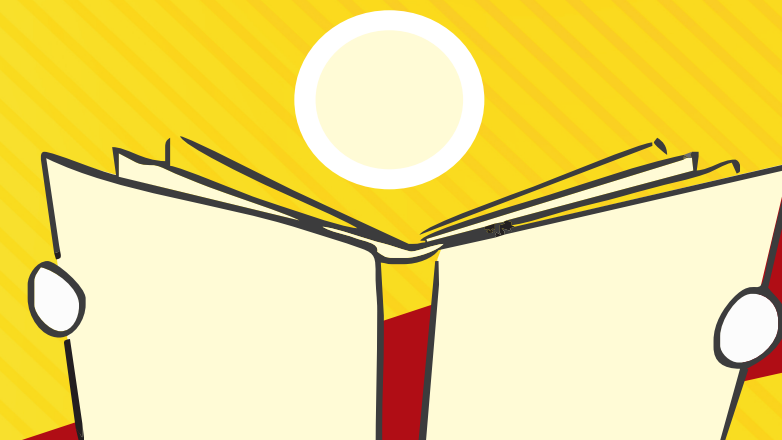


# LITERACY & READING IN NIGERIA

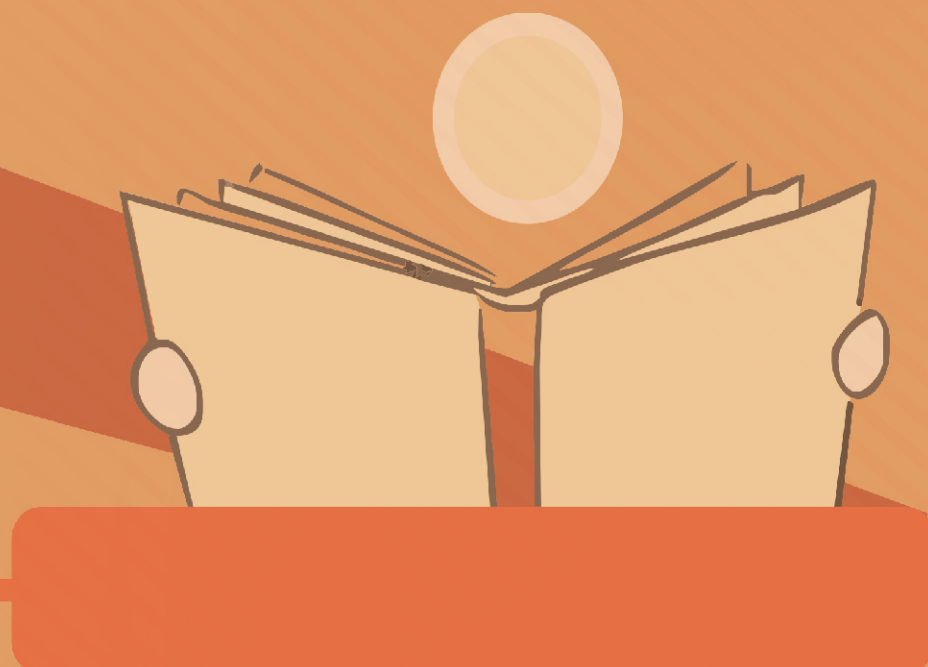


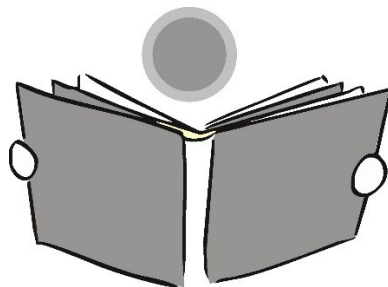
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Literacy Promotion Association, Nigeria (LiPAN) formerly Reading Association of Nigeria was established in Nigeria more than four decades ago. The Association has successfully promoted literacy among learners and teachers in Nigeria through workshops and conferences down the years. At Biennial and Mid-Term Conferences, contemporary issues, methods and strategies affecting effective and goal-oriented literacy among learners are being discussed critically. Promoting critical literacy in a supersonic and digitally-driven world hinges on capacity building of learners with sustainable living skills for them to be creative, adaptable, versatile and engage in critical thinking.

As common with all LiPAN publications, this volume is a compendium and companion for classroom teachers, textbook writers, literacy practitioners, researchers and curriculum planners as articles focus on critical literacy for sustainable living.

Enjoy this edition as you read.

**Prof. S. O. Makinde**

*President*

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# Critical Literacy for Sustainable Living

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## Introduction

The theme of the 18<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference, which coincides with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reading Association of Nigeria, meets the present situation in Nigeria and the world. Sustainable living is desirable in these circumstances where many nations in the world are facing various challenges which range from Covid 19 and its effects, climate change, insecurity, economic recession, religious intolerance, poverty, poor governance, poor wealth fare, religious intolerance and poor attention to education by government especially in Nigeria to mention a few.

These challenges have serious adverse effects on the citizens across the globe. It is therefore necessary to come together and brainstorm on how sustainable living will be attained by the individuals in the society. It is imperative to encourage literate individuals to read critically while the emergent readers are taught how to engage and profit from critical literacy. Sustainable living for the purpose of this address is seeing as the ability of the individuals to be able to provide for their own needs without or little help from others. It is observed today, that many literate individuals find it difficult to use their literacy skills to acquire desirable information that will enable them provide for their needs.

In addition, many literate individuals find it difficult to read and infer correct meaning from what they read. It is therefore necessary to encourage critical literacy across the educational levels.

This lead paper therefore, discusses meanings of critical literacy, history of critical literacy, Principles of critical literacy, critical literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and critical literacy Practice.

## What is Critical Literacy?

Critical Literacy is a term that is popular among literacy scholars. It has been around for

many years. Critical literacy involves examining the relationship between language and power in a text. Luke (2000) defines critical literacy as the ability to analyse the relations and fields of social cultural and economic power shared within and through texts.

Lankshear, McLaren (1993) says that critical literacy encourages students to become active readers and writer of cultural texts so that they can create their own meanings to shape and transform their social condition.

These definitions emphasize the need for students to be active readers and writers. They need to read and understand their culture before they can create their own ideas about shaping or transforming their society.

Critical literacy is a learning approach where students examine texts in order to understand the relationship between language and the power it can hold. The ability of students to critically analyse and evaluate the meaning of texts as they relate to topics for example equity, power and social justice will equip them with critical stance, response or action towards an issue. Critical literacy involves the questioning and examination of ideas. It requires the reader to synthesis, analyse, interpret, evaluate and respond to the texts they read. Critical literacy refers also to the process of becoming aware of one's experience relative to power relations, often realized through reading and writing. The experience of the reader plays a significant role in critical literacy activities.

Critical literacy assists individual to read text in deeper, more meaningful ways by encouraging readers of all ages to be more engaged in using their literacy skills to construct meaning of texts. They can use their understanding of a text to identify the intention of the author. Critical literacy encourages individuals to read in an active and reflective manner. Critical literacy is very important for all ages especially

for students in this age of technology for them to succeed. The skills require for critical literacy enhances the readers' ability to look deeper into meaning of text and understand what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, critical literacy is based on the belief that reader should be encouraged to critique and challenge through in-depth analysis and investigation, the way in which language and text's function. Critical literacy involves looking beyond the literal meaning of a text to determine what is present and what is missing in order to analyse and evaluate the texts complete meaning and the authors' intent.

### **History of Critical Literacy**

Critical literacy applied the tenets of critical theory to the education programme by examining how schools reproduce inequality and justice. Critical social theorists focused on oppressive and unjust relationships produced by traditional forms of schooling. They analyse the traditional models of education, which typically place the teachers at the front of the classroom transmitting the knowledge to students who sit passively clearing or receiving the information.

Paulo Freire, a protagonist of critical pedagogy beliefs that teaching should challenge learners to examine power of structure and patterns of inequality within the society. Paulo Freire (1970) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* provides an example of how critical literacy developed in an educational context. He proposes system in which students become more socially aware through critique of multiple forms of injustice. This awareness can be achieved by providing the students the opportunity to explore and construct knowledge.

Freire identifies a traditional type of education called 'banking concept of education'. This model of education turns students into containers to be filled by teacher. In this type of teaching, knowledge is seeing as a gift by the teachers to the students who are considered to know nothing. The teachers are therefore considered as the possessors of knowledge.

Therefore, the role of the teachers does not challenge the students to think authentically or value student's own funds of knowledge. In

opposition to the Freire banking model of instruction, teachers who knew the values of critical literacy do not see their students as containers or vessels to be filled.

They often create experiences or situations that give the students opportunities to construct knowledge. Therefore, schools create situation that help students to interrogate social conditions through dialogue about issues that are significant to their lives. Teachers in critical literacy classroom serve less as instructor and more as facilitators of conversations.

### **Implications of Freire's Ideas**

- Teachers and Students are both learners. Paulo Freire emphasized the collaborative, social nature of learning. He sees learning as a joint venture between the teachers and the learners instead of something more authoritarian.
- Develop Learners critical literacy. Learners should think critically about the things they read, saw, and heard. They are to be taught how to identify inequality or injustice. A learner with a critical consciousness can frame questions on issues and look for possible answers because they possess the language which asks, is this fair? Was that just? Was there equality.
- Teachers should encourage active enquiry and curiosity, which will lead to participation.

Freire opines that preventing active inquiry in classroom is a means of denying learners the opportunities for growing up into mature autonomous people who can critically reflect on their world to make it a better place.

### **Principles of Critical Literacy**

Pedagogy of critical literacy consists of the following: (1) Teaching of multiple literacies (2) Teaching continuous inquiry and (3) Teaching Reflection.

- **Teaching multiple Literacies:** Multiple literacies are important for literacy development especially for middle and upper primary learners. They provide

innovation for motivating and engaging the learners. Multiple literacy approach to the teaching of English as second language helps students to attain levels of language skills.

The term multiple literacies refer to the ability to interpret many formats, sources, or media through which we obtain information.

The sources of literacies are visual literacy, textual literacy, digital literacy and technological literacy.

**Visual literacy:** This refers to the ability to interpret, negotiate and make meaning from information presented in the form of an image; it is a set of abilities that enable an individual to effectively: find, interpret, evaluate, use and create images and visual medial. Visual literacy is important to readers' development in many ways. It allows gradual development of the student's readers understanding.

It enables students to build their own interpretation and to rely on their own powers of critical thinking.

Therefore, critical literacy teachers will develop the students' ability to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use and create images and visual media. Visual literacy allows the examinations of different visual texts such as non-fiction, textbooks, picture books, art advertisements, poster, graphic novel comic strips, animations, films clips, and web pages. It is a good method for introducing critical literacy to emergent readers.

### Strategies for teaching visual literacy in the classroom

- Picture analysis. Before reading a book or a chapter, talk about the picture on the cover page at the beginning
  - Note Sketching – visual note taking reinforces concepts students are learning
  - Take a colour test
  - Insert memos
- Visual literacy helps students to grasp content of what they are learning very quickly. It encourages students to make

associations between pieces of information, soak up chunks of course content quickly and function as a memory aid.

**Textual literacy:** Textual literacy is the ability to communicate effectively, net speak or text speak. Textual literacy is linked with traditional definition of literacy, ability to read and write. At a basic level, it refers to the reader's ability to assimilate written information such as literature documents, and to communicate effectively in writing.

Textual literacy is important to learners because it helps them to gain insight during reading, they can think about how the information they are reading connects to other books they have read or their previous knowledge.

### Digital literacy

Digital literacy simply means being able to understand and use technology. It entails ability to find and create information online in a beneficial and useful way. It involves knowing the limitations of technology, understanding the dangers and precautions that the use of technology requires. Digital literacy allows users to improve their efficiency, access to things and fulfilment. It allows students to move beyond a process-oriented understanding of technology and apply digital resources creatively in their original work. It also allows students to use critical thinking skills. The digital technologies like internet platforms, social media and model devices are good examples.

**Technology Literacy:** This is called technological literacy. It is the ability to use, comprehend, manage and analyse technology safely, effectively and responsibly. It also involves using technology to evaluate, create and integrate information. The use of technology literacy includes, creating content, posting to social media, making a YouTube video, and writing blog posts. It also covers simple communication with friends, family associate, co-workers and people who may share your interests.

**Critical Literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The critical literacy skill is one of the important abilities of young learners that should be developed from primary school. This will enable them to respond intelligently to various kinds of information around them. Critical literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is important because it encourages individuals to understand and question the attitudes, value and belief of written texts, visual applications and spoken words. Critical literacy skills promote the examination and reform of social situations and exposes students to the hidden agendas within texts. In order to become critically literate, we must teach students to do more than reading and writing. Students are to become agents of social change. Teaching of critical literacy should be geared towards the attainment of the 21<sup>st</sup> literacy skills, which are critical thinking; collaboration; communication; information literacy; Media literacy; Technology literacy; Flexibility and Leadership.

**Critical literacy Practice in the Classroom**

Incorporating critical literacy into the curriculum of schools beginning from early childhood education is advantageous because of its numerous advantages. This will have positive impact on the learners' autonomy, their intellectual growth, cognitive abilities, democracy power distribution, social circumstances, responsibility and raised awareness and better understanding of the world and specifically Nigeria. The need for the inclusion of critical literacy in Nigeria educational system is imperative because of the multi ethnicity and multilingual nature of the country.

Gainer (2012), Luke (2012) and Sheibe and Rogow (2012) suggest that including critical literacy approaches in schools as well as teacher education curricula will enhance students' understanding of their environment as well as the roles of media in manufacturing sophisticated strategies or symbolic and ideological control of almost every segment of human life. Critical literacy will enable the students to analyse and evaluate the meaning of texts as they relate to topics on equity, poem and social justice. In addition, critical literacy will enable the students

to critique and challenge through in-depth analysis and investigation, the ways in which language and texts function to advantage or marginalized social group. The most important thing about critical literacy is that students are able to consider in-depth subjects they have read and not just brush it on the surface or cram the information.

In addition, students are equipped with skills with which they can analyse and reflect on aspects of meaning of what they read whether it is a textbook, novel and picture book. Critical literacy can be transformative as students who engage in it from young age are prepared to: (1) make informed decisions regarding issues such as power and control (2) engage in the practice of democratic citizenship and (3) develop an ability to think and act ethically.

**Ways of Teaching Critical Literacy**

Since critical literacy theme, focuses on the relationship between language power, social practice and access to social services there are numerous methods of engaging students to become critical members of their community. In order to enlist students' interest in critical literacy and its skills, students can read novels, short stories, magazine articles and watch films.

Students can evaluate the social construction of the texts and question the factors that influenced the authors to create such texts. It is the duty of the critical literacy teacher to encourage students to look at texts from other perspectives based on their knowledge and recreate the text read.

A text on social groups can be evaluated from the standpoint of marginalized groups, in order to analyse the power relations and inequities promoted by the text.

Behirman (2006) explains that the development of critical literacy encourages social justice and exploration of language and literature in many forms. Critical literacy helps children to understand themselves, others, and the world around them. From literature, the most commonly used practices that support critical literacy include reading supplementary texts, reading multiple texts, producing counter texts, having students



conduct research about topics of personal interest, reading from a resistant perspective and challenging students to take social action. We shall look at each of the above very briefly.

### **Reading Supplementary Texts**

Reading of supplementary texts assists students to confront social issues that may not be covered by the recommended texts. The media and technology provide opportunities for students to have access to many supplementary texts. They have the opportunity to analyse themes and related issues that are similar to the ones found in the recommended texts. If students are offered the opportunity to review appropriate internet resources such as: songs, television programming, and advertisements, as well as many other visual mediums, students will be exposed to popular texts which they can analyse outside the school. Lyrics from popular music can serve as part of supplementary texts in order to engage students in discussion on social issue.

### **Reading Multiple Texts**

Allowing the students to have access to multiple texts on the specific theme will enable them to analyse the theme, the value, or voices being promoted in the recommended texts. This practice can encourage students to use evidence from different books to support their interpretation of the recommended texts. This may suggest that meaning is fixed. Teachers who use this method have to select authors who write about similar topics and themes during the same period. When students read these similar themes and evaluated the voices of these authors, they can assess the different views of the authors.

### **Producing Counter- Texts**

A critical literacy teacher can encourage students to produce counter texts because of their experience from reading texts or experience gained through multi-media. In a class, some students are not often heard but if they are encouraged to create-counter texts their voices will be heard. The counter texts can validate the thought, observations and feelings of the students.

Counter texts may be produced in reading journals, book, weblogs, and personal narratives.

### **Social Action**

Students can be involved in community activities such as projects, a field trip or observing or taking part in festivals. Through this, they can have insight in what is going on in the community. They can identify what is lacking and make suggestions. In fact, when students are involved in social activities, they have better understanding of their society. Students can use the experience gained to improve their society.

### **Media and Technology**

Another popular strategy for teaching critical literacy is the media and technological means. The internet and technological devices are now available and are very useful in teaching critical literacy. Television is available in almost every home while many people are learning using handsets. Torres and Mercado (2006) say that teachers must show students how to read between lines of the media messages, question the interest behind them and learn how to look for alternative ways to be informed or entertained. When students are taught to do all these, they are using the critical literacy skills that enable them to analyse, synthesize, that is they interrogate the text for implicit meanings.

### **Allowing Students Choice**

Teachers who engaged students on critical literacy need to allow the students to choose or write and even read topic that are of interest to them. This will also boost the interest of the students. When they are engaged in project writing, the students must be able to identify the problems, conditions of society that created the problems and attempt to proffer solution.

### **Conclusion**

Critical literacy when taught in classes will enhance students' ability to think about reconstructing and redesigning texts, images and practices to convey different messages and ways of being that have real life effects and impacts. Therefore, critical literacy work needs to focus on

social issues, concerning the society, and the ways in which we use language and other semiotic resources to shape our understanding of issues. It is important to note that students learn best when what they are learning is important to their lives and experiences. Therefore, teachers should use topics, issues and questions that are related to the learners' conditions.

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# Critical Text Processing: A Tool for Sustainable Governance

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## Introduction

In its online edition of September 7, 2021, The Nigerian Tribune reported Nigeria's Minister of Education saying that more than 76 million adults, representing 38 per cent of the estimated 200 million population of Nigeria, cannot read and write, while an additional 6.9 million children are out of school. He was then quoted as saying that:

“Regrettably the advent of COVID 19 pandemic has disrupted the learning of children, young people and adults at an unprecedented scale which might likely hinder the realization of SDG Target 4.6”.

SDGs 4.6 Target is to ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030. Its specific aim is to ensure that by 2030, all young people and adults across the world should have achieved relevant and recognized proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills that are equivalent to levels achieved at successful completion of basic education.

The broad objective of SDG 16 is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. It specifically seeks to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (16.6); ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7); ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements (16.10); promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

(16.b) The aggregate expectation of both SDG 4.6 and SDG 16 Targets is that functional literacy will serve as a critical tool in human development and the sustainability of systems, mechanisms and structures of governance. However, the staggering illiterate population in Nigeria will certainly negate the attainment of these targets with serious consequences for sustainable governance.

The aim of this paper, therefore, is to establish the nexus between critical literacy and sustainable governance particularly in Nigeria. While it specifically argues that the acquisition of critical literacy skills is a necessary condition for citizens' participation and involvement in sustainable governance, it claims that critical literacy with its roots in text processing can provide opportunities for sustainable societal transformation. It proposes that the use of mother tongue will better serve the purpose of sustainable governance.

The conceptualization of critical literacy adopted in this paper stems from Andreotti's (2014) perspective that challenges imbalances in power and representation on the one hand, and emphasises the social, cultural and historical 'construction' of realities and highlights the limits and blind edges of any system of signification on the other hand. Based on this orientation, a critical literacy approach would focus on the production of knowledge/power and enable questions that will lead to a better understanding of social practices thereby prompting actions that will bring about change.

## Sustainable Governance

Generally, governance entails the making of decisions about the direction of an institution. It could be at the levels of democratic, economic and financial, corporate, environmental, religious or even family.

*The World Bank in a 1991 paper MANAGING DEVELOPMENT: THE GOVERNANCE DIMENSION defines “governance” as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. In very broad terms, it is the system and processes by which a country, an organisation or institution is controlled and operates, and the mechanisms by which it, and its people, are held to account. In other words, it is about the culture and institutional environment in which citizens and stakeholders interact among themselves and participate in public affairs. Sustainability governance, on the other hand, is the management of organisations in a manner that is both lawful and which promotes a good life for all, now and far into the future.*

Governance becomes sustainable only when:

1. It is effectively and efficiently responsive to the present and future needs of society.
2. The political system secures inclusiveness and effective citizen participation in decision making
3. The voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making
4. A social system provides solution to tensions arising from disharmonious development;
5. An economic system that is able to generate surpluses on a sustained basis
6. It is transparent, equitable, consensus oriented, accountable, and follows the rule of law.
7. It assures that corruption is minimized.

### **Components of Literacy**

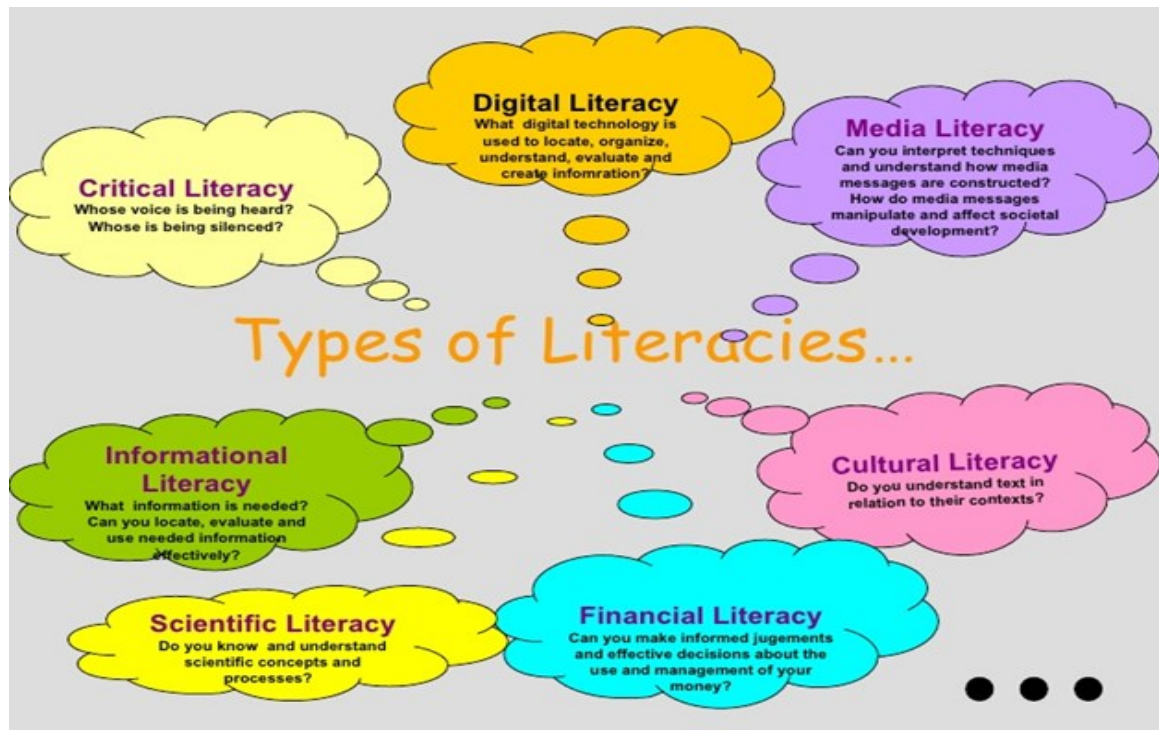
In today's 21<sup>st</sup> century, literacy is conceived, not just as the ability to read and write,

but as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. In its description of literacy, UNESCO adopted a functional perspective that highlights; a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. Abia (2012) argues that the functional perspective of literacy implies:

the ability of an individual to read and write and also use the skills of reading and writing for his daily living. In other words, one who is literate should be able to read and write and use these skills to provide for his daily needs and also solve problems around him that affect his wellbeing as an individual and that of the society to which he belongs.

To enable participation, the individual must possess a repertoire of multiple literacies which encode social practices integral to the development of society. This was the position of Aruma (2014) who maintained that literacy provides the individual with clear knowledge of what is happening and how they can contribute to the growth and sustainable development of the society. The multiple literacies include:

1. critical literacy
2. Digital literacy
3. Media literacy
4. Civic literacy
5. Information literacy
6. Cultural literacy
7. Financial literacy
8. Scientific literacy
9. Technological literacy



The concept of multiple literacies is informed by the belief that there are many ways to relay and receive information, and as such individuals, in today's world, have to learn how to construct knowledge from multiple sources and modes of representation for their personal development and for them to function effectively as citizens. (Seel; 2012),

The affordances provided through multiple literacies are not only viewed as the catalyst for responsive citizenship, they underscore the goals of the National Policy of Education 2004, which include: a. A free and democratic society; b. a just and egalitarian society; c. united, strong and self-reliant nation; d. a great and dynamic society; and e. a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

The achievement of these national goals will require concerted efforts from both the government and the citizens to address the myriad of challenges that have constituted a threat to the survival of the present generation and those yet unborn. While policy makers are required to act by generating policy outcomes which when complemented by citizens through responsible

lifestyles will produce sustainability. In other words, it is the complementary actions of both policy makers and the citizenry that will maintain or improve the quality of social, economic, political, environmental life for present and future generations without placing an unfair burden on future generations.

The burden of sustainability will appear to place a responsibility for knowledge construction, reproduction and dissemination on the key stakeholders in the governance structure. On the one hand, the management of the decisions about the direction of government will determine the level of citizens' compliance, participation and ultimately its success. On the other hand, citizens' perception and interpretation of government's policies and programmes will determine their reaction and level of participation and compliance. For instance, in the turn of the new millennium which came with the affordances of information communication technology and its attendant world of disinformation, misinformation, misrepresentation, fake news etc, the citizenry will be at odds with regards to what to believe, hence trust between them and the



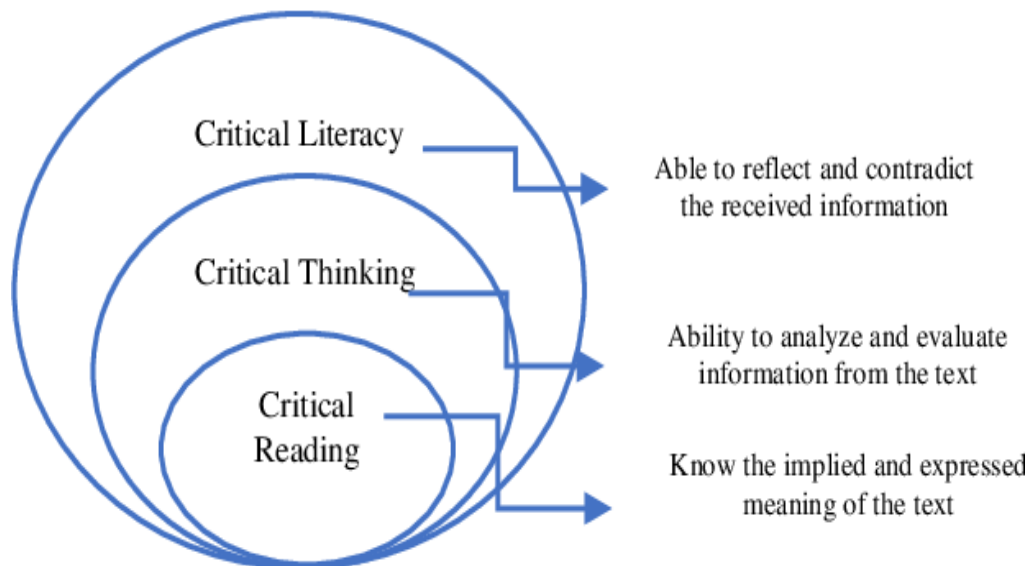
government will be grossly eroded. In such an atmosphere, governance will be difficult because the citizens will base their actions on their perception of the reality as painted by the framers or writers of such information. The need to enable this mutually beneficial interdependence among the stakeholders in the governance architecture dictates the application of critical literacy skills.

### Critical Literacy Skills

Critical literacy is basically the ability to actively read texts in a manner that promotes a deeper understanding by questioning the attitudes, values, and beliefs of written texts, visual applications, and spoken words. In other words, critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand the socially constructed layers of power in human relationships. A text can therefore be defined as a “vehicle through which the codes and conventions of society are communicated by

social actors. In the context of this presentation, the constitution, government releases, newspaper publications, legislative acts, books, party manifestos, songs, conversations, pictures, movies, etc. are all considered texts.

Critical literacy promotes thinking skills that involve the questioning and examination of ideas and socially constructed concepts; such as inequality, marginalization, resource control, insecurity, restructuring, internet frauds, LGBTQIA+ etc. In addition, it requires the reader to synthesise, analyse, interpret, evaluate and respond to the texts read or listened to. Tozer, Senese, & Violas (2009) summarize the importance of critical literacy by stating that beyond the ability to read and write, critical literacy emphasizes the ability to use reading and writing as the basis of higher-order thinking skills that allow a person to analyze and critically evaluate what is read and written or what is heard or spoken.



A critical literacy practice would necessarily expect an individual to make informed decisions regarding societal issues by developing the ability to recognise text, think, and act ethically as democratic citizens. In other words, to become critically literate, one must learn to read in a reflective manner. Three key skills (TTE) are required for any critical literacy practice:

1. Reading/listening (text recognition) skills
2. Thinking skills
3. Evaluation skills

Generally, texts serve as the link between past reality, present experiences and future possibilities. To understand the values, principles and systems upon which the society was built and

governed, one must engage texts by reading. In the same way, texts provide a window through which access is gained into the thoughts, intentions, values and directions of today's stakeholders in the business of governance. While reading brings together the text encoder and the text decoder, language mediates the meaning making process of the text consumption.

### Critical Reading Skills

A reading skill or ability is *the ability for someone to interact with a text and comprehend*

*the words*. In other words, it is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows. Critical reading on the other hand pertains to a person's capacity to read, comprehend, interpret and decode written or spoken language and texts, and understand their meaning. It involves engaging in what you read by asking yourself questions such as, 'what is the author trying to say?' or 'what is the main argument being presented?'



### A basic requirement for citizenship participation in governance is the ability to read and listen.

To be able to interact with and process textual information, text consumers need:

- the ability to identify the words (word recognition);
- to understand what the words mean (comprehension);
- to connect words and their meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate (fluency).

It would be near impossible for a largely 'illiterate' (who neither reads nor writes) citizenry to become active participants in the governance process. (Data from the ministry of education revealed that as of September 2021, 38 percent of the estimated 200 million population, representing over 76 million adults, are non-literates.) Their

lack of the ability to read will constitute the weak link in the chain of sustainable governance as they will not be in any position to understand the policy decisions and directions of government, let alone fulfil their democratic citizenship roles. The intricately interwoven relationship between the individual's ability to read and act responsibly in favour of societal development is succinctly captured in the good book, which says, "Write down the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it." This raises a lot of pertinent questions:

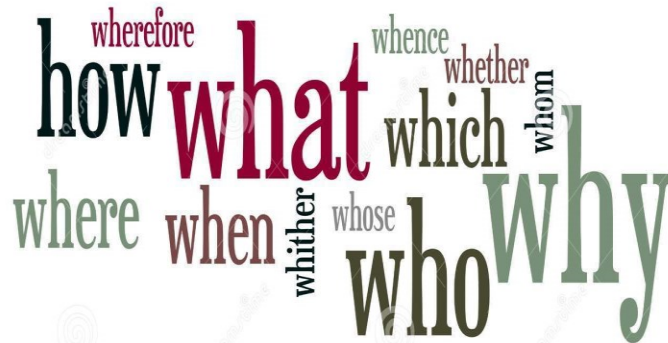
1. Does Nigeria's literate population have materials to read (Does the government have a clearly spelt out vision)?
2. Are these Nigerians reading at all?
3. When they do read, do they understand?
4. Are they implementing/acting on what they are reading (what exactly are they doing with what they are reading)?

Perhaps this explains why successive Governments at various levels in Nigeria, through pronouncements and actions, have shown preference for illiteracy. When the people are in a state of paralysing docility, governments take it as a cue to enthrone the reign of impunity and irresponsibility in governance. For instance, the continued rape of the nation's treasury by a few politically exposed individuals in privileged positions of power not only jeopardises the wellbeing of the present generation of Nigerians, it compromises the availability of a prosperous economy for the coming generations. Similarly, the irresponsible manner in which kidnappings and killings have been allowed to thrive across the country through the seeming hopeless disposition

of the country's security apparatus and the complicity of the citizens across the country is treading on the path of unsustainability governance.

### Thinking Skills

Thinking Skills are mental processes that are applied when readers seek to make sense of experience. Text consumers can make sense of texts when they interrogate text materials by seeking to find answers to the why, when, how, what etc of the text. An essential duty of the citizenry is to hold those in government accountable by asking questions about government decisions, policies and plans.



When productively engaged, thinking skills enable text consumers to integrate each new experience (encoded in the text) into the mental models that they are constructing of “how things are.” A corollary to that will be the mapping out of alternative courses of action to sustain positive practices or mitigate or stop practices that are considered to have negative implications for sustainability.

Critical thinking skills enable readers to engage in the following mental processes:

1. Reasoning. Reasoning is the process of using existing knowledge to draw conclusions, make predictions, or construct explanations. Three methods of reasoning are the deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches.
  - 1.1 Deductive reasoning starts with the assertion of a general rule and proceeds

from there to a guaranteed specific conclusion. In deductive reasoning, if the original assertions are true, then the conclusion must also be true. e.g.

Flooding is often a consequence of blocked drains.

The drainage system in Lagos is reeling under

Lagos will always be flooded.

In deductive reasoning, once the propositions are sound, the rather stern logic applied will produce absolutely certain conclusions. Therefore, while it is possible to make observations and expand implications through deductive reasoning, it will be difficult to make predictions about future or otherwise non-observed phenomena.

- 1.2 Inductive reasoning begins with observations that are specific and limited in scope, and proceeds to a generalized conclusion that is likely, but not certain, in light of accumulated evidence. Conclusions reached by the inductive method are not logical necessities; no amount of inductive evidence guarantees the conclusion.
- 1.3 Abductive reasoning typically begins with an incomplete set of observations and proceeds to the likeliest possible explanation for the set. Abductive reasoning yields the kind of daily decision-making that does its best with the information at hand, which often is incomplete.
2. Analyzing Skill: Analytical skill is the ability to scrutinize information so as to get to the bottom of things and solve a problem or find an answer. It often involves the ability to identify a problem, investigate to find out relevant facts, and find a logical solution to it.
3. Decision-making Skill: While a decision can be described as an act of selection or choice of one action from several alternatives, decision-making can be defined as the process of selecting a right and effective course of action from two or more alternatives for the purpose of achieving a desired result.
4. Evaluating Skill: The goal of evaluating a text is to form an opinion or judgment about the content, quality, or validity of the content with the intent of communicating your opinion to others later. Evaluating a text begins with summarizing the main idea of the text in order to grasp what it is about.
5. Problem solving Skill: This refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems. This doesn't mean you need to have an immediate answer, it means you have to be able to think on your feet, assess problems and find solutions.

#### Five important Critical Thinking Skills



(Downloaded from Dreamstime.com)

#### Evaluation Skills

Evaluation in critical reading involves examining textual arguments to make a judgement. To make evaluative claims, the reader needs to distinguish fact from opinion, and

separate arguments given for and against the various claims. It will therefore be useful to ask some evaluative questions to establish the purpose and the veracity of the text contents. The reader may ask questions relating to:

1. the purpose of the text, e.g. why would a document be released at a particular time and not at another time; what purpose is a "Breaking news" item designed to serve?
2. the writer's attitude towards the text topic,
3. The claims being made in the text
4. the reliability of the conclusions drawn in the light of the evidence presented,
5. the writer's use of language in terms of the meaning being covered. For instance, what would be the difference between "Fulani herdsmen" and "terrorists"; "unknown gunmen" and "hired killers"?

A key element to critical evaluation is to form opinion or response to the value of the text. It however must be noted that the tendency to always look for the negative in text production is not synonymous with evaluation. An inherently evaluative exercise can have a positive orientation while at the same time pointing out the weaknesses of the text. In addition, it is expected that the evaluation should offer solutions (action/recommendation-based).

### Language Question in Critical Reading

Language as a vehicle of communication provides a proper channel to express and share ideas that help to create mutual understanding which is a prerequisite for any significant development. Therefore, it is safe to state that the language in which a text is encoded is the central factor affecting the reader's ability to process a text.

Generally, language embodies the totality of human experience within a specific socio-cultural context. It determines the way people think. This is the central idea of the Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf hypothesis (Sapir, 1983. Whorf 2012) which holds the belief that the structure of a language determines a native speaker's perception and categorization of experience. The Sapir-Whorf linguistic relativity hypothesis hinges language users' perception of reality on the cognitive affordances made available by the language they speak. Consequently, it could be argued that the language

in which a text is constructed ultimately shapes the reader's perception of the reality being projected by the writers of the text. The acquisition of language skills will engender better communication (between the text encoder and the text decoder) that is requisite in the maintenance of governance systems and structures for sustainable development of society. To this extent, language literacy can be regarded as the backbone of any critical engagement that contributes to sustainability. If it is true that language literacy (constructed and reproduced in texts) bequeaths a legacy of responsible citizenship and responsive governance to successive generations; then language certainly plays a big role in sustainable development.

### Summary

The interface of critical literacy and sustainable governance could be hinged on the following propositions.

1. Text construction, production and procession are never neutral. As socially constructed messages, texts work to have us think about and believe certain things in specific ways. Each time we read, write, or create, we draw from our experiences and understanding about how the world works. For example, engaging with texts about government policy on deregulation of fuel pricing, restructuring, etc, ought to shape the citizens' understanding of these social issues. However, questioning the perspectives conveyed by the writer will prepare the citizens to produce texts that present counter arguments.
2. Reading and listening to peoples' concerns or their responses to policy texts (e.g petitions, letter to the Governor, press release, press conferences, etc) enables government actors to know how they are reading and problematizing their worlds.
3. Critical literacy practices become transformative when both the citizens and drivers of the governance process develop an ability to think and act

ethically by making informed decisions regarding social issues such as power and control, and engaging in the practice of democratic citizenship. By questioning the unfair privileging of certain dominant discourses in which society engages, people would be better able to contribute to making the world a more equitable and socially just place.

4. Critical literacy is key to making governance more sustainable, and the nation more peaceful and prosperous: its principles and pedagogy should be incorporated into the language curriculum taught in schools.
5. The ability to process texts, especially in mother tongues, would enhance the acquisition of knowledge and skills that are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.

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# Critical Literacy for Sustainable Living

**Professor Ismail Junaidu**

*Executive Secretary NERDC*

## Introduction

Distinguished scholars and participants at the conference, it is indeed an honour to be invited to deliver the 40th Anniversary lecture of the Reading Association of Nigeria. 40 years of existence as an association is no mean achievement. It goes to show the commitment of the members of the Association to the tenets and principles upon which RAN is founded. It is heart-warming to note that this Association has held 18 Biennial conferences. Your pursuit to provide Nigerians with the opportunity to acquire appropriate knowledge, attitudes and skills through reading remains commendable. In all climes, Associations like RAN give impetus to nation building as they attempt to shape agenda for public discourse to awaken the consciousness of leaders towards meeting the critical needs of the people. Where such bodies do not exist or exist in limbo, it is the citizens that suffer the consequences. I, therefore, commend you all for staying true to the principles of nation building through your numerous activities and initiatives focused on improved reading culture and skills.

