

Kiriji as Ritual Drama of Transition: Particularities of Modern Theatre in Kiriji of Ilaje-Etikan

Stephen Ola Ajimisan

Abstract

This paper explores the theatrical particularities in *Kiriji*, the royal rite of passage of the Ilaje-Etikan people of Ondo State, Nigeria. Studies reveal little or no significant research has been conducted on the rite. This is mainly because the rite is seen only from the standpoint of its sacredness, which culminates in the difficulty in garnering information for research. This paper adopts Walter Goldschmidt's functionalism model in revealing the particularities' socio-cultural functions. The theory examines the network of social needs to which a performance/rite ministers within its society of origin. The theory is suitable because it helps examine the rite's literary essence and particularities: oral interviews and field interactions with officiants of the rite form primary data sources for the research. Video clips of previously celebrated rites and secondary sources like books, journals and cyber resources are also used. The paper reveals the moral and historiographic functions of the rite among the people. It also reveals that modern theatrical particularities are inherent in the rite. They include the adequate diversification of the functions of the audience, costumes, make-up, directing, prompting, acting, mime and gestures. The study recommends the technologisation, selective exploration and deflation of the ritual propensities in the rite to make it serve the purpose of morality, entertainment, cultural tourism and revenue generation for Ilaje-Etikan and help globalise the rite.

Keywords: Kiriji, Technologisation, Theatrical Aesthetics, Functionalist Theory, Globalising.

Introduction

Kiriji is the dialectal name for the Indigenous funerary rite in honour of a monarch among the people of Etikan Kingdom, Ondo State, Nigeria. The royal funerary rite is a common cultural or traditional phenomenon across the different cultural isoglosses of the world. It takes different forms among the different "peoples" and cultures around the globe. It is called different names. Among the different tribes of Africa, traditional rulers are buried in unique ways that are different from how chiefs and commoners are buried. The rite takes different patterns among different ethno-cultural groups of the world. The Benin people call it "Emwinekhua" (Fiotori, 2004 & Odemwingie, 2016), while it is called Dornu-Koroken, which means the rite of the dust or mother earth among the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta region of South-southern Nigeria (Nkane, 2019; Nyanga, 2019; Osih&Osih, 2019). The Igbo people of the southeastern Nigeria call it "Ohuruya" (Innocent, 2021). The Hausa people of Northern Nigeria call it "Gawa'n' Sarki", the funerary rite in honour of the king (Adamu, 2021).

Theatrical aesthetics in *Kiriji*, the royal funerary rite or rite of committal among the people of Etikan Kingdom, is the subject of this seminar paper. The name *Kiriji* is a combination of three (3) different monosyllabic words: "ki", which means to greet or bid farewell in the form of last respect or valediction; "ri", which means to allow to sink or let down into the grave; and "ji" which means committal to the dust, transcendental realm or mother earth. The Etikan Kingdom is in the present-day Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State, Southwestern Nigeria.

Ilaje-Etikan: Geographical and Historical Background

Ilajeland is a body of scattered littoral settlements on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. It is the only local government in the entire Yorubaland that is a part of the geographical entity designated as the Niger Delta Region and one of the nine (9) Niger Delta member states. They are a peculiar subgroup of the Yoruba cultural and historical entity located in the southeastern part of Yorubaland and

the western fringe of the coast of the Niger Delta. The region is about 1,321 km long on the coast, from the Bight of Benin (Oghoye) in the east to Elefan in the present-day Olokola area in the west. The area is the home of the longest coastline in West Africa. The area comprises four distinct kingdom groups: Ugbo, Mahin, Etikan and Aheri. All four major kingdoms agree that their root is collectively traced to Ile-Ife, believed to be the cradle of creation and civilisation.

While Ugbo, Etikan, and Aheri have one root in Ile-Ife, Mahin has a different ancestral root but is still from Ile-Ife. The Mahin people accept to be called descendants of Oduduwa, while Ugbo, Etikan and Aheri do not accept to be addressed as descendants of Oduduwa. There has been a long-standing battle of supremacy between the Olugbo and the Ooni of Ile-Ife because the Olugbo believes that the Ooni and his people are the descendants of his ancestors' tenants. He claims that his crown and throne are the oldest in Yorubaland. Akinruntan 2015 & Ofeimun (2016) lend credence to this fact. The people, then known as the Ilaje Ugbo/Igbo group, now comprise three distinct kingdoms: Ugbo, Etikan and Aheri. These kingdoms were once regarded as the Ugbomekun/Igbomokun in the pre-Oduduwa chronicles of Ile-Ife, and their ascendancy has raised a lot of radical and revolutionary dust, which triggered reconstruction. Contrary to the subjective historical tradition imposed on earlier students of history, that Oduduwa, who migrated to Ile-Ife from either Benin or the Middle East, as contained in the tradition popularised by Egharevba and other erudite historians, was the father of the Yoruba people, including the aboriginal people that he met in Ile-Ife, the IlajeUgbo, Etikan and Aheri have refused to be bullied into accepting Oduduwa as their ancestors since he met their ancestors in Ile-Ife on his arrival.

Yoruba history supports the migration tradition, and the Oriki Iran Olufe attests to this fact. These historical traditions uphold the truth that Oduduwa met people in Ile-Ife and could not have annihilated all the aborigines that he met there in a brawl of ethnic cleansing or chauvinism. Etikan Kingdom is one of the kingdoms that evolved from the ancient I/Ugbomekun faction of the pre-Oduduwa history of the Yoruba people in Ile-Ife.

Conceptualising Aesthetics

The concept of aesthetics refers to what constitutes beauty in a work of art or any performance. It also refers to the things in arts, performances or even rites that do not only constitute beauty but also capture one's attention, fancy or sense of judgment or taste in a text, either oral or written. Henri Oripeloye (2016), while examining the views of scholars on aesthetics, asserts that in trying to define or conceptualise aesthetics, the core feature of the perspectives of the scholars is that "performance aesthetics is defined and enhanced by the cultural traditions that produce the scenario and meanings attached to words." To him, what constitutes performance aesthetics is determined and underscored by the "cultural tradition" from which an event originates. He also argues that meanings ascribed to words or "any act", as may be narrowed down to the royal funerary rite of the Ilaje-Etikan, are conditioned by a people's culture, tradition and worldview. However, it must be pointed out that the judgment of what constitutes beauty in any form is subjective and varies from culture to culture. This assertion may be limited to words and their meanings alone.

Bacon (1980), Richardson (2002), Dezin (2003), and Panaiotodi (2003) have, at various times and from different angles, attempted to pontificate on what constitutes, to them, performance aesthetics or, better still, aesthetics. Their postulations have a common ground. From their standpoints, aesthetics, whether in theatrical, ritual or profane performances, operates within cultural paradigms, and these paradigms encompass the people who are the collective performers in the performance and the layers of interpretation attributable to their performance. This takes us back to Oripeloye's opinion (2016) earlier, which was echoed above. He opines that

The bodily performance in such communities is also essential for determining what constitutes the performance's aesthetic value. However, what constitutes aesthetics

differs from one society to another, and, therefore, it may not be feasible for someone who has yet to be integrated into a particular society and its culture to clearly understand or determine the aesthetic value in such a community (4).

What constitutes aesthetics varies from culture to culture and community to community. For instance, in *Kiriji*, which is the royal funerary rite of the people of Ilaje-Etikan and Ilaje-Ugbo, during the IjoOloro (Oloro's ritual dance or glee), the Oloro appears from the traditional grove, which is akin to the backstage in any theatre, sits comically on the traditional stool and eventually begins to dance comically to tremulous rhythm of the Olumoghonne (Etikan traditional) drums. As he dances, he plays ludicrous pranks to make the people laugh against the taboo that they must not laugh at him and his comical dance. Suppose a folklorist extracts that scene of a traditional or ritual dance and plays it among the people of any culture worldwide. In that case, the "Oloro's dance", an "aesthetic act", will still be seen as a dance or, more accurately, a ritual performance, but the meaning different cultures will attribute to it may differ.

There are some theories or schools of thought in Aesthetics Studies. They include impressionism and intentionalistic schools. Impressionism devotes attention to the impression created or impressed on the minds of the reader or those appreciating a work of art or artwork that influences or affects their aesthetic judgement of the work under review. This is mainly applicable to paintings, sculptures and other artworks. Another exciting and thought-provoking school in Aesthetics Studies is intentionalistic thought. This theory is hinged on the critique and judgement of a work of art based on an author's intention to create a work. Critics, therefore, juxtapose the author's intention for the creation of the work with the accomplishments of such intentions behind the creation of the work. What does the author seek to achieve by creating this work?; What message does the author intend to send to his/her audience or readers? By creating this work, what aspect of the societal life does the author portray and why?; All these questions suffice under intentionalistic criticism. W.K. Wimsatt (1907-1975) and Monroe C. Beardsley are notable in the school. The duo jointly published a work entitled *Intentional Fallacy* (1954) to popularise the school and the theory. This seminar presentation aligns with the intentionalistic aesthetics theory (221). The reason for the alignment is that the theory helps to examine *Kiriji*, the royal funerary rite of the people of Etikan Kingdom, as an aesthetic object; the indigenous aesthetics in the rite and the intention of the people of the Kingdom for the perpetuation of the rite and what they seek to achieve through the perpetuation of the rite; which is morality. Here, the rite is critiqued like modern drama or indigenous drama, a work of art that elicits aesthetic judgement or criticism.

Theatrical Aesthetics in *Kiriji*

This segment of the paper attends to the theatrical aesthetics in *Kiriji*, which makes the indigenous ritual performance look more like modern or sophisticated drama. It pays attention to the functional significance of the theatrical aesthetics in the rite. An examination of theatrical aesthetics is carried out through the theoretical lens of the functionalist theory, with illustrations from the rite below:

The Public as the Audience and Performers in *Kiriji*

Etymologically, the word "audience" derives its root from the Latin word "audience", which is synonymous with the word "audit", meaning "hear" or "to hear". In a practical sense, an audience may be the crowd in the seats at a sporting event, people who tune in to a specific morning radio show or even people who enjoy watching a specific genre of movies. For the sake of this research, the audience definition as the large number, crowd or group of people who have come to a place to see or hear a performance or to admire a belief suffices. The village's traditional square, known as OgwaOlikan (Erede et al.), which, for this study, serves the purpose of a theatre, is now a "seeing

place" for a large number of people who have come to see all the traditional and customary performances lined up as funerary proceedings during the *Kiriji* (royal funerary rite) of the Ilaje-Etikan people of Ondo State, Southwestern, Nigeria. The crowd that has come to celebrate the funerary rite or pay the last respect to the late monarch is classified as the audience.

Michel Muraski identifies three (3) categories of audience viz: Lay audience, managerial audience and expert audience. According to Muraski, the lay audience has no special or expert knowledge in a specific field, including the rite and the ritual proceedings. They are non-initiates or non-officiants of the ritual proceedings of the rite without the residual cultural knowledge of the rite. The managerial audience may or may not have more knowledge than the lay audience about the subject, but they need the knowledge to decide an issue. The expert audience may be the most demanding regarding knowledge, presentation, graphics, or visuals. They are often "theorists" or "practitioners." They have residual knowledge of a document or performance and partially flow with the performer during the performance.

During the various ritual performances in *Kiriji*, the audience is present; they clap, laugh, or even make some frivolous and extraneous comments, which constitute side attractions. They are the ingredients that make the performance more vivacious, compelling, and livelier, and they also constitute the behavioural spectrum through which the performers in the rite examine their proficiency. So, they are not just for presence sake, but they also compel the attention and respect of the ritual officiants. Who are the performers? In the light of the various performances during *Kiriji*, the Abojutoro (the chief officiant), drummers, singers and other officiants in the rite are called performers. They give life to the rite and the performances therein. Akporobaro (2006) agrees that the audience is a factor to reckon with when he submits that the place of the audience doubling as performers is not coincidental (18). It is intrinsically natural to the rite. On one occasion, the Abojutoro faces the audience and announces that one of the children of the departed monarch is about to pick one of the "props" or paraphernalia displayed alongside the remains of their father in the conversation exemplified below:

Abojutoro: – (*facing the audience, pointing at them*) Oja, an ma ka gho iran!
Meaning towns people, oversee the scene.

Okan nara aghan oma Oba Adeleke. Nara urun elo ghanyi baghan gbanre naye lo. (One of the children of the late Oba Adeleke Adedoyin Oyetakin is set to come and pick up one of the royal paraphernalia left behind by their father).

He (the Abojutoro beckons on one of the sons to draw closer to the platform on which the paraphernalia are displayed through prompting or stage direction and signals him to pick one "Prop").

Son: – *He dances gleefully towards the platform, hesitating for some seconds as if thinking what to pick; the audience also looks keenly, prompting him to pick one prop or paraphernalia.*

Audience: – Oyake! Mu un! Abi we to ma urunwo le mu? Go ahead and pick, or don't you want to pick?

Abojutoro: – (*from the back stage*) Ankaghoiran! You people should watch!

Son: – *Dances more frantically, goes to the platform, picks a cloth and displays the cloth.*

Audience: – Omawogharin! You are a son and not a bastard.

Abojutoro: – *Now at the centre stage begins the announcement* Oja, oma Oba Adedoyin Oyetakinghan ma mu aso o. Eyi tuna nipe an ma pea de atiadatijarin, bi o ba se pe o mu adeabiada, ojaragbanowo re. Eyitumanipeadeei to lo agbole yen ma. See the translation below:

- - - Townspeople, one of the sons of Oba Adedoyin Oyetakin, has picked from the props on display. If he had chosen the royal scythe or crown, the "Oja" would have retrieved it from him because it is an abomination to do so. The crowns and the scythes belong to the Kingdom, not the individual family. The punishment for doing so is that no king will ever emerge from that family.

Audience: – *Clapping as the drumming and singing continue, heightening to diminuendo.*

In the illustration above, the audience participates in the actions and the performance. Their clapping and side comments also form parts of the performance's overall aesthetic value and meaning-making processes. Beyond watching as spectators, they have also performed the roles of performers and judges (critics) in the way the Abojutoro faces them to make his announcements, the way the prince picks his prop and jubilantly shows it to them while acknowledging their applause as he dances to the rhythm of Olumoghonne (the traditional drums of Etikan origin) drums and in the way they also hail him in the chorus for getting it right.

Directing and Prompting in the Rite: The AbojutoroOghonne (Chief Officiant) as the Stage Director and Prompter

Directing and prompting, features of modern drama, are also intrinsically embedded in *Kiriji*, an example of traditional African performance. Directing, prompting and actions are pragmatically adopted during the different performances of the funerary rite. Our primary research objective is to review how these dramatic elements play out in the Indigenous performances in *Kiriji*, which is neither a product of Western civilisation nor taught or learnt through cultural contact.

Directing and prompting are, therefore, consciously or unconsciously employed. In this case, the director or prompter, the AbojutoroOghonne, the chief officiant in the rite and the royal children are "unschooled" in the act of drama or dramatic aspects, including acting, prompting and directing. The director helps strategically plan the production's lighting, scenery, sound effects and other musical accompaniments. In modern drama, directing is an instruction written in the script of a play that gives direction to the actors or information about the scenery. From the view made available on www.youdictionary.com, stage direction is defined as "an instruction written in the script of a play that gives direction to the actors or information about the scenery. It also means "an instruction in the script of a play, directing the movements of the actors, the arrangement of scenery etcetera". In each of these definitions, one idea which is "to instruct or guide", is inherently cardinal.

Prompting has its etymological root traced to the Latin word "promptare" or "promptus", which means to "assist". Prompting in modern theatrical practices means assisting someone in acting or reciting some materials by suggesting or saying the following words of something forgotten or not perfectly learnt. Prompting means to give actors their lines as reminders; the prompter is the one who hides behind the curtains, near the stage or in the prompt corner/box. In *Kiriji* (the royal funerary rite of the Ilaje-Etikan), both prompting and directing are strategically and systematically deployed, even with little or no knowledge of modern drama, by the chief officiant and the other performers in different roles and scenes. The Abojutoro combines the functions of the chief officiant, prompter, director and even an actor at different stages and scenes in the rite. For instance, the extract cited under segment (The public as the audience and performer) is helpful for illustration. The Abojutoro is seen performing the stage director and prompter role, acting, dancing, and leading songs where necessary. The video footage attached to this work shows several instances of such.

He also directs the scene of "IseOgungun" (the invocation of the synodic spirits of the ancestors to come and receive the body of the departed monarch behind a cubicle for the

transcendental reunion). He invokes the spirits and tells the public that the spirits of the departed ancestors appear one by one behind the cubicle. He explains why a particular figure among the ancestral spirits has refused to join the glee, remains static, and does not dance, and the reason for that is to aid the audience's understanding. The Abojutoro (the chief officiant) leads in singing and dancing where necessary as an actor during the performance at various stages and scenes, which bestows him the role of a versatile personality who performs different roles at different stages. He represents a performer who is exceedingly versatile and creative to the extent that he performs multiple roles at different performance stages.

In this case, the Abojutoro and other performers rely on something other than any preparatory training on the roles, changes in the movements and scenery or a central script from which they are directed or prompted in their roles and cues. They rely on the residual knowledge of the rite already stored in their memory, as directed and prompted by the Abojutoro, chief officiant. The use of prompting and directing are practically exemplified in many places, especially where one of the children is to pick an item named "scythe-pinning" (Idoda)

Costumes, Props, Make-up and their Symbolic Significance in *Kiriji*

Like other Western performances or theatre, costumes, props and make-up arts are exceedingly important to the successful performance of the *Kiriji*. They foreground the aesthetic and communal identity of the people. Like the *Biripo* and other home-grown performances such as festivals as shown by Ajimisan (2016), Enikuemehin (2013) and Ajulekun (2014) and (2018), costumes, props, and make-up arts are highly significant to the performance of *Kiriji* whether as a secular or sacred performance. Ajimisan (2016) refers to costumes as "the attires, clothing materials or adornments used by the performer and members of the troupe". Ajimisan shows that costumes are not limited to clothing materials alone. The term "costume" etymology comes from French and Italian words which mean fashion or custom. In Kerry Hishon's *How Costumes Affect Your Character* (2019), Hishon thinks that.

Costumes are a fabulous part of the theatre- they help tell the story, help actors get into character, and immediately tell the audience what is happening. For many student actors, receiving their costumes is an inspiring day. However, challenges can crop up once students are actually in their costumes. Many directors request that students come to rehearsal wearing comfortable clothes that they can move in. While that is useful for learning choreography and blocking, it is less valuable if the students wear costumes that are not work-out-gear. Costumes definitely can affect an actor's performance for better or worse.

According to Hishon, costumes are worn on the feet and lower body, such as shoes, skirts and dresses, jackets, coats, capes and shawls; gloves, jewellery; head, face; hat and headpieces; wigs and facial hair; masks and speciality make-up etcetera. Her submission is that they can affect the character of the users and performers. This assertion links costumes to the psychological effects of the costumes on users or performers. Besides the identity issue in using costumes during the indigenous performances, costumes can also change the totality of the person's appearance. They also connect him or her to the realm beyond him or her and make the user hyper-active or even integrate them into the transcendental realm of the ancestors and metaphysical powers. Costumes are tools of impersonation in modern theatre and indigenous performances. Through the instrumentality of the costumes, a character who is on the physical human plane can assume the camouflage or disguise of the supernatural or metaphysical forces such as the nymphs, phantom spirits, cyclops, ghosts, gnomes, sphinx, demons, goblins, witches, gorgons, ghouls, vampires etcetera, and impersonate any of them in perfect or near-perfect mode. The idea of costumes being capable of situating users within a socio-cultural and religio-spiritual space has also been

corroborated by Utoh-Ezeajugi. Thus, costumes are now seen as instruments of social integration, social mobilisation and stratification since they can foster and orchestrate social classification of people on the social echelon based on their appearances and fashion taste.

It, therefore, follows that if costumes can change the look or tell the story of or about a character by showing or revealing his or her identity, it can also entrench and enshrine the transfiguration and outright metamorphosis of the character from one plane of existence to another. Costumes are vital elements of indigenous African drama. Like the indigenous African drama, costumes are unavoidably vital elements of the performance(s) in *Kiriji*. Trace Utoh-Ezeajugh (2006) sees costume as "the items of clothing, accessories and ornamentations worn by the actor or actress to define the character and establish the circumstances of the character's existence by situating him or her in time and space".

Props, according to Ajimisan (2016), are "other items which are not of clothing but are complementary in costuming, whether held in the hands or other parts of the body". They are small miniature or even conspicuously observable materials held by the performers, actors, actresses and oral artists during their activities or theatrical enactments. Ajulekun (2013) submits that "costumes and props are paramount among elements used in relating human experiences to the audience. The dynamics of aesthetics in the performance are revealed through costumes and props." In *Kiriji*, several examples of such miniature or large items or materials are used either by design or default. For clarity, examples of such items (props) used in the rite are shown above with their pictures. They include fly-whisk, walking staffs, royal scythes, crowns, coral or royal beads and the mystical staff. They constitute royal insignia of office and ancestral paraphernalia believed to have been brought by Erede, the founder of Etikan Kingdom, from Ile-Ife, the ancestral root or source of all Yoruba-speaking people around the globe.

They have symbolic or pan-semiotic significations that are anaphoric and metaphoric. Pan-semiotic is a branch of language and literature that studies the interpretation of the symbolic messages passed by nature and natural objects to man. Simply, it is the message of nature to man in natural objects in a symbolic manner. They are pan-semiotic significations of royal ancestry, collective prosperity, historical root awareness and consciousness and aristocratic ascendancy of the people. Pan-semiotic signification means attributing deeper or symbolic meaning than the physical appearances of objects. In the Ilaje belief system, people are accorded recognition or indignation based on their dress. This fact has also been buttressed by Isogun (2018). Ajulekun (2018) posits that props are "properties used in theatrical production." Horn (2014) also believes that "props used in indigenous performances could be symbolic and naturalistic." In line with Horn's position above, the props displayed alongside the remains of Oba Adedoyin Oyetakin, as seen in the pictures above and the video clip of his royal funerary rite, are all symbolic and naturalistic. They pass more profound and extraordinary messages to the people beyond their appearances. Props are used in Indigenous performances such as the Malokun Festival of the Ilaje-Ugbo or Irele people of Ondo State, Ijusu (Yam Festival) of Ilaje-Etikan and the *Kiriji*.

Props are signifying objects. They are cultural, social, religious and historical signifiers of some aspects of the people's lives and belief systems with totemic or metaphorical correlations. Props are formally known as theatrical property and are objects used on the stage or screen by the actors during Indigenous performances or screen productions. In practical terms, props are anything movable or portable on a stage or set distinct from the actors, scenery, costumes and electrical equipment (en.m.wikipedia.org.uk 2020). George, D. (2020), while examining the purpose of props in the theatre, submits that "props are crucial in the storytelling; they complement and motivate the character, helping the actor feel more "the part", setting the scene, identifying a particular time and place and cultural setting, sometimes even becoming a huge focus of the film (dickgeorge.co.uk,2020). In Indigenous performances such as the *Kiriji*

rite, props are indices of the various spatial-temporal and socio-cultural contextualisation of configurations captured, covered or exemplified by a performance among a folk.

Make-up is a cosmetic and artificial substance used to change, conceal, or disguise actors' appearances in the theatre, drama, or performances. They range from colours, dyes, paints and paintings, festoons, cocoons, charcoal or facial creams to make an actor or performer more beautiful, handsome, scary or ugly. For instance, artificial colourations applied to change a person's natural appearance to look like a witch, wizard, gorgon, or nymph are products of make-up art. The theatrical make-up aims to delineate and enhance a character's role and give performers an additional tool for conveying the character being performed. Stage makeup often creates visual stereotypes or cliché that the audience will readily understand (fashion history.loveto know.com.) In performing arts or indigenous performances, make-up refers to any materials used by actors for cosmetic purposes and to give the actors the appearance appropriate to their characters (www.britanica.com/retrieved). Make-up is essential to the performances because it helps to improve, enhance, or alter the appearance of the actors, actresses or performers in indigenous performances or oral arts. Make-ups are worn on the stage for the following reasons: because of intense stage lighting and audience distance, to avoid a washed-out, formless and shapeless appearance of the face. In the article, *The Importance of Make-up and Costumes in Theatre* by Lauren Vork, she submits that:

While the bare-bones essential components of theatre are just actors and a script, most productions are complete with adding costumes and make-up. Costumes and make-up are essential in a production's drama, character creation, visual aesthetic, and practical elements.

She identifies five significant areas of importance of costumes and make-up in theatre: visual effect and character reinvention or re-evolution style, setting, and actors. In visual effect, she submits that "beyond setting and character, costumes and make-up play an important role in visibility and aesthetics. Make-up is necessary to ensure that the features of an actor's face are easy to see and not get washed out by the bright stage lights. In the area of setting, she concludes that make-up and costumes are chief indicators of the time and place of the play. She further asserts that make-up and hairstyles should be coordinated to match the play's setting, though some concession is made in make-up styles to avoid wash-out. In the area of style, she believes that "special costumes and make-up not only enhance the vision for the drama and storytelling alone, but it helps create a theatrical experience that is enjoyable from a visual standpoint as well as dramatic one". From the actor's angle, she succinctly submits that:

Costumes and make-up serve an essential purpose for actors, too. Though the actors' primary work in creating their characters is done during the weeks of rehearsal and individual practice leading up to a show, seeing themselves transformed visually into a character is often a powerful source of inspiration.

As in the case of the *Kiriji*, ritual performances of the Ilaje-Ejikan people, costumes, and make-ups help tremendously change a performer's visual outlook and enhance his performance.

For example, in the Ijo Oloro (Oloro's ritual dance or glee), the Oloro's appearance is cosmetically transformed through the use of make-up to disguise the identity of the performer and also to enhance his performance as truly a reincarnate of one of the dead ancestors. It also helps to give him a more morbid or monstrous look, too scary for people to look at. They also induce serious laughter since the scene is consciously or unconsciously intended as a comic relief. They are purposively enacted to ease the pent-up emotion and sorrow

occasioned by the loss of a beloved leader, father or village head so dear to his immediate family and the Kingdom.

Dance and Comic Relief in *Kiriji*: Ijo Oloro, other Dances in the Rite and their Symbolic Significations

Like other indigenous performances or modern theatre, drama, dance, and comic relief are indispensable in *Kiriji*. This is one of the reasons I situate *Kiriji* within the ambits of traditional or indigenous drama. Ajimisan sees dance as "the conscious and calculated body movement or foot-steps to the accompaniment of a specific sound and rhythm." Emoruwa opines that the reflection of the cultural patterns of a people is found in dance. Dance and dancing among the people of Ilaje are reflections of the "inner self" of the dancer. This reflection of the inner self is further widened and envisioned through several facial expressions and covert expressions of joy and happiness. The affirmation of the expression of the dancer's inner self is also found in Opoku (1968) when he submits that.

We, the people, accept the dancer's unique roles as the centre of our life- in his subtle flexions of the hands and figure, our prayer; in his thrusting of arms- our thanksgiving, his stamp and pause... Thus, he dances, not alone but with us, and we are with him. We are not spectators but co-creators and participants in the African way of life drama.

According to this opinion, dance is magical and symbolic because it can reflect people's aspirations and disposition through body movement. The position of Ajulekun (2014) is akin to this when he posits that "dance is a reflection of the cultural heritage of a people."

Omosule (2006) further suggests that the function of dance "as an expression of social organisation safeguards the traditionally established social and political hierarchy and equally emphasises the standard of behaviour and instruct morals within society." Dance and dancing are tied to the human psychological and emotional state of being, and they are potent tools of social mobilisation, self-expression, mobilisation, and socialisation among the folk where folk dance is practised. Dance is a display of kinetic motion and a corollary of the inner sensation expressed only through it (dance) and smiles or facial expressions Ajimisan (2016). Emoruwa (2005) thinks that "dance serves a vital function in every human society as it helps to achieve social cohesion, or togetherness, causing them to feel a deep sense of communion with one another." This further situates dance within the social milieu. However, dance is also a religious and spiritual affair. In some cultures, it is believed that people are launched into the realm of the spirit through dance. In this sense, it may also be of ritual significance. Ajulekun(2018) observes that

Dance is a universal language of movement that conveys meaning and evokes emotions in the participants. It is primarily a non-verbal mode of communication that can express life experiences, observations and reflections. In another sense, dance is a physical activity widely used in various settings with people who have social, emotional, cognitive or physical concerns. In other words, dance is not just an ordinary or uncoordinated act; it is an organised act aimed at influencing people socially, mentally, physically and even spiritually (68).

This opinion further buttresses our earlier submission that dance transcends the physical realm alone. It is not just a tool for social cohesion but also a tool for spiritual cohesion and integration. It also serves ritual purposes since the ritual is believed to be the kernel or nucleus of every "spiRITUAL" communion or activity. To Bridget Webster, "Arts and culture are cornerstones for a healthy society, and dance is an elemental part of that fabric". This is so because dance is integral to arts and culture. Webster adds that

dancing is a natural feeling; it makes you feel stronger and happier and is hugely important for our development as adults. It improves communication skills and has

only positive benefits in every aspect of our lives. Dance is a fundamental component of the performing arts and a core ingredient for happy, healthy citizens._

According to Webster, dance has also been narrowed down to physical exercise and fitness, which engender healthy and happy living. Besides serving as a tool of social integration, dancing can also serve as a tool of human communication of desires and education since it involves the propagation and promotion of the people's culture and heritages to attract tourists and regularly featuring in the itineraries of tour operators. Though complex, dance may be described simply as ordered bodily movements, usually performed to music. Dance has symbolic codification, which was summed up by Nketia (1965) when he submitted that.

