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SHARED SCHEMATIC STRUCTURES OF METAPHYSICAL DISCOURSE AND GENDER-BIASED DEVIATIONS IN THE 'GLOBAL MIGRATING SOUTH'
Case studies on West-African refugees' ELF-mediated trauma narratives

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Abstract - This paper explores native schematic structures of West-African oral narratives that are transferred into the ELF variations used by migrants and refugees in their trauma reports collected in Italy. Case-study data analysis reveals that these schematic structures are unexpectedly shared with autochthonous oral trauma narratives typical of economically-depressed areas of Southern Italy, thus representing an instance of contemporary 'Global migrating South'. In this context, migration from the African Global South to Southern-European countries fosters conditions for intercultural communication, particularly with Mediterranean regions not typically categorized as part of the Global South. Hence, the deterritorialization of the ELF variations caused by the migrants' displacement from their native contexts in the Global South – where such variations often represent official pidgin/creole forms (as in the ex British colonies of Africa) – helps identify similar schematic patterns across different settings, especially when highly-emotional reports of traumatic experiences are involved. This phenomenon is assessed by applying a model grounded on Cognitive Linguistics, Possible-Worlds Semantics and Modal Logic to the analysis of a number of case studies focused on Nigerian refugees' trauma narratives, involving the transfer of native-language structures into their ELF variations at the levels of ethnopoetic pragmatic patterns, idiomatic lexicon, ergativity, modality, and metaphorical frames grounded in metaphysical imagery. Data reveal that West-African refugees' trauma narratives often personify traumatic events as cruel supernatural beings or deities, such as Yoruba divine entities or other mythological hybrids shared with the host Mediterranean cultures, which assume animate, agentive roles in ergative structures. The study also emphasizes how biomedical definitions provided by the American Psychiatric Association fail to address trauma effects in the Global migrating South, where not only physical and natural causes, but also sociopolitical factors, religious constructs and metaphysical beliefs deeply influence expressions of distress. These culturally-embedded 'idioms of distress', therefore, necessitate an alternative interpretive framework that acknowledges both physical and metaphysical elements to enhance clinical interactions in Transcultural Psychiatry. A discrepancy in this research is finally introduced with the presentation of a parallel corpus in progress focusing on schematic divergences from the findings analyzed in this paper, occurring when judgment on women's traumatic experiences are involved within the same regions encompassed by the "Global migrating South".

Keywords: Global migrating South; English as a Lingua Franca (ELF); idioms of distress; trauma narratives; ethnopoetic entextualization.

1. Research focus and topic

This paper focuses on an exploration of West-African migrants' *native schemata* (i.e., background knowledge of linguacultural behaviours stored in the minds of members of a speech community and actualized in the grammar structures of their L1s – Carrell 1983) transferred into the ELF variations (English as a Lingua Franca – cf. Guido 2008, 2018) that they used in their trauma reports collected in Italy. It will be argued that case-study data analysis frequently reveal that West-African migrants' schematic structures are unexpectedly shared with similar structures identified in autochthonous oral trauma narratives in economically-depressed areas of Southern Italy, thus representing an instance of what it will be here defined as a contemporary *Global migrating South*. It is believed

that such a coincidence can foster intercultural communication between migrants from the African Global South and people from the Southern Mediterranean regions which are not normally categorized as part of the Global South. This would entail that the deterritorialization of ELF variations caused by migrants' displacement from their native contexts in the Global South (where such variations often represent official/nativized pidgin/creole forms – as in the ex British colonies of Africa) helps identify similar schematic patterns, especially in highly-emotional reports of traumatic experiences.

2. Theoretical grounds and research hypothesis

In this paper, this phenomenon is assessed by applying a model based on theories of Cognitive-Experiential Linguistics (Sweetser 1990), Modal Logic and Possible-Worlds Semantics (Hintikka 1989; Pietrovski 1993; Stalnaker 1994) to a case-study analysis focused on West-African migrants' trauma narratives, where it is possible to observe the transfer of native-language structures into their ELF variations at the levels of ergativity, modality, idioms of distress, ethnopoetic pragmatic patterns, and metaphorical frameworks grounded in metaphysical concepts and imagery (Guido 2005, 2008, 2018).

Ethnographic data will corroborate the research hypothesis that West-African migrants' trauma narratives often schematize traumatic events and their effects by:

- projecting them into a transcendental dimension triggered by their strong emotions, and then
- transfiguring them into personifications of cruel supernatural beings or deities – such as Yoruba divine entities or other mythological monsters – shared with the host Mediterranean cultures by a process of hybridization that assume:
  a) animate, agentive roles in ergative structures (typical of Proto-Indo-European/Afro-Asiatic typologies, placing the inanimate Object in animate Subject position (OVS clause structure (Langacker 1991), also found in African Animist religions (cf. Guido 2008)
  b) mark the 'ethnopoetic organization' (Hymes 1981) of the autochthonous trauma narrative that West-African migrants transfer into their ELF variations.

3. Research objective, assumption, and rationale

The objective is to show evidence that, in such transcultural psychiatric contexts, the biomedical definitions codified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, issued by the American Psychiatric Association (APA 2022), are actually inadequate in accounting for the schematic patterns and metaphorical representation of traumatic effects in the Global migrating South where not only physical and natural causes, but also socio-political reasons, and even religious and supernatural beliefs deeply influence narrative expressions of distress (Guido 2018). This would entail that culturally-embedded *idioms of distress* necessitate an alternative interpretive framework acknowledging both physical and metaphysical elements to enhance intercultural clinical interactions in the domain of Transcultural Psychiatry.

The protocol analysis (Nisbett & Wilson 1977; Ericcson & Simon 1984) of ethnographic case studies are here meant to investigate the extent to which such trauma narratives contain schematic features from migrants' typologically-distinct native

languages automatically transferred into their ELF variations at the levels of syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and metaphorical patterns. It is here assumed that such a transfer is triggered by the migrants' emotions involved in their trauma narratives. Indeed, it is argued that the migrants' degree of psychological resilience and adaptation to traumatic experiences is influenced by their *positive, uncertain,* or *negative perspectives* on their reaching of a 'possible world' they regard as a 'utopia' that is in contrast with the 'dystopian reality' of their home countries. The rationale underlying such an assumption is that such perspectives are marked by recurring use of specific modal operators that reflect a four-level gradient which range from *possible*, *unreal* and *impossible 'utopian worlds',* up to the actual world experienced as a *'dystopian world'* during the Covid-19 pandemic. Such degrees determine types of trauma narratives defined as, respectively, of: *hope*, *frustration*, *despair*, and *urge of escape* (cf. Guido 2023).

