying the circumference in their cells, while the officers maintain the centre formation. A panopticon is a penal structure of circular design in which prisoners are placed in cells along the circumference, and the guardroom is in the centre of the structure. The structure was first conceived by Jeremy Bentham in 1787 as a way to provide security in prisons at a limited cost. The panopticon is metaphorically conceived as an observatory, which observes human behaviour in the prison setting. Hence the prison is visualized as an observatory, where inmates' behaviour is monitored to see how they react to the law of punishment.

Often, prison interactions become interactions which take place within social institutions with a clearly defined hierarchical structure (say schools, the police, the law courts, [prisons,] etc) in which the power to discipline or punish those of lower rank is vested on holders of higher rank (head teachers, inspectors, judges, [prison officials,] etc) (Thomas, as cited in Mayr, 2004, p. 92 – 93). Hence, most prison interactions are situated in a position of power where the more powerful participant constrains the contributions of the less powerful participants.

The counselling interactions more or less reduce the tension between individuals of different ranking as the issues of trust, confidence, and healing are at stake. Russell and Dexter (2008) understood counselling to be a dynamic process of negotiation which purports to create opportunities for self-determined change for the client. Counselling is portrayed as a talk based on voluntary participation, confidentiality, equality, and self-help (Jing-ying, 2013). Every counselling interaction recommends a relationship between the counsellor and the client. Counselling is not

only about exploring core issues and gaining a different perspective on problems and psychological difficulties; it is also about building a rapport and trust with the counsellor, so that a client feels comfortable enough to open up and voice their worries. This relationship is built on trust and confidentiality, and can make all the difference between a positive and negative counselling experience. Nelson-Jones (2009) was of the opinion that:

counselling and helping relationships take place within participants' hearts and heads as well as face to face. Most obviously, counselling relationships are public and consist of observable verbal, vocal and bodily communication of varying degrees of intention. However, these relationships are also private and consist of counsellor ... and client internal mental processing (p. 40).

In a bid to institute a rehabilitating kind of reform in the prison community, most prison communities take advantage of the prison counselling interaction. It is a combination of the prison interaction and the counselling interaction. There is a struggle to maintain equality and confidence, while displaying power and information retrieval, for further prosecuting use.

Almost always, all the activities carried out in the prison society (including the prison counselling interaction) are performed using language, which is the human way of sharing and exchanging information that pertains to their overall welfare. Prison counselling, as one of the welfare activities, becomes highlighted to manage inmates' wellbeing enhancement. Prison counselling is formulated as a talk different from other talks going on in other situations within the prison because of the language employed during the counselling interactive sessions. Prison counselling is an interactional process involving conversation. The language enacted in a Prison counselling discourse is situated in a position of power. One way of reviewing the prison counselling discourse is in the area of intonation quality; where intonation quality presupposes the manifestation of pause, stress and intonation in the formation of hegemonic counselling interactions. Another linguistic issue explored in the prison counselling discourse is 'utterance forms'. It lays emphasis on sentence structure and switching of codes as a way to initiate the kind of relationship and understanding necessary in militating against prison stress and enhancing inmates' wellbeing. Hence prison counselling discourse becomes a mixture of linguistic formality and informality to achieve discipline and reformation.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

There have been several studies on language and the wellbeing of inmates during prison counselling interactions. Researches which have been done around prison counselling interaction can be grouped into such areas as critical discursive psychology, correctional counselling and psychoanalytical feminism. Watts and de L Horne (2000) and Allen (2005) investigated prison counselling and stress from such areas in correctional counselling as coping with trauma. Within psychoanalytical feminism, works as Johnson (2003), Banks (2003) and Solomon, Nwankwoala and Ushi (2014) studied women in prison, and the plight of female prisoners. Tenibiaje (2010) studied counselling interaction on such platform as counselling for productive employment of prison inmates.

These researches have presented comprehensive analyses of the psychosocial and economic elements affecting inmates, but this study wants to contribute a new dimension to what already exists by examining the influence language has on the overall wellbeing of inmates with focus on prison counselling interaction. Studies which come close to this are Agbakwuru and Ibe-Godfrey (2016) on incarceration and the wellbeing of prison inmates in Nigeria; Jing-ying (2014) on dilemma of empowerment: responsibility attribution in prison counselling; and Picken (2012) on coping strategies, adjustment and wellbeing of male inmates in the prison environment. In addition, this study utilizes resources from discursive psychology in pursuing linguistic insinuations ensuing from prison counselling interactions involving inmates. As a result, the study investigates how prison counselling interlocutors engage language in confronting the overall wellbeing of inmates during prison counselling interaction in the Olokuta Medium Security Prison, Akure, Ondo State.