Traditional dances give scope for conveying thoughts or matters of persona or social importance through movements, postures and facial expressions. Through dance, individuals and social groups can show their reactions to attitudes of hostility or cooperation held by others towards them. They may show deference to their superiors, gratitude to their benefactors, and their estimation of themselves in the presence of their rivals, servants, subjects and others through their choice of appropriate symbolic gestures (65).

Dance is the behavioural denotation of the person's inner being, essence and the expression of self through gestural movement or body manipulations. It also shows the devotion or symbolic signification of the dancer's piety towards the forces believed to be benevolent to her or him. It is also a form of entertainment.

Comic relief is also an aspect of the dance or theatrical enactments in the rite. According to Abrams (1999), comic relief is the

Introduction of comic characters, speeches, or scenes in serious or tragic work, especially dramas. Such elements were almost universal in Elizabethan tragedy. Sometimes, they occur merely as episodes of dialogue or horseplay to alleviate tension and add variety; in more carefully wrought plays, however, they are also integrated with the plot in a way that counterpoints and enhances the serious or tragic significance (41).

In this opinion of Abrams, the employment or application of comic relief as a theatrical device or technique is peculiar to scripted drama or modern theatre. It is a technique deployed to ease or reduce tension in tragic works or works with serious actions. It is also "an amusing scene, incident, or speech introduced into serious or tragic elements, as in a play to temporarily relieve tension or intensify the dramatic action. It is a relief from tension caused by losing a loved one through the introduction of a comic element (www.dictionary.com). It can also be seen as "a relief from the emotional tension, especially of a drama provided by the interposition of a comic episode or element" (www.merriam-webster.com.) It has also been defined as "an amusing scene, incident, or speech introduced into serious or tragic element, as a play, to provide temporary relief from tension, or to intensify the dramatic action". Comic relief is also "when the comedy takes place in a story that is dramatic, tragic or serious overall, not comedies" (literaryterms.net). It can also be seen as "a comic interlude, or comic element in a tragedy or an amusing moment or element in a serious situation". It can also be "an amusing scene, incident, or speech introduced into serious or tragic elements as in a play, to provide temporary relief from tension" (www.collinsdictionary.com).

Comic relief is a modern theatrical technique used in indigenous performances outside modern or sophisticated theatre or drama. One such performance is the *Kiriji* (royal funerary rite) of the Ilaje-Etikan people of Ondo State, southwestern Nigeria. In the rite, Ijo-Oloro, "Oloro's ritual or mock dance or glee" is an example of comic relief employed in indigenous performances. During the occasion, which is characterised by serious tension or intense, tragic mood occasioned by the loss of a beloved monarch so dear to his immediate family and the Kingdom at large, a specific, short but comically interesting scene is introduced to ease the mounting tension and make people or the

audiences "laugh off" their heavy nerves. In Ijo-Oloro, the "Oloro", a middle-aged man is seen emerging from the grove with his funny and loose costume, wearing laughter-inspiring make-up and ludicrous facial expressions or contorted face, befitting a buffoon in Western drama or sophisticated theatre. He emerges three different times before he eventually puts up his show.

A stool is prepared for him to sit on, and he also holds the Kingdom's mystical staff, with which he soon begins to dance. At the sound of the Olumoghonne drums, which sound esoterically, betokening the cryptic nature of the dance and the dancer, the Oloro dances like a buffoon in such an irresistibly laughable manner that people, forbidden from laughing at his comical dance, typical of human foibles and tomfoolery, are irresistibly tempted to laugh. This dance offers temporary relief or ease to the audience's tension. Ijo-Oloro and other dances in the rite also serve the purpose of comic relief, even though the performers never intended it to be so. The three times that the Oloro emerges from the grove symbolically signify the three stages of human existence – the dawn, the afternoon and the dusk. The first emergence signifies the dawn of human life, a period of innocence, freshness and vitality. The second emergence signifies noon, a period of immense strength, vigour, energy, aspiration, and fulfilment of an existential dream. The last emergence is an allegorical signifier of the dusk and end to all life's struggles, accomplishments, dreams and aspirations, which lead to death or transfiguration from one form or stage to another or transit from one phase or plane of human existence to another, the hereafter.



Pictures of the Oloro's ritual glee and other dances show the application of dance as a comic relief in the rite.

Conclusion

An exploration of *Kiriji*, an indigenous rite of the Ilaje-Etikan people of Ondo State, shows that, though *Kiriji* is a home-grown customary practice, many theatrical aesthetics characterise sophisticated dramas that are intrinsically embedded in it. This justifies the situation of the *Kiriji* within the ambits of indigenous drama. The rite is not only situated within the province of traditional or indigenous drama of transition but is also equated to the same level in form, ideology or propaganda. On this note, the paper recommends proper technologising and carnivalisation of the rite, exempting aspects that link it with idolatry. This will help make the rite a viable entertainment and revenue-generation tool. It will also open it up for subsequent research.

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The Social Relevance of Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperatives

**Tunde, J. Akande, Samuel Nnabugwu Chinedu
& Ekika Lazarus Isaac**

Abstract

This paper examines the relevance of Immanuel Kant's categorical imperatives to contemporary ethical issues. It begins with an overview of Kant's ethics, including the formulations of the categorical imperatives. The social relevance of the categorical imperatives is discussed in relation to ethical issues like suicide, abortion, violence, corruption, and terrorism. Applying the categorical imperatives reveals why these acts are morally wrong - they fail to show proper respect for humanity as an end in itself and cannot be reasonably universalised. The paper highlights the enduring usefulness of Kant's deontological approach as a lens for evaluating moral questions today. Though formulated centuries ago, the categorical imperatives provide a principled basis for ethical conduct by stressing moral rules binding on all rational beings.

Keywords: Categorical Imperative, Social Relevance, Good Will, suicide, Abortion, Corruption

1. Introduction

Throughout history, moral philosophers have grappled with the quandary of determining the fundamental basis of a valid moral system. The fundamental question is whether moral norms should derive from immutable, absolute foundations or arbitrary, situational concepts. Of more concern is the current surge in moral decay, leading to several contemporary moral dilemmas like suicide, abortion, violence, corruption, terrorism, and others. Due to this progress and increased moral subjectivity, morality is now considered personal. Therefore, it is illogical to establish a moral framework apart from one's personal or cultural environment. Can morality be universally applied? If so, what are the societal implications of a universalised moral theory in today's society? The German philosopher Immanuel Kant proposed a moral theory over two centuries ago grounded in a universal foundation. His views respond to this query. William Lawhead argues that Kant's moral philosophy remains a prominent source of ethical understanding in our current culture, particularly in relation to challenging ethical dilemmas in politics, law, medicine, and business (Lawhead, 2015, p. 370). Kantian moral theory prioritises the concepts of responsibility, reason, dignity, and value of human individuals, as well as an unchanging and absolute moral rule. His categorical imperatives encapsulate this moral paradigm. Ezedike emphasises that according to Kant's categorical imperatives, the moral correctness of an action is entirely independent of its effects. According to Ezedike (2020:185), determining the morality of an action can be done by assessing its alignment with a legitimate moral principle. He further asserts that the method to assess the validity of a moral rule is based on formalistic criteria. By "formalistic," he referred to the requirement for moral law to meet the criteria of categorical imperatives, which serve as the fundamental and highest principles or standards of morality. Kant formulates the "categorical imperative" as a universal ethical principle representing an absolute and unconditional obligation to be followed in all situations, justified as a goal (Johnson, 2018, p. 14). Thus, this paper demonstrates that Kant's formulation of categorical imperatives remains very socially relevant in contemporary times, owing to its wide-ranging applicability as an ethical framework.

Understanding Kant's Categorical Imperatives

Kant's moral theory asserts that goodwill is the only thing that can be considered truly good, without any exceptions. Kant recognises other entities that can be classified as morally good. For

example, he enumerated three classifications of these positive attributes, which are: (1) *mental abilities* (such as wit judgment); (2) *qualities of temperament* (such as courage, resolution and perseverance); and (3) *gifts of fortune* (such as power, riches, honour, health and happiness). However, while these things may be beneficial for him, they are not inherently good, as these positive attributes have the potential to be exploited for malevolent purposes. Therefore, he deduced that only "goodwill" possesses absolute goodness. According to Kant, goodwill should be grounded in rational principles and moral law rather than influenced by subjective factors like emotions and personal preferences. Additionally, actions prompted by goodwill should be performed out of a sense of obligation.

Kant argues that the core premise of our moral obligations is based on the "categorical imperative." An imperative is a directive or command. Kant distinguishes between two types of imperatives. The first sort is a hypothetical imperative (Lawhead, 2015, p. 372). The imperative being referred to is a conditional imperative. The structure is as follows: if you desire X, then perform Y. According to Kant, this principle informs us of our moral obligations, which depend on our desire to achieve a specific objective. The second type of imperative is the categorical imperative. Kant presents the moral law as a categorical imperative. The categorical imperative prescribes our moral obligations without relying on preconditions, subjective desires, or qualifications (Lawhead, 2015, p. 372). It is categorical due to its specific format: DO X! This indicates the moral obligations that are universally applicable and binding in all circumstances and at all times. Moreover, this directive applies to all situations and remains constant. It is universally applicable, including all individuals, at all times and in all situations. It is coherent and does not result in any inconsistency (Lawhead, 2015, p. 372).

Formulation of the Categorical Imperatives

Kant argues that there is only one fundamental principle of morality, known as the categorical imperative. However, this principle can be expressed in at least three different ways. Each formulation is synonymous with the others, although each one highlights a distinct facet of the rationality of morality.

Kant articulates the initial formulation of the categorical imperative as follows:

"act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (FMM, 39).

The initial statement urges us to adhere to universal law, which implies that we should behave based on a principle that applies to all rational creatures rather than one that is only legitimate if we desire a specific outcome. Therefore, it recommends determining if the guiding principle of a potential action can or cannot be universally applied and then deciding whether to accept or reject it. Kant emphatically cautioned against the notion that our immoral principles become universally applicable. He continues to uphold the principle of moral evaluation that requires us to be capable of desiring that a principle of action should be universally applicable. The second iteration of the categorical imperative formulated by him is as follows: "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only" (FMM, 47)

This revised version implies that everyone possesses inherent value and dignity, and we must refrain from objectifying or dehumanising others. We cannot assist in the exploitation of other individuals as mere instruments. Due to this particular attribute, we must regard ourselves and others not solely as a means but also as ends. According to Kant, an end can be described as an object formed via the activity of free will, which is determined by the notion of the thing (Paton, 1963, p. 166). For Kant, only rational individuals, such as agents or persons, may be seen as ends in themselves. Since only they possess an unconditioned and absolute worth, it is incorrect to merely employ them as instruments to achieve a goal whose value is merely relative. William Lawhead

emphasised that individuals are noumenal entities that go beyond their empirical manifestations and are not objects. According to him (2015: 374), individuals cannot possess conditional worth but have absolute or intrinsic value, as they are the origin of all conditional value. A notable aspect of this statement is that Kant openly asserts that we should consider ourselves with reverence and not solely as a tool for a purpose.

Kant's third formulation of the categorical imperative centres on the idea of the will of every rational being as making universal law. Therefore, this formula is based on the principle that a rational will makes or gives itself the laws it obeys, hence the principle of autonomy. It is expressed as follows:

"So act that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim" (GMM, 33).

According to Kant, the autonomy of the will is the highest fundamental of morality. It is the one principle that governs all moral rules and the associated obligations. Conversely, Kant argues that the heteronomy of the will is the origin of all false moral principles. It fails to provide the foundation for moral duty but also contradicts the concept of duty and the moral nature of the will. Furthermore, freedom is crucial to the autonomy of the will. According to Kant, moral rule is not an external imposition but a manifestation of one's rational nature. Lawhead posited that if every individual adhered to the principles of rationality, they would form an ideal society (referred to by Kant as a "kingdom of ends") in which everyone would possess autonomy while adhering to a shared universal moral code (Lawhead, 2015, p. 374).

The Social Relevance of the categorical imperatives

The essence of Kantian categorical imperative might be summarised as follows: "Only act on principles that you can simultaneously become universal laws." (Copleston, 2003, p. 328) The ultimate moral rule must possess universality, meaning that every specific moral law must be objective and devoid of personal bias. The determination cannot be solely based on my wants, but rather, it must be neutral and fair to all individuals involved. If I behave in a morally upright manner, it is expected that the other individual has an obligation to also behave in a morally upright manner. Presently, our society is deeply plagued by many forms of corruption and immorality. Morality appears to have been discarded and disregarded in the annals of history. It is a matter of inquiry if many individuals in our society possess a conscience. Can it be asserted that individuals who engage in these immoral behaviours nonetheless possess a sense of moral awareness? Every individual has the duty and accountability to ensure that their behaviour aligns with the ultimate goal of humanity. By adhering to the concept of benevolence and treating humanity as an end-in-itself, we can achieve the utmost moral perfection. Kant argues that the only object that possesses absolute goodness is goodwill. Regardless of the outcome or repercussions, it is essential for one's activities to always be morally upright and driven by good intentions. In this analysis, we will examine the societal relevance of Kant's Categorical Imperatives in relation to contemporary social and ethical matters such as suicide, abortion, violence, terrorism, and corruption.

Kant's Categorical Imperatives and the Ethical Dilemma of Suicide

Suicide is the deliberate act of ending one's own life, done with full autonomy and intention. There are two forms of suicide: direct and indirect. Examples of direct suicide include methods such as hanging, shooting oneself, and ingesting poison. In this scenario, death is intentionally desired either as an outcome, such as in euthanasia or as a method to achieve a goal, such as in a hunger strike leading to death. Indirect suicide refers to the act of intentionally causing an event that is not directly intended to cause death, but it is known that death will result from it (Pazhayampallil, 1997, p. 1035). In this scenario, death is not desired but instead allowed. One seeks to pursue something

lawful and perceived to have a greater significance than bodily existence. For instance, a pilot during a conflict may intentionally crash his plane, which is carrying bombs, into an enemy vessel. Similarly, if a lifeboat becomes overcrowded in a shipwreck, passengers may leap into the sea, even when there is no chance of being rescued (Grisez & Boyle, 1979, p. 108).

Suicide is commonly perceived as an act that brings shame and is morally condemnable. In moral philosophy, figures such as Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, Camus, and others have rejected the concept. At the same time, the Stoics, Hume, and contemporary humanists advocate it as a fundamental aspect of self-determination and human freedom. According to Camus, a person who commits suicide is a coward who admits that life is overwhelming and cannot comprehend its value, hence perceiving life as not worth the effort (Camus, 1966, p. 5).

Kant deems suicide as undesirable due to its implication of the eradication of both the subject of morality (man) and morality itself. Lawhead argues that by choosing to end one's life to escape suffering and disillusionment, one perceives oneself as an object controlled by other factors (Lawhead, 2015, p. 374). Therefore, by employing the categorical imperative as a standard for morally assessing suicide and utilising the issue of suicide to examine this standard, we can consider the following scenario: "A man, due to a succession of misfortunes that have accumulated to the extent of despair, becomes disillusioned with life. However, he still possesses complete rationality to introspect and determine whether his intended course of action contradicts his obligation to himself." He should, after that, administer the test to determine if the principle of his behaviour can be generalised as a law applicable to all of nature. Stated in this manner: I have made it my guiding philosophy to end my life if its continuation poses more harm than it offers enjoyment due to my self-centeredness. The remaining inquiry is whether this principle of self-love can be universally established as a fundamental law of nature. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that a natural system in which the same sensation, designed to promote the continuation of life, actually destroys life would inherently contradict itself and hence cannot exist as a functioning natural system. Therefore, the maxim cannot be universally applicable and is thus utterly contradictory to the fundamental concept of all moral obligations (FMM, 85).

Based on Kant's categorical imperative, the problem of suicide fails to meet the necessary criteria. Kant argues that suicide is morally incorrect as it fails to uphold the inherent value and respect for human beings. Furthermore, engaging in suicide entails the annihilation of humanity and regards it just as a tool to attain a desired outcome, such as liberation from burdens. Therefore, individuals must confront the difficulties and obstacles of existence with optimism rather than evading their obligations by resorting to suicide. Universalising this conduct would result in the eradication of both society and the human race. A parent may contemplate suicide due to his inability to provide sustenance, shelter, clothing, and education for his children. By engaging in this activity, the children are subjected to severe difficulties, which may lead them to take their own lives in order to escape their troubles.

Consequently, this would result in the eradication of the family and, ultimately, the extinction of the human species. Therefore, suicide is in direct opposition to the obligation of individuals to behave based on their duty or in alignment with the moral code rather than for personal gain. Suicide is an act of cowardice and self-centeredness.

The Categorical Imperative and the Ethical Dilemma of Abortion

Abortion, as described by Peschke, refers to the deliberate removal of a non-viable human fetus from the mother's womb through human intervention. This can involve either killing the fetus before removal or exposing it to inevitable death outside the womb (Peschke, 1966, p. 314). In his encyclical letter "Evangelium Vitae," Pope John Paul II defines abortion as the intentional and immediate termination, through any method, of a human being in the early stage of their existence,

from conception until birth (Pope John Paul 1995:11). Abortion can occur through direct or indirect means and can be either spontaneous or induced through artificial methods. Spontaneous abortion, often known as miscarriage, is caused by either a developmental anomaly in the fetus or an illness affecting the woman. Induced abortion, often known as direct abortion, refers to the deliberate expulsion of human life from the uterus, either by the patient herself or with the help of someone else.

Regarding direct abortion, it involves intentionally expelling or destroying the fetus as the desired outcome or as a means to reach this outcome. On the other hand, indirect abortion refers to allowing the death of the baby as an unintended consequence of deliberately intending a different outcome (Peschke, 1966, p. 315). An example of indirect abortion is the demise of a fetus that is not yet capable of surviving, which occurs as a result of the surgical extraction of a diseased uterus from the expectant woman.

Although several reasons have been put out in support of abortion, it is deemed morally incorrect to intentionally and deliberately carry out an abortion when examined through the perspective of Kant's categorical imperative. This is because we cannot generalise the act of ending a child's life based on social, eugenic, or economic considerations, as these factors do not pose any direct threat to our survival. The endorsement of intentionally desired and arranged abortion for any reason, whatever, will result in the infringement of the categorical imperative, which also asserts: "Behave in a manner that you always treat humanity, whether in your self or the self of others, as an end in itself and never merely as a means." Induced abortion regards a human person (a child) as a mere instrument to achieve a specific objective. Consequently, it is deemed incorrect. Another justification for its incorrectness, when considering Kant's categorical imperative, is that universalising the act of abortion will result in the devaluation of human life, transforming society into a ruthless environment where only the most adaptable individuals thrive. The mother possesses the ability to expel the child because of her physical strength or advantageous position rather than being justified in doing so. Similarly, anyone who has the opportunity and motive to take another person's life will do so promptly and without feeling guilty.

Furthermore, one of the repercussions is the occurrence of a domino effect. This means that if we permit the act of ending human life in one circumstance, we will eventually permit it in all circumstances, ultimately resulting in the eradication of human society. However, abortion goes against the ethical duty of individuals to consistently regard human beings, including themselves and others, not as a mere instrument but as a valuable end in themselves. Abortion is ethically wrong and does not guarantee the preservation of human life in all circumstances.

Categorical Imperatives and the Issue of Violence, Corruption and Terrorism

A prevalent societal issue that has profoundly affected our contemporary society is the proliferation of violence, corruption, and terrorism. The pervasive prevalence of violence, corruption, and terrorism in the contemporary world raises a profound ethical dilemma regarding their partial or complete justification. Violence, as defined by the World Health Organization, refers to the deliberate use of physical force or power, whether threatened or actual, against oneself, another individual, or a group or community. This use of force has the potential to cause injury, death, psychological damage, hindered development, or deprivation (WHO, 2002). Violence includes acts of physical, sexual, and psychological aggression, as well as the use of threats, deprivation, and neglect towards oneself or others. Corruption can be understood as a departure from the proper order, driven by selfish motives to acquire unfair advantages. Corruption is a societal problem that can manifest either at an institutional level or on an individual level. It pursues excessive satisfaction by disregarding established rules and standards of operation. Terrorism entails the aggressive infringement upon an individual, both physically and psychologically, as well as the violation of

their property and freedom in a perilous manner that even jeopardises their survival. Hoffman defines terrorism as the intentional use of violence or the threat of violence against civilians to instil fear (Hoffman, 2006, p. 15). These three entities have achieved extensive global prevalence in contemporary times. The peril presented by these societal issues to the tranquillity, advancement, and fundamental survival of human society has prompted several individuals to condemn them entirely, rejecting all basis for their justification.

Nevertheless, specific individuals perceive these actions as reasonable methods to secure their existence in a society that appears to endorse the principles of "might is right" or "survival of the fittest". Regarding corruption, it is contended that it serves as a means of ensuring one's survival and meeting basic needs. An underpaid labourer rationalises corruption as a form of "hidden remuneration". However, violence and terrorism are perceived as methods of resolving conflicts or asserting some perceived justifiable grievances.

However, when we examine these social issues through the lens of Kant's categorical imperative, it becomes evident that these actions are inherently immoral and cannot be applied universally as a guiding principle due to their association with corruption, violence, or terrorism. The maxim "when in desperate need of money for family support, resort to fraudulent means" cannot be universally applied, nor can the maxim "use violence to seek justice for harm inflicted by others." Legalising these actions would lead to a disorderly and perilous society where fundamental human rights would be severely compromised. A civilisation constructed around these detrimental aspects cannot achieve stability and would lack advancement and growth.

Evaluation and conclusion

From the preceding, Kant's categorical imperatives have some relevance to current ethical dilemmas in the following manner. Firstly, it establishes a robust philosophical basis for moral absolutism, emphasising logical obligation and universal moral principles. Kant's approach dismisses moral relativism and situational ethics in favour of immutable moral truths. Although some may criticise this as excessively inflexible, it does offer a principled counterweight to more subjective approaches to ethics. Furthermore, the utilisation of categorical imperatives in relation to topics such as suicide, abortion, murder, and corruption demonstrates their extensive suitability as an ethical framework. The imperatives are not dependent on particular circumstances but instead assess the intrinsic morality of actions. This facilitates a uniform moral evaluation across many ethical quandaries.

Nevertheless, there exist arguments that might be levied against Kant's theory. Some contend that the complete restriction on treating humans solely as a means neglects to consider intricate scenarios where harm can be reduced. Kant's imperatives lack flexibility and fail to offer guidance when two moral principles clash in an intricate scenario. In summary, Kant's categorical imperatives significantly impact moral philosophy by constructing an ethical framework based on rationality, obligation, and reverence for human beings. Despite its imperfections, the theory remains a viable framework for assessing moral decisions using universally accepted principles of morality. This exemplifies Kant's deontological methodology's lasting influence and societal significance in changing cultural standards. Ultimately, the categorical imperatives are a defining characteristic of moral absolutism and one of philosophy's most impactful ethical frameworks. Their focus on ethical obligation and universal principles remains relevant in examining moral quandaries in the present day.

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Eteh in Pre-Colonial Nigeria: Origin and Social History

Usman Chukwudi & Paul Oshagwu Opone

Abstract

This paper examines the pre-colonial history of the Eteh people of South-eastern Nigeria. The people have rich cultural similarities with the Igala of modern Kogi State. Such similarities include but are not limited to language, title system, marriage ceremony, festivals, masquerades, and so on. However, their pre-colonial history has remained elusive among scholars. More importantly, there had arisen a series of accounts attributing the origin of the people to elsewhere, such as Igbo east of the Niger, Idoma, and even to Bida. This paper, therefore, aims to interrogate the various accounts of the origin of Eteh to establish their ancestral origin. To do this, it resorted to primary sources comprising archival and oral testimonies and secondary sources available on the subject. The paper deployed narrative, descriptive, and analytical historical methods of research. It argues that the ongoing controversy is primarily due to the multi-ethnic nature of the clan over the years. But, the findings indicate that the Igala people are the locals of Eteh land. However, waves of migration brought the other groups into the area at different times. The paper concludes that the later immigrants from elsewhere were only assimilated into the already established society by the Igala aborigines, as ascertained by the emphatic political and socio-cultural similarities between Eteh and the Igala people.

Keywords: Eteh, Origin, Migration, Identity, Social History

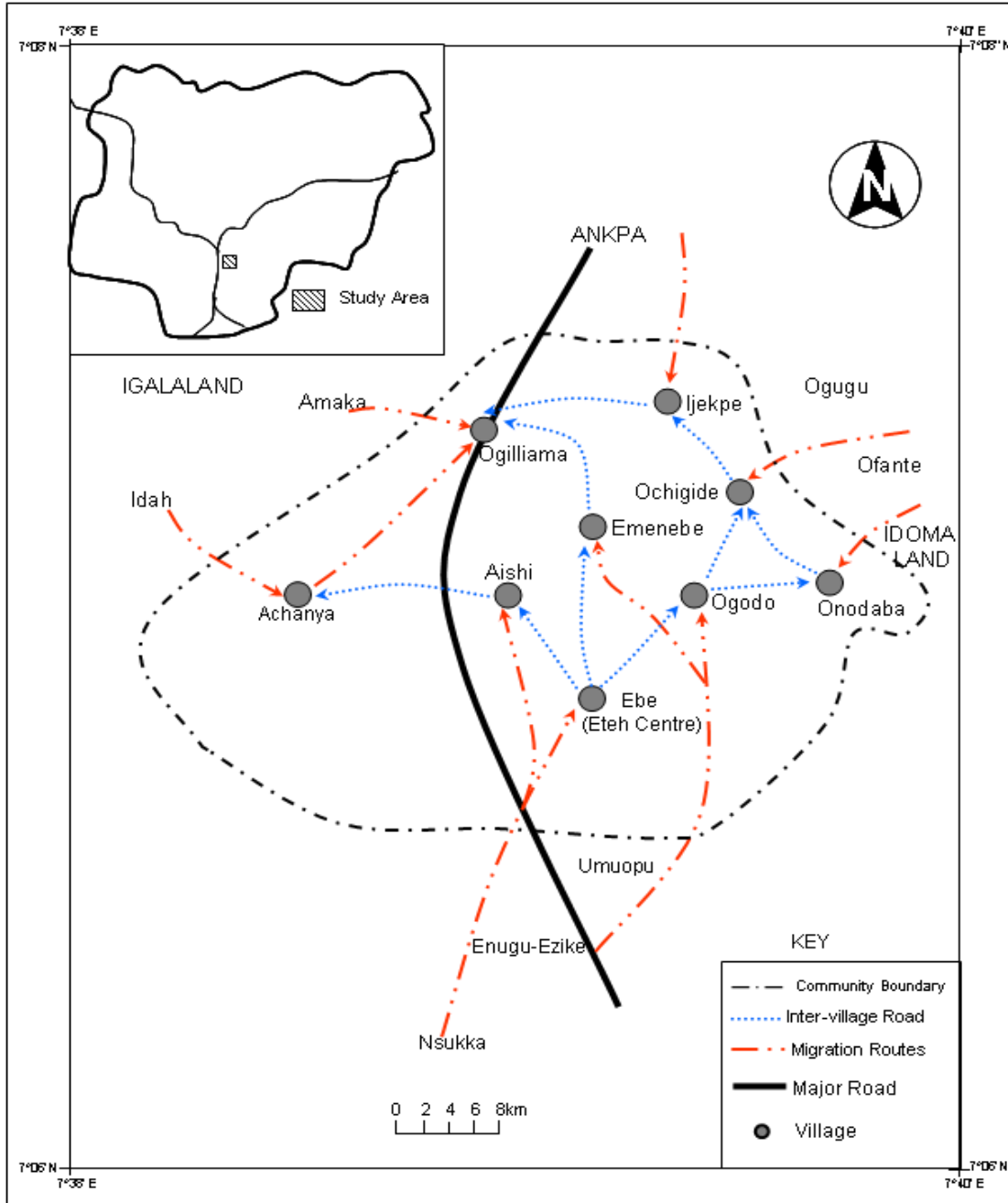
Introduction

One of the most controversial aspects of African pre-colonial history is the origins and migration of groups. African historians, leveraging earlier studies by the Europeans, have delved into it to expand the body of knowledge on African historiography. What has been the case is that many African scholars could hardly detach from the conclusions reached by the Europeans, which has not helped to address the problem of origins among African groups. Very recently, attempts have begun to reconstruct and revise the European scholarly superstructure by interrogating the origins and identities of African groups (Opone, 2022). However, Eteh is yet to benefit from such studies. Eteh is a multi-ethnic border clan presently situated along a 90-kilometer stretch from Benue, cutting across Kogi and Enugu to Anambra, but mainly between Olamaboro Local Government Area of modern Kogi State and Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area of current Enugu State of Nigeria. The clan comprises nine villages: Achanya, Ochigide, Aishi, Ebe, Emenebe (Ayinebe), Ijekpe, Ogilliana, Ogodo and Onodaba.

It is located between longitude 7⁰E and Latitude 7⁰W. It is bound to the northwest by Ankpa and Amaka in the Ankpa and Ofu Local Government Area of Kogi State, respectively. It is bounded to the northeast by Ogugu and Ofante in Olamaboro Local Government Area and Kogi. To the north, it is surrounded by the Ubelle River and stretches beyond Efeche to Okura in Kogi State, while to the West, it is bounded by Amara, Aguijebe, and Ikem, and to the South, Umuopu and Aji, all in Igboeze-North Local Government Area of Enugu State (Eteh Community Development Association, 2012). It has a population of about 39,000, according to the 1963 National Population Census (Egenti, 2015, p.2).

The clan is home to people from different ethnic groups, including Igala, Idoma, and Igbo. Although there are now a sizeable number of Igbo people in the area, the majority of the people claim Igala origin (Group Interview with Igwe Clement C., Alachi E., Eliugwu S. And Ogangwu S.; Ayinebe. 13/04/2023).