4. Ethnopoetic entextualization and fieldwork observations

An ethnographic enquiry was carried out into trauma narratives produced by West-African migrants through the use of their own variations of non-native/nativized English that represented the 'lingua franca' during the online interviews taking place in the specialized clinical and forensic contexts of Transcultural Psychiatry.

ELF variations are often perceived in host countries (Italy) as displaced and transidiomatic (Silverstein 1998), and even as defective Standard English variants. Yet, such native-language transfers into ELF disclose West-African migrants' ethnopoetic organization (Hymes 1981, 2003) of their autochthonous oral narrative of traumatic events. Previous research (Guido 2008, 2018) cast doubt on traditional clinical and medical-legal reports textualized – or 'entextualized' (Urban 1996) according to Western editing into 'paragraphs', not recognizing non-Western native linguacultural structures transferred into migrants' ELF narratives, thus disregarding the actual illocutionary force of their trauma reports.

The accommodation strategy that was here adopted in order to overcome such a misrepresentation of trauma narrative intentionality patterns was the one defined as 'ethnopoetic entextualization' (Guido 2008). Ethnopoetics was first introduced by Hymes (1981) who edited the transcriptions of non-Western oral narratives into non-rhyming 'verse patterns' of relevant information not conceived for artistic effects, but rather with the purpose of highlighting the speakers' real intentions underlying the illocutionary organization of their narratives. Indeed, the 'ethnopoetic entextualization' is assumed to originate from primordial experiences of bodily physiological and emotional rhythms rendered into verses in order to better recall orally-recounted past events to be passed down from generation to generation. This is evident in ancient accounts of highly-emotional reports of past events and deeds – such as in the ancient oral chronicles reported in Homer's *Odyssey* – today considered as masterpieces of 'epic poetry', but rather being records of perilous events experienced by earliest human communities as wondrous phenomena.

In the wider corpus of West-African migrants' ELF-mediated oral narratives (Guido 2008, 2018), which includes the ethnographic data analyzed in this paper, a sonnet-like pattern of 'five-and-three' / 'five-and-two line verses' was identified, focusing first on the traumatic events that were recounted, and then on reactions to such events. More specifically, an ethnopoetic 'sonnet-like' pattern of 'five-and-two line verses' was

observed in the sub-corpus of Nigerian-Pidgin-ELF-mediated trauma narratives from which the case studies to be here analyzed are taken (cf. Guido 2018).

5. Methodology and research subjects

The methodological approach adopted for data collection in the case studies in point, focused on the identification of Nigerian migrants' native ethnopoetic structures transferred into their ELF-mediated trauma reports, involved a series of online videoless interviews meant to put migrants at ease by avoiding uneasy face-to-face contacts with the interviewer who, however, minimally intervened to elicit narrative development. It was observed that trauma effects were often metaphorically rendered into concrete shocking deeds that are not represented as enacted by real animate subjects, but rather by inanimate objects surprisingly playing animate agentive roles, as well as by natural elements, or even by supernatural entities that come to be collocated in the clausal position of ergative subjects – such as merciless Yoruba gods, or frightful creatures that are often hybridized with analogous mythological beings typical of the host popular cultures. And precisely such hybridizations have been observed, in a number of case studies to be analyzed here, to actually generate novel idioms of distress of a transcultural kind, which project reality into unexpected counterfactual metaphysical dimensions shared within the geographical space of what has it here been defined as 'Global Migrating South' encompassing Northern and Sub-Saharian Africa, as well as the Southern regions of Europe surrounding the Mediterranean sea incessantly crossed by huge numbers of migrants.

And indeed, the research subjects of the case studies reported in this paper were represented by Nigerian migrants who underwent extremely dangerous sea-journeys across the Mediterranean sea to escape from traumatic situations of war, persecution and economic depression in their homeland, to come to Southern Italy where they often worked illegally. It was observed that these migrants' adaptation degrees to trauma was determined by their feelings of:

(a) *Hope* for reaching what migrants perceived as utopian 'possible worlds' (Stalnaker 1994). In such cases, traumatic experiences were narrated by using 'belief reports' (Lau 1995; Schiffer 1996; Stalnaker 1987), 'need' and 'obligation' deontic modals, and folk proverbs on trauma represented as a 'necessary rite of passage' towards a better life.

(b) *Frustration* at having to endure problems in the host country limiting the migrants' possibilities for deriving benefit from a 'possible world' that suddenly appears to them as 'contrary to present facts' (Hintikka 1989) (due, for instance, to normative restrictions on freedom that, if violated, would cause repatriation or imprisonment).

(c) *Despair* for adverse facts hopelessly disrupting the migrants' longed-for expectations in the 'utopian world' that suddenly turns for them into an 'impossible world' (Zalta 1997). Such a dejected state is reported through the migrants' use of native 'idioms of distress' (Mattingly 1998) and modals of obligation conveying their compulsion to re-experience past trauma over and over again, by also encompassing, in their obsessive recollection, some host-country metaphysical imagery that come to merge with their own native idioms of distress, rather than taking action to overcome trauma effects.

(d) *Urge of escape* from Italy, all of a sudden become an unsafe 'dystopia', especially during the Covid-19 period – a host country that many West-African migrants longed for abandoning quickly to return to Africa, perceived as much safer than Italy, but that, unfortunately, could not reach because of the EU-border closures as a safety

measure to control the pandemic spread.

The Nigerian migrants' seven-line ELF-mediated trauma narratives were collected by employing the Think-Aloud Technique (Nisbett & Wilson 1977), consisting in an initial prompt by the interviewer who, then, left migrants free to give vent to their ELF-mediated 'ethnopoetic' trauma reports through a 'confessional' videoless computer screen. Subsequently, a Protocol Analysis (Ericsson & Simon 1984) was carried out on transcriptions, with the aim of interpreting trauma symptoms in the clinical contexts of Transcultural Psychiatry.