### **1.2 Aim and objectives of the study**

This study explores the contribution of language towards the wellbeing of inmates during prison counselling interactions in the Olokuta Medium Security Prisons, Akure, Ondo State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. investigate the phonosyntactic elements in prison counselling discourse
- ii. explain the phonosyntactic elements in terms of intonation quality and utterance forms in prison counselling interaction

### **1.3 Research questions**

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the phonosyntactic elements prevalent in prison counselling discourse?
- ii. How can the phonosyntactic elements be explained using intonation quality and utterance forms?

## 1.4 Scope of the study

The focus of the study is on language and how it addresses the overall wellbeing of prison inmates during prison counselling interaction in the Olokuta Medium Security Prisons, Akure, Ondo State. Wellbeing here is the summation of wellness of an individual inmate, which include biological and physical health, emotional and psychological wellness, mental and social states.

Language in this study is projected to account for a phono-syntactic view of wellbeing encountered during prison counselling interaction. In the prison counselling interaction, the general wellbeing of inmates that were in attendance for counselling as clients was discussed. The intonation quality of the discourse is examined to ascertain inmates' understanding of the prison counsellor as a rehabilitator; inmates' attitude towards the prison as a rehabilitating society; identity of the inmates as Awaiting Trial Persons (ATPs) or Convicted Persons (CPs). The intonation quality of the interaction is also explored through the syntactic utterance forms to determine how psychological dilemmas that bother inmates and inmates' memory of crime leading to incarceration are revealed. On the syntactic aspect of language, this study examines the effect of sentence structure and switching of codes on the interactions emanating from the interlocutors and how they address psychological concerns in the area of wellbeing.

The data are limited to the counselling interactions and clinical sessions between the prison counsellor, the clinical psychologist and the inmate clients and the focused group interview granted to the researcher by the counselling participants in the Olokuta Medium Prison, Akure, Ondo State. The population of the study comprises 20 Awaiting Trial Females, 10 Awaiting Trial Males, 10 Male Convicts, 1 Clinical Psychologist, 2 Prison Wardens, and 1 Prison Counsellor. Discursive Psychology (henceforth DP) constitutes the theoretical framework. The study is interested in investigating the discourse of prison counselling interaction in relation to the wellbeing of inmates.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Previous studies on prison counselling interactions, language and inmates' well-being

According to Lyons (2002), "spoken sentences are not just combinations of phonological elements; they are also combinations of syntactic units" (p. 60). As such, the study, which is focused on the counselling interactions between prison counsellors and inmate clients, takes a look at the phonosyntactic implication of the language used by interlocutors in prison counselling interaction to enhance inmates' wellbeing. Such phonosyntactic elements include pause, stress, intonation, sentence structure and switching of codes. Lyons (2002) also maintained that spoken sentences are not, of course, punctuated as such with anything that is strictly equivalent to the initial capital letter or the closing full-stop, or period, of written sentences. While the written language makes use of punctuation marks, the spoken language utilizes intonation-patterns. These intonation patterns are phonologically biased.

Pauses, according to Jefferson (2004), are silences within turn-constructive units (TCUs). Silences are measured as gaps, pauses, or micropause. Pauses can be used to gain talking time; to restructure scripts that are not well-formed; to choose better qualifying diction that represent thought and can win the trust of either party involved in the interaction; to allow preceding utterance's effect permeate within the listener; and to indicate passing turn to another interlocutor. In spoken utterances, pauses are marked by such transcriptions as (.), (0.3), (3.5). While (.) is measured in micropause, (0.3) and (3.5) are measured in tenths of seconds. But in written language, pauses could be represented by such punctuation marks as comma (,), fullstop (.) and question mark (?) in different scenarios for different reasons.

Stress and intonation, according to Ngulube (2015), usually work hand in hand to produce the appropriate implication of what is said. For spoken interaction, especially in prison counselling interaction, the presence of stress on any part of the utterance lays emphasis on the utterance segment. Stress could be represented in spoken interaction by the following transcriptions ( ^ ) up dash, ( : ) colons – as much as possible depending on the stress impact, ( \_\_\_ ) underlining and ( ABC ) capitalization of stress unit. In his opinion, Nordquist (2018) noted that in speech, intonation is the use of changing (rising and falling) vocal pitch to convey grammatical information, or personal attitude. Intonation is particularly important in expressing questions in spoken language. It is the rise and fall (and vice versa) in the pitch of the voice. "Falling tune usually shows finality in an utterance. It is therefore used in commands, complete statements, questions beginning with 'wh'" (Ngulube, 2015, p. 51). Bringing it home, Ngulube (2015) maintains that:

Intonation is a problematic area for many Nigerian speakers of English. Most Nigerian languages are tonal while English uses intonation. Intonation for us therefore is hardly significant for meaning or attitude. Our understanding of utterance in English, therefore, is aided by the grammar or syntax of the utterance rather than its intonation. (p. 56) Consequently, in the Nigerian prison counselling context, where intonation is somehow observed by the prison counsellor and the clinical psychologist, it is usually to create a sense or an atmosphere of formality. Generally, the tonal quality of the Nigerian languages affect the Nigerian English used in the prison counselling interaction.