Geographically, the clan is situated in and around the Niger-Benue region. Anthropologists have determined that this common habitation area is the region surrounding the modern town of Lokoja. From there, people scattered to various locations, and the protracted period of isolation has now resulted in linguistic distinctions. Although the different peoples in the area claim to be autochthonous, that is, they are original to their location, it does not presuppose that the Eteh people have no origin. Interestingly, the clan comprises three distinct groups: Igala, Idoma and Igbo (Nwaezeigwe, 2007, pp.27-29).



Eteh clan

Source: Personal Fieldwork (13/04/2023)

However, Ohiri-Anichie (2007) explains that the people within the Niger-Benue Confluence speak the languages which belong to the proto-kwa sub-family of the Kwa language family which is a branch of the more extensive Niger-Congo language of Africa that gave birth to such languages as the Igala, Yoruba, Edo, Idoma, Igbara, Igbo, Nupe, Bassa, etc. Thus, Atanda (1980, p.2) stresses that

language is one of the primary determinants in considering an ethnic group's identity because it is the means of communication when it lacks corporate existence. The separate identity of such an ethnic group becomes impossible.

Literature Review

Several studies on the pre-colonial ancestry of African populations have been published. Scholars have remained engaged in that aspect of African history to contribute to contemporary literature. Opone (2022) states that the identity of a people's ancestral or geographical homeland is implied by their origin, based on a historical and ethnological analysis of the Anioma people of the Western Niger Delta. The study identifies two popular traditions of the origins of the Anioma people: origin from the old Benin kingdom and heartland Igbo. The paper argued that Anioma's identity has been shifting due to certain occurrences in the area's history.

Chinagorom and Onuora (2018. p.58), in their contribution to the discourse about the origin of Ndi Igbo, briefly say that it is about a time in history when people should start writing their history to avoid distortion by scholars. As they argue, that is only when such people can build an ideological framework and image based on authentic and meaningful interpretations of their past and present and a realistic projection of the future. That is precisely why this study relies on oral testimonies from the Eteh people who are knowledgeable about the subject for better analysis.

According to Adojoh (2020), the origin of the Igala people has been linked to several groups, including the Jukun, Yoruba, Benin, and Igbo East of the Niger. He, however, has faulted these claims but, sadly, went ahead and committed a historical blunder by tracing the origin of the Igala people to Egypt. That he claims by citing some unfounded similarities in vocabulary. Meanwhile, innumerable vocabulary similarities exist between the Igbo and Yoruba, which belong to the same Kwa sub-language group of the Niger-Congo.

In an earlier study, Opone (2017) asked whether the Ukwuanis are Benin or Igbo, given their claims to the regions. The paper tries to answer that question by studying their origin and migration and concludes that such a Ukwuani claim to Benin is motivated by political reasons. This is more so that the realities on the ground do not suggest so. Those studies will aid the analysis of this current research because the Anioma and Ete are of the same historical strand, given their claims of origins to three different places. The only difference is that while the Anioma claim to originate from Benin, Igala and Igbo, Eteh claims Igala, Igbo and Idoma. In both areas, there is an identity issue.

Traditions of Origin

Human beings as social groups have the inherent tendency of moving from one place to another. This is because there are necessities of life needed for survival that may not be available or, to be fair, are in short supply wherever they must have found themselves by default. As a result of this scarcity, there is this insatiable quest for more; hence, movement happens for this 'selfish' interest to be satisfied. Over time, the concepts of indigene, non-indigene, migrants, settlers and so on developed. Thus, the people who believe they are indigenes based on first arrival or longevity tend to deprive the perceived non-indigenes of specific resources.

Determining the Eteh people's origin has long been complex and controversial (Interview: Akpen, P., UniAbuja, 22/12/2022). It is even more difficult, especially as it touches the foundation of people's identities (Opone, 2017, p.132). According to Eko (1998) and Amed (2000), there is no documentation concerning the origin of Eteh. However, the colonial ethnographical report shows that the various villages have origins traceable to different groups and communities within the Niger-Benue Area. For instance, it suggests that Onodaba is from Edumoga, Obida is from Bida, Ayinebe and Aishi are from Nsukka. Achanya is from Idah (NAE, GR11/1/87/1668, (1930). An Ethnographic Report on the Peoples of the Nsukka Division, Onitsha Province, by Meek, C.K.) That has become

the norm because African societies, including Eteh, have been unfairly stratified in such a manner that one's socio-political and economic status has a lot to do with the group they are associated with by origin. In other words, who you are or where you come from determines, to a large extent, what you get from society. It should be borne in mind, however, that this movement from place to place does not portend that the migrants do not have their actual aborigine no matter the distance they have covered. Dike and Ajayi (1988, p.395) affirm this by noting that:

Each community – family, clan, village, town, or state – however large or small had (sic) an established tradition concerning its origins. The community might split up, migrate, and assimilate new elements or be conquered by others and absorbed by new immigrants ... and the latest community formulated a new tradition of origin. These traditions (over time) become the core of the community's view of history.

Sadly, the problem here remains that regardless of how long the 'migrants' or 'non-indigenes' have lived in their newfound land, they are being reminded of their migrations by the Aborigines when the sharing formula of scarce resources is to be implemented. The consequence of this has always been conflict of various degrees, especially when the perceived migrants refuse to comply with the indigenes' demands. Against this backdrop, this work investigates the possibility of the people's origin.

The Eteh-Igala Connection

Some oral accounts have suggested that the origin of the Eteh people can be traced to Igala. Such a migration is connected to the military and commercial phase of Igala's expansion in the 17th century from the Idah area of the present Kogi State. As a result of that movement, Igala spread and settled in several communities and local government areas in Enugu. These include Eteh, Umuopu, Enugu-Ezike, Oguje, Okuto, Uzo-Uwani, Nsukka, Igbo-Eze South, Enugu-East, Igbo-Eze North, among others. They are quick to share their pride in their roots, although quite a good number of them have, sadly, lost what used to be their primary language (Igala). They have now stuck to Igbo as their general language.

In an oral interview (Uzo-Uwani, 21/12/2023), Ukuta gives an insight into the migration and existence of Igala in Enugu State. He says there is no Igala settlement in the study area of Nsukka and Enugu-Ezike, including Eteh. He firmly believes that the region's people, as mentioned above, are of Igala extraction, which is why the Nsukka and its environs are referred to as Nsukka-Asadu-Ideke-Alumona. Both Asadu-Ideke and Alumona are Igala people who came in earlier and set up the place. For him, it is not an issue of settlement because the entire Nsukka in Enugu North Senatorial Zone, except for Ukehe in Igbo-Etiti, have Igala elements. In particular, Eteh predominantly comprises the Igalas and Idomas. However, he did not present evidence to support his claims.

An area account gave a deeper explanation, adding credibility to the people's history. According to it, the Igala people migrated from Idah and settled in Eteh and other parts of the Enugu North Senatorial zone. The historical root of Idah made it compulsory for any king produced in Eteh to obtain his traditional staff of authority from the Attah of Igala (Oral interview, Rev. Canon Simon Okolo 21/12/2023). A few cultures and traditions have endured between the Igala man in Enugu and his brother in Kogi State. The Igala people of Enugu have preserved their masquerades, dances, foods, and folklore. Fortunately, this aspect of the peoples' lives contributed immensely to their peaceful co-existence over the years. A traditional ruler, Igwe Simon Osi Itodo, Ezeoba 1 of the Essodo community in Enugu-Ezike, notes the peace and harmony between the Igala people of Enugu-Ezike and their hosts. For him, "We enjoy peaceful co-existence with the Igala people here." He added that if you come to a given community, you will understand the community's culture and

follow them to practice it; after all, those people will also learn your own culture while you learn theirs at the same time and then life goes on."

On his part, Igwe Chukwu Debelu lends credence to the fact that the people of Eteh and Igala have shared cultural heritage. In his words, so many people from the Eteh clan marry from Idah; in the same manner, people from Idah come to Eteh to match. They are interwoven, and there has been no problem because their relationship is strained if one is hurt at either end. He also calls to mind the shared cultures. Two masquerades are known as Akatakpa and Egwugwu, which are common at both ends. Egwugwu is used as an instrument to discipline erring members of the clan.

More so, there are written works that corroborate the above oral accounts concerning the Eteh-Igala connection. For instance, in his public lecture delivered at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1974), Azikiwe said that "the Igala people who inhabit Eteh District of Eastern Region desire to be merged with their Igala kindred in Igala Division of the Northern Region. They were originally administered as part of the north until boundary adjustments were made in 1924 when they found themselves in the East". He, therefore, proposed the merger of the minority of Igala people in the Nsukka area, which encompasses the Eteh clan with their Igala kith and kin in the Ankpa Division of the Igala Native Authority.

The Eteh-Igbo Connection

An oral source unequivocally says that:

The people speak multiple languages, including Igbo, Igala and Idoma. But generally, Igbo is the dominant language. So, Eteh is 100 percent Igbo. The fact is that nobody germinated from the ground. In any place one is, he is a visitor there, but it is left to you to dig and discover your roots.

The Ebe Palace Secretary, Ugbane John, supported this view as he noted: According to him. "Eteh people are Igbos, so it is a matter of understanding. The people are not strangers; they are not northerners. If somebody has lived in a place for over 2,000 years, you cannot say that person is a stranger. We are purely Igbo people.

In an interview with a local writer, Okopi, he argues that though the origin of the name Eteh and its meaning has remained elusive to him, local research has shown that Eteh is an Igbo clan by origin. He avers that the Idoma tribe has the highest number of ancestral migration routes and dispersal to Eteh during the disintegration of Apa/Wukari and allies with Idah centuries later. The land occupied by Eteh today originally belonged to the Ezike people of Igboland, harbouring the mass influx of Idoma and Igala as late as the Jihad war. However, it became a victim of internal colonisation by the Attah of Igala, as did other communities in the Niger-Benue area. These claims may only serve as a lead to a source because they are fraught with biased elements; hence, an in-depth analysis is needed.

Analysis of the Traditions of Origin

The above explains the massive influence wielded by the Igala kingdom in the area in the distant past. Afigbo (1973, p.79) confirms the above explanation, noting that the Idah (Igala) kingdom rose between the 13th and 17th centuries. It was an overtly political and military state. Thus, in keeping with the intrinsic character and quest of the state for expansion, it became an issue of conquest and rule of the extensive area of the Niger-Benue region.

The rise of Idah led to a situation in which the presence of Igala adventurers became remarkable in the Niger valley. Some adventurers settled in their host communities, bringing Igala's cultural traits and symbols to bear on them. Some merely came for trading and returned home, leaving some of their artistic impressions behind primarily through marriage.

The Nsukka area, including Eteh, was not exempted from the prevailing happenings of the period. It instead took a more profound dimension in the study area such that it involved slave raids primarily, especially with the European presence that gave impetus to the slave trade in Africa. Those raids were attributed to a mythical personality known as Onoja Oboni. He was a descendant of the royal house at Idah (Igala Traditional Headquarters) who conquered and annexed to the Igala kingdom, the northern communities of old Nsukka, sometime in the 17th century (Abdukadir: 1990, p.87).

In that way, Onoja is said to have peopled *ogurugu* from where he launched raids into the Nsukka areas. That is to say that the Igala warlord and traders alike might have married the Nsukka women and settled on the land known as Eteh, consequent upon which their supposed cultural indices were left behind. Afigbo (1980, p.85) also affirms that the Nsukka people borrowed Igala titles to add to their earlier Nri system of *Ozo and Nze*. He also maintains that in the 17th and 18th centuries, Igala influences would appear to have become the dominant factor in the cultural contact and interaction between the Igala and the Igbo. What obtains in the area, as many societies in Africa is, as Opone (2017, pp.132-133) avers, is that the rationality of the natural man presupposes that he becomes historically conscious of his existence by insistently demanding to know where he came from, to whatever location he must have found himself. This is especially so, considering that this identity awareness makes man relevant in his ever-competing political environment, which determines his socio-economic stature in his society. What one can or cannot do, considered achievable or unachievable, naturally becomes a function of where one comes from. As such, most African people have tended to erroneously attribute their origin to more pronounced or "bigger" groups to sustain this relevance.

Relationship Among the People in Pre-colonial Times

The Eteh people had lived together and interacted with one another over a long period, so their different cultural heritages became interwoven. In other words, notwithstanding their differences due to socio-cultural background, they accepted one another and participated in these activities equally. There was a give and take, particularly in language, marriage, economy (occupation) and festivities. No wonder Afigbo (1987:40) points out that these groups enjoyed a robust interaction in many aspects of their co-existence. While maintaining that disputes, especially in the land area, might have arisen, it was not enough reason to create a permanent vendetta among the people as the conflicts were amicably resolved. The point to note is that the people of Eteh, by providence, have come to stay.

Political Organisation

Eteh clan operated a chieftaincy stool under a chief titled *Onu-Oda Adogo?* as a vassal to the Attah of Igala. However, for convenience and efficiency in home governance, the Eteh clan was politically stratified in descending order, with a quasi-parliamentary system of government and a bicameral federalist legislature. This is where an incumbent first-class chief traditionally sits at the helm of all sovereign matters concerning the clan and has subordinates to reach the grassroots level.

Traditional Administrative Organisation of Eteh Clan

The traditional administrative ladder of the Eteh clan flows in a descending order thus;

- Onu-Oda Adogo: The Head, Council of Chiefs (First-class chief)
- Aidokanya: Traditional Prime Minister.
- Gango: Council of Chiefs (Second-class chiefs)
- Abogijo: Council of Elders
- Madaki: Village Head (Third-class chiefs).

- Achi-Okobia: Youth Council

Onu-Oda Adogo

This title, the holder of which is consistently recognised as the head of the clan, was first introduced by Enwenwowo, great-grandson of Ogbe Taku, who was the head of the clan at the time. It is said that Enwenwowo, remembering that his ancestor was a son of the Attah of Idah, wished to have his position recognised by the latter by being given a title. He went to Idah and after paying specific fees, the Attah handed him a staff and gave him the title of Onu-Oda. The Attah told him that this was the staff of OgbeTaku, his grandfather, and that the staff and the title Onu-Oda should always be held by the head of the town, who would sacrifice to Ogbe Taku (Oral Interview: Adejoh, Hezekiah, Ogilliam. 22/12/2022).

The ears of the Onu-oda were pierced by one of the Attah's female officials and the new chief was given a charm that is said to have consisted of a piece of sacred wood to which a cloth packet was attached containing some dust taken from the ground at Eteh. The reason for including the dust was that this represented *Aje*, the earth deity and that if anyone did wrong to the Onu-oda, Aje would take vengeance on the person as the Onuoda was regarded as the steward of Aje and the owner of the soil of Eteh. The Onu-oda used to make offerings of kola to this charm. The candidate obtains the position after paying dues of a fixed amount to all heads of kindreds and titled officials. He also had to give an enslaved person, goat, cloth, gown and fowl to the eldest brother of the late Onu-oda. These payments were regarded as a contribution towards the burial rites of the late Onu-oda or as a refund for the gift the late Onu-oda had himself been required to give at the election. Notably, when an Onu-oda dies, his eldest brother or son acts as regent until a successor is appointed.

Since then, every Onu-Oda has gone to Idah to have his title confirmed by the Attah; the title is not recognised as complete until the holder has done so. Onu-Oda Adogo, at any point in time, is the holder of the clan's symbol of peace, equity, justice and fairness, known as *Offo and Ule*. He is also the custodian of Eteh's cultural heritage.

Aidokanya

The Aidokanya is saddled with deputising or representing the Onu-Oda Adogo. The administration of the clan automatically falls on his shoulders for any reason the Onu-Oda Adogo is not disposed of. He also serves as the spokesman for the Onu-OdaAdogo, the council of chiefs, elders, and all the people of the Eteh clan.

Gango

Directly below the Onu-Oda Adogo and Aidokanya in the rung of the political ladder is the council of chiefs known as the *Gango*. This council comprises nine (9) second-class chiefs representing the clan's nine (9) villages. It represents the upper legislative chamber and serves as the traditional cabinet to the Onu-Oda Adogo, solely entrusted with decision-making and policy implementation. The members are usually appointed to assist the Onu-Oda Adogo in running the clan. Following their appointments, they become heads of their respective villages; they, in turn, appoint third-class chiefs who operate and deputise them at the village level, traditionally known as *Madaki*. One of these Gangos is usually designated as the traditional prime minister, the *Aidokanya*.

Abogijo

The council of elders, the Abogijo, serves as the lower legislative chamber. It serves as the consultative assembly and the clan's highest policymaking body. The legislative body's two chambers (council of elders and council of chiefs) exist and function separately. However, they work hand in hand for the development of the clan.

Village-Level Administrative Structure

At the village level, the administrative unit is built around *Abogijo* (the council of elders at that level), with the eldest man of the village as the traditional spokesman. The *Gango*, representing the village at the clan level, serves as the premier and the head of the cabinet to the *Abogijo*. Other cabinet members include all the eldest men representing the various families that make up the village, the appointed *Madaki* of the town and the *Achi-Okobia*.

Madaki

These are the third-class chiefs at the village level as appointed by the various gangos (second-class chiefs at the clan level) who serve as deputies to the gangos.

Achi-Okobia

This is the head of the Council of Youth, representing the interests of the village's young men and serving as the village's public relations officer. Still, at the village level, some pressure groups exist, including the age grade, masquerade, and so on, which usually emanate from the family and age group formations. Some of the functions of these pressure groups are to serve as checks on the abuse of power by the constituted authorities. The democratic element of this arrangement is reflected in the village assembly (Opone, 2017, p.58). The final implementation of the several policies and decisions made at the top would occur at this level.

Economic Activities

It is said that as the environment goes, so do the people. Thus, the people's preoccupation from antiquity remains agriculture. The clan forms part of the rainforest region extending from the Anambra axis to the Lower Niger-Benue area. The dense trees harbour games and, as such, significantly encourage hunting as an occupation for the men. At the same time, the fertile soil brought about by adequate rainfall facilitates farming activities and bumper harvests by the women especially. Farm produce includes tubers and grains such as yam, cassava, maize, beans, and rice. More importantly, they have been acclaimed for producing the finest palm wine and best kola nut among other farm make in the region and, as such, became a flashpoint during the trade boom along the Niger. Thus, kola nut was an essential commodity during the period and that attracted the influence of the Attah of Igala in the area and on the Niger. The Igala traders usually made advances into Eteh to buy kola nut for onward trading with the people in the lower Niger area (Oral Interview: Idoko Owoicho, Onodaba.13/04/2023).

Socio-Cultural Organisations

Eteh, like a typical African society, has its established socio-cultural institutions through which the people relate, firstly, among themselves and, secondly, with their neighbours. These institutions were traditional and rooted in the people's cultural heritage. Having been partly peopled by the Igala, the clan also assimilated other groups from different cultural backgrounds and at different times, which occasioned an admixture of cultures still prevalent within its borders. One such is the festival. Festivities are part and parcel of every society. They are platforms for reunions and celebrations of all manner. Several festivals are celebrated in Eteh, including the *Iwai* and *Onwuli*. A respondent, Ukuta (Uzo-Uwani, 21/12/2023), who spoke on their festivities, noted that the iwai festival is a season when they celebrate the harvest of the new yam. He also mentioned that the onwuli festival celebrates the general harvest and thanks the Almighty Creator for a productive planting season. He described the ceremonies as glamorous, stressing that in some of them, young male adults have to exhibit manhood by flogging each other with whips to prove endurance. Also, all masquerades use spiritual powers to test or prove themselves.

Two masquerades are known as Akatakpa and Egwugwu, which are common at both ends. Egwugwu is used as an instrument to discipline erring members of the clan. When the people are meant to contribute resources for a general project, for instance, and some people fail to contribute, it is the responsibility of the egwugwu masquerade as an instrument of discipline to enforce the contribution.

Marriage Ceremonies

There are two forms of marriage in Eteh: marriage by agricultural services and marriage by a combination of bride price and exchange.

Agricultural Services: This marriage happens when the suitor cannot afford the necessary dowry. He has to go and live in his proposed father-in-law's house and work for him on his farm until he can pay the required dowry. If a female child results from the union, the father-in-law will take her instead of dowry for his daughter. Either party can dissolve the marriage before the dowry is paid. Upon such dissolution, the husband takes any male child born during the marriage.

Bride Price and Exchange: The suitor goes to the proposed bride's house and gives her two rods, asking her if she is willing to marry him. If so, he returns later and gives her father four rods. He then brings palm wine, kola, and two rods to the father for consent. He repeats this process with the bride's mother. Having obtained their consent, he collected 180 rods, 120 of which he paid the father and 60 to the mother to complete the dowry payment.

Burial Rites

All middle-aged and older men are buried in their houses, except when they died an evil death or when they suffered from and died of a contagious disease. In the latter cases, they are buried on distant farmland. On the other hand, the young men and, women and children are buried on the home farmland. The body is wrapped in a cloth, and in the case of a man, it is placed with the head towards the West, and in the case of a woman, with the head to the east. The Uhu Bush, which is close to where the Onu-Oda make sacrifices known as Ani Juju, is where the Onu-Oda are typically buried. He is placed in a crude wooden coffin and buried wearing only his clothing. Four of his slaves were executed early in the institution and buried with him; he typically told his sons in advance whose slaves he wanted to be buried with him.

Religion

Okumagba and Ogege (2009, p.53) define religion as how a man in a cultural area relates to the supernatural. Man attempts to manage his conscience through the realm of the spirit. Before the incursion of the Christian Missionaries into Eteh, as elsewhere in Nigeria, the people held tenaciously to their type of religion or system of worship known today as the African Traditional Religion (ATR). Before this intrusion, there was no such word as religion in the proper sense of it. This was because everything about the people of Africa, from birth to death, revolved around cultural practices and belief systems. Religion, as it were, was interwoven in the fabric of the people's everyday life and experience.

The people of Eteh believe in God Almighty as the Creator of the universe, whom they referred to as *Ojo* (Igala), *Agaba Idu* (Idoma) and *Chukwu Okike* (Igbo), respectively. However, they strongly believe in spiritual powers and deities, including *Okwute* and *Ibegwu*. Okwute was thought to be the idol initiated and worshipped by the supposed founder of Eteh himself before his son, Ogebe Attah-Akwu, inherited the ruling stool, which has transcended to his grandchildren today. Okwute is

usually kept under the custody of the living eldest man of the clan in the village where he is domiciled at the time. The god would only be relocated one year after the demise of its custodian.

The Ibegwu is known as the god of justice; the people believe it does not judge the sin of anyone who does not have Eteh blood running in his veins except those of their wives from outside the clan. For instance, Eteh sons and daughters must be punished by the ibegwu if they commit adultery; on the contrary, foreigners that live in Eteh, including wives of Eteh sons, cannot be punished for any taboo regardless of how long the person has existed in the clan. This, they believe, shows that the god of Eteh knows the people. As a result, they respect their tradition to the degree that an Eteh son or daughter would prefer to tell the whole truth and plead for pardon when he offends someone else or commits a taboo. Thus, they are always afraid to hurt one another for fear of the unknown from the god, which helps maintain peaceful co-existence among the clan's people.

Conclusion

This paper examined the history of the people of Southeastern Nigeria in pre-colonial times, focusing on the origins. It submits, as their traditions suggest, that although aboriginal Igbo were inhabiting the area sparsely and later waves of migration brought the Idoma group, it was not until the arrival of the Igala immigrants in the 17th century that the clan became socio-politically united. This is as the paper clarifies: the Igala people wielded so much influence in the area through the Attah of Igala during the period. The paper pointed out that the people were predominantly farmers who specialised in several farm produce, including yam, cassava, maize, beans, etc. Still, more importantly, they were the finest palm wine in the area. As a people, they functioned and politically operated a chieftaincy stool that revolved around *Onu-Oda* (Eteh traditional ruler) as an appendage of the Attah of Igala. Such a relationship was sustained by the yearly tribute paid to the Attah from whom he obtained his staff of office. Finally, the paper observed several socio-cultural elements that had an affinity with the Igala and were geared towards directing the people's daily activities and guiding their relations among the various groups in the clan and their neighbours. Some of the social elements ensured the sanity and sanctity of the people. Be that as it may, the admixture of distinct immigrants in the land occasioned by different waves of migration has found expression in government politics, undermining the age-long cordial relationships among the Eteh inhabitants. That notwithstanding, the evidence provided by this paper has shown that Eteh people can sustain their unity in diversity to ensure peaceful co-existence, which is a prerequisite for attracting government attention for rapid development at all levels in modern times.

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Name	Age	Status/Occupation	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Adejoh, Hezekiah	66	Farmer	Ogillliama	22/12/2022
Akpen, Philip	59	Professor of History	UniAbuja	22/12/2022
Alachi, Emmanuel	70	Chief	Emenebe	22/12/2022
Eliugwu, Samson	55	Neighbourhood Watch	Ebe	13/04/2023
Idoko, Owoicho	56	Farmer	Onodaba	13/04/2023
IgweChukwudebelu	68	Ogodo Traditional Ruler	Ogodo	22/12/2022
Igwe Clement Ogwuche	69	Ayinebe Traditional Ruler	Ayinebe	13/04/2023
Itodo, Osisi	71	Traditional Ruler	Enugu-Ezike	22/12/2022
Ogangwu, Anthony	66	Retired Civil Servant	Abuja	5/8/2022

Ogangwu, Jonathan	46	Youth Secretary	Ayishi	12/04/2023
Okolo, Simon	100	Clergy	Ayishi	21/12/2022
Okopi, James	52	Local writer	Ebe	13/04/2023
Ukuta, Maximus	67	Chief/Politician	Uzo-Uwani	21/12/2022

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L'intelligence artificielle comme support pédagogique dans le processus d'enseignement/apprentissage de la traduction

ADIGWE, Joseph Chinedu

Résumé

L'utilisation de l'intelligence artificielle (IA) dans le domaine de l'éducation est de plus en plus populaire, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'apprentissage des langues. Son utilisation est sans précédent dans divers domaines de l'activité humaine. Parallèlement à la nécessité d'améliorer l'apprentissage des langues, l'intelligence artificielle devrait servir de support au processus d'enseignement/apprentissage de la traduction. Cette étude examine donc les différents outils d'intelligence artificielle liés à la traduction. L'objectif de l'étude est d'identifier les outils d'IA qui peuvent être utilisés dans l'enseignement de la traduction et comment ils peuvent être utilisés comme support pédagogique pour améliorer l'enseignement et l'expérience d'apprentissage de la traduction. Cette étude adopte une approche descriptive. Les outils d'IA échantillonnés pour l'étude sont Bad Translator et DeepL. Leurs utilisations ont été examinées et leurs fonctionnalités et résultats analysés. Les résultats de l'étude révèlent comment l'intelligence artificielle peut être utilisée pour améliorer l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la traduction.

Mots clés : traduction, intelligence artificielle, enseignement des langues, Bad Translator, DeepL.

Introduction

Compte tenu de l'évolution de la mondialisation et des progrès rapides de l'internationalisation, la pédagogie de la traduction est progressivement devenue une composante importante de l'enseignement universitaire des langues étrangères. Les méthodes traditionnelles d'enseignement de la traduction présentent de nombreuses limites, telles que le temps, l'augmentation des coûts de main-d'œuvre, etc. Avec le développement rapide de la technologie à l'ère de l'intelligence artificielle (IA), une révolution dans la technologie de la traduction a donné naissance à une variété d'outils de traduction assistée par ordinateur et de technologies de traduction. Dans le domaine de l'enseignement de la traduction, l'utilisation de la technologie de l'IA est progressivement devenue un point chaud de la recherche, en particulier en ce qui concerne le développement des robots de traduction, ce qui fait que la traduction automatique (TA) joue un rôle de plus en plus important dans l'enseignement de la traduction. De nos jours, de plus en plus d'enseignants ont commencé à élargir continuellement le cours de traduction (Afzaal, Ahmad, Imran, & Xiangtao, 2020). Certains cherchent à combiner la technologie de l'IA avec les techniques d'enseignement de la traduction afin d'améliorer l'efficacité de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage de la traduction, tandis que la plupart d'entre eux ne font qu'effleurer le sujet. Toutefois, l'examen de nombreux documents montre qu'il est urgent d'accorder plus d'attention à l'identification d'outils de traduction IA spécifiques pouvant être adaptés pour améliorer le processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage de la traduction, ainsi qu'à l'amélioration de la compréhension de leur utilisation.

En outre, selon Jiang (2022), l'utilisation de l'IA pour l'enseignement de la traduction pose encore de nombreux problèmes. Selon Jiang, il s'agit notamment d'un système incomplet de programmes d'études en technologie de la traduction, de ressources pédagogiques insuffisantes, d'un manque d'enseignants spécialisés dans les technologies de l'information, d'une méthodologie d'enseignement inappropriée, d'un environnement d'enseignement rétrograde et d'une évaluation trop simplifiée de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage.

Dans ce contexte, l'IA est une tendance inévitable. Pour mieux comprendre la candidature de la technologie de traduction dans l'enseignement, Xiao et Yi (2021) ont utilisé l'IA pour la réforme de l'éducation personnalisée et ont proposé une méthode de construction de modèle de formation personnalisée basée sur l'IA pour l'enseignement de la traduction. Joyce (2018) a utilisé la

technologie de l'IA pour étudier l'impact de l'utilisation de la traduction en langue maternelle et de l'utilisation de définitions en langue seconde sur l'apprentissage et le test des connaissances en matière de reconnaissance du vocabulaire en langue seconde, et l'a appliqué à l'enseignement de la traduction. Sun, Anbarasan et Praveen (2021) ont développé un système d'enseignement de l'anglais par IA en ligne basé sur l'apprentissage profond. Voici les orientations générales des recherches actuelles des chercheurs et la situation actuelle dans le domaine de la traduction.