It is here argued that trauma, in West-African narratives, is not an individual experience to be treated by applying Western psychiatric-therapy protocols that typically resort to epistemic modality of logical deduction and are codified by the biomedical PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) terminology established in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* issued by American Psychiatric Association (cf. APA 2022). In fact, APA PTSD definitions mainly refer to trauma impact on Westerners (i.e., US war veterans – Summerfield 1999) but fail to classify the manifold causes and effects of trauma on non-Western populations (Peltzer 1998) who experience such trauma causes and effects not only as mental and physical, but also (especially in African contexts) as socio-political and even spiritual and supernatural. Indeed, such trauma causes and effects are metaphorically referred to by native 'idioms of distress' (Gibbs & O'Brien 1990) which, it is here argued, frequently mark the West-African ethnopoetic organization of oral trauma narratives transferred into ELF variations – as the following case studies will illustrate. Such ethnopoetic structures of non-Western trauma narratives should indeed be recognized and disambiguated by Western psychiatrists who, instead, conventionally interpret them by reference to the APA clinical definitions (cf. Eisenberg 1981; Mattingly 1998).

6. Case Study 1: ELF trauma narratives of 'hope' built on counterfactual logic and hypothetical syllogism

West-African migrants' trauma-narratives of 'hope' often justify past traumatic events as the necessary motivational trigger to leave their risky homelands in order to reach a longed-for 'possible-world', that is often identified with the host European country. An instance in point is represented by the case study under analysis, where the research subject is a Nigerian young man, speaking L1-Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin English perceived in Italy as a standard-deviating ELF variation (NP-ELF, typically characterized by the NPE phonetic orthography in transcription and by typologically-marked syntactic structures, such as: tense/aspect markers – 'bin', 'go', 'don', etc.); the plural 'dem' marker; the all-purpose preposition 'for', a OVS clausal ergativity; and the typical L1 reduplications). This young man fled from Nigeria after a Boko Haram terrorist attack killing his mother, and now he hopes for a safer and better life in Italy.

The focus of this Case Study 1 is represented by the migrant's belief in Ori, the Yoruba God of individual destiny that cannot be changed (Ali 1995; Oduwole 1996). The Nigerian migrant employs a quite complex narrative reflecting his painful attempts to give reason for his mother's unbearable tragic fate, which he finally comes to justify by considering it as a 'necessity' (marked by the deontic modal "must") that would prompt him to seek a better life so as to fulfill the destiny that Ori decided for him. The intricate narrative features employed to this purpose, grounded on a complex structure of conversational Moves, reflect the migrant's struggle to 'accept' his illogical religion despite the traumatic facts induce him to 'deny' it, till reaching an 'accommodation' by

making reference to his native popular proverbs. What follows is the protocol analysis of the transcription of the migrant's original narrative in NP-ELF, entextualized into ethnopoetic lines in order to emphasize the Move structure of the illocutionary force underlying his account of traumatic events.

6.1. Original NP-ELF ethnopoetic transcription and its Standard-English version

a) Opening (traumatic event):
[1] Boko Haram bin kill my mama. One *gbosa*, one explosion big big bin chop my mama body./
- *Boko Haram killed my mum. A 'gbosa', a huge explosion reduced my mum's body to pieces.*
[2] Mama eye dem look my eye dem and se tear race, my pikin, you must to run run fo beta life./
- *Mum's eyes looked into my eyes and said: run away, my child, you must run immediately to find a better life.*
b) Accept belief:
[3] Ori decision fo pipul destiny dem fo no change. We say: "Chicken wey run way go still end up inside pot of soup"/
- *Ori's decision about people's destinies should not change. We say: "when the chicken runs away, it still will end up inside a pot of soup"*
[4] so pipul can no be able fo change dem destiny./
- *so people should not be able to change their own destiny.*
c) Deny belief:
[5] But we fo tink se Ori decision no bi good, o, like my mama bad destiny./
- *But we should think that Ori's decision is not good at all, like my mum's bad destiny.*
d) Accommodation:
[6] But yes, Ori decide destiny fo beta and my mama bin die fo push me fo beta life./
- *But yes, Ori decides destiny for better and my mum died to push me to find a better life.*
[7] Life na difficult fo Italy, o, but we say "if life dey show you pepper, make pepper soup"./
- *Life is difficult in Italy, indeed, but we say: "if life shows you pepper, make a pepper soup"*

6.2. Protocol analysis

The analysis of the migrant's trauma narrative of 'hope' reported above is markedly built on two dimensions:

1) the *indexical dimension of the actual world*, which regards "a terrorist attack as a traumatic fact" where the conventional sense of a concept – or 'primary intension' (Lau 1995) – determines its truth-conditions;
2) the *iconic dimension of possible world*, which regards "a terrorist attack as a prompt for better life" where the sense of the concept – or 'secondary intension' (Lewis 1973; Zalta 1997) – deviates from its conventional sense as its truth-conditions are determined by an alternative illogical world.

In his attempt to match such opposite dimensions so as to accept his "Ori belief", the migrant resorts to two cognitive strategies:

a) an *experiential pliability*, to adapt his narrative to the illogical 'possible world' represented by his religious belief;
b) a *suspension of disbelief*, to induce himself into believing in the illogical 'possible world' conveyed by his religion, but that is nonexistent in reality.

Furthermore, the Nigerian migrant builds his trauma narrative on a sort of *hypothetical syllogism*. A Syllogism is a deductive reasoning aimed at reaching a conclusion based on two statements that are assumed to be true. Yet, in this case in point, the statements are just 'hypothetical', insofar as they are organized as follow:

a) Report of traumatic experience

- Boko Haram terroristic attack causing the death of the migrant's mother and its emotional effects on him.

b) Accept belief:

- People *cannot* change Ori's destiny (exactly like the the 'chicken' of the proverb cannot avoid ending up 'in a pot of soup').

c) Deny belief:

- *but* Ori's decision is not right in consideration of his mother's tragic destiny.

d) Accommodation:

- *and yet* Ori always decides for better and the migrant's mother died in order to encourage his son to leave his home country in search of a better life in Italy.
- Thus, the *logical conclusion* is that the migrant himself, not Ori, can change his own destiny by turning his 'difficult life' in Italy into a 'better life' (as stated by the Nigerian proverb that he quotes: you can turn the unpleasant spicy "pepper" into a delicious "pepper soup").