It should be noted that where intonation tries to make appearance, it is usually within the utterances of the counsellors. A tonal language according to Aderibigbe (2012) is “a language that employs levels to [sic] pitch to make lexical or syntactic distinction or both, that is, tone performs two major functions namely lexical and grammatical function.” (p. 2) This may be true when the language in question is indigenous or tonal but what happens when the language is borrowed and indigenized, in the case of Nigerian English? There is a combination of English prosodic features and Nigerian linguistic tonality at play. Hence, it suffices that the study engages a combination of intonation and tone.

It is worthy to note that inmates' overall wellbeing enhancement cannot be achieved if pursued with every sense of formality. For this reason, sentence structure and switching of codes (which intone utterance forms in this study) are introduced by the counselling interlocutors to initiate an atmosphere of informality to enhance inmates' social wellbeing through a sense of belonging noticed in the social bonding and rapport visible in the relationship between the counsellor and the counselee. Although the PC/CP extract information from the IC through the formal means of interrogation, they however tend to choose their diction carefully in order not to threaten the inmate clients' face, thereby rousing the prison stress level, which may truncate inmates' wellbeing.

Sentence structure takes the form of sentence form and function, which entail that (i) statements function as declaratives; (ii) questions function as interrogatives, and (iii) commands/requests function as imperatives. While most utterances emanating from the PC/CP are interrogatory, that issuing from the ICs is declarative as it takes the form of statements. At the understanding and changing stages of counselling, there are more of declaratives and imperatives than interrogatives. This strikes a balance between the formality (as witnessed at the onset of PCI) and informality (which is witnessed as wellbeing components are enhanced).

On a second hand, inmate clients are given opportunity to express themselves by responding to the elicitations. It is through these responses that inmates reveal self which opens an avenue to observe psychosocial issues hindering wellbeing enhancement. To further heighten the level of informality which projects social bonding and rapport among PC/CP and IC, and helps inmate clients reveal self, codes are switched from the very formal Nigerian English to inmates' indigenous language, especially the language of the immediate environment where the prison yard is located and the Nigerian Pidgin. The researcher, not being conversant with the language of the immediate environment of the prison location, is absorbed into the interaction as a participant observer via interpretation. Hence, switching of codes during PCI is viewed as an interpretation strategy that absorbs interlocutors into the prison counselling interaction. In linguistics, code switching or language alternation occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more languages, or language varieties, in the context of a single conversation.

Every human being strives to live well. Some desire to live well in the area of health, accommodation and finance; others long to subsist in terms of feeding, freedom and social acceptance. Howbeit, all forms of living well are manifest under the broad theme of wellbeing. Wellbeing in this sense refers to the sum total of wellness of an individual in terms of biological and physical health, emotional and psychological wellness, mental and social states, etc. It connotes lack of depression or anxiety. (Agbakwuru and Ibe-Godfrey, 2016, p. 83)

This therefore presupposes that when an individual is lacking in any of these areas where wellbeing finds expression, such an individual's state of mind becomes jeopardized and as a result, the stress component is heightened. Stress is a normal part of life. You can experience stress from your environment, your body, and your thoughts. According to Cleveland Clinic News (2015), stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The American Psychological Association (2019) described stress as any uncomfortable emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological and behavioural changes. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Stress affects the emotional and psychological wellbeing of inmates. Stress could be routine, traumatic or sudden. The routine type of stress includes pressures of work, school, family and other daily responsibilities. The traumatic type of stress consists of event stress like major accident, war, assault, natural disaster, which may result to mental illness. The sudden stress may include loss of job, divorce, illness or incarceration.

Imprisonment and the incarceration period can feature in the types of stress listed above. Imprisonment is a sudden traumatic event in the life of an individual; during incarceration, the routine kind of stress is experienced as activities in the prison develop into repeated traumatic events considered to be prison stress. Researches on stress and prison stress include Murphy (2004). In his study, 'Pre-prison, prison, post-prison: post traumatic stress symptoms', Murphy explained that inmates bring into the prison pre-prison experiences which are likely to expose them to incarceration experiences, causing post traumatic stress symptoms. He further explicates that the incarceration experiences which inmates have been exposed to constitute traumatic stressors that cause post traumatic stress symptoms in some individuals. "Prisoners ... have always confronted a unique set of contingencies and pressures to which they were required to react and adapt in order to survive the prison experience" (ASPE, 2001).