L'IA en tant que concept

D'une manière générale, l'IA est une technologie qui simule l'intelligence humaine par le biais de machines. La recherche dans ce domaine développe de nouvelles technologies pour simuler, étendre et développer l'intelligence humaine. Selon Lee (2017), l'intelligence artificielle se compose de différents stades d'évolution. Au fil du temps, les machines d'IA ont été développées pour posséder diverses capacités telles que l'audition, l'apprentissage, le raisonnement, la pensée, entre autres. L'intelligence artificielle a connu trois stades de développement : l'intelligence informatique, l'intelligence perçue et l'intelligence compréhensive (Cao, Li et Zhang 2018). Depuis les années 1950, l'intelligence artificielle a connu un processus allant de la gestation au développement rapide, puis à l'application commerciale. La recherche initiale sur l'intelligence artificielle s'est principalement concentrée sur la logique symbolique et la représentation des connaissances, etc. Avec les progrès de l'informatique, de nouvelles technologies telles que l'apprentissage automatique et les réseaux neuronaux sont progressivement devenues des points chauds de la recherche.

Intelligence artificielle et traduction

L'intelligence artificielle dans le domaine de la traduction consiste à utiliser des machines à traduire une forme écrite ou sonore d'une langue naturelle en une autre forme écrite ou sonore d'une autre langue naturelle sur la base d'un programme informatique spécifique qui combine les connaissances de la linguistique informatique, de l'intelligence artificielle et de la logique mathématique. La traduction par intelligence artificielle est un écosystème intelligent construit par l'internet, les personnes impliquées et la machine (Liang, 2018). L'objectif de l'intelligence artificielle est d'approfondir la nature de l'intelligence et de créer un nouveau type de machine intelligente capable de réagir comme l'intelligence humaine. Techniquement, la traduction par intelligence artificielle est le produit du développement continu de la traduction automatique. Le processus de traduction automatique se divise grosso modo en trois étapes : l'analyse de l'original, la conversion de l'original en traduction et la génération de la traduction. Les candidatures à la traduction automatique comprennent l'acquisition d'informations, la diffusion d'informations et l'échange d'informations, parmi lesquelles l'acquisition d'informations est relativement mature et largement utilisée à l'heure actuelle. En outre, selon Kong (2020), la combinaison étroite de la technologie de la traduction assistée par ordinateur (TAO) et de la traduction automatique, qui vise à diffuser l'information, est devenue un outil indispensable pour les traducteurs et les interprètes professionnels. La traduction à intelligence artificielle est l'intégration de la traduction automatique et de la traduction assistée par ordinateur. La traduction par intelligence artificielle a été largement utilisée et popularisée en raison de ses avantages : faible coût, haut degré d'automatisation, vitesse de traduction rapide, facilité d'utilisation et économie de budget. Selon Yuxiu (2024), la technologie de traduction basée sur l'IA est devenue une stratégie courante avec les progrès des technologies informatiques et de l'IA. Cette technologie est un moyen d'utiliser la technologie informatique et la technologie de l'IA pour traiter les données originales, afin de réaliser une traduction automatique. La technologie de l'IA a de nombreuses candidatures dans l'enseignement de la traduction, dont les plus courantes sont la traduction vocale et la TA. La traduction vocale peut aider les étudiants à traduire rapidement et avec précision la langue parlée.

La candidature de la technologie de l'intelligence artificielle dans les cours de traduction a apporté des changements révolutionnaires. Elle permet non seulement d'améliorer considérablement la précision et l'efficacité de la traduction, mais aussi de fournir une aide à l'apprentissage personnalisée pour les cours de traduction (Klimova, Pikhart, & Benites, 2023). Tout d'abord, la technologie de l'intelligence artificielle utilise le traitement du langage naturel et les algorithmes d'apprentissage automatique pour effectuer rapidement et précisément les tâches de traduction, réduisant ainsi les erreurs causées par les facteurs humains. Par rapport aux méthodes de traduction traditionnelles, la traduction par intelligence artificielle est plus objective et plus précise, et n'est pas limitée par le niveau de langue et les connaissances professionnelles du traducteur. Cela est particulièrement important lorsqu'il s'agit de textes complexes et professionnels, afin de garantir la précision et la cohérence de la traduction. Deuxièmement, la technologie de l'intelligence artificielle peut également fournir une compréhension sémantique et une correspondance sémantique en temps réel pour aider les étudiants à mieux comprendre le texte original et améliorer la qualité de la traduction. Grâce à l'apprentissage en profondeur et au traitement du langage naturel, l'intelligence artificielle peut comprendre le contexte, saisir les nuances de la langue et même comprendre le contexte culturel afin de transmettre plus précisément le sens du texte original. Cela permet non seulement d'améliorer la précision de la traduction, mais aussi de cultiver la capacité de communication interculturelle des étudiants.

En outre, la technologie de l'IA fournit une aide à l'apprentissage personnalisée pour les cours de traduction. Grâce à une analyse intelligente des habitudes et des niveaux d'apprentissage des étudiants, l'intelligence artificielle peut fournir des ressources d'apprentissage personnalisées et des parcours d'apprentissage personnalisés pour les étudiants. Cette méthode d'apprentissage personnalisée peut stimuler l'intérêt et l'enthousiasme des étudiants pour l'apprentissage, de sorte qu'ils peuvent participer plus activement à l'apprentissage. Parallèlement, l'intelligence artificielle peut également ajuster le plan et le contenu de l'apprentissage en fonction de la situation d'apprentissage des élèves, ce qui permet à ces derniers de bénéficier des ressources et des méthodes d'apprentissage les plus appropriées. Cela améliore sans aucun doute l'effet d'apprentissage et la qualité de l'enseignement, et rend l'apprentissage des étudiants plus efficace et plus ordonné. En résumé, la candidature de la technologie de l'intelligence artificielle dans les cours de traduction a apporté des changements révolutionnaires. Elle permet non seulement d'améliorer la précision et l'efficacité de la traduction, mais aussi de fournir une aide à l'apprentissage personnalisée pour les cours de traduction.

Les défis de l'enseignement de la traduction : avis de chercheurs renommés

La formation des traducteurs a connu des changements considérables depuis le début des années quatre-vingt-dix. L'importance du cours de traduction ne peut être ignorée. Avec le développement en profondeur de la mondialisation, la communication interculturelle est devenue un élément indispensable de la vie quotidienne des gens. Le cours de traduction est conçu pour cultiver la capacité de communication interculturelle des étudiants et leur donner l'occasion de maîtriser les compétences de transfert entre différentes langues. En apprenant les cours de traduction, les étudiants peuvent non seulement comprendre les expressions linguistiques et les connotations culturelles dans différents contextes culturels, mais aussi améliorer leur capacité à appliquer la langue et leur accomplissement culturel (He, & Sun, 2021 ; Jaesok & Nguyen, 2018 ; Joyce, 2018). Cependant, le programme de traduction traditionnel présente certains problèmes qui limitent le développement du programme de traduction. Tout d'abord, le contenu de l'enseignement est trop simple, se concentrant souvent sur l'enseignement des compétences de transfert linguistique, mais ignorant l'introduction du contexte culturel et le développement de la capacité de communication interculturelle. Dans les cours de traduction traditionnels, les enseignants doivent souvent faire face à un grand nombre d'étudiants,

et il est difficile de dispenser un enseignement et une orientation ciblés en fonction des caractéristiques de chaque étudiant. Cette méthode d'enseignement n'est pas propice au développement individuel des étudiants et à l'amélioration de l'effet d'apprentissage.

En ce qui concerne la méthodologie, Adigwe (2021) révèle que les professeurs de traduction des universités nigérianes sélectionnent individuellement leur propre matériel, avec peu ou pas de coordination. Dans la mesure où il n'existe pas de critères de référence clairs pour cette formation, beaucoup de tuteurs ne se donneraient même pas la peine de motiver le choix des textes qu'ils apportent en classe.

Les textes que ces enseignants utilisent sont soit traduits au préalable, soit proviennent pour la plupart de sources qui proposent des textes traduits, prêts à être utilisés par l'enseignant. On pense donc que l'interaction en classe est basée sur le fait de dire - moi - qu'est-ce que cela signifie ? En d'autres termes, il n'y a pas d'approche pédagogique claire à adopter. Toujours selon Adigwe (2021), les élèves se livrent à un exercice d'essai et d'erreur, en essayant de deviner ce que l'enseignant a en tête, ou sur leurs notes de cours. Ils finissent par étudier des textes et leur traduction, mais n'apprennent que très peu de choses sur le métier de la traduction. Les résultats des étudiants aux tests de traduction indiquent également qu'ils n'améliorent guère leurs compétences linguistiques. Par conséquent, certains étudiants sont frustrés parce qu'ils ne sont pas satisfaits de l'exercice traductionnel du cours, tandis que d'autres développent l'idée fausse que c'est là l'essence même de la traduction.

Discussion sur Bad Translator et DeepL en tant qu'outils d'IA pour la traduction

Au début de cette étude, l'un des objectifs de la recherche est de présenter les différents outils d'IA liés au langage. Il existe un grand nombre d'outils d'IA pour la traduction des langues qui sont utilisés à des fins de traduction. L'analyse de la littérature montre que très peu d'outils d'IA disponibles sont utilisés dans l'enseignement de la traduction. *Copy ai, memoQ, DeepL, Reverso translation, Translation memory, Bad translator, Wordly, Yandex, Crowding, Speech translation, Unbabel, Integral, Babylon Translator, Project management, Smartcat, Textunited, Website translation widget* sont autant d'exemples d'outils d'IA disponibles et utilisables dans le domaine de la traduction.

Cette étude se concentre sur deux outils d'IA qui peuvent être utilisés comme support pédagogique pour améliorer l'expérience d'enseignement et d'apprentissage de la traduction. Dans cette étude, les caractéristiques de Bad Translator et de DeepL seront discutées en détail et leur mode de candidature sera examiné.

Bad Translator est un outil qui utilise Google Translate pour créer des traductions intentionnellement incorrectes en traduisant de manière répétée un texte dans différentes langues et vice-versa. Ce processus permet d'obtenir des traductions humoristiques et absurdes qui sont divertissantes et peuvent être utilisées à des fins comiques. Bad Translator peut être évalué comme un complément ou un outil en ligne pour générer des traductions amusantes. L'outil peut être utilisé pour créer des traductions de style français/anglais pour des panneaux, des publicités ou simplement pour le plaisir.

Bad Translator possède des fonctions linguistiques uniques qui permettent à l'utilisateur de convertir ou de modifier automatiquement des textes dans une langue particulière. Par exemple, l'utilisateur peut convertir un texte anglais en terrible anglais en modifiant automatiquement les mots ou en les déplaçant. Cet outil en ligne peut être utilisé de manière transparente.

Quant à DeepL Translator, il s'agit d'un service de traduction automatique neuronale lancé en août 2017 et appartenant à DeepL SE, basée à Cologne. Il s'agit d'un service de traduction automatique qui peut être utilisé pour traduire des textes d'une langue à une autre. Bien que les traductions automatiques ne soient pas toujours parfaites et qu'elles puissent ne pas saisir toutes les

nuances et complexités d'une langue, DeepL peut toujours être un outil utile pour l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la traduction.

Selon les développeurs, le service utilise une nouvelle architecture améliorée de réseaux neuronaux, ce qui permet d'obtenir des traductions plus naturelles que celles des services concurrents (DSL.sk, 2017). En outre, le traducteur peut être utilisé gratuitement avec une limite de 1 500 caractères par traduction. Les fichiers Microsoft Word et PowerPoint aux formats Office Open XML (.docx et .pptx) et les fichiers PDF peuvent également être traduits. DeepL propose l'abonnement payant DeepL Pro, disponible depuis mars 2018, qui comprend un accès à l'interface de programmation d'applications et un plug-in logiciel pour les outils de traduction assistée par ordinateur, notamment SDL Trados Studio (DeepL Pro, 2019). En mars 2024, le service de traduction de DeepL prendra en charge plus de trente et une (31) langues.

Bad Translator / DeepL : Soutien pédagogique dans le processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage de la traduction

La technologie de l'IA a de nombreuses candidatures qui peuvent être instrumentales dans l'enseignement de la traduction. Les deux outils d'IA étudiés peuvent être exceptionnellement utiles dans le processus d'enseignement/apprentissage de la traduction dans différentes sphères du processus d'enseignement/apprentissage.

Exercice pratique de traduction

Grâce à DeepL et Bad Translator, les enseignants peuvent demander aux étudiants de travailler ou de s'exercer à tout moment, car la traduction nécessite une pratique et un exercice réguliers. L'outil propose des tons formels et informels qui peuvent être sélectionnés au cours du processus de traduction en fonction du type de texte. Par la suite, les traductions produites seront examinées en classe en présence des étudiants. Une façon pratique d'utiliser DeepL et Bad Translator pour l'apprentissage de la traduction consiste à traduire dans la langue cible des extraits de discours personnels de tous les jours. L'enseignant peut demander aux étudiants de rédiger un essai sur un sujet spécifique et de le traduire à l'aide de l'un des deux outils d'IA. Cela peut être particulièrement utile car les traductions seront basées sur un discours réel, pertinent, pratique et applicable à l'étudiant, plutôt que sur des listes inventées ou tirées d'un livre de grammaire. En utilisant DeepL ou Bad Translator pour traduire leur propre discours, ils peuvent mieux comprendre et améliorer leurs compétences linguistiques d'une manière pertinente et significative pour eux. Bien entendu, cette méthode fonctionne également lorsqu'il s'agit de se concentrer sur ce que disent les gens autour de soi.

Développement du vocabulaire

Dans les cours de traduction, on rappelle aux étudiants la nécessité de maîtriser autant que possible les vocabulaires général et technique ainsi que les expressions, car cela est crucial pour l'exercice de traduction. Le traducteur DeepL, en tant qu'outil d'intelligence artificielle, dispose d'une fonction qui permet aux apprenants ou aux utilisateurs de construire le vocabulaire généré par DeepL au cours du processus de traduction. Cela se fait en tenant compte du domaine d'activité, en particulier pour les textes spécialisés.

L'exercice de construction de vocabulaire peut être réalisé en ouvrant la version web de DeepL Translator, en choisissant les langues source et cible et en téléchargeant un texte source à partir duquel des vocabulaires peuvent être extraits dans la langue cible. Une fois la traduction générée, les étudiants doivent être invités non seulement à identifier les mots-clés, les expressions, les acronymes, etc. dans la traduction produite, mais aussi à examiner leur utilisation et leur collocation (préposition, adjectif, etc.). L'utilisation de cet outil d'IA pour cet exercice permettra de gagner du temps car il est

généré automatiquement et le résultat peut être sauvegardé pour une référence ultérieure. Avec le temps, grâce à la pratique fréquente de ce type d'exercice, les apprenants deviendront remarquablement compétents dans l'utilisation du vocabulaire dans leurs deux langues de travail. On ne saurait trop insister sur la nécessité d'enrichir le vocabulaire à des fins de traduction.

Organisation et positionnement des mots

L'un des meilleurs outils d'IA à utiliser dans le processus d'enseignement/apprentissage de la traduction, en particulier en ce qui concerne la réorganisation des mots, est le Bad Translator. Cet outil a la capacité de réorganiser les mots, les acronymes, les abréviations, les expressions, etc. Voici comment fonctionne l'outil : lorsque le site web est ouvert, après la sélection des langues de travail, le corpus ou le texte source est copié et collé dans la zone de texte source. Ensuite, une commande est donnée à l'outil. Le résultat de cette commande se traduira par un texte déformé dans lequel la plupart des mots (adjectifs, articles, adverbes, prépositions, etc.) sont réorganisés de manière erronée, produisant ainsi une forme déformée du texte cible.

Pour ce travail, les étudiants devront procéder à une édition approfondie de la traduction produite. De cette manière, ils deviennent plus compétents dans la construction des phrases, le positionnement des mots en tenant compte du sens ou du message des segments de phrase.

Exploitation du terme et synonymes

L'utilisation et l'exploitation des termes font partie intégrante de la traduction, à la fois en tant que discipline et en tant que processus. Il s'agit d'identifier des termes ou des jargons, également connus sous le nom de registres de langue, spécifiques à un domaine particulier, également connu sous le nom de champ d'activité, tel que : la banque et la finance, l'aquaculture, l'exploration spatiale, la sylviculture, la fabrication d'automobiles, la boulangerie, etc. Lorsque DeepL produit une traduction, l'utilisateur ou les apprenants ont la possibilité de cliquer sur le(s) terme(s) proposé(s) (mais pas seulement sur les termes, mais aussi sur tout mot dont les synonymes sont nécessaires) dans la traduction, ce qui génère une liste déroulante de nombreux termes, synonymes, adjectifs, articles (en particulier pour les langues comme le français). L'étudiant peut alors parcourir la liste de termes ou de mots, selon le cas, dans la liste déroulante et sélectionner le terme/mot considéré comme le plus approprié en gardant à l'esprit le domaine dont relève le texte. Cet exercice aidera les étudiants à avoir une compréhension pratique des termes, synonymes, adjectifs, etc. ainsi que de leur utilisation et du moment où il faut les utiliser. L'exercice les aidera également à comprendre la nature stricte des termes et de leurs synonymes et la manière dont ils sont appliqués dans la traduction. Par exemple, ils comprendront pourquoi le terme « X » peut être utilisé dans un domaine particulier, alors que son synonyme ne sera pas approprié dans ce même domaine, indépendamment de la similitude de sens.

Identification des erreurs

Pour acquérir la maîtrise de la traduction en tant que pratique, un traducteur doit être capable d'identifier les erreurs, les incohérences et les contradictions dans les textes source et cible. Nous nous concentrons sur l'identification de ces erreurs dans le texte cible. Dans la plupart des universités nigérianes, la méthodologie commune d'enseignement de la traduction consiste à donner aux étudiants un texte sur papier et à leur demander de le traduire. Le texte est ensuite récupéré par les étudiants, corrigé et noté, avec peu ou pas de discussion ou de correction, alors que l'enseignement de la traduction ne devrait pas seulement impliquer un texte à traduire. Non ! Pour renforcer les compétences linguistiques et de traduction des étudiants, il est donc pertinent de leur donner des traductions contenant des erreurs spécifiques et de leur demander de les réviser. Par la suite, une discussion approfondie sur leurs différents efforts sera examinée de manière critique et discutée. Les

traducteurs sont souvent contactés pour réviser des traductions et certains deviennent des réviseurs avec le temps.

Grâce à Bad Translator et à DeepL, cet exercice peut être réalisé en toute transparence. DeepL dispose d'une fonction qui permet de souligner certaines erreurs dans le texte traduit. Tout ce que l'apprenant ou l'étudiant doit faire est de prendre note de ces mots et de chercher un mot plus approprié pour le segment de traduction. Toutes ces actions peuvent être effectuées automatiquement, ce qui permet de gagner du temps.

Comparer les traductions

La comparaison des traductions pour comprendre le processus de traduction est essentielle dans le processus d'apprentissage de la traduction. Les professeurs qui enseignent la traduction peuvent utiliser DeepL ou Bad Translator pour traduire un texte d'une langue source vers une langue cible, puis comparer la traduction à une version du même texte traduite par un traducteur humain. Cet exercice peut aider les étudiants à voir en quoi la traduction automatique diffère d'une traduction humaine et peut leur permettre de mieux comprendre les nuances de la langue, en particulier si le contenu source contient des éléments culturels. En règle générale, DeepL et Bad Translator offrent tous deux la possibilité d'une comparaison ligne par ligne et phrase par phrase.

Révision du texte

L'une des caractéristiques les plus remarquables de DeepL est sa capacité à aider à la révision d'un texte. Les professeurs de traduction peuvent profiter de cette opportunité pour enseigner aux étudiants comment réviser un texte. Il facilite l'exercice de révision en soulignant ou en mettant en évidence les zones problématiques du texte et lorsque l'on clique sur la phrase ou les mots, cet outil d'intelligence artificielle fournit des suggestions, accélérant ainsi le processus de révision.

Recommandations et conclusion

En général, DeepL peut être un outil utile pour l'apprentissage des langues. Son application dans le processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage de la traduction peut faire gagner du temps et offrir des moyens plus efficaces de structurer la méthodologie d'enseignement ainsi que de suggérer des moyens diversifiés par lesquels des compétences spécifiques peuvent être examinées et consolidées. Néanmoins, il est important de garder à l'esprit que les traductions automatiques ne sont pas toujours parfaites et qu'elles peuvent ne pas saisir toutes les nuances et complexités d'une langue. Il ne fait donc aucun doute que l'intelligence artificielle est devenue un axe de développement important dans le domaine de la science et de la technologie d'aujourd'hui. Elle a non seulement obtenu des résultats remarquables en matière de reconnaissance vocale, de traitement du langage naturel et dans d'autres domaines, mais elle a également trouvé un large éventail de candidatures dans de nombreuses industries telles que les soins médicaux, la finance et l'industrie manufacturière. Avec les progrès constants de la technologie et l'expansion continue des scénarios de candidature, l'intelligence artificielle continuera à apporter plus de surprises et de changements dans le domaine de la traduction.

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Radio Commentaries and Rural Development: A Study of Amansea, Anambra State

Dan Chibuzo Okoye

Abstract

Radio is the primary mass medium in rural communities. This paper investigates the influence of Anambra Broadcasting Service's news (ABS radio) commentaries on rural development in Anambra State. The Agenda-setting theory was used, which explains the relationship between media and the public's perception of important issues. The theory of reasoned action (TRA) also aims to explain and predict human behaviour based on individuals' attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. This study employed a survey method, which involves information gathering about a large population by sampling their opinion of the chosen sample from the large population. This study's sample area is Amansea, a rural community in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The research used a purposive sample of 160 respondents drawn from the population. The responses gathered show that radio is the primary communication medium for rural dwellers. Also, the analysis showed that the study population listens to ABS radio news commentaries. It is also evident that as a radio station, ABS recognises its responsibility to inform and educate rural residents about developments in their area. Most respondents said they have become more aware of and participate in community development because of ABS radio news commentaries. The study, among other recommendations, highlighted the need for increased accessibility to radio broadcasting among rural dwellers, diverse radio content and programme productions, and promotion of community broadcasting.

Keywords: ABS Radio, News Commentaries, Rural Development, Amansea, Anambra

Introduction

Communication continues to be the bedrock of human interactions in everyday activities because it touches all spheres of life. Communication is an interaction process through which persons or groups relate to each other and share information, experiences and culture. It can also be described as the act through which human relations exist. Communication involves the interaction produced when two or more persons come together to share ideas or have dialogue. Mass communication transmits messages, ideas, attitudes, opinions and information through various media to a massive audience. These media are grouped into two categories: print media and electronic media. Under print media, we have newspapers, magazines, and books, while electronic media includes radio, films, and television. According to MacBride et al. (1981) in *Many Voices One World*, radio in developing countries is the only medium labelled as mass where the radio broadcast can reach a large proportion of the population and possess the means to receive them. This entails sending out content through radio and television broadcast media. Ukwueze (2013) explains that for broadcasting to take place, the transmitter (a set of equipment used to produce and transmit electromagnetic waves carrying messages or signals, especially those of radio and television) transforms sound, picture or both into electromagnetic waves. These waves carry voice transmissions through the air to homes and other locations, where they are received through radio sets. If we go with the two classifications of radio programmes, namely, spoken word and music, we will agree that the radio news commentary is under the spoken words. News commentary is an aspect of writing in radio productions that is peculiar to the radio. It is believed to be a writing expressing strong feelings concerning societal issues and events. For radio commentary to be used for rural development, it serves as a source of motivation for people to adopt a particular lifestyle or even to embark on a project that is important to the social well-being of the community members. Anambra State communities have continued to exhibit positive responses towards achieving developmental goals

essential to their economic and social well-being. Community development can be economic, social or political. Community development is a collection of activities to improve the availability of infrastructures and services within a rural setting.

It should be noted that, through the years of growth and development in Nigeria, rural dwellers have yet to have adequate access to modern media. This is because they need the basic infrastructure that would have helped to introduce mass media in their locality. Other problems include illiteracy and poverty among the majority of the rural dwellers. According to the United Nations, community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. Therefore, this study focuses on radio news Commentaries' influence on rural development in Anambra state.

Statement of the Problem

Research on the role of radio news comments in promoting rural development in Anambra State is lacking. For rural populations, radio is a vital source of information, and news commentary is essential for influencing public perception and awareness. As a result, it is critical to evaluate how ABS Radio's news commentaries have affected rural development in Anambra State. The problem associated with this is a high rate of illiteracy, which is peculiar to the inhabitants of many rural communities. The transient nature of radio broadcasts makes it difficult for a listener to get the intended message if he/she is not present when the programme is aired or if competence in English is lacking, arising from using English as the preferred broadcast language. The researcher in this study will proffer some solutions to these problems and make valuable recommendations. The work will highlight a course of action to help advance rural development in Anambra through the ABS radio news commentaries. This study will also go a long way in helping rural dwellers participate in community development processes.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the extent to which the Amansea community listen to ABS radio news commentaries
2. To ascertain the most frequently listened to ABS Radio news commentary among Amansea residents.
3. To ascertain the extent to which ABS Radio news commentaries are focused on rural development.
4. To assess how much ABS Radio news commentaries have affected the amount of community's awareness and participation in rural development efforts.

Research Questions

In assessing the influence of radio news commentaries in advancing rural development, this study attempts to answer the following questions to achieve the above objectives.

1. To what extent does the Amansea community of Anambra listen to Abs radio news commentaries?
2. What is the most frequently listened to ABS radio news commentary among Amansea residents?
3. To what extent do these news commentaries broadcast rural developmental messages?
4. To what extent have ABS radio news commentaries affected the community's awareness and participation in development processes?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A commentary is an objective comment and discussion on a topic which is or would be of interest to a radio target audience. The commentary could be heard on the radio and seen in action on television. Radio commentaries provide an in-depth and objective analysis of societal events, and they come immediately after the news. There are two significant types of radio commentaries: sports and news commentaries. However, a new practical type of radio commentary emerged, which this study will refer to as news analysis commentaries. News analysis commentaries come in the form of talks and comments by a guest or guests on current affairs programmes on the radio, such as paper reviews, otherwise called press reviews on ABS. For the sake of this study, we shall concentrate on the radio news commentaries. There are many forms of media writing, and radio news commentary is one of them. It is peculiar to broadcast media and has taken a strong and permanent place in the radio business. Okunna (2002) states that radio news commentary is for broadcast media, and Editorial is for print media. It is called the "editorial of the air." In support of this assertion, Ibemesi (2004) discloses that radio commentary is the analysis of an event of the day written by station staff or a guest contributor. This means that radio news commentary talks about current and vital issues and events and addresses them accordingly, making the audience aware of issues and events as they concern the people. It is usually read at the end of a significant newscast, like ABS radio house style.

News Commentaries often proffer solutions and suggestions for the way forward. Although the news commentary is supposed to be the opinion or stand of the station, this has not been the case because the writer's opinion does not necessarily mean the opinion of the station Ibemesi (2004). Hence, it is constantly being attributed to the writer of a particular commentary. This shows that radio news commentary embodies ideas from different quarters that share experiences as they relate to the people concerned. In other words, a news commentary may not necessarily be attributed to the radio's Editorial. Some scholars have continued to refer to news commentary as being to the radio what Editorial is to the newspaper and magazine. This attribute is only attainable in some ramifications as radio stations like Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) radio, Awka has introduced a news commentary it calls Editorial. This trend was introduced in 2017 when discussing or analysing delicate and prominent issues concerning the government, the state and the country. This does not mean that a staff's commentary automatically becomes an editorial but a byproduct of the station's opinion. On February 25, 2023, Nigeria's General Election Day. ABS radio broadcast a news commentary urging Nigerians to come out en mass and vote peacefully.

The commentary introduction read, "Today, millions of Nigerians will troupe out again, this time to try to get it better. In the Abs Editorial that follows, we call on Nigerians to lay a stake in something as big as the future of today and tomorrow's generation. Also, on August 27 2023, the station read a commentary, 'Anambra at 32: this light must shine'. The Continuity Announcer (CA) read the introduction: 'Anambra State is 32 today. Our Editorial today examines the state's slogan, "Light of the Nation", and why it must guide our collective journey to a livable and prosperous homeland. These radio news commentaries were tagged as ABS editorials, which means they were the opinion of the Anambra Broadcasting Service. These news commentaries are aired immediately at the end of the news. With ABS radio airing commentaries six times a day, many questions arise when examining the relationship between radio news commentaries and community development. This has led to the emergence of Development Communication.

Development Communication, or *DevCom* for short, is also known by these other names: Communication for Development, Development-Support Communication, Communication in Development, Communication for Social Change, behavioural Change Communication, and Emancipation Communication (Okunna, 2018).