7. Case Study 2: ELF trauma-narrative of 'hope' built on ergative and supernatural causation

West-African migrants' L1 trauma narratives are frequently not built on an SVO transitive structure – which is the characteristic Western-language typology where the Subject is represented by the Agent, namely, the animate cause of action – but on an OVS ergative structure – a non-Western-language typology (frequent in Sub-Saharian Africa) where the Subject is represented by the Object in the position of Agent – which comes to be transferred into the non-Western migrants' ELF variations (Nwachukwu 1976).

More specifically, an ergative narrative structure can be characterized by:

a) an inanimate Object in animate Subject position as the cause of action;

b) a 'supernatural causation' personified by abstract deities as Subjects (like Ori in Case Study 1) determining people's fates.

In Case study 2 under analysis, the subject is an L1-Igbo/NP-ELF speaking Nigerian young man who survived a shipwreck where three friends drowned. His hope in Italy is to get a university degree, but he ended up picking tomatoes. In his trauma narrative reported in this section, he describes a car accident where he was injured and three of his friends died. And yet, despite this tragic experience of his friends' tragic death, this is once again a trauma narrative of 'hope' built on the following two distinct causation structures:

- an *ergative causation* where inanimate objects ('sea', 'ship', 'van', and 'road') become animate subjects in narrative clauses;
- *a supernatural causation* where the 'greedy road' becomes an animate Subject, embodied by Ogun, the Nigerian god of the road, who causes accidents in order to feed on the victims' bodies.

What follows is the protocol analysis of the transcription of the migrant's original ELF narrative entextualized into ethnopoetic lines:

7.1. Ethnopoetic transcription of ELF-mediated trauma narrative

[1] The sea swallow the boat and three friends when we go to Italy. A ship rescue me./

[2] I want go to university, but here I only pick pick tomato all day./
[3] This van take us for our shack after tomato picking/
[4] and the road quick crush the van against a lorry and kill two friends for eat them./
[5] I remember the poet Soyinka say "the road waits, famished", I learn this in school./
[6] He say god Ogun become road and cause accidents for kill and eat people./
[7] But he can no kill me, no, because I must go to university./

7.2. Protocol analysis

The above-reported trauma narrative has a seven-line ethnopoetic structure reproducing the chronological development of traumatic events like a sequence of movie images. Each line of this narrative is marked by 'ergative Subjects' – namely, inanimate Objects turning into animate Agents and deliberately causing tragic events, or undergoing them (i.e., the 'sea' that swallows the migrants' boat; the 'ship' that rescues them; the 'van' that takes migrants back to shacks after work; the 'road' that crushes the van and kills some of them). More specifically, the last two lines show:

a) the 'road' ergatively personified as the merciless Nigerian god Ogun (hence, a supernatural Subject);
b) the migrant asserting his determination to:
   - change his adverse destiny by defying Ogun's power to kill him (marked by the use of the deontic modal 'cannot' – 'can no'), and
   - get a university degree in Italy, viewed as a path towards a 'possible better world' (marked by the deontic modal 'must' collocated after the first-person 'I').

Yet trauma effects are still evident in the migrant's use of the 'conceptual simple present' (Guido 2018) in reporting highly-emotional past facts, highlighted by the demonstrative 'this' and 'the'.

8. Case Study 3: ELF trauma-narrative of 'frustration' built on ergative and supernatural causation

The subject of this Case Study 3 is a Nigerian man who felt frustrated at realizing that his asylum application was rejected by the Committee for Refugees' Rights as he was classified as just an 'economic migrant' despite the many traumatic events that he had to face during his long and perilous journey to Italy. So he came to personify his frustration by blaming the vengeful Nigerian god Ṣàngó who – he believed – first tried to kill him while he was crossing the stormy Mediterranean sea to reach the Italian coasts and then, once in Italy, he was determined to send him back to Nigeria where he had abandoned his family to indigence and starvation in search for a better life only for himself in Italy. What follows is, again, the protocol analysis of the transcription of the migrant's original narrative in NP-ELF, entextualized into ethnopoetic lines to make his intentionality schemata more evident.

8.1. Original NP-ELF ethnopoetic transcription and its Standard-English version

[1] The Committee say my asylum application no good 'cause I'm Nigerian and I'm here only for work./
- *The Committee says that my asylum application is invalid because I'm Nigerian and I'm here only to work.*

[2] So I must come back in my country. I vex because Nigeria give no work./
- *So I must go back to my country. I'm distressed because Nigeria doesn't give any work.*

[3] The desert no bin stop me, and the mine there in Niger and prison in Libya no break my back./
- *The desert didn't stop me, and the mine over there in Niger and the prison in Libya didn't break my back.*

[4] But when I bin lef my country and my family with no money and no food/
- *But when I left my country and my family with no money and no food*
[5] Ṣàngó must think se [that] I shame my people and my land/
- *Ṣàngó must have thought that I put my family and my country to shame*
[6] and when I bin lef for the sea for come here he bin throw thunder and wave dem, tall tall/
- *and when I left to come here across the sea he threw thunders and huge waves*
[7] for grasp the boat and kill me. Now he *must* send me back in Nigeria./
- *to grasp the boat and kill me. Now he must send me back to Nigeria.*

8.2. Protocol analysis

In this transcription, the ethnopoetic lines emotionally mark the changes of direction in the migrant's trauma narrative by the use of specific syntactic features, such as the pragmatic use of full stops, breaking the discourse flow, and of the link-words 'and', 'but', 'so'.

Lines [1] and [2] focus on the migrant's asylum application rejected by Committee for the Refugees' Rights since, as a Nigerian, he was regarded as 'economic migrant'. The realization that he was obliged to go back to Nigeria (highlighted by the deontic modal 'must') made him frustrated as Nigeria did not offer any work opportunities.

Line [3] focuses on the migrant's recollection of past traumas (signaled by the NPE past-tense marker 'bin') in his perilous journey towards the longed-for 'possible world' during which he had to furiously fight against hostile inanimate natural elements (the 'desert', the 'mine', the 'prison') syntactically represented as ergative animate Subjects implacably trying to hurt him and stop his journey to Italy.

Lines [4] and [5] are characterized by the adversative 'But' focusing on his remorse at having abandoned his family in poverty – a feeling unexpectedly personified as the ruthless Yoruba god Ṣàngó (in a 'supernatural' ergative Subject position) condemning him for having humiliated his family and home country (as the migrant himself evidently conjectures by the use of the epistemic modal 'must').