It is this 'unique set of contingencies and pressures' that this study considers as prison stress. Prison stress is a discomforting situation that truncates inmates' wellbeing. To curb this and enhance inmates' wellbeing, the prison counselling interaction was made available.

## 2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study comes from Edwards and Potter (1992) Discursive Psychology (DP) approach to Discourse Analysis. This selection is informed by DP's interest in interpreting language in terms of the psychosocial context in which it occurs. Language is regarded as a social phenomenon, hence it is studied in relation to its use in society (Halliday, 1994), say, prison society.

### 2.2.1 Discursive psychology

As an approach developed out of discourse analysis, Discursive Psychology uses studies of both naturally occurring and experimentally engineered human interaction to criticize the way topics have been conceptualized and treated in psychology. Hence, it focuses on material drawn from natural situations such as relationship counselling, child protection help lines, neighbour disputes, family mealtimes, and very recently, prison counselling interaction (PCI). Topics discussed mainly in PCI revolve around stress and wellbeing within the prison environment. DP is analytically focused on the way psychological phenomena are practical, accountable, situated, embodied and displayed (Potter, 2005). DP draws on the philosophy of mind of Ryle and the later Wittgenstein (1958), the rhetorical approach of Michael Billig (1996), the ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel (1967), the conversation analysis of Harvey Sacks (1992), the speech act theory of John Langshaw Austin (1962) and the sociology of scientific knowledge from Mike Mulkay, Steve Woolgar and Bruno Latour. It nevertheless attempts to derive understanding of traditional topics like attitude, identities and memory as constructed by participants in human interaction. While mainstream psychology treated discourse as a 'mirror' for people's expressions of thoughts, intentions, motives, etc., Potter (1996) maintained that discourse is a 'construction yard' where all such presumptively prior and independent notions of thought and so on were built from linguistic materials, topicalised and, in various less direct ways, handled and managed. Discursive psychology therefore starts with psychological phenomena as things that are constructed, attended to, and understood in interaction.

In traditional psychology, talk is conceptualized as a reflection or indication of mental content; but discursive psychology regards such conversation and interaction as a social action or function (Moses, 2018). DP is about building a description to present a course of action that follows standardized routine. Edwards (1994) calls this 'script formulation'.

## 3 Methodology

The data for this study emanated from prison counselling interactions and the focused group interviews. The data was accessed from the Olokuta Medium Prisons, Akure, Ondo State in September/October, 2016 and July, 2018, being the period approved for the research by the State Controllers of Prisons, Ondo State Command. Every activity in the prison is predetermined and scheduled because of the nature of the environment. Hence, the counselling and clinical sessions were scheduled to avoid clash of activities. Each session was made up of a group of five inmates, making a total of eight interactive sessions.

There were 20 awaiting trial female inmates in the prison as at the time of the study; all of them were divided into four groups of five inmates each in a group counselling interaction. 20 male inmates were also incorporated in the clinical/healing session. 10 of the male inmates were convicts and the other 10 were awaiting trial males. They were also divided into four groups of five inmates each in a group clinical session. This division is based on the period of incarceration and related offences. A clinical psychologist, a prison counsellor and 2 prison wardens were also available in the prison yard and thus form the population for this study. The prison counsellor and the clinical psychologist are female and male prison officials who are professionals in counselling and clinical psychology employed to handle the reformatory aspect of the prison inmates. The female prison counsellor is responsible for the reformatory welfare of the female inmate clients, while the male clinical psychologist is responsible for the healing of the male inmate clients. The selection of the Likuta Medium Security Prison, Akure, Ondo State is justified by the fact that the research is a case study.

Two of the group counselling interactions and two of the clinical sessions were selected as samples. The lock-up time for inmates and the period stipulated for the research within the prisons influenced the counselling style. Discursive Psychology is the theoretical insight employed in answering the research questions. The study is such that should employ interpretation of recording from the prison counselling conversation. But due to the nature of prison in general and Nigeria prisons in particular, such could not be attained. Individuals who go into the prison yard where inmates inhabit are prohibited from taking any gadget that compromises the intricate nature of the prison yard. Hence there was no audio or audio-visual recording of the PCI sessions.

#### 4 Data presentation and analysis

This section makes a presentation of illustrative excerpts from the sample analysis. The table below is arranged according to counselling psychological issues noticeable in prison counselling interactions, their linguistic interactive responses and wellbeing components.