Development communication involves using suitable mass communication channels in the development process to effect positive behavioural changes. Development Communication engages

stakeholders through various means to exchange communication that would affect positive change for development. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2011) opines that communication for development stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in decisions related to their development. For the development process to be carefully designed and implemented, a communication flow should create room for proper interaction between all the stakeholders. Communication for Development (C4D) provides platforms for dialogue that encourage inclusive decision-making, allowing for the perspectives and needs of rural communities to be considered. It raises awareness among rural communities about prominent development issues, such as health, education, and agriculture. According to UNICEF (2012), communication for development is defined as a systematic, planned, and evidence-based strategic process that promotes positive and measurable individual behaviour and social change, which is an integral part of development programmes, policy advocacy, and humanitarian work. According to Moemeka (1989), radio has been identified as the best mass medium for rural dwellers' education at the country's development level. For the media to create an enabling environment for development, it has to do that through its various programmes that dwell on developmental issues and events. This is why Ibemesi discloses that:

The main ingredient in a news commentary is that there must be an issue that informs the writer's desire to comment and that the writer must take a stand that is thoroughly canvassed in support of or against the topic of the news commentary. Another element is synchronising the writer's opinion with the broadcast station's. (Ibemesi 2004)

This implies that although radio news commentary is a personal opinion of the writer, it allows the writer to influence what is happening in society and serves as a source of public enlightenment. ABS radio news commentary on March 20, 2023, was termed tax evasion in Anambra state. The commentary described taxation as a source of public revenue for governments in financing expenditures and driving the wheel of sustained economic development. It described tax evasion as an impediment to the effective collection of taxes and other internally generated revenues by the government while calling on the citizens to abide by civic responsibilities. The news commentary of July 8, 2023: The need to curb Malaria Scourge in Nigeria suggests that the task of ridding Nigeria and Africa of this hydra-headed monster (Malaria) must be pursued with utmost vigour. The commentary called on the Ministry of Health and Environment to aggressively dislodge all stagnant drains as these form breeding spots for mosquitoes. All overgrown bushes around commercial and residential houses must be cut. Nigerians should be sensitised on the proper prevention and cure of malaria. A similar commentary on World Tuberculosis Day, March 24 2023, suggested that the mass media, health workers, traditional and community leaders, religious leaders, organised public sector and the general public should join the government in its effort to control tuberculosis. ABS Commentary on August 9, 2023, on the consequences of Monday Sit at Home, explains the economic and social consequences of the Monday Sit at Home and what the state is doing to restore normalcy. It stated that

The Anambra State Government is committed to bringing back the spark and bustle of Mondays to markets, motor parks, government offices, and schools. To ensure this happens sustainably, all the security agencies have been fully mobilised to be on red alert to protect lives and property through constant patrols and encampments at strategic locations. (ABS, August 9 2023).

The commentary also reminded the people on the number to call for an emergency. As a good citizen of Anambra State, they should immediately say something when they see something terrible happening. That is the only way to end the criminal onslaught on Anambra's peaceful way of living. This is why Aroh (2002) sees community development as education to the fullest to stimulate

the desire for better things. According to him, it strives to educate and motivate people for self-help to develop responsible, local leadership among them and inculcate in them a sense of citizenship and a spirit of civic consciousness.

Writing on the highly acclaimed Anambra Community Choose Your Project Initiative, ABS Commentary on April 17 2023, it stated, All things considered, what sets the Choose Your Project Initiative apart is not necessarily the timing of its implementation nor is it the obvious benefits it brings to the low incomes households who supply labour various construction sites, what stands the initiative out is the new vista it opens in the democratic governance in Nigeria. It ensures that everyone is given a sense of belonging and that every community in Anambra state matters. From various reviews, radio is considered the most appropriate for reaching rural areas because of its advantages over other mediums. Aroh (2002) maintained that development in all societies must have the following objectives:

1. To increase the availability of material resources and widen the distribution of essential life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection.
2. To appraise living in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education and greater attention to cultural and humanistic values, all of which serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and natural self-esteem.
3. To expand the range of economic and social choice to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence concerning other people and nation-states and the forces of ignorance and human misery.

In the August Meeting and Addressing Contemporary Societal Challenges, ABS commentary on August 4, 2023, described women as critical stakeholders in social development in Igbo society. It states:

From their micro units at community levels as Umuada (married daughters), Ndinyomdi (wives), and many others to the larger groupings that became the norm in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria, women remain catalysts of infrastructural development and conscience police of their various communities and churches. They initiated and completed many town halls, water projects, primary health care centres and hospitals, markets, and schools in many communities and churches. This year's "August meeting" should not be another annual jamboree but a time for critical re-evaluations and providing solutions to the many challenges facing our society (ABS, August 4 2023).

In order to help Anambra communities survive the economic hardship currently witnessed in Nigeria, ABS radio wrote an editorial (news commentary) on August 28, 2023, on Governor Soludo's Timely Palliatives, disclosing that the state government's palliative will cushion the effects of the economic hardship in the country among Anambra Indigenes and residents. According to Aroh (2002), one crucial thing to bear in mind about community development is that it centres on the upliftment of the lives of people in the community either by the help of governments federal, state and local governments, which are nearer to the people. It is also a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of the community. ABS radio news commentary on International Women's Day on March 8, 2023, discussed women's empowerment and encouraged rural women to participate in politics and rural development. It also called for action to improve women's civil, political, cultural, social and economic education and opportunities. Again, ABS news commentary on July 5 2023, on The Global Fight Against Drug Menace, recommended that the federal government imbibe the principle of information technology to inform and educate the masses on the harmful effects of drugs. It suggested that structures should be put in place to curb the circulation of these harmful substances because a community can only be regarded as healthy when there are no hard drugs.

The crucial role of radio news commentaries in advancing rural development by disseminating information, raising awareness, advocating for change, empowering communities, and

promoting best practices can never be overemphasised. Radio news commentaries bridge rural communities and the wider world, facilitating the exchange of ideas and resources that can bring positive change and development in rural areas.

Theoretical Framework

Since radio news commentaries have been used to discuss issues which are essential for the development of our rural communities, such as taxation, youth violence, basic infrastructures, fire hazards, work health and empowerment of women, then considering their reach to rural areas, they have made an impact in rural development. Communication and development come together to bring about social well-being and self-actualisation of community members.

Some Communication Theories attempt to explain the individual's response to the media and give insight into the research's subject matter.

Agenda-Setting Theory

In developing the Agenda-Setting Theory, McCombs and Shaw (1972) wrote that members of the "audience not only learn about public issues through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach on an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place upon it. Agenda-setting theory is a mass communication theory that explains the relationship between media and the public's perception of important issues. The media can influence the importance and salience of topics in the public's mind by selecting and highlighting specific issues. In other words, the media can set the agenda for public discourse by deciding which issues to cover and how to frame them.

According to the theory, the media plays a significant role in defining and shaping what the public thinks is important and what is not. It proposes that the media can influence the public's perception of important issues by repeatedly covering and discussing specific topics. If the media consistently covers a particular issue, the public will likely perceive it as more important than other issues that receive less attention. This perception of importance can then influence the public's opinion, attitudes, and behaviours.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) is a social-psychological theory that aims to explain and predict human behaviour based on individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. The theory explains and predicts human behaviour based on individuals' attitudes and subjective norms. It suggests that an individual's intention to engage in a specific behaviour is influenced by their attitudes towards the behaviour and their beliefs about what essential others think they should do.

According to the theory, attitudes are formed based on an individual's beliefs about the outcomes or consequences of the behaviour. Positive attitudes towards a behaviour are likely to result in a higher intention to engage in that behaviour, while negative attitudes are likely to lead to a lower intention. On the other hand, subjective norms are shaped by an individual's perception of what others think they should do. Suppose an individual perceives that their significant others or social group believe they should perform a specific behaviour. In that case, they are more likely to have a higher intention to engage in that behaviour.

Methodologies

This study employed a survey method. The survey method involves information gathering about a large population by sampling their opinion of the chosen sample from the large population. The research method used by the researcher is the survey method of research. This is because it is a suitable scientific method of asserting the public's views on any contemporary issue. This study's

sample area and population is Amansea, a rural community in Awka North Local Government Area in Anambra State. The community comprises five villages: Amaowe, Egbeagu, Okwukwa, Orebe and Umuokpala. The Population distribution 2015 by the Anambra State Bureau of Statistics was computed and projected using the Thomas Malthus Exponential Model, with Anambra State's growth rate at 2.83%. (Anambra Statistical Yearbook 2023)

To find the projected population using Thomas Malthus' exponential model, we need to use the formula:

$$P(t) = P(0) \times e^{rt}$$

Where:

$P(t)$ is the projected population at the time

$P(0)$ is the initial population

e is Euler's number (approximately 2.71828)

r is the growth rate

t is the time period

Plugging in the given values:

$$P(0) = 6315$$

$$r = 3.2 \text{ (as a decimal, } 3.2/100 = 0.032)$$

$$t = 2023 - 2015 = 8$$

$$P(2023) = 6315e^{(0.032 \times 8)}$$

Calculating the exponential part:

$$0.032 \times 8 = 0.256$$

$$e^{0.256} \approx 1.291$$

$$P(2023) = 6315 \times 1.291$$

$$P(2023) \approx 8146.57$$

The projected population using Thomas Malthus' exponential model would be approximately 8146.57.

Regarding the nature of this study, a purposive sample of the Amansea community in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra state is chosen as the sample size. The population mainly comprises farmers, traders, and a few civil servants. The research used a purposive sample of 160 respondents drawn from the population.

One hundred sixty copies of the questionnaire were used to reach and elicit information from the respondents. Those who were literate filled out the questionnaire by themselves, while for those who were not, the questionnaire was translated for them, and their responses were used. The researcher used a simple percentage score (%) and frequency table to analyse data. All judgments were based on responses gathered from the field.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Administration of Questionnaire

Of the 160 copies administered, only 157 were filled and returned, while three got lost. Thus, the researcher will present, analyse and interpret only the returned questionnaires.

Table 1: Abs Radio News Commentaries Listenership Pattern

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Always	91	60%
Sometimes	46	31%
Rarely	14	9%
Never	—	00
Total	151	100%

Table 1 shows that 91 respondents, 60%, agreed that they steadily listen to the radio news commentaries. This could be due to power supply and poverty, which prevented them from affording other forms of media. Forty-six people, represented by 31%, confessed that sometimes they listen and sometimes tune off depending on how the topic interests them or their understanding and comprehension of what was being broadcast. Fourteen people, representing 9%, were of the opinion that they rarely listen to news commentaries; this could be attributed to the fact that stations' news times vary.

Table 2: Most Listened Abs News Commentaries

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Taxation	48	32%
Health	31	20%
Agricultural Practices	40	26%
Building Basic Amenities	22	15%
All of the above	10	7%
None of the above		
Total	151	100%

Table 2 shows that 48 respondents, 32% of the respondents, agreed that they often listen to the Abs radio news commentaries about taxation; this is a result of the current state of the governor's drive for taxation. Thirty-one people, represented by 20%, disclosed that theirs was a health-related topic. Forty people, representing 21%, said agricultural. Twenty-two respondents, representing 15%, said commentaries on building basic amenities, while 10, representing 7%, said all of the above areas.

Table 3: Extent on which Abs radio news commentaries are used for rural development

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very much	74	49%
Not very much	42	28%
Moderate	29	19%
Undecided	6	4%
Total	151	100%

Table 3 shows that on the question about the extent of the use of ABS radio news commentaries in advancing rural development in Anambra State, 74, representing 49%, said very much, 42 people, constituting 28%, said not very much but still accepted that ABS radio commentaries influence rural development, while 29 representing 19% said the developmental messages are just moderate. 6 representing 4% are undecided on the issue at stake.

Table 4: Abs Radio News Commentaries and Increase in Awareness and Participation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	123	81%
No	28	19%
Total	151	100%

Table 4 shows that 123 respondents, 81% representing a vast majority of the respondents, agreed that radio news commentaries had increased their awareness about community development in their town and the state at large.

Summary

This work aims to determine the influence of Abs radio news commentaries in advancing rural development, using the Amansea Community of Anambra state. From the responses gathered during the research work, it is evident that radio is the primary mass medium of communication for rural dwellers. Also, the analysis showed that most of the sample population listens to ABS radio news commentaries. Moreover, in carrying out this study, the researcher discovered that radio news commentaries are vital tools in enhancing rural development in the Amansea community.

Recommendations

1. The station should take measures to make news commentary available to all rural communities. This can be done by improving the coverage and reach of ABS radio in remote areas.
2. Radio news commentary should cover various issues pertinent to rural development, such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare. As a result, rural communities will be thoroughly aware of the opportunities and difficulties they encounter and be better prepared to make decisions.
3. Developing and upgrading basic infrastructure and social facilities in rural areas is essential. The growth of rural areas will benefit from this. Establishing these facilities and infrastructures will aid in halting the rural-urban migration that impedes rural development.
4. Radio stations should broadcast their news commentary in the people's mother tongues as much as possible. Such is available in ABS radio, but private radio stations in Anambra state must be encouraged to embrace and broadcast news commentaries, especially in the Igbo language.
6. Community broadcasting should be promoted. The language to be used shall be that of the community. When communities are permitted to do so, rural dwellers can comprehend the messages because they are broadcast in their native dialects and languages.

Conclusion:

The study shows that radio news commentaries are essential in promoting rural development. It provides rural communities with valuable information on various aspects, such as agricultural activities, government policies and development initiatives. The study highlighted the need for increased accessibility, diverse content, collaboration with rural communities, and training and capacity building for broadcasters. By implementing these recommendations, the influence of radio commentary can be further enhanced. This will contribute to the overall development of rural areas by equipping communities with knowledge and resources to address their specific needs and challenges.

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Suburbia: Conceptualising Ethnography in Nigerian Stand-up Comedy

Aghogho Agbamu

Abstract

The paper is an ethnographic reading of Nigerian stand-up comedy from the prism offered by suburbia as a socio-literary concept. Suburbia is here developed as the framework to account for the way Nigerian stand-up performances, since the turn of the millennium, have turned out to be insightful articulations of cultural kinship, geographical classism and geopolitics, regional socio-rhetoric on its stereotypes, and strategic identity laundering. The study posits 'suburbia' as the poetics to engage the manner and reason stand-up in Nigeria, juxtaposes different regional social behaviours, as well as the disparities between urban life and rural or suburban realities. It is here posited, that Nigerian stand-up owes much of its material to comparing centric and marginal sociologies on regional, ethnic and even biological levels. It is also discussed that the artistic evolution of the subgenre in the country is traceable to the economic and cultural urban-suburban traffic that implicate for instance, Northern Nigeria, Warri, Benin City, Lagos Island and Mainland, Calabar, and even the developed West, in discourses of language and accents, civility, religion, food, environment, childhood, worldviews, and so on. The paper conceptualises through suburbia, Nigerian stand-up comedy's fascination with the nation's postcolonial ethnography, by using jokes to document, critique and satirise cultural provenances, provincialism and diversity, while realising the anthropological triggers by which laughter, otherness and kinship are exercised between comics and audiences during the performance of socially aware material.

Keywords: suburbia, suburban, urbanity, ethnography, stand-up comedy, Nigeria.

Introduction

What is intended here is to critique stand-up comedy as an artistic articulation from the margins unto the dominant culture, through jokes that systematically comment on, or react to the class difference and ethnographic plurality of the Nigerian nation. What is proposed here is to develop a concept that takes into account how Nigerian stand-up comedy performances are expressed from a foundational basis of regional, ethnic, (auto)biographical and behavioural backgrounds, usually to audiences from similar structures, but with an incongruous juxtaposition at the heart of the play. The logic here is to underscore how and why Nigerian stand-up comics customarily seek out a kinship with portions of the audience on shared experiences, cultural orientations, beliefs, upbringing norms, ethnic behaviour, and even identity. Suburbia is thus proposed to conceptualise the modern performance of stand-up comedy in Nigeria, as a non-divisive reinforcement of ethnic and regional stereotypes, a parody of social and class disparities, and a celebratory fetishism of minoritarian (not minority) identity. The minoritarian differs from the minority, in the sense that while the minority implies a dominated margin, the minoritarian represents an influential minority that maintains tangible cultural primacy within the general populace, and holds its own well vis-à-vis the majority. 'Minoritarianism' is more or less a neologism for a political and cultural process, structure or clout, where minority interests are taken into special consideration, in fact almost disproportionately, in appeasement, or as a pandering towards, in respect of fairness and socio-cultural equity. As a political concept, minoritarianism differs from the minority, in the sense that the dominance of the majority is upturned, in order to

secure and enforce ‘quota primacy’ in decision-making, for a minority that is outnumbered but significant, for the demographic balance of a given society (Ramachandran, 2013). The present study pursues through suburbia, a conceptual path towards the organisation of the rhetorical logic of Nigerian stand-up comedians, and strategies and motivations of humour usually adopted to highlight minority groups above the majority, to create juxtapositions and playful agonistic portraiture of, or between majoritarian and minoritarian orientations.

Suburbia: Reading the Ethnography of Nigerian Stand-up

In the construction of the humorous, Nigerian stand-up comedians have a habit of sampling groups within their audiences, that share affinities with themselves (as suburban ambassadors), or with outskirts or non-elite geographies or backgrounds. Double (2005) in fact renders this as an expectation, an operational tactic, where the comic seeks an ethnic, linguistic or cultural kinship with the audience, by impressing on them local references they can immediately find intimate first, before they find funny – or in order to find funny. Raj (2021) already establishes in this regard, that comedy is constructed within “specific cultural assumptions”, and thus “what and why things are funny is influenced by culture” (p. 34). If comedy is “very culture specific”, it follows then that commonplace jokes about other people or groups, are relevant “in defining ourselves in relation to others, constructing the us and them, and for the creation of a sense of identity”. It follows also that in order to understand and appreciate jokes, ridicule or the humorous, there has to be a mutual pre-knowledge of local information between comedian and audience. Without this, a joke cannot be successful (Popović, 2018, p. 597). There have appeared to be catchphrases that signature Nigerian stand-up performances, so much so they help secure that much-needed bridge between comedian and audience. Such catchphrases are uttered by the comedian to identify and establish a kinship with portions of the audience, such that the joke becomes a verifiable tale to those conversant with the local zeitgeist or cultural orientation, and a wondrous reportage to those shunted to the cynosure of a semi-dramatic irony. In such dramatic irony, the suburban I-can-relate amongst the audience, laugh because the jokes are a harmlessly embarrassing memoir, or a proud hilarious nostalgia; while the others who are just realising there and then a bit of the suburban culture in review, also laugh, but a different kind of laughter, one of pleasurable learning.

Over the past two decades, Nigerian stand-up comics have successfully effected a very famed call-and-response at events. This call-and-response signifies a direct kinship between comic and audience over a business and cultural hub of Delta State: “*Area!*” – “*Eh!*”. The oil-rich Warri, central to the Niger-Delta region has a reputation for youth restiveness and picaro streetism energised especially by a special sociolinguistic signature: Nigerian pidgin English. Another rhetorical strategy of kinship plays out when comedians want to establish an affinity with audiences from Benin City, as implicated in their jokes. “*Oba gha tokpe e!*” is sounded out to the audience, and portions who immediately recognise it as the clarion reverence for the ancient monarchy of the city, gleefully respond, “*Ise!*”. Warri and Benin City are themselves urban areas, cities in their own rights with a national reckoning. But suburbia as conceptualised here does not derive its postulation necessarily from cityness, but in the way certain locations have been stereotyped as purveyors of behaviours and norms worth laughing about, or at. According to Blumberg (2010), representations of suburbia invoke extreme familiarity, and at the heart of such suburban portraiture is usually a “class-specific dilemma”. It was a convention for the better part of two decades to have Nigerian stand-up comedians tick off the *aje-butter* versus *aje-kpako* comedy of manners between people raised in ghetto and lack, and those raised in serenity and privilege. This juxtaposition-convention for example helped energise (and still energises), mainland-island geographic genteelisms in Lagos, and high-low class disparities in Nigerian stand-up. Given that the conception of suburbia, particularly to those who do not live in the suburbs anymore, or who have never lived there, is that not much changes

through the years (Evers, 2009), comics continue to utilise suburban clarions and material, to claim and maintain a portraiture of the suburbs for newer generations.

Suburbia is a historical participant in urbanity; without it, urbanity is incomplete (McManus & Ethington, 2007). But the suburban is not fully urbanity, neither is it by consequence, rurality. It is betwixt and between. It etymologically denotes an understated urbanity, and culturally connotes a deviant urbaneness. The characteristics of life in the suburbs, existing in the peripheries or on the outskirts of a larger city or urban area, describe a different cultural superstructure of mentality, language, personality and comportment, from urban values. For Sies (2001), geography and economic circumstances are some of the many factors that make distinct, urban from suburban. However, such is the complexity of the suburb that these factors do not suffice to arm stereotypes. Theodoropoulou (2010) on the other hand, reviews suburbia anthropogeographically as a continuum or an encompassment of urban and countryside culture, from whence clear stereotypes can be derived and discoursed to account for its urban-rural paradigm. This entirely spicier superstructure or order of sociality and being, pockmarked by slums, poverty, infrastructural incapacities and government marginalisation, nomenclaturally imply suburbia, both as a location and a manifest orientation. The suburb shadowboxes the metropolis, mirrors it, realises it cannot be same with it, and ironises the differences in Warri, Lagos Mainland-Island, and Ajegunle jokes. Suburbia also accounts for the way Nigerian stand-up comedy prefigures a hyperbolic provincialism that pitches tribal accents against centric articulation. This is usually manifest in the mimicry of Northern Nigerian, Yoruba, Igbo and Calabar accents, as well as sophisticated American and British ones.

Ekpang and Bassey (2014) undertook a study of how Nigerian stand-up, sources material from the accents of Calabar natives, and how this comic representation satirically foreground a Calabarian linguistic, social and cultural stereotype. It must be noted however, that this phenomenon is not exclusive to the geographical area the study covered, since indigenes of Akwa Ibom and Cross River states share the same phonological characteristics. Bridging humour and metaphor, Ekpang and Bassey realise a four-way discourse on Calabar humaphors in Nigerian stand-up: phonological humour, behavioural traits, sexual allusions and names. The phonological humour being the most engaged, manifest the mother tongue interference at both segmental and supra segmental levels of Calabarian phonology. As regional accents are “a popular ingredient for jokes in stand-up comedy in Nigeria as every tribe is marked by some Mother Tongue interference”, merely mentioning “a particular interference or speech style”, invokes a superiority humour, “directed at a particular ethnic group or tribe” (pp. 179-80). From sample jokes, the study captured some mispronunciations from the Calabarian accent thus: /k/ in “uka” as a replacement for /g/ in “Oga”; /r/ in “rook” as a replacement for /l/ in “look”; /t/ in “tinse” as a replacement for /s/ in “since”; /j/ in “yop” as a replacement for /t/ “chop” (p. 180). Calabarian names have also been portrayed as cacophonous, winding in syllables, and having orally inarticulate consonant clusters, in the “accentual performance” of Nigerian stand-up (p. 182). Calabar has thus been exoticised in stand-up rhetoric as not just a historical location in the Nigerian nationhood, but a cultural connotation for sexual prowess (derived from their consumption of dog meat, and canine stamina thereof), and great culinary skills (derived from fattening room practices, and appraisals of cuisines like *ekpangkukwo*, *afang*, and *edikanikong*). This exoticism extends to the peculiar English of the Calabarians, derived from the mock-difficult “Efik phonetics as captured in the consonant clustering and clapping” and in “complicated sounds resulting from phonological reduction and onomatopoeic sounds in the local names” (p. 183). For Ekpang and Bassey, the extreme portraiture of the typical Calabarian as somewhere between a clownish not-very-smart and downright stupid individual, has been most embarrassing – a flat never-evolving characterisation that has crystallised for decades, in Nigerian television soaps and home videos.

As the suburb has become an archetype for servicing jokes in Nigerian stand-up comedy, it must be noted that ‘suburb’ in the concept of its use here, is differently derived from its possible linguistic marker of residential exclusion by wealth and the pastoral. Possible, because the suburb is a confusing label: in another denotation, especially to Nigerian English speakers, it could imply residential underprivilege vis-à-vis the urban centre where white and blue-collar labour abound (Kperogi, 2017). Take the distances commuted by workers daily in Lagos for example, who get the best paying jobs nearer to, or on the Island, or in the highbrow areas of the Mainland, but who live deep in the bowels of the Mainland. Take as another example, those who work in the federal capital, Abuja, but cannot reside there because of the explosion in real estate valuation and rent prices, and so live in the urban zone of Karu Local Government Area, in a conurbation of towns stretching to the federal capital, such as New Nyanya and Mararaba. Not all Lagos may be Lagos enough; or the oft-maligned axes may arguably be more Lagosian in character than highbrow areas where the civic tenor is cleaned-up. A core of the working-class labour and skills that sustain Abuja as a federal capital, do not (in fact, cannot) reside in its metropolis. Are they the suburb, or the real Abuja inevitably not-at-home? Suburbia can sway both ways. Urbanity in this instance can be seen as a melting pot of migrating proletariat suburbanites – suburbia in mobility to metropolia. The context of suburb in this Nigerian proletarian and lower-middle class context, illuminates a completely opposite denotation from linguistic markers and even scholarship on the subject in the Global North, where suburb is a safe, therapeutic, if not classist distance from perceived urban disorder (Banash & Enns, 2003; Evers, 2009; Goldsmith, 2000; McCann, 1998, p. ix; Nall, 2018, p. 1). It is instructive to establish, that suburb as a spatial and class delineation, brutally differ in the Global North from Global South – the former marked by an educated middle-class demographic, and the latter by a poorer, less literate population (Kugler, 2019, p. 9). Suburbia is therefore not a universal parable.

Suburbia in this context, is conceived as a praxis that energises ontology, locale or the autochthonous, as a source of pride or purveyor of derision, for stand-up performance. Suburbia encompasses a theoretic that in the rhetoric of stand-up, comics would employ a geographic genteelism to account for how locale and/or indigeneity conditions and influences the superstructure of a person’s universe or identity complex – how a person behaves, thinks, how they react or respond to situations, what their passions and preferences are, and even how they walk, talk, eat and dress. Suburbia in Nigerian stand-up, here contextualises the praxis of extracting individual experience, cultural heritage, locational circumstance, domestic norm, and even institutional nuance (church, school, police station, hospital), as material for narratives tenderable as jokes. More implicative for this concept, is that these jokes emphasise more than anything else, the disparity between two ways of life, of being, of citizenship. This splits the audience into those who recognise the imagery and ironies due to their suburban roots, and those who do not; yet are unified in a class humour, be it a case of laughing to (incongruity), or laughing at (superiority). At the heart of suburbia is an especial ambivalence that makes it at once a consequence of, and deviation from urban sprawl, such that it parades urbanity and rurality, but technically betrays both; offers the apprehensible but withholds outright familiarity; evinces a secure ubiquity, yet maintains a fragile invisibility; while conjoining desirability with revilement (Coon, 2014, p. 9; Silverstone, 1997, p. 4).

It would make clearer sense at this point to consider the discourse of ‘suburb’, ‘suburban’ and ‘suburbia’, from primary definitions, while insisting on their points of divergence for conceptual implication in the present study. Kugler (2019), offers a thorough basis:

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word ‘suburb’ originates from the Old French term ‘suburbe’ or the Latin term ‘suburbium’, meaning ‘near to’ (sub-) ‘city’ (urbs). It is further defined as “an outlying district of a city, especially a residential one” (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2018: suburb). Similarly, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a suburb as “an

outlying part of a city or town” or “the residential area on the outskirts of a city or large town” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, 2018: suburb). Apart from these two definitions, that clearly refer to the spatial aspects, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary also specifies the suburb as “a smaller community adjacent to or within commuting distance of a city” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, 2018: suburb), providing a broader sense by including the people living in a suburban area. An even wider interpretation can be found in the Cambridge Dictionary, where suburbia is defined as “the way of life of people who live in the outer parts of a town” (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2018: suburbia). Interestingly, the Cambridge Dictionary also includes the addition “mainly disapproving”, indicating that the term suburbia is often used in a pejorative, disfavoring way (p. 8).

The aforementioned, though denotatively appropriate, do not represent what suburbia as a framework means in this context for the analysis of Nigerian stand-up comedy. The present study sides instead with Corcoran’s (2018) submission that the suburb is more associated with thriving civic culture and social affiliation, than alienation and the disintegrative. Suburbia transcends the tangibility of territory, to accommodate the discursive and the experiential, inherent in its socio-spatiality. As suburbia pursues this transcendence by embodying and elevating the everyday to a viable “object of cognition”, and to “the status of theoretic concept as a result of the entry of capital into lifestyles”, it militates against all anti-suburbanism as elitism. This militancy is because suburbia is inevitably perpetually juxtaposed against urbanity, in socio-literary narratives of otherness on levels of culture and geography, at the very least (McCann, 1998, p. viii). This recognition of class-geography, corroborates Goldsmith’s (2000) attestation that performing stand-up in the suburbs and in the city are very different realities, because of the difference in the tenor of cultural experiences and subsequently, references, which would be at play in the jokes. Furthermore, suburbia puts into illuminating context, the fact that entire cities could be suburbs in comparative contexts to bigger cities, or that entire cities could be characterised in such a way that they become a closed convention for certain possibilities of human socio-cultural behaviour. Nigerian stand-up comedy in the past decade has seen the animation of characters like Akpos, the archetypal Warri boy, the ultimate picaresque who in his own right, has become a modern folk hero, a graduation from the Tortoise, capable of just about anything from awe-inspiring genius to downright inanity. Stereotypes like that have helped condition in the minds of audiences, Warri as a town where poshness and genteel civility cannot thrive, and where instead the witty, streetwise and mouthy dominate.

Back to the minoritarian, When Nigerian stand-up comics emphasise affinity to locale or indigeneity as ways to rev up audiences, they do so knowing they actually attend to a minority, but they succeed because that minority sits atop a very sellable and viable identity necessary for the composition and reception of humour. By pandering towards this minority within or amongst audiences, stand-up comics seek to establish an existing affinity. But the interesting thing is that very regularly, this search for minority affinity usually rev up both those who truly share that affinity with Warri, with Ajegunle, with Benin, with *aje-kpako*, with Lagos mainland, with *Pitakwa* (Port Harcourt), and those who really do not. Minority affinity is emphasised here upon the understanding that the most commercially rewarding stand-up events in Nigeria, hold in the heart of the metropolis, or at least capital cities. Lagos as a hotbed for Nigerian stand-up, has never been able to condition suburban stand-up material away from Warri or Benin content. Comics from South-South and South-East extraction have performed regional and suburban experiences that otherwise should be alien to Lagosians, but these materials have become a mainstay in the city. Suburbia construes for Nigerian stand-up, a talking-back (in the same vein as Ashcroft et al.’s title on postcolonial studies, *The*

Empire Writes Back (2002)), from comics who represent the experiential backwaters of urban sprawl, to the urban centre, and in the language of the suburbs. Affiliation with the suburbs, in fact, has become a tested and trusted route to securing instantaneous legitimacy with urban audiences, who seem to almost immediately believe a comic would be funny, because he has showed he comes from underprivilege. The comic secures this audience trust and consequently, their suspension of sobriety (implied in the same tenor as Coleridge's "suspension of disbelief" in *Biographia Literaria*), necessary for the ordinance of jokes as successful. Such has the importance of suburban affinity or affiliation been to Nigerian stand-up culture, that it has become a staple for opening routines.