Line [6] is focused on Ṣàngó who unleashed against the Nigerian migrant furious natural elements (the 'thunder' and the 'sea' with 'huge waves' emphasized by the 'tall tall' adjective emotional reduplication.

Line [7] shows the migrant's deep sense of frustration at realizing that the vengeful Ṣàngó was determined (marked by the deontic modal 'must') to send him back to Nigeria.

9. Case Study 4: ELF trauma-narrative of 'despair' built on cultural hybridization of 'idioms of distress'

The recurrent features in this kind of trauma narrative of 'despair' can be summarized into two schematic attitudes:

a) The more 'despair' prevails at the awareness that West-African migrants' desired 'possible world' cannot come true, the more they use their native 'idioms of distress' (Gibbs & O'Brien 1990), often personified as merciless folk-mythological creatures (in ergative-subject position) transferred into ELF variations.

b) migrants share 'idioms of distress' not only with their native communities, but often hybridize them with host community's parallel trauma idioms – rather than adopting conventional APA lexicon (APA 2022) as a disambiguation attempt to make idioms accessible to host contexts (Kirmayer 1989).

The Subject of this Case Study 4 is a Nigerian woman who made her own a Southern-Italy idiom of distress from the Salento region where she dwelled – namely, the 'Taranta's Bite' (the mythical tarantula-spider that is believed to bite oppressed female farm labourers,

causing them to have terrible convulsions and hallucinations. Interestingly, the Nigerian woman hybrided the 'Taranta's Bite' idiom with her own native idiom of distress called 'Ghost possession', whose symptoms are similar in that both altered states of mind correspond to her feeling of being detached from her body and brain – body and brain being synecdoches of her whole person, both collocated in an ergative-Subject position as animate Agents within clauses.

The case-study topic is specifically focused on the traumatic event that involved the woman's husband and her two male children who were killed in ambush and, as a result, she was considered a witch causing their death (thus becoming a worthless woman, not having children to contribute to the prosperity of her community). She underwent a risky sea-voyage to Italy where she worked very hard as farm labourer in wheat harvesting. She too believed that she was a witch causing her family death, and this provoked in her trance-like seizure similar to the trauma symptoms suffered by barren women in Guinea Bissau, defined as 'Kiyang-yang', namely, 'Shadow' – that is, 'worthless women' (Einarsdóttir 2004). She believed that she was victim of the Taranta's poisonous bite that caused her frantic convulsions and dooming her to be haunted and possessed by her children's ghosts. What follows is, once again, the protocol analysis of the transcription of the migrant's original narrative in NP-ELF, entextualized into ethnopoetic lines.

9.1. Seven-line ethnopoetic entextualization of NP-ELF trauma narrative

[1] In my village, people hate me because my children bin die because I'm witch./
[2] I'm sick, my body shake shake, jump, run,/
[3] and brain go out my head/
[4] and I speak with my dead children voice./ *[obsessive thought of her dead children]*
[5] Here people say se [*that*] Taranta bin bite me/
[6] and only a drum can calm me./
[7] Taranta curse me because I'm witch./

Such short lines coincide with the woman's broken voice overwhelmed by despair and are introduced by 'and', together with the reduplications that speed the trauma-narrative rhythm according to the frantic pace of her seizures.

10. Case Study 5: ELF trauma-narrative of 'despair' built on cultural hybridization of 'idioms of distress'

The topic of Case Study 5 is focused on the West-African idiom of distress 'Brain Fag', meant as 'fatigue' caused by 'thinking too much' about traumatic facts suffered in the past. Such an idion is correlated to the other native idioms of 'Heavy Chest' and 'Worm Creeping'. 'Heavy Chest', in its turn, is correlated to the Southern-Italy spiteful pixie 'Sciacuddhi' living, according to the folk-tale tradition – in the Salento countryside, and pressing the chests of exhausted peasants as they sleep, as well as plaiting horses' manes at night-time. 'Sciacuddhi' is furthermore correlated to the assonant 'Shugudu', a Nigerian elfish devil sent by wronged people to press the breath out of their enemies' chests and to cause their death for revenge.

The subject of Case Study 5 is a young Nigerian man who, as a boy, was kidnapped by Boko Haram terrorists and became 'child soldier' forced to kill people so as to train them into becoming ruthless criminals. In Italy, the memory of his past crimes torments this young man, triggering in him anxiety symptoms that, in his ELF trauma narrative, are collocated in ergative subject position in clause structures and represented by

hybridizing native idioms of distress with the 'Sciacuddhi'/'Shugudu' supernatural causation. What follows is the protocol analysis of the transcription of the young man's original narrative in NP-ELF, entextualized into ethnopoetic lines in order to make the emotional illocutionary force of his report more evident.

10.1. Seven-line ethnopoetic entextualization of NP-ELF trauma narrative

[1] My brain think think murder I done./
[2] Worms creep in my brain, and chest, here, is heavy, heavy when I sleep./
[3] My Italian friends in the tomato field think Shakudi sit on my heart the night and choke me./
[4] They laugh and say Shakudi also make the plaits in my hair/
[5] and I think that he must be Shugudu sent by the family of the little pikin [*child*] I bin kill,/
[6] I cut him throat and he look my eyes and die and he's innocent like my little brother./
[7] Shugudu now must crush my heart like a tomato, I know./

10.2. Protocol analysis

The migrant's anguish is evident in the irregular length of the ethnopoetic lines, reproducing the broken emotional rhythm of his panting while recounting his trauma experience.

Line [1] introduces a 'brain' synecdoche, where the 'brain' is in an ergative-Subject position as an autonomous 'thinking creature', emphasized by the 'think think' reduplication marking the obsessive painful memories of the Nigerian migrant's past crimes.

Line [2] contains the "worms" metaphor, where the 'worms' are represented as an ergative Subject 'creeping in the migrant's brain' as they embody the trauma symptom of 'head numbness'. Also the 'heavy heavy' 'chest' is an ergative Subject embodies the symptom of 'chest-tightness' as an anxiety-induced breath shortness before sleep.

Line [3] focuses on 'chest-tightness' interpreted by the migrant's fellow workers as the Sciacuddhi pressing the young Nigerian migrant's chest while asleep.