Counselling Psychological issues	Linguistic interactive responses				Wellbeing components
	Script formulation		Phonosyntactic implication		
	Prison Counsellor	Inmate client	Intonation quality	Utterance forms	
Relating	Elicitation in talk	Self-revelation	Pause Stress Intonation	Question Statement	➤ Social wellbeing ➤ Physical wellbeing
Understanding	Punishment distancing	Crime confession	Pause Stress Intonation	Question Statement	➤ Psychological wellbeing
Changing	Encouragement /Motivation	Behavioural change	Pause Stress Intonation	Question Statement Request	➤ Spiritual wellbeing ➤ Emotional wellbeing ➤ Life satisfaction

#### 4.1 Relating

From the beginning of the prison counselling interaction (PCI), there is an effort to strike a relationship. While the prison counsellor ensures that she wins the trust of the female inmate client by creating conducive atmosphere for the Female Inmate Client (FIC) to relax, the FIC tries to build rapport with the Prison Counsellor (PC) who is seen to be presenting as friendly. On the other hand, the Clinical Psychologist (CP) exhibits knowledge of the inmates who he has bonded with in a father/son-like relationship, while the male inmate clients embrace the hand of fellowship extended by the clinical psychologist and in response, the CP is fondly addressed by the male ICs as PD – Psychology Doctor.

##### 4.1.1 Relationship building, linguistic interactive responses and wellbeing components

Every counselling interaction strives to build a relationship between the counsellor and the client. At this point rapport is created. The prison counsellor and clinical psychologist attempt to get affirmation from the inmate clients in every group counselling interaction. This is done by cautious invitation known here as ‘elicitation in talk’. The PC/CP, by way of questioning, invites the inmate clients to reveal aspects of themselves regarded as intimate and in the process the ICs perceive the PC/CP as caring and friendly. The perception of the PC/CP as a caring friend eliminates the inmates’ distrust of prison counselling officials as one of the punitive teams and in effect initiates inmate’s self-revelation. Extract 1 illustrates the relating stage of the PCI:

##### Extract 1

- 1 PC: What is your name?
- 2 IC: Mm: my name is Client
- 3 PC: ((smiles)) (0.2) what is your mother’s name?
- 4 IC: (0.1) she is Client mother
- 5 PC: What is your father’s name?
- 6 IC: He is Client father
- 7 PC: What er (0.1) was your occupation
- 8 IC: I mea::n em (0.2) what work did you do
- 9 PC: be:fore you were er brought ~ here?
- 10 IC: Ca:tering
- 11 PC: Which school did you:: attend?
- 12 PC: (0.3) catering school
- 13 PC: What is your:: family background
- 14 PC: (0.2)is it erm a polygamous or monogamous fa:mily
- 15 IC: It is a monogamous family
- 16 PC: Are your parents together?
- 17 IC: That is (0.3) did you grow up with both parents li:ving together?
- 18 IC: ((nods)) (0.1) Yes

**19 PC:** What is your marital status?

**20 IC:** °I am single°

**21 PC:** (3.5)

This extract illustrates the continuous invitation of the inmate client by the prison counsellor through series of questions. This utterance form (question, which is interrogative) is known as elicitation in talk. The preponderance use of the wh-question format seems to be the ideal pattern with which the PC elicits information from the IC as well as builds a counselling relationship with the IC. Questions such as “What is your occupation?” and “What is your family background?” are employed by the PC to eliminate the fact that unemployment and family background are indices for crime involvement. Such eliciting material clauses as “which school did you attend?” are employed for further clarification on reasons for incarceration and for investigating into stress propelling factors that destabilizes wellbeing. All the elicitations have corresponding interactive responses from the IC.

The IC’s responses connote some level of self-revelation which is to enable the PC/CP assess factors that may heighten the IC’s level of involvement in crime-related situations. Responses made by the IC reveal the IC’s identity to the PC. This helps to strike a rapport with the PC in the event of the prison counselling interaction.

One way to look at the communication processes involved in counselling relationships is in terms of how counsellors/psychologists and clients reward each other (Nelson, 2009:41). By looking beyond such tags as ‘prisoner’ and ‘guard’, both the PC/CP and the IC portray positive relationships during counselling/healing sessions (Kendall, 1993).

At the relating stage of prison counselling interaction, both the PC/CP and ICs formulate such scripts as relationship bonding through elicitation in talk and self-revelation to build a counselling/healing relationship whose intent is to debunk doubt and distrust, and create a stress-free or stress-reduced environment during ICs incarceration. These enhance the social wellbeing of the inmate. Social wellbeing involves a sense of belonging to a community (say, prison community) and making a contribution to society. The inmate, having started a bonding, trustworthy relationship with the prison counsellor/counselling psychologist, feels a sense of belonging in the prison environment, where s/he has access to authorities in uniform.