Closely examined, the theme of this conference “Critical literacy for sustainable living” sparks off a lot of thoughts. First, it reminds us of the critical role of reading in the effort to improve the living standards of people. Second, it positions reading and literacy development as core elements of rapid development and as sure means for the attainment of national developmental goals. The big question around this theme then is how well is Nigeria positioned for sustainable living given her literacy rate in the global rating? This question is not to weaken our morale but to spur us into some deeply thinking towards setting an agenda of where we want to be in the global ranking of literacy rate, perhaps for the next decades. We cannot afford to miss out joining the global trend towards achieving a leap in the improvement of the reading skills and abilities of learners. It is not just about

improving learners reading ability and comprehension but more about mobilizing learners as social actors with knowledge and skills to disrupt the commonplace; conduct research, analysis and interrogation of multiple viewpoints on an issue; as well as identify issues focused on socio-political realities in the context of their lives.

The hallmark to achieving the above is through the redesign of the instructional package and process of teaching reading. This again underscores the importance of the theme of the conference. Critical literacy which literally refers to approaches to literacy instruction that place emphasis on helping people develop a sense of their own power to make a difference for the accomplishment of goals they deem important and resist the coercive effect of illiteracy. Fundamental to a critical literacy approach is the understanding that a reader does not read texts in isolation, but develops an understanding of the cultural, ideological and sociolinguistic contexts in which they are created and read. The above clearly shows the link between critical literacy and sustainable living.

To achieve critical literacy among the learners, there must be deliberate programmes and actions that clearly focus on building a strong reading foundation at the basic education level. This informed the development of the National Reading Framework (NRF) by my organisation, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The NRF was recently approved by the National Council on Education for implementation in Nigeria. Let me delve a little into the NRF.

## The National Reading Framework

The overall reading practice contents and strategies must always be structured and standardised based on a well-designed and articulated framework. It should be emphasized that the most important document that sets criteria

and standards for reading instruction, learning, skills, and performance is the National Reading Framework (NRF) of a country. National Reading Framework (NRF) defines common goals and measures against which to assess reading instruction, learning reading, and reading outcomes. The framework targets the reading conditions, conducts and behaviours of learners while reading a text that is literary, factual, or informational in nature. The text to be read by learners should be written in the identified and approved source or origination language, English or Nigerian languages. The decision and context for learners to read in English or Nigerian language, account for the position which maintains that, how well learners learn to read is determined by the language they learn to read (Alidou et al 2006, Thomas and Collins 2002, and Marsh et al 2002). The NRF provides detailed description of the types of text pupils or learners are expected to read and understand at the end of each grade level. Therefore, it provides the grade specific benchmarks for reading in English, and sampled 9 network Nigerian languages namely Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Efik, Fulfulde, Izon, Kanuri and Tiv (NERDC, 2021). Indeed, the NRF established uniform national minimum standards on reading that align with the ones set under the UNESCO Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) for reading. The reading indicators established by the GPF are set to report progress on global Sustainable Development Goal 4.1 (SDGs).

The National Evaluation Framework (NEF-R) for reading, as stated earlier in this presentation, is an essential component of the NRF. It outlines critical reading skills and standards that learners must perform or demonstrate at the end of each grade from Primary 1 to Primary 4 and to Primary 6 or higher grade as the situation might warrant.

The NEF-R as an evaluation framework provides standard criteria for grade-level texts that clearly regulate or determine their level of difficulty. Therefore, it is pertinent to give an insight into the performance standards and the end of grade -level text criteria to enable their correlation as determinants and guidelines for the

development of textbooks for early grade instruction in Nigeria.

### **Reading Performance Standards**

The reading performance standards are set and established by reading experts, researchers, teachers, educators, curriculum experts, and policy makers at different technical sessions. The standards are evidence-based and benefitted among other sources, from data obtained in the course of reading activities conducted through the initiatives. The performance framework assigned descriptors for the different levels and set minimal expectation of learners at the different grades from primary 1-3 and 4-6. A very important aspect of the performance framework is the identification of the reading skills that should be retained and upon which the performance or proficiency of learners are based. These skills apply across reading in English and the sampled Nigerian Languages namely Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Efik, Fulfulde, Izon, Kanuri and Tiv. The skills retained are oral listening comprehension, phonological awareness, concept of print and paratextual features, alphabetic principles, fluency, reading comprehension, and attitudes towards learning and motivation to learn. The performance framework assigned key performance indicators under each skill and their appropriate descriptors and statements considered relevant and necessary under each grade level (P1-3, 4-6).

It is pertinent at this juncture to give a brief listing of these skills, their performance indicators and descriptors that are expected to be demonstrated by learners at the relevant levels. Even though the provisions of key performance indicators and descriptors apply to all levels and languages, there are exceptions whereby certain selected few descriptors may only be relevant to English or Nigerian languages.

The descriptors may yet apply differently based on the peculiarity of the languages. The identified skills and their key performance indicators and descriptors are listed below for primary 1-3



**A: Oral Listening Comprehension** A.1 Indicator: Locate and understand ideas in grade-level stories read aloud or told orally. This contains two descriptors to locate information directly or explicitly stated and interpret information based on clues.

**A.2 Indicator:** Understand the meaning of words in grade-level stories read aloud or told (commencing only at P1 with regards to Nigerian languages). It contains descriptors to identify familiar and unfamiliar words.

**B: Phonological Awareness.**

B.1 Indicator: Identify and manipulate sounds in spoken form. This consists of two descriptors to identify initial sounds or end sounds spoken in two or three syllabic words as well as same sounds spoken at the beginning, middle, and end of two or three syllabic words.

**C: Concept of Print and Paratextual Features**

C.1 Indicator: Identify basic features of print. The descriptors are to identify basic features of a book: front cover, back cover, title page, and illustration and orientation of pictures and images, as well as opening and flipping of pages, reading orientation (line and line by line) etc.

**D: Alphabetic concept letter names and letter**

D.1 Indicator: Identify and locate letters, upper and lower case and decode and blend sounds

D.2 Indicator: Read globally words as an added impetus to decoding

D.3 Indicator: Read letter-sound using decoding and blending skills to read familiar and unfamiliar short sentences. This contains descriptors to decode, blend and read accurately 3-4 syllabic words at different designated speed.

**E: Fluency**

E.1 Indicator: Read aloud a pace and accuracy that meets minimal standards set for P1 to P3 or other grades.

**F: Reading Comprehension**

F.1 Indicator: Understand the meaning of words in grade-level texts. This consists of descriptors to

identify the meaning of simple familiar words, unfamiliar words, expressions, level equivalence words

F.2 Indicator: General simple words, and sort words or words using semantic categories. Identify and generate words using semantic categories or sense relation (based on colour, clothing, season, etc.) as well as grade level equivalence.

F.3 Indicator: Locate and retrieve explicit information at the sentence or text levels, e.g. name of characters, and places.

F.4 Indicator: Interpret information at sentence or text level based on clues in the text.

F.5 Indicator: Establish main and secondary ideas (depending on the grade-level text, reading activity, and level equivalence question).

**G. Attitude towards Reading and Motivation**

G.1 Indicator: Engage in class and school reading activities in group reading, class reading, read aloud, reading practice, and reading competition.

The performance standards explained above provide publishers, writers and material developers with clear indicators of the targeted skills that will enable them to meet the expected reading content and instruction as well as the needs of learners.

**End of Grade Level text Criteria**

Reading of grade level text has been made imperative in the NEF-R to enable learners' performance be in accordance with the requisite reading/learning skills. Therefore, it is important to specify what constitutes the end of grade level texts. The end grade-level texts are set to establish the level of difficulty to be used for the purpose of reading instruction especially performance of the learners pertaining to standardised reading skills. The end grade-level texts criteria facilitate learners to attain the minimal performance outcome. The text criteria also provide learners with a comparable level of text difficulty that is gradually regulated. Textbooks for reading instruction need to satisfy the standard indicators of grade-level texts. The end of grade-level text criteria often are established by several factors

that are psycho-social, learner dependent, textual and informational (depending on the ideas expressed in the text). The utilisation and analysis of the five factors and their related features of text difficulty level resulted in the end grade-level text criteria contained in the NEF-R. Generally, the criteria set consist of expected level of difficulty based on surface features of the text in terms of vocabulary used, number of words repeated, length of text, length of word or number of syllables and structure of word or sentence used. The criteria also account for the graduation of the difficulty level of the types of ideas that are expected to be expressed or contained in an end grade-level text from Primary 1-3 and 4-6. Learner interest, familiarity and maturation constitute significant expectations and determinants of grade-level texts. A brief explanation is provided below on the end grade-level text criteria for Primary 1-4 English and sampled Nigerian languages contained in the NEF-R.

The different criteria set under the evaluation framework consist of surface features, and deeper features each circumscribed by several criterion specifications based on textual quality, size, structure, information, themes, ideas, learner interest, and language for instance.

### **A. Surface Feature Criteria**

**A.1 Length.** Length is a grade-level text criterion or descriptor that stipulates textual requirements across the level and based on languages in terms of number of words, sentences, and paragraphs

#### **A.2 Concept of Print**

This criterion specifies the font size and spacing to be used, for text

#### **A.3 Word and Vocabulary**

Word and vocabulary is a criterion that specifies words as either simple, difficult, familiar or unfamiliar, unique words, sort words, categories, or dialectal.

#### **A.4 Nature of Sentence**

The sentence criterion specifies end grade-level texts based on types and length of sentence either

simple, shore; declarative, repeated sentence frame, compound etc.

### **A.5 Nature of Punctuation**

The punctuation criterion specifies the use of selected punctuation marks to be used in grade-level texts from P1-4.

### **B. Deeper Features**

**B.1:** Number of characters

**B.2** Number of ideas under which a main idea/central idea or supporting ideas are specified

**B.3** Structure of text criteria which specifies clear beginning, middle (problem) and end (solution).

**B.4** Theme: A criterion that specifies the familiar themes and every day events from pupils lives.

**B.5** Interest in and commitment to reading. The criterion imposes the selection and reading of happy and enjoyable narratives that are grade-level appropriate.

Therefore, the foregoing description of end grade-level text criteria for Primary 1-4 constitutes substantive determinants and guidelines for the development of textbooks for reading instruction in Nigeria. These criteria set in the evaluation framework serve significant information for publishers, writers, and institutional materials developers to utilise appropriately.

### **Reinforcing the Performance Standards and Grade-Level Texts**

Aside the performance standards and end grade-level text criteria, there are other book quality assurance standards and set benchmark. These are established quality assurance standards set by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). Key assessment indicators and descriptors and rating scales pertaining to books and other instructional materials or resources. Specifically, it is apt to also describe these indicators and descriptors that are appropriate at specifying the quality of materials for reading instruction at the early grades. The standards set for the assessment and quality

assurance of textbooks include the following selected indicators and descriptors. Any textbook to be quality assured and assessed shall specify how:

- a. Content difficulty level is appropriate and suitable for the intended age of learners and grade level.
- b. The text promotes the way that instructional materials are sourced from the immediate environment.
- c. Concept and contents are illustrated with clear experiences of learners.
- d. Teaching and learning activities, strategies, and assessment allow learner participation.
- e. Cover page contains book title, and other pages with their related features.
- f. A book contains certain limits regarding size, page number, weight and dimension, and type of binding required for the different grade levels.
- g. A book consists of appropriate font size and their use consistently across the different grade levels.
- h. Language and style are used accurately and appropriately based on correct spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and sentence structure and usage as well as logical arrangement of ideas.
- i. Appropriate paper grammage, visuals, images and colours are used in the textbook.
- j. Culture, ethical and positive norms, and values are maintained in the text.

Therefore, the above selected set standards and requirements captured in the benchmark provide further relevant guidelines and determinants for developing instructional materials for reading at early grade levels.

### Recommendations

- To achieve critical literacy, there is the need to start developing various reading materials including digital materials to meet the provisions of the NRF.
- Teaching of reading for critical literacy must be inseparable from the teaching of

cultural ways of seeing, describing and explaining.

- It is therefore recommended that reading materials are developed and assessed in line with our cultural heritage and as provided in the NRF. It is also important that the elements of the NRF are fully introduced in the programme of teacher training institutions. This will enable the would-be teachers get prepared to utilize effective pedagogies for teaching reading for critical literacy.
- RAN, Authors, publishers, reading experts, language and literary experts, key agencies, printers, and other critical stakeholders in the book development chain need to synergies and collaborate to entrench the NRF in the subsector to achieve positive national developmental outcomes and attain the SDGs.
- RAN shall initiate action to collaborate with NERDC and development partners on a project to promote and nurture budding authors to develop creative imaginative or factual writings in the different languages.

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# Achieving Transformation of Education in Nigeria through Critical Literacy

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## Abstract

*Nigeria, like most other countries of the world, is undergoing rapid technological, social, economic and political reforms. Importantly, these fundamental changes in socio-economic and political development going on in both the global and local contexts call for an urgent transformation of education so that other sectors will not leave education behind to wallow in the deep sea of underdevelopment. This study examined how global education reform could be achieved in Nigeria through critical literacy. It critically reviewed some important concepts in education, transformation of education, previous existing education transformation programmes in Nigeria, factors responsible for the collapse of education reforms and critical literacy as agent of education transformation. The study discussed in details RAPID Framework for education transformation and how it's could be implemented through critical literacy in Nigeria. It explored secondary sources such as review of related literatures to gather data which analysed using content analysis. This study recommended that a successful application of critical literacy in the process of transforming education would increase competitiveness, employment, economic development, citizenship and social cohesion.*

**Key words:** Education, Employment, Global, Transformation, Underdevelopment

## Introduction

### ***Meaning of Education and a Brief History of Western Education in Nigeria***

The truth remains that there is no general definition of education as no one person should be presumed to have the final say on matters relating to it. In this study, reviews of the meanings of education from different angles would be given rather than an etymological definition.

Education is described as the process of transmitting the culture of a society from one generation to the other (Kolawole, 2015). It is knowledge acquisition, a process and means by which a society evolves for the purpose of impacting its values and mores, as well as pursuance and attainment of its collective vision, aspirations and goals. A great philosopher of education, late Prof. Akinkuotu established that education is a process through which man is raised

up in the right way so as to be good through the inculcation of the right knowledge that will empower him to be fitted into his immediate environment. It is the development of the whole man- soul, body, intellectual, emotional and physical well-being. This point of view is in consonance with Bamisaye's position that education is a cumulative process of development; development of intellectual abilities, skills and attitudes, all which form our various outlooks and dispositions to action in life generally.

Factually, there is a confluence where all these highlighted meanings meet. This means that they all share one same attribute and this attribute is that education takes place in all human societies and every society determines its own form of education.

As noted by Babarinde (2016), western education has long history in Nigeria. The first

beneficiaries were slaves and children of slaves who were exposed to western education abroad and later those educated at home. Fafunwa (1974) equally narrated that the first recorded effort was some sort of educational institution in the Oba of Benin's palace in 1515, while major open attempts took place in 1842 and 1843 through the Methodist Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society. Likewise, the ground breaking record was set by Christian Missionary Societies with the first secondary school CMS Grammar School, Lagos, established in 1859.

### **What is Critical Literacy?**

Critical literacy has no set definition rather many scholars have defined it in diverse ways. Etymologically, literacy is perceived to be peculiar to reading and writing. But literacy has gone beyond only reading and writing. One can now talk about digital literacy, critical literacy, sustainability literacy and the list is endless. Our focus in this work is critical literacy. The University of Melbourne (2018) put it that critical literacy is a central thinking skill that involves the questioning and examination of ideas, and requires one to synthesize, analyse, interpret, evaluate and respond to texts read or listened to. It is a process whereby readers question, explore, or challenge the power relationships that exist between authors and readers. It examines issues of power and promotes reflection, transformative change, and action. Similarly, Jones (2006) stated that critical literacy is like a pair of eyeglasses that allows one to see beyond the familiar and comfortable.

Critical literacy is an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development. It is a kind of literacy (words rethinking the world) that connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical for rethinking our lives and for promoting justice in place of inequity. Students/learners are positioned to operate as "boarder crosser" in the process of using critical literacy (Anderson and Irvine 1993). The idea of boarder crosser is eminent in Katherine, Lucas and Catherine (2022) narratives. Likewise, one of the authors of this study always

challenges his pupils' perceptions of a familiar and often favourite story, The Tortoise and the Dog. He begins the class by reading the text aloud to the students. Most of the pupils laughed fondly as they remembered hearing the story as a child. After reading the text, it is then discussed. The pupils usually comment on how the book teaches children to share and to love their friends. They talk about their remembrance of hearing the story read to them by parents. Everyone is feeling happy.

Then, he asks the pupils to listen to the story again, this time paying attention to social justice, which socioeconomic class implied by some people having food in plentiful while the entire village is famished. What message does the story portray about racial and ethnic differences? As the class reads the book a second time, there is a definite change in the atmosphere of the discussion. The pupils begin to perceive the story in a different way. They are more attuned to looking at texts from different perspectives. From the illustration above, critical literacy encourages readers to question, explore, or challenge the power relationships that exist between author and readers. Mentor (2021) revealed that critical literacy helps to critically analyse and understand issues of social economic and political injustice and inequities. It helps to deconstruct internalized sense of worthlessness and oppression. It also creates a space for alternative paths for self-growth. It promotes action, transformation and social justice within a community of learners. It is important to know that all these are achieved by placing attention on social justice qualities, stereotypes, gender roles, socioeconomic class, accuracy and authenticity, racial and ethnic portrayal and action/praxis

### **Transformation of Education in Nigeria and its Current Global Trends**

Transformation of education is any planned change in the way a school or school system functions, from teaching methodologies to administration. Its benefits include; increased competitiveness, employment, economic development and citizenship, and social cohesion (Moran, 2012). No doubt, different countries in

the world transform their education for various reasons. In the case of Nigeria, we can talk about the 1969 National Curriculum Conference which according to Okparaugo (2021) is the foundation of modern Nigerian education. The conference reviewed the existing goals of Nigerian education with the aim of identifying new goals for the country's education at all levels. Likewise, another significant and relevant transformation of education in the country was that of the introduction of Universal (free) Primary Education in 1976 and the establishment of more federal universities, polytechnics and colleges to boost the nation's manpower. Likewise, Anuforo (2013) stated that in order to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Universal Basic Education (UBE), a number of reforms and innovations were introduced by the Obasanjo administration (1999 - 2006) through the Federal Ministry of Education. The reforms during Obasanjo's regime featured public-private partnership in the management of the federal unity schools in Nigeria, restructuring of the Federal Ministry of Education and some of its parastatals and passage of Education Reform Act in 2007.

Fast-forward to 2011, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria initiated a Transformation Agenda which the Federal Ministry of Education corroborated with a Four-Year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector (2011- 2015). These strategic plans in education have engendered an expanded role for education as an investment for economic, social and political development; an aggregate tool of empowerment for the poor and the socially marginalized groups; an effective means of developing the full capacities and potential of human resources as well as the development of competent work force through the acquisition of practical life skills relevant to the world of work as a veritable means of developing sound intelligent learning societies fit and relevant to the 21st century.

However, the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic three years ago which consequently led to the closure of schools around the world deepened the pre-existing global

learning crisis. Makinde, Adetokun and Hunpegan (2021) reported that the closure of schools in March 2020 affected over one billion students in more than 180 countries in the world. Upon the drop in the spread of the pandemic, schools reopened for academic activities but with varying damages to the sector worldwide. Among these problems are: increase in out-of-school children, distortion of curriculum implementation, building walls instead of bridges between teacher and the student. As a result, international organizations like United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and the World Bank made radical and urgent calls for transformation of education to heal the wound caused by the pandemic in the sector. The transformation of education globally is tagged RAPID meaning:

**Reach** every child and keep them in school

**Assess** learning levels regularly

**Prioritize** teaching the fundamentals

**Increase** the efficiency of instruction, including through catch-up learning

**Develop** psychosocial health and wellbeing

As Anuforo (2013) explained, transformation of education is often influenced by some factors like shift in societal/national philosophies and goals. For instance, the goals of education in Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education (2014) are: development of the individual into a morally sound, patriotic and effective citizen; total integration of the individual into the immediate community, the Nigeria society and the world. The goals also include provision of equal access to qualitative educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels of education, within and outside the formal school system. The policy further stated other goals as inculcation of national consciousness, value and national unity; development of appropriate skills, mental, physical and social

abilities and competencies to empower the individual to live in and contribute positively to the society.

Another factor that also influences transformation of education is manpower and professional needs. It is obvious that educational policies (1979, revised in 1981, 1988 (3rd Edition), 2004, 2007, and 2014) are formulated from time to time in order to produce through education, the desired manpower such as teachers, lawyers, engineers, doctors, nurse, bankers, factory workers, civil servants, miners etc. This is leveraged on the fact that a highly educated and skilled labour force is a great asset to nation building.

Technological development significantly influences education transformation (Anuforo, 2013). Owing to Obanya's (2020) submission that technology has had profound influences on people's lives in general and particularly on education. It has created a one-world scenario with real-time information flow encouraging easy sharing of ideas, fashions and products across geographical boundaries. As a result of this great impact, it has necessitated the formulation of new national philosophies and innovations. Likewise, the desire to catch-up with the advanced countries of the world in science and technology prompts Nigeria to embark on reforms in education, which is described as an instrument per-excellence for effecting national development (NPE, 2014).

### **Achieving Transformation of Education through Critical Literacy**

In this study, our focus is on how to achieve the five RAPID key policy action on education transformation by the Global Education Recovery Tracker Survey (GERT 2022).

**R: Reach Every Child and Keep Them in School:** Global Education Recovery Tracker Survey (GERT 2022) put it that ensuring the world's children, particularly the most vulnerable, return to school is essentially not only for education but also to address social challenges such as early marriage, early pregnancy, child nutrition, child labour and mental health. Countries showed their commitment to return children to school: at

primary and secondary education levels, at least half of countries reported taking measures such as automatic re-enrolment and community mobilization campaigns to address disengagement from school, as well as cash transfers and subsidies to address economic hardship faced by families. A true and deep 'reach all' effort is imperative for education systems to shift from recovery to transformation. Governments can eliminate barriers to education for vulnerable and marginalized groups by targeting specific policy measures to identify and reach those who are still excluded and have been left behind. This includes ensuring that the right to education for all is not only fully captured in national legal and regulatory frameworks, but also effectively enforced. Critical literacy could help in retaining students through its fundamental roles. That is, students through critical literacy will see aspects of themselves in the curriculum and this will definitely be an attractive means to bring children's lives into the classroom. It gives the student a sense of belonging particularly by engaging their thinking, guiding their thinking, extending their thinking and reflection. Through critical literacy, students will see school in another dimension because they will gain perspective by understanding education or learning in a different way.

**A: Assess Learning Levels Regularly:** Emerging data from countries around the world show that learning losses due to COVID-19-related disruptions are real and disproportionately distributed. As children return to school, understanding their current learning levels, needs and contexts allows teachers, school leaders, system managers and policymakers to make informed decisions about instructional approaches, assessment practices and other related policy measures for learning recovery and better outcomes. Through critical literacy, students' ongoing development is examined. It often allows examination of ideas, and requires one to synthesize, analyse, interpret, evaluate and respond engagement to study. It is a process whereby students' question, explore, or challenge

the power relationships that exist between two knowledge paths.

***P: Prioritize Teaching the Fundamentals:***

Education transformation will entail reviewing learning objectives, content relevance and corresponding time allocations; producing the necessary educational materials; and using lessons learned during the pandemic as building blocks for the review, design and strengthening of evolving curriculum during crisis and non-crisis contexts. As it is generally observed, critical literacy is an introduction to the democratization of culture, a programme with human beings as its subjects rather than as patients, a programme which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, one in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention (Education for Critical Consciousness). From the forgoing, through critical literacy, teachers will teach students from cultural backgrounds that are very different from theirs. This will address concerns that affect the lives and self-perception of some students (Galbraith, 1967).

***I: Increase the Efficiency of Instruction:*** a much smaller number of countries is implementing proven measures to catch up on missed learning, such as extending instructional time, providing tutoring programmes and using targeted instruction. To support teacher performance, more than 70 per cent of countries implemented policy measures on structured pedagogy and teacher professional development on the effective use of technologies. Ensuring education transformation requires countries to adapt new policies and financing for strengthened licensing and accreditation schemes, as well as modernize pre-service teacher education curriculum to include supervised field teaching, induction and mentoring. To increase the efficiency of instruction as an aspect of education transformation, the teacher must see critical literacy as a pedagogical tool that empowers and encourages students from being oppressed. Likewise, critical literacy advocates that teachers' instructions must include cultural contexts.

Teachers' instruction must engage, guide and extend students' thinking. Through critical literacy instruction, children move beyond comprehension into thinking.

***D: Develop Psychosocial Health and Wellbeing:***

To transform education, school systems must monitor, address and prioritize learners' and educators' mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. A whole-of-society approach, involving collaboration across sectors including education, child protection, health and nutrition, will be needed to ensure children, adolescents and youth receive comprehensive services while education systems build better going forward. This item, developing psychosocial health and wellbeing, could be achieved through critical literacy. Through critical literacy, a higher order process could be developed to appraise information of relevance to health. It will aid awareness of issues, participation in critical dialogue in decision making for health. It will aid students to reflect upon health determining factors and processes and to apply the results of the reflection into individual or collective actions for health in any given context.

**Conclusion/Recommendation**

The relevance of critical literacy in transforming education has been adequately reviewed in this study. It is seen as a kind of literacy (words rethinking the world) that connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical for rethinking our lives and for promoting justice in place of inequity. Its application in curriculum content area advocates that diverse students' cultural knowledge should be used to build curriculum. Competitiveness, employment, economic development, citizenship and social cohesion, which are the hallmarks of education transformation, could best be achieved through critical literacy. This study therefore recommends that critical literacy should be included in education transformation in order to change inequitable ways of being and problematic educational practices. Critical literacy has real-life



effects and real-world impact on education. As a result, educator must leverage on its usage to the fullest.

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# Critical Thinking and Literacy for a Creatively Healthy Living: Reflections on Some Social Media Health Tips

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## Abstract

*The realities that critical literacy is grounded by critical thinking and creative healthy living is grounded by both critical thinking and literacy are yet to be given scholarly attention. Extant studies on critical literacy and critical thinking do not reflect on or show the place of these two in healthy living. This study rises to bridge this laid-bare knowledge gap by dissecting the nexus between critical thinking and literacy and their significant place in sustainable healthy living. Reflections are made on selected social media health tips to reveal the place of these two phenomena in attaining, maintaining and sustaining healthy living by individuals. The study also relies on secondary data, drawn from library and internet sources. It is premised on pragmatism and psychoanalysis theories of critical thinking, which emphasise experimentation and uncovering and challenging of assumptions for evidential new behaviour, creative self-appropriation of knowledge and betterment in all ramifications. The analysis of data reveals that critical thinking leads one to critical literacy and creative healthy living. The study concludes that what is read about health as well as general knowledge gets subjected to critical thinking for evaluative, creative and evidential results, upon which the knowledge got from literacy is put to pragmatic uses for health and otherwise benefits.*

**Key words:** Critical thinking, Critical literacy, Creative healthy living, Reflections, Social-media, Health tips

## Introduction

There can be no critical literacy without critical thinking. Besides, significant creative sustainable healthy living among individuals is only possible with critical thinking and critical literacy, among other diverse factors. The implication of these two assertions is that there is a nexus between critical literacy and critical thinking on one hand, and critical thinking and critical/creative healthy living on the other. Many people seem ignorant of the reality of these assertions. Scholars are also yet to take cognisance of this reality and pay deserving scholarly attention to this laid-bare knowledge gap. Thus, to bridge the gap, this study seeks to dissect the nexus between these phenomena, with a view to empirically demonstrate the significant

place of critical thinking and literacy in creative sustainable healthy living.

## Conceptual Analysis of Critical Literacy and Thinking

Critical literacy, Anderson and Irvine (1993, p. 82) note, 'is learning to read and write as part of the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations.' Although this definition confines the purpose of critical literacy to historical constructions and power relations, it explicitly states what it entails, which is learning to read and write for in-depth consciousness, cross-examination of facts, analysis and criticism of historical constructions and power relations. Norton (2007, p. 13) notes that 'literacy is not only

about reading and writing, but [also] about relationships between text and reader, student and teacher, classroom and community.' The relationships noted by Norton, among others, point to interconnection (i.e., correlation) between critical literacy and other allied endeavours like critical thinking. It should be noted that critical literacy goes beyond learning to teaching, consumption of produced (written) works of art to producing works of art as the manifestation of critical literacy, which is drawn from critical thinking. Anderson and Irvine (1993, p. 82) are of the opinion that the pedagogic relevance of critical literacy is the peak of its importance. Thus, critical literacy plays a crucial role in ensuring sustainable creative healthy living, because it educates individuals on how to live a healthy life.

For Lankshear & McLaren (1993, p. xix), critical literacy concerns making concerted efforts to acquire and practically display reading and writing skills at a reasonable extent in productive ways that benefit self, others and the society, with the benefits including enlightened engagement in different affairs, and the attainment of democratic emancipation at both individual and group levels. Critical literacy is said to be 'built on exploring personal, socio-political, economic and intellectual border identities' (Bishop, 2014, p. 51). This study adds that it is ultimately built on critical thinking, which lies behind these 'border identities.' That is, critical thinking is the springboard or motherboard of critical literacy and the noted built personal, socio-political, economic and intellectual border identities. It should be noted that health is a means of identities, which is even why there are medical (health-based) considerations of disability and other like identities. Critical literacy locates where learners are positioned to operate beyond the confine of the traditional practice of teacher-to-student alone flow of knowledge, whereby the teacher used to be the monopolist of knowledge in teaching-learning activities (Anderson & Irvine, 1993). It is said to be grounded in ethical imperative meant to examine contradictions in society (e.g., freedom, obligations, justice, and political immunity) in relation to the meaning of these contradictions and

the constructed and institutionalised silence that permeates incidences of suffering in everyday life. Besides describing critical literacy as 'a kind of literacy about structures, structural violence, and power systems,' Bishop (2014, p. 51) points out that it involves the use of texts and print skills in ways that enable students to examine the politics of daily life in the contemporary society.' The aim is to enable the students 'understand what it means to locate and actively seek out contradictions within modes of life, theories, and substantive intellectual positions.' In this era of digitalisation and globalisation, social media, as some aspects of technological feats and forums of the new media, house and offer various health tips that require critical literacy on one hand and critical thinking on the other, in order to be able to put the tips into selective, creative, meaningful and non-harmful uses. By implication, social media users, who are not well grounded in critical thinking and literacy (i.e., with critical thinking and literacy skills), would likely make use of health tips on the social media as well as other forms of the new media without any form of critical considerations, even at their expense. Not all pieces of information on the new media are true or correct. Falsehoods largely obtain on social media and other new media. These include fake news, misinformation, disinformation, fallacies, scams, and so on. The argument is that while it is factual that health tips, which produce or lead to attaining and maintaining healthy living, obtain on social media, critical thinking and critical literacy (i.e., their skills), are needed to decide to use and how well to use the tips for the realisation of good health, misinformation, disinformation, fallacies, scams, and so on. The argument is that while it is factual that health tips, which produce or lead to attaining and maintaining healthy living, obtain on social media, critical thinking and critical literacy (i.e., their skills), are needed to decide to use and how well to use the tips for the realisation of good health.

Critical thinking, also regarded as 'reflective thinking,' has no single generally accepted definition. Besong (2021, p. 2) defines critical thinking as 'an act of careful, logical, in-depth, reason-based and result-oriented thinking

directed at achieving a given goal.' Its usage in the academic or educational circle is attributed to John Dewey, who had used it interchangeably with 'reflective thinking' in 1910 (Besong, 2021, p. 2). For Dewey (1910, p. 6), critical thinking refers to active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends. It also involves constructive thinking that rests on one's own observations and experiments, and other factors (Ennis, 1962; Fisher & Scriven, 1997; Johnson, 1992), with the central goal of appraising the products of such thinking (Besong, 2021). For Robert, Besong and Danjuma (2022), critical thinking describes the act and art of engaging in decisive, logical and sustained deep(er) mental reflections on various ideas, aspects, matters and things of life about cosmos, self, others, the Supreme Being, beings, humans and non-humans, and the universe, with a view to making tangible observations for cogent and valued results in form of answers to questions of and about life and existence. They note that this definition attempts to conceive and describe critical thinking from a comprehensive approach, as it concisely captures all what critical thinking entails (Robert, Besong & Danjuma, 2022).

Besides, the definition looks at critical thinking as a concept, an act and an art (Robert, Besong & Danjuma, 2022). The artfulness and resourcefulness of critical thinking are what primarily make it an art. As an exercise involving action in the mind and the brain through other parts of the human body system, it is an act. Its associate attributes: 'decisive', 'logical', 'observations', 'results', 'cogent', 'sustained', and 'mental reflections' prove critical thinking to be a tasking exercise that crosses the province of arts and humanities to sciences. It allows its performers or actors (i.e., critical thinkers) to make choices and exploits of what become(s) shared cogent and valued results of individual's deep mental reflections. The results are most often than not sustainably beneficial to the individual critical thinker and others concurrently (Robert, Besong & Danjuma, 2022). According to Besong (2021), critical thinking involves thinking

critically, logically, creatively diversely about issues; thoroughly processing and organising facts, data and other kinds of information to identify and describe a problem; and evolving, implementing and sustaining efficient solutions to the problems at stake.

Critical thinking skills are noted to include identification (e.g., identifying biases), inference, research, determining relevance, curiosity (the quest to know), observation, introspection, retrospection, inductive and deductive reasoning, critical reflection, creativity, decision-making, problem-solving, analysis, communication, keeping an eye for details, pre-empting situations, and multitasking, among others (Besong, 2021; Erstad, 2018). Critical thinking is not only affirmed to be the foundation of self-reliance, but also to make one to be conscious of and exhibit self-content, self-worth, self-reliance, responsibility, and self-development (Besong, 2021; Moore, 2021; Kloppers, 2019; Kim & Isma'il, 2013; Nwokoye, 2009; Fonchingong and Fonjong, 2003). It takes critical thinking to realise the truism or falseness of health tips on social media and other new media, regardless of how interesting the tips may be. This reality applies to other communicative contents of critical literacy, which were first borne out critical thinking, on social media, other new media and the varied forms or sources of the traditional media and data sources in general.

### **Historicising Critical Literacy Theory**

Pioneer theorists and initiators of critical literacy discourse, Freire and Macedo (1987), discuss critical literacy in relation to critical pedagogy, which came to be known simply as the Freirian pedagogy. They argue that critically literate persons do not only understand how meanings are socially constructed in texts, but also understand the political and economic contexts of the created texts. These contexts ground the meanings of the social constructions created in texts. For Lankshear and McLaren (1993), literacy is more complex than the traditionally defined skills of reading and writing. They argue that the traditional definition of literacy ideologically aligns with particular

postures of normative and inherently exploitative socio-political consciousness. For them, critical literacy revolves around the social construction of reading, writing and text production within political contexts of inequitable economic, cultural, political, and institutional structures. Earlier, Freire (1970) had theorised critical literacy within socio-political context, inclusive of and focusing more specifically on school context. Freire (1970) explains critical literacy in relation to critical pedagogy, whereby both are characterised by socio-political constructions of indoctrination and the development of a critical consciousness.

Besides, Freire (1970) describes political indoctrination and the development of a critical consciousness as ‘careful’. Consciousness is needed to do meaningful reading and writing. By emphasising critically reflective teaching and research agendas, Lankshear and McLaren (1993) implicitly affirm the place of thinking in critical literacy, which is the backbone of critical reflection, reflective teaching and learning, critical and creative research, and creative healthy living built on critical thinking and literacy. Lankshear and McLaren (1993) are of the view that literate skills and forms are socially practised. They argue that critical literacy differs from cultural literacy. Thus, unlike cultural literacy that dictates a given knowledge corpus (Hirsch, 1988), the former does not. Rather, it seeks epistemic independence or freedom for students, whereby students are not confined to getting, accepting and holding on to only whatever comes from the teacher. That is, the restrictive, rigid and teacher-centred traditional system of teaching and learning is discouraged by advocates of critical literacy and thinking. This rigid system is considered the tyranny of academic literacies by Street (1984), Knoblauch and Brannon (1993) and Lankshear and McLaren (1993), among other scholars. It is averred that tyranny of academic literacies could serve the purpose of socially reproducing dominant ideologies, such as racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and xenophobia, which perpetuate different forms of injustice in society (Street, 1984). Given the above, Lankshear and McLaren (1993, p. 17) condemn

the traditional system and call it ‘colonisation culture’ pedagogy. They go on to show that critical literacy seeks to question both historical and contemporary imbalance or inequality and the politics of exclusion among groups from the angle of mainstream narratives (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). Lankshear and McLaren (1993, p. 17) identify three education practices that demonstrate critical literacy. These are liberal education, pluralism, and transformative praxis. Accordingly, liberal education refers to an approach to disciplinary knowledge, where intellectual freedom exists with considered disparate interpretations, but any form of inevitable contradiction is avoided, while rational argumentation takes precedence and gains victory at last (Bishop, 2014, p. 53). This system of education emphasises reading to evaluate principles that support a loose conception of tolerance of what comes from those who are not mainstream, while at the same time maintaining the mainstream. In our context herein, evaluating the involved principles implies the existence of ethics in this area and the ethical imperatives that have to be examined to realise critical literacy, critical teaching and creative healthy living. The realisation of these three becomes possible with critical thinking, critical reflections, critical and creative reading, writing, learning, teaching and analysis.

Here, praxis refers to the process of naming the conditions of oppression and struggling collectively with others in a cycle of action-reflection-action against such oppression (Freirian, 1970; Bishop, 2014). Lankshear and McLaren (1993, p. 7) maintain that there is ‘a guiding principle behind the processes of transformative critical literacy praxis,’ which concerns making analysis to understand how agents functioning within the confine of ‘established structures of power participate in the social construction of [different spheres of literacy] literacies.’ Lankshear and McLaren (1993, p. 7) call critical literacy praxis ‘political and social literacies’ involving ‘textual studies that are analysed at the discursive level, in which the texts were created and sustained (Bishop, 2014, p. 53). Apple (1992) shows that certain

knowledge gets socially legitimised in schools. That is because schools make up an essential agent of socialisation. For Apple (1992), texts, the primary property of schools, are characterised by, or rather built on, cultural politics. That is to say the constructions in texts within the school system are political or have political undertone. As Seidel (1985, p. 45) has noted, all kinds of discourse are political, because each discourse serves as a site of struggle, whereby there is a 'semantic space in which meanings are produced and/or challenged.' The aim of every political discourse analysis is to expose how political events, acts and processes are organised, structured and expressed, and what kinds of possible influence or effect they may exert on the political cognitions of the public at large (Anderson, 2014). Thus, constructions in schools are legitimised and institutionalised among generations of learners and teachers. Ideas (ideologies) are involved. Constructed ideologies get socially legitimised (Apple, 1992). That is the base of Apple's (1992) notion of 'no curriculum is neutral'. According to Apple (1992), curricular information involves and undergoes ideological processes. Apple (1992) demonstrates that pedagogic curriculum involves socio-political constructions that end up spanning ages among schools, teachers, and students. With critical literacy, experiences and knowledge about institutions along with the nature of the knowledge are creatively constructed in such manners and ways that reflectively determine the democratic functions or otherwise of the school, as an agent of socialisation and society (Apple, 1992; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993). | literacy is figured out as the most distinct of all the four major approaches to critical literacy (inclusive of critical teaching and learning), claimed to be addressing socio-cultural issues, while remaining deliberately disassociated with or non-participatory in politics.