This is minoritarianism: pandering towards a minority clout for balance, in spite of, or even right at the heart of an extant majority threshold. Suburbia in stand-up is minoritarianism, where an appeasement to a regional or suburban bloc is pivotal to the ignition of experiential affinity and the sustenance of humorous wonder. Nwankwo's (2019) passage puts in thorough context the minoritarian politics of performing suburban stand-up in Nigeria:

Identification with poverty is one tool that comedians use to create the kind of friendliness they need with the audience in order to have a perfect atmosphere for humour exchange [...] I Go Dye intersperses his acts with shouts of "Area!", something that has become a kind of trademark for most comedians from Warri [...] Warri and Ajegunle share a lot of similarities. It is instructive that together, Warri and Ajegunle, have produced more comedians in Nigeria than any other city. One common feature to these sites is their cosmopolitan outlook, being that their inhabitants are from different ethnic backgrounds. In Warri, it is Itsekiri, Urhobo, and Ijaw, while Ajegunle boasts of having a sizeable representation from all ethnicities in the country. Due to their mix-culture residents, Pidgin English, which is also the lingua franca of Nigerias stand-up art, is the primary language of communication [...] It is usual for one Warri person to call another by this salutation. It indicates that the person being hailed is a true child of the soil; an authentic member of the Area (locality) (p. 107)

Setting therefore, is the ultimate trope in Nigerian stand-up rhetoric. Where a joke is set, or where a character in the joke was raised, is conceptually brought to the surface in suburbia as a hitherto unheralded site of creative cultural narration, and as a critical deficit in stand-up scholarship. Suburbia imagines itself as a space, or as spaces, of cultural identity both on the individualistic and communal level, that has (or have) remained largely unexplored. Suburbia also services a literary nationalism (surely, stand-up comedy is literature), a movement of diversity announcement and (re)cognition in which comedians attempt to compose, celebrate and appraise distinct place-based conventions frame-worked by the nation-state. Aguoru (2022) rationalises suburbia's national identity-formation, thus:

Stand-up comedy in Nigeria has transcended the distinct divides typical of the Nigerian multi-cultural space. Unlike other brands of art, which essentially depict specific ethnic leanings, stand-up comedy, in Nigeria, has negotiated a detribalised status. As a result, the genre accommodates an overlap of cultural paradigms through the extensive use of multi-culture (Mary Sengstock, 2009:244) without any group claiming ownership. Thus, the emergent stand-up comedy in Nigeria is immune from the puritan and structural narrative of ethnic slice in such a way that all cultures identify with but no culture appropriates the genre to itself. This is archetypical neo-culturalism, which refers to the alteration of the multiple traditions to evolve

a post-modern new-tradition of wider claim [...] The presence of numerous, yet unique, universal patterns in diverse cultures enables the melding of idea(l)s, which are modified or reinvented deliberately or fortuitously. Stand-up comedy in Nigeria is largely indebted to this syncretic form of sub-cultures; and within this context, neo-culturalism is a platform of unification that enables a country with complex and diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and political identities to endorse a mixed-matched variety of Stand-up comedy as its new popular theatre [...] Thus, while this paper makes the claim that Nigerian Stand-up comedy has been largely influenced by professional Yoruba performances and comical forms, it does not impose the Yoruba culture on contemporary Stand-up comedy. Rather, it insists that a middle-ground has been achieved by a neo-cultural blend of features to produce the cultural cocktail now known as Nigeria's brand of Stand-up comedy (pp. 20-21).

Aguoru's article summates that the history of Nigerian stand-up comedy is in fact a compilation of different suburban contributions, such that as the genre has evolved through the years aesthetically and formally, it has blended together various regional and ethnic traditions of performance and rhetoric. Such has been the thoroughness of this blend, that it eliminates all traces of exclusive ethno-cultural signatures, and posits a national, neo-cultural and postmodern ensemble, where the boundaries of possible tribal or regional ownership and authorship are smoothened out. Nigerian stand-up as a performance and theatrical event, packaged for commercial audience-ship was an evolution from pre-industrial orality evident in many oratorical cultures, but first modernised as troupe-forms by the Yoruba Alarinjo in the 1980s. South-South Nigeria's development of the art as a lucrative vaudevillian show, especially through the pioneering entrepreneurship of Ali Baba, and Opa Williams' *Nite of a Thousand Laughs* in the late 1990s and 2000s, is also worth mentioning. But Nigerian stand-up today is a seamless ethnographic and regional syncretism, when in essence, its history and aesthetic evolution has always been at the behest of suburbia.

Conclusion

While suburbia seems problematic in its "confluence of the real and the imagined", it is even more of a challenge to negotiate its discourse while avoiding "a position in which suburbia itself becomes one more vanishing referent which evades direct comment". Extant scholarship on the suburbs, have towed the cue of poststructuralist discursivity, to focus more on how the suburbs have been represented, than the actual suburbs themselves; even when what renders the suburb "tangible and intelligible" reside in the recognition of its precise experiential conditions. Suburbia reminds of the need to be disentangled and deciphered from the polemics of the "cognitive maps of the world" that literature has helped construct (McCann, 1998, p. ix). Suburbia is thus inherently more diffused with urbanity, than it is contrarian. Suburbia as a conceptual framework can help curate the ways in which stand-up comedy has been taken up by Nigerian comics of suburban birth and/or upbringing in Warri (as is the case with Ali Baba, I Go Dye, I Go Save, Gandoki, Gordons and Akpororo), Benin (Bovi and Maleke), Port Harcourt (Julius Agwu), and Ajegunle (Basketmouth). The appropriation of pidgin as the operational language of stand-up is an important sociolinguistic fact of the genre's prioritisation of open access and its conscious desire to be as inclusive as possible of Nigeria's multiculturalism. As Nigerian stand-up rhetoric is constructed through the suburban trope, and received with glee and non-clannish impartiality by hitherto non-ratified audiences, pidgin simultaneously helps align with suburban identity, yet disalign from, or transcend multiple regional or tribal tendencies. Suburbia conceptualises how stand-up has been usurped by comics of suburban

affiliation, as a fertile space of visibility and assertion, and as a site for the institutionalisation of cultural diversity through a populist centering of Nigeria's sociolinguistic galaxies.

In suburbia as a conceptual framework, Nigerian stand-up realises its generic expectation intimately connected to socio-cultural practices within the critical ecology where it is performed and appraised. As stand-up suburbia reifies the subaltern, resits dominant positions and enthrones marginality through the performance of underprivilege, it simultaneously consolidates socio-cultural stereotypes and linguistic hierarchies. Through suburbia, the present study realises how cultural attributes are strategically narrated on a national platform; and how over time, national identities come to be shaped by conditions of collective expectation, as enabled by approbatory mirth and comic-audience suburban affiliation.

END NOTES

¹ Alleluya Atuyota Akporobomerere (Ali Baba) was born on June 24, 1965, in Warri, Delta State, where he spent his first eight years. He had secondary education at Command Secondary School, Ipaja, Lagos, and Ibru College Agbarha-Otor, Delta State; and attended Bendel State University (now Ambrose Alli University), Ekpoma, Edo State. He is Urhobo by tribe, and Deltan.

² Francis Agoda (I Go Dye) was born on April 4, 1979, in Abraka; was raised at Okpara Waterside; and had his elementary and secondary education at Ighogbadu Primary School, and College of Commerce, Warri, Delta State. He is Urhobo by tribe, and Deltan.

³ Otaghware Otas Onodjayeke (I Go Save) was born on May 20, 1979, in Warri, Delta State, where he was raised, and had his elementary and secondary education – Aileru Primary School and Essi Secondary School. He got a tertiary degree from Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi, Edo State. He is Urhobo by tribe, and Deltan.

⁴ Tony Mofe-Reeku (Gandoki) was born in Warri, where he was raised and had his primary and secondary education. He set a Guinness World Record for the longest individual stand-up comedy performance, beating the American David Scott's (The Midnight Swinger) record of 40 hours, 8 minutes non-stop, set at the Diamond Jo Casino in Dubuque, Iowa, United States, from April 29 to 30, 2013. Gandoki had promised to prepare 600 topics to make jokes on, to attack the previous record. He performed from September 29 to 12:34pm October 1, 2016, at The Exclusive Mansion Hotel, Oniru, Victoria Island, Lagos, setting a new record of 42 hours, 10 minutes (Adesanya, 2016; Chima, 2016; Star Connect Media, 2016). He is Itsekiri by tribe, and Deltan.

⁵ Godwin Komone (Gordons) was born in Warri, and spent most of his formative years there, raised by his grandmother since his parents' separation when he was three months old. He attended Ighogbadu Primary School, and then Nana College, Warri. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Integrated Science from Delta State University, Abraka. He is Urhobo by tribe, and Deltan.

⁶ Bowoto Jephthah Oluwatiseyifumi Tanimola (Akpororo) was born on October 3, 1989 in Warri, where he was raised, through primary and secondary education. He relocated to Lagos in 2009 after winning the Calabar zone of the Opa Williams-organised National Comedy Challenge; and contested twice in the *AY Open Mic Challenge*, placing second at first attempt, and first at second attempt. He rose to fame after his 2013 performance at Basketmouth's Laff n' Jamz show, opening the route to performing in other comedy shows. He later obtained a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Lagos State University. He is a native of Ilaje, Ondo State.

⁷ Bovi Ugboma was born on September 25, 1979 in Benin City, the capital of Edo State, attending University of Benin Staff School for his primary education. He was shuttled around three secondary schools in Delta and Edo State by his civil servant parents, due to disciplinary infractions: Government College, Ughelli; Edokpolor Grammar School, Benin City; and Boys Model Secondary School, Onicha Olona. He obtained a Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts from Delta State University, Abraka. He is Isoko by tribe, and Deltan.

⁸ Maleke Moye Idowu was born on February 14, 1979, in Benin City, Edo State, and had his primary and secondary education there, attending Oguola Primary School and Edokpolor Grammar School. He proceeded to obtain a degree in Business Administration from Auchi Polytechnic, Edo State.

⁹ Julius Agwu was born April 7, 1973, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, where he hails from. He attended Elementary State School and later UBE Primary School both in Choba, Port Harcourt, for his primary education. He got his secondary education from Government Secondary School, Borokiri; and Akpor Grammar School, Ozoba, both in Port Harcourt. He secured a Diploma, and later a Bachelor's degree in Theatre Arts, from University of Port Harcourt. He is Ikwerre by tribe.

¹⁰ Bright Okpocha (Basketmouth) was born on September 14, 1978, in Ajegunle, and had his primary and secondary education in Apapa, Lagos, before getting a degree in Sociology and Anthropology from University of Benin. He is Igbo by tribe, and hails from from Abia State.

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Graphic Design: The History of Early Illustration Practice in Nigeria Osaigbovo Felix Onaiwu

Abstract

Graphic design encompasses different aspects and elements. It can be challenging to explain as a fractured discipline because designers work in varied environments and may rarely or never engage in some aspects of the practice. However, as a creative pursuit, there will always be a reason to engage in other discipline areas. This paper is, therefore, a deliberate attempt to look into an ancient aspect of graphic design, which is an illustration and its antecedents in the early periods of the visual arts practice in Nigeria, and to provide a valuable resource for designers irrespective of the particular field in which they work. Ultimately, illustrations in graphic designs are used for jobs such as advertising, branding, packaging, editorials, storytelling and storyboarding, and infographics. The methodology employed in this essay is the literature review and art historical methods.

Keywords: Graphic design, Elements, Discipline, Practice, Illustrations

Introduction

Illustration is a visualisation or a representation of a subject matter made by the artist, such as painting, drawing, photograph sketch, or other kinds of image or objects seen, imagined or remembered using graphical depiction. The word is derived from the Latin word *illustra'tio* or *illu'stro* meaning enlighten. Smith (2009) sees illustration as the act of making lustrous or clear sketches, photographs and other pictorial elements elucidating and accompanying texts, while Dennis and Jenkins (2009) view illustration as artistic images, illustrating texts, poems, fashion, magazines, stamps or a book and very often made for children's books. Similarly, Kalilu and Woods (2014) see illustration as drawings mainly employed in books and magazines, specially introduced to buttress or highlight ideas visually. He emphasised that illustrations are also engaged as teaching aids.

Irivwieri (2007) stated that there are four factors which determine the suitability or otherwise of illustration, and these factors include:

- a. Illustration must be based on a refinable human appeal relevant to the target market.
- b. They must focus on some crucial aspect of the product, service or institution.
- c. They must be seen as being related to the copy theme.
- d. They must be seen as sensible and credible unless a special effect is aimed at them.

Generally, Irivwieri (2007) submits that illustrations are pictographic materials appearing with or without text amplifying or enhancing it. Although illustrations may be charts, maps, diagrams, or decorative elements, they are more usually representations of scenes, people, or objects related in some way, directly, indirectly, or symbolically, to the text they go with. When these pictorial materials are done in Pen and Ink, they are termed pen and ink illustrations. Consequently, illustration is a visual language of communication, supplementing information given in the text and reinforcing the written word.

Ultimately, illustration aims to explain or enhance an account, a poem, a story, or a piece of literal information by using a visual representation of something described in the text. Illustrations can also represent technical images of plants, medicine, or different processes, as well as biological or chemical processes or technical illustrations to give information on how certain things are used.

The historical origin of illustration is as old as that of writing. The pictographs of early humans and the hieroglyphics of ancient Egyptians contain the roots of illustration and text. Before

the printing press's discovery, books (manuscripts in codex form or scroll) were illustrated using hand drawing methods. According to Edward (1999), the earliest surviving sample of an illustrated book is an Egyptian papyrus scroll from about 2000 B.C. In ancient Egypt, the Book of the Dead, a text designed to be placed in tombs, was the most frequently illustrated work. In orthodox Europe, the earliest illustrations were made of technical texts. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322BC) used illustrations in most of his biological writings. After this period, the next developments were Illustrations in the form of authors' portraits, followed by the illustrations of literary texts such as the Iliad and the Odyssey by Homer (750BC). Well-known illustrations were also produced in China, effective from about the 5th century B.C. Edward (1999) stated further that medieval European artists illustrated texts with paintings in miniatures pictorially decorated initial letters or marginal decorations. In the Islamic world, Mughal (Indian) and Persian (Iranian) artists also illustrated works of history and poetry with intricate jewel-like paintings.

Lester (1995) posited that early manuscript illustrations were called illuminations due to the delicate nature of the designs. He stated further that Johannes Gutenberg (1398-1468) invented the printing machine in 1448, developed a movable type system in Europe, and improved casting based on hand mould and matrix. According to Lester (1995), most early 16th and 17th-century illustrations were done in woodcuts, engravings, and etchings. He further stated that lithography improved on illustration standards in the last part of the 18th century. Personalities like William Blake (1757-1827) rendered his illustrations in relief etching. During the mid-19th century, more illustrators sprang up, amongst whom was John Leech (1817-1864), the English caricaturist and George Cruikshank (1792-1878), also an English Illustrator and caricaturist. At this time, character drawings and caricatures were used to illustrate fiction magazines. (Edward, 1999)

Sezgin (2001) avers that in the year 1841, the British humorous magazine The Punch was established and high-quality illustrators like Sir John Tenniel (1820-1914), The Dalziel Brothers: George (1815-1902), Edward (1817-1905), John (1822-1860) and Thomas (1823-1906). The magazine employed all wood engravers and Georges du Maurier (1834-1896). He noted that this period witnessed a steady change from the famous illustrations of reliance on caricature to complicated topical interpretation. These early artists trained originally in various aspects of the arts but became reputed illustrators. Sezgin (2001) noted that "Punch and similar magazines such as *'Parisian Le Voleur'* realised that good illustrations sold as many copies as written content at the period.

There was also a period known as the American Golden Age of illustration. Atkinson (2009) wrote about this period, stating that the American "golden age of illustration" lasted from the 1880s until shortly after World War 1 (although the active vocation years of later golden age illustrators went on for an extra few decades. In Europe, a few years earlier, magazines, newspapers, and books had become the foremost media for public use. Advancements in printing technology allowed illustrators to experiment with colour and new representation techniques.

Today, there is an increasing eagerness to collect and appreciate unique artworks used as illustration materials in magazines, books, posters and newspapers. Many museums, galleries, exhibitions, magazines and art outlets have devoted a room to the illustrator. Creative draftsmanship from the best-known magazine illustrators is known to rake in much surplus at auctions. For instance, Norman Rockwell's (1894-1978) work, according to Hyatt-Mayor (2012), transcends even these high standards, with his painting "Breaking Home Ties" selling in a 2006 Sotheby's auction for 15.4million U.S. Dollars.

Maxfield (2014) stressed that Pen and Ink started as a medium for writing and simple diagrams. By the Middle Ages, Monks were already producing dazzling illuminated texts. A few years later, artists like Rembrandt Van Rijn and Leonardo Da Vinci started using reed and reddish brown ink pens to make expressive drawings and plans. In the last part of the 19th century, printing

became more sophisticated, with illustrators and caricaturists such as Thomas Nast (1840-1902), who developed pen and ink drawing to become an art form.



Fig. 1. Rembrandt, *Jesus and the Adulteress*, Pen and Ink (Wikipedia, 84x65cm, 1644)

From the above, it can be deduced that pen and ink practice as an art form started in the 19th century. However, the medium was developed to a high level in Chinese art during the Tang Dynasty (618-906) A.D. noted (Wilson, 2004). After that, in Japan during the Muromachi era (1338 – 1573), pen and ink have always been the primary medium of the art style of the Asians.

Presently, pen and ink practice is done by skilled craftsmen all over the world. Advertising agencies, freelance draftsmen and cartoonists have their works printed in dailies, and many other artists do pen and ink sketches as a prelude to the final execution of their works either in sculpture, paintings, graphics or other aspects of art like monograms. According to Knobler (1980), the practice of present-day graffiti started with pen and ink sketches that artists made on paper, but he further explained that not all graffiti artists were pen and ink experts. The assertion of Knobler was predicated on the pen and ink drawings of the German Expressionist Painter and Printmaker Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938), who, according to him, also practised some forms of graffiti during his time.



Fig. 2. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Frau Erna Kirchner*, Pen and Ink, (31x24cm) 1921(Wikipedia)

Graffiti as a term and art form was derived from the Latin word “*Graphire*”, meaning to write, but is directly related to the Italian *graffito* for inscription or design. The word precisely means "to scratch". Graffiti is truly the plural form of *graffito*. Etymologically, both "graffiti" and its singular form "graffito" are from the Italian word *graffito*, meaning "scratched". "Graffiti" is applied in art to works of art by cutting a design into a surface. An interrelated term is "sgraffito". It entails scraping through one layer of colour to reveal another colour underneath it. According to Baldwin and Roberts (2006), this technique was primarily used by potters who glaze their wares and then scratch a design. In ancient times, graffiti was engraved on walls with a pointed object, although coal or chalk were often used. The word also originates from the Greek *graphein*, meaning "to write." In a nutshell, neither anthropologists nor art historians have identified where exactly graffiti originated from because Greek and Roman equivalents of the word came up almost in the same period.

During the Renaissance, stylus, metal points, and pen and ink were considered fine line media inconsistent with the broad line of charcoal and chalk. Illustrations can be artistic images, illustrating a text, magazines, or a book. Traditionally, Pen and Ink illustration is a minimal channel, allowing only individual monochromatic pen strokes. However, despite the shortcomings of this medium, beautiful pen and ink illustrations incorporating a wealth of textures, tones, and styles can be created. Certainly, partly because of their simplicity and economy, pen and ink illustrations are widely used in textbooks, company profiles, product manuals, advertising and many other forms of printed matter. Egonwa (2012) saw illustration as "visualisation such as drawing, painting or other works of art that stresses subject more than form". He stressed that an illustration aims to explain or beautify a story, poem or piece of written information, such as a newspaper article, by providing a visual image of something described in the text. On the other hand, an illustrator specialises in enriching written text by providing a pictorial illustration that flows with the content of the associated text.

Part of the appeal and beauty of pen and ink illustrations is that they can be easily printed with text, using the same ink on the same paper, without any dent. For the same reason, Pen and Ink

illustrations could also be useful in desktop publishing and laser printing, especially if the illustrations were generated and manipulated on a computer. Salisbury (2009) maintains that the requirements of interactive pen and ink illustrations have two significant properties that distinguish them from other art media. According to him, these are the distinguishing properties thus:

Every stroke contributes both tone (darkness) and texture. Since tone and texture are not autonomous parameters, the pen artist should take care to deliver both of these qualities simultaneously. Strokes work collectively; in general, no single stroke is of profound importance; instead, strokes operate together to express tone and texture.

Despite the limitations inherent in working with just two essential elements, pen and ink renderings allow the artist to express himself in various styles. Pen and Ink renderings have a rich history, including simple outline sketches, cartoon caricatures, and detailed illustrations.

Early Illustration Practice in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the twentieth century witnessed the rise of pen and ink illustration. Kalilu (2014) thinks that the twentieth century was an essential part of art history, not only because of the abundance of documentation but also because it brought African and Nigerian art to the global limelight. Among the forerunners who became famous in art and drawing between the beginning and the middle of the century in Nigeria were Aina Onabolu (1882-1963) and Akinola Lasekan (1916-1972). They were all celebrated first-generation artists with Western orientation. Oloidi (1998) submitted that Onabolu (1882-1963) made hundreds of pencil and charcoal studies of his models; he stressed that Onabolu was more proficient in portraiture than still-life drawing. Lasekan (1916-1972) was regarded as the first Nigerian cartoonist and the forerunner of modern Nigerian drawing with his satiric drawings in cartoons.

Fosu (1986) noted that among Lasekan's drawings are the provocative cartoons of poor Africans and the Blackman in the West African Pilot. Lasekan's proficiency was justified by the four books of animated cartoon drawings he published in the 1940s. Their works influenced Ben Enwonwu (1917-1994) in the 1940s and the array of students of the Zaria art school in the late 1950s (Fosu, 1986). There is no doubt that drawing was inherent in all of them, but only Uche Okeke (1933-2016) truly excelled in drawing, which was so pronounced in his Uli experiment, known as Ulism. Okeke's drawings are often rendered in pencils, pen and ink, charcoal or gouache with titles such as Ojadili, The Orphan and The Maiden's Cry. Okeke influenced Obiora Udechukwu (b. 1946), who later became an apostle of the Uli symbols in art. According to Fosu (1986), Udechukwu's works are marked by line drawings; "Wait or Drink from the Gutter" was a clear example.

The late 1970s and 1980s, according to Oyelola (1998), were invariably one of the most vibrant periods in the history of modern art in Nigeria, especially in draftsmanship. It ushered in and witnessed the emergence of more art training institutions in the country, which turned out more academically oriented artists than ever. It also saw the rebirth of drawings with astonishing exhibitions in the visual arts and its diversification into other media, such as newspapers and advertising agencies. Artists of significance and noticeable records in drawing during this era were Agbo Folarin (1936-2010), Tyrone Geter, Josy Ajiboye, Ebun Aleshinloye, Sola Ogunfuwa and Hilda Woods. Oyelola and Fosu were lecturers at Ahmadu Bello University and the University of Ibadan, respectively. Although Geter was not Nigerian, his drawing skills were said to have been reawakened during his residency at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, where he staged two outstanding exhibitions tagged footnotes: An exhibition of Paintings and Drawings and Vibrations: Harmonious Discords of Space Exhibitions of Paintings and Drawing in 1983 and 1986 respectively. Fosu (1986) maintains that his drawings, particularly that of Gani Odutokun's portrait in the 1983 exhibition, can be described as outstanding for their fluidity in his use of charcoal.

As for Folarin, Oyelola (1998) observed that he is remembered for the preliminary drawings of Ogun and Osun, the Yoruba god and goddess, used for his *Orisa* lithograph series in 1979 and 1980.



Fig 3. Josy Ajiboye, *Cartoon series* pen and ink, 8x15cm, 1971 source: Wikipedia

Josy Ajiboye's pedigree in cartoon illustrations in the newspaper industry is traceable to the pioneering role played by Akinola Lasekan. Although Ajiboye started drawing before the 1980s, his works became more pronounced in the 1980s, particularly for his ingenious depiction of the political and economic realities of the period in satirical cartooning on the Nigerian Daily Times, where he worked. He also had to his credit a book on cartoons titled *Josy Ajiboye on Sunday*, which was a totality of some of his contributions to drawing. However, Ogunfuwa belongs to the class of a younger group of artists. His illustrations on the pages of two Nigerian dailies, the Guardian and the National Concord, were still noticeable in the archives of these newspaper houses. An example of this is Figure 4 below.

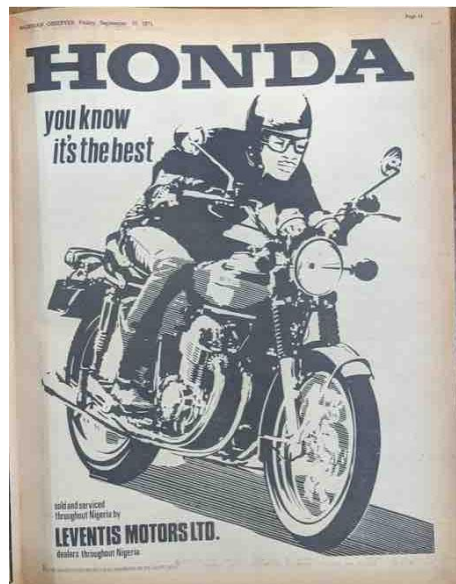


Fig 4. Concord Newspaper *advert of Honda Motorcycle* 1970 source: Wikipedia

There is no doubt that the 1980s witnessed several illustrations by other illustrators. The Advertising industry was also included in the drawing as it formed the basis for any meaningful

advertising design. Lintas Communications Limited is among the first-generation advertising agencies in Nigeria. By the 1980s, the numbers of these agencies had increased, with Rosabel and Insight communications coming formidably stronger. All these agencies have visual artists who do storyboard of any advertorial design in the form of illustrations; notable among such artists was Erhabor Emokpae (1934-1987), who rose to the post of the head of design section of Lintas, Lagos, in the 1980s. As Aaker et al. (1992) corroborate, the decision to invest resources in purchasing time or space in these agencies distinguishes advertisers from non-advertisers. The advertiser makes use of mass media, but non-advertisers do not.

Kalilu (2014) noted that there was no doubt that the conception of drawing in the 1980s gave birth to its diffusion into educational publications in the 1990s and the 2000s. These revelations informed the colourful illustrations on the pages of most kindergarten, primary and Junior Secondary School books. Macmillan and Oxford publications are some of such publishers. Most of these publishing houses now employ visual illustrators who draw for them. This submission of Kalilu shows that Nigeria has come a long way regarding the practice of pen and ink illustration and, by extension, general drawing.

The concept of Pen and Ink Illustration in Graphic and Advertising Design Communication

Graphic design is the process of visual interaction and problem-solving through image, space, typography and colour. Graphic and advertising design work is always done with communication to the public in mind, especially when fitting illustrations accompany it. 'Visual' is a term derived from the word 'vision', which relates to the concept of seeing. At the same time, communication is sharing messages, information, and ideas with others at a particular time and place. According to Microsoft Encarta 2009, communication involves talking and writing and non-verbal communication such as body language, facial expressions or gestures. Irivwieri (2013) defines communication as transferring information from creature to creature, person to person and point to point. Graphic design communication involves using printed images to convey messages through symbols and signs. This assertion of Irivwieri agrees with that of Ogilvy (1999), who opined that for an excellent advertisement to take place, it must be informative and capable of reaching everyone or reaching the target audience and market. Visual communication is thus the use of images or pictures, such as painting, photography, video, or film, and electronic communication, such as mail, cable television, or satellite broadcasts, to pass information from one point to another. According to Peter and Michael (2001), communication is essential to personal life. It is also essential in education, business, and other circumstances where people encounter each other.

Businesses are connected with communication in several ways. Some businesses build and mount communication gadgets, such as fax (facsimile) machines, video cameras, CD and DVD players, printing machines, personal computers, telephones and Closed-circuit televisions. Others create some of the messages or content these technologies carry, such as movies and software. These companies are part and parcel of the media or telecommunication organisations, as organisational communication is vital in every business concern. People in organisations need to be in contact to organise their work and to update others outside the business about their goods and services. These kinds of communication are called advertising and public relations.

Frascara (2004) thinks that writing is a way of recording language in visible form and giving it relative permanence and goes further to explain that until the invention of audio recording, speech was limited to those within earshot or on the other side of a telephone. It fades away immediately,

except in the memories of the speaker and hearer. Writing and drawing overcomes this limitation and allows the storage of immense amounts of information and its transmission to wherever a written message may be conveyed. Pen and Ink drawing as a tool for illustration in graphic and advertising design production further concretises the effect of communication by bringing the message to everyone's understanding via visual means.