Intonation qualities such as pause, stress and intonation are prevalent in the formulation of script. Pauses are silences within turn-constructual units (TCUs). Silences are measured as gaps, pauses, or micropause. Pauses can be used to gain talking time; to restructure scripts that are not well-formed; to choose better qualifying diction that represent thought and can win the trust of either party involved in the interaction; to allow preceding utterance’s effect permeate within the listener; and to indicate passing turn to another interlocutor. For instance, in line 3, (0.2) is recorded after the behavioural response of ((smiles)) as the silence needed to allow the quest for bonding seep into the inmate in order to develop, as well as enhance the social wellbeing of the inmate. Other relevant examples of pauses in the above extract include: L4 (0.1) where the inmate considers what her mother’s name has to do with the interaction; L7 (0.1) used with a delay continuant ‘er’ for remembrance of succeeding words; L8 (0.2) used with a delay to restructure preceding construction; L21 (3.5) – a longer pause/gap showing termination of turn and indicating next speaker’s turn.

Underlining is used to indicate some form of linguistic stress or emphasis, either by increased amplitude or by higher pitches; the more underlining within a word, the greater the emphasis. Such emphasis is recorded in L7 – occupation, where 2 syllables are stressed to indicate the importance of employment, and the relationship between employment and incarceration. Other situations where emphasis is noticed include L13 – family; L14 – polygamous; L15 – monogamous; L17 – you; and L19 – status. Emphasis of different degrees are represented but all have an inclination to familial relationship and lend credence to social and emotional wellbeing, where emotional wellbeing means feeling good, being happy, experiencing positive emotions like love, joy or compassion, and feeling generally satisfied with life.

Intonation is the sound pattern of phrases and sentences produced by pitch variation in the voice. Intonation is primarily a matter of pitch variation. It performs such functions as indicating the attitudes and emotions of the speaker; highlighting aspects of grammatical structure (such as signalling the difference between statements and questions); focusing attention on important elements of the spoken message; and also helping to regulate conversational interaction. There are some punctuation marks employed to connote intonation. These marks, although they are used to perform graphological functions relevant in syntax, they are nevertheless utilized in exhibiting intonation in interactions. For instance, the extract above is heavily burdened with elicitations which are carried out through questioning. In grammatical construction of questions, they are usually marked by question marks to indicate the speech act of interrogation. However, a question mark (?) indicates strongly rising intonation. The use of interrogatives by the PC/CP indicates the strong position they occupy in the life of inmate clients and gives credence to formality and discipline.

## 4.2 Understanding

The understanding stage of the psychological themes empowered in prison counselling interaction and clinical psychological session opens an avenue for both the PC/CP and the IC to know and affect themselves, positively. The PC/CP also utilizes elicitation to generate crime-related information from the IC. This produces emotional bonding between them.

### 4.2.1 Emotional bonding, linguistic interactive responses and wellbeing components

The PC/CP employs punishment distancing to create emotional bonding with the IC. In punishment distancing, the PC/CP removes self from the punitive team through the open-ended elicitation prevalent at the interaction level. At this stage, the PC/CP strives to maintain punitive distance and also respect the rights of the inmates. Extract 2 explains this phenomenon.

#### Extract 2

1 **PC:** >What's your offence< (.)

2 Why did they bring you - here

Notice the first interrogative clause is relational and presupposes that the client actually committed an offence. Rectifying the utterance, the PC repeats the question using material process. The third person plural pronoun 'they' as used by the PC distances the PC from the punitive team that remanded the inmate client, thereby presenting as 'the good and caring official'. This enables the PC to elicit further crime-related information from the inmate client, as she bonds emotionally with the IC and without infringing on the IC's right to personal space.

Since the IC has created rapport with the PC at the beginning of the counselling interaction and is already bonding emotionally with the PC, the IC feels relieved to share further information with the PC who is seen as a trusted friend and a dependable ally. Extract 2b below connotes the IC's response to the PC's elucidation in extract 2 above and also depicts the interactive bonding.

#### Extract 2b

1 **IC:** Seven of us =

2 = were remanded for the same - offence (.)

3 but one person has been er

4 (0.2)

5 bailed

6 We were at Idorin °in a church program° =

7 = someone with a kind of spi:rit started a - confession

8 (0.3)

9 She went from church to church (.)

10 but at one church

11 (0.5)

12 she was em (0.2)

13 >asked to wait till the service was over<

14 After the servi:ce was

15 o::ver, the church people re-fused to

16 attend to us (.) since we all follo: wed the lady.

This narration by the IC is in consonance with crime confession. The PC's elucidation does not seem persuasive; this gives the IC the freedom to let go of every emotional and psychological inhibitions which have minimised inmates' wellbeing since incarceration. The friendly opportunity created by the PC allows the ICs to express their feelings as PC's friends and not as prisoners. Notice the stress on the first word 'seven'. This lays emphasis on the number of persons involved in the same crime. It also features as a rise in pitch occasioned by freedom of expression; this freedom is engineered by the PC. The PC uses this opportunity to elevate ICs' psychological wellbeing.