The other approaches are functional literacy and the rhetoric of objectivism; interpretive literacy and the politics of nostalgia; expressivism as literacy for personal growth (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993, p. 152). In other words, Knoblauch and Brannon (1993, p. 152) identify four major approaches to critical teaching

and literacy learning, which are critical literacy; functional literacy and the rhetoric of objectivism; interpretive literacy and the politics of nostalgia; expressivism as literacy for personal growth. They emphasise that only critical literacy has, and shows the complexity of a socio-political framework that grounds 'the relationships of language and power with practical knowledge of how to use language for advocacy, social critique, and cultural transformation' (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1993, p. 152).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The cognitive theories of critical literacy explain in part the pedagogic relevance of critical literacy, as affirmed by Bassham et al. (2007), Brookfield (2005), Comber (2001), Comber (1993), Hull (1993) and Popper (1959), among others, who analyse the implications of critical literacy for critical literacy learning in schools. Comber (2001) has emphasised that it is best to engage in critical literacy with multiple sources and opposing views. The aim is to sufficiently or appropriately interrogate constructions and political goals involved. The pragmatism cognitive theory of critical literacy explains the experimentation to bring about better social forms. Causing better social forms requires constant experimentation, learning from mistakes, deliberately seeking new information and possibilities. In real world application, pragmatism involves phenomenal transfusion. Transfusion implies the attempt to create a connection where one does not exist. It involves as well as requires manipulating the consensus values. While transfusion is a propaganda technique, pragmatism is a critical thinking technique. These are two cognitive techniques of one pedagogic area—pragmatics.

In real world application, these two techniques are made to connect practically. For example, in a classroom context, a student taking a different stance on a subject matter, following the pragmatic application of critical thinking and literacy, is considered not supporting the others or not taking side with the teacher. Meanwhile, it is possible for the given student to support the class on the subject matter that he or she holds a

different (opposing) view and yet be thinking differently about the subject. The implication is that in the course of doing so or showing such support to the class (other or some other students, or the teacher), that student brings to place the transfusion technique that involves manipulation. By supporting the class, an attempt is thereby made by the student to create a connection where it does not exist. By virtue of the creation, manipulation obtains. The transfusion as well as manipulative exercise is undertaken at the cognitive realm that houses ideas (ideologies) from among which constructions are made revealing in practical or real contexts as knowledge, information, meanings, views, realities, experience, principles and/or practices (cultures). Essentially, transfusion points to the stage at which critical thinking becomes creative and gets revealed pragmatically at the stage of critical literacy that involves critical teaching and learning.

In pragmatism, the values of consensus are transfused or manipulated, while in psychoanalysis, these values are sold (i.e., consensus is used as a selling point). Then, in assumptions framing, certain behaviours get uncovered and challenged in the realm of psychoanalysis. Informed decisions follow afterwards. And, other points of views are examined. Thus, with the experimentation of cognitive assumptions, evidence is got uncovering and challenging the assumptions behind empirical new behaviour, creative self-appropriation of knowledge and betterment in all ramifications. The foregoing analysis shows both explicitly and implicitly that there is a correlation between critical thinking and critical literacy. The reality of this correlation is also a proof for the existence of interconnected relationship between critical teaching and learning (Brookfield, 1995), criticality and creativity, performance and productivity, and other dual/multi phenomena. Critical thinking makes it possible for one to know what to believe and what not to believe among what critical literacy offers the learner, as in the case of social media health tips for sustainable healthy living. This is in view of the possibility of façade masquerading as reality, as in bias and

prejudice masquerading as empirical fact or objective interpretation. Bassham et al. (2007) observe that if one could understand how bias and prejudice masquerade as such, one would be at a better position to decide on what to believe and that to disbelieve.

For this study, all critical thinking elements essentially apply to critical literacy. These include reasoning, hypothesis, (hypothesising for deduction), deduction, induction, argument, analogy, reading, listening, writing and speaking, questioning, observation, test, experimentation, grouping, control, familiarisation, informality and formality, (self-) criticism, understanding, cause and effect, and evidence (Bassham et al., 2007; Brookfield, 2005; Popper, 1959). It is understood from Stephen Brookfield that these elements lie behind the 'Processes of Self (in Culture and Society),' a taxonomy of the critical thinking theories. In Brookfield's theorised conception, the Processes of Self Theory of critical thinking summarily involves productive, positive, lived, process, context-specific, emotive and rational embodiments. These embodiments are followed by critical reflection that is made up of challenging assumptions, contextual awareness, imagining/exploring alternatives and reflective scepticism. Therefore, with these shared elements, critical thinking and literacy share interconnected functions in creating, maintaining and sustaining healthy living.

### **Betwixt Critical Literacy and Critical Thinking**

As the world build individuals, the world is built by individuals too through words and actions. It is in view of this reality that Shor (1999, p. 2) has noted that critical literacy is a kind of literacy involving the use of words to 'rethink worlds' and 'self-dissent in society'. Individuals redefine themselves and remake society through critical literacy in form of alternative rhetoric and dissident projects (Shor, 1999). Critical literacy interrogates power relations, discourses and identities in a world that is yet to be just, humane and finished (Shor, 1999). In an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development,

critical literacy challenges the status quo (Shor, 1999). It is with critical thinking that critical literacy possibly challenges the status quo. In what lends credence to the position of this paper, Shor (1999, p. 2) states that critical literacy 'connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical, for rethinking our lives and for promoting justice in place of inequity.' The position of this paper regarding the foregoing is that critical literacy and critical thinking correlate, as critical literacy is borne out of, and relies on critical thinking. Both critical teaching and learning are rooted in and rely on critical thinking.

Thus, health tips offered to the social media audience are first borne out of critical thinking before being let out through critical literacy, whereby the audience learns from the content producers how to create, maintain and sustain healthy living. Blackburn and Clark (2007) show a nexus between critical literacy and activism, as in youth advocacy for justice. Critical literacy is affirmed to be a method of social enquiry, as activism, which propels and offers refined education and impartial justice (Morrell, 2008). By implication, critical literacy is borne out of critical thinking, for which crucial social enquiries are made, meaningful and resourceful education is attained, and justice for identity groups is pursued and realised without bias or, at least, with only minimal bias. By affirming that critical literacy concerns the 'connections between literacy, power and educational change,' Norton (2007, p. 6) lends credence to the position of this study that critical literacy is connected to critical thinking and critical teaching. Giving health tips to people to learn, such as on social media, entails critical teaching. Doing so is a form critical teaching.

More so, Norton (2007) shows elaborately that critical literacy is a mechanism for international development. This literacy also impacts on culture, making some cultures more prominent and known than others among heterogeneous public. Street (2001) and Canagarajah (1999) also show elaborately that critical literacy is a mechanism for development at

all levels, not at the international level alone. It is to that end that Canagarajah (1999) emphasises that understanding the 'politics of location' is paramount to understanding the literacy practices of a given community.' Critical literacy is also affirmed to play a crucial role in education, linguistics, development and health, among others (Kwesiga, 1994; Makoni & Meinhof, 2003; Openjuru, 2003; Parry, 2003). This study argues that while critical literacy propels participation, as noted by O'Donoghue and Kirshner (2008), critical thinking engenders critical literacy, without which participatory skill is undermined by individuals. Both critical thinking and literacy share the following skills, among others: problem-solving capability, creative thinking (i.e., thinking out of the box) for worthwhile results, collaboration (as in collaborative decision-making), teamwork, co-operation and effective interaction and communication with others, and efficient interpretative skill, among others.

Again, critical literacy is a strong factor in cultural studies, education (pedagogic context), identities and differentiations, consciousness, broadened knowledge and intellectuality, diversity and cohesiveness, power relations, and socio-historical constructions, among others. It is critical thinking that grounds critical literacy, which is made manifest through teaching and learning. These involve ideological and pedagogic processes, logical and evidential evaluation, analysis, criticism and decision-making. Smetanová, Drbalová and Vitáková's (2015) study reflects the foregoing. Smetanová, Drbalová and Vitáková's (2015) study concentrates on situating implicit theories of teachers and students in teaching-learning process in the issue of critical thinking in education context. It also sees to what the concept of critical thinking entails, based on the subjective opinions of the respondents on what critical thinking entails and how a critical thinking child could be imagined. Also, it interrogates Czech teachers' consideration of the desirability or not of critical thinking. The study proves that the concept of critical thinking is variously conceived among individuals. It also reveals a correlation between



teaching experience and opinions on the need to develop critical thinking.

Essentially, the foregoing study lends credence to this present one, because the findings apply to the case of the present study. However, while their own study only looks at the pedagogic context of critical thinking, this present study steps beyond that scope to looking at critical thinking in general context in relation to sustainable healthy living and its place in critical literacy that joins forces with critical thinking to pursue and produce sustainable healthy living among individuals in general, not teachers and students alone. In another development, Singer's (2006) study shows that critical literacy is a viable means of changing the world. The students studied by Singer (2006) wrote about stories of injustice, and finding an audience and collaborators. In doing so, they got themselves 'consumed' with activism and the world outside the school. Lankshear and McLaren (1993, p. 8) have talked about this situation in students' reading and follow-up literary appreciation, as they note that readers, including student readers, are bound to react to what they read in texts with 'their own ideological investments'. In other words, in the course of writing about activists while reading Philip Hoose's (2001) text about the influence of youth throughout the history of the social justice movement in the United States, Singer's studied students got immersed in the world outside the school, as they got participating in activism and literacy research (Singer, 2006, p. 112). The Singer's (2006) study illustrates with various stories how reading and writing change the world. It should be noted that reading and writing are language skills. The others in the same categories of language skills are speaking and listening. Listening and reading are categorised as primary/receptive language skills, while writing and speaking are categorised as secondary/productive skills (Monday & Eze, 2012). These skills are the base of literacy, be it critical or uncritical literacy.

### Methodology

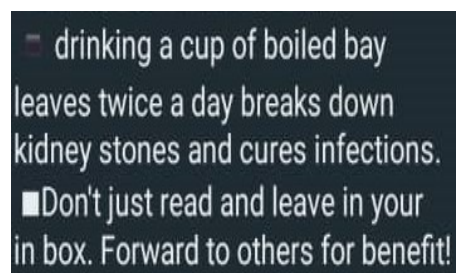
Two research methods are employed. These are the descriptive survey design and the analytic methods. The survey design suits the field

survey for primary data. The analytic method is employed because of its suitability for the analysis of both primary and secondary data. The primary data are drawn from social media, Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. Observation is the other source of primary data used. The secondary data are sourced from library and internet print sources, such as textbooks, journals, periodicals, special, conference and seminar papers, newspapers and magazines, among others. Qualitative approach and content analysis are employed in doing the study, including its analysis.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

Here, the primary data sourced from social media are presented in sets and analysed afterwards, with a view to showing the correlation between critical thinking and critical literacy in finding, rousing, attaining and maintaining creative healthy living.

#### Data Set 1: Dealing with infections and harmful habits to eyes



Things we do that damage the eye

Constantly rubbing the eyes

Too much screen time

Staring directly at the sun or any light emitting object

Staring directly at the sun or any light emitting object

Unprescribed or overuse of eye drops

Smoking

Drinking too much alcohol

Hitting the eye

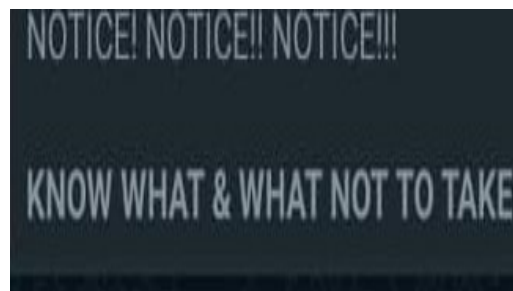
Using mobile phones in the dark or even watch tele where there is little light

**Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022**

Obviously, social media users, who are literate in English and suffer from the above noted ailment, would undoubtedly try to experiment what they learn from the encoded piece of information above. First, they would think critically about the truthfulness or the falseness of the health tips given above. That is, they are bound to first interrogate the reality of the health tips given. Then, other decisions, actions and processes follow up. This is done employing critical thinking. The result of their critical thinking about it would determine their experimentation of the given health tip or not. Upon critical thinking, experimentation follows after collecting the substance, boiling and observing it. Once they get cured of the infections they have, such persons would make valid experiential and evidential conclusion on it and spread the above health tip. As such, creative good healthy living is attained. If proven otherwise, they would do otherwise and criticise the same or the like health tips some other time on social media as well as other new media. It took critical thinking, critical literacy and creativeness to procedurally arrive at the conclusion.

Next, the tips given above highlight habits that are harmful to the eyes, which would be avoided by many who read the post as well as such other posts on what not to do to the eyes. While some of the tips are commonly known, others are not. For example, not quite many people know or believe that it is harmful to: spend too much time on screen, stare directly on light emitting object, use mobile phone in the dark, watch television where there is little or no light, drink too much of alcohol, and smoke often,

among others. Thus, critical thinking roused the critical health-concerned research and creative work that put forward the health tips as content for critical literacy, which lead to creative sustainable healthy living. Upon reading, it takes critical thinking about these tips to start doing what would get rid of (or avert) infections and eye problems.



#### 4. Burger with fries



The usual combo, a burger with fries, actually isn't considered an ideal meal.

#### 2. Yogurt and fruit



**The following are the best-known risk factors for cervical cancer:**

Inhaling secondhand smoke or smoking.

Having a lot of romantic partners.

Having an unprotected encounter.

Having a limited immunity.

It seems sensible that caffeine shouldn't be eaten in excess since it can also lead to headaches.

Eat natural food, fruits, vegetables, drink a lot of water, avoid alcohol and smoking and do some physical exercises; you'll be surprised after a period how your sexual performance will improve.

I am talking from experience.

**Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022**

The above caption 'Know what & what not to take' is a captivating headline on social media, which symbolically communicates a lot about healthy living. It was borne out of critical thinking for critical literacy to allow for its digestion. Critical thinking, which gave rise to it in the mind of the producer(s), is also applied by the audience in order to accept and put to use what is made known to take and not to take. Thus, critical thinking led to creative healthy living for the audience through critical literacy that makes it possible for the audience to get the useful health tips. Also, critical thinking is needed in order to be creative in digesting the information given. For examples, warnings have been sounded about cervical cancer and the implications of taking caffeine excessively. Learning the tips critically and acting upon them would lead to attaining healthy living (i.e., staying healthy).

It is realised from the data presented above that there are certain challenges people suffer, because they never knew what to do as rightful health practices until they got educated by critical literacy content on the health matters concerning them. First, it is realised that wrong combination of different food varieties causes health challenges, such as cervical cancer, headache and poor sexual performance. It is learnt that smoking by oneself, or inhaling smoke from smokers while they are smoking, exposes one to cervical cancer. Another risky practice is that of having many sex partners and having unprotected sex with them. It is advisable for one to boost one's body immunity; avoid excess intake of caffeine; know the food, vegetable and fruits to combine or rather avoid combination; and avoid the use of sexual stimulants. Instead of using stimulants and engaging in unhealthy habitual acts of smoking, alcoholism, and not doing exercises, the content producers exposed the learner to the above packed health tips that are the reverse of what threaten healthy living. One has to be critical and creative enough to make judicious use of the tips for the attainment and maintenance of healthy living. Talking from experience, one of the content producers stressed the imperative of eating natural food, fruits and vegetable, drinking plenty of water, doing exercises, and avoiding smoking. With critical and creative thinking, a reader of the content understands that it is not just about drinking any kind of water, but portable, drinkable and good water. The unstated information is got from inference and experience, using cognitive skills, reasoning, deduction, induction, logic, evaluation, etc., which together constitute characteristics of critical thinking and literacy. Pragmatics and cognition are the factors behind understanding and stating the unstated information rightly. To get the stated surprising results of doing the aforementioned, the reader of the above content, has to experiment with the data through various requisite processes and methods until they reach the final stage of verifying the truthfulness or falseness of the literacy content.

### Data Set 3: Health tips on menstrual healthy living

Studies have indicated that increasing your heart rate through exercise can help you manage premenstrual syndrome symptoms. Exercise can also help improve your mood and lessen the likelihood of bloating while you're on your period.

Always wash your hands before doing tasks like tampon insertion or pad replacement while your friend Flo is in town. This not only keeps your hands clean but also guards against all the bacteria you come into contact with throughout the day. So, before doing anything down there, make sure to wash your hands.

Snacks with a lot of salt are potato chips. You retain more water if you consume more salt. Reduce your intake of salty meals during your period so that you have nothing else to make you bloaty (full of stomach gases).

Chemicals found in fragranced feminine products have the potential to irritate everything and change the balance between good and bad bacteria. Additionally, the chemicals in these products have the potential to disrupt the normal process by causing PH imbalance. Additionally, one of the potential causes of pubic boils down there is wearing highly scented pads.

#### 5. Limit your sugar intake.

Consuming sugar in moderation is okay,

#### 6. Don't drink too much coffee.

Because complete withdrawal can result in headaches, this does not mean that you

#### 7. Steer clear of alcohol completely.

Drinking alcohol could make your period symptoms worse because it can dehydrate you, make your headache worse, and make you bloat. Additionally, it may result in nausea and digestive issues diarrhea.

### Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022

Borne out of critical thinking, the producers of the above presented social media content educated women (girls, ladies and women) on how to ensure and maintain healthy menstruation through personal hygiene and food selection. The first tip is that of keeping fit through exercises. Women are told that doing exercises is of great benefit to their monthly menstruation. The second tip is on personal hygiene, with the example of washing one's hands. The consciousness of the menstruating woman is roused to the imperative of washing her hands clean and regularly during her monthly menstruation. This stated information on maintaining personal hygiene during menstruation has pragmatic implications of unstated pieces of information about keeping oneself neater than ever during the period of menstruation.

The menstruating woman is also advised to reduce her rate of salt and snacks consumption, as doing affects her menstruation. Obviously, not all women know this. Many who know it may not have been conscious of this reality. As such, their consciousness is roused to it. For the sake of healthy living, the menstruating woman, who likes snacks and salty food a lot, would reduce the consumption rate. Also, consuming large quantity of salt is detrimental to individuals in various regards. As such, reducing it during menses

implies ensuring healthy living beyond the menstrual period. By so doing, the above piece of information, borne out of critical thinking by the content producer(s), contributes to ensuring the healthy living of the social media users that experiment with these tips. Thus, the producers meaningfully contributed their quota to addressing health issues in society through creative measures borne out of critical thinking, and revealed to the public through critical literacy. Similarly, the menstruating woman is advised against the consumption of plenty of sugar. She is charged to reduce the quantity of sugar she consumes. The second author of this article feels that this message is of great value to Northern Nigerian women, most of who like sugary food a lot. The warning also applies to those who consume white Maggi, especially in the North and such other parts of Nigeria and the globe at large. The menstruating woman is also advised to reduce the consumption of caffeine to the barest minimum in order to maintain healthy living. Alcohol consumption is supposed to be halted completely during the menstruating woman's monthly period. The risk of consuming alcohol during menstruation as well as even generally afterwards is highlighted. Also, the menstruating woman is told of the effects of chemical products like perfume and the likes on her during menstruation. Thus, suspending the use of chemicals during menses by the menstruating woman is of great health benefits to her. That is one way of attaining, maintaining and sustaining healthy living through creative healthy menstruation, obtained through critical literacy that resulted from the initial critical thinking of the content producer, who then decided to educate the social media audience with the packaged critical literacy communicative content.

#### **Data Set 4: Health tips on okra health benefits**

According to Healthline, cleaning up your arteries is the first step toward ensuring a healthy blood flow throughout your body. Your blood vessel elasticity and flexibility will be restored immediately.

Okra is a good source of fiber, which can help to prevent constipation and other digestive problems.

if you eat much okra, it increase fertility..you can give birth to twins

The antioxidants in okra can help to protect cells from damage and may help to reduce the risk of cancer.

According to Healthline, the soluble fiber in okra can help to lower cholesterol levels and keep your heart healthy.

#### **Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022**

From the above data, it is gathered that one way of ensuring and maintaining sustainable health is to cleanse up the arteries. This can be done using okra. Okra can be used to prevent constipation and other digestive problems. It increases fertility. Okra is also found to be capable of reducing the risk of cancer, besides protecting cells from damage. Okra also keeps the heart healthy, which is obviously one way of ensuring and maintaining sustainable healthy living that has a bearing to critical thinking, critical literacy, critical teaching and learning on social media. By taking advantage of the above content of critical literacy, which reveals the above health tips on social media, the audience would get critical and creative about it, experiment with it, and finally attain creative sustainable healthy living.

#### **Data Set 5: Tips on benefits of sexual intercourse**

1. Regular or occasional intercourse amongst partners has been shown to increase immunity and reduce the risk of contracting a variety of diseases. It's true that having intercourse with your partner can help strengthen your immune system but research shows that you should also prioritize eating well, exercising, and other lifestyle changes.



## 2. Studies have shown that regular intercourse can assist people with hypertension or high blood pressure without resorting taking drugs or herbal remedies.

Please what the post is talking about is good health and I am sure that everyone needs good health, so it doesn't matter whether you are married or not, old or young, male or female what matters is that you are knacking, if you are not married please look for boyfriend or girlfriend just make sure that you are knacking for the sake of your health ooo

## 3. Make a concerted effort to have intercourse time to time, as this type of physical activity has been shown to hasten the rate at which fat is burned from the body.

## 4. Despite the fact that intercourse raises your heart rate, research suggests it can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease. The levels of testosterone and estrogen in your body can be naturally balanced by regular intercourse.

**Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022**

Learning is a continuous process. It is the essence and the end result of literacy, critical and uncritical kinds alike. The social media audience of the above health tips is exposed to some benefits of sexual intercourse, which many people either do not know or usually neglect. The social media users in entangle with these tips would undoubtedly benefit from them. Those who never knew or usually neglect these stated benefits of having sexual intercourse regularly or timely have undoubtedly learnt to do so for the sake of the benefits. Accordingly, the exposed

health benefits include increased immunity, effective control or management of hypertension and high blood pressure, burning out fat from the body, reduced risk of cardiovascular diseases, and balancing the levels of testosterone and oestrogens in the body. These are among other health benefits of sexual intercourse.

With critical thinking, the audience of the above critical literacy health tips on sexual intercourse becomes obliged to do the needful that brings forth the noted health benefits. For instance, persons having hypertension and high blood pressure, who were ignorant of the natural treatment of these ailments by engaging in regular or timely sexual intercourse, would become poised to doing so. As they do so, they maintain and attain creative healthy living that is sustainable in nature. They sustain their life as well as health with sexual intercourse. This is particularly so for persons suffering from these ailments who do not like medicines. Partners in love and/or sexual relationships, who erstwhile felt no need for regular or timely sex, get sensitised and roused to having sexual intercourse regularly or timely for the sake of healthy living. In the case of both partners feeling erstwhile to be doing the other partner favour with sex, the mentality would certainly change henceforth. This is made possible by critical literacy, which was borne out of critical thinking about healthy living through sexual intercourse. Then, the producer then applied creativity to the critical thinking to produce critical thinking content in the form of the critical, creative and sustainable health tips on sexual intercourse. These are among other health benefits of sexual intercourse.

## Conclusion

The analysis of the gathered and used data obviously shows that what is read about health as well as every other subject matter or knowledge in general gets subjected to critical thinking for evaluative, creative and evidential results, upon which the knowledge got from literacy is put to pragmatic uses for health and otherwise benefits. What is got from critical literacy via its critically made content is usually borne out of critical thinking. Processing it into any kind of content for critical literacy also involves critical thinking. That is, critical thinking directs the whole process, without which no good or meaningful result is got

for presentation to the learner of the communicative content made by the players or actors of critical literacy. The foregoing applies to the case of pursuing, attaining, maintaining and sustaining sustainable healthy living.

Health tips, such as those found on social media and other new media, are borne out of critical thinking. In creating these tips, the producers first of all think critically and creatively about different health situations and then move to experimenting their thoughts on what they thought out to be the panacea for the health issues, which they take up to address respectively. In the course of processing their thoughts and material substances for experimentation into realities, they still rely on critical thinking in order to obtain good or excellent results. These results become or constitute their processed communicative content for critical literacy. In the case of processed communicative content for critical literacy on health (i.e., healthy living), health tips, such as those analysed herein, are thereby produced and disseminated on critical literacy channels, such as the social media. These health tips borne out of critical thinking get to the audience through critical literacy for creative and sustainable healthy living. Thus, critical thinking and critical literacy are recommended as viable means of attaining, maintaining and sustaining creative healthy living.

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# Promoting Reading Culture in Nigeria: What ESL Teachers Can Do

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## Abstract

*Reading culture in Nigeria generally is relatively low; even among students where reading should be a major priority. The Nigerian experience revealed that students mostly read to pass examinations instead of reading to gain knowledge and improve their understanding. Against this dearth of reading culture, there is therefore the need to find means through which reading culture can be improved among Nigerian students. This is precisely what this study is about. In other words, the study was conducted to improve reading culture among Nigerian students. The study introduced a programme tagged “DEAR” (Drop Everything and Read) to students of a school in Ogun state, Nigeria. The students were made to observe the DEAR programme for a period of six weeks after which a questionnaire was administered on them. The reliability value of the instrument was 0.847 using Cronbach alpha. Data collected were analysed using ANOVA. The results revealed significant difference in the scores of students using DEAR compared to conventional method ( $F = 5.102$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). Also, students performed better using DEAR ( $x = 17.32$ ;  $\sigma = 8.250$ ) compared to conventional method ( $x = 8.96$ ;  $\sigma = 5.070$ ). Since the study found out that DEAR improved reading culture among Nigerian students significantly, it therefore recommends that stakeholders in the education sector in Nigeria (government, policy makers, schools and ESL teachers), should encourage the use of DEAR in Nigerian schools so as to improve reading culture in the country.*

**Key words:** Promoting, Reading, Culture, ESL, Teacher

## Introduction

One of the main dividends of education is literacy, i.e., the ability to read, write and communicate effectively with others. An effective way by which literacy level is developed, enriched and sustained is through reading not just for academic achievement but for all-embracing enlightenment and development. Due to the importance of reading as well as being one of the four basic language skills, it is increasingly receiving some attention from teachers and researchers. While teachers (and parents) are worried about the poor reading habits of students, researchers are equally worried and have therefore been directing research efforts on ways to arrest the ugly situation as far back as the 1960s and 1970s. Authors such as Unoh (1968), Banjo (1975) and Omo-Ojuigo (1987) have carried out research

on this phenomenon. Their studies provide succinct analyses of the definitions, nature, scope, problems and solutions to reading backwardness in Nigeria. And today, more research efforts are still being made to encourage reading in Nigeria. These efforts notwithstanding, it appears that not much improvement is noticeable in terms of reading in Nigerian schools and the society generally. Thus, the poor performance in internal and external school examinations cannot be separated from the poor reading habit of Nigerian students. Buttressing this ugly situation, *The World Culture Statistics* (2020) ranks Nigeria as one of the lowest reading culture countries in the world. In the report, two countries in Africa (i.e., South Africa and Egypt) were listed amongst countries with high reading culture. This dearth of reading culture has necessitated the need to find

means through which reading culture can be improved among Nigerian students. This is precisely what this study is about.

### **What the ESL teacher can do**

Teachers generally are responsible for encouraging students to read but the task is more on the ESL teacher. This is because the English language teacher is directly responsible for teaching reading both as a skill and as a habit. Hence, the inability of learners to read well is often blamed on them. This is a major reason they should always search for better approaches, methods and materials that can enhance their effective lesson delivery and techniques that would help develop creative reading habits in the students. This search led to the discovery of the DEAR programme in the USA. The method has recorded outstanding success in the USA, hence, the need to experience the same in Nigeria.

### **The DEAR Reading Programme**

This approach can be particularly useful in the school to inculcate reading habit in pupils and learners. It takes the teacher encouraging their students to get helpful reading materials (a book of their choice) apart from the recommended textbooks; set a time of about 35-40 minutes per week to start with, while the teacher guides, corrects and appraises their performance. This reading programme was tested on 50 junior students of a school in Ogun State, Nigeria. The programme lasted six (6) weeks, with a pre-test and a post-test to ascertain the perceived effects of the programme on their reading skills and attitude. The questionnaire also sought the students and their teachers' responses on the worth of the programme. Information (data) gathered there were analysed using ANOVA. Results revealed that the DEAR programme has positive effects on the students' reading skills and attitude to the level that it was adjudged a worthwhile exercise and that it should be included in the general school curriculum.

### **Research Questions**

1. In what way does DEAR improve reading culture in Nigeria?

2. Is there significant difference in DEAR method and conventional method in the promotion of reading culture in Nigeria?

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study adopted a pre-test, post-test, quasi-experimental design, where the pre-test utilised the conventional method, the post-test utilised DEAR reading method.

#### **Population of the Study**

The population for the study comprised of Junior Secondary School students of a school in Ogun State, Nigeria.

#### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample size for this study was fifty (50) students of a Junior Secondary School in Ogun State, Nigeria; with twenty-five (25) in J.S.S. 1 and twenty-five (25) in J.S.S. 2. Before the completion of the treatment, schools went on holiday and the selected respondents had been promoted to J.S.S. 2 and J.S.S. 3 respectively. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. Students in the selected school were divided into two classes. Class A was the control group, while, Class B was the experimental group.

#### **Research Instrument**

The research instruments adopted for the study comprised of Sections A and B. Section A is about the demographic data of the respondents, while, Section B is about continuous writing used for pre-test and post-test. The pre-test was the control variable, while, post-test was the treatment.

#### **Reliability of Instrument**

The reliability of instruments was ensured with the administering of question on 20 Junior Secondary School students in Ijebu Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. The reliability index was 0.847 using Cronbach alpha.

#### **Validity of Instrument**

The validity of instruments was ascertained by giving the research instruments to

experts in the field of test and measurement in order to ensure that they were appropriate for the study.

### Procedure for Data Collection

The researchers worked hand-in-hand with the principal and the English teachers in the selected intact classes. A pre-test on continuous writing was administered to the students; this was followed by treatment of four weeks on instruction using DEAR reading method. A post-

test was administered afterwards. A total of six weeks was spent on data collection as follows:

| Activities | Duration |
|------------|----------|
| Pre-test   | - 1 week |
| Treatment  | -4 weeks |
| Post-test  | -1 week  |
| Total      | -6 weeks |

### Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained was analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the SPSS package.

## Results and Summary of Findings

### Results

**Table 1:** Analysis of Variance Result on the difference in Conventional and DEAR Scores in Improving Reading Culture in Nigeria

|                     | N  |       |       | R    | Sig.(R) | F     | Sig.(R) |
|---------------------|----|-------|-------|------|---------|-------|---------|
| Conventional Method | 25 | 8.96  | 5.070 | .848 | .000    | 5.102 | .009    |
| DEAR                | 25 | 17.32 | 8.250 |      |         |       |         |

**Source:** Authors' Computation, 2022 (See Appendix)

The result shows that the mean scores of the conventional method and DEAR were 8.96 and 17.32 with 5.070 and 8.250 standard deviation respectively. The DEAR programme candidates had higher mean scores than students in the conventional reading method, indicating that students performed considerably better during the DEAR programme. Although there was high degree of deviation from the mean scores using DEAR compared to the conventional method, the R-value of 0.848 with p-value of 0.000 depicted significant interactions between the two scores. Hence, significant positive connections existed between students' scores using the conventional and DEAR methods.

Furthermore, the F-ratio of 5.102 with p-value of 0.009 indicated that the conventional scores and DEAR scores differ significantly. Hence, it was extrapolated that there was significant difference in the conventional and DEAR methods in improving reading culture in Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

*In what way does DEAR improve reading culture in Nigeria?*

Findings from the study revealed that DEAR reading method improves reading culture significantly in the students. The result corroborates with the work of Gardner (2004) which states that the independent reading programme tagged 'DEAR' gives students time to read what they intend to read and also receive adequate support needed for further reading explorations and reflections. Also, Farrell (1997) and Gardner (2004) assert that with DEAR reading method placing much emphasis on students' reading for pleasure and reading any literary texts of their choice reading enthusiasm is highly promoted.

*Is there significant difference in DEAR method and conventional method in the promotion of reading culture in Nigeria?*

Findings from the study revealed that DEAR reading method had higher mean scores of 8.96 and 17.32 with 5.070 and 8.250 standard deviation respectively. Also, the R-value of 0.848 with p-value of 0.000 indicated significant interaction between the two scores. The F-ratio of 5.102 with p-value of 0.009 indicated that the conventional scores differ significantly from DEAR reading method. The study is in consonance with the work of Gardner (2004) which states that learning occurs in learners through repeated demonstrations, using DEAR as a yardstick. The conventional method is insufficient considering reading and its comprehension. Also, getting the words right becomes a learners' definition of reading.

### Conclusion

In this paper, attempt has been made to discuss the state of reading in Nigerian schools and society as a whole. It pointed out that reading culture in Nigeria, especially when compared with the developed world (including two African countries - Egypt and South Africa) is relatively low. The phenomenon called for efforts to ameliorate the ugly situation which this study is about. The study experimented with the DEAR Programme and found out that the programme increased reading habit among the students in the selected school considerably compared to the conventional method.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Students should be made to imbibe reading culture.
2. Parents should ensure books are available to their ward(s) and avail them the privilege of reading unhindered.
3. Political leaders, companies, corporations and NGOs should support students and the education sector in Nigeria by donating books to schools and public libraries.
4. Libraries should be well stocked with almanacs, encyclopaedias, periodicals, literary texts and other reading materials.
5. Ministries of education should initiate DEAR reading technique in schools' teaching time table.
6. English language teachers should be given the opportunity/support to attend workshops, seminars and conferences for professional development.
7. Government, corporate bodies and stakeholders in the education sector should establish and maintain standard public libraries to whet the reading appetite of students and the general public.

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# Critical Literacy for Sustainable Educational Development

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## **Abstract**

*This paper provides an overview of what literacy and critical literacy are and why they are important to teachers and students. The definitions of literacy and critical literacy are highlighted by seeing literacy as the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living and from different modes of communication. Critical literacy on its part views readers as active participants in the reading process which invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text's message to question, examining, or disputing the power relations that exist between readers and authors. These insights help to assess the background knowledge that students may have in relation to critical literacy teaching and learning. The paper also provides discussions in the areas of: teaching literacy with young children and school-age children; importance of using critical literacy in the classroom, how critical literacy could be used to change the world, and the gains of critical literacy as sustainable educational development. The discussion establishes the need to guide students to get the best from critical literacy lessons and to facilitate planning for making teachers become efficient in their teaching. The paper ends with conclusion and recommendations on the way forward in promoting critical literacy in students in order to help them read between the lines and also think out of the box.*

**Key words:** Literacy, critical literacy, sustainable educational development.

## **Introduction**

Critical literacy is one of those terms that at first seems straightforward, but asking people to define it deceptively suggests simplicity, but instead opens up a world of complexity. Because there are so many different ways people think about literacy, it is worthwhile to examine some ideas associated with it. For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009-2014) has discussed literacy not just in reference to teaching practices in schools but in reference to the meaning of literacy across the world. Two key components to their description are that literacy is a fundamental human right and that it is the foundation for lifelong learning.

One will not really begin to appreciate literacy as a fundamental human right until he/she started working in schools. This will give many opportunities to observe students who had

developed extraordinarily high levels of literacy, and also many students who had not (Abednia, & Izadinia, 2013). As part of the job, you will work with teams to find out those students who were struggling with learning disabilities in literacy areas, such as reading, listening comprehension, oral expression, and written expression. You would rather be surprised that a large number of students who were having trouble developing literacy skills did not necessarily have learning disabilities (Abednia, & Izadinia, 2013). This goes to say that most teachers simply cling to teaching what they love, regardless of the effects on students.

Believing that students who were having difficulty learning how to read must have something wrong with them, and that it is part of a school, the classroom teacher's job to figure out what was wrong with the child should be disregarded (Edelsky, & Cherland, 2016). This is

because majority of students who struggled with reading could learn to read quite well, but the trick is focusing on the kind of instruction students needed rather than focusing on what was wrong with students. In other words, practice should shift from seeking explanations of literacy problems based on fixed factors within the child, to seeking solutions within the instructional environment.

Developing Critical Literacy on the other hand should rather ensure that all forms of communication are social and political acts that can be used to influence students and can lead them to social change (Comber & Simpson, 2001). According to Freire (1997), students are active participants in the reading process so Critical literacy should encourage students to question, explore, or challenge the power relationships that exist between authors and readers. It should examine issues of power and promote reflection, transformative change, and action. Reading from a critical perspective should involve thinking beyond the text to understand issues such as why the author wrote about a particular topic, wrote from a particular perspective, or chose to include some ideas about the topic and exclude others (Gainer, 2017).

It is at this juncture that one should begin to conceptualize critical literacy in the same way that UNESCO discussed it - as a fundamental human right, foundation for lifelong learning. It is this point that has led to this study, since what teachers do will have a major influence on what the students know and can do, not only in the classroom, but for the rest of their lives.

### **Literacy**

Literacy refers to a wide range of skills and abilities related to reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and performing, along with an array of perspectives that situate literacy within a sociocultural context (National Governors Association & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010). While traditional definitions of literacy have centered mostly on the ability to read and write, contemporary definitions include social practices, such as those associated with culture and power that are interwoven among all literacy practices,

including teaching, learning, and using literacy (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Furthermore, the digital age has brought forth innovative changes in how people make meaning, so the term literacy also includes making meaning from different modes of communication. Literacy is critical in helping students make sense of our world. From the time we wake up to the time we go to sleep, we are constantly making meaning of the world around us. Literacy has traditionally been thought of as reading and writing. Although these are essential components of literacy, today our understanding of literacy encompasses much more. Literacy is therefore the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living (Janks, 2010).

### **Literacy with Young Children**

From the moment a child is born, his or her literacy journey begins. Children's literacy abilities are nurtured through their families and communities (Hayik, 2011). Examples are that: the child smiling or crying to communicate his/her needs to a parent; the child forming his/her first words; the child interpreting the symbols around him/her; the child singing a song, and; the parent and child laughing over a story.

### **Literacy with School-age Children**

As children enter the school system, there is a strong focus on the development of reading and writing skills. Children engage in learning opportunities that have them interacting with many different forms of text, in print and digital forms, using words, visuals and graphics. According to (Jeyaraj, & Harland, 2014), students begin to learn: the rules of language; how to acquire information, evaluate it, and ethically use it; how to construct meaning from various kinds of text and, how to communicate effectively

As students move through the school system, they continue to refine all of their foundational skills as they explore a wider variety of texts and technologies. The vast amounts of information that are available through both print and the internet and the ability to communicate with wide and varied audiences around the globe

have expanded the ways our students read and communicate (Jeyaraj, & Harland, 2014). Literacy for our students today also means preparing them to be critical and ethical consumers of information.

### **Where literacy instruction takes place**

Literacy development does not take place in just the Language classroom. It is a shared responsibility among all educators. Although specific knowledge and skills are taught primarily in Language classes, every subject area teacher is responsible for further developing, strengthening and enhancing literacy (Jeyaraj, & Harland, 2014). Every subject area has its own unique literacy demands. Content area teachers know their subject matter and their programs of study. They are aware of the literacy requirements of their subject and understand that it is through literacy that meaning is made within their subject area content. Students need to be taught how to read different kinds of text, write and express themselves in the formats associated with each subject, and use content-specific vocabulary (Jeyaraj, & Harland, 2014).

Literacy development occurs not only in school but in every aspect of daily life. We interact with others when we have a conversation. We read maps, advertisements, newspapers, recipes, manuals and websites. We analyse and interpret vast amount of media information. We write poems, songs, reports, blogs, and emails. Literacy opens the door to the world.

### **Critical literacy**

Although there is no set definition of critical literacy, it essentially involves examining the relationship between language and power in a text. This examination is responsive and thoughtful in nature. The chosen text, students' comfort and familiarity with the text, and the lesson goals all have an effect on what happens in the classroom (Akbari, 2018).