Line [4] moves to the Nigerian migrant's fellow workers minimizing his distress by making fun of the 'dreadlocks' in his hair braided by the spiteful Sciacuddhi.

Line [5] comes to focus again on the Nigerian migrant's anguish and, more precisely, on his deduction (marked by the epistemic modal 'must') that this spiteful creature is, in fact, the Yoruba fiend Shugudu, unleashed against him as a payback vengeance by the wronged family of the little child that Boko Haram terrorists forced him, as child soldier, to murder.

Line [6] introduces the shocking description of the Nigerian migrant's past brutal murder of the little child conveyed by the use of the 'conceptual simple present', highlighting the sense of the present permanence of his past anguish, turning the young migrant's longed-for 'possible world' into a nightmare.

Line [7] concludes the trauma narrative with the migrant's conclusion that now Shugudu is compelled (marked by the deontic modal 'must') to murder him for his past crime, by pressing his breath out while he is asleep, crushing his heart like a 'tomato' (with reference to the migrant's work).

11. Case Study 6: ELF trauma narrative of 'urge of escape'

The topic of Case Study 6 regards an evolution in West-African trauma narratives due to the Covid-19 pandemic raging in Italy in 2020, which induced many African migrants to

consider Italy no longer as a 'utopian possible world', but as a 'real dystopian world', and prompting in them an 'urge to escape' to return to Africa, a 'Covid-free impossible utopian world' where they could not return because forbidden by the anti-Covid border closure.

The subject of this case study is a Nigerian woman who was satisfied with her job as a building-cleaner in Italy, but suddenly, during the pandemic period, she felt overwhelmed with fear for her life. She, then, irrationally blamed Western scientists for challenging the power of life and death over humankind by the African god Ọbalúayé, who cast his pandemic curse on Western countries for revenge. In the Nigerian woman's view, African people would be punished if they went on staying in doomed Italy and, thus, she longed for going back at once to Nigeria – or 'Naija' as it is called by its inhabitants who lovingly regard it as a utopian motherland. What follows is the protocol analysis of the transcription of the Nigerian woman's original narrative in NP-ELF, entextualized into ethnopoetic lines in order to make the rhythm of her anguish clearly emerge.

11.1. NP-ELF trauma narrative entextualized into a seven-line ethnopoetic structure

[1] This job is good, yes, give money for honest life./
[2] But I must come for Naija [*Nigeria*] quick now, I no want stay here now, no/
[3] why? We say se [*that*] Obalúayé now is angry for white men think se [*that*] their science can heal sick people./
[4] But only Ọbalúayé can kill people for their sin and can heal people, no medicine, no science can heal Covid./
[5] And if African people stay here in Italy, he go [*will*] kill us./
[6] Naija is safe place, we respect our land and our gods and they bless and give health for us./
[7] So I must come for Naija quick quick, but law here say se [*that*] we must no move out Italy./

11.2. Protocol analysis

The uneven length and the irregular rhythm of the ethnopoetic lines reflect the agitated pace of the migrant's narrative.

Line [1] introduces the Nigerian woman's previous state as a migrant happy with her honest job in Italy.

Line [2] marks a change in the direction of the Nigerian woman's thought by means of the adversative 'But' to signal her new inner urge (marked by the deontic modal 'must') to leave Italy and go back to her utopian Nigeria (the beloved 'Naija').

Line [3] introduces the vengeful god Ọbalúayé as the supernatural causation of Covid seen as a punishment against the Western scientists challenging his divine life/death power.

Line [4] explains Ọbalúayé's powers (marked by the deontic modal 'can' as 'capability')

Line [5] focuses on Ọbalúayé who 'will' (rendered by the NPE future-tense marker 'go') punish Africans in Italy as sinners (emphasized by the first-person pronoun in "will kill us").

Line [6] makes reference to Nigeria (affectionately defined as 'Naija') that is praised as safe and blessed by gods.

Line [7] introduces the Nigerian woman's compulsion (marked by the deontic modal 'must') to return to Nigeria at once (highlighted by the 'quick quick' reduplication), which is denied by the obligation to respect the EU laws (as signaled by the deontic modal 'must').

12. Further research developments: gender-biased ELF trauma narratives of 'blame and punishment'

A discrepancy worthy of note in this research is represented by the observation that the four categories of trauma narratives analyzed so far (namely: trauma narratives of *hope*, *frustration*, *despair*, and *urge of escape*) do not apply to male subjects' reports, in their ELF-mediated narratives, of tragic events regarding women's unacceptable lifestyles in both Western and non-Western social contexts of the Global South. Indeed, in a parallel corpus in progress (Guido *forthcoming*), such schematic divergences occur when men judge women's traumatic experiences by applying only one shared category – that is: *blame and punishment*. No evident metaphysical references to revengeful autochthnous deities or to spiteful folktale creatures personifying haunting traumatic memories has been observed in such narratives, but only prosaic reports of brutal crimes with short and often vile and vulgar comments on women's behaviours. In sum, supernatural and metaphysical entities that should embody also women's trauma effects, in male subjects' reports come to be actually replaced by the judging men themselves.

12.1. Turning female trauma narrative of 'hope' into male 'blame and punishment' judgment

Hence, for instance, the trauma report that a young female migrant subject should have recounted herself as a trauma narrative of 'hope' for a better and emancipated life in Italy, the host country (so as to be finally free from her native cultural, religious and family bounds of stifling submission and obedience). Then, when the young woman was found murdered by the hand of her family, male subjects from her own community made reference to such traumatic fact precisely through a flat 'blame and judgment' narrative, which was not organized into emotional ethnopoetic lines, but rather into sharp short clauses, such as: "she dishonoured her family"; "she betrayed her culture and religion". Unexpectedly, also some male subjects from the host Italian community, when interviewed in English on such tragic event, resorted to the 'blame and punishment' schema in their cynical comments, such as: "she abandoned the traditional values of her culture only to adopt the empty way of life of many frivolous Italian girls"; or even worse: "she died just for a mini skirt and a lipstick!". This young woman's violent death, therefore, could not even deserve the tragic grandeur of being killed by a 'god of destiny' (like Ori, in Case Study 1), but was hastily stigmatized by offensive male judgments.