Herbert (2000) noted that pen and ink illustration, as entrenched in graphic and advertising design, is a special blend of art used to deliver information to a particular group of people. If the information is presented in a way that attracts the intended audience and persuades them to take action (such as buying articles or informing people of the intended gathering or meeting), the designer has done his or her job well. One approach to state the purpose of the graphic artist is to construct visual formats for messages, considering the intended audience by using mutually understandable illustrations, alphabets, symbols, images, and colours and selecting suitable media. Hence, the messages are acceptable and elicit a positive response. Simmons (2012) observes that whether one drives down a well-travelled highway, stroll through a local shopping mall or surf the Internet, one sees and interprets many graphic design messages every day. These messages may be in logos, illustrations, graffiti, signs and posters, or television, computer and magazine graphics. One may need to plan some image messages of one's own; one may need a handbill or billboard to advertise an event, a newsletter or brochure for an organisation, or a logo for a business. Pen and Ink drawings as tools for illustration give more people access to understanding the message conveyed by the design.

However, using these tools to communicate a message efficiently requires comfortable knowledge of the skills involved in accomplishing such work. It also needs an understanding of how to organise visual information using the principles and elements of design. The area of design that deals with structuring visual information for communicating messages is called graphic design, as corroborated by Goldstein (1980). So, information is becoming more illustrative as we exchange information with people whose languages and cultures vary from ours. Pen and Ink drawings are tools for illustration in graphic and advertising design production, and well-designed symbols and images in the form of illustrations may help make our messages easier to understand. Harney (2012) noticed that today's young people will face many situations in the future, both on and off their jobs, in which they will need to understand and use good advertising design strategies to ensure that their messages are seen and understood.

Every piece of graphic design arises from the need to communicate a specific message and to obtain desired feedback; in other words, it comes to survive because someone wants to say something to somebody else so that this someone else does something. This is perhaps why one cannot pass judgments on the quality of a design only based on its visual manifestation.

Harrison (2003) felt that the aesthetic aspects that affect the selection of some designs in juried exhibitions and books should be distinct from the assessment of the main reason for advertising design, which centres on generating a specific response from the target audience.

This writer thinks, however, that some illustrators and designers conceive their pieces with design exhibitions in mind, to the detriment of the clarity, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the materials produced, although some designs can become junk, historical documents or aesthetic paradigms once they have accomplished their primary goal. Illustrations and advertising design are not just about looks but fundamentally about performance. Sometimes, the concern for originality and beauty has contributed to visual complexity and cultural value development. However, it has yet to promote the communication function of design and has often distracted illustrators and designers from the original purpose of their work.

Detecting social, cultural and historical meanings in designs often happens without our awareness of the process and is part of the pleasure of looking at these designs. Some of the information we bring to reading images concerns what we perceive their value to be in a culture at large. This raises the question: What gives an image that social value? Sturken and Cartwright (2001) think that images do not have value in and of themselves; they are given diverse kinds of value, be it monetary, social or political, in particular social contexts. They went further to state that the capacity of images (Designs) to affect their viewers and consumers is dependent on the more significant cultural meanings they invoke and the political, social and cultural contexts in which they are viewed and that their meanings lay not within their image elements alone but are acquired when they are consumed, viewed and interpreted.

To understand Pen and Ink illustration and advertising design properly, Jonathan (2001) believes we have to think more about actions rather than objects. The emphasis should be on something other than the product, given that this is only a means. Essentially, the designer generates the communication by designing an event, an act in which the public interacts with the design. Therefore, the designer's intention is the design of the communication situation. Furthermore, the significant issue is not the communication act itself but the impact that this has on people's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour. This makes clear the need to study the interaction between messages in illustrations, the general design and people, not only the interaction of visual elements with one another, which has absorbed the attention of designers so much in the past. Illustration composition is imperative, but it is only a tool to organise the communication event. This communication event takes place over time, not only in space. It is loaded with complex human elements relating to speech, understanding, age, information, instruction, memory, cognitive style, preferences, prospects, needs, and other perceptual, academic, social, cultural, and emotional dimensions.

Irivwieri (2011) noted that for a work of art to be successful, it requires skilled organisation or arrangement of its various segments to arrive at some order and unity. These various segments are known as principles and elements of art. He further elucidates that design principles are sometimes called principles of organisation. These principles include proportion, contrast, balance, eye movement and unity. Therefore, the principle of pen and ink illustration in advert promotion is to affect people's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, which happens after communication occurs.

Graphic design is everywhere, from wrappers on biscuits to mugs and office supplies logos. One sees many graphic design examples daily, and most of the time, one needs to realise its impact. Graphic design can serve many functions, such as Signage, Corporate identity/ Branding, Packaging, Printed materials (books, flyers, magazines, newspapers), Online (banners, blogs, websites), Album sleeves, Film and television titles and graphics, T-shirt and clothing designs, Greeting cards, Holograms, Logograms and Monograms and Other more minor mementoes.

Summary

This account has espoused the character and modes of operation of graphic designers of old times. The practice of present-day graphic design has gone beyond the hand-drawn analogue illustrations and the use of papers and lettraset for page layout; the practice of modern-day Graphic design is in the domain of the use of the computer in everything ranging from typography, page layout, web design, animations, branding and packaging, cinematography and film production, non-linear editing techniques, game design and also the application of artificial intelligence packages to optimise designs, enhance the quality of photographs for adverts and indeed all aspect of graphics and very lately, artificial intelligence technology has been introduced by FIFA, UEFA, CAF and other continental football bodies to detect the veracity or otherwise of certain decisions taken by the centre referees which he or she might have inadvertently taken in the course of a game. Recently,

The Video Assistant Referees stationed in their cubicles radioed the centre referee to review such decisions via the screen stationed by the pitch. Artificial intelligence technology reveals the minutest details in real-time and, in most cases, converts the video clip into a vector image to reveal the actual situation.



Fig. 5. Felix Osaigbovo: Photoshop interface of photo transformation

This has shown the development of graphics from the time of the analogue to the present digital era. Figure 3 above shows the processes of photo transformation using Photoshop software with artificial intelligence filters using the same composite photograph to achieve different variants.

Conclusion

This is only a tiny fraction of the many areas of graphic design. Sometimes, such as signage design, it must provide straightforward ways to convey information. Pen and ink illustration simplifies something quite complex, making it easy to navigate and understand. Graphic design is a discipline that takes ideas, concepts, text, and images and presents them in a visually engaging form through print, electronic, or other media. It imposes an order and structure to the content to facilitate and ease the communication process while optimising the likelihood that the target audience will receive and understand the message. A designer achieves this goal by consciously manipulating elements; a design may be philosophical, aesthetic, sensory, emotional, or political.

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Poverty Reduction in Nigeria's Niger Delta through Indigenous Enterprise: A Case Study of the Gin Industry

Forae Felix Ovie & Etumudon Ewere

Abstract

This paper examines poverty reduction in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria through production enterprise with the domestic gin industry of the Niger Delta as a case study. The entrenchment of unemployment and poverty in the Niger Delta occasioned by the destruction of the traditional occupations of fishing and farming through petroleum oil exploration activity, and the imperative to reduce poverty are in line with the current global call for sustainable resource use as a strategy to reduce the incidence of poverty globally. Aside from palm wine which is distilled to produce gin, the manifold utility of the various species of raffia palms native to the freshwater swamps of the Niger Delta and their exploitation on a broader scale seem a viable strategy for employment generation, stemming rural-urban drift, improving the socio-economic lives of the people and ultimately reducing the incidence of rural poverty. Palm wine and the locally distilled gin popularly known with epithets and appellations like *Ogogoro*, *Sapele water*, *push-me-I-push-you*, and *agbakara*, to name a few, occupy essential places in the cultural space of the Niger Delta. A large market exists in the Niger Delta and beyond for palm wine, gin and the by-products of the raffia palm made from piassava, bamboo, fronds and other parts. The paper argues further that due to increasing youth restiveness and the perennial disruption of oil production in the region, there is a need to reinvent the Niger Delta gin industry by establishing resource-based cottage industries and the expansion of those in existence.

Keywords: Environmental degradation, Sustainable development, resource utilisation, gin production, poverty reduction.

Introduction

It is undeniable that alcohol is one of the most essential substances ingested by human beings. It is the most widespread use and deeply embedded in diverse cultures. In fact, for centuries, alcohol has played prominent roles in the religious, economic and indeed cultural activities of African societies, Niger Delta inclusive. The brewing and fermenting of alcoholic beverages such as beer, spirits and wine sourced from locally grown crops and plants dates back to history- whether rum from sugar cane, whisky from barley, brandy from grapes, vodka from rye or *Ogogoro* from raffia palm wine. Alcoholic beverages are also fermented from millet, guinea corn, maise, and plantain (Schler 2002).

The gin industry of the Niger Delta has not been accorded the attention it deserves, even though it provides an example *par excellence* of a sustainable and viable economic enterprise capable of reducing the incidence of unemployment and poverty in the Niger Delta region. This is not surprising. Centuries of trade in palm oil and kernels between the Niger Delta and Europe it is meant that the palm oil industry was promoted above the gin industry. Also, the importation of European liquor affected the fortunes of the local gin industry. The colonial government's perception and labelling of local gin as "illicit gin" to prohibiting and preventing it from emerging as a competitor to foreign gin led to the promulgation of numerous legislations to outlaw its production, consumption, and even to outlaw its production, consumption and even documentation (Korieh 2003). Prohibition legislations were relaxed only in the 1970s. Apparent neglect of the gin industry also stems from a lack of adequate knowledge about the botany, physiology, agronomic values and method of cultivation of the raffia palm. Although government has long recognised the usefulness of raffia palm and its contributions to economic development since the 1950s, its efforts in the

conservation of renewable natural resources in Nigeria has not improved the renewability of raffia palm forest lands, as compared with the forest lands in the arid vegetation belts of Northern Nigeria. However, the establishment of the Forest Research Institute of Nigeria and the Nigerian Institute for Palm Oil Research heightened research into the various species of raffia palms found in Nigeria when the government mandated the latter in 1964 to expand its research activities to include raffia palms (NIFOR 1971). Actual research started in the 1970s by establishing more raffia palm plantations, such as the Raffia Sub-station at Onuebum, Rivers State and the Raffia Experimental Station at Otegbo, Delta State. Thus, official interventions have primarily been directed towards research into raffia palms rather than their utilisation for production.

The manifold utility, the importance of raffia palms and the local gin in the economy of the Niger Delta called for increased intervention by reinventing this enterprise which is popular in the wilds of the swamp forest, as viable and alternative sources of poverty reduction in the Niger Delta. This is imperative in a region where petroleum oil exploration activities have left lasting negative vicissitudes of environmental degradation and ruin on the ecosystem, rendering many inhabitants unemployed and poor.

Theoretical Framework

The least cost theory of industrial location will be adopted as a framework of analysis to accomplish the objective of this paper. This theory has elements of agglomeration economies, labour, and transport costs. In adopting this theory, it is borne in mind that production involves using inputs to produce output in the form of useable goods. This theory attempts to explain enterprises' location in terms of minimising factor (input) costs, such as raw materials that go into the production process to maximise profits. Thus, the theory assumes that production activities with a high use of raw materials should be located near supply sources. Alfred Weber's work entitled *Theory of the Location of Industries* (1999) is considered to have established the foundations of modern location theories. Subsequent works either built on or expanded Weber's theory.

Although location theories were formulated for advanced societies, they are also relevant to developing societies since human beings are generally rational in making decisions and choices, whether in developed or developing societies. As Forae (2010) notes, the economics of the Niger Delta gin industry reveals that proceeds from the distillation of gin and the sale of palm wine were significant sources of revenue or income among palm wine tappers and distillers. The gin and palm wine are also essential elements in the cultural, religious and ritual activities of the people and beyond (Erivwo 1991; Ilega 2001; Olokor 2001). The urban and rural dwellers demand gin. Thus, the increasing business-for-profit nature of gin production led to the need to reduce production costs and maximise gains by building distilleries near the swamp forest. Costs and benefits considerations underscore optimum location consideration among distillers: the need to economise on transporting bulky raw materials due to shorter distances between inputs and the distillery. For example, costs are reduced by both distillers and palm wine tappers by ferrying large quantities of wood and palm wine to the distillation site, thus economising on transportation.

The need to locate close sources of raw materials is also an economic consideration and rational choice among canoe builders and weavers. This is informed by the availability of economic timber in the drier portions of the swamp forest and the manifold uses to which the by-products of the raffia palms, such as thatch, piassava fibre, bamboo, raffia, are put by weavers to earn a living. A large market exists in the Niger Delta for various hand-woven raffia handicrafts. As the raffia palms are relatively dispersed in the wet forest, canoes are needed by distillers who double as palm wine tappers to reach the palm trees to tap and fetch the wine back to the distillation camps. Canoes are also needed by fishermen who sometimes double as palm wine tappers as they sell the wine to distillers. To this end, agglomeration economies are assumed to be derived from the cluster of

ancillary occupations connected to the gin industry, as this enables such activities to reduce costs. The need to maximise gains is directly related to labour requirements for gin distillation. Distillers benefit from cheap labour. Since distillation is a wholly family affair, every family member is involved in the enterprise; hence, permanent shelters are built close to the distilleries.

The Incidence of Poverty in the Niger Delta

Poverty is one of the main symptoms or manifestations of underdevelopment, and its reduction is generally considered synonymous with development (*Salmen* 1992). Poverty is currently attracting varying degrees of attention as an area of research and action-oriented subject. This aligns with the new global call for sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Among other aims, poverty alleviation remains one of the critical focuses of sustainable development. In contrast, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger constitutes the first goal of the Millennium Development Project (*UN* 2004). Achieving this goal is pertinent to sub-Saharan Africa, where, on average, 45-50 per cent of the people live below the poverty line - a much higher proportion than in any other region of the world except South Asia (*Mbaku* 1994). The incidence of poverty is so high at individual and household levels that an increasing number of Nigerians are finding it difficult to eat and clothe themselves. A recent survey by the Federal Office of Statistics shows that the incidence of poverty has increased tremendously since the mid-1980s. The survey shows that about a third of Nigerians lived below the poverty line in 1992, while a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report puts it at 50 per cent in 1990. The survey also reveals that the incidence of poverty is more significant in rural areas than in urban areas.

The Niger Delta problem has assumed a worrisome dimension with the insistence of its people on the control of petroleum oil resources owing to increasing marginalisation and environmental degradation of the region which produces Nigeria's oil. Numerous studies, reports and findings on the Niger Delta problem indicate that the destruction of the traditional occupation of fishing and farming via pollution of rivers and farmlands through incessant crude oil spills has entrenched unemployment and poverty in the region. (*World Bank* 1990: *Aluyor* 1998: *Akobo* 1998, *Aluko* 2004). According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2006), there were 874 reported significant cases of oil pollution between 1989 and 1999 in which marine life was utterly destroyed in affected areas of Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Rivers, Cross River, Edo and Ondo States. A direct fallout or consequence is that most people whose primary occupations are fishing and farming have thus been deprived of their livelihood. This affected thousands of farming and fishing families.

Aluko (2004) notes that black substances (crude oil) covered the creeks, rivers and ponds, while many communities in the Niger Delta lost their fishing rights as all aquatic lives in those communities came to an end. Also, frequent gas flares have resulted in deforestation, while corrosive erosion has been traced to the oil exploration and protection activities of multinational oil companies such as Shell and Chevron. Thus, the majority of the people have not only been deprived of their means of livelihood, but the increasing restiveness of the youthful population has resulted in kidnapping activities, disruption of oil production and general insecurity in the region. The magnitude of the problem calls for concerted efforts in tackling poverty with a focus on reinventing and diversifying the local gin (*Ogogoro*) distillation industry of the Niger Delta, which is a natural outgrowth due to the abundance of raffia palms in the vast freshwater swamps of the Delta.

The Physical Environment, Geographical Distribution and Morphology of the Raffia Palms

The Niger Delta region is home to coastal and inland peoples such as Ijo, Itsekiri, Efik, Okrika, Urhobo, Isoko, Ibibio, Kalabari, and Andoni, among others. It is the largest wetland in Africa, third in the world, covering an area of approximately 70,000sq.km (*Alagoa* 1999). Along the coast, it extends from the Benin River in the west to the Bonny River in the east. It is a low-lying

area riddled with an intricate system of natural water channels through which the Niger River finds its way into the Atlantic Ocean. It is divided into Western, Central, Eastern Delta and the Cross River Valley (Alagoa 1972). The division has eased discussion of its history as the activities of its inhabitants are dictated by the physical environment. The entire region is divided into four geographic belts: mangrove swamps, coastal and sandy beach ridges, upper Delta and freshwater swamps.

Mangrove swamps occur south of the freshwater swamps and are uninhabitable, with black silt soil that is poor in nutrients. Mangrove trees with silt roots are the most familiar plants, though other tropical woods are found on the few high and forested grounds. Periwinkle, reeds and floating aquatic plants like lilies, grasses and recent water hyacinth characterise this belt. The greatest asset of this belt lies in its marine resources, which have come under increasing environmental degradation, such as crude oil spills. The coastal and sandy beach ridges zone lies very close to the open sea. Fishing is also prominent, with numerous clusters of huts used as fishing outposts. The upper delta belt is north of the freshwater belt, which merges into a non-deltaic landmass. It is the driest portion of all the belts. It comprises dense human settlements with farming as the main activity of its inhabitants due to its fertile lands.

The freshwater swamp belt stretches northwards from the mangrove swamps to the apex of the Delta. It is marked by tropical rainforest and freshwater swamps, either flooded seasonally or permanently due to heavy rainfall and this belt's water-logged 'hydrographic' soil type characteristics. The various species of raffia palms proliferate naturally in this environment (Russel and Tuley 1966). Economic timber and the typical African oil palm, *Elaeis guineensis*, also occur in the low-land rainforest. This belt is extensive, covering large parts of Delta Central and South senatorial districts, large parts of Ekeremor and Southern Ijo axis of Bayelsa State, and Rivers, Akwa-Ibom and Cross River States. Patches of freshwater swamps can also be found in all parts of the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta is one of the world's most expansive freshwater swamps.

Raffia palm's presence in the Niger Delta dates back to history (Shaw 1972). However, in the mid-18th century, botanists documented their presence as the dominant element of the flora of the swamp forest (Otedoh 1981). About 20 species of raffia palms are found in tropical Africa, of which six are indigenous to the Niger Delta. These are *Raphia hookeri*, *Raphia vinifera*, *Raphia regalis*, *Raphia longiflora*, *Raphia manni* and *Raphia Africana* (Keay 1985). Raffia palms have the longest and most developed leaves in the plant kingdom as mature fronds may reach 12-14 metres in length (Hutchinson and Dalziel 1936). The young unexpanded 'spear' leaflets (raffia), usually bright green above and greyish beneath, may reach 1.6 metres in length depending on the species, which is of great economic importance. Unlike mature fronds, they are usually erect but bend over in a complete semi-circle when mature. *R. hookeri* is popularly called the palm wine raffia because it yields more wine when tapped than other species. At the same time, *R. vinifera* and *R. regalis* are famous for their strong and arching petiole (bamboo). Apart from palm wine and bamboo, other raffia palms produce good piassava fibre, especially *R. hookeri* and *R. vinifera*. Piassava fibres are rugged and durable and originate from the leaf sheath. *R. hookeri* is distinguished by a thick and tangled mass of piassava fibres on almost its entire trunk, especially the upper part and leaf bases. (See figure). The raffia palm's trunk may take 5 to 10 years to reach maturity, depending on the species. However, there are early maturing and quick-growing species. The ripe fruit of the raffia palm is scaly, cylindrical, ellipsoid to top-shaped, and may be measured between 8 cm and 10cm long and chestnut coloured. The fruits, like all other parts of the raffia palms, are utilised in a variety of ways. Seeds propagate raffia palms, though some species, like *R. vinifera*, can also be propagated by suckers (Russel and Tuley 1966). The inflorescences of the raffia palms bear both male and female flowers, and they grow from the base (head) of the spear leaflets. A tapper cuts the base of the spear leaflets of the matured palm with a tapping knife. The sap (wine) begins to trickle after a few hours. A

receptacle is usually placed below the opening to collect the run-off. Raffia palms are tapped twice daily and continuously for about 2-3 months. Each tapping process yields 5-20 litres of wine per palm daily, depending on the tapping duration, climate, and species (NIFOR 1975, Ogidigben 2006).



Source: Field Study, 2012

The Gin Industry and Poverty Reduction

Palm wine and gin are products of the raffia palm. The wine is a natural, clear, colourless liquid or juice and, when freshly tapped, contains 10-12% sugar (Ogbonda 2000). It is an essential traditional requirement at the ceremony of dowry payment. It is consumed at community gatherings and during festivals. It is also poured as libation to appease the gods and the dead, for social entertainment, and as a leisure beverage. Apart from serving the above functions, native gin is widely regarded among Niger Deltans as the chief beverage for entertainment and as morning "pepper soup". The wet environment of the Niger Delta also encourages drinking. The inhabitants of the Niger Delta have long appreciated the therapeutic properties of herbs, roots, bark of trees and plants. When added to gin and ingested, they are believed to serve preventive and curative purposes for several diseases and ailments. There is a vast internal trade in palm wine and native gin as traders are seen in various gin distillation camps where they collect and load drums of palm wine and gin in chartered Lorries bound for many urban centres in Nigeria.

Apart from palm wine and gin, raffia palms are exploited for their raffia, bamboo, fronds, piassava, fibre, fruit, trunk, roots and edible maggots. These products are of great socio-economic importance. The epidermal strips of the raffia are peeled off and dried in the sun, after which they acquire a pale straw colour. The dried strips are twisted and used as twine for the local mat weaving industry. They are also used to produce sacks for processing cassava, a staple crop in the Niger Delta. The petiole (bamboo) is helpful in the following ways. The entire pole is used as the roofing structure of thatch houses famous in the Niger Delta. It is also used for constructing local bridges in many coastal communities and making fishing rods. The stiff outer fibre of the bamboo is useful for weaving a traditional sieve, separating fibres from dried oil palm nuts before cracking and weaving baskets and fishing traps.

Among the Ijo, Isoko, Urhobo, and other tribes of the Delta, the fibre is used to make traditional kitchen shelves where fish and bush animals are smoked and palm kernels are dried before cracking. The pithy inner tissue of the petiole is essential in the mat weaving industry. From this, beautiful and multi-coloured mats are often produced with dyed and dried raffia strips (twine). A thriving and extensive market exists for locally woven raffia mats in the Niger Delta and beyond as they serve a variety of purposes, such as temporary shelters for market stalls and for spreading tapioca in the sun, among other traditional uses. The people of Ikot-Ekpenne exported fine and lavishly decorated locally manufactured raffia products to South Africa and Europe (Stevens 1945; Bailey 1947). Thatch obtained from the fronds of the palm is of great socio-economic importance. Its main uses include thatch for roofing residential houses, local market stalls, and bicycle repairers sheds. Piassava fibre is used to weave a variety of fish traps. At the same time, it serves as rope for tying bundles of firewood and fencing and for fastening traditional instruments for tapping palm wine. The mesocarp of the ripe fruit of the raffia palm is eaten when boiled or made into a pulp for stupefying fish to get a large catch. The people of the Niger Delta also believe that the dried seed of the raffia fruit has tremendous therapeutic values when ground, and it is effective in treating a variety of illnesses such as fever, spleen disorders, swollen legs, and boils and getting rid of flatulence among many other ailments (Atalawei 2011; Duophere 2012). Oil is also obtained from the palm nuts for human and industrial needs. The root of the raffia palms is used by traditional healers to treat abdominal pains and general body pain (Atalawei 2011). Raffia pulp, obtained from raffia trunk, is reputed to have high fibre content and is thus useful for the commercial manufacture of paper. The authors were shown samples of paper and paper products made from the pulp of raffia at NIFOR. The live and decaying raffia palm yields different types of edible maggots, such as the larvae of rhinoceros beetles, *Oryctes spp* and the *Rhynchoporus* species. They are fried or smoked and eaten with tapioca as a local delicacy.

To this end, efforts should be geared towards establishing numerous resource-based cottage industries. The following enterprises can be established from raffia palm products: preservation and bottling of raffia wine, yeast extraction from palm wine for confectionary and health purposes, large-scale distillation of ethanol for industries, schools, laboratories and medical uses, wide-range brush and handicrafts enterprises, raffia palm oil extraction for human and industrial needs, pulp and paper manufacture, jute bag manufacture among many other enterprises.

Conclusion

From the preceding, it is discernable that the domestic gin industry is a viable enterprise for reducing the incidence of poverty in the environmentally degraded Niger Delta. This is in line with current initiatives in proper resource utilisation to eradicate extreme poverty globally. The indigenous gin industry is an example of an enterprise capable of meeting this global challenge. Although raffia palms have been recognised as economic resources and potential contributors to economic development, much still needs to be done to improve their fortunes through utilisation for economic development. The vast resource base and the manifold utility of the raffia palm impose the imperative to develop the gin industry, including the ancillary activities connected to it, to reduce the incidence of poverty currently bedevilling the Niger Delta in the 21st century.

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Exploring Collective Trauma in Selected Anglophone Covid-19 Poetry

Ilechukwu Ijeoma Susan & Enajite Ojaruega

Abstract

The paper investigates the profound impact of collective trauma on humans, with a specific focus on the COVID-19 pandemic through the prism of carefully selected poetry from parts of Anglophone Africa, Europe, America and Asia. Employing a multidisciplinary approach of psychology and literature, the study discerns the intricate ways in which poetry serves as a poignant means to express, navigate and analyse the complexities of shared societal and global trauma. The research delves into diverse cultural perspectives, considers how various poets grapple with and articulate their COVID-19 pandemic experiences through poetry. With a range of comprehensive reviews of contemporary poetry stemming from the COVID-19 experience, the study identifies recurring themes, linguistic nuances, and emotional resonances that encapsulate the collective psyche. By employing qualitative content analysis, the study unveils ways in which the selected poets articulate collective trauma, offering a deeper understanding of the shared human experience in the face of unprecedented challenges. The study affirms that manifestations such as loss, grief, isolation, fear, guilt, uncertainty are common in collective trauma and poetry serves as a medium for resilience, hope, empathy and communal understanding.

Keywords: trauma, collective trauma, COVID-19, Pandemic, collectivity

Introduction

Traumas involve psychological and emotional responses to events that are regarded as harmful and distressing. Allen (1995, p.14) provides a detailed definition of trauma by including “responses to powerful onetime events like accidents, natural disasters, crime, surgeries, deaths and other violent events. It also includes responses to chronic or repetitive experiences such as abuse, neglect and combat. Thus, trauma describes experiences that are physically and emotionally draining and damaging”. Traumas may be personal such as sexual abuse, physical abuse or collective such as natural disasters, wars and pandemics in nature depending on the extent to which its impact is felt.

Collective trauma refers to a profound psychological and emotional impact of a disheartening event or series of events on an entire society or a specific cultural group. Unlike individual trauma, which affects a person’s mental and emotional well-being, collective trauma involves the shared experiences and responses of larger communities or even nations. According to Erikson (1976), collective trauma is distinguished from personal trauma because of its response to social transformations resulting from the accident rather than the acute shock of observing the destruction or experiencing personal losses. He argues further that:

Collective trauma blows to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bond attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. It involves the gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared... (1976, p.154).

Saul (2022, p. 3) defines collective trauma as “the impact of adversity on relationships in families, communities and societies at large. This includes natural and human-caused disasters as well as the cumulative effects of poverty, oppression, illness and displacement”. It emphasises the shared experience of distress within a group of individuals who may or may not share the same cultural background. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which is the focal point of the study, collective trauma manifests as a shared sense of loss, fear, uncertainty which overwhelms societies

globally. Collective trauma explores how large-scale events such as wars, natural disasters, pandemic or societal upheaval, impact groups collectively.

The study is grounded on the recognition of poetry as a reflective and creative medium for expressing the complex emotions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 crisis not only posed a public health threat but also deeply impacted societies worldwide, leaving a lasting imprint on collective memory. The study contextualises the pandemic experience within the broader framework of collective trauma, by understanding how the selected poets process shared distress through poetic expression. The study captures the multifaceted nature of responses, acknowledging the intersection between culture, identity and trauma. The poets selected for this study include: Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Kola Eke from Africa; Charlotte Jolley and Julie Sheldon from Europe; Scott Momaday and Michael Whitney from America and Cyrine Kotras, Ashish Gupta from Asia. The poets for this study have been carefully selected from English speaking areas of the four continents and these poems adequately explore how humans reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic by documenting these collective traumatic experiences which resulted in feelings of anguish, grief, frustration, depression, nostalgia, resilience, and survival. Examining COVID-19 through poetry and exploring collective trauma provides a unique perspective on the human experience during the pandemic. Their Poetry reflects the collective social dimensions of the pandemic. The different poets selected for the study provide unique perspectives on how their communities were impacted, revealing societal strengths, vulnerabilities and resilience of human spirit. Despite the deadly impact of the COVID-19 virus on the globe, not much attention concerning the collective traumatic effects of the pandemic have been looked at. Budryte and Resende (2023) in their study observe the lacuna in trauma studies that depict pandemics such as Spanish flu and COVID-19 despite the millions of lives that they have claimed (p.1). COVID-19 has had more impacts on humanity than any other man-made or naturally destructive event. It is this lacuna, this study intends to fill.