Using the four dimensions of critical literacy - disrupting the commonplace, considering multiple viewpoints, focusing on the socio-political, and taking action - as a springboard, this work focuses on how purposeful

questioning, discussion, and improvised drama might influence how students engage with critical literacy lessons. This is because critical literacy is a learning approach where students are expected to examine various texts to understand the relationship between language and the power it can hold. Students critically analyse and evaluate the meaning of texts as they relate to topics on equity, power and social justice (Bourn, 2011). These texts are then used to equip students with a critical stance, response or action towards an issue.

Critical literacy sees to the process of becoming aware of one's experience relative to power relations, often realized through reading and writing. Critical literacy takes place in various learning environments and cultural contexts (Bourn, 2011). The reading and writing-based learning process encourages students to accept, reject or reconstruct ideologies presented in texts. Critical literacy perfects the way of thinking about curriculum, literacies, and the lived experiences of our students. It is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships (Burnett, & Merchant, 2014). (Bourn, 2011) added that critical literacy views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond passively accepting the text's message to question, examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors. It focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation, and action.

### **The Importance of Critical Literacy**

Choo, & Singha, 2015 stated that critical literacy is essential in our everyday life because it helps: to establish equal status in the reader-author relationship; to understand the motivation the author had for writing the text and how the author uses the text to make us understand in a particular way; to understand that the author's perspective is not the only perspective; and to become active users of the information in texts to develop independent perspectives, as opposed to being passive reproducers of the ideas in texts.



Critical literacy helps us to read texts in deeper, more meaningful ways, by encouraging readers of all ages to become more actively engaged and use their power to construct understanding and not used by the text to fulfil the intentions of the author.

Critical literacy helps us to move beyond passive acceptance to take an active role in the reader-author relationship by questioning issues such as who wrote the text, what the author wanted us to believe, and what information the author chose to include or exclude in the text. The development of critical literacy skills enables students to look at the world through a critical lens and challenge the power relations within the messages being communicated Comber, & Simpson, 2001).

Critical teaching allows students to actively work out their learning and problem solving, by providing an outlet, a source of action or social justice.

Critical teaching allows students to better connect classroom practice with the social realms they engage in outside of school, providing a connection between the home, school, and social realms.

In the opinion of (Choo, & Singha, 2015), the practice of critical literacy engages students and allows them to use their previous experiences, providing classroom literacies more similar to literacies used outside of the classroom. Using critical literacy as a frame through which the teacher and students design curricula and use literacies in the classroom, helps students view literacy as connected to their personal experiences and as a tool to use effectively to explore and effect change in their lives.

### **Critical Literacy in the classroom**

Some of the most commonly used practices that support critical literacy included: reading supplementary texts; reading multiple texts; reading from a resistant perspective; producing counter-texts; having students conduct research about topics of personal interest; and challenging students to take social action. It requires thinking beyond the text to understand issues such as why the author wrote about a

particular topic, wrote from a particular perspective, or chose to include some ideas about the topic and exclude others (Lee, & Runyan, 2013). Teachers who facilitate the development of critical literacy encourage students to interrogate societal issues and institutions like family, poverty, education, equity, and equality in order to critique the structures that serve as norms, and to demonstrate how these norms are not experienced by all members of society. (Lewison, Flint, & van Sluys, 2017) asserted that by matching our teaching with the specific talents and needs of our students, and by considering our students' points of views in early childhood literary teaching, we are able to speak to children's identities and empower them.

We must use texts in our classrooms with which students will identify, and reflect the lives and experiences of our students, as well validate them. The books we read with our students should address issues that affect the lives of our students in important ways. We must also engage students in meaningful class discussions and conversations about these books, crossing lines of culture, gender, race, and class, as well as providing students with opportunities to critically examine the world around them (Masuda, 2019). Critical literacy does not end in discussion, rather it leads to action.

### **Using critical literacy to change the world**

In most cases, students feel a need to channel their legitimate concerns into action. As educators, we know that figuring out how to support young people in their desire to drive change can be challenging. For one thing, it can be easy to ignore that many young people yearn to participate around the most urgent issues of the time (Haydey, Kostiuk, & Phillips, 2007). For another, creating age-appropriate opportunities for young people to engage and lead on big issues is not as clear-cut as other school activities. That said, educators and other adults can learn how to promote a sense of urgency and empower young people rather than stand on their way. Some possible ways according to (Kincheloe, 2014), include:

Help youth organizers to strategize: Encourage students to take on a big issue by starting with a defined and specific goal. This could be a campaign that targets a specific policy, corporation, or politician, or is the aim to build community knowledge and power to address an issue through a collective plan for direct action.

Ask young people to analyse who touch their lives: Who is the god-fathers who have managed to get local politicians in their pockets? Who is directly affected for example, by climate justice issues? Which corporations are successfully pushing back against environmental regulations and polluting the environment without any accountability? Who should be at the decision-making table about new environmental policies? Helping young people educate themselves on these topics does not have to take the form of a one-sided lecture or reading (Mazdaee, & Maftoon, 2012). Creating skits, songs, paintings, poetry, art exhibits and interactive research activities to explore the root causes of social issues can allow young people to analyse their everyday experiences to yield new ways of thinking about their world in the areas suggested by (Oakes, & Lipton, 2013), as in:

Build skills: Effectively organizing may require new skills, for example, talking to journalists, publicizing campaign events, conducting research, understanding how to negotiate with stakeholders and navigate institutions, drafting petitions or letters to elected officials or other collective action to change policies and institutional practices. Educators are well placed to assist with these activities.

Forge mentoring and youth-adult partnerships: Educators can help youths contribute their viewpoints and ideas by providing structured, supportive spaces. They should also resist assuming that youths are inferior to adults in terms of their needs, concerns, and abilities. Teachers can engage young people in planning an advocacy work as important stakeholders with both agency and real-world experiences.

Help them identify and truly understand issues: The students are aware of the cases of religious and tribal crises, unknown gunmen

attacks, terrorists' attacks and kidnappers in the country and are fully aware of the destructions, deaths, and evacuations resulting from such cases. Indeed, for some years in the country, several dozen homes have been destroyed, more than 100,000 people have died, and over 300,000 people have been displaced from their homes and were housed in IDP camps. Many students know of families who have hosted relatives in their homes because of crises displacement and related outages. Teachers can be advocates and allies with young people by ensuring that youths perspectives, analysis, and ideas are integrated into intergenerational partnerships for change (Oakes, & Lipton, 2013).

### **Critical literacy for sustainable educational development**

There are at least two common trends in educational initiatives that promoted concern for others. The first was based on the idea of a common humanity. This was represented as a 'soft' approach to global citizenship and sustainable education. The second was based on the idea of justice and complicity in harm. This also was represented as a critical approach to global citizenship and sustainable education (Rozansky, & Agesen, 2010). The argument here is that the 'soft' approaches based on a modernist understanding of linear time, progress and development, although productive in certain contexts, tended to close down the possibility of more critical approaches. These are particularly of approaches that offered alternative ways to conceptualise sustainability knowledge and solutions from the perspective of historically subjugated peoples (see also Bryan and Bracken, 2011; Bourn, 2011; Martin, 2011; Andreotti, 2006). Critical literacy as an educational practice that critically examines origins and implications of assumptions as well as other possibilities for signification, could be a viable way to address this problem.

The conceptualisation of critical literacy combines questions within two orientations. The first orientation challenges imbalances in power and representation. This can be illustrated in questions such as: who decides (something is true

or ideal), in whose name and for whose benefit? The second orientation challenges the notion that meaning is Policy & Practice. This emphasises the social, cultural and historical 'construction' of realities and highlights the limits and blind edges of any system of signification, promoting openness to suppressed knowledge and subjectivities and to what is unknown (Sangster, Stone, & Anderson, 2013). This orientation is illustrated in questions such as: where is this understanding coming from (in terms of collective 'root' narratives), where is it leading to (in terms of social, cultural, political and environmental implications), and how can this be thought 'otherwise' (what possibilities of signification have been 'forgotten' in this context)?

Within the multiplicity of critical literacy traditions, this approach differs slightly from critical engagements based on other orientations. Cervetti, Pardales and Damico (2001), for example, established a distinction between traditional reading, critical reading and critical literacy, emphasising that each orientation of 'reading critically' will result in different questions being asked. Using their framework, illustrates these differences through the scenario of a teacher and a student in a classroom, where the teacher is telling the student that he/she needs schooling in order to 'be somebody in life'. Within the framework proposed by Cervetti et al., a traditional form of reading would enable 'decoding' questions such as: what did the teacher say, how did she substantiate his/her arguments, is what he/she said true or false? A critical form of reading would look further into the context and political framework of the scenario: where was this school, when did it happen, what was the socio-economic situation of the teacher and student, what was the motivation and political orientation of the teacher, what power relations are reproduced in the teacher's statement, how did the teacher's views affect the student and his/her family?

A critical literacy approach would focus on the production of knowledge/power and enable questions like: who decides what 'being somebody' means, in whose name, for whose benefit then, and now, how do we come to think

about the ways we do, who makes choices about understandings of reality, whose interests are represented in these choices, who benefits or loses with them, what choices are forgotten, how do people in different contexts understand the idea of 'being somebody' (Pandya, & Avila, 2014)?

It is obvious that when introducing critical literacy in sustainable educational development, teachers should choose scenarios that make evident dominant and perspectives about the benevolence of progress. Scenarios to use could be for example, a poster with pictures of children in need with the title 'education for all can solve all problems. Then the idea of 'critical reading' to explore the context of production of that poster: what is the purpose of the poster, who created it and with what motives, where was it placed and why, how and why were pictures and words chosen, how is the reader manipulated through the language?

Again, use the idea of 'critical literacy' to start and open up questions related to complicity in harm at a very basic level, such as: who decides what problems and solutions are (in the poster, historically and in 'our' context), what assumptions inform these decisions, how are unequal relationships between donors and recipients reproduced through these significations, what other conceptualisations of problems and solutions could be designed by communities that have been historically subjugated in these relationships, and so on (Zyngier, & Fialho, 2015). This should also emphasise a strategic distinction between reflexivity and reflection in the practice of critical literacy in teacher education.

## **Conclusion**

The discussions in this work uphold critical literacy as a right and a necessity to every student in school. It is therefore obligatory that teachers' guidance to students should be towards explicit engagement of students with power relations in texts. This suggests that teachers should not underestimate the capabilities of students in analysing texts using a critical perspective. If teachers and students continue to believe that literacy entails merely reading words

on a page and not critically analysing how those words shape identities and influence readers perspectives, this will lead to mismatch in learning. Students need teachers who will guide them towards a deeper appreciation of the power of words and other meaning-making modes of words to enable them to change and adjust policies and practices. This entails that using the classroom as a site to examine competing interests between students and their effects on society is a concrete response to encourage students to read the words as well as the world.

Finally, this work suggests that there is a need for teachers to lead students towards a heightened awareness of the presence of power structure at words in the valorization and subordination of varied literacy practices. Such pedagogy will provide both teachers and students with the opportunity to know why certain literacy practices are valued over others. A critical literacy teacher accommodates students' varied modes of meaning making to recognize their diverse skills and sense of identities. Thus, for teachers who wish to respond to the literacy needs of the time, and teach students about their responsibility towards building a just and humane society, critical literacy is worth teaching for a sustainable educational development.

### Recommendation

This work proffered the following recommendations to all the stake holders in education on the need to enhance critical literacy for a sustainable educational development:

1. Teachers should adopt the teaching practices that will guide students towards a deeper appreciation of the power of words and other meaning-making modes of words to enable them to change and adjust policies and practices that affect their lives positively.
2. Students should embrace new skills that will enable them analyse their everyday experiences to yield new ways of thinking critically about the world around them.
3. Government should ensure that school curriculum includes critical literacy activities as the educational practices that will examine origins and implications of

assumptions and the possibilities that could be viable ways to address the students' everyday problems.

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# Critical Literacy: A Tool for Changing the Mind-sets of the Religious Bigots in Nigeria

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## Abstract

*When people are at war against themselves, it spells doom in the nation. Religious intolerance has brought woes to the people and country as a result of the violence that accompanies its display. In Nigeria, several measures have been put in place to curb this act but all seem not to have yielded any positive result. This paper posits that critical literacy – a central skill needed to be able to effectively navigate through various texts which involves questioning, evaluation of ideas and requiring analysis, interpretation, evaluation and responding to texts been read or listened to, can transform the mindset of a religious bigot. Critical Literacy enables the nation's citizens to be literate as it raises their critical and social consciousness. The paper defines religion, religious bigots and bigotry, instances of this in Nigeria and how Critical Literacy can curb religion intolerance for a peaceful co-existence. In conclusion, critical literacy is not just developing citizens' English ability but cultivating and nurturing them to have critical minds that will equip them with the ability to make and take good decisions. Among the recommendations given is that language teachers should not teach comprehension superficially but should lead the learners to make meanings both at inferential and critical levels.*

**Key words:** Religious intolerance, bigotry, critical literacy.

## Introduction

Nigeria is a plural society. It has many tribes, languages, cultures and religions. The differences in these oftentimes bring about misunderstandings, fights and disharmony making peaceful co-existence difficult. Peaceful co-existence is a state in which there is no war, violence, fighting, discrimination, disagreement and intolerance; where the people live in harmony irrespective of their ethnic, social, political or religious standing. Nigerian societies are mixtures of people from different tribes with different faiths. For oneness, citizens of a nation must be tolerant of one another. This however, is not always the case in Nigeria as conflicts in different forms (marital, community, political and religious) arise among the people.

Religious conflicts have its root in religious intolerance. Marjan (2018) asserts that the core issue driving these conflicts and extremist actions is intolerant thought processes traceable to

religious bigots. Religious bigots are individuals who strongly and unfairly demonstrate hate and intolerance to religious viewpoints (Urban Dictionary, 2022) and the intolerance expressed is referred to as bigotry. The worry in the act of these bigots is the consequence of their acts. In most cases they unleash terror on their opponents resulting in death and destruction of property all in the name of protecting their faith. Religion as defined by Oxford Learners Dictionary (2022) is the belief in the existence of a God or gods, and the activities that are connected with their worship. It could also be a particular system of faith and worship while religious bigotry also referred to as religious intolerance is the inability of an adherent of a particular religion to acknowledge, accommodate and accept the right of others to live by another faith different from his own because of perceived superiority of his religion over others (Ojo, 2017). Many Nigerians have suffered different types of losses at the hands

of these religious bigots – lives, houses, means of livelihood and investments are destroyed or razed down. The aforementioned have led to fear and distrust among the people.

Despite the fact that Nigeria is one of the nations that adopted the United Nations 1981 declaration on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination or beliefs (Limon, Ghana & Power, 2014) religious intolerance still persists. Many measures have been taken to curb the practice and its aftermaths. One of such measures is the establishment of Nigeria Interreligious Council (NIREC) which provides religious and traditional leaders' forum to promote interactions and understanding among Christian and Islam faithful's as well as lay foundations for peace and religious harmony in the country (NIREC, 1999 in Nwanaju, 2016). This group also mediates on matters relating to religion. Other measures taken to subdue religious intolerance include organisation of conferences, issuing of press statements and the use of dialogues. Yet, religious bigotry persists. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks for another method of addressing the issue for peace and better living and a means of transforming the mind-sets of religious bigots. This paper proposes that a way of cultivating the minds and awakening critical consciousness is through critical literacy as advocated by Freire (Freire, 2007).

Freire (2007) proposes that building a peaceful nation devoid of conflicts requires advancing its citizens to criticise oppression and exploitation. The citizens need to be empowered for the possession of power and equal status. Critical Literacy involves working with learners to understand the nature and implications of ideologies; as it illuminates the difference between the moralistic position of indoctrination and ethical approach. Critical literacy developed from Freire philosophy is a strategic instructional practice which aims at teaching a nation's citizen to be literate and critical, raising their critical, social consciousness and hopes to create a more just society through problem solving, dialogue and critiquing of issues (McClean, 2006). In addition, critical literacy equips citizens to see different viewpoints, exchange ideas, raise critical

questions, be aware of social problems and injustice and defend themselves through peaceful means. This paper will explore how critical literacy can be used to curb religious bigotry / intolerance in Nigeria for a more peaceful nation.

### **What is Religion and Religious Bigotry?**

Religion is the service and worship of God or the supernatural, a commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2022). Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with diverse ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups. There are three main religious groups and they are Christianity, Islam and Indigenous religions. These religions according to Aluko (2017) have differences that have brought about unrest as the tolerance level has got to a point of polarity and the country has suffered a lot of setbacks as a result of religious crisis resulting from religious bigotry. Religion which should have been a supplement to the laws of the land is used by bigots for selfish purposes. An individual who strongly or unfairly demonstrates hate and intolerance to other religious viewpoint is a religious bigot and the intolerance expressed is bigotry. The resultant effects of this include killings, looting, arson, insecurity and disunity.

For peace and stability in a nation, there should be harmony which religious bigotry does not promote. Despite the freedom of religion emphasised in the Nigerian Constitution of 1999, some religions faithful still constitute themselves as spanners in the wheel of progress. This is where the problem of religious bigotry has affected the nation. According to Nwanaju (2016), there can be no peace in the world without peace among religions. If this is so, then it could be said that there can be no real peace in Nigeria without a conscientious effort by the religious groups that make up the society to promote peace among themselves.

The absence of peace gives room for conflict. Religious conflicts have been on for decades in Nigeria. Even the Nigerian Civil War of the 60s was not totally free of religion. Kirk-Green in Nwanaju (2016) argues that the situation that led to the Civil War was bedevilled by a set of

oppositions among which were the unending North versus South, Islam versus Christianity mind-sets. There was the Mataisine riots of the 1980s, the Boko Haram that officially began in 2009 and is still on. There are other incidences where the religious bigots have displayed religious intolerance. These includes; Zango-Kataf religious crisis in 1992, clashes between Christian - Muslim students at the Federal College of Education, Zaria and the Ahmed Bello University Zaria in 2002 and 2006 respectively. 2001 saw a clash between the Hausa Muslims and Christians in Jos. These have been recurring and in 2004, there was the Yelwa and Shendam crises. Of recent, there was the killing of a school teacher in Bauchi because she was said to have abused the Qur'an; a woman was killed in Abuja close to a mosque because she was preaching Christ, and in Sokoto, a student of the College of Education was killed and burnt because she was said to have abused Prophet Muhammed. These acts could be blamed on religious intolerance.

Religious intolerance always originates from the perceived superiority of one's religion over the other; it is an attitude that has been developed in the minds of some religious extremists who have come to see their religion as having no equal and are ready to do anything to see that their religion is not challenged by any other. In other words, religious intolerance is the inability of an adherent of a religion to endure the practice and existence of another religion (Terhemba, 2022). It is also the intolerance of another's religious beliefs and practices when a religion is criticized and discriminated against, irrespective of the fact of secularism (United Nations' Humans' Right, 2018, Riya, 2019). The consequences of religious intolerance by religious bigots have cost the nation many lives and property. Re-iterating the aforementioned, Kukah (2011) asserts that the effect of the violence carried out by those bigots due to religious intolerance has resulted into a country that has been mangled, fangled and totally destroyed. This is worrisome and as efforts made by the government, reconciliation committees and religious bodies seem not to be yielding much fruit, the proposed option that could be explored

to help bring an end to religious intolerance and what follows it is the adoption of critical literacy in the lives of the citizens.

### **Concept of Critical Literacy**

The idea of Critical Literacy (CL) is associated with Paulo Friere, a Brazilian philosopher and a literacy educator. CL is developed from critical theory which had the goal of explaining and identifying social problems with theoretical insights (Willis, 2011). Critical theory emphasises the important roles of individuals as agents of social change with the ultimate goal of transforming society for the better (Au, 2009). Friere (2007) in his pedagogy of the oppressed proposes CL as a way of balancing inequalities by teaching the nation's citizens to be literate and raise their critical and social consciousness. CL is viewed by Friere as an instrument of liberation and key mechanism for social construction and social transformation. CL does not only aim at helping people become literate but also develop critical consciousness and making them become change agents for a better society.

Critical Literacy is a learning approach where learners are expected to examine various texts to understand the relationship between language and the power it can hold (TOPHAT, 2022). Critical Literacy refers to the process of becoming aware of one's experience relative to power relations often realized through reading and writing. This reading and writing based learning process encourages students to accept, reject or reconstruct ideologies presented in texts.

All forms of communication, whether spoken or written are acts that can be used to influence people and lead to change. Written words are read. Information is garnered by reading and Friere (1970) opines that readers are active participants in the reading process and critical literacy encourages readers to question, explore and challenge the power relationships that exist between authors and readers. As readers, they critically analyse and evaluate the meaning of texts as they relate to topics as equity, power, social justice, discipline and so on. These texts equip the students to take critical stance, response or action towards an issue.



Critical Literacy examines issues of power and promotes reflection, transformative change and action. According to McLaughlin and DeVoogd (2004), reading from a critical perspective involves thinking beyond the text to understand issues as well as why the author wrote about a particular topic or wrote from a particular perspective while Jones (2006) compares critical literacy to a pair of eye glasses that allows one to see beyond the familiar and comfortable. In other words, CL empowers the readers to be active thinkers who look at the world from different perspectives and develop questioning habits that encourage them to think and act. This type of literacy therefore moves the reader beyond passively accepting the text's message to questioning, examining or disputing the power relation that exists between readers and authors.

In the repeated words of Friere (Ellis, 2013), CL is reading the word to change the world. Lewinson, Flint and Vun Sluys in Norris, Lucas and Prudhoe (2012) assert that CL can:

1. Disrupt a common situation or understanding where readers can gain perspective by understanding the text or situation in different ways.
2. Examine multiple viewpoints where readers are encouraged to think about texts from the perspectives of different characters.
3. Focus on socio political issues where readers examine power relationships between and among individuals.
4. Take action and promote social justice, invite students to determine a course of action to bring about change in an inappropriate, unequal power relationship between people.

All the aforementioned may not necessarily be included in CL activities. By examining texts that utilise any one of these dimensions is engaging in critical literacy.

### **How Critical Literacy can change the Mind-sets of Religion Bigots**

When people read critically, they are analysing and rationalising their reasoning power. They are not just sending out words; they are

deconstructing and reconstructing texts, taking in the use of language in relation to the various issues raised in the texts. A society confronted with the challenge of religious intolerance resulting in conflicts could have in the students' texts topics as tolerance, respect, peace, security and unity. As the citizens read them with critical minds, they are able to take a more reasonable stance for the betterment of the society. As they read critically, questions as these are raised:

- Whose voices are heard and whose are silenced in the text?
- Who is privileged and who is marginalised in the text?
- What does the author want the readers to think?
- How does the author use specific / particular language to promote his / her beliefs?
- What action would one take based on what has been read and learnt from the text. (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

Responses to the aforementioned posers give the readers a better insight and understanding to the issues confronting the society. This enables him cultivate good relationship with others.

As readers analyse, evaluate consciously or unconsciously messages in texts read, interact and make meanings from texts, their attitudes and values are being shaped. The reader as he reads is not just a passive acceptor of what the author intends but is participating actively in the reading process as he deconstructs the text, responds to the words of the text by bringing to bear his personal experience on every word in the text which includes his point of view, culture, religion and much more. Doing this enables the reader appreciate the scenario created in the text which transforms his thought and beliefs and acceptance of the others for better societal living. Freire (2007) opines that the language teacher does not only help students develop their language ability but also facilitates and nurtures the development of their minds and critical consciousness with the abilities to understand the diversity of their society, learn how to emphatically listen to those who have different views (religion) from theirs,

accept differences and diversities and work with others collaboratively for a peaceful living.

Critical Literacy develops readers' ability to think systematically. As they read, they think, question the text and support their ideas with reasons. To be tolerant of one another, even in religion, one must cultivate an understanding of the ways of lives of all in the society. This could be done by bringing out of the text what the reader comes across into the real world. Doing this enables the reader develop a new and richer understanding of issues and be more positive in handling differences.

Besides learning the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing; critical literacy will enable learners engage in learning how language, power, socio-political systems and issues are interrelated. Bigots are irrational beings; they do not think rationally. They are vulnerable and do not see deep. Critical Literacy gives learners the opportunity to make use of language to critically question, discuss, debate and critique problems and vigorously challenge the take-for-granted ideologies of injustice, hatred and oppression in the society (Luke, 2012). This will make learners challenge and resist the mainstreams that marginalise and motivate them to take actions that will bring changes to their mind-sets and beliefs.

As readers read multiple texts, they see issues from different perspectives and viewpoints. As they analyse and synthesise information, they come to know that texts can be interpreted from various positions such as the author's view, advocate's view; the resistant's view and even the reader's view. Critical Literacy allows readers identify different aspects of meaning from a text and learn that people have different views and stance based on their race, culture or religion. This in turn makes them learn how to express their ideas and personal opinion from a variety of perspectives leading them to expand their range of thinking, understand diverse beliefs and positions and accept diverse viewpoints (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

The afore-stated will make the people appreciate one another and gradually diminish misunderstanding, hostile feelings and prejudice

which are derived from inaccurate and misleading information. Adunyarittigun (2017) reiterates that with the aforementioned, there will be no space for different 'taken-for-granted' ideologies of being 'us' and 'them', contributing to the desire to settle disputes and negotiate by non-violent means. Critical Literacy is key to curbing intolerance and cultivating understanding, peace and tolerance in the society.

## Conclusion

Critical Literacy is a promising approach that could be used to bring about peace in a harmonious society by being tolerant of one another's belief and stance. Literacy is a systematic cultivation of the mind through training and instruction. When this is lacking, the individual can easily be involved in crises: political, social or religious. Critical Literacy is deeper than making the students develop their English ability. It is cultivating and nurturing citizens to have critical minds with social consciousness which can transform violence and conflict (resulting from religious intolerance) in the society into peace.

## Recommendations

- Education should be made compulsory for all in the nation. Making the citizens literate will give them room to be able to read logically.
- Topics and books relating to burning issues as peace, tolerance, unity, communal living should be made available for reading.
- Reading centres / libraries should be well stocked with reading materials.
- Language teachers should not teach reading comprehension superficially but should lead students to make meanings at both inferential and critical levels.

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# Sustaining Literacy Skills in Primary School through Yoruba Verbal Aptitude Reasoning

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## **Abstract**

*Many researchers had confirmed that mother tongue education will enhance the acquisition of second language of a child. Efforts were made to promote the learning of mother tongue or language of immediate environment. In the recent time USAID organised a program for reading in the three major Nigeria languages which was supported by some of the stakeholders. In spite of all efforts to promote reading, there is need to introduce a strategy that will enhance the effective learning of reading, which is Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning. Since the use of verbal aptitude reasoning starts from early grade level and through to advanced level at different stages in life; for academics, employment, and immigration in test of English such as TOEFL, IELTS, and GRE, etc. This study seeks to introduce Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning for elementary level of education to boost the literacy skills of pupils in Yoruba language which will eventually enhance the acquisition of literacy skills of English language and the various advanced verbal aptitude reasoning test in future. The study highlighted the suggested contents for Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning for pre and primary school pupils. The importance of Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning and learning method were also explored. Recommendations were made the Yoruba scrabble be introduced, children be advised to play the language puzzle games both in school and at home. Children should read Yoruba texts extensively, watch Yoruba films and news to enrich their vocabulary banks in order to have a grasp of Yoruba literacy skills through Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning. Also, stake holders should embrace the introduction of Verbal aptitude reasoning for the three Nigerian languages.*

**Key words:** Verbal aptitude reasoning, Non-verbal reasoning, Literacy skill, Yoruba verbal reasoning,

## **Introduction**

Verbal aptitude encompasses the ability of a student to spell words correctly, use correct grammar, understand word meanings, understand word relationships and interpret detailed written information. Andrew, Cobb and Giampietro (2005) noted that verbal ability (or aptitude) is when a person is skilled at putting ideas into words, both in oral and written forms. Verbal aptitude facilitates the interpretation of information in a logical and analytical manner. Such ability helps in organizing words coherently (Andrew et al, 2005). Some of the reasons why students fail examinations could be due to the inability to frame responses to questions and spell words correctly. Obe (1996) listed weakness in

comprehension and the inability of students to express themselves, among others, as factors responsible for mass failure in examinations.

Recently, USAID (2021) presented to the Lagos state government series of published books tagged Hausa - Ma karanta, Igbo - Ka anyiguo, Yoruba - "Je ka kawe" meaning Let us read. The stake holders explained that the program will move a long way in improving Yoruba language literacy skills among primary school pupils. It was a worthwhile program for sustaining literacy development in the three major Nigerian languages. Also, Federal government in NPE (2013), realising the importance of mother tongue designed the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the lower level of education, all in an attempt to promote active learners'

involvement, comprehension and critical thinking through the medium of instruction which ensure learners' reasoning skills necessary for all readers. The skills are phonemics awareness, phonics, fluency, Synonyms and antonyms, simile, vocabulary and logical reasoning and comprehension.

Fafunwa (1975) established that the use of mother tongue to teach children would enhance the reading skill of pupils and they would be able to transfer the knowledge acquired through MT education into learning of other languages and other subjects which will eventually help in achieving a lifelong learning which is included in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In spite of all the efforts of the USAID, SUBEB and Lagos state government, NERDC on Early Grade Reading (EGR), one germane initiative that can boost all initiatives of language literacy of pupils which has not been attended to. It is the introduction of Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning. This could serve as a complement to all the efforts on Yoruba language teaching and learning. Researches had shown that there are no alternatives to the child's mother tongue for effective learning to take place. Olopade (2009), Fafunwa (2009) affirmed that with the use of mother tongue education, the complex ideas might just be easier to grasp and the understanding of the same idea in a second language is generally at par with that of the mother tongue. Also, Owolabi (2008) summarised the Ife six-year primary project in January, 1970 as a convincing success and proof that the use of indigenous languages or mother tongues is the best medium of instruction.

### **Yoruba Verbal Aptitude Reasoning**

Verbal reasoning has to do with literacy skills: reading and writing skills. It is generally taught through oral or written instruction. It involves making meaning based on the information to improve understanding and applying verbal aptitude reasoning skills to learning new words, while speaking and listening are parts of Yoruba verbal reasoning. Ability to master Yoruba verbal reasoning skill will assist pupils to solve some of the basic problems

associated with reading, writing and spelling of Yoruba words.

According to Michaelidou (2016), Verbal reasoning is basically about the way learner thinks with words. It is a form of understanding and reasoning concepts based around words and language. It involves the following:

- problem- solving around words
- thinking about text
- following written instructions and finding solution
- understanding letter sequences
- decoding letter and number-based codes.

All these can also be adapted into Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning.

Verbal reasoning measures learners' ability to use language to identify and solve problems. It goes beyond formal literacy by testing wider reasoning and cognitive abilities by identifying words within words, solve basic word puzzles or patterns in words and sentences, finding one letter to complete two words or spotting the odd word in a group or naming synonyms and antonyms of words. All these can be adapted into Yoruba language, since the language has its rules of word formation and structures. Non-verbal reasoning deals with images and interaction with images and pictures. Although, people largely think in abstract and images, the ability to respond to and interact with visual imagery can be a good test for abstract thinking, creativity and complex problem solving. Examples include identifying odd shapes in groups, creating shapes with materials, finding identical shapes in groups. All these are also embedded in Yoruba language. Therefore, Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning will not only improve learners' cognitive skills but helps them to be creative in targeted languages.

### **Verbal Aptitude Reasoning Test**

Verbal reasoning exams are intended to test a child's ability to understand and reason using words, and are a test of skill, rather than of learned knowledge. The theory is that they allow the examining body to build a picture of a child's potential for critical thinking, problem-solving and ultimately, intelligence. Verbal reasoning tests

assess the ability to understand written information and analyse logical relationships between words to make accurate conclusions. There are five types of verbal reasoning questions: synonym and antonym, word analogy, word association, reading comprehension and making inferences.

These tests are typically used in the screening round of a recruiting process, which helps employers scrutinize the candidates with poorer cognitive skills. These types of tests are included in GRE test, IELTS, TOEFL tests. Yoruba verbal aptitude test if introduced to children early would eventually be advantageous to the learners in future when faced with international, organisational and career tests.

### Importance of Verbal Aptitude Reasoning

The importance of verbal aptitude reasoning cannot be overestimated for the following:

- it helps to enrich learner's vocabulary
- it improves learner's language; grammar, spelling, analogies, word swaps, finding new words, comprehension and sentence completion.

The knowledge of these language concepts will improve learners' language skills thus sustaining Yoruba literacy. Therefore, it is pertinent to introduce the knowledge of Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning to Yoruba learners from Primary to junior secondary thus helping the learners to have the grasp of Yoruba literacy.

### What is verbal reasoning?

#### Objectives of the study

The study seeks to;

- examine the importance of verbal aptitude reasoning and verbal aptitude reasoning test.
- explore the contents of the Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning according to pupils' classes.
- highlight some of the Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning which would enhance pupils' performances in all Nigerian languages.

### Teaching strategy for Verbal Aptitude Reasoning

Children should be encouraged to do the following.

- Play word games and quizzes, for example, spotting the odd one out from a list of words, giving a synonym or antonym for a word, solving anagrams.
- Encourage your child to do crosswords and word searches, and plays games like Hangman.
- Play word-based family games like Scrabble and Boggle.
- Set your child spelling challenges, focusing particularly on commonly misspell words (there/their/they're) and homophones (words that sound the same but are spelt differently, like fair and fare).
- Become a family of culture vultures, taking your children to museums, shows and exhibitions to build their general knowledge (Adeyemi, 2017).

### Method and Procedure

The suggested contents of the Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning test were highlighted according to learners' classes from kindergarten class to primary six.

Kindergarten class - (Jẹle o simi)

Kọ awọn ẹta nla - Trace upper letter A B D

1. A  
B  
D
- ii. Two lettered words - ba be bi bo bo bu da, de de di do do du, fa fe fi fo fu and all Yoruba consonants with vowels.
- iii. Three lettered words - Aja- dog, Eti- Ear, Enu- mouth, ile - House,
- iv. Four lettered word- Eyin-tooth, ahon-tongue,
- v. Five lettered word- adiye- hen, apoti- stool, ehoro- rabbit, ologbo- cat,
- vi. Six lettered words- pepaye- duck, eranko- animal, ododo- flower

- vii. Multiple lettered words - Tolotolo-turkey, konkoso- sieve.
2. Kọ lẹta a b d - ni lẹta kekere - Trace lower case letters
3. Orin Rhyme - Awọn ẹya ara (Parts of the body)  
Ori mi, ejika, orunkun, ẹsẹ.  
Ori mi, ejika, orunkun, ẹsẹ.  
Ori mi, ejika, orunkun, ẹsẹ.  
Ara mi ni gbogbo wọn  
My head, my shoulder, my knees, my feet  
My head, my shoulder, my knees, my feet  
My head, my shoulder, my knees, my feet  
They belong to my body.
4. Kọ lẹta sinu awọn iho wọnyii--Fill the boxes with letters

|   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| A |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

### Primary one

1. Kọ awọn alifabẹẹti Yorùbá ni lẹta kekere - Write Yoruba alphabet in lower cases  
a b ... e ... f g gb. i j ... m n o ọ ... r s s  
... .. y.
2. Pari awọn alafo ti o wa ninu awọn ọrọ wọnyii -Fill in the blank spaces  
i. aj..... (dog)  
ii. .... wa (we)  
iii. et..... (ear)  
iv. .... de (crown)
3. Kọ awọn lẹta nla ati kekere-- write in upper and lower cases Aa Bb Dd Ee Ẹẹ Ff  
..... Hh Ii Jj Kk ..... Mm Nn Oo  
Oọ ..... Rr Ss Ẹs ..... Ww Yy
4. Tun awọn lẹta wọnyii kọ, ki o si sọ wọn di ọrọ - Re arrange these letters to make words  
i. eil----- (house)  
ii. jaa ----- (dog)  
iii. hoi----- (hole)  
iv. rio ----- (head)

### Primary Two

1. Fa ila roboto yipo ọrọ ti o bẹrẹ pẹlu lẹta "e"  
i. eti = (ear)

- ii. ilé = ( house)  
iii. adé = (crown)  
iv. èjì = (two)
2. Wa ọrọ si awọn alifabẹẹti isalẹ yii -- Form a word for each alphabet listed below

### Example:

A = Àdà (cutlass) B = Bàbá (father)

- i. D = -----(name)  
ii. E = ..... (lip)  
iii. Ẹ = ---- (bird)  
iv. F = ---- (cap)
3. Sọ lẹta nla pọ pẹlu lẹta kékéré----Match the capital with small letters  
A a  
B b  
D d  
E-----e  
Ẹ ẹ  
F f

(James, Abiodun & Yerima 2006) Adapted

### Primary Three

1. Fa la yipo awọn faṣẹlẹ wọnyii ---Circle the letters that are vowels  
a b d e ẹ f g gb h i j k l m n o ọ p r s s t u  
w y
2. So awọn ọrọ ti o jọra pọ----- Do the matching of words  
Ajá (dog) Owo (money)  
Ọpẹ (palm tree) .....Ọpẹ (palm tree)  
Adé (crown) Ajá ( dog)  
Owó (money) ilé (house)  
Ilé (house) Adé (crown)
- b. **Synonyms-** Words that are similar in meaning  
Aga- chair- ijokoo- seat Ile - house-  
ibugbe- abode igbo- forest- aginju -  
jungle

Kọ ọrọ ti o ni itumọ kannaa siini alafo yii

- i. akekọo.....  
ii. aya .....

**Antonyms-** words which are opposite in meaning.  
oko-aya okunrin- obirin funfun-  
dudu

Kọ awọn idakeji ọrọ sinu alafo yii  
dide .....sun.....  
rerin-in.....olowo .....

**Primary Four****i) Similes**

**Simile means comparing one thing with another using "as" or "like"**

Oyin (honey), èèrà (Ant), Koriko (grass), Iná (fire), iyẹ (feather), yinyin (ice), Ìnàkí (gorilla), Kìniún (lion)

Pick appropriate word to complete the similes.

The box below will help you.

- i. O dun bi.....
- ii O ni awo ewe bi .....
- iii. O le siṣe bii .....

- iv. O gbona bii.....
- v. O tutu bii.....
- vi O ni igboya bii .....
- vii. O ni irun lara bii .....
- viii. O fuyẹ bii .....

**Primary Five****i) Awon oro ti o fi ibagbepo ebi han-----Words Showing Family Relationship**

Baba (Father), Iya (mother) Omokunrin son, Omobinrin (daughter), Ana (in-law), cousin etc.

1. Baba mi ni..... ngba ti iya mi je iyawo (Aburo baba mi okunrin, Ọkọ, Awọn ọmọ (My father is the ..... while my mother is the wife.(uncle, husband, children ).
2. Gbogbo awon omokunrin ati ọmọ obinrin ni a n pe ni..... ( ibeji, ibeta, awọn ọmọ All the sons and daughters in a family are called ..... (twins, triplets, children).
3. Bi a ba bi ni akoko kannaa lati ọdọ iya kan naa, a o ma pe wọn ni .....(ibeta, Ibeji, awọn arakunrin). If two children are born at at the same time by the same mother, they will be called ..... (triplets, twins, brothers) Olunloyo (2005) Adapted

**iii . Arojinle**

Bayo dagba ju Sola lọ. Sola dagba ju Musa lọ. Eṣe kere si Musa. Tunde dagba ju Sola lọ ṣugbon o kere ju Bayo lọ.

a. Ẹni ti o dagba ju gbogbo gbogbo wọn lọ ni.....

b. Ẹni ti o kere ju gbogbo wọn lọ ni .....

**iii) Logical Reasoning**

Bayo is older than Sola. Sola is older than Musa. Eze is younger than Musa Tunde is older than Sola but younger than Bayo.

a. The oldest of them all is .....

b. The youngest of them all is .....