Likewise, in another traumatic event reported in the corpus, the young Italian female victim could not recount her experience as a narrative of 'hope' (for having found the courage, as a woman, to feel free to move alone late in the night, to have fun at parties and discos, and to be proud of her own beauty and stylishness). In fact, this is the tragic case of a model-looking young woman who, while driving home at night after a party, was hit and killed by a car driven at high speed by an African migrant. Also in this case, a number of comments that were collected through interviews to male subjects from both Italian and African migrants' communities fit the schema of the 'blame and punishment' trauma narrative. And once again the emotional ethnopoetic lines emphasizing the emotional force of trauma narratives were replaced by men's brief and abrupt judgments – as, for instance, the cynical comment of an Italian man: "Well, she was beautiful, a pity, but she know that in the night she mustn't stay out because there're many risks, for example African immigrants drink alcohol and drive like mad, and in fact they killed her." A similar abrupt comment was collected from a West-African male interviewee: "She go around the night, why? Stay safe in your home! A woman no go out late the night alone.

She maybe drunk! The African man no see her car go cut the road, and kill her." Also in this case, male subjects of both Global-South contexts blamed the young woman for her vanity and shallowness, and her death in a car accident was the predictable punishment. And also in this case, this trauma report does not deserve the highly tragic 'epic' narrative of the woman whose youth and beauty attracted the god of the road (Ogun, in Case Study 2) who killed and devoured her.

12.2. Turning female trauma narrative of 'frustration' into male 'blame and punishment' judgment

A female migrant's trauma narrative of 'frustration', too, can become a narrative of 'blame and punishment' when it comes to be filtered from the points of view of men from both Global-South areas. This is the case with a Nigerian woman living in Italy, who underwent an aesthetic treatment for bleaching her skin in order to achieve a better integration and acceptance in the new host community. The outcome of such a treatment, however, was disastrous as it left her with skin blemishes and a psychological discomfort. Comments collected from a number male subjects from her Nigerian community focused on judgments of disapproval for the woman's hopeless attempts to conform, even physically, to the standards of the host country, and of blame on her for refusing her own ethnic features and, as a consequence, her own identity. Judgments collected among some male subjects from the Italian community similarly focused on blame and scorn not only on the Nigerian female subject of this case in point, but on all women, both Western and non-Western ones, who pervasively resort to cosmetic medicine and surgery to the point of turning themselves into ridiculous and pathetic monsters.

12.3. Turning female trauma narrative of 'despair' into male 'blame and punishment' judgment

As for instances of female trauma narratives of 'despair', the male subjects' inappropriate and disrespectful stances can be epitomized by the migrant woman in the previously analyzed Case Study 4, whose devastating pain and anguish for the murder of her children in Nigeria provoked in her unrestrained, frantic convulsions, scornfully belittled by her fellow workers as the odd seizures of the overwrought peasant women who were believed to be victims of the poisonous bite of the Taranta, the mythical Southern-Italy spider. In that case, the Nigerian woman's first-person trauma narrative was entextualized into ethnopoetic lines in order to emphasize the illocutionary force of her painful experience. Also Sciacuddhi, the mythological elfish creature, mentioned in the trauma narrative of 'despair' in Case Study 5, is another personification of trauma effects that, in Southern Italy, is mostly associated with extremely anxious women whose symptoms of chest tightness and shortness of breath are believed to be caused by this evil elf spitefully pressing their chests at night. Actually, this creature is nothing more than the embodiment of a collective social stigma and punishment for those women who are anxious and dejected because of their longing for a better, different life which is impossible for them to achieve.

Yet, also in cases of trauma narratives of 'despair', when the female subject is the victim of a murder and cannot report her tragic experience in the first-person, the third-person accounts of such a crime filtered from the points of view of male subjects are often grounded upon the 'blame and punishment' schema. An example of this kind is represented by the case of the Italian teenage girl raped and murdered by two Nigerian pushers she approached to get drugs. Although both the Italian and the Nigerian migrants'

communities condemned the two drug smugglers for their atrocious deed, yet, in some male subjects' ELF-mediated comments, it is possible to identify the typical 'blame and punishment' narrative pattern. Some comments by West-African male subjects focused on the girl's extrovert attitude, which may have been misunderstood by the two pushers, as reported in the following comments: "She must no hook up with them"; "She know well what she go do, maybe she bin die for overdose". Italian male subjects, in turn, judged and blamed the girl's summer outfit: "She had a little top and shorts, so tell me what African men must think of her"; "Parents must control what she did and the people that she met. The girl was free to do what she wanted, go with immigrants, take drug, and this is the result". Hence, also in this case, the tragic destiny of this girl does not seem to be worth of an empathic trauma narrative, recounted by means of an ethnopoetic entextualization of her fatal destiny that may have even deserved the dignity of a representation through supernatural embodiment (such as that one of the Ori god). On the contrary, her destiny is sternly reported through the cutting judgmental stances by male subjects from both Global-South areas.

12.4. Turning female trauma narrative of 'urge of escape' into male 'blame and punishment' judgment

Also the last category of trauma narrative, defined as 'Urge of escape', has been observed to have a different male narrative representation when the topic concerns women. Indeed, when female traumatic experiences are filtered through male perspectives, then they are, once again, reported according to the 'blame and punishment' schema. This is, for instance, the case regarding two Nigerian young women, who were enticed into migrating to Italy with the promise that they would work honestly and earn a living in a beauty salon. Yet, after a long and painful journey (during which they were also raped by their smugglers), they came to Italy to discover that they were obliged to become sex workers. In a short time they became wealthy, but one of them contracted a serious sexually transmitted disease. Both longed for returning in Nigeria, their homeland, but they knew very well that their native community would no longer accept and integrate them. A number of men of the West-African community migrated in Southern Italy, during a fieldwork interview referred to the women's traumatic experience in this disparaging way: "They are rich now, so? They go sin, they shame their family and people"; "They can no return for Nigeria, they can no get married, they go pass everybody their disease". Similarly, also Italian male interviewees were caustic in their judgments towards these two women: "Yes, they are beautiful! And they are rich also. But are prostitutes, and they are ill, not safe, they spread infection here and in Africa!"; "They choose that life, they know before that if they come in Italy they must become escort, prostitute. And in Africa know well what kind of women they are, they don't want that they return".