Latches (=) are used by the participant who holds the floor to maintain talking turn as they are in groups. The IC also uses pauses and delay continuants to gain time to remember some judicial terms as seen in lines 3 and 4 where the delay continuant (er) and the pause marker ((0.2)) foreground the bid to remember the term 'bailed'; and in line 12, where the delay continuant and pause are employed in order to utilize better diction and well-structured syntax, for instance, 'asked to wait till the service was over'. This utterance was speeded up as indicated by its enclosure in the right/left carats (> <) in line 13, to cover up for the delay earlier witnessed. Such words as 'spirit', 'service', 'over' and 'followed' have colons within them. The colons show degrees of elongation of the prior sound; the more colons, the more elongation. These elongations draw attention to the words which foreground inmates' spiritual



wellbeing. At the mention of ‘offence’ (line 2), ‘confession’ (line 7) and ‘-fused’ in ‘refused’ (line 15), there is a heightened pitch used to produce the words.

This also lays emphasis on the fact that at this point, the inmate clients desire to free their emotions of every bit of the memory of the crime (which led to their incarceration) and thereafter, foregrounds crime confession.

Naturally, in a conversation such as this, there should be prompts and/or responses from the other participant to show involvement in the interaction. But the prison counselling interaction is a peculiar kind. Moreover, the stage to which the interaction has progressed demands that the prison counsellor maintains a level of silence in order to assimilate every details of the crime confessed. As a result, there is no case of overlapping and interruptions from the PC.

By distancing self from the punitive team, the PC/CP not only succeeds in bonding emotionally with the IC but is also able to elicit offence-related confessions from the IC. Offence confession seeks to extract emotions of pity from the prison counsellor and demonstrates change in behaviour or in response to prison stress as it affects inmates’ wellbeing. The script of crime confession is also formulated to solicit help from the PC/CP as psychological change agents.

### 4.3 Changing

At the changing stage, the PC/CP encourages and motivates the IC, while the IC exhibits behavioural change necessary for wellbeing enhancement. Since the whole process of prison counselling is geared towards the rehabilitation and consequent change of the inmate clients, this stage therefore becomes the most desired by both counselling participants – PC/CP and IC. The samples analyzed under this stage are taken from a combination of counselling interaction, clinical session and focused group interview (between the inmates and the researcher). In the samples, the PC/CP formulate scripts such as encouragement and motivation, while the ICs construct such script as change in public-threatening behaviour, which stretches its flanks towards wellbeing enhancement and stress regulation.

#### 4.3.1 Change patterns/wellbeing enhancement/Stress regulation, linguistic interactive responses and wellbeing components

At the level of crime confession, the PC/CP notices areas where change is imminent and encourages the IC. This brings about trickles of change in one pattern of behaviour or the other. By motivating these trickles of change, the IC garners more stress regulating energy to evoke greater change elements. Motivations emanate from the PC/CP during counselling when they allow other change agents conduct extra counselling sessions for inmates and visitations by inmates’ relations. Here change becomes encouraged and its evidence motivated. As the IC is beginning to cope with prison stress through constant counselling sessions, patterns of change begin to manifest visibly in them. Stress regulation is apparent in a transformational setting. Involvement in constant counselling interaction within the prison community has proved to contribute to the reduction and/or regulation of prison stress witnessed by the inmates of the Olokuta Medium Security Prisons, Akure, Ondo State. As a participant observer, the researcher manually recorded constructions from the PC/CP, which suggest motivation and encouragement. Extract 3 below explains it further.

#### Extract 3

**1 IC:** I wa::nt to ask ̄her something ((‘her’ referring to the researcher))

**2 PC:** ((nodding)) Go ahead.

**3 IC:** ((Beams with smile)) Th(h)anks.

As the PC and IC have bonded so well emotionally, the IC feels free and relaxed with the PC such that they can eventually make demands or requests. The elongation of ‘want’ emphasizes desire which foregrounds request. The utterance form employed by the IC in line 1 is request, though in statement format. This is made possible because the IC now has an understanding of the PC/CP as a rehabilitator and a change agent, whereas the PC/CP regards the IC as an individual in need of rehabilitation that enhances their wellbeing within the duration of incarceration. The PC grants the IC’s request, first with a behavioural response (nod), followed by the utterance ‘Go ahead’. The form of PC’s response is imperative. It behaves like a command, but in the circumstance where it manifests (changing stage), the command nature of the imperative clause is lessened and it thus functions as acknowledgment. This is motivating and so reinforces the inmates’ belief in the PC. The IC rewards the PC with a behavioural response of beaming with smile, while attempting to verbally reciprocate with a laughter-laden ‘thanks’. Notice that the use of ‘thanks’ is informal. At this point, the IC is beginning to experience the most satisfying wellbeing component that involves behavioural change and stress regulation – life satisfaction. This gesture by the PC spells encouragement and motivation of the IC to discard stress-related behaviours and assume a change in behaviour.