**Conclusion**

The study has provided solutions to the means to enhance Yoruba literacy skills which is reading and writing of Yoruba through Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning in primary school

- It has also shown that since the knowledge of verbal aptitude reasoning is for life long that is from primary level to advanced level, it is pertinent to introduce Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning which would enhance the grasp of verbal aptitude reasoning thus enhancing the learning and sustaining Yoruba literacy through Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning. With the knowledge of Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning, learners' horizon would be wide enough that problems easily be solved in terms of critical thinking, logical reasoning, analogies and spelling.



- Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning is an innovative strategy which can enhance and sustain the learning of Yoruba literacy.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are presented.

- Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning should be introduced to primary school pupils in Nigeria.
- Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning should be incorporated into primary school Yoruba language curriculum.
- Yoruba scrabble and puzzle games should be developed to complement Yoruba verbal aptitude reasoning which would enhance the sustainability of Yoruba literacy and help in the especially English even to advanced level.

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# Effect of Genre-Based Critical Literacy Instruction on Achievement and Retention of Igbo Language L<sub>1</sub> Learners' Reading Comprehension Skills

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## Abstract

*This study sets out to explore the effect of genre-based critical literacy instruction on NINLAN NCE Igbo L<sub>1</sub> learners' reading comprehension. Design of the study will be Quasi-experimental pre-test post-test non-equivalent control group design. The population of the study consists of NINLAN NCE Igbo Language L<sub>1</sub> learners. Thirty NCE two and three students from two intact classes of regular and part time programmes were sampled purposively and used as intact classes to avoid disruption the classes. The participants, regular and part time students, were assigned into two groups of experimental (critical literacy instruction) and control groups (conventional literacy instruction) respectively. Luke and Freebody's Four Resources Model was adopted for instruction on two Igbo drama texts. The instrument for data collection was a forty item Igbo Language Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (ILRCAT) drawn based on the texts. Pre-test was administered followed by a four-week genre-based reading instruction module would be implemented in both groups. In addition to code breaking, text participating, and text using activities, the conventional approach to reading comprehension instruction, text critiquing activities were embodied into instruction of the experimental group. Traditional code breaking, text participating, and text using activities were involved in the instruction process of the control group. At the end of the teaching process, the post-test was administered. The ILRCAT was re-administered after two weeks as retention test. The three hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at .05 alpha levels. The findings indicated a statistically significant difference in the mean achievement score and retention scores between the experimental and control groups the result further revealed that female students outperformed their male counterparts who participated in the critical literacy instruction. It was recommended that curriculum designers should integrate critical literacy into the Igbo language reading curriculum since the literal meaning of the texts is no longer the main focus of reading texts.*

**Key words:** Critical Literacy, Igbo Language, Reading Comprehension Skills

## Introduction

Reading, being one of the four language skills, seems to be the most important skill since it improves the overall proficiency of language users/learners. The ability to read is highly valued since reading assumes a vital role in educational, political, economic, and recreational cum social lives of a people. Reading is a vital aspect of language learning as it is a critical component of developing other skills like grammar, vocabulary,

and writing (Bostock, 2020). Reading, as a receptive skill, promotes writing and other productive skills, and language communication skills are part of vital prerequisites for effective learning and teaching. There are five aspects to the process of reading namely, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency. These five aspects work together to create the reading experience. Students must develop skills in all five of these areas to become

successful readers. Bonnie (2003) assert that proficient readers use five skills when they read stories, poems, newspapers, science books, and other text. The present study however, is interested in Igbo language reading comprehension skill.

Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand written words. It is also the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate with what the reader already knows (Grabe, 2009). Wolf (2016) asserted that improving reading comprehension and inferences translates improving one's vocabulary, critical text analysis and practicing deep reading. Kirby and Savage (2008) believe that reading is the first endeavour to describe the "balanced literacy"; they suggest that reading comprehension results from developing skills in the areas of decoding and linguistic comprehension.

Before now, literacy was perceived as the ability to read and write. The world is gradually transiting from the traditional reading and writing in school to the highly technological gadgets that could make learning take place anywhere and anytime. According to Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA, 2019), literacy in the 21st century demands the ability to move confidently, efficiently and ethically between a wide range of written and visual print, live, digital or electronic resources. Literacy is most times viewed as a technical skill which should be acquired; it is a required foundation for societal action and one's all-round education, growth and development. The success of every society depends on the number of individuals who are endowed and willing to use their power of endowment to salvage their society from individual or communal challenges through the power of critical thinking.

Vasquez (2017:1) posits that critical literacy is "a theoretical and practical framework that can readily take on such challenges creating spaces for literacy work that can contribute to creating a more critically informed and just world". Vasquez et al. (2019:306) further conceptualized critical literacy as "a lens, frame, or perspective for teaching throughout the day, across the curriculum, and perhaps beyond, rather

than as a topic to be covered or unit". Critical literacy can be deduced as a by-product of critical thinking since the primary aim of the later (critical thinking) is the objective analysis of an issue in order to form judgment while the former (critical literacy) as an educational theory and pedagogical practice raises the issue of unequal power structure within education and the importance of justice for the weak. However, the weak or oppressed can overcome their oppressors and oppressions if and only if the products of critical thinking and/or pedagogical solutions are employed.

Lee (2011:96) opines that "critical literacy is intended to help the marginalized unveil unequal power relations and transform their lives through the empowerment of literacy education". Critical literacy argues that being critically literate is acquiring knowledge of literacy that can be turned into action to change the status quo. The idea of critical literacy can be perceived from different perspectives; it is not just the expression or judgment of the ability to read and/or write as it is perceived by many. Luke (2014:14) describes critical literacy as "the object of a half-century of theoretical debate and practical innovation in the field of education. It is a means of unravelling myths and distortions and constructing knowledge about, and acting upon the world since a lot of ideas worth studying have been neglected over the years. Critical literacy revolves around the ability to motivate, shape, reshape, teach, motivate, encourage or empower the innate knowledge and skills endowed in humans. Hence, it involves examination, questioning, interpretation and appraisal of ideas or phenomena. Critical literacy owes more to literacy since literacy refers to the application of reading, writing and numeracy skills in everyday context.

Hussein (2021) stated that scholars offered different frameworks of practicing critical literacy and that each one focused on certain components that can be practiced in literacy training. These include:

- Freire's (1970) banking of education and problem posing education. For banking education, the teachers choose and the students are just passive receivers

whereas problem posing education engages teachers and students in a critical dialogue about problems related to them in the world.

- Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses its critique on the connection of language and social structure.
- Luke and Freebody's (1999) Four Resources Model of code breaking, meaning making, text using and text critiquing.
- Lewison et al.'s (2002) synthesized the four dimensions model of disrupting the commonplace, considering multiple viewpoints, focusing on the socio-political system, and taking action and promoting social justice.
- Janks (2013) model of relationship between language and power which synthesizes different notions including domination, access, diversity, and design/redesign into one integrated framework of interdependent elements.

This present study adopted Luke and Freebody (1999) framework.

Luke and Freebody's (1999) Four Resources Model has played a vital role in making critical literacy accessible across disciplines. The model was originally developed in 1990 by Peter Freebody and Allan Luke. It has been influential in the design of literacy programs worldwide and it associated four roles of the reader and expanded the definition of reading from a simple model of decoding printed texts to a model of constructing meaning and analysing texts in socio-cultural contexts. Effective reading employs a variety of techniques and tools that let learners, break the code of texts (in order to decode), participate in the meaning generation of texts (text participation), use texts functionally (text use), and to critically analyse and transform texts (text analysis).

Genre-based literacy pedagogy guides language users and learners to recognize and use language codes from lexical and other longer structural patterns to enhance learners' academic

literacy level. It is also believed that learning is best accomplished through explicit awareness of language, rather than through experiment or exploration. It is on this note that the researchers decided to extend the knowledge of this ideology to the achievement and retention of language learners' reading comprehension skills by conducting a quasi-experimental research on teaching Igbo language reading comprehension skills based on critical literacy approach which centres mostly on code breaking, text participating, and text using activities, the conventional approach to reading comprehension instruction, text critiquing activities would be embodied into instruction of the experimental group.

Several earlier studies used components of critical literacy for reading comprehension instruction in different languages. Kurt-Taspinar and Cubukcu (2020) in a quasi-experimental study aimed at unveiling the impact of genre-based critical literacy instruction on twenty-three adult English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' reading comprehension using Luke and Freebody (1999) four resources model. They found no statistically significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the critical literacy group (experimental group) and conventional literacy group (control group).

In a similar study by Sultan et al. (2017) examined the effect of the critical literacy approach on pre-service language teachers' critical reading skills. This approach used in teaching experimental group involved interpretation skill, analysis skill, making an inference skill, evaluation skill, explanation skill, and self-regulation skill whereas the conventional task-based learning was used for control group. Findings revealed that the critical literacy approach had a significant effect on the pre-service language teachers' critical reading skills. Further, the experimental group achieved better at critical reading skills and reached higher post-test scores on average. It indicated that the critical literacy approach had a significant effect on critical reading skills. Hussein (2021) assessing the effect of a collaborative learning program based on the connectivism theory for developing

EFL prep stage students' critical literacy found a positive effect of using collaborative e-learning for developing prep stage students' critical literacy.

In another development, Javadi and Mohammadi (2019) investigated the effect of critical discourse-based instruction on Iranian English major students' reading comprehension. They used the Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis, with an emphasis on the 10-question model. The experimental groups were taught using critical discourse-based instruction to explore the masked and covered meanings of the texts in discovering interrelation of discourse structures and ideological structures of the texts. The control groups were taught using traditional approach. Findings showed that the effect of time on the influence of critical discourse-based instruction on students' reading comprehension and the interaction between time and experimental group were significant. Further, the mean scores in the pre-test, post-test and follow-up test of the experimental group were statistically significant. In addition, the comparison of the post-test and follow-up score did not show a significant difference. Test of language proficiency in intermediate and advanced levels, they reported a significant difference between the two levels in favour of critical teaching method in the intermediate group. Finally, result of gender differences in reading comprehension proficiency based on CDA indicated no significant difference between the two groups. In other words, critical discourse-based instruction does vary between genders.

Oda and Abdul-Kadhim (2017) examined investigates the relationship between gender and reading comprehension achievement at college level using Barrett's Taxonomy in dividing reading comprehension into levels of literal, inferential, critical, and appreciative. It compares the achievement of the two groups of gender (males and females) on each of the four levels and found that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups of gender on three levels of reading comprehension (literal, inferential, and appreciative), but for the critical

level, females outperformed males to a statistically significant level. Lending credence to the foregoing finding, Saidi (2012) in his study found that males comprehend science-oriented texts, while females scored higher on art-oriented passage. Saidi affirmed that females show superiority over male in many aspects in language class.

A close look at the empirical studies reviewed showed that different critical literacy instructional techniques were used with majority on CDA. They are all based on EFL and at tertiary education level. No literature available to the researchers studied any Nigerian language, hence, the current study sought to examine the effect of genre-based critical literacy instruction on achievement and retention of NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' reading comprehension skills using the two Igbo dramatic texts by Ohaiké (2018) and Nwali (2020) and Luke and Freebody four resources model. Specifically, the following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant main effect of critical literacy on NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' achievement in reading comprehension skills.
2. There is no significant effect of gender on NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' achievement in reading comprehension skills.
3. There is no significant main effect of critical literacy on NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' retention in reading comprehension skills.

## **Research Methods**

**Design of the study:** The design of this study was quasi-experimental pre-test-post-test non-equivalent group design. This design was deemed appropriate because the subjects were retained in the intact classes as randomization was not possible as in true experimental design (Creswell, 2012). Further, pre-test and post-test was administered to both groups (experimental and control) but only experimental group received treatment which is teaching Igbo language reading comprehension skills based on critical literacy approach (Creswell, 2014).

**Participants:** The population of the study consisted of all the NCE two and three students of National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN). The sample of the study was 30 students with Igbo language subject combination. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample because only those that offer Igbo language as their Nigerian language option were selected. To avoid interaction among the groups, students in the regular programme were used as experimental group (critical literacy instruction group) while those students for weekend programme (conventional literacy instruction group) was used as the control group. The two groups were taught by the same lecturer.

**Instrumentation:** The instrument for data collection was Igbo Language Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (ILRCAT). It was made up of 40 items drawn from two Igbo language drama texts, *Ego na-ekwu* by Ohaikwe (2018) and *Uwa adighi ka chere* by Nwali (2020). These texts were used for instrument in both groups. Five multiple choice items were constructed to cover each of the four components of Luke and Freebody's (1999) four resources model of code breaking, text participating, text using activities, and text critiquing activities apart from text participating sections that are not multiple choice. The instrument was validated by colleagues in the department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages. The Kuder-Richardson formula-20 ( $K-R_{20}$ ) was used in estimating the reliability of the instrument and an index of 0.86 was obtained which was adequate to warrant the use of the instrument as a reliable.

**Experimental Procedure:** The researchers obtained the consent of the students for

participation in the study. The pre-test was administered to the two groups; the scores were collated and kept. Thereafter, the subjects were requested to participate in a four weeks genre-based reading comprehension instruction. Four lecture notes were prepared for each group giving a total of eight. The four lesson plans for experimental group (critical literacy group) focused on critical literacy skills of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation. It also involved critical reading questions as well as comprehension questions. The other four lesson plans for conventional literacy group focused on activities related to code breaking, text participating, and text using. At the end of the four weeks the post-test was administered to the two groups. The scores were also collated and kept. The students were left to continue with other topics for the semester. Two weeks after, the same instrument was re-administered as delayed post-test (retention test). The three set of scores were retrieved and coded in preparation for analysis.

The scores of pre-tests, post-test and delay post-test were collated and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25 (SPSS-25). The analyses involved descriptive statistics and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for testing the hypotheses at .05 alpha levels. The tenability of the hypotheses was determined by comparing the chosen alpha levels with the p-value in the output tables. A null hypothesis was rejected if the p-value was less than or equal to the alpha level otherwise it was retained.

## Results

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant main effect of critical literacy on NINLAN NCE Igbo language  $L_1$  learners' achievement in reading comprehension skills.

**Table 1**

*Analysis of Covariance of Main Effect of Critical Literacy on NCE Students' Achievement in Igbo Language Reading Comprehension Skills*

| Source            | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Corrected Model   | 1296.530 <sup>a</sup>   | 2  | 648.265     | 94.644 | .000 |
| Intercept         | 124.220                 | 1  | 124.220     | 18.136 | .000 |
| Critical literacy | 17.534                  | 1  | 17.534      | 2.560  | .121 |
| Achievement       | 380.379                 | 1  | 380.379     | 55.534 | .000 |
| Error             | 184.937                 | 27 | 6.850       |        |      |
| Total             | 25792.000               | 30 |             |        |      |
| Corrected Total   | 1481.467                | 29 |             |        |      |

Table 1 revealed that F-ratio  $(1, 27) = 55.53$  at p value  $(.000) < \alpha$  level  $(.05)$  therefore, with the effect of pre-test partial out, the null hypothesis of no significant effect of critical literacy on reading comprehension skills is rejected. This implies that there is statistically significant mean difference (7.41) between those taught Igbo language

reading comprehension skill with critical literacy and those taught with conventional method. Table 2 further indicated that those taught reading comprehension skills with critical literacy had higher mean score gain of 8.18 as against that taught with conventional method with mean score gain of 0.77.

**Table 2:** *Mean and Standard Deviation of Effect of Critical Literacy on NCE Students' Achievement Scores in Igbo Language Reading Comprehension Skills*

| Group             | N  | Pre-test    |                 | Post-test   |                 | Mean score gain | Mean difference |
|-------------------|----|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                   |    | $\bar{X}_1$ | SD <sub>1</sub> | $\bar{X}_2$ | SD <sub>2</sub> | $\bar{X}$       |                 |
| Critical literacy | 17 | 26.00       | 1.84            | 34.18       | 2.46            | 8.18            | 7.41            |
| Conventional      | 13 | 20.23       | 3.06            | 21.00       | 2.02            | 0.77            |                 |

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant effect of gender on NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' achievement in reading comprehension skills.

**Table 3:** *Analysis of Covariance of Main Effect of Gender on NCE Students' Achievement in Igbo reading comprehension skills*

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Corrected Model | 48.873 <sup>a</sup>     | 2  | 24.436      | 7.188  | .007 |
| Intercept       | 51.215                  | 1  | 51.215      | 15.064 | .002 |
| Achievement     | 4.075                   | 1  | 4.075       | 1.199  | .292 |
| Gender          | 47.965                  | 1  | 47.965      | 14.108 | .002 |
| Error           | 47.598                  | 14 | 3.400       |        |      |
| Total           | 19953.000               | 17 |             |        |      |
| Corrected Total | 96.471                  | 16 |             |        |      |

Table 3 showed that  $F\text{-ratio}_{(1, 14)} = 14.11$  at  $p$  value  $(.002) < \alpha$  level  $(.05)$  therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female NCE

students taught Igbo language reading comprehension using critical literacy approach. Table 4 showed that female students with mean score gain of 9.23 outperformed the male students with mean score gain of 4.75.

**Table 4:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Effect of Gender on Achievement Scores in Igbo reading comprehension skills Taught with Critical Literacy

| Gender | N  | Pre-test    |        | Post-test   |        | Mean score gain | Mean difference |
|--------|----|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|
|        |    | $\bar{X}_1$ | $SD_1$ | $\bar{X}_2$ | $SD_2$ | $\bar{X}$       |                 |
| Male   | 4  | 26.50       | 1.29   | 31.25       | .96    | 4.75            | 4.48            |
| Female | 13 | 25.85       | 1.99   | 35.08       | 2.02   | 9.23            |                 |

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant main effect of critical literacy on NINLAN NCE Igbo language L1 learners' retention in reading comprehension skills.

**Table 5:** Analysis of Covariance of Main Effect of Critical Literacy on NCE Students' Retention in Igbo Language Reading Comprehension Skills

| Source            | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F       | Sig. |
|-------------------|-------------------------|----|-------------|---------|------|
| Corrected Model   | 1548.726 <sup>a</sup>   | 2  | 774.363     | 179.096 | .000 |
| Intercept         | 74.447                  | 1  | 74.447      | 17.218  | .000 |
| Critical literacy | 25.395                  | 1  | 25.395      | 5.873   | .022 |
| Retention         | 94.995                  | 1  | 94.995      | 21.971  | .000 |
| Error             | 116.741                 | 27 | 4.324       |         |      |
| Total             | 24408.000               | 30 |             |         |      |
| Corrected Total   | 1665.467                | 29 |             |         |      |

As can be seen in Table 5  $F\text{-ratio}_{(1, 27)} = 21.97$  at  $p$  value  $(.000) < \alpha$  level  $(.05)$ . Based on this result, the null hypothesis which postulated that there is no significant main effect of critical literacy on NCE students' retention in Igbo language reading comprehension skills is rejected. It can be deduced that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean retention scores

of NEC student taught Igbo language reading comprehension with critical literacy approach and those taught using conventional approach. Table 6 is confirmed that those taught with critical literacy approach retained the concept more with very low mean difference of 0.39 whereas those in conventional group had higher mean difference indicating lower retention.

**Table 6:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Main Effect of Critical Literacy on Retention in Igbo Language Reading Comprehension Skills

| Groups            | N  | Post-test   |        | Retention Test |        | Mean score gain | Mean difference |
|-------------------|----|-------------|--------|----------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                   |    | $\bar{X}_1$ | $SD_1$ | $\bar{X}_2$    | $SD_2$ | $\bar{X}$       |                 |
| Critical literacy | 17 | 34.18       | 2.46   | 33.76          | 2.28   | 0.39            | 1.23            |
| Conventional      | 13 | 21.00       | 2.02   | 19.38          | 2.22   | 1.62            |                 |



## **Discussion**

The study aimed assessing the effect of genre-based critical literacy instruction on achievement and retention of NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' reading comprehension skills. The first hypothesis revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean achievement score of NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' taught Igbo language reading comprehension skills with critical literacy and those taught with conventional method. The result is expected since engaging learners in critical literacy instruction leads to active, open-minded, and strategic reading with critically analysing and interpreting the information presented in texts (McLaughlin & DeVogd cited in Kurt-Taspinar & Cubukcu, 2020). This finding corroborated with Javadi and Mohammadi (2019); Sultan et al. (2017) who in their independent studies with different critical literacy techniques found that there exists statistically significant difference in the mean achievement scores of learners taught reading skills based on critical literacy approach. However, the finding negates Kurt-Taspinar & Cubukcu (2020) who found no statistically significant difference in the achievement of those in the critical literacy group and conventional literacy group. Although they suspected that result was due to the small sample size used in the study.

The second hypothesis tested the effect of gender difference on achievement based on critical literacy instruction. The indicated a statistically significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female NINLAN NCE students taught Igbo language reading comprehension using critical literacy approach in favour of female students. This implied that female students outperformed males in reading comprehension based on critical literacy instruction. This finding is in agreement with Oda and Abdul-Kadhim (2017) who comparing four levels reading comprehension found that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female on literal, inferential, and appreciative skills, but for the critical skill, females outperformed males to a statistically significant level. On the contrary, gender

differences in reading comprehension proficiency based on CDA indicated no significant difference between male and female, in other words, critical discourse-based instruction does vary between genders (Javadi & Mohammadi, 2019). The inconclusiveness of gender difference in achievement in reading comprehension is not surprising language because males comprehend science-oriented texts, while females scored higher on art-oriented passage and comprehension is art-oriented Saidi (2012). Saidi added that there are evidences that females are better than males in many aspects of language learning. Admittedly there several factors that influence variation in comprehension of texts, they include topic of texts, familiarity of text, vocabulary knowledge, language learning strategy among others (Saidi, 2012; Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017)

Finally, the third hypothesis tested the main effect of critical literacy on NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' retention in reading comprehension skills. It was found that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean retention scores of NEC student taught Igbo language reading comprehension with critical literacy approach and those taught using conventional approach. Javadi and Mohammadi (2019) supporting the finding reported that follow-up test (retention test) of the experimental group (CDA group) was statistically significant.

## **Conclusion**

The study explores the effect of genre-based critical literacy instruction on achievement and retention of NINLAN NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners' reading comprehension skills using the two Igbo dramatic texts and four resources model critical literacy technique of Luke and Freebody. Based on the findings it was concluded that critical literacy-based instruction showed evidence of effectiveness in achievement and retention of Igbo language reading comprehension skills among NCE Igbo language L<sub>1</sub> learners. It enhanced comprehension of texts and increased critical awareness the learners. Critical literacy developed critical attitude in learners by actively engaging them in a process of critical thinking, analysing a problem, and providing responses

from many perspectives. Although the found that females exposed to critical literacy approach proved better than males in achievement in reading comprehension skill, it was concluding that gender variation in reading comprehension are affected by factors ranging from topic of texts, familiarity of text, vocabulary knowledge, to language learning strategy.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Curriculum designers should integrate critical literacy into the Igbo language reading curriculum since the literal meaning of the texts is no longer the main focus of reading texts.
- Language teachers should work towards developing learners' critical awareness skills and reasoning abilities because learners develop their ability in Igbo language as they practice critical literacy skills.
- Language instructors should provide a language class that will foster interaction between female students and male students in a way that leads to equal development of reading skills and thinking skills in order to improve in reading comprehension skill.

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# Teachers' Perceptions on Learner-Related Variables Impeding the Development of Critical Literacy for Sustainable Religious Tolerance in Aba Education Zone, Abia State

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## Abstract

*This descriptive survey was conducted to determine teachers' perceptions on the extent to which learner-related variables like language competence, reading competence, religiosity, self-esteem, and cultural awareness might impede the development of critical literacy for religious tolerance among secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State, Nigeria. This research adopts the descriptive survey design. The population comprises all male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone, Abia State, Nigeria. The stratified and purposive sampling methods were used in enlisting the participation of 100 secondary school teachers in data generation. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-made questionnaire tagged "Learner-related Impediments to Critical Literacy for Sustainable Religious Tolerance Questionnaire" (L-RICLSRTQ). The questionnaire was validated by experts of instrument development to ensure it had validity for the study. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha which yielded a coefficient of .72. Data generated from the questionnaire was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to for the purpose of answering the research questions. The results revealed that language competence, reading competence and self-esteem impeded the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance to a great extent while religiosity and cultural awareness impeded to a moderate extent. Based on these perceptions by the teachers, the researchers recommended, among others, that teachers assist the learning to develop language and reading competences necessary for the development of critical literacy skills for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.*

**Key words:** Critical literacy; Sustainable religious tolerance; Learner-related impediments; Psychology of learning; Pedagogy

## Introduction

Religious tolerance has become an existential need for Nigeria. Unfortunately, much of the information on mass media is drenched in various forms of inciting, discriminatory, and provocative religious sentiments. The capacity to avoid vicariously adopting these orientations when consuming public information on religion depends to a large extent on the readers' ability to not only read but read critically, questioning the motive, intent and tolerance orientation of the writer beyond the obvious facts presented. This

calls for more than mere literacy; critical literacy is needed.

As with general literacy, critical literacy begins with ability to read or listen and decode information correctly. But it is distinguished from general literacy as it brings on the additional component of critical thinking woven into the process of reading and listening. Blake (2016) defines critical literacy as the ability to find embedded discrimination in media by analysing the messages; reading beyond the author's words and examining the manner in which the author

conveys their ideas about the subject in focus to determine whether these ideas contain prejudicial biases or inequality. Operationally, critical literacy allows an individual to engage critical thinking first uncover embedded biases in literature and thereafter attempts to make sense of these biases by “analysing the power dynamics that create the written or oral texts of society and then questioning their claims” (Smith, 2015). The aim of critical literacy therefore is the ability to examine the language and wording of texts and how certain aspects of grammar are used to convey the clandestine but actual intended meaning put up by the writer (Temple, 2016).

As categorically stated right from the outset of this discourse, religious tolerance has become an existential need for Nigeria. Religious tolerance is broadly conceptualised as the forbearance and permission given by the adherents of a dominant religion for other religions to exist. Typically, there is a religious sect that perceived themselves as dominant or that pursues such dominance thus looking at other forms of religious expressions and practice in their geographical spread with disapproval as inferior, mistaken, or even harmful. Generally, the dominant religion has been argued to typically enjoy state backing, or at least the support of prominent state actors who provide the cover for the dominant religion to assert their dominance and suppression on other religions (Gervers, Gervers, and Powell, 2001; Joachim, 2017; Perez, 2003).

The recent incidents of interreligious crises in Nigeria fueled by intolerance among members have drawn global condemnation. Most worrisome is the fact that some of these crises are sparked by very basic interactions between persons who by their level of literacy ought to have been more sensitive to their use of written communication to forestall such crises. A case for quick reference is the killing and burning of a level-two female student of the Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto by irate youths. The student who was of the Christian faith was accused of making a social media post that blasphemed the holy prophet Muhammad causing her classmates of the Muslim faith, which is the

dominant religion in Sokoto State, to mob the girl, club her to death and burn her corpse in public, defying the resistance of the school security operatives (Abdulsamad, 2022).

The current research is built on the premise that students may fail to develop the quintessential skill of critical literacy due to the intervening effects of deficiencies in key learner-level variables. Language competence, reading competence, self-esteem, religiosity and cultural awareness have been isolated for this study. These learner-level variables are, in the opinion of the researchers, foundational to the development of critical literacy. One can hardly critique what they read if they are barely able to read in the first place. One would have difficulty reading any language they have not learned enough to be able to decode the phonemics correctly. Where self-esteem is deficient, students may cower from responding to biases they perceive in religious discourses thus allowing a leeway for acrimonious sentiments to germinate and flourish. Lack of sound religious foundation may cause zealots to push ignorantly for wrongly conceived blasphemy where none actually exists and poor cultural awareness has been found to breed intolerance due to lack of respect for the cultural differences of others and a false sense of superiority of one's culture. Against this back drop the researchers saw it pertinent to examine the perceptions of teachers on the extent to which these learner-related variables may impede the development of critical literacy among students. The findings would inform pedagogical interventions aimed at inculcating in the learner's critical literacy skills for sustainable religious tolerance in Nigeria.

## Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of teachers on the learner-related variables that impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among students in public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone, Abia State. Specifically, this study has the following objectives:

1. To determine teachers' perceptions on the extent to which *language competence* impedes the development of critical

- literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.
2. To determine teachers' perceptions on the extent to which *reading competence* impedes the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.
  3. To determine teachers' perceptions on the extent to which *religiosity* impedes the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.
  4. To determine teachers' perceptions on the extent to which *self-esteem* impedes the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.
  5. To determine teachers' perceptions on the extent to which *cultural awareness* impedes the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.

### Research Questions

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. To what extent does *language competence* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?
2. To what extent does *reading competence* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?
3. To what extent does *religiosity* impede the development of critical literacy for

sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?

4. To what extent does *self-esteem* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?
5. To what extent does *cultural awareness* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?

### Review of Related Literature

Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran and Adelman (2019) in their review on various policy implications of toleration, examined existing research on intergroup tolerance, the importance of perspective taking, the asymmetry of tolerance, and the boundaries of toleration. The authors highlighted that tolerance can function as a dimension of intergroup comparison that leads to acceptance or rejection of cultural and religious minority groups. The authors showed the depoliticized effects that tolerance might have and the possible negative psychological consequences for groups that are tolerated in society. The relevance of this work for the current research is the insight it provides on the multidimensionality of religious tolerance, which in the current research is presumed to be only sustainable through the inculcation of critical literacy skills from the early years of education.

Urlaub (2013) examined the connection between critical thinking, literacy, and intercultural awareness, with a view to extending the curricular and methodological repertoire of business language programs and instructors. To that end, the study introduced an instructional technique for business language classes that will elevate the learners' level of criticality toward second language texts. The approach is based on the reading comprehension strategy of self-generating questions. Instead of responding to questions raised by the instructor or the textbook, students self-generate questions vis-à-vis the

assigned texts. After providing a working definition of critical literacy and an outline of previous research that relates to strategy instruction in literacy-centred foreign language education, the article illustrated this approach and analysed the question sets that two American students generated in response to a German newspaper article on the actions of anti-consumerist advocacy groups. The relevance of this study to the current research is the insight it provided in how cultural awareness and critical thinking are intertwined thus validating the imperative of enhancing cultural awareness to improve critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance.

Montgomery (2001) in a separate study established the importance of culturally responsive teaching that accommodates differences among diverse students and the need for those students to find connections between themselves and the school and/or curriculum to improve their critical literacy. In culturally responsive classrooms, teachers recognize the need to develop instructional strategies which meet the needs of all students. Critical literacy engages teachers and students in thought-provoking discussions that connect their lives to the texts. It challenges readers to question, to disagree, and to examine power relations that exist in stories and in real life. Cowhey (2006) maintains that critical literacy encourages critical thinking and social action allowing students to learn through activism while developing a sense of social justice, a sense of fairness and equity that begins with personal and community experience and extends globally and historically. These authors in their separate works emphasize the role of culture in the social responsive aspect of critical literacy which, in the opinion of the current researchers is crucial for sustainable religious tolerance.

Hanif, Ali and Carlson (2020) in their study attempted to provide a contextual account of religious tolerance in Pakistan with a special focus on schools (including *madrasas*) and religiosity. Building on the pre-existing literature the authors tested to what extent *madrasas*, secular (worldly) education schools, and individual religiosity

explain religious tolerance among students. They measured four dimensions of religious tolerance: freedom, respect, discrimination, and acceptance. Random sampling techniques were used to collect data from students ( $N = 937$ ) of *madrasas* and mainstream schools. Structural equation modelling analyses revealed that *madrasa* students were least tolerant of religious minorities and private school students were the most tolerant. The study also found that the higher the religiosity of an individual, the lower their levels of religious tolerance, particularly, among private school students.

Szcześniak, Falewicz, Madej, Bielecka, Pracka and Rybarski (2022) in their study on religious struggles and self-esteem observed that individuals tend to have various perceptions of themselves in comforting or distressing circumstances. The researchers suspected that religious comfort and religious distress correlate differently with people's self-esteem. Since the relationship between religiosity and self-esteem is not only direct but can be mediated by other factors that are recognized as buffers against adverse situations, the main goal was to verify whether dispositional gratitude may have an indirect effect on the association between both variables. The research involved data from 254 participants aged 18 to 25 ( $M = 21.24$ ;  $SD = 2.09$ ) and included 192 women (76%) and 62 men (24%). To measure the title variables, the Religious Comfort and Strain Scale (RCSS), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) were used. The results showed that people who consider religion as a source of comfort express positive attitudes toward the self and recognize others' kindness, as well. In contrast, people who consider religiosity as a cause of fear, stress, and internal strain tend to display a lower subjective sense of personal worth and lower appreciation of the positivity around them. Moreover, gratitude had a mediatory effect on the relationships between religious comfort/negative emotions toward God and self-esteem. This gives credence to the imperative of examining the role of self-esteem in critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance.

Ko (2013) explored the relationship between EFL learners' critical literacy practices and the English language proficiency. Four focal EFL learners' critical literacy practices in their dialogic interaction were investigated and 39 students' views on their critical literacy learning were also analysed. The four focal students' discussion on a gender-related local news article was analysed based on the concept of critical discourse analysis; the students' views on critical literacy learning were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings showed that despite the difference in their English proficiency, the four focal students all demonstrated critical literacy in varying degrees as shown in its previous study, and that critical consciousness of gender and class are raised through dialogic interaction. This study thus corroborates the previous one that English proficiency does not hinder EFL learner's critical literacy practices. Besides, this study had an additional finding; that is, English proficiency levels do affect EFL learners' views on critical literacy learning. Therefore, a critical literacy-based class would be more acceptable to students whose English proficiency is high. This study provides basis for the current research to determine the extent to which language proficiency impacts of the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance.

## **Methods**

### **Design**

This research adopts the descriptive survey design. The descriptive research design involves using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect data that aids in accurately describing a research problem. More specifically, it helps answer the what, when, where, and how questions regarding the research problem, rather than the why. The descriptive method of research can involve the use of many different kinds of research methods to investigate the variables in question. It predominantly employs quantitative data, although qualitative data is also used sometimes for descriptive purposes. It is important to note that in the descriptive method of research, unlike in

experimental research; the researcher does not control or manipulate any variables. Instead, the variables are only identified, observed, and measured. These considerations informed the choice of this research design for this study.

### **Area of the Study**

This study was carried out within Aba Education Zone of Abia State. Aba Education Zone spans a total of nine (9) Local Government Areas of Abia State: Aba North, Aba South, Isiala Ngwa North, Isiala Ngwa South, Obingwa, Osisioma, Ugwunagbo, Ukwu East and Ukwu West. Aba people are predominantly Christians but there are quite a handful of Muslims and pagans which makes this area the choices for this study on sustainable religious tolerance. Educationally, there are ninety-two (92) public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone at the time of this study. The population of senior secondary students in Aba Education Zone was considerably large enough to allow the generalisation of findings from this population on other characteristically similar populations.

### **Population and Sample**

The population comprises all male and female teachers in public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone, Abia State, Nigeria. At the time this study was conducted, there were 421 male and 859 female teachers (totalling 1280 teachers) in all the 92 public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone. The stratified and purposive sampling methods were used in enlisting the participation of 100 secondary school teachers in data generation for this study. These sampling methods allowed for the selection of teachers across the education zone without prejudice to any section while also facilitating the enlistment of teachers who are available and willing to participate in the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument for data collection was the "Learner-related Impediments to Critical Literacy for Sustainable Religious Tolerance Questionnaire" (L-RICLSRTQ) developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was validated by



experts of instrument development to ensure it had validity for the study. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha which yielded a coefficient of .72.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Teachers sampled for the study were provided copies of the research questionnaire to complete in person by the researchers. They were duly informed about the purpose of the study and their consent obtained without duress. They were allowed sufficient time and offered needful explanations to help them fill out the questionnaire correctly. All administered copies of

the research instrument were retrieved safely with zero attrition. Subsequently, the data collected were collated and analysed using descriptive statistics to answer the research questions. The results are presented and discussed in the subsequent sections.

### Results

#### Answers to Research Questions

**Research question 1:** To what extent does *language competence* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?

**Table 1:** *Language competence and critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance*

| S/N | Response           | Frequency | Weighted Score | Weighted Score | Mean | Remark |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|--------|
| 1   | Strongly Agreed    | 37        | 148            |                |      |        |
| 2   | Agreed             | 49        | 147            |                |      |        |
| 3   | Disagreed          | 12        | 24             | 3.21*          |      | GE*    |
| 4   | Strongly Disagreed | 02        | 02             |                |      |        |

\*1-1.44=Little Extent; 1.5-2.44=Moderate Extent; 2.5-3.44=Great Extent; Very Great Extent = 4-3.5

To answer research question 1, descriptive statistical analysis of research data was computed. The results presented in Table 1 shows that out of the 100 public school teachers who responded to the research questionnaire, 37 Strongly Agreed and 49 Agreed, whereas 12 Disagreed and only 2 Strongly Disagreed to the postulation that students who possess higher levels of language competence are also capable of higher levels of critical reading competence in their schools. The researchers concluded, based

on the resulting weighted mean score of 3.21, that to a great extent, language competence can impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria.

**Research question 2:** To what extent does *reading competence* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?

**Table 2:** *Reading competence and critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance*

| S/N | Response           | Frequency | Weighted Score | Weighted Score | Mean | Remark |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|--------|
| 1   | Strongly Agreed    | 44        | 176            |                |      |        |
| 2   | Agreed             | 47        | 141            |                |      |        |
| 3   | Disagreed          | 03        | 06             | 3.35*          |      | GE*    |
| 4   | Strongly Disagreed | 06        | 06             |                |      |        |

\*1-1.44=Little Extent; 1.5-2.44=Moderate Extent; 2.5-3.44=Great Extent; Very Great Extent = 4-3.5

To answer research question 2, descriptive statistical analysis of data collected

from the 100 public school teachers who participated in this study was done. The results

presented in Table 2 shows that out of the 100 public school teachers who responded to the research questionnaire, 44 Strongly Agreed and 47 Agreed, whereas 3 Disagreed and remaining 6 Strongly Disagreed to the postulation that students with higher levels of reading competence also develop higher level of critical reading competence than their peers with lower level of reading competence. The weighted mean score of 3.35 indicated that to a great extent, reading

competence can impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria.

**Research question 3:** To what extent does *religiosity* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?

**Table 3:** *Religiosity and critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance*

| S/N | Response           | Frequency | Weighted Score | Weighted Score | Mean | Remark |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|--------|
| 1   | Strongly Agreed    | 17        | 68             |                |      |        |
| 2   | Agreed             | 31        | 93             | 2.44*          |      | ME*    |
| 3   | Disagreed          | 31        | 62             |                |      |        |
| 4   | Strongly Disagreed | 21        | 21             |                |      |        |

\*1-1.44=Little Extent; 1.5-2.44=Moderate Extent; 2.5-3.44=Great Extent; Very Great Extent = 4-3.5

To provide statistical answer to research question 3, descriptive analysis of research data collected was done. The results presented in Table 3 shows that out of the 100 public school teachers who responded to the research questionnaire, 17 Strongly Agreed and 31 Agreed, whereas another 31 Disagreed and 21 Strongly Disagreed to the postulation that students who are very religious are more sensitive and responsive to charged religious sentiments in print and electronic write-ups. The researchers concluded, based on the

resulting weighted mean score of 2.44, that religiosity can only impede the development of critical literacy among the students in Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria to a moderate extent.