Such 'blame and punishment' harsh judgments on unfortunate women uttered by male subjects once again of both Global South areas indeed collide with the trauma narrative produced by the migrant women themselves, who are aware that there would not be a future form them in their native country after having been forced to become prostitutes in Italy. What follows is precisely the ethnopoetic entexyulization of the first-person trauma report narrated by a Nigerian woman who longed for leaving Italy to return to Nigeria, but she knew that in her homeland she would not be accepted (Guido 2022):

12.5. Original NP-ELF ethnopoetic transcription and its Standard-English version

Lines 1-5: outer context
[1] Das pipul dem bin don mek mi walk fo tri day dem, o, fo Niger border/
- *Those people had made me walk for three days to the Niger border*
[2] wie dem bin sell mi to won 'madam' and won car bin tek mi fo Al Zuwarah
- *where they sold me to a 'madam' and a car took me to Al Zuwarah*
[3] wie won shack wit di sand-bed bin don lok mi and oda ten ten girl dem
- *where a shack with a sand-bed had locked me crammed with other ten girls*
[4] wie di *oyibo* dem (*Yoruba*: white men) bin de kom evri de evri de
- *where the white men were coming every day, every day*
[5] a remember di pain fo my yansh and leg dem and di cut dem fo my bodi
- *I remember the pain in my back and legs and the cuts in my body*
Lines 6-8: inner response
[6] Wen di boat bin bring os fo Italy a bin mek my pikin,
- *When the boat brought us to Italy I gave birth to my child*
[7] but hie police dem bin spot os and dem bin pik os all.
- *but here the police found us and they took us all.*
[8] fo Nigeria a no get hope fo mari and fo my pikin in future.
- *In Nigeria I have no hope for getting married and for my child's future.*

12.6. Protocol analysis

In the first five lines of this ethnopoetic transcription, concerning the 'outer context of trauma', the link-words signal the narrative turning points in the female migrant's oral report, making her trauma narrative follow the alliterative rhythm of her breath while giving voice to her emotions. This can be noticed in lines 2-4, starting with *wie* ('where') that highlights the physical places of her migration journey which suddenly become the emotional places of her increasing distress. Hence, the 'car', the 'shack', and the 'boat' come to be personified within the respective clauses as animate ergative Agents in thematic subject position. In line 5, the woman deliberately avoids any explicit description of herself as she underwent torture and rape, rather preferring only few hints at the frequency of abuses, emotionally highlighted by reduplication ('every day every day'), and at its physical effects (wounds and pain in her back and legs). The last three lines focus on the woman's inner response to trauma, by principally focusing on the socio-cultural consequences of rape that shattered all her hopes of returning to her homeland, Nigeria, where she longed for getting married in order to secure a future for herself and her illegitimate child. As evident, this entextualization of this woman's trauma report into ethnopoetic lines drastically diverges from the 'blame and punishment' male judgments as it respects the emotional rhythm and the intentionality patterns of the woman's original narrative.

13. Conclusions and prospects

This paper has focused on West-African migrants' trauma narratives classified into four categories: *hope*, *frustration*, *despair*, and *urge of escape*, each marked by specific typological and metaphorical features of the migrants' L1s that were transferred into their ELF variations (Guido 2018, 2020, 2022). Some partial data drawn from a parallel corpus in progress (Guido *forthcoming*) have also been introduced with the intent to show evidence of some schematic divergences occurring when male subjects judge women's traumatic experiences by applying only one schematic category – namely: *blame and*

punishment.

What emerges from the analysis of the ethnographic data analyzed so far is that West-African migrants, rather than using APA trauma terminology, tend to 'hybridize' native idioms of distress, often of a supernatural type, with host community's parallel idioms. This suggests that there is an urgent need for developing hybrid ELF-mediated trauma narratives and lexicon to be employed not only during specialized encounters with West-African migrants in contexts of Transcultural Psychiatry, but also in multicultural forensic contexts. Indeed, in such contexts a new model of ethnopoetic entextualization is required, capable of rejecting the Western tradition of transcribing non-Western migrants' accounts of events into 'paragraphs' (i.e., Introduction, Development, Conclusion), which characterize the Western conventions for textualizing transcriptions of oral reports, but do not correspond to the non-Western migrants' native textual conventions (Blommaert 1997). Hence, forensic transcriptions into paragraphs of non-Western narratives may fail to convey the speakers' genuine intentionality. More specifically, 'forensic editors' of migrants' trauma reports often 'displace' them from their original socio-cultural contexts in order to reframe them – or 'entextualize' them (Urban 1996) – into a written form within the new and alien socio-cultural contexts of the host country (Slembrouck 1999). In fact, migrants frequently perceive their transcribed reports as 'pragmatically marked', since they do not recognize them as 'their own' because editors actually tend to impose their own 'preferred interpretation' on the written reformulations of the migrants' original oral reports. The result is frequently an unequal and culturally-biased forensic entextualization (Coulthard 2000), liable to cause injustices as they would overlook the migrants' different native socio-cultural world schemata organizing their original oral trauma narratives. Such misinterpretations are unfortunately frequent in the field of Transcultural Psychiatry (Guido 2018), that is why this paper has proposed a possibility of entextualizing West-African (Nigerian) migrants oral trauma narratives by identifying in them some specific textual clues for their correct interpretation, based on the migrants' native socio-cultural schemata (such as, for instance, word repetitions, shifts in tense/aspect, in location, or in actor-position within accusative/ergative clauses, indicating units of meaning to be edited into 'lines' reflecting, in autochthonous oral narratives, the rhythms of bodily actions and emotions, revealing what the speakers themselves regard as relevant in their narrative). Such clues would allow a medical-legal officer as editor to recover the original 'situatedness' (Gumperz 1982) within the very structure of the migrants' narratives, thus overcoming the sense of a pragmatically-marked and unfamiliar narrative structure and facilitating the production of appropriate clinical/forensic reformulations. The method adopted in this paper is therefore Hymes' (2003) 'Ethnopoetic Approach' applied to written reformulations of migrants' oral trauma narratives (Guido 2018), with the intent to infer the migrant's intentionality from the close form/meaning interrelationships identified in the Nigerian migrants' reports. Indeed, acknowledging such narrative differences would entail recognizing West-African migrants' identity that they unfortunately very often perceive as injured, disrupted and displaced from their own native socio-cultural contexts.

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