COVID-19, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, is a respiratory illness that emerged in late 2019 in Wuhan, China. It quickly escalated into a global pandemic. The virus primarily spreads through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Common symptoms of the virus include fever, cough and shortness of breath, though it can range from mild to severe symptoms. Governments worldwide implemented several measures such as lockdowns, social distancing and masks mandates to curb the spread. The pandemic strained the health care system, the economies and daily life activities. Consequently, vaccines were developed and rolled out at a fast pace to mitigate the impact and spread of the virus. The virus brought with it several speculations and questions on the method of its transmission, the existence of the virus, the description and a label for it.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the psychological theory with the focus on trauma as an offshoot. The psychological approach to literature is concerned with the enquiry into the minds of writers and characters to understand why they think or act the way they do. Trauma as a sociological and psychological field of study, over the years has intersected with literature, making it a multi-disciplinary field of study. The rise of public awareness about trauma in the twentieth century and the growing attention given to the Vietnam War and the Holocaust survivors gave way to the flourishing of numerous trauma narratives. The relationship between trauma and literature is complex, as literature serves as a medium for individuals to express, explore and cope with traumatic experiences. Through literature, writers can convey emotional weights of trauma, offering their readers glimpses into the inner world of those who have experienced traumatic events. Harding (2006, p. 9) informs us that “Literary representations of trauma attempts to help readers access

traumatic experiences and thus, have an important place among diverse historiographic, testimonial, and representational approaches in illuminating the persona and public aspects of trauma". Through the reflection of trauma in literary studies, there is certain fostering of empathy by allowing readers to indirectly experience the emotional terrain of trauma. This occurs by allowing the readers engage with poets, personas, characters in literary texts who undergo traumatic experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding trauma and devastating effects on individuals and groups of people. Literature often plays a major role in its ability to represent and broadcast trauma at the collective level. Overtime, psychologists like Caruth, Herman, Ferlman recognised only personal or individual trauma. However, in recent times, during the late twentieth century, psychologists and sociologists started to apply the concept of trauma to societal groups ranging from small to large scale population

Empirical Studies on Collective Trauma

Most studies on collective trauma have been on historical events and their effects on several societies. Most studies are centred on man-made traumas that involve political assassinations, collective trauma from colonial experiences, African American slave trade experience, terrorist attacks, genocides, and wars thereby neglecting naturally induced traumatic experiences such as epidemics, pandemics, volcanic eruptions, wildfires, tsunamis, and flooding. Ron Eyerman, one of the original creators of the theory of collective trauma has deeply explored on the theory by examining several studies on man-made collective traumatic experiences. Eyerman's 2001 study contributes significantly to the field of trauma studies in that he examines how historical events such as slavery in the United States of America shaped collective identity and memory over time. By focusing on slavery as a collective trauma, historical atrocity becomes embedded in the collective identity of African Americans which are transmitted from one generation to another. His 2008 study borders on the collective trauma experienced or triggered by the gruesome assassination in 2004 of former film director Theo Van Gogh. Furthermore, Eyerman (2011) analyses the murders of Swedish former Prime Minister Olof Palme and former Foreign Minister Anna Lindh and the episodes of grief and confusion in Sweden that caused collective trauma. Onwuachi-Willig (2016) like Eyerman dwells on the racial discrimination experienced by the African Americans and the collective trauma experienced. She uses the case of Emmett Till's brutal murder by two white men and criticises the racist acquittal of Till's murderers and concludes that the all white judicial jury acquittal caused the African American community deep collective trauma.

In the field of literature, few studies have been carried out with regards to collective trauma. However, most literary studies have been on prose fiction genre as against the poetry genre. Mackichan (2012) examines Seamus Heaney's collection of poems *North* from the point of view of intersecting the discourse on collective trauma and testimony as theorised by Caruth, Felman and Laub to bear witness to the prolonged political conflict in Belfast, Ireland known as "Troubles". Closely related to Mackichan's study is that of Alsaden (2013) who uses the Iraq war of 2003 to explore the trauma manifested by the Iraqi civilians and American veterans with focus on the negative consequences of war. Through the adoption of the collective theory, her paper explores "how trauma fractures identity" and the present difficulties in dealing with the destructive nature of war (p.1). She uses poetry collections of Brain Turner, Al-Rubaire, Duaye Mikahl and Haider Al-Kabi for her study.

Moawad (2022) is pertinent to this study as in his study; he explores the collective traumatic effect on people's lives and the therapeutic nature of poetry, using Regin Silvest and John Charles Ryan's collection of poems, *Covid-19 Pandemic Poems Volume I*. He argues that while people's lives are affected by the Covid-19 virus all over the world, "disordered or traumatic people can have

psychiatric treatment through therapeutic processes of reading and writing poetry and behavioural activities” (p. 30).

Rostam (2022) undertakes a vivid study on collective trauma of African Americans through the portrayal of the characters in Toni Morrison’s novel *Song of Solomon* who are weighed down by the heavy burden of rejection, oppression, racism and white dominance. The paper studies these black characters who struggle with major repressive pressures within trauma theory. He concludes that recovery is for “only those characters (who) could surpass the pressure of trauma and find a connection as well as meaning in their lives that could pass the stages of recovery” (p. 3170).

Africa as a continent has experienced several traumatic experiences ranging from colonialism to disturbing post-independent experiences like civil wars in Nigeria and Rwanda and Congo to terrorist activities by Islamic sects like Boko Haram. Nigeria will be the main focus in the African context. The most notable event in Nigeria that has garnered attention from the world is the Nigerian/Biafran Civil war. The Civil war was a deeply traumatic event with significant collective repercussions as a result of a staggering loss of lives and properties leaving scars that endure in memories of those who lived through it. The war came with severe humanitarian crisis marked by famine and widespread starvation in the Biafran camp. It left deep psychological scars on individuals and communities with long lasting mental health problem.

The Nigerian/Biafran war experiences have received huge literary attention since the late 1960s till the 2000s. Literary texts on the three genres have been written to expose the traumatic experiences of the Nigerian Civil war. “Nigerian Civil war poetry” according to Okuyade (2021), “reveals the traumatic experience of Nigerians in turbulent times” (p.23). Through a sampling of poetry from Christopher Okigbo, Gabriel Okara, J.P Clark, Chinua Achebe, Odia Ofeimun, Chinweizu, and Peter Onwudinjo, the destructive nature of the war is depicted in literary studies. In the prose genre, many fictional representations of the Civil war have emerged. Numerous scholarly articles on trauma studies have emerged from the Nigerian Civil war experience. Some notable ones include: Nwahunanya (1997), Francoise (2011) Dalley (2013), Nwanyanwu & Anasuidu (2019), etc.

Despite the numerous social, political and literary reviews ranging from political assassinations to African American experiences and Civil wars from Europe, America, Middle East and Africa, there is still a gap on collective traumas that are induced and caused by natural disasters. Hence, poetry on COVID-19, the most recent pandemic man has experienced in the last century serves as a great choice for this discourse as a result of its global impact.

Manifestations of Collective Trauma in Selected Poetry

For the study, the poems selected include Adimora-Ezeigbo’s “Rhythms of Isolation”, “Portrait of Calm”; Eke’s “Every Symptom”, Jolley’s “A Life with no Colour”, Sheldon’s “Some of us”; Momaday’s “In the Time of Plague”; Whitney’s “Working from Home”; Kotras’ “When Death Comes to a House”, and Gupta’s “Covid-19: From Carrier to Warrior”. The poems are analysed according to the order in which they have been arranged in the previous sentence according to the poet’s continent of origin.

Adimora-Ezeigbo’s “Rhythm of Isolation” as the title implies, revolves around the idea of isolation during the dreadful COVID-19 pandemic. In the first stanza below, a reference to isolation is seen:

It seemed a joke when the orders sounded
“Stay home, stay safe,” was the command
“Whether you are man, woman, child,

Stay home and prevent Covid-19 infection” (p. 4)

The first line captures the initial skepticism or disbelief surrounding the directives to “stay home, stay safe” during the COVID-19 pandemic. This response reflects a collective reaction to the sudden imposition of restriction and the gravity of the situation. The subsequent lines that follow also suggest a shared response to the directives, indicating a collective experience of the pandemic. The abrupt shift in daily life marked by the command to stay at home reflects a shared disruption of social norms and values. The initial perception that it “seemed a joke” suggests a resistance or disbelief, which is a common initial response to unexpected and disruptive events. This resistance can be seen as a coping mechanism, as individuals and societies grapple with the unfamiliar and potentiality of a traumatic circumstance. The directive to “stay home, stay safe” becomes symbolic of the larger societal response to the public health crisis caused by COVID-19. The symbolism highlights the collective effort to protect individuals and communities, showcasing a shared response to traumatic events. The poet’s use of “whether you are a man, woman, child” emphasises the level of severity the virus comes with and thus this warning extends to the smallest unit of any society which is the family. This places the family as a symbol for the collective society devoid of race, class and creed.

The poem continues with the poet leading us into her newly crafted routine since the emergence of the virus. She informs in the following lines:

Widowed alone, I took refuge in old and new books,
Experimented with exotic recipes from cookery books,
Tackled loneliness with a burst of activity
That drained my energy like a sieve (p. 4)

The poet persona reflects on her individual response to isolation and loneliness, likely intensified by the experience of being alone at that moment in time. While it does not explicitly address collective trauma, it offers insights into personal coping mechanisms during challenging times, which can be connected to a broader societal responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The poet’s engagement with books and recipes signifies a personal coping strategy which consequently leads to adaption to new realities. The lines above further convey a sense of loneliness and the draining effect of certain activities. This resonates with the collective experience of isolation during lockdowns and social distancing measures.

In another poem titled “Portrait of Calm”, Ezeigbo conveys a sense of individual fear and anxiety, reminiscent of facing an uncertain future. It reads:

I wake up in the morning afraid
Troubles of life weigh heavily on my mind
I feel a flutter in my heart, making me anxious
Like a warrior setting out to fight his first battle,
Like one embarking on a perilous journey.
Is this the way they feel who await confirmation
Of a life-threatening condition
After undergoing an array of tests?
The possibility of death looms large. (p.3)

This can be paralleled to the collective trauma experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The reference to a “warrior setting out to fight” and “embarking on a perilous journey” mirrors the global experience of confronting an invisible enemy-the virus. The line “is this the way they feel

who await confirmation of a life-threatening condition after undergoing an array of tests?” draws a connection to the widespread testing efforts during the pandemic. Many individuals underwent COVID-19 tests, anxiously waiting results that could potentially be life-altering, reflecting a shared experience on a larger scale. Furthermore, the looming possibility of death expressed in the poem resonates with the collective grief and loss felt globally due to the pandemic. The pervasive fear and uncertainty depicted in the poem align with the emotional toll experienced collectively during a period marked by illness, loss, and a sense of vulnerability.

Kola Eke’s “Every Symptom” in its entirety captures the heightened state of vigilance and suspicion surrounding symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting elements of collective trauma. This suspicion is expressed in the following lines:

Every symptom
Equivalent of the virus
Common cold and cough
Aches and sneezing (p. 58)

A woman
Unable to survive
Venom of caesarian operation
Linked to the virus (p. 58)

The first five stanzas of the poem convey a sense of hyperawareness where every symptom is treated as equivalent to the virus. Hyperawareness in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic refers to an elevated state of consciousness and attentiveness regarding the virus and its implications. Individuals experiencing hyperawareness may constantly monitor news updates, adhere strictly to safety measures, and exhibit heightened sensitivity to potential risks. This heightened awareness often stems from the severity and global impact of the pandemic, leading people to be more vigilant in protecting themselves and others. This reflects a collective response to the fear and uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, where heightened vigilance leads to the tendency to link various illnesses to the virus. Stigmatisation and taboos set in during these perilous times as symptoms like sneezing in public places or experiencing a headache, is linked to COVID-19. This reflects a collective response where individuals may face social stigma or be treated as suspects contributing to a collective sense of caution.

The poet’s mention of treating “every infinitesimal illness treated as covid-19” reflects a pathologisation of everyday symptom. The mention of an elderly man’s prolonged headache in the third stanza being linked to the virus illustrates how the pandemic can influence the interpretation of natural causes. This reflects a collective trauma response where various health issues are viewed through the lens of the prevailing crisis. Furthermore, the poet’s reference to the isolation of suspected passengers on flights in the stanzas that follow indicate a shift in the manner in which health concerns are addressed. This reflects the collective trauma response of implementing strict protocols to contain the spread of the virus, even if it means isolating individuals with mild symptoms. Also, the portrayal of anyone who sneezes becoming a suspect, especially aboard an aircraft, reflects a collective atmosphere of suspicion and fear. This collective response is driven by the shared anxiety about the contagious nature of the virus and the efforts to prevent its spread. The suspicious passengers and aircraft crew are presented in the following lines below:

Aboard an aircraft
Any passenger who sneezes
Treated as a suspect
On landing

Gets to waiting hands
Of NCDC
Sneezing aboard (p.58)

Julie Sheldon's "Some of Us" is a witty poem which provides a survey into the living conditions of the collectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of contrasts. In the first stanza, Sheldon highlights several experiences of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some persons are compelled to stay at home, possibly due to safety measures or health concerns, while others are working intensively, perhaps in essential services. These divergent experiences are expressed thus:

Some of us must stay at home
And not go out the door
Some of us are working
Like we've never worked (n.p)

The poet's use of "working like we've never worked before" suggests a significant shift in work patterns, possibly due to increased demands in certain sectors. The need for some persons to stay at home indicates a collective adaptation to new norms and safety measures imposed by the pandemic. This adaptation is cultural in nature, reflecting changes in how individuals and society navigate daily life and interpersonal interactions during a pandemic. Sheldon's use of contrast is evident throughout the poem. The contrast between staying at home and working intensively reflects a shift in societal priorities. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a reevaluation of what is considered essential, with certain roles taking precedence over some others. This shift in priorities contributes to a collective re-assessment of societal values. These further reflect the collective responses to the pandemic, where societal structures had to undergo rapid transformation.

In the second stanza, relations are redefined as:

Some of us are falling out
With Siblings, Dads, and Mothers
Some of us are reaching out
And looking after others. (n.p)

The poet's use of "falling out with siblings, Dads and Mothers" suggest interpersonal conflicts within families during the pandemic and reflects collective trauma responses as individuals navigate heightened stress, tension, uncertainty and potentially strained living conditions, contributing to tensions in familial relationships. "falling out" indicates emotional strain and isolation, reflecting the impact of the pandemic on mental health and relationships. The collective trauma from the occurrence of the virus has the potential to create an emotionally charged atmosphere, contributing to more challenges.

The last two lines of the second stanza contrasts the first two lines which illustrate a positive response to the collective trauma, where some individuals actively engage in acts of comparisons and support. It depicts the resilience and solidarity that can emerge in response to shared challenges. "The act of "looking after others" extends beyond immediate family, suggesting a broader sense of community care and support. This reflects a collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, where individuals recognize the importance of mutual assistance and empathy in the face of shared adversity.

The contrasting experiences of "falling out and reaching out" highlight the diversity of coping mechanism within society. In the sixth stanza, the poet portrays diverse emotional responses within the society to the pandemic, further offering insights into the collective experience. She affirms:

Some of us feel positive
And think we're in charge
Some of us feel anxious
And fear the world at large (n.p)

The lines above illustrate a spectrum of emotional responses from feeling positive and in control to experiencing anxiety and confronting reality. The divergence highlights the complexity of the collective emotional atmosphere during the pandemic, indicating that individuals within the same society may perceive control or agency. This can be seen as a coping mechanism within the collective trauma, where some individuals explore more optimistic outlook to maintain a semblance of control over their circumstances. On the other hand, the lines also express feelings of 'anxiousness' and "trepidations". This reflects the collective trauma response to the uncertainty, unpredictability, and potential threats associated with the pandemics. Anxiety can be heightened during times of crisis, influencing how individuals navigate and perceive the world around them. The contrast in emotional state suggests that certain factors may influence how individuals within a society cope with and respond to trauma.

Despite the diversity in emotional responses, the lines in the sixth stanza imply that those feelings are shared within the collective. The collective trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic influences the emotional climate, contributing to shared experience of uncertainty, hope, anxiety and fear among individuals in the society.

Charlotte Jolley's "A Life with no Colour" as the title implies, expresses the bleak and anhedonic moments during the pandemic. The poem generally conveys a sense of collective trauma in response to the unexpected and disruptive nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. The introductory stanza expresses this anhedonic mood:

Our world of innocence was caught unaware,
Taunted by a malicious nightmare,
Locked inside for the foreseeing future
An experiment gone wrong; a distorted sculpture (n.p)

The poem is introduced with the phrase "our world of innocence" which suggests a pre-pandemic state of naivety or unpreparedness. The sudden emergence of the pandemic disrupted the perceived stability, leading to a collective loss of innocence as societies grappled with the unforeseen challenges. The poet's use of "malicious nightmare" in the second line characterises it as a malevolent force, contributing to a sense of collective trauma. This personification highlights the emotional impact of the crisis and the psychological toll it has taken on individuals and societies. Also, the poet's mentioning of being "locked inside from the foreseeing future" reflects the widespread implementation of lockdowns and social distancing measures. The poet also refers to the virus as "an experiment gone wrong" to suggest a sense of unpredictability and unintended consequences, thereby creating a speculation about the virus being deliberately spread into the world for biological warfare. She further describes the situation of the world at the moment as a "distorted sculpture" conveying the sense of social disfigurement or alteration. The pandemic has reshaped cultural norms, values and structures.

In stanza two, the line "We wait through the day for that word of relief" captures the collective anticipation and anxiety associated with waiting for updates on the pandemic. The reference to citizens "spiraling into psychotic belief" suggests the psychological toll of the crisis, reflecting a shared experience of heightened stress and uncertainty. The newspaper ad stating "Lives have been lost" directly addresses the collective trauma of bereavement. The pandemic has led to a

widespread experience of grief in countries around the world, contributing to a shared sense of mourning and sorrow. The stanza also shows the impact on the mental health of the collectivity. The line “coronavirus is sending people mad” alludes to the impact on their mental health, emphasising the collective psychological toll of the pandemic. This reflects collective trauma where individuals grapple with the stress, fear and uncertainty induced by the crisis. Stanza three presents a disruption of normalcy. The lines, “No longer walks or country hikes” and “isolated from family and friends” highlight the disruption of normalcy and social connections. These disruptions contribute to a collective sense of discrimination and a reevaluation of the cultural importance of social bonds and daily routines. The lines “where to go; what to do, we try our best to struggle through” reflects the collective effort to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic. The shared struggle emphasises the collective resilience and determination to survive amidst the pandemic. The fourth stanza paints portraits images of solitude and vulnerability in the expression “Trapped inside till the crisis end” which involves an experience of being confined to one’s home represents a shared aspect of the collective trauma, where individuals feel restricted and uncertain about the future. The pandemic brings about a monochrome in existence. This is underscored in, “A life with no colour; only black” which symbolises the emotional impact of the pandemic, suggesting a pervasive sense of despair and bleakness. This reflects the collective trauma of experiencing a world transformed by the crisis with far-fetching consequences.

Scott Momaday’s “In the Time of Plague” reflects the collective trauma experienced during the pandemic and conveys a nuanced response to the challenges posed by the crisis. The first five lines depict cautious interaction and suspicion.

We keep indoors
When we dare to venture out
We are cautious, our neighbours
Smile, but in their eyes there is
Reserve and suspicion (n.p)

These lines communicate a feeling of wariness and skepticism in interpersonal exchanges, reflecting a shared experience amid the pandemic. The neighbour’s smiles with “reserve and suspicion” underscore the impact on social relationships and the need for distance to prevent the further spread of the virus. The poet’s expression of “much of our fear is unspoken” in the eighth line points to the silent, pervasive anxiety unspoken by individuals in the community. The reliance on “rote consolation” suggests the collective response to cope with fear through familiar repetitive gestures and phrases.

In the lines below, the poet weighs the impact of the pandemic and the reaction of the collectivity, thus:

We endure thoughts of demise
And measure the distance of death
Death too wears a mask.(n.p)

The preceding lines encapsulate the collective trauma of contemplating mortality and the constant awareness of the potential consequences of the virus. The virus becomes a shared existential concern. However, from the fourteenth line till the end of the poem, the poet evokes a sense of hope amid the darkness that comes with the virus in the following lines:

But consider, there may well be good
In our misfortune if we can find it is
Hidden in the darkness of our fear

But discover it and see that it is hope. (n.p)

The lines above, the poet suggests that hidden within the darkness of fear, there is hope. This reflects the resilience of the collective spirit in the face of adversity, emphasising the cultural capacity to find optimism even in challenging times. The poem encapsulates the collective trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic, portraying a society struggling with fear, caution and uncertainty but also finding resilience, hope and a sheer commitment to positive transformation.

Michael Whitney's poem "Working from Home" humorously reflects an individual's experience of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the elements of collective and cultural adaptation. The poem begins by recalling the initial speculation that working from home would be great with the freedom from a daily commute and formal attire. The poet expresses this excitement in the following lines:

I remember the days when I'd speculate
That working from home would simply be
great.
No need for car, the tie and the suit;
No need, ever again, for that daily commute
I could work in my jammies, or wear nothing
at all.
And never worry about the boss down the
hall
I'd only dress up when I'd be meeting on
zoom
Then I'd just have to clean a little part of the
room (n.p)

The lines above reflect a collective sentiment during the early days of the pandemic, where there was some optimism about the benefits of remote work. The poem touches on the inevitable shift to remote work, where traditional workplace norms, such as dressing up and commuting, changed. This reflects the broader societal adaptation to new work structures and expectations during the pandemic.

The poet uses humour as a technique in his portrayal of the pandemic through the humorous depiction of the home office life. Phrases like "work in my jammies", clean a little part of my room" reflect adaptation to the informalities of remote work. The poem humourously captures the change but also alludes to potential challenges.

Ironically, as the poem progresses, the tone shifts, the poet persona expresses frustration with the unexpected challenges of working from home. This change is expressed in the lines below:

But now that it's happened, my dream hasn't come true
'Cuz working from home is like life at the zoo
A big cage of monkeys couldn't be any worse
The noise and congestion drive me to curse (n.p)

The lines above express the loss of peace and quiet which emphasises the collective struggle of individuals to adapt to the blurring of professional boundaries. The loss of a quiet working environment contributes to a shared experience of frustration and stress.

The concluding part of the poem produces a sense of nostalgia for the days when the poet persona used to go to the office. This reflects a cultural longing for the familiarity and structure of the traditional work setting, indicating that the shift to remote work may not have been ideal as initially

imagined. Overall, the poem captures the mixed emotions and unexpected realities associated with the shift. This regret is captured in the following lines:

Alas, working from home, I get nothing done
And what's even worse--- it's not that much
fun
Now I yearn for the days when I went off
work
Working from home, it turns out, was the dream of a jerk. (n.p)

Cyrine Kortas' poem "When Death Comes to a House" poignantly conveys the collective trauma experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the context of death and mourning. The first stanza describes the disruption of funeral rites and ritual as a result of the lockdown during the pandemic. The poet persona expresses this disruption in the lines below:

When death comes to a house,
No cousins are called
No relatives from different,
Countries will be flying (p.7)

These lines emphasise the profound impact of the pandemic on traditional funeral practices. The absence of cousins and other relatives from different countries, rites and rituals reflects trauma where the customary ways of bidding farewell to the departed (dead) are disrupted due to the constraints imposed by COVID-19. The poet's dismay about "the dead will not be paid tribute" highlights the collective trauma of being unable to perform customary acts of respect and remembrance. The absence of funerals, a significant cultural ritual, contributes to a shared sense of loss and unfulfilled mourning practices. The third stanza depicts unfinished stories and lost legacies as a result of the interruption in the funeral rites. The lines, "When death comes to a house, no grandchild will ever hear, the rest of the story" (p.7) encapsulate the collective trauma narrative. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the continuity of family stories and histories, leaving future generations with gaps in their understanding of the past. The last two lines of the third stanza, "the rest of the story, it ended in a covid zone" (p.7), suggest that the pandemic became a defining and concluding element in the lives of those who pass away during this time. This contributes to the collective trauma of the unique and challenging period that shapes how death is experienced and remembered. The last stanza further captures the collective grief experienced by individuals and communities dealing with death during the pandemic. The limitations imposed on traditional mourning practices further contribute to a shared experience of sorrow and a sense of inadequacy in expressing grief.

The last poem selected for the study is Ashish Gupta's "Covid-19: From Carrier to Warrior". The poem presents an individual's reflection on contracting the virus as he deliberates in the following lines:

How did I get contaminated?
How did I become a corona carrier?
Why did I become the burden for government and corona warriors? (p. 9)

The poet persona grapples with questions about how he got contaminated and became a virus carrier. This reflects the individual's internalisation of the fear and uncertainty surrounding the virus, contributing to a shared sense of vulnerability experienced by many during the pandemic. The poet

persona also expresses a sense of responsibility and guilt for being a burden and a potential risk for both government and corona warriors. His guilt continues in the next few lines below:

Why did I not obey the rules?
Why did I not prove myself
A law-abiding, responsible citizen? (p. 9)

This personal responsibility reflects the broader collective expectations for citizens to adhere to the guidelines and avoid spreading the virus, contributing to a collective consciousness about civic duty. The poet persona questions his act of disobedience to the pandemic rules by blaming himself for not being a law-abiding citizen. This self-reflection mirrors the societal emphasis on responsible behaviour to curb the spread of the virus, contributing to a collective awareness of the importance of adherence to safety measures. The poet persona probes further into the activity that leads to the contracting the virus. This brings a feeling of uncertainty and fear of the unknown as one might not know who has the virus in the community. The poet queries:

Who trapped me? Who snared me?
Let me think, let me the link
Once I had gone to a vegetable shop.
Everywhere I was alert
Everywhere I was coward
Is this its reward?
How to guess? How to trace?
What was the face? How was the pace?
Who was he, or who was she? (p. 9)

In the lines above, the poet expresses uncertainty about who trapped him and how he got infected. This uncertainty is a shared experience during the pandemic, as individuals grapple with the invisible nature of the virus, contributing to a collective fear of the unknown.

In the later parts of the poem, the poet persona's journey from uncertainty to recovery and the subsequent plasma donation conveys a sense of triumph over the virus. The personal victory becomes a collective narrative of resilience and contribution to the fights against the pandemic, fostering a shared sense of hope. He expresses this optimism and hope in the following words:

I was discharged with showering flowers
I was a common man, but all made no Mars.
A Few days later, I donated my plasma
It saved more lives, even critical with asthma (p.10)

Summarily, the poem captures the poet person's journey through the trauma of being infected with COVID-19 and reflects broader cultural responses to the pandemic, encompassing themes of responsibility, isolation, fear, resilience and community solidarity.

Conclusion

The study has shown that collective trauma experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic has been poignantly expressed through poetry, serving as a mirror to an aspect of society's deep-seated emotions. The examination of collective trauma stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic reflects manifestations of grief, uncertainty, fear, guilt, anxiety, isolation, frustration and the stark of deaths. In this collective expression, shared experiences that highlight resilience and power of human connection in the face of adversity are present. As communities grapple with the aftermath, the poetic narratives offer a cathartic space, fostering understanding and solidarity, emphasising the

importance of acknowledging, processing, and collectively healing from the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic. The poems selected for the study acknowledge the universal struggles faced by humanity and man's ability to adjust to the uncommon living conditions.

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Reduplication in Urhobo and English

Okotie Glory Uririoghene & Macaulay Mowarin

Abstract

This study comparatively analyses reduplication in Urhobo and English. Reduplication in morphology is a word-formation process that repeats a base as a whole or part to form a word. The study reviews types of reduplication, such as total reduplication, involving a complete repetition of the base word, and partial reduplication, involving copying part of the base word. The paper adopts morphological doubling theory for the study analysis. To achieve the aim of this study, data are gathered from selected competent speakers of Urhobo and analysed in comparison with English reduplication. The paper finds that Urhobo and English reduplications are similar as both possess total and partial reduplication. The paper also finds that while both languages possess partial reduplication, the Urhobo language forms partial reduplication through the addition of prefixes and suffixes, which function as modifiers, qualifiers and plurals; English, on the other hand, does not rely on reduplication to change modifiers and qualifier.

Key Words: Morphology, Reduplication, English, Urhobo.

Introduction

Language is defined as a system that involves developing, acquiring, maintaining and using complex communication systems, particularly human ability. Lado (1950) posits that language is primarily an instrument of communication among human beings. In addition to its communicative use, language signifies group identity, social stratification, social grooming, and entertainment. Every human being is endowed with a language acquisition device (LAD), which makes learning a language easy for each user. Ndimele (1992) states that "human languages are unique and share certain similarities in creativity, arbitrariness, cultural transmission, duality, displacement and constancy". Language thus helps man and his environment. Language has characteristics and properties that a learner must be acquainted with or acquire before claiming mastery of a language. The English language co-exists with other languages, such as the Urhobo language. A user of both languages – English and Urhobo – would need to become acquainted with aspects of these languages and their similarities and contrasts not only to master but to make proper usage of both languages. One aspect of language that possesses similarities and contrasts between English and Urhobo is reduplication.

Reduplication is a word-formation process that involves copying some part of a base (a segment, syllable, or morpheme) or even the whole base. The term "reduplicant" refers to the copied part of a word, while the term "base" refers to the root to which the reduplication process applies (McCarthy & Prince, 1995; Adiza & Emama, 2024; Emama, 2024). Rubino (2005) defines reduplication as the systematic repetition of phonological material within a word for semantic or grammatical purposes. Reduplication is a subtype of repetition, a pervasive phenomenon in every language affecting all linguistic units, such as sounds, words, and phrases. It is a formal operation whereby part of the base or the complete base is copied and attached to it (Haspelmath, 2002). Kiyomi (1995) provides an analogy for defining reduplication when he says that "given a word with a phonological form X, then reduplication refers to XX or xX (where x is part of X and x can appear either just before X, just after X, or inside X). Conditions: (i) XX or xX must be semantically related to X. (ii) XX or xX must be productive." Reduplication is thus a productive word-formation process across languages. While reduplication is observed in a wide range of languages, its level of linguistic productivity varies (Ghomeshi et al., 2004; Marantz, 1982). The patterns of reduplications and