**Research question 4:** To what extent does *self-esteem* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?

**Table 4:** *Self-esteem and critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance*

| S/N | Response           | Frequency | Weighted Score | Weighted Score | Mean | Remark |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|--------|
| 1   | Strongly Agreed    | 28        | 112            |                |      |        |
| 2   | Agreed             | 34        | 102            | 2.74*          |      | GE*    |
| 3   | Disagreed          | 22        | 44             |                |      |        |
| 4   | Strongly Disagreed | 16        | 16             |                |      |        |

\*1-1.44=Little Extent; 1.5-2.44=Moderate Extent; 2.5-3.44=Great Extent; Very Great Extent = 4-3.5

Summary of data analysis presented in Table 4 forms the basis for answering research question 4 in this study. The data shows that out of the 100 public school teachers who participated in this study, 28 Strongly Agreed and 34 Agreed, while 22 Disagreed and the remaining 16 Strongly

Disagreed to the postulation that students' self-esteem may impede their development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone. The weighted mean score of 2.74 derived from the descriptive statistical analysis of their responses indicated that to a great extent,

self-esteem can impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria.

**Research question 5:** To what extent does *cultural awareness* impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among public secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State?

**Table 5:** *Cultural awareness and critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance*

| S/N | Response           | Frequency | Weighted Score | Weighted Score | Mean | Remark |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|------|--------|
| 1   | Strongly Agreed    | 14        | 56             |                |      |        |
| 2   | Agreed             | 26        | 78             |                |      |        |
| 3   | Disagreed          | 41        | 82             | 2.35*          |      | ME*    |
| 4   | Strongly Disagreed | 19        | 19             |                |      |        |

\*1-1.44=Little Extent; 1.5-2.44=Moderate Extent; 2.5-3.44=Great Extent; Very Great Extent = 4-3.5

To provide statistical answer to research question 5, descriptive analysis was carried out on the data collected from a sample of 100 public school teachers in Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria. The summary of data analysis presented in Table 5 shows that out of the 100 teachers who responded to the research questionnaire, 14 Strongly Agreed, 26 Agreed, 41 Disagreed and 19 Strongly Disagreed to the postulation that cultural awareness impedes the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance among students. The researchers concluded, based on the resulting weighted mean score of 2.35, that cultural awareness can only impede the development of critical literacy among the students in Aba Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria to a moderate extent.

### Discussion

The results of data analysis done in this study provide statistical answers to the research questions earlier raised to guide the study. First, it has been found that language competence can impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance to a great extent. This result mirrors the findings of Ko (2013) who established through an empirical study that (English) language proficiency had a high correlation with critical literacy among the study sample. This result provides a basis for promoting the development of language competence among

learners in order to provide the foundation needed for them to build other literacies upon, including critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance. Without adequate language competence especially as the language of formal education in Nigeria is different from the mother tongue of the learners, it would be difficult for the learners to develop beyond general literacy. Language mastery is this submitted as an essential building block for critical literacy by this report.

The analysis of data on the extent to which reading proficiency impedes the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance provided statistical basis to conclude that reading competence impedes the development of critical literacy to a great extent as well. This finding is not surprising as reading competence is an integral part of language competence. One would hardly read proficiently if they have not developed a level of mastery over the language of the text in focus. Hence, as observed by Uruab (2013) literacy (which includes reading ability) has an important connection with critical thinking which distinguishes critical literacy from general literacy. Hence, the works of Uruab (2013 and Ko (2013) are additional corroborations to the conclusion drawn in this work on the impact of reading competence on the development of critical literacy needed for sustainable religious tolerance.

The result obtained from statistical analysis of data obtained on the extent to which religiosity impacts the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance revealed that religiosity may impede critical literacy to a moderate extent. While previous related literature on this is largely scarce, the work of Hanif, Ali and Carlson (2020) provided a contextual analysis of religiosity and religious tolerance indicting religiosity over general education as sustaining religious intolerance. This study along with the current finding suggest that much research is required to further understand how religiosity affects the development of religious intolerance and what needs to be done to douse the bigotry observed among zealots and inculcate tolerance through education and religious instruction across various climes for sustainable religious coexistence especially in religiously diverse areas like Aba Education Zone, Abia State.

This study also analysed the impact of self-esteem on the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone, Abia State. The statistical analysis of research data showed that self-esteem may impede the development of critical literacy to a great extent. Understandably, self-esteem plays out where critical literacy demands appropriate social response to biased contents of textual information. A related study conducted by Szcześniak, *et al* (2022) already established a connection between religious struggles and self-esteem both in comforting and distressing circumstances. Hence the current finding goes to confirm that where distressing (biased, discriminatory) contexts may be encountered, self-esteem may mediate the response of the learner towards such texts. Thus, this study provides and empirical basis for consideration to be given to the development of learner's self-esteem as it is crucial to their ability to act right in social situations that call for critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance.

This also study examined teachers' perceptions on the extent to which cultural awareness could impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance. The analysis of research data showed that cultural awareness impedes the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone to a moderate extent. The minimal impact of cultural awareness could be attributable to

the diversity observed in Aba Education Zone. Aba being a major commercial hub in Nigeria attracts people from so many ethnic and racial groups. The years of coexistence could adequately lull the boundaries and differences that naturally exist among dwellers in this region. However, for the purpose of developing the level of critical literacy needed for sustainable religious tolerance, it is pertinent to assist learners develop the cultural awareness necessary to cultivate religious tolerance. In a related study, Montgomery (2001) established the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy tailored to the needs of the learners which would also be advocated by the current research. Verkuyten, *et al* (2019) in their study had already alerted educators to the asymmetry of tolerance, the boundaries of toleration and the role of perspective taking in religious tolerance. The current research, in consonance with Verkuyten, *et al* (2019) is also of the position that cultural awareness is essential for the development of sustainable religious tolerance, based on the result obtained.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study provide statistical evidence to conclude that the learner related variables investigated in this work namely language competence, reading competence, self-esteem, religiosity and cultural awareness can impede the development of critical literacy for sustainable religious tolerance in Aba Education Zone, Abia State. Based on this conclusion, the following recommendations have been put forward by the researchers:

1. Teachers should assist students under their tutelage to develop language competence. Since English is the language of instruction in public schools in Nigeria, it would be beneficial for the students if their teachers seize every opportunity to ensure that the students develop a good level of mastery of the language, beyond being able to use it in basic communication. This will help the students decode correctly the various nuances in written communication which are embedded with biased and inciting religious messages capable of causing rifts between the major religious divides of the state.

2. Teachers should devise means of helping students develop reading competence. This will help them advance beyond being able to merely call out the words in print correctly but also understanding the various functions of written expressions and styles. This would go a long way to enhance their critical literacy skills making for sustainable religious tolerance
3. The government at all levels and school administrators should engage the services of counsellors and educational psychologists to assist students build self-esteem. This would help them cultivate the assertiveness needed to respond appropriately to inappropriate publications that can incite to religious hatred and rancour without fear or favour.
4. Parents are encouraged to assist their wards advance beyond the motions of their religion and learn about their faiths so as to develop the competence needed to critically analyse what is handed down to them by their clerics and determine if such religious dispositions and beliefs are capable of creating dissention and conflicts in the society or not and respond appropriately.
5. Schools are encouraged to provide responsive multicultural training to their students to help them gain necessary knowledge and understanding of the various local cultures around them. This will boost their capacity for tolerance and accommodation for the cultures of others.

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# Factors Associated with Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety among Lagos State University Undergraduates

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## Abstract

*The aim of this present study was to investigate Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) by questioning students (n =87) of foreign languages of the Lagos state University. Adapting the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale developed by Howitz, Howitz and Cope (1986) for data collection tool, data was analysed using one-way ANOVA, chi-square and PPMC. Results showed among others that female student displayed a higher level of anxiety than their male counterparts; that Foreign Language students of Portuguese displayed a higher level of anxiety than other students of French and Arabic; and that age of students was not significant statistically related to their FLA. The results of this paper provided teachers and decision-makers with some recommendations and pedagogical implications that will enable them to overcome the female students' language anxiety in the classroom in the LASU setting, which will also help in achieving better learning outcomes with suggestions towards easing the anxiety level of foreign language students in classrooms.*

**Key words:** Anxiety, Classroom Anxiety scale, Foreign Language, Lagos state University.

## Introduction

Foreign language anxiety is a complex classroom phenomenon that has been found by different writers to be a predictor of foreign language achievement among learners (Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Woodrow, 2006). Different variables of age, academic achievement, prior history of visiting foreign countries, prior high school experience with foreign languages, expected overall average for current language course, perceived scholastic competence, and perceived self-worth and other learners' personality traits (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Zhang, 2013 Dewaele, 2013) were equally found to significantly contribute to the prediction of foreign language anxiety. According to Gawi (2020), foreign language classroom anxiety is one of the major causes of EFL university students' weakness in their performance. Campbell and Ortiz (1991) equally pointed out that language anxiety among university students is disturbing and can disrupt their learning process. This

problem has not received adequate documented attention from researchers in Nigerian Universities particularly in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Primarily, this current study further contributed to this area of FLA by seeking to know the contributions of variables such as students' age, gender, level of study on the classroom language anxiety of a sample of 87 Nigerian university students learning Arabic, French and Portuguese at the Lagos State University. Such a comparison has not been attempted in this location, but is vital, because it helps to deepen the understanding of the nature of FL learning and its anxiety among Teachers and students of languages not their first tongues.

## Literature Review

Anxiety can be defined as a mental and physical state characterized by specific emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioural symptoms (Kral'ova, 2016). It is an adaptive reaction which mobilizes the organism and helps it defend or

avoid an anxiety stimulus. The stimulus can be a previous external or internal antecedent or trigger. To state the definite causes of anxiety can be rather complicated as it is influenced by many factors – biological, psychological, social or other (Doubek, & Anders, 2013). When anxiety is limited just to a specific situation, such as using a foreign language, it is termed specific anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Anxiety when associated with learning a foreign language is termed as “second/foreign language anxiety” related to the negative emotional reactions of the learners towards foreign language acquisition (Horwitz, 2001). FLA is generally viewed as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to foreign language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Horwitz, & Young, (1991) identified two approaches to identifying foreign language anxiety; transfer approach – where FLA is viewed as a manifestation of other forms of anxiety; and unique approach – where foreign language achievement is correlated with FLA but not with other types of anxiety.

MacIntyre (1998) defined FLA as an individual emotional experience of being worried or a negative feeling as a reaction to learning a foreign language. Emphasizing specific learning contexts, Horwitz et al. (1991) described FLA as an individual complex of feelings, perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours that arises from a class situation where one learns and uses foreign languages. To measure FLA in classrooms, Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Although some researchers have questioned its construct validity (Sparks and Ganschow 2007), the FLCAS has been recognized as a reliable tool to examine FLA in classrooms (Young 1994). Foreign language anxiety appears to be a universal problem across different languages and different countries. For example, in the North American context, Week and Ferraro (2011) discovered that in American students of 44 French, German, and Spanish, gender and anxiety, measured by the FLCAS, were significantly related to foreign language performance determined by a final grade.

In the, Middle East situation, Mahmood and Iqbal (2010) examined anxiety in male and female groups of Pakistani students of English and documented that in both the male and female Pakistani students, anxiety had an effect on academic achievement. In the Asian context, Wang (2010) found that over 50% of the students learning English in China had moderate to high anxiety levels. Few studies compared foreign language anxiety of students studying different foreign languages to examine if foreign language anxiety varied according to the target language. When Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) examined foreign language enjoyment and anxiety of students around the world, they noticed significant cultural group differences. American participants had the lowest anxiety while Asian students reported the highest anxiety, and South Americans, Arabs, and Europeans scored somewhere in the middle. Horwitz (2001) also reported levels of foreign language anxiety may vary in different cultural groups. For American learners of foreign languages, at least, anxiety levels do not seem to vary with respect to target language (Horwitz, 1986; Aida, 1994); however, Asian students of English seem to have higher levels of anxiety with Middle Eastern students scoring lower (Horwitz, 2001). These results indicate that future researchers, when studying foreign language anxiety, should pay attention not only to general constructs of foreign language anxiety, but also to additional variables that might have an effect on students.

Al-Khotaba, Alkataba, Abdul-Hamid, and Bashir (2019) examined the impact of foreign language speaking anxiety as a psycholinguistic barrier affecting speaking achievements of EFL Saudi learners at Northern Border University in Saudi Arabia. The study used a questionnaire and speaking achievement tests as the main tools for collecting data. The participants of the study were 100 (50 female and 50 male) students major English. Also, the research implemented SPSS program to analyse the data. The findings of this paper showed a weak correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and the participants' achievements in language learning.

Alsaleh (2018) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and reading anxiety as well as the impact of foreign language anxiety on reading comprehension among preparatory year students' major English language at Imam Mohamed Bin Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Sixty female students participated in this study. The tools of the study were the Foreign Language Classroom Scale, the foreign language reading Anxiety Scale, and a test for reading comprehension. The findings of this study showed that the participants experienced a moderate level of reading anxiety and language anxiety. Also, it revealed that difficulty of understanding new words' meaning, pronunciation, difficulties of reading long texts, and the fear of making mistakes are the main sources of foreign language reading anxiety. Bansalem, (2018) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety, multilingualism and anxiety in the Saudi context. The participants of this study were 96 Saudi undergraduate students (40 female and 56 male). The Arabic version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLACS) of Horwitz, et al. (1986) applied as a tool for data collection. The findings of this study revealed that Saudi multilingual students experienced a moderate level of foreign language anxiety. In addition, female learners have more anxiety than male learners.

This current study concludes that more researches are needed into more contributors of FL anxiety, such as students' gender, prior background and exposure to the language, level of studies and age remain to be further studied in the Nigerian environment. Teachers are thus faced with great difficulties in dealing with all anxiety-provoking factors. Hence, it is practical and effective to focus on the more prominent factors that can be established by studies comparing variables in terms of their effects on FL anxiety. In addition, our understanding of the nature of FL anxiety can be enhanced by identifying the more prominent factors. Such a comparison has not been done before.

## Methodology

In particular, this study aims to answer 3 questions and 2 hypotheses:

1. What is the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level of students on the basis of gender?
2. Will there be a relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their level of study?
3. What is the relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their Language of study?
4. What is the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level of students on the basis of age?

## Hypothesis

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the anxiety level of students based on their level of study

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between students' age and their anxiety level.

Participants constituted 87 foreign language students of Arabic, French and Portuguese majors recruited from the Foreign Language Department of the Faculty of Arts at the Lagos State University, Ojo. (52 females and 35 males). The students were all native speakers of Yoruba Language and possess good command of the English language as a second language. They have all been students of the foreign languages for more than a year as only year two and year three students were sampled. Only Arabic students (n= 26) have had any prior experience in learning Arabic before university enrolment

**Research Instrument:** The researcher used an anxiety questionnaire as the main instrument for this study to collect data. It contained 25 items adapted from the Horwitz FLAS questionnaire (Horwitz, et al., 1986). The questionnaire contained two variables: section one asked participants background information about themselves while section two contained the 25-item questionnaire. A five Likert scale ranging



from 1(strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) was used to categorize the data.

**Procedures:** The data collection was done in the second semester of 2022. The first part of the questionnaire is a brief instruction to the participants on how to fill it. The questionnaire was administered to the participants of the study in their classes with due permission from their lecturers. The questions pointed to the students to select the best choice that describes their situation when learning their foreign Language of study. They knew the confidentiality of their responses and the information given will only be used for the research. It took the students an average of 25 minutes to fill in their responses.

## Results

### Research question 1

What is the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level of students on the basis of gender?

**Table 1:** Foreign Language Anxiety level of students on the basis of gender

| Gender | N  | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|--------|----|--------|----------------|
| Male   | 35 | 102.66 | 22.351         |
| Female | 52 | 113.62 | 20.875         |
| Total  | 87 | 109.21 | 22.026         |

Table 1 shows that female students with a mean score of 113.62 and standard deviation of 20.875, displayed foreign language anxiety more than their male counterparts with a mean score of 102.66 and standard deviation of 22.351. This implies that female students were more anxious than the male students.

### Research question 2

Will there be a relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their level of study?

**Table 2:** Chi-Square of the relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their level of study

| Tests                        | Value             | df | Asymp. Sig. | Phi ( $\phi$ ) |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----|-------------|----------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | .574 <sup>a</sup> | 6  | .997        |                |
| Likelihood Ratio             | .567              | 6  | .997        | .085           |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .258              | 1  | .612        |                |
| N of Valid Cases             | 79                |    |             |                |

The relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their level of study was not significant:  $\chi^2$  (6, N = 79) = .574,  $p$  = .997,  $\phi$  = .085, as revealed in table 2. The association was of weak strength:  $\phi$  = .085 and thus the students' level of study accounted for 0.72% of the variance in the students' foreign language anxiety level.

### Research question 3

What is the relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their Language of study?

**Table 3:** -Square of the relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their Language of study

| Tests                        | Value              | df | Asymp. Sig. | Phi ( $\phi$ ) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-------------|----------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 7.966 <sup>a</sup> | 4  | .093        |                |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 8.304              | 4  | .081        | .304           |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 6.830              | 1  | .009        |                |
| N of Valid Cases             | 86                 |    |             |                |

Table 3 shows that the relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety level and their language of study was not significant:  $\chi^2$  (4,  $N = 86$ ) = 7.966,  $p = .093$ ,  $\phi = .304$ . The association was of weak strength:  $\phi = .304$  and thus the students' language of study accounted for

9.24% of the variance in the students' foreign language anxiety level.

#### Research question 4

What is the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level of students on the basis of age?

**Table 4:** Foreign Language Anxiety level of students on the basis of age

| Age            | N         | Mean          | Std. Deviation |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|
| 16-19 years    | 13        | 118.92        | 12.646         |
| 20-23 years    | 39        | 111.08        | 19.561         |
| 24-27 years    | 22        | 107.50        | 27.889         |
| Above 24 years | 13        | 96.77         | 21.390         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>87</b> | <b>109.21</b> | <b>22.026</b>  |

Table 4 indicates that students who are between 16 to 19 years old were the most anxious, with mean and standard deviation of 118.92 and 12.646, respectively. Students whose age ranges between 20 and 23 years old were the next in their anxiety level with mean of 111.08 and standard deviation of 19.561. The Table also shows that students who are 24 to 27 years old were the second least in their anxiety level with mean and standard deviation of

107.5 and 27.889, respectively. Students, who are above 27 years old, were the least in their anxiety level.

#### Hypotheses

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the anxiety level of students based on their level of study

**Table 5:** One-Way between-subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the anxiety level of students and their level of study

| Tests          | SS        | Df | MS       | F     | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------|----|----------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 3438.776  | 3  | 1146.259 | 2.485 | .066 |
| Within Groups  | 38283.500 | 83 | 461.247  |       |      |
| Total          | 41722.276 | 86 |          |       |      |

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in table 5 reveals that the difference between anxiety level of students and their level of study is not statistically significant,  $F_{(3, 83)} = 2.485$ ,  $p = .066$ . The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the anxiety level of students based on their level of study was not

rejected. This implies that there were no statistical differences among anxiety level of students and their level of study.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between students' age and their anxiety level.

**Table 6:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) between students' age and their anxiety level

| Variable      | N  | Mean | SD   | R     | p-value |
|---------------|----|------|------|-------|---------|
| Anxiety level | 87 | 1.98 | .821 | -.249 | .020    |
| Age           | 87 | 2.40 | .921 |       |         |

Table 6 reveals that there is negative significant correlation between students' age and their anxiety level ( $r = .249$ ,  $N = 87$ ,  $p = .02$ , 2-tailed). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between students' age and their anxiety level was rejected. The implication of this is that as the students increase in age, there is a corresponding decrease in their anxiety level.

### Summary of Findings

1. Female students showed foreign language anxiety than the male students.
2. As the students increase in their stay on campus, their foreign language anxiety level decreases, with the exception of first year students.
3. Students whose language of study was Portuguese displayed the highest level of anxiety, followed by students who had French as their language and students with Arabic as their language of study were the least in anxiety level.
4. As the students increase in their age, their foreign language anxiety level decreases
5. The difference between anxiety level of students and their level of study is not statistically significant.
6. There was negative significant correlation between students' age and their anxiety level.
7. The relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) level and their level of study was not significant.
8. The relationship between students' Foreign Language Anxiety level and their language of study was not significant.

### Recommendations

In light of these findings, this study recommends the following:

1. That a form of pre-entry classes should be provided for undergraduates seeking to study foreign languages at the institution. This would form a background upon which other levels would be built upon. As it is implied by the findings of this study, indeed, the students of Arabic had lower level of FLA because they all possess a background knowledge in the Arabic language. Hence, it is recommended that particularly, the French and Portuguese language should be studied for a period of 5 years, 1 year for a certificate entry course and 4 years for the degree programme.
2. That the language enrolled into by students should be practiced by students inside the classroom with the teacher and their classmates and thus an enabling environment where adequate use and frequent simulations can be done.
3. That University authority should liaise with foreign embassies of the FLs on the provision of a –year study abroad programmes for the students. Although, the French language students are opportune to visit the French Language Village in Badagry, such opportunities are not available for the students of Portuguese and Arabic Languages. Beyond the relevance of having direct contact with native speakers of these languages, the a-year programme would be a form of motivation for students enrolled on the to study FL and will help in reducing FLA.
4. That teachers should equally be encouraged to motivate students to participate in the classroom without correcting them. Also, the teachers of foreign languages should increase the students' self-confidence and reinforce them as well by appreciating their work in the classroom. Also, they should encourage their

students to speak confidently without anxiety or fear of making mistakes.

5. That teachers should use games to create a relaxed atmosphere. They should also try to change the traditional teaching methods that focused mostly on teachers by other methods that activate the role of the students, i.e., students' cantered approach.

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# **Building a Gender-Sensitive Culture of Peace through Critical Literacy among Undergraduates in Select Universities in Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

*The Nigerian society, from time immemorial, is a patriarchal society. It is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women. Women are relegated to the background, subjugated, discriminated as the weaker sex such that not all jobs, positions and offices are given to them despite the level of education, intellectual ability, experience in life, physical strength and financial status. There is a limited participation of women in decision-making positions in most sectors; segregation into certain activities; restricted opportunities for training, capacity-building and networking; how many women are included in the political and electoral processes, in national governance and the security structure processes? In most cases, they are placed under men. The average Nigerian woman is seen as an available object for prostitution, forced marriage, street hawking, instrument of wide-range trafficking and a misfit in the society. Research has shown that even in the universities, conflicts and violence arise as a result of gender disparity. Course representatives, presidents of the Student Union Government (SUG), the different clubs and societies in the universities are usually and preferably headed by males rather than females. These conflicts and violence either inside or outside the classroom usually affect the quality of teaching and learning, mutual relationship and peaceful co-existence. This study aims to estimate the causes and effects of gender disparity in the universities and proposes building a gender-sensitive culture of peace as the way forward through critical literacy. The study was based on the analysis of 50 structured questionnaires distributed among students and teachers in the select universities through random sampling. Critical literacy is proposed as the strategic tool for building a gender-sensitive culture of peace. It also proposes how teachers and students in the universities can make significant contributions to the transformation of conflicts and violence stemming from divisions, hierarchy of differences and inequalities of the society into peace.*

**Key words:** Critical literacy, Culture, Gender-sensitivity, Peace.

## **Introduction**

Conflicts and violence have become common global issues which stem from historical divisions, hegemony and privilege, and day-to-day inequalities. Conflict occurs when an individual's needs, interests, wants or values are incompatible with someone else's, and this causes the individual to express an emotional reaction to the situation by showing disagreement and interfering with what someone else needs to get or to have (Mayer, 2000). Gender inequality is no longer a new or strange concept in Nigeria and in other African countries. It is discrimination on the basis of sex or gender causing one sex or gender

to be routinely privileged or prioritized over another. In most Nigerian universities, conflicts and violence arise as a result of gender disparity and this affects teaching and learning, mutual relationship and peaceful co-existence among teachers and teachers, teachers and students, students and students. Our concern here is gender inequality among undergraduate students. Course representatives, presidents of the Student Union Government (SUG), the different clubs, societies and especially decision-making or leadership positions in the universities are usually and preferably occupied by males rather than females. Despite notable progress in recent decades,

women are still underrepresented and disregarded, particularly in these leadership positions. This, most often, trigger conflict and violence. Categorically speaking, the university has been viewed as a very important context where effective approaches can be used to advance world citizenship, to give students opportunities to understand and practice in participatory democracy, support social justice and to resolve conflicts peacefully. It has become instead a context where inaccurate, misleading and adverse beliefs or prejudices against each other are promoted. This is so because teaching and learning in Nigeria are repositories or what (Freire, 2007) terms "Banking Education." Learning is reception of knowledge, ideologies and beliefs deposited by the teacher. Within this context, the potential for students to learn and be creative is limited. The dominant ideologies and inequalities of the society are deposited upon them. The school teachers play a pivotal role in promoting gender disparity by their opinions, creating unequal educational environments and opportunities that are so unfair to a particular gender, stereotyping male or female, using gender-laced language and others. Consequently, the students lose self-dignity, logical reasoning and become catalysts of gender inequality. Freire believed that this is a form of oppression and is seen as a field for the reproduction of inequality (Crean & Lynch, 2011). A strong teacher should treat all the students fairly by creating an enabling environment where equal opportunities are given to all. In other words, an alternative way to resolve conflicts and build a culture of peace among undergraduates in our universities is by cultivating their minds with critical consciousness through critical literacy and that is the purpose of this study. According to Save the Children Organization (2022),

Gender discrimination robs children of their childhoods and limits their chances- disproportionately affecting the world's girls. Girls are denied their rights, kept from school, forced to marry and subjected to violence- their voices undervalued, if they are heard at all. This assault on girls also deprives nations of the energy and talent they need to progress.

Anderson and Irvine (1993) submit that when girls are empowered to lead their lives, speak their minds and determine their futures, everyone benefits. History suggests that when we fight gender oppression, societies are more stable, safe and prosperous, with happier, better educated citizens. This study, therefore, proposes critical literacy as a powerful tool of enlightenment, nurturing the students' critical consciousness, education and a means of closing gender gap and ensuring peace, equity and gender equality. It also proposes how teachers and students in the universities can make significant contributions to the transformation of conflicts and violence stemming from divisions, hierarchy of differences and inequalities of the society into peace.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to estimate the causes and effects of gender disparity among undergraduates in universities and proposes critical literacy as the strategic tool for building a gender-sensitive culture of peace.

### **Critical Literacy: An Overview**

Critical Literacy is a combination of two simple words, 'critical' and 'literacy'. Literacy is one subject that cannot be easily defined because it means different things to different people and scholars. Traditionally, it is referred to as the ability to read, write, speak and listen, and use numeracy and technology, at a level that enables people to express and understand ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, to achieve their goals and to participate fully in their community and in a wider society. Hillerich (1978) defines it as the demonstration of competence in communication skills which enables the individual to function appropriately to his/her age, independently in his/her society and with potentials for progress in the society. In view of this study, Literacy goes beyond reading and writing as presented above. It is a social action through language use which develops us as agents inside a larger culture. The question is, how have we been shaped by what we hear and say? Burke (1966) argues, "If language is a social force constructing man, how can we use and teach

oppositional discourses so as to remake ourselves and our culture?" And the researcher asks, "how can undergraduates in universities be helped to 'un-learn' what they have learned, discard from memory or lose track of all gender-discriminatory languages, opinions and situations they have been exposed to right from childhood and which is at its extreme in the universities".

On the other hand, the term, 'critical' has a distinctive etymology in Western philosophy and science. It is derived from the Greek adjective, 'kriticos', the ability to argue and judge. Critical literacy was borne out of a passionate desire to nurture the oppressed into self-consciousness, right judgment and ability to defend themselves from their proud oppressors. According to Anderson and Irvine (2009), critical literacy is "learning to read and write as part of the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations" Essentially, then, critical literacy is language use that questions the social construction of the self. When we are critically literate, we examine our ongoing development, to reveal the subjective positions from which we make sense of the world and act in it. Simply put, critical literacy is literacy for equity.

In addition, Paulo Freire (1970) revolutionary educational philosophy defined critical literacy as the capacity to analyse critique and transform social, cultural and political texts and contexts. Working in indigenous and peasant communities in Brazil, Freire's approach to critical literacy was grounded in dialectical materialist and phenomenological philosophies. He argued that literacy transmitted in conventional schooling was based on a "banking model" of education, where learners' lives, cultures, knowledge and aspirations were taken as irrelevant. He advocated a dialogical approach to literacy based on principles of reciprocal exchange. These would critique and transform binary relationship of the oppressed and oppressor, teacher and learner. The acquisition of literacy entails the naming and renaming, narrating and analysing of life worlds as part of a problem-posing and problem-solving pedagogy. Critical theory emphasizes the important role of

individuals as an agent of social change with the ultimate goal of transforming society for the better (Kinchelow, & McLaren, 2005; Au, 2009). In other words, critical theorists are concerned with relieving human sufferings from social inequality and social injustice (Keller, 1993).

### **Gender**

Gender is the socially and culturally constructed roles for men and women. For instance, gender roles of men as owners of property, decision makers and heads of household are socially, historically and culturally constructed and have nothing to do with biological differences. It is important to note the difference between sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological differences between male and female. For instance, the adult female has breast that can secrete milk to feed a baby but the adult male does not have. Gender roles differ from place to place and change with time. But sex roles are naturally fixed (Alamveabee, 2005). Gender as argued by Lorber (1994) is an institution that is embedded in all the social processes of everyday life and social organizations.

### **Gender Disparity**

Gender disparity has found prominence in access to education in contemporary times. It is evident when there is a discrimination of a particular gender in terms of access to resources, opportunities, general welfare or power relations. Disparities are evident to a large extent in universities in Nigeria.

### **Gender Sensitivity**

Gender sensitivity is the process or way individuals, service providers, institutions and the society at large treat and provides equal opportunities for male and female. This could be seen in the way they refrain from discriminating against or stereotyping people on the basis of sex or gender, treating everybody with equal respect, offering gender sensitivity training and providing adequate representation of female in different positions. Pearson (2000) posits that in all aspects of social activity, including access to resources for production, rewards or remuneration for work,

distribution of consumption, income or goods, exercise of authority and power, and participation in cultural, political and religious activity, gender equality is important in establishing people's behaviour and the outcome of any social interaction. As well as institutions between individual men and women, gender relations describe the social meaning of being male and female, and thus what is considered appropriate behaviour or activity for men and women.

### **Culture of Peace**

Culture is the way of life, beliefs, values, norms of a social group. Relevant to this study is Iwundu's definition (2005) which says that culture is whatever it is; one has to know or believe, in order to operate in a manner acceptable to the members of that particular society. They include: norms, language, social practices, etc.

Peace, on the other hand, is more than the absence of war. It is the promotion of values, attitudes, behaviour and institutional arrangements that promote mutual caring, well-being, appreciation of differences, access to justice and equitable sharing of earth's resources with all human beings.

According to Adam (2003), at its general conference in 1995, UNESCO introduced the concept of a culture of peace which it used to refer to values, attitudes and behaviour that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing, based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity.

### **Gender-sensitive culture**

Gender sensitivity is the awareness and insight into the state of the other sex, with reference to historical roots of sexist stereotyping, discrimination and violence (<https://www.un-redd.org>). It is gender equality made manifest through language, behaviour and relationship. Men and women are different in experiences, needs, issues and priorities. There are things each sex can do better but none should be considered better than the other. They are meant to complement each other.

Gender-sensitive culture is a culture of equal rights and opportunities in education,

sharing of human resources, positions, treating with mutual respect, integrity and dignity all human beings irrespective of the gender. It is abolishing discriminatory laws, religious and cultural norms, removing gender stereotypes in our homes, workplaces, schools and different organizations, and providing respectful and empowering environment for women and men, using gender-sensitive language and making effort to remove sexist behaviour (sexist jokes). In Nigerian situation, for instance, leadership positions are conspicuously dominated by the males in the family and other sectors. Gender-sensitive culture proffers equal opportunities for all irrespective of gender. Consequently, freedom, mutual respect, stability, peace, progress, innovations and other positive outcomes will embrace a society where it is conscientiously and adequately practiced.

The model on which this work is anchored is Paulo Freire's (2005) "Critical Literacy Theory." Freire and Macedo (1987) and Freire (2007) proposed that resolving conflicts and building a peace culture require advancing citizens to be literate, to criticize oppression and exploitation. Learners need to be empowered to struggle for learning and for the possession of power and equal status (Kellner, 1989). Freire believes that looking beyond the literal meaning of a text to determine what is present and what is missing, in order to analyse and evaluate the text's complete meaning and the author's intention is the field of critical literacy theory. Critical literacy developed from Freire's philosophy and is a strategic instructional practice which aims at teaching a nation's citizens to be literate and critical, and raising their critical and social consciousness and hopes to create a more just society through problem posing, dialogue and critique of social and political problems (Shor, 1987; Anderson & Irvine, 1993; Morgan, 1997; Hagood, 2002; McLean, 2006). In addition, learners will be ready to listen to multiple viewpoints, exchange ideas, raise critical questions, be aware of social problems and social injustice and be ready to defend themselves in a peaceful means. In this research, we examine how the female gender that Freire refers to as the



oppressed alongside their male counterparts can be empowered to stand up against social injustice and oppression and to promote a culture of peace and equity in an environment ripped with gender inequality.

## Research Methods

### Sample population

The sampled population for the study was fourth year students of English & Literary Studies of Imo State University, Owerri, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Tansian University, Umunya and their teachers totalling fifty (50). The determining factors for the selection were number of years spent in the university, experience, observations and personal encounters.

### Instrument and technique

The instrument for the research was a four-item question. The first item was concerned with finding out the causes of gender inequality

among undergraduates on campus. The second item asked the different leadership positions on campus and the gender the students often prefer in those leadership positions. The third question requested the students' reasons for choosing each gender. The last question was concerned with finding out the effects of gender inequality on teaching and learning, and relationship among the students. After collecting and analysing the data, the responses were converted into simple percentages for analysis and discussion.

### Validity and reliability of the instrument

The questionnaire was developed and validated by the researcher using experts' advice and dialoguing with colleagues. The questions were designed to provide answers to the research questions raised. In all, fifty questionnaire items were distributed in the Department of English & Literary Studies of the select universities. Out of fifty, forty-five were retrieved from the respondents.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Causes of Gender inequality among undergraduates in universities

| Causes                   | No of respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Intellectual prowess  | 5                 | 11.11%                    |
| 2. Family background     | 5                 | 11.11%                    |
| 3. Socio-economic Status | 5                 | 11.11%                    |
| 4. Dominance             | 20                | 44%                       |
| 5. Competitive           | 15                | 33%                       |
| 6. Confidence            | 40                | 89%                       |
| 7. Assertiveness         | 20                | 44%                       |
| 8. Cooperative           | 30                | 67%                       |
| 9. Nurturing             | 30                | 67%                       |

**Table 1** above shows that the major cause of gender inequality among undergraduates in universities is confidence which the respondents affirmed is possessed by males rather than females. Males are confident in the face of challenges while females are not. Males are dominant; they exercise more power and influence than females. Males are also competitive; they are motivated and are great

motivators while females are not. Males are assertive, that is, they voice out their opinions than females. However, females are more cooperative and nurturing than males. Females also demonstrate higher people-orientation and participative style of management while males rely on task-orientation. The result vividly depicts that students prefer males as leaders than females.

**Table II:** Leadership positions on campus and the gender the students often prefer in the leadership positions.

| Leadership positions  | No of respondents |         | Percentage of respondents |         |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|
|                       | Males             | Females | Males                     | Females |
| President (SUG)       | 35                | 5       | 78%                       | 11.11%  |
| President (ELSA)      | 30                | 10      | 67%                       | 22%     |
| President (NASEL)     | 25                | 15      | 56%                       | 33%     |
| President (HUSA)      | 30                | 5       | 67%                       | 11.11%  |
| Course Representative | 30                | 5       | 67%                       | 11.11%  |
| Financial Secretary   | 20                | 10      | 44%                       | 22%     |
| Treasurer             | 25                | 15      | 56%                       | 33%     |

**Table II** shows that approximately 80% of the students and teachers prefer the male gender in almost all the salient leadership positions in the universities. This is in line with Matthew Biddle whose research on "Men are still more likely than

women to be perceived as leaders" reveals that despite progress, gender gap in leadership persist. Result has it that in 2018, women hold just 26% of executive level positions in about 500 companies at Buffalo in America.

**Table III:** Students' reasons for selection into leadership positions by gender in universities

| Reasons for selection into leadership positions | No of respondents |        | Percentage of respondents |        |
|---|-------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------|
|   | Male              | Female | Male                      | Female |
| 1. Sexual harassment                            | 5                 | 30     | 11.11%                    | 67%    |
| 2. Low self-esteem                              | 10                | 25     | 22%                       | 33%    |
| 3. Lack of bodily support                       | 10                | 30     | 22%                       | 67%    |
| 4. Nature of decisions                          | 30                | 5      | 67%                       | 11.11% |
| 5. Strong work relationship                     | 20                | 25     | 44%                       | 56%    |
| 6. Task in question                             | 35                | 10     | 78%                       | 22%    |
| 7. Management style                             | 15                | 25     | 33%                       | 56%    |

**Table III** shows the different reasons identifiable for students' preference of one gender to another in leadership positions. One important reason behind the selection or appointment into leadership positions is the task at hand. 35% of the respondents are of the opinion that the tasks involved in those leadership positions can confidently be handled by males rather than females. 30% of the respondents affirmed that females, in order to attain and maintain top leadership positions, are usually exposed to sexual harassment. 25% of the respondents also affirmed that the patriarchal culture existing in most

universities which see the female gender as the weak sex has made them develop low self-esteem. Most often, females discourage fellow females and vote them out as far as leadership positions are concerned. Females suffer from unified bodily support from fellow females. 30% of the respondents are of the opinion that the male gender is usually astute and resilient in decision making than the female gender. About the strong work relationship and management style, 25% of the respondents opined that females are better off because they operate a participatory leadership

style while the male gender is task-oriented in nature.

### **Effects of Gender inequality on teaching and learning and mutual relationship among undergraduates in the universities**

1. **Higher exposure to sexual harassment:** research has shown that girls/women in the universities experience higher exposure to sexual harassment as a result of gender inequality. Boys/men are not easily assaulted like their female counterparts in the hands of male lecturers.

2. **Low self-esteem:** gender inequality brings about low self-esteem among the segregated and oppressed group who feels not qualified, not fit, unsuitable, unacceptable for a particular position. In some universities, it has become a culture that a female cannot attain a particular leadership position.

3. **Electing or appointing the wrong person into leadership position.** One of the consequences of gender inequality is the election or appointment of wrong persons in leadership positions. This has remained the problem of the Nigerian society which believes that the female gender despite outstanding capabilities cannot attain certain positions. One would ask why the female gender should not be elected into the presidency and other decision-making positions in the country since the male gender has failed us. Moreover, studies has shown that male course representatives, to a great extent, have failed and disappointed those who elected, selected or appointed them yet it is a prevailing culture that males are better than females as course representatives.

4. **Depression** is one of the psychological effects of gender inequality whereby an individual feels rejected. This, to a large extent, has led to high intake of hard drugs, prostitution and suicide among students.

5. **Conflict** is a common result of gender inequality where the oppressed expresses dissatisfaction and goes into a verbal or physical fight with the oppressor which sometimes tend to be violent and may affect teaching and learning and destruction of life and property.

6. **Dissociation** occurs when one feels disconnected from self and the surrounding environment. Gender inequality causes depersonalization and derealisation, identity confusion and identity alteration. Studies have shown that students begin to dissociate as a result of oppression and injustice.

7. **Trauma** is an individual's response to a deeply distressing or disturbing event -oppression, rejection, abuse, denial or injustice which overwhelms the individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness and diminishes their sense of self.