There is a rise in pitch when the IC was saying ‘her’; this suggests the emphatic recognition of a third-party in the counselling interaction (represented by the Participant Observer – PO). The PO is an element in the world outside

the prison walls. Outside world interaction is necessary for mental refreshment. It avails inmates the opportunity to feel belong and loved. It contributes immensely to the enhancement of such wellbeing components as social wellbeing, psychological wellness, and life satisfaction. Inmates' relatives are regarded as outside world intervention. When visited by relatives, inmates' wellbeing components are enhanced. A reverse, which entails deserting and rejection of inmates by relations, increases the level of stress and initiates a tremendous decrease in the enhancement of wellbeing components in the prison. Extract (4) illustrates this:

#### EXTRACT 4

- 1 **PO:** How lo::ng have you been here?
- 2 **IC1:** Two weeks
- 3 **PO:** [(Faces IC2 to derive a response from her)]
- 4 [(0.4)]
- 5 **IC2:** Three months
- 6 **PO:** How do you feel
- 7 **IC1:** Not happy (0.2) but have been visited by relations.
- 8 **PO:** [(Looking towards IC2)]
- 9 [(0.2)]
- 10 **IC2:** I am NOT happy=
- 11 = since I have been here (.)
- 12 No relative has visited

The elongation of the time reference "long" in line 1 lays great emphasis on the extent of the incarceration period. This helps to reveal that the duration of incarceration can make an impression on stress regulation and wellbeing components. 'Here' is high-pitched to enclose the apprehensive use of 'prison'. The question mark (?) is used in conversation to not only elicit, but to achieve other functions. The immediate succession of the word 'here' (making reference to prison) by the mark of interrogation is employed to show the strong position prison has come to occupy in the inmates' lives during the incarceration period. There is an overlap between the body language of the PO in line 3 and the pause (line 4) showing a concurrence in the response expected of IC2 by PO.

Underlining indicates emphasis; the extent of underlining within individual words locates emphasis and also indicates how heavy it is. The underlining of 'feel' (line 6) lays emphasis on the importance attached to inmates' feeling in a prison environment. The PO's emphasis on 'feel' draws desired emotion from and checks the progression of wellbeing components in the inmate clients. The interrogation on inmate clients' feelings illuminates the need for outside world intervention, which is necessary for wellbeing enhancement. Such is witnessed in the high-pitched word 'visited' (line 7) and a loud expression of emotion 'NOT happy' (line 10) noticeable among the inmate clients. The inmate who is dejected due to lack of visitation by relatives express such using 'visited' enclosed in degree (°) signs. The degree signs are used to represent utterances that are 'hearably' quiet. A rehabilitating change comes in the form of positive gain. During the clinical or healing sessions, when asked to explain how gainful presenting for the clinical session has been, a male inmate client responded thus:

#### Extract 5

- 1 **IC:** I've gained a lot of things=
- 2 =like (0.1) how to >stay away< from
- 3 em (0.2) ba::d influence (0.2) how to:
- 4 get closer to Go:d
- 5 (0.2)°I haven't been a church goer°
- 6 but erm (.) since incarceration (hmm)
- 7 I [(touching the chest)] (0.2)
- 8 have decided to be >close to God< a::nd =
- 9 =live with society in a positive way.

Counselling/clinical sessions are regarded as avenue for the enhancement of spiritual wellbeing as could be gleaned from the above extract. Emphasis is placed on 'I' in lines 1 and 7 to indicate individualisation of wellbeing enhancement, especially that of spiritual wellness, as elevated by expressions such as 'close(r) to God' (lines 4 and 8), 'stay away from bad influence' (lines 2 – 3), 'live with society' (line 9), etc. 'I haven't been a church goer' is enclosed in degree signs to show a quieter expression laden with the psychological behaviour of shame.

#### 5 Conclusion

The study reveals that during prison counselling interactions, counselling psychological issues of relating, understanding and changing are examined chronologically alongside linguistic interactive responses of script formulation and phonosyntactic implications to expose wellbeing components which help prison inmates revisit the

prison environment and incarceration as a rehabilitation home and rehabilitation programme, respectively. During prison counselling interaction, both PC/CP and ICs formulate scripts which have phonosyntactic implications. Scripts formulated include: elicitation in talk, self-revelation, punishment distancing, crime confession, encouragement/motivation and behavioural change. On the phonosyntactic implication of the scripts, there are intonation quality and utterance forms. In the area of intonation quality, pause, stress and intonation are examined, while sentence structure (question, statement, and request) is explored under utterance forms.

During the prison counselling interaction, issues pertaining to inmates' wellbeing are discussed to enable them cope with prison stress. Such wellbeing components as realised in the study include social, physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, as well as life satisfaction.

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