8. **Insomnia** is a common sleep disorder which students may tend to develop as a result of gender inequality.

9. **Gender-based violence** is any interpersonal, organizational or politically-oriented violation perpetrated against people due to their gender identity, sexual orientation, or location in the hierarchy of male-dominated social systems such as family, military, organizations, or labour force (O'Toole and Schiffman, 1997).

10. **A lack of representation** is a situation usually experienced by the female gender in the universities as a result gender inequality whereby they are not represented in most decision-making positions.

### **Strategies for Building a Gender-Sensitive Culture of Peace in the University through Critical Literacy**

1. Critical literacy is a promising approach to make our students, our seeds of democratic society, become critically informed, aware of social justice and committed to transform conflicts into peace in our society.
2. Integrating women, peace and security in the university curriculum will help ensure a culture of peace in the universities since it will become part of the studies made by all.
3. Education is a dichotomy, an instrument of domination and an instrument of liberation. According to UNESCO (1998) and Eisler & Miller (2004), Education has been proposed as the best approach to advance world citizenship and resolve conflicts peacefully. In view of the above, the researcher states that

students should be well-informed through seminars, workshops and conferences on the dangers of gender inequality. They should become catalyst for the creation of a society free from oppression and injustice.

4. Teachers should be transformed in their mindset and also help connect literacy lessons to the lives of students and thus, help them connect to their community and to their world.
5. Students should be given opportunities to make use of language to critically question, discuss, debate and critique problems in the classrooms and society, and vigilantly challenge the taken-for-granted ideologies of injustice, marginalization and disenfranchisement in the universities, families and society.
6. Exposure to the right knowledge will make students challenge and resist the mainstreams that marginalize them and motivate them to take actions to make changes.
7. Having been exposed to critical literacy, teachers should encourage students to engage in praxis (Freire, 2007). Students are expected to become conscious of issues and problems in their lives, classrooms and communities which are the origin of conflicts such as poverty, oppression, injustice, inequity, hegemony, marginalization and democracy. They should critically investigate the reality of the issues and become aware of their role as change agents as Freire rightly posits.

### Conclusion

The study has revealed a lack of representation of the female gender in the leadership and decision-making positions in the universities. This is influenced by several factors which have been discussed in the study. Confidence has been identified as one of the reasons behind the preference of the male gender in leadership positions. With proper and adequate exposure to critical literacy, the female folk can gradually build confidence. Another point is sexual harassments of the female folk. This should be addressed practically by the school authority and the government.

There is no gainsaying the fact that critical literacy is the way forward as proposed by the researcher which according to Paulo Freire (2007) is an instrument of liberation. He believed that language and literacy are key mechanisms for social construction and social transformation. Critical literacy aims not only at helping people become literate but also at developing critical consciousness and making them become change agents for a better society.

There should be a well-developed Critical literacy scheme and adequate logistics and infrastructure put in place. The university authority and the government should put in place functional staff and student development centres in the universities where the deficiencies could be rectified.

Books, manuals, articles, newsletters and their e-equivalents are very important and should be encouraged and promoted in all the universities to ensure self-consciousness and empowerment in order to build a gender-sensitive culture of peace.

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# Critical Literacy as Veritable Tool among Youths for Sustainable Religious Tolerance

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## Abstract

*This study investigated critical literacy skills as a veritable tool for sustainable religious tolerance among students of Yaba College of Technology. This paper is a survey research report. 100 Higher National Diploma (HND) and National Diploma (ND) students were purposively selected for the study. The questionnaire used to elicit information was administered virtually. Data derived from the questionnaire were subjected to statistical data (SPSS). It was revealed that the majority of these students read online materials and articles for information that prompted their opinions, religious doctrines, and beliefs. At the same time, they tackled contrary opinions without critical examination. The study recommended that topics on religious tolerance should be introduced to aid essential reading skills to even become more tolerant towards other faiths. In addition, students should be more intentional to learn and unlearn attitudes, values and ideologies whenever necessary.*

**Key words:** Sustainable Religious tolerance, Critical literacy skills, Reading, Religion, Literature

## Introduction

Literacy can be defined as the application of reading, writing and numeracy skills in an individual's day-to-day context. Literacy also highlights the ability to read and write at a level whereby individuals can effectively understand and use written communication in all media (print or electronic), including digital literacy. The concept of literacy takes on a central and multivariate dimension and is mobilized in several contexts, such as digital literacy, sustainability literacy and partial literacy, which can be translated into multi-illiteracies; seem to have a fragmentation by not carry out in-depth work on the causes, according to the critical literacy perspective (Sandro& Ana 2020). According to UNESCO 2018, Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. The following the features of literacy but not limited to them: Literacy is about

the uses people make of it as a means of communication and expression, through a variety of media; Literacy is plural, being practiced in particular contexts for particular purposes and using specific languages; Literacy involves a continuum of learning measured at different proficient levels. Therefore, in order to effectively comprehend any aspect of literacy, an individual must engage in critical analysis of such activities, which include what is read, spoken, or visualized. Critical literacy involves a normative analysis of the relationship between designs, shapes and features of texts and their consequences in material and social contexts. (Allan 2012). Critical literacy can, overall, be understood as "a theoretical and practical framework that can readily take on such challenges creating spaces for literacy work that can contribute to creating a more critically informed and just world (Vasquez, 2017 in Ana 2020). McLaughlin & DeVogd (2004), cited that critical literacy involves thinking beyond the text to understand issues such

as why the author wrote about a particular topic, wrote from a particular perspective, or chose to include some ideas about the topic and exclude others. Critical literacy is like a pair of eyeglasses that allows one to see beyond the familiar and comfortable: it is an understanding that language practices and texts are always informed by ideological beliefs and perspectives whether conscious or otherwise (Jones 2006).

Shor (1999) explained that, it provides students not merely with functional skills, but with conceptual tools necessary to critique and engage society along with its inequalities and injustices. Generally, it requires understanding literacy as a tool for social action. Examining how language is organized to reproduce race, class, and gender roles is a function of socially responsible literacy. Critical literacy is a questioning approach to form a judgment or conclusion from a print. It encourages reflective and independent thinking during the process of reading. Students critically analyse and evaluate the meaning of texts as they relate to topics on equity, power and social justice. It further enables students to investigate power relations within the social and historical context of their lived experience and within the broader frame of their mediated culture. This reading and writing-based learning process encourages students to accept, reject or reconstruct ideologies presented in texts. Critical literacy provides a key opportunity for the debating, unpacking and learning about this family of questions. The aspect of literacy that shall be considered in this work is reading.

Reading in itself is an already proven way of improving your general knowledge, your mental abilities and even your emotional intelligence. While all these benefits are valid even for those who only read for pleasure, relaxation and entertainment, those who engage in critical reading have been shown Critical reading therefore involves a higher level of involvement from a reader than recreational reading. The reader is expected to apply certain thought processes, raise questions and the result is better comprehension and enhanced clarity. The benefits inherent in reading are mental development, better understanding of text, critical thinking

improvement, remembering, logical reasoning and problem-solving skills. Critical reading steps include read normally, read again and more carefully, make note, understand every word, analyse every word, practice metacognition or critical thinking, draw conclusion. With the understanding of critical reading, we shall consider how it will further foster sustainable religious tolerance among youth.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse federation, which consists of 36 autonomous states and the Federal Capital Territory. Apart from this indispensable fact, it is also religiously diverse but the two most prominent religions practised are Islam and Christianity, the disagreement between these two groups was the major cause of intolerance and social-political crises in Nigeria. In Nigeria, violent religious crises, more especially between Christians and Muslims have claimed thousands of lives and properties worth millions of naira have been destroyed. Most inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria occurred between adherents of Islam and Christianity. Some of the crises which occurred are Kano revolt (1980), Kafanchan-Kaduna crisis that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, Bulunktu Bizarre (1982), Kastina crises (1999), Samfara conflict, Kaduna revolt, Bauchi crises and Sokoto (1999), the Kaduna Sharia riots of 2000, the 2000 Jos crises and the current conflict by Boko Haram against Christians and moderate Muslims (Canci & Odukoya 2016). Another significant example was the peaceful protest on February 3, 2022 led by Muslims over a move by the Oyun Baptist High School (OBHS) administration to ban students from wearing hijab which later degenerated into chaos as violence broke out. Recently, precisely in the month of May 2020, was the killing of a Christian female student of Shehu Shagari College of Education in Wamako, Sokoto State, identified only as Miss Deborah, was accused of passing unflattering comments about Prophet Mohammed on campus, beaten and hit with sticks and subsequently burnt to death. These are the occurrences of religious crises that are exposed to the populace. Hence, there is an urgent need to promote religious tolerance to foster peaceful co-existence.

Many factors are responsible for religious violence in Nigeria, among which are ignorance or half knowledge of the true teaching of the very religion that the people involved claim to be defending, campaigns of hatred and blackmail, the lack of genuine desire to understand each other's belief and culture. Other factors are religious fanaticism, extremism and intolerance, inability of the Government to use effective and adequate measures to prevent the crisis, inaccurate knowledge and interpretations of the two holy books for self-interest, forceful acceptance of one's religious belief (Omotosho 2003, Lawal 2020). Considering the factors listed, most of them arise from the fact that many have failed to critically analyse the document but accept with further probing the interpretation imposed by the said religious leaders. These have likewise been the reason why various sects arise from the same religion. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how critical literacy can promote religious tolerance. Religious Tolerance refers to the ability to accommodate or respect religious values, beliefs and practices that are different from your own.

### **Statement of the problem**

There are numerous researches conducted in various subject areas, however, it is still alarming to note that many are still ignorant of some basic fact about religion and education. Reading culture among youths in Nigeria has suffered a great setback a lot, which has made us lose some vital information that should aid our personal development and that of the society. Consequently, from secondary to higher institution there have been a number of recorded religious crises or intolerance, the outcome of which has claimed countless of life. Ignorance or half knowledge of the true teaching of the very religion that the people involved claim to be defending, religious dogmatisms, fanaticism, extremism and intolerance and so on have been identified to be some causes of religious violence in Nigeria. Therefore, the focus of the work is to examine how critical literacy can help address the issue of religious intolerance in the Nation.

### **Research Questions**

This edu-religious study research bases its study on the following questions:

1. What is the effect of religious crisis in the society?
2. To what extent has religious intolerance affected the educational system in Nigeria?
3. To what extent will critical reading address religious intolerance in schools?

The questions are to enable an empirical study into the lifestyle of the students in a polytechnic school. The first question is to reveal if there has been any religious crisis in the environment during their time of study. The second question is to address from a student's standpoint how religious crisis has affected them in the educational setting and to share their experiences. The third is to recommend veritable tools towards achieving critical reading that will engender safe and tolerant relationship between students of opposite faiths.

### **Review of Literature**

This section presents a few researches conducted on critical literacy and religious intolerance in the educational system.

Abdul (2020) examined the influence of religious tolerance among college students. The researcher utilized three measurement tools of psychological scales: the religious Orientation Scale –Revised and Personality scale of Big Five Personality and Scale of Religious Tolerance. The study revealed that religious orientation and personality traits have a positive influence on religious tolerance among students. Furthermore, personality traits play significant roles in the development of religious tolerance, while students who have extrinsic religious orientation tend to have low religious tolerance. This means that the intrinsic orientation has positive influence while the extrinsic had negative influence.

A survey by Suleeman (2018) was conducted on senior high schools in Indonesia, which examined the roles their parents played in developing values of tolerance to people with different faiths. From the aforementioned survey, the researcher applied Ajzen and Fishbein's model

which claimed that “...motivation to interact with individuals with different faith is influenced by knowledge and attitude towards the issues”. Findings showed that students’ motivation to getting engaged and marrying a person with different faith is influenced by their knowledge on it as well as their attitudes to that behaviour.

Nisa (2021) in a study on the cultural management of religious tolerance in multicultural Islamic education learning in state schools used an interpretive paradigm approach to address the issue of multicultural teaching. The paper revealed that if multicultural teaching is applied in schools, it would create a civilization that will promote tolerance, democracy, benevolence, justice, harmony and other human values.

### Theoretical Framework

This paper applies the Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura (1977), which argues that it is expedient to observe, model, and imitate the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. SLT examines the influence of both environmental and cognitive factors on human learning and behaviour. The theory claims that through reinforcement, a child may pick up an

attitude that is either positive or negative. A person simply learns by observing the environment and acting or imitating such behaviours. They internalize attitudes and patterns thereby recreating them.

### Methodology

The study adopted a survey approach by administering questionnaire online using the Microsoft forms platform. The online form was sent to various study groups created at the beginning of the session for students at the Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) levels. The online platform was to aid blended learning strategies for development and acquisition of language skills.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections and three sub-sections. The first section was to get the demographics of the category of respondents who filled the questionnaire while the second section was to get the respondents’ perception on critical literacy, teachers’ teaching, and the quality of books being studied. The data sample was then processed on a statistical data platform (SPSS23) to derive the frequency percentages of each of the records.

### Data Presentation

#### 1. GENDER

| GENDER | FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|--------|----------------------|
| MALE   | 26%                  |
| FEMALE | 74%                  |
| TOTAL  | 100%                 |

Figure table 1

#### 2. LEVEL

| LEVEL | FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|-------|----------------------|
| OND   | 90%                  |
| HND   | 10%                  |
| TOTAL | 100%                 |

Figure table 2

#### 3. RELIGION

| RELIGION     | FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|----------------------|
| CHRISTIANITY | 77%                  |
| ISLAM        | 23%                  |
| TOTAL        | 100%                 |

Figure table 3



**4. AGE**

| <b>AGE</b> | <b>FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE</b> |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| 16-18      | 19%                         |
| 19-21      | 44%                         |
| 22-24      | 28%                         |
| 25-28      | 9%                          |
| Total      | 100%                        |

Figure table 4

| <b>S/N</b> | <b>QUESTION</b>   | <b>AGREE</b> | <b>STRONGLY AGREE</b> | <b>DISAGREE</b> | <b>STRONGLY DISAGREE</b> | <b>NEUTRAL</b> | <b>%</b>    |
|------------|---|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>1.</b>  | I understand the meaning of religious tolerance                                     | <b>53.5%</b> | <b>42.3%</b>          | <b>0.7%</b>     | <b>1%</b>                | <b>2.5%</b>    | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>2.</b>  | I practice religious tolerance in school  | <b>60.1%</b> | <b>22.5%</b>          | <b>7.9%</b>     | <b>2.2%</b>              | <b>7.2%</b>    | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>3.</b>  | I learnt to be religiously tolerant in school                                       | <b>57.7%</b> | <b>17.6%</b>          | <b>15.1%</b>    | <b>3%</b>                | <b>6.7%</b>    | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>4.</b>  | Teachers teach how to be religiously tolerant                                       | <b>59.7%</b> | <b>15.6%</b>          | <b>7.2%</b>     | <b>0.7%</b>              | <b>16.8%</b>   | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>5.</b>  | Religious tolerance is practiced among students                                     | <b>57.7%</b> | <b>12.4%</b>          | <b>8.4%</b>     | <b>0.7%</b>              | <b>20.8%</b>   | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>6.</b>  | We read books that help us practice religious tolerance                             | <b>58.9%</b> | <b>10.9%</b>          | <b>11.6%</b>    | <b>2%</b>                | <b>16.6%</b>   | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>7.</b>  | More literature books should be recommended to aid critical literacy                | <b>64.9%</b> | <b>20.5</b>           | <b>5.2%</b>     | <b>2%</b>                | <b>7.4%</b>    | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>8.</b>  | Teachers ensure that students read more on religious tolerance                      | <b>57.9%</b> | <b>12.1%</b>          | <b>11.1%</b>    | <b>1%</b>                | <b>17.1%</b>   | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>9.</b>  | Reading of literature books on religious tolerance will prevent violence in schools | <b>38.9%</b> | <b>9.4%</b>           | <b>11.9%</b>    | <b>14.6%</b>             | <b>25.2%</b>   | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>10.</b> | I prefer to read literature on religious violence on the internet                   | <b>28.2%</b> | <b>3.7%</b>           | <b>25.5%</b>    | <b>8.4%</b>              | <b>34.2%</b>   | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>11.</b> | I prefer to read literature on religious tolerance in the classroom                 | <b>38.6%</b> | <b>5%</b>             | <b>19.8%</b>    | <b>3%</b>                | <b>33.7%</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

|     |  |       |       |       |       |       |      |
|-----|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 12. | I would love to read literature to learn more about other religious and how to tolerate them | 61.2% | 13.6% | 5.2%  | 5.7%  | 14.3% | 100% |
| 13. | More literature on religious tolerance should be introduced as a General Studies' topic      | 57%   | 14.3% | 9.4%  | 6.2%  | 13.1% | 100% |
| 14. | Reading culture is well practiced among youths today   | 45.7% | 6.4%  | 20.7% | 5.7%  | 21.5% | 100% |
| 15. | Students read but not to the extent of critical reading.                                     | 70.4% | 12.1% | 6.2%  | 3%    | 8.4%  | 100% |
| 16. | Religions in Nigeria are tolerant of other religious groups                                  | 41.7% | 7.2%  | 21%   | 6.9%  | 23.2% | 100% |
| 17. | I learnt major subjects about my religion by reading   | 56.5% | 11.9% | 13.6% | 2.7%  | 15.3% | 100% |
| 18. | I read religious literature critically.  | 35.3% | 3.5%  | 28.4% | 2.7%  | 30.1% | 100% |
| 19. | I change my believe system whenever I come across a better opinion                           | 42.2% | 11.4% | 24.2% | 8.9%  | 13.3% | 100% |
| 20. | Critical reading will promote peace in the country   | 47.7% | 15.3% | 15.3% | 3.5%  | 18.3% | 100% |
| 21. | I agree with ALL the doctrines of my religion  | 52.1% | 18.5% | 11.4% | 4.4%  | 13.6% | 100% |
| 22. | Most online contents on reading promote religious peace and tolerance                        | 43.5% | 8.9%  | 17.5% | 5.2%  | 24.9% | 100% |
| 23. | I have witnessed religious riot in my school   | 20%   | 7.7%  | 45.4% | 18.3% | 8.6%  | 100% |

Figure table 5

### Discussions and Findings

The data record shows that 405 respondents partook of the survey. Results in the table on gender and academic level show that 74% respondents were females while 26% were males. 90% of the respondents were in the Ordinary

National Diploma (henceforth OND) and 10% were Higher National Diploma (henceforth HND). Based on religion, 77% were from the Christian faith while 23% were from the Islamic faith. The results also show that respondents with the age bracket of 16-18 was 19%, 19-21 was

44%, 22-24 was 28% and 25-28 was 9%. This meant that more respondents within the age bracket of 19-21 were most involved in the survey. Findings show that in question 1 ***"I understand the meaning of religious tolerance"*** 53.5% respondents agreed showing that they understood what religious tolerance meant. 42.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 0.7% disagreed and just 1% strongly disagreed. Record also shows that 2.5% neither agreed nor disagreed.

In question 2, 60.1% agreed, 22.5% strongly agreed that religious tolerance is practiced in the school while 7.9% disagreed and 2.2% strongly disagreed; leaving 7.2% respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed.

In question 3, 57.7% respondents agreed while 17.6% strongly agreed to the notion that they learnt to be religiously tolerant in school. However, record revealed that 15.1% disagreed while 3% disagreed and 6.7% neither agreed nor disagreed. This proved that the school plays an important role in the shaping of the minds of the students to be religiously tolerant of one another's faith.

In question 4, record revealed that 59.7% respondents agreed that teachers teach how to be religiously tolerant, 12.4% strongly agreed but 7.2% disagreed, 0.7% strongly disagreed while 16.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. The percentage of those who disagreed was far lesser than those who agreed, again, this proved that teachers are playing a key role in the sensitization of the students.

Question 5 revealed that 57.7% of the respondents agreed to the notion that religious tolerance is practiced among students, while this is so, 12.4% strongly agreed to it. However, the record also revealed the differences as 8.4% disagreed while 0.7% strongly disagreed and a surprising figure of 20.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. In the question, those who neither agreed nor disagreed seem to be unsure if religious tolerance is being practiced among students and in comparison, with the question, that revealed teacher teach how to be religiously tolerant, there difference is not a wide margin.

Question 6 posited the notion that students read books that help them practice

religious tolerance, which revealed that 58.9% agreed, 10.9% strongly agreed but 11.6% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed and 16.6% neither agreed nor disagreed. The record proved that more of the respondents could not affirm that religious books are provided on religious tolerance. In question 7, respondents were asked to confirm if more literature books should be recommended to aid critical literacy. Interestingly, 64.9% agreed, 20.5% strongly agreed while just 5.2% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed with 7.4% who neither agreed nor disagreed. This shows that majority of the students were interested in having more literature books recommended to aid critical literacy.

The next question provided the respondents an opportunity to reveal their perception on whether teachers ensure that students read more on religious tolerance. This segment revealed that 57.9% agreed while 12.1% strongly agreed. However, 11.1% disagreed while 1% strongly disagreed and 17.1% neither agreed nor disagreed.

In question 9, the respondents were asked to confirm if reading of literature books on religious tolerance would prevent violence in schools. The record shows that 38.9% agreed, 9.4% strongly agreed, however, 11.9% disagreed and 14.6% strongly disagreed but 25.2% neither agreed nor disagreed showing that they were not sure of if more literature items would prevent religious violence in schools.

Respondents were asked in question 10 to provide their opinions if they preferred to read literature on religious violence on the Internet. The record shows that 28.2% were in agreement while only 3.7% strongly agreed. 25.5% disagreed while 8.4% strongly disagreed and 34.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. This column revealed that more students could not say for sure whether the internet was a preferred platform for reading contents on religious violence or not. There was just a slight difference between those who agreed and those who disagreed, which may also imply that many students still do not prefer contents on religious violence provided on the internet.

Record shows in question 11 that 38.6% prefer to read literature on religious violence in the

classroom while 5% strongly agreed. 19.8% disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed but 33.7% neither agreed nor disagreed to the notion. A review at question 10 and 11 shows that majority of the respondents were not quite sure whether they preferred online contents to contents studied in the classroom.

Question 12 asked respondents to show if they would love to read literature to learn more about other religious and how to tolerate them. The record reveals that 61.2% agreed to the notion while 13.6% strongly agreed; but only 5.2% disagreed and 5.7% strongly disagreed leaving 14.3% who neither agreed nor disagreed. This proved that students were more interested in reading contents that will enable them respect one another's faith and to tolerate them as well. This also implied that students want the growth of the society and if the chance to accommodate, adjust or tolerate people from different faiths came, they would do so willingly prejudice.

Likewise in question 13, respondents were asked to share their opinion on wanting more literature books on religious tolerance to be introduced as a topic in General Studies course and the record shows that; 57% were in support of the notion, 14.3% strongly agreed, and while 9.4% disagreed, 6.2% strongly disagreed and 13.1% neither agreed nor disagreed. Interestingly, this serves as a pointer that the students wanted more awareness and sensitization on religious tolerance in the school and in the society.

In question 14, students were asked to confirm if reading culture was well practiced among youth and the record shows that; 45.7% agreed to the notion, 6.4% strongly agreed, however, 20.7% disagreed while 5.7% strongly disagreed and 21.5% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Question 15 posits the notion that students read but not to the extent of critical reading, this column revealed that 70.4% agreed to the notion, 12.1% strongly agreed, but 6.2% disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed, and 8.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. This is a pointer to the fact that majority of the students are aware that even though they read, they do not read critically. In other to have a full grasp of the multi-religious society, one must be able to read critically in order to avoid conflict and maintain a peaceful co-existence.

Respondents were asked to confirm if indeed religions in Nigeria are tolerant of other religious groups in question 16, and the record show thus; 41.7% agreed to the notion, 7.2% strongly agreed, while 21% disagreed, 6.9% strongly disagreed, but 23.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. The percentage of those who were not quite sure if religious groups are tolerance of each other in Nigeria was high enough to consider more sensitization on religious tolerance.

In question 17, respondents were asked to confirm if they learnt major subjects about their religions simply by reading and the record shows the following; 56.5% agreed, 11.9% strongly agreed, while 13.6% disagreed, 2.7% strongly disagreed and 30.1% neither agreed nor disagreed.

In question 18, respondents were asked to confirm if they read religious literature critically, and the record shows that 35.3% respondents agreed to the notion, and 3.5% strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 28.4% disagreed that they read religious literature critically, and 2.7% strongly disagreed but surprisingly, 30.1% neither agreed nor disagreed. This record implies that students do not read religious literature critically which may spark off religious intolerance among them.

In question 19, it posits that if respondents are able to change their religious beliefs should better opinions be put forward, and the record reveals that 42.2% agreed to that notion, 11.4% strongly agreed, and while 24.2% disagreed, 8.95% strongly disagreed. However, 13.3% were in neither agreement nor disagreement. The percentage of those who agreed revealed that a good number of students would most likely adjust their way of interaction with those of different faiths. It is also important to note that the percentage of those who disagreed may need a reorientation that will help guide them towards maintaining a safe and religiously tolerant environment for students of different faiths.

The notion, which states that critical reading will promote peace in the country in question 20, reveal that 47.7% agreed 15.3% strongly agreed 3.5% disagreed while 18.3% strongly disagreed but 18.3% was not quite sure whether critical reading was an option for promoting peace in the country.

In question 21, respondents were asked to confirm if they agreed to all the doctrines of their

religions and the responses reveal that while 52.1% agreed, 18.5% strongly agreed, however, 11.4% disagreed and only 4.4% strongly disagreed but 13.6% neither agreed nor disagreed. The section simply suggests that more than half of the population of the students are in total support of the teachings and doctrines of their religions.

In question 22, respondents were asked to confirm if most online contents on reading promotes religious peace and tolerance, the following were the feedbacks; 43.5% agreed to the notion, 8.9% strong agreed but 17.5% disagreed, 5.2% strongly disagreed while 24.9% neither agreed nor disagreed. Surprisingly, record shows that those, who neither agreed nor disagreed, were more than those who actually disagreed. This means that students find religious contents online as a factor for promoting peace and tolerance.

The final question was to confirm if the respondents had witnessed religious riot in the school, 20% agreed to this notion while 7.7% strongly agreed, however, 45.4% disagreed while 18.3% strongly disagreed claiming that they have not experienced religious riot in the school. 24.9% neither agreed nor disagreed. The record reveal that religious riot in the school is not on the increase, however, more work needs to be done on the 20% who had experienced religious riots one way on the other.

### Recommendations

The study conducted revealed the perception of the students towards the teachers, likewise the perception the students have towards critically reading religious contents whether online or in the classroom. The paper examined these responses and pulled out a few recommendations for teachers. Some of the recommendations generated from this study are:

- Teachers at all level, should endeavour to promote critical reading in and out of the classroom.
- More literature books on critical reading and religious tolerance should be made available or even recommended at every level to sensitize the students.

- Students should be encouraged to critically review any content on religion before consuming it.
- Religious tolerance should be a topic in the General Studies course for students at every level.

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## Youth Participation in Governance in Nigeria: A Critical Review

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**Abstract**

*The paper takes a critical review of youth's participation in governance in Nigeria. The current National Youth Policy of Nigeria defines youth to be people of 18-29 years. According to World meter as at August 2022, Nigeria's population stands at 217, 079, 601 with the youth accounting for 70% of the population which means youth population alone is 151 million. The Nigerian youth is innovative and resilient and if given the opportunities will excel in any field of endeavour (Daniels,2022). However, despite its enterprise, energy and dynamism, this generation of Nigeria's youth may not see the change it wants without the knowledge of how Nigeria's political system works and actively participates in it. The youth face many challenges in Nigeria without being heard by leaders. This is because ideology, sound political principles and having plans for effective governance for sustainable economy is often relegated to the background. And so, the youth has been yearning for reforms in the system that would create more avenues for its inclusion in governance (Adebunmi, 2020). The Nigeria's current vice president Prof. Yemi Osinbajo advised that power is not handed over on a platter. Through different movements, over the years' youths have agitated for development and social well-being. For instance, the legendary states men like Obafemi Awolowo, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, and Nnamdi Azikiwe among others advocated for Nigeria's independence. The 2021 list by Chandler Good Governance Index (CGGI) ranks Nigeria as the third worst governed country of 104 countries based on governance, leadership and foresight. This is as a result of political parties putting in place mechanisms that hinder young people from getting access to tickets that would enable them to contest for political offices. Recently there was an uprising as was seen during End SARS protest. Yiaga Africa is a youth movement which has many programmes such as Youth Initiative for Advocacy and Watching the Vote amongst others. The targeted audience is young people who are from age 16-30 years and who must be based in the 36 states of Nigeria. One of the group's major goals is to promote civic activism and effective youth political participation. Their effort has yielded some results as there has been a slight improvement as can be seen through the reformation on Youth Policy Document. The National Youth Policy has many programmes for youth inclusion in governance but lacks implementation strategies. The review has shown that some youth have apathy towards governance due to activities of the politicians. The paper concludes that the youths are not adequately represented in governance in Nigeria so they rebel using different fronts. But with the youth becoming more aware of their rights, there is still hope for the future of sustainable governance in Nigeria. The paper suggests amongst others that the nation should run an inclusive government where the youths shall have fair representation. Also, youths must be prepared by having core values such as integrity, self-discipline and hard-work. They should also involve in activities that will keep them fit, functional and relevant in order to be considered for leadership roles in governance.*

**Key words:** Youth, Governance, Participation**Introduction**

Nigeria is said to be the biggest economy in West Africa. According to *World meter* as at August 2022, Nigeria's population stands at 217, 079, 601 with the youth accounting for 70 percent of the population which means youth population

alone is 151 million. With such a teeming population which might double by 2050 according to the United Nations, Nigeria needs to build a strong resource base on which to sustain her economy. The huge population of youth in Nigeria signifies a great asset for a socio-political

transformation within a democratic space (Amzat & Abdullahi, 2016).

The Commonwealth defines youth as people of age 15-29 years. The African Youth Charters inform that youth are young people of age 15-35 years. The amended National Youth Policy of Nigeria 2019 refers to youth as people of age bracket of 18-29 years (Chioma, 2020).

As huge as the youth population in Nigeria is, about 90 million youths and graduates are unemployed as reported by the Executive Secretary National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) Idris Muhammad Bugaje (Salau, 2022). This condition indicates a bleak future for Nigeria as millions of frustrated youths are left to roam the streets. Meanwhile the size and youthfulness of the population offer boundless chances to expand Nigeria's capacity as the economic hub of Africa and globally (Salau, 2022). The teeming vibrant youths with their enterprise, energy and dynamism will not see the change they want without the knowledge of how Nigeria's political system works and actively participating in it (Daniels, 2022). Ayer (2020) informs that there is a gap between the young people and decision makers when the decision makers are not aware of the needs of the young people. According to Ayer (2020) youth group need to advocate for an open system of governance where information and communication are easily assessable.

Many youths however have apathy concerning political matters due to so many reasons. For instance, fear of being killed or assassinated is one reason many young people avoid getting involved in politics. Also, the high cost of buying nomination forms hinders them from fully participating (Vite, 2020). This leaves the old leaders to continue to recycle themselves at the helm of affairs of the nation (Oni, 2020). Ogwo (2022) is of the opinion that Nigerian youth will not realise their potential if they are not allowed to become actively involved in governance.

### **History of youth participation in governance in Nigeria**

History has shown that before independence, young Nigerians advocated for the change that resulted into the nation gaining her independence. According to Targba (2020), the advocates include Anthony Enahoro, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ahmadu Bello, Obafemi Awolowo, Abubakar Tafawa Belewa, Senator Joseph Sarwuan Tarka and Herbert Macaulay. They were active members of the Nigerian youth movement which was found in 1935. Dr. Azikiwe later became the First Nigeria's president after she got her independence (Quadri, 2021). Sir Ahmadu Bello was the co-founder of the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC) with sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who was later on made minister of Transport. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa became the leader of the Organization of African Unity. Chief Awolowo also funded a political party known as Action Group (AG) (Targba, 2020). Senator Joseph Tarka was one of the founding members of United Middle Belt Congress (The Guardian, 2020). The Guardian (2020) informs further that the Senator was also an advocate for state creation so as to give political and economic power to minority groups in Nigeria.

There are also others who actively participated in governance in Nigeria in various capacities. For instance, there were Mrs Funmilayo Ransome Kuti who was an educator, political campaigner as well as women rights activist and Margaret Ekpo who was an activist. Later, Ekpo became a pioneer female politician in the country in the first republic (Walubengo & Simwa, 2022). There was also General Multala Muhammed who ruled only for a short while but left a formidable mark on the lives of Nigerians. As a young military Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, he ruled only between 1975 and 1976 but was able to create more states out of the 12 previous ones in Nigeria (Wikipedia). He also set up a public complaint commission (Wikipedia). This has made it possible for Nigerians to be given fair hearing.

All these statesmen and women did all they could to make Nigeria a better place for the country's citizens and for the future generations. What is even more interesting about them is that their ages ranged between 37 and 60 but they

actively participated and their voices were heard and heeded as can be seen with the case of advocacy and eventual independence. Obafemi Awolowo became the leader of opposition in the Federal House of Representatives at 51 years old (Quadri, 2021). Ani (2022) informs that Dr. Azikiwe was about 56 years old when he became the President of Nigeria while Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was 48 years old when he became the Prime Minister (Quadri, 2021). Senator Joseph Sarwuan Tarkaa served as a member of the Nigerian Constitutional Conference between 1957-1980. He also served as Shadow Minister of Commerce and died in 1980 at 48 years (The Guardian, 2020). One can then infer that when all the politicians mentioned here started participating in politics and governance, they were much younger.

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Sir, Ahmadu Bello who were the dominant figures in the three regions (Northern, Eastern and Western) were examples of selflessness. According to Ani (2022), the patriots managed Nigeria's resources well. Embezzlement then was rare rather than the norm. For instance, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, as Prime Minister of Eastern Region, built University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1955 with proceeds from palm oil (Ani, 2022). Obafemi Awolowo established the Western Nigerian Government Broadcasting Corporation in 1959 (Ani, 2022). The corporation is reputed to have given birth to Africa's first indigenous television. The author informs further that Ahmadu Bello decided to remain Premier of Northern Region even when his party, the Northern People's Congress had won majority seats in the parliament in 1959. Nwaeze (2022) explains that Sir Ahmadu Bello used consultations to arrive at agreements. His greatest achievement was the modernization and unification of the diverse people of Northern Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe also promoted Pro-African nationalist agenda while he worked as an editor for *Africans Morning Post*.

Another prominent statesman, Chief Anthony Enahoro was Nigeria's foremost anticolonial and pro-democracy activist (Targba, 2020). Nwaeze (2022) informs further that at 21

years Chief Enahoro became the editor of Nnamdi Azikiwe's newspaper, *Southern Nigeria Defender*, thus, becoming the youngest editor in Nigeria. Most importantly he was the first to move the motion for Nigeria's independence, thereby earning the name father of the Nigerian state.

Ani (2022) explains that the statesmen had a mission and a vision so they could collaborate. For instance, they formed alliances to ensure success. One can therefore rightly infer that the statesmen could achieve much success because they were younger and could think better as well as collaborate. According to Huskey (2015), the challenges of sustainability will require high levels of collaboration and therefore, developing the competencies for collaboration in the context of sustainability is essential for future leaders.

### **Political Activities after the First Republic**

Nigeria got her independence and power was handed over to the statesmen. But in 1963 till 1999, when Nigeria returned back to democratic governance, there had been series of Coup- de- tat that saw military Heads of State at the helm of affairs in this country (Quadri, 2021). The nation was finally able to practice democracy from 1999 the author concluded.

Nigerians are however not satisfied with what has been happening concerning governance in the nation. For instance, Ani (2022) complains that political parties are tied to regional strongholds. Adejoro (2020) expatiates that politicians base their campaigns on vague promises, criticisms of other parties, attacks and a lot of expenditure. The writer informs further that, better ideology, sound political principles and having plans for effective governance that will ensure sustainable future is relegated to the background. According to Adejoro (2022) lack of proper and visionary governance makes the citizens to be resigned to fate as any hope of proper governance seems to be unrealistic. But some citizens demand for their rights to heard in Nigeria as has been manifesting through various movements and agitations like the Oduduwa People's Congress (OPC), the Ijaw Youths Forum (IYF), the Ohaneze Ndigbo, the Arewa People's



Consultative Forum, the Niger Delta Militants and so on are all socio-cultural organisations in Nigeria that aim to represent the political interest of all their communities within and outside Nigeria. According to Ani (2022) the root of this widening national fault lines is a feeling of discontentment and alienation fielded mostly by the absence of inclusiveness in governance. The author concludes that bridging such divides is a necessary step to rebuilding trust and national cohesion.

The idea of rebuilding trust in the citizens however may not be the main agenda of the Nigerian elites. So, Nigerians resort to protests as was witnessed during the June 12 protests in 1993 (Adibe, 2017), Occupy Nigeria in January 2013 over removal of fuel subsidy (Wikipedia), # End SARS in 2020 amongst others. Nigeria has also witnessed numerous agitations. For instance, there are agitations for Oduduwa Republic, Arewa Republic, Niger Delta Republic and so on (Adibe, 2017). All these are as a result of feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction among the various constituents of the Nigerian Federation. In every protest or agitation in Nigeria young people are usually the majority if not the instrumentals.

### **Youth and politics in Nigeria**

Nigeria has enjoyed democracy since 1999. Adebunmi (2020) says that Nigerians had hoped to enjoy good governance having democratically elected leaders into public offices. The yearnings of Nigerians have however, turned into frustration (Adebunmi, 2020). For instance, youths have been yearning for reforms in the system that would create more avenues for youth inclusion in governance (Adebunmi, 2020). The author informs further that the call for reforms is because, the youths feel the future of Nigeria is being mortgaged by leaders who are not in tune with what is happening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Youths are the most important resource base of any nation. According to Oni (2022), youth's greatest asset is innovative mind embellished with creativity. The author concludes that most of the inventions in the world, thriving entertainment, ICT and e-commerce are products of youthful thinking and vibrancy. According to Amzat and

Abdullahi (2016) youths are expected to play important roles in the community. Boutros (2016) points out that the involvement of youths in politics leads to civic engagement because it can include service to the community through involvement in health education and charity work. However, as noble as these ideas are, the political elites are not ready to meaningfully include youth in governance. The resultant effect is that the youth face many issues in the world without being heard by the leaders (Boutros, 2016). Many decades ago, a famous musician, (Jimmy Cliff) in his song advised that if we fail to treat the youth right, we would be playing with dynamite. Youth political participation captures the involvement of youths in responsible and challenging political action that meets genuine needs of the people with opportunities for planning and or decision-making affecting others in the political system (Amzat & Abdullahi 2016). In agreement with the above Dzur (2016) informs that research on quality democracy considers not only the existence of institutions of democratic government but how viable these are to guarantee responsibility and accountability, support engagement and to continuously enhance political socio-economic equality.

Youth involvement in governance will account for better leadership in Nigeria. According to Amizat and Abdullahi (2016), youth participation in politics fosters a sense of citizenship and makes political processes more transparent and accountable towards young people. Adebunjo (2019) informs that the Nigerian youth have not yet achieved the level of inclusion required to gain representation in politics.

### **Efforts Made by Government and Groups for Youth Inclusion in Governance**

Efforts have been made and are still being made to get the youths more meaningfully involved in politics. This is not to say they are not at all involved in politics one way or the other. The matters of concern here are in the aspects of involvement and the percentage. For instance, Gaby (2016) informs that there are fewer young people in newer democratic governments compare to more mature democratic systems. In agreement

Vite (2020) states that Nigeria has been experimenting with democracy for only 30 years and therefore, has poor manifestation of citizenship engagement in post military population. According to Codemint (2020), since Nigerian independence in 1960, Nigeria has been struggling to install a viable and durable democracy however, its dismal politics characterized by consistent inability to conduct credible, and transparent elections in which both voters and votes are protected has made the agenda of democratic sustainability largely a mirage. All the above reasons are part of the reasons that affect youth participation in politics in Nigeria.

The major factors standing in the way of youth participation in politics and subsequently governance was the National Youth Policy (2009) which set age limits thereby hindering prospective young people to fully participate (Onwuka, 2022). With the advent of Not Too Young to run bill sponsored by Tony Nwulu in the House of Representatives supported by Abdulaziz Nyako in the senate, the bill was passed. According to Tukur (2018), President Muhammadu Buhari signed the bill in the presence of selected invited youths from across the country. Tukur (2018) explains further that the new law is aimed at relaxing some of the stringent and discriminatory provisions of the constitution that set age limits to democratic inclusion of youth. Tukur (2018) says further that the president advised the youths that though they could aspire, for presidency, they should wait till after 2019 election. Perhaps, the president's comments could be looked upon from different perspectives by critics no matter how well he meant. Onwuka (2022) opines that the Not Too Young to Run Law is a façade that masks the sour issues at the heart of retrogressive politics in Nigeria. This includes God-fatherism, election malpractice, money politics and lopsided economic disparity between the ruling class and the deliberately pauperized youths by the same politicians, the author concluded. However, Vite (2020) affirms that the Not Too Young to run bill is a welcome development as it affords youths the right to contest and be elected into political offices they were excluded by virtue of age. But the

author regrets that as laudable as the ideas seems, the socio-political structure and process in Nigeria is tailored to favour the retired elites in military, the intelligentsia and the economic juggernauts (Vite, 2020). What this means is that even with the freedom to run for public offices, very few youths will be able to do so due to financial constraints.

Other reasons youth are not actively participating in politics lies with the youth themselves. For example, Vite (2018) opines that youth become aloof because politicians do not like criticism as can be seen with the Hate Speech Bill. The author informs further that, the bill is an indirect way of silencing agitating voices. According to Wikipedia alienation is one of the causes of voter apathy. This happens when the electorate feel that the political system does not work for them and therefore, participating in it will be fruitless exercise (Wikipedia).

According to Michael Jobbins, the director of Global Affairs and Partnerships, at Search Common Ground (A Washington based non-government organization) as reported by Huskey (2019):

“One of the problems is if you are young person in many places across Africa or, frankly in America or anywhere, you are coming of age in an environment where you see corruption, you see that your tax money isn't giving you benefits, the schools are bad, the health clinics are bad, the roads are bad... the enormity of the task of changing the environment, I think is something that drives apathy” he said.

Deborah Thornton, a professional associate in the public affairs section at the US Embassy in Manrovia as reported by Huskey (2019) found that youths are not interested in politics because they have different priorities such as financial troubles, trying to go to school, finding where to live and finding money for school and books.

Youth everywhere have the same concerns so in Nigeria too the cases are similar. The finding of Deborah is corroborated by

Adebajo (2019) who informs that Nigerian youth have not yet achieved the level of inclusion required to gain much representation in politics as they are too poor to run for political office. Some youths find it appalling how human rights are abused and at the level of sabotage emanating in poor execution of projects as well as the level of dishonesty that is usually exhibited by politicians (Vite, 2019). Other challenges according to Oni (2020) include lack of motivation, fear of being maimed or assassinated by desperate politicians, fear of detention and so on.

### **Youths and the prospects of inclusion in governance**

The term youth has been defined variously by different groups. For example, the United Nations defines youth as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood independence. They are people of age 15-24 years the UN explains. The African youth charter refers to youth as every person between the age of 15-35 years, while the National Youth Policy of Nigeria (2019) informs that youths are people of age 18-29 years. Ani (2020) informs that youth are people with vigour, agility, spirit and energy. Youths are also associated with ambition, enthusiasm and are promising. Attahiru Jega, former chairman of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) informs that Nigeria has the highest population of youth around the world. The Worldometer (a reference website that provides real time statistics for diverse topics around the world) explains that Nigeria's population as at August 2022 stands at 217, 079, 601 with the youth accounting for 70 percent which means youths are a large population of 151 million. With this number, it means youth in Nigeria can set a political agenda for the nation (Boutros, 2016). Also Ogwo (2022) informs that 51 percent of the registered voters in readiness for 2019 elections were between 18-35 years.

YIAGA (Youth Initiative for Advocacy Growth and Advancement) Africa, a group that seeks a paradigm shift in Nigeria's socio-political life; that encourages democracy and youth inclusion as well as human rights, having this numerical strength as a yardstick advocated

loudly for the Not Too Young to Run bill which was eventually passed into law (Itodo 2018). YIAGA Africa's function is to keep Nigerian government accountable (Ewepu 2020). YIAGA's targeted activities include educating and empowering Nigerian youths to play active roles in political advancement (Olorunbi, 2019). According to Itodo (2018), the organization hosts campaign, advocacy and movement building workshops aimed at improving capacity of state-based groups, coordinating movements at the state level (OFA 2017). To keep with one of their programmes, "Watching the Vote", in 2019 elections, over 3000 volunteers were deployed across Nigeria as election monitors (Olorunbi, 2019).

Some Nigerians are of the opinion that the "Not Too Young to Run" campaign has awoken the desire of young Nigerians to participate in election Shola (2021) and has increased the desire to create a better nation, hence the increase in number of youths running for offices of the President, National Assemblies, Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly in 2019 the author concludes. Also, the number of youth registration for voting increased. According to Federal Ministry of youth and sports development in collaboration with National Bureau of Statistics, concerning National Youth Survey 2020, young Nigerians within the age group of 18-35 were the highest population of voters as they constituted 51.11 percent of total age group registered to vote at the polls in 2019. Also, Ewepu (2020) informs that youth candidacy in Nigeria's 2019 election rose to 32.2 percent as against 21 percent in 2015.

### **Benefits of youth participation in governance**

Nigeria needs a strong resource base on which to build her economy as such all areas of the Nigerian nation should involve youths as they are greater in number. The huge population in Nigeria signifies a great asset for a socio-political transformation within a democratic space. According to Codemint (2020), recognizing and nurturing the strengths, interests and abilities of the young should be done through real life opportunities. Youth political participation

captures the involvement of young people in responsible and challenging political action that meets genuine needs of the people with opportunities for planning and decision-making affecting others in the nation (Amzat & Abdullahi, 2016).

Youth political participation fosters a sense of citizenship and makes policy processes more transparent and accountable towards young people (Amzat and Abdullahi, 2016; Ayer, 2016). The authors explain further that participation in governance would help to build self-confidence to develop a sense of initiative and skills of negotiation. Akinyetun (2021) opines that social inclusion of youth in governance is instrumental in avoiding violence, extremism, crime and instability. With all these out of the way, the Nigeria's state would be more sustained in all ramifications. Boutros (2016) explains that young people who participate politically early in their community are more likely to become engaged citizens and voters. This is to say that the youth understand the plight of the people more and would be more willing to cause positive changes in the lives of the citizenry when given opportunity at representation, the author concluded. Ayer (2020), emphasizing on importance of youth in governance, informs that through youth participation, an environment of the rule of law will be ensured as well as reduction in corruption but transparency would be increased to build strong and inclusive public institutions. Akinyetun (2021) found a correlation between youth political participation and good governance in Nigeria.

### **What more needs to be done?**

Statistics has shown that there is an improvement in youth participation however there is still a lot more work to be done for youths to realise their goal of inclusion in governance in Nigeria. The leadership of this country has a role to play as well as the youths. Daniels (2022) opines that government should empower the youths so as to achieve sustainable development through youth capacity. Nigeria needs to help the youths to gain practical skills regarding the bureaucracy and policy formulation processes that

go with leadership. For instance, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) Nigeria (2019) through its Inclusive and Accountable Politics (IAP) programme works to build the capacities of young persons in politics. Also, as a result of the (IAP) programme working with key stakeholders, a network of young persons in Politics with Values (PWV network) was created to monitor and evaluate the activities of members of young parliamentarian Forum (YPF) in the national assembly as well as advocate for increased space for youth politics (Itodo, 2018).

Another important initiative is that of YIAGA workshops. Itodo (2018) informs that the group held a workshop in 2017, the purpose of which was to promote civic activism and effective youth political participation. Itodo (2018) explains further that, other workshops held by the group are tailored towards improving the capacity of state-based group coordinating. The participants are also introduced to fundamentals of community organizing theory of change and also, building alliance and coalitions.

Ayer (2020) emphasises that to help develop youth skill at governance, in Nepal, they go through projects called Youth Mock Parliament. The process familiarises would be leaders with the processes of governance such as law making and responsibilities of members of parliament (Ayer, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

The paper concludes that youth are becoming more aware of the need for them to become involved in politics though some are still sceptical about it. The paper concludes that first republic democracy with meagre resources yielded more dividends to the nation than those of the present and with more resources; the reason being that they were younger, more energetic and dynamic in their thinking. Today, youth population in Nigeria is the highest. Such a population with their innovative mind, if woven into the fabric of governance will pave a more progressive pathway to move the country forward.

### **Suggestions**

The paper suggests that

- Youth groups should intensify advocacy for an open system of governance where youths are given equal or more chances of participation.
- Nigeria's Electoral Commission or youth groups could conduct a 'Mock Election' and a 'Mock Parliament' (borrow from Nepal) where young people with intention of becoming public servants would participate by 'role playing' the processes of election and duties of members of parliament.
- Youth groups could carry out voter education campaign via 'mock polls' to help reduce invalid votes and inform other youths of the need to participate.
- Members of parliament should lead an exemplary life so as to reduce apathy of youth to democratic processes
- Youth groups should campaign (possibly use jingles) against participating as touts or thugs to old time politicians.
- Youth should have a youth focused political party and be ready to vote for the youths during election
- Forms for electoral offices should be made less expensive.

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# Extensive Reading: A Strategy for Effective Teaching and Learning of Critical Literacy in Language Classrooms

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## Abstract

*Observation has shown that reading activities in some language classrooms are targeted at comprehension and vocabulary exercises. These activities do not encourage learners to become critics of reading materials, literary texts and other sources of information. Research has revealed that critical literacy is not a widespread practice in language classes at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. This paper therefore i) discusses the essence of critical literacy in teaching/learning activities in language classrooms; ii) reveals how extensive reading, a supplementary activity, could foster students' understanding of critical literacy; and iii) examines the synergy between critical literacy and extended reading. The study concluded that one of the effective means through which critical literacy can be taught in language classroom is to expose learners to extensive reading and schedule their reading time, source for reading materials that foster critical thinking, logical argument, questioning, and transformation of self and/or one's world and as well strive to become independent readers who synthesize, analyze, interpret and evaluate what is heard, read or written.*

**Key words:** Critical Literacy, Critical Reading, Extensive Reading, Reading, Strategy

## Introduction

With the trend of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) in the world today, students ought not to be involved in the dissemination of false information and dogmatism that could be detrimental to the lives of the people and development of the society, rather, they should sieve pieces of information they receive daily (Jimola and Olaniyan, 2021). Khorshidi and Iran (2017) note that we live in a text and media-saturated world, consumer-driven world where we are faced with bombardments of various pieces of information from different sources, hence, the need for critical literacy seems to be intense more than ever. Therefore, language students need to be critically aware of what, who, and where of the information identity so that they can read, write, communicate, interpret and use the message appropriately as social beings. By doing this, they become critical thinkers, objective problem solvers, trailblazers and future nation builders. The present 21st-century society should not only prioritise knowledge production but also

promote critical literacy as a veritable key to correct reasoning (Jimola and Olaniyan, 2021). As learners are confronted by overwhelming information posed by the waves of technology, critical literacy allows learners to digest information with accountability and become critical consumers of the information that they receive (Kaur and Sidhu, 2014). One of the effective means to achieve critical literacy is to engage in extensive reading. Extensive reading fosters readers' thinking skill, constructive-arguing acumen, evaluating techniques, questioning astuteness, and self and world transformation. Therefore, this paper therefore discusses the essence of critical literacy in teaching/learning activities in language classrooms; reveals how extensive reading, a supplementary activity, could foster students' understanding of critical literacy; and examines the synergy between critical literacy and extended reading.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Reading**

Reading is a conscious and unconscious thinking process which is unraveled by many strategies to reconstruct the meaning that the author is assumed to have intended. This is done by comparing information in the text to the background knowledge and prior experience of the reader (Ningsih, 2019). Reading is considered to be a neglected aspect of language teaching and has always been perceived as a challenging skill by many ESL learners (Ningsih, 2019). Kaur and Sidhu (2014) examine the challenges and difficulties faced by tertiary students from two public universities in Malaysia in trying to comprehend an opinion-based text. The findings show that many students still experience the following reading difficulties: understanding the author's message, distinguishing fact from opinion, understanding main ideas, guessing meaning from context and making inferences. Students in colleges and universities ought to be lovers of reading, however, reading literacy requires the higher order of reading skills, the aspects which appears difficult for them, especially in critically finding value in texts. Every text has its positive and negative values which the author believe in. Hence, the reader needs to be critical in their judgement of the text, instead of consenting to the views and values enforced by the authors.

Reading could be formed as habits if read for pleasure. To achieve this, this study seeks to reiterate that teaching and learning of literacies including critical literacy is not limited to English language classrooms only. Therefore, there is the need for teachers handling English courses and other language courses to incorporate critical literacy dimensions in their courses. Before any knowledge can be effectively imbued in classrooms, it is important that teachers are intimated with the workings of such tasks. Hence, this present study reiterates the need for language teachers to have a better understanding of critical literacy so that it can be incorporated into teaching/learning activities in the classrooms.

### **Critical Reading**

Wells et al. (2022) differentiate between critical reading and critical literacy. Critical reading focuses on deliberately uncovering a relationship between the reader, writer, and subject through analyzing the writer's use of devices such as diction, parallel structure, figurative language, and imagery to uncover author's intention and consider the subsequent effect on the intended reader's thoughts and emotions. Stambler (2013) states 7 critical reading strategies:

1. previewing-learning about a text before reading it,
2. contextualizing-placing a text in historical, biographical, cultural contexts,
3. questioning to understand/remember-asking questions about the content,
4. reflecting on challenges to beliefs/values-examining personal responses,
5. outlining and summarizing-identifying main ideas and restating in your own words,
6. evaluating an argument-testing logic of a text and
7. comparing and contrasting related reading-exploring likenesses and differences.

For students to be critical readers, Kaur and Sidhu (2014) state the need for a reader to: consider the author's purpose in writing the account; seek to identify the main claims the authors make in putting forward their argument; adopt a skeptical stance towards the author's claims, checking whether they support convincingly what they assert; question whether the author has sufficient backing for the generalisations that they are making; and consider whether and how any values guiding the author's work may affect what they claim. From the above, the teacher's role is pivotal at helping learners become critical readers by helping them think about their own reading processes, develop a strategy in thinking, and negotiate meanings when in contact with challenging texts. Teachers should bear in mind the background knowledge of learners, need of the learners as well as their



interests. When readers are critical readers they graduate to become critically literates.

### **Critical Literacy**

The term critical literacy surfaced in the 1980s, and thereafter, it has not only gained much importance in education but has also been widely practiced in classrooms across level of education in the western countries (Syamdianita, 2017). Critical literacy originated from the constructivism theory (has roots in philosophy and psychology) which explains how knowledge is constructed in human being when information comes into contact with existing knowledge that had been developed by experiences (Kaur & Sidhu, 2014). Clare and Bernadette (2003, p.2) explain that constructivist teaching fosters critical thinking and creates motivated and independent learners. It is based on the belief that learning occurs as students are actively involved in the process of knowledge construction and meaning, instead of passively receiving information. Critical literacy “situates a text within political, historical, and social contexts as a means to name and challenge inequity. It also involves readers recognizing they bring with them certain backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs that will impact how they transact with a text (Wells et al., 2022).”

Critical literacy goes beyond conventional ideas of reading and writing but incorporates critical thinking, arguing, evaluating, questioning, and transformation of self and/or one's world (McDaniel, 2006; Syamdianita, 2017). Kaur and Sidhu (2014) note that “critical literacy could be a credible pedagogy only if it can allow learners to understand and unravel the biases and prejudices that exist in a given language. Therefore, due to the complexity of this process of critical literacy, teachers need to be patient in guiding learners towards achieving critical literacy and becoming autonomous learners but cannot expect it to be an automatic process of learning (Kaur & Sidhu, 2014).”

Critical literacy is a central thinking skill that a tertiary education seeks to develop in students. It involves the questioning and examination of ideas, and requires you to

synthesise, analyse, interpret, evaluate and respond to the texts you read or listen to. Critical literacy starts with reading or listening. There are two parts to engaging with academic texts: a reporting element where you describe what it is you are engaging with; and a reaction or response element where you then respond to and interpret the text (The University of Melbourne, nd). Critical literacy is not negating ideas but questioning them so as to understand them differently (Khorshidi & Iran, 2017).

Fajardo (2015, p.31) notes that the “germane feature of critical literacy is the examination of the politics behind the creation of texts. This can be examined by identifying the writer's purpose, the assumptions and factors shaping an author's points of view; and the possible economic, political, and social interests that a writer purportedly upholds.” In critical literacy, readers examine authors' beliefs held at the time the text was created, and how readers may be manipulated to accept these beliefs through language, images, layout, and other textual features contained therein (Fajardo, 2015).

Khorshidi and Iran (2017: p.100-105) explains the 7C phases of critical literacy as conducted in his study:

#### **1. Comprehension**

The first step of a critical literacy practice is to understand what the text is saying at the superficial level. With regard to above points, comprehension is when the students engage with a text after they read it for the first time. In other words, it is the first contact with a problem, a question, etc., raised as the subject matter to be challenged.

#### **2. Construction**

In construction level, students moved from text, not fully detached from it, to their own existential world; namely, a transitivity from the word to the world. This is the time when connections are made between the classrooms and outside of the classrooms and that of real life through the learner's own problems, inspirations, and emotions.

### **3. Conceptualization**

Conceptualization is the fruit of the dialogue and correlation between the subject and the self, when everyone in the classroom began making his or her notion or concept. The students value the vital importance of dialoguing and how it helps them learn and how new ideas, thoughts, concepts, and creative works take shape through a meaningful critical communicative process; that is, a move from the world to the word, the text, or the subject matter they were reading.

### **4. Conversion**

Conversion takes shape when those internalized themes began to transform into personal practical reactions, that is, transitivity from reflection to action.

### **5. Conscientization**

Conscientization is the highest level of critical literacy dynamism. Conscientization gives students the power to know, understand, and reflect on the knowledge and put into action the knowledge gained. A conscientized learner acts, moves, and changes actively and practically.

### **6. Critiquing**

Critical literacy aims at weighing, critiquing, and judging the traditions, the knowledge, and contents of the text and even the linguistic structures and elements of the text through critiquing and questioning. Critiquing is where apprehension of the text takes place. The students in a critical literacy classroom learn how they are not expected to merely and unthinkably answer the given questions but to generate their own questions.

### **7. Communication**

Communication or dialoguing (spoken or written) is the most important and prevalent feature of our critical literacy practices. critical dialoguing can take different forms: dialogue with other students and the teacher, dialogue with the objects of discussions in the form of texts, videos, photos, ideas, problems, etc., and dialogue with themselves when writing journals or doing

inquiries, or when thinking critically about how to solve different problems.

Fajardo (2015) posits that critical literacy provides students with the opportunity to question, resist, and reconstruct textual representations that do not correspond to their own identities and explore multiple perspectives on a topic. Different strategies have been employed to achieve varied perspectives on a topic in the classroom such as reading varied versions of the same topic, reading a story that reveals divergent points of view, explaining the views of people with different cultural backgrounds, or identifying the prevalent and unheard voices in a text. The essence of these strategies is to show to the students that no answer comes easily to complicated issues because tackling such problems requires development of the skills of information-processing, evaluation, enquiry, creative thinking, good reasoning and the ability to differentiate between emotions and values (Fajardo, 2015).

Different studies have been carried out on the importance of critical literacy in classrooms. However, majority of the studies focus on English classroom. Fajardo (2015 reviewed of critical literacy beliefs and practices of English language learners and teachers. The study highlights the possibilities and challenges experienced by both students and teachers as they practise critical literacy in English language classrooms. The study concluded that English language teachers and learners seem to favour conventional literacy practices (literacy merely entails reading words on a page) rather than critical literacy (critically analysing how those words shape identities and influence readers' perspectives) and this could lead to a culture of acquiescence. The study of Mitsikopoulou (2020) focuses on critical pedagogy and English as a Foreign Language teacher education. In the study, students explore the relationship between texts and their contexts, and they examine how the choices we make from the language system act upon, and, simultaneously, are constrained by the social context. They also learn how to construe different kinds of meanings, something that constitutes a challenge for some students. The article

concluded that the preparation of critical educators should start from their undergraduate studies. Such a project would entail moving beyond the traditional conceptualization of a critical thinking approach and endorsing a critical literacy perspective.

There have been many methods, techniques, curricula and beliefs supporting means by which teachers can develop learners' comprehension skills and broaden their horizon when thinking of a text. Teaching in language classrooms is not limited to decoding of language but to also understand how language is used in relation to the world. There exist a significant relationship between text and context. Therefore, readers should not passively accept text at surface level, nor only read through their own lens. Rather, they should seek to understand the lens of the author, the lens they have, and finally the lens that others around the world have (Jordahl, 2021). Becoming skilled in critical literacy should not be limited to teaching and learning of reading and writing. Tertiary institution language lecturers could create awareness of critical literacy in learners by getting them engaged in meaningful learning experiences when reading expository texts, opinion-based texts or other content-based subject texts capable of fostering students' critical thinking skills in various undergraduate courses offered in the university. Creating awareness, imparting knowledge and competence in critical literacy could be achieved if the students are exposed to the workings of extensive reading.

### **Extensive Reading**

Extensive reading means giving autonomy to readers to select the reading material based on its relevance to their interests, knowledge, and experience by supplementing reading tasks with a large number of materials on a wide range of topics (Day & Bamford, 2002). Lyutaya (2011) posits that the purpose of extensive reading is to get the main idea of the text rather than a complete, detailed understanding of every grammatical, thematic, and discourse element. Extensive reading allows students to find pleasure in reading as they gain a general understanding of literary ideas, learn reading

strategies, acquire new vocabulary, and increase their English proficiency. If properly incorporated into classroom, extensive reading could affect students' critical literacy on another topic taught in the classroom.

Lyutaya (2011) discusses four guidelines needed in extensive reading tasks:

1. students voluntarily choose from a large amount of materials those texts that they want to read from which they can find fun or pleasure.
2. students choose the right difficulty level. Due to excessive length or complexity of the text, students should review the length and difficulty when selecting a text to see whether the vocabulary is acceptable to their level and if they can follow the ideas.
3. students create a community of readers to share and learn with more depth and understanding ideas with others, consider alternative points of view, and broaden our own perspectives.
4. students keep a reading log at pre-, during-, and post-reading intervals to learn strategies to enhance reading comprehension, activate new vocabulary, and develop the writing skill.

Extensive reading gives students the privilege to select texts based on their competence, knowledge, experience and topics of interest. This act encourages students to read wide from different texts written by authors of multiple perspectives of literary works to retrieve information, acquire knowledge, find pleasure and thoroughly extract assumptions hidden in the texts. Day & Bamford (2002) cited in Syamdianita (2017) state 10 principles of extensive reading approach, they are as follows:

- i. the reading material should be easy. The material should have little or no unfamiliar items of vocabulary and grammar.
- ii. availability of large number of books on broad range of topics. To achieve a successful extensive reading, students are encouraged to get materials they want to

- read which is of interest to them by getting variety of reading materials.
- iii. base on students' interests, learners are allowed to select what they want to read.
- iv. the more the quantity of texts read, the better for the students.
- v. fluency and fast pace of reading is ensured because they are the determiner of the text to be read.
- vi. reading is targeted at pleasure, information and general understanding.
- vii. extensive reading is done out of the four walls of the classroom individually and silently. By this, students determine the pace, place and time of reading.
- viii. the follow-up activities of extended reading are not followed by comprehension questions.
- ix. orientation and guidance should be provided by teachers during extended reading tasks so that learners can know why and how to engage in extensive reading.

The students could be good readers if their teachers serve as a role model by reading and talking about some of the texts used by learners. Hanslo (2016) states some of the reading inventions put in place to teach extensive reading, they are: Free Voluntary Reading, Drop Everything and Read and Sustained Silent Reading. Extensive reading is set out as a recreational activity to help students develop love for reading. When students read constantly, their knowledge of vocabulary, spelling, reading fluency and language comprehension is enhanced. Hanslo (2016) advocates that teachers allocate ten to twenty minutes of the daily language lesson to allow learners to read quietly during which there are no oral activities, book reports or any assignments, no compulsion to finish reading their books. Seeing their teachers read for pleasure motivates them to read more frequently.

There are some reasons why students should engage in extensive reading. Extensive reading "allows students to meet the language in its natural context and see how it works in extended discourse beyond the language met in textbooks; builds vocabulary; helps students to

build reading speed and reading fluency; builds confidence, motivation, enjoyment and a love of reading; allows students to read and listen so they can develop good reading and listening habits, and helps students get a sense of how grammatical patterns work in context (Syamdianita, 2017:131)."

Several studies have been carried out on the use of extensive reading in the classroom. Savaş (2009) examined the need for an extensive reading component in English for Academic Purposes programs at the tertiary level as a way of improving students' academic literacy and also determine the influence of extensive reading classes on the development of functional academic literacy. Findings indicate that extensive reading is more productive than intensive reading as the former focuses on meaning while the latter focuses mostly on language. Hanslo (2016) examined impact of an extensive reading programme on the reading proficiency and reading motivation. Findings revealed that reading on a daily basis during the English lesson benefits learners, improves their reading proficiency which could have positive influence on their overall academic results. However, the studies shows that attitudes and motivation to read regularly take long to inculcate but if we maintain the reading intervention it might change over time. Syamdianita (2017) examined how extensive reading as a supplementary reading approach is able to encourage students' critical literacy. The findings revealed that extensive reading is evidenced to motivate students to approach texts critically, challenge taken knowledge, relate the texts to world's issues, improve their awareness of how to see and understand human beings, and question the intention of the texts from distinct viewpoints.

### **Synergy between Critical Literacy and Extended Reading**

Critical literacy empowers readers with the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand and critique power, inequality, injustice, equity in human relationships and other societal issues and institutions like family, poverty, education,

politics, policies religion, socio-economic status, race, class, gender, sexual orientation and biases and hidden agendas within texts. Exposure to extensive reading enhances critically literate person strives to comprehend new cultures through thoughtful inquiry and exploration that emphasizes deconstructing preconceived notions about culture, moving beyond surface knowledge of the target culture to becoming thoughtful, respectful world citizens (Saud, 2015). A critically literate individual must learn to “read” in a reflective manner. In this context, text is means a “vehicle through which individuals communicate with one another using the codes and conventions of society”. Accordingly, songs, novels, conversations, pictures, movies, etc. are all considered texts (Coffey, nd).

Anstey and Bull (2006) explain that teachers who wish to help learners achieve critical literacy partake in meaningful engagement with reading and enjoy it as a lifelong learning endeavor, some steps could be taken in the beginning stage of teaching critical reading skills by limiting the number of texts used by learners in the class, review their content thoroughly, agree on-set of criteria regarding the topics, values and attitudes of the content. When this is achieved, teachers can encourage students to read a broad range of texts which are available and assist students to develop the skills to analyse the texts. With this, students are empowered to identify a text’s origin and authority backing it up, develop objective mind and be skilled to criticize any text in different contexts. Extensive reading provides students the opportunity to come to their own understanding of new cultures, tradition, beliefs, and socio-cultural practices through thoughtful inquiry and exploration that emphasizes deconstructing preconceived notions about culture, moving beyond surface knowledge of the target culture to becoming thoughtful, respectful world citizens (Suad, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

This present study concludes that teaching and learning of literacies including critical literacy is not limited to English language classrooms alone, hence the need for all language

teachers (indigenous and foreign languages) to incorporate critical literacy dimensions in their courses. Critical literacy in language classrooms helps students to challenge what Bourke (2008; p.309) terms as the “rule of text: the perception that a text is authoritative and final, and an underlying belief that suppresses the reader’s license to challenge, question, deconstruct or rewrite the assumptions, beliefs, ideologies, concepts embedded, implicitly or not, within the perspective of the text”. The study shows that one of the effective means through which critical literacy can be taught is to expose learners to extensive reading. Through extensive reading, readers read wide from different texts written by authors of multiple perspectives of literary works to retrieve information, acquire knowledge, find pleasure and thoroughly extract assumptions hidden in the texts. This gives the students the opportunity to critically critique these texts and question the intention of the texts from distinct viewpoints.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that for students to become critical readers when they engage in extensive reading, they should engage in the following tasks:

- i. setting aside and managing their class and private time for extensive reading activities.
- ii. setting a reading goal and choose reading books appropriate to their individual reading level.
- iii. raising their reading autonomy
- iv. selecting reading materials appropriate for their level
- v. selecting reading materials that arrest and sustain their interest.
- vi. schedule their reading time, source for reading materials that foster critical thinking, logical argument, questioning, and transformation of self and/or one’s world.
- vii. becoming independent readers who synthesize, analyze, interpret and evaluate what is heard, read or written.

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# Nasarawa-State Undergraduate Students' Critical Reading of Social Media Documents for Sustainable Living in the Nomophobic World

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## Abstract

*Man is a rational soul capable of encoding and decoding information. Reading is one of the basic media a literate man uses for decoding any form of information, especially for sustainable living. Beyond the print, the technology age begetting computer, the Internet, smartphones and social media brings about an influx of information beyond one's door step; with a smartphone, one can access the global world at any setting and context. Hence, it enhances people, especially, students', reading of social media documents but the level of comprehending the texts tends to influence their living. This study was set to determine the undergraduate students' critical reading of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world and specifically it examined the influence of their gender and religion on the subject. The study adopted a descriptive survey research; undergraduate students constituted the population for the study. 321 undergraduates of 200 level were selected using purposive and stratified sampling techniques respectively. A researcher-designed test was used to collect data for this study. The instrument was validated and then tested reliable with Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of 0.63. The findings of the study show that only 29% of the respondents were able to critically read the social media documents and evaluate them for sustainable living, while gender and religion did not influence the level of their critical reading. It was therefore recommended, among others, that university education stakeholders should include and facilitate critical thinking and reading through the courses such as Communication in English and French/Arabic or Study Skills in order to improve students' level of reading comprehension and criticism for their survival in the nomophobic world.*

**Key words:** critical reading, document, evaluation, nomophobic world, social media

## Introduction

Man is unique for being a rational soul characterised by reproduction, growth, mobility, sensation, thought, verbal and non-verbal media of communication, and mostly ability to reflect. Man is a homo sapiens creature gifted with communication through language. This is why Adedimeji (2020) stated that only humans have the complex system of communicating using sounds and written signs and can also imitate other creatures by creaking, humming, grunting, among others. The features differentiate him from plant and animal as vegetative and sensitive souls. With the ability to communicate, especially through language, reflect, reason and then take a decision, man is expected to critically explore all other creatures and creations without a limitation. The

deep understanding is inevitable in the exploration as it is in communication. One of the major media of exploring the universe is reading, proverbially considered as "the window onto the outside world"; the antidote for ignorance"; it "lights up the soul"; and as Chinese proverb underscores "the world cheats those who cannot read" (Lawal, 2020:174).

Reading is a literacy skill of decoding a meaning from a set of signs, symbols or letters strung together following the acceptable principle or general standard. It is a nurtured and learnt skill central to all others including listening, speaking and writing; however, as central as it is, comprehension is its essence. It is the comprehension that differentiates reading from other co-ordinate terms including rehearsing,

memorisation, cramming, broadcasting and regurgitation. Comprehension is the goal of reading. Thus, reading comprehension is an act of recognising, deciphering, interpreting and decoding both the substantial and superficial meanings from a text. Comprehending a text means that one really understands the information or message encoded in the text by the writer (Yusuf, 2022). To comprehend a text or retrieve both intended and unintended meanings from a text for development or survival, one has to read critically beyond the literal and inferential levels.

Critical reading covers inferential and evaluative skills and involves an in-depth understanding of a text, assessment of its value and passing of judgement about it. Lawal (2020) refers to critical reading as “reading beyond the line” - the level in which one is expected to identify what a text says and how it presents the subject matter (Kurland, 2000) and determine the strengths and weaknesses in the writer’s argument, thereby recognising all forms of information, such as instructional, directive, factual, fable or opinionated, contained in the text. However, by critical reading, it does not connote reading with the mind-set to criticise the text writer and/or the text but to rule out the meaning, value worth and value vacuity based on the standard model or acceptable principle. It implies that a critical reader reads, thinks, interprets, digests, synthesizes, analyses and questions while accepting what makes most sense and relevant to him and rejecting what is distorted or irrelevant to his need or the general value especially based on certain condition, circumstance, experience, context, etc.

According to Mahshad (2017), the critical reader has to consider some factors in order to interpret, digest and question a text; such factors include: Considering the source of the text, recognising what is said, Recognising the assumption and implications, recognising intent, attitude, tone and bias, and recognising argument. Mahshad (2017) stressed the importance of critical thinking on critical reading which requires the reader to think about, analyse and evaluate what he is reading, and work out what is good and what is not, and why. By critical or evaluative

reading, the reader is expected to read and evaluate the text based on his background knowledge and experience; consider both merits and demerits or strengths and weaknesses of the content of the text; differentiate among instructions, directions, facts, fables and opinions contained in the text; and then pass a judgment about the worth or value of the text. In order to read to or beyond the critical level, there is a need to situate the reading within the rubric of theory.

Scholars such as Bloomfield and Barnhart (1961), Goodman (1975), and Lawal (1997, 2020) proposed some models to foreground and explore reading. Thus, linguistic, psycholinguistic, and pragmatic and metaphysical models of reading credited to Bloomfield and Barnhart, Goodman, and Lawal explain reading from different dimensions. Linguistic model sees reading as involving grouping letters into the spoken expression which psycholinguistic sees it as involving the reader’s mind and the language of the text for information retrieval. Psycholinguistic theory is used to anchor reading from the rudimentary level of “learning to read” to the functionary level of “reading to learn” and of constructing and reconstructing meaning from a text. At both stages, one cannot underestimate the sociolinguistic principle presenting reading as a social process because both language and society are systematically construed in the text.

Wallace (2003) argued that reading is a three-way interaction among the writer, the text and the reader; each of which is socially constrained and directed if not socially constructed. He considered the text producer (writer), the text itself and the text receiver (reader) as social phenomenon, and he therefore contented that critical readers focus more on communally negotiated responses to texts than their individual ones. One can infer that sociolinguistic principles present a text as a composite of both social and linguistic variables, and its meaning can be construed and retrieved by critically determining the interplay of the society and the language of the text.

Lawal (1997) cited in Lawal (2020) presented pragmatic model of reading from the lowest level of linguistic, situational,



psychological, social, cultural to cosmological contexts which in turn beget competencies in decoding a text. Lawal (2020) pointed out that pragmatic model of reading zeroes on three critical and interactive factors for reading; they are the reader's mind, the language of the text, and the reader's global knowledge and experience - all should be brought to fore in order to comprehend the text. The pragmatic model encapsulating linguistic, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic principles considers the invaluable role of context in reading. Furthermore, Lawal (2020) proposed metaphysical model of reading as 3-R-embracing model with the first R standing for Recitation which corresponds to the linguistic model; the second R referring to Reflection which encompasses both psycholinguistic and pragmatic models in context and the third R of Ramifying or Reproducing which "gives the model its unique metaphysical thrust". According to Lawal (2020:177), based on this model, "the ultimate goal of reading is the ennobling of minds and souls in a ramifying and ratiocinated sense". Therefore, one can critically read a text for sustainable living if one anchors the texts using the models.

If the ennobling value is the ultimate goal of reading as posited by Lawal (2020), reading is meant for all-rounding development, especially for sustainable living. Sustainable living covers environmental, economic and social factors serving as parameters for determining the living worth of every citizen. Reading becomes productive when used to earn living in the present nomophobic and information-influx world. It implies that all documents about or through environmental, economic and social phenomena should be critically read for survival; otherwise, one may be led astray especially through social media documents or posts.

Social media documents refer to all forms of posts accessible through WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Blogging, MySpace, YouTube, among others. The documents can be texts, images or emoticons, etc. All these media have a lot of effects on the people's sustainable living as they help providing information about all issues, disciplines, and

human endeavours beyond one's door step. They are crucial in the development of people and their society. However, false information posted through social media can lead to failure in education and business; abuse people's privacy and the society; and lead people to take wrong or inappropriate decisions (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016). Through technology, especially smartphones and social media, a majority of people have become nomophobic.

It appears that a majority of people are now prone to nomophobia, a word coined by the United Kingdom-based research organisation in 2008 to mean the fear or anxiety regarding the loss of their smartphone or connectivity; "the fear of not having a functioning mobile phone". Nomophobia is linked to a cell/mobile phone or smartphone addiction. The compulsive use of phone is a kind of behavioural addictions emanated from losing control of one's actions in order to always engage in using/pressing a phone. Despite the advantages of mobile phones, the obsessive use of these devices has some adverse effects on people's health, psychological state, social relationship, well-being and academic performance. Nomophobia is becoming a threat to human's physiological, psychological, civic, social, mental as well as physical health, as cell phones are identified as the possible biggest non-drug addiction of the 21st century. This may be one of the reasons why the mobile phone inventor, Martin Cooper, asked and suggested to people who spend too much time on the phone, "You really spend five hours a day (on phone)?" "I would say, get a life!" The 93-year-old engineer admitted that he spent less than five percent of his time on phone (Majumdar, 2022).

It is evident that undergraduate students surf the Internet with phones for information as they do check social networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, YouTube, MySpace, Yahoo messenger, etc. for chatting and exchanging documents or texts on different issues. Thus, Rafiq, Tufail Khan, Asim and Arif's (2020) findings showed the positive effect of social media on students' reading habits and, however, revealed that they distracted students' attention during the study time.

However, the findings of Rafiq et al. did not correspond with that of Kojo, Agyekum and Authur (2018) whose study revealed a negative impact of students' excessive use of social media on their reading culture and then academic performance. One may find it necessary to assess the undergraduate students' critical reading of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Social media are the platforms where an avalanche of documents is exchanged and are the highest meeting point of people, especially the youths and undergraduate students, for a vast array of purposes. Hence, some findings revealed that social media enhanced the extent at which students read (Rafiq, Tufail Khan, Asim & Arif, 2020); other findings proved that they had a negative impact on students' academic performance (Anyira & Udem, 2020; Kojo, Agyekum & Authur, 2018; Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015). Many other recent studies including Ojo (2022), Mahmoud and AhmedShafik (2020), Kusuma (2020), Deepa & Priya (2020), and Fokam, Ningaye and Koyeu (2019) were also on social media effects on different spheres of people. The studies were similar to the present one because they dealt with social media, students and reading; however, the studies determined impacts of social media on students' reading habits, culture and academic performance distinctly. They established that students always surf social media thereby accessing documents, but none of the studies determined the students' critical reading of the social media documents. Thus, the research gap was created part of which the present study aimed at filling up. Hence, this study assessed Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world.

### **Research Purpose and Questions**

The generally purpose of this study was to assess Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world.

Specifically, the following research questions were raised and answered in this study:

- a. What is the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world?
- b. Do gender and religion create any difference in the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

- HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world based on gender.
- HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world based on religion.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey type of research in order to gather data to determine the undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world. The population for this study consisted of undergraduate students of public and private universities in Nasarawa State. The target population was 200-level undergraduate students; they were selected because the researcher was certain that they had taken Communication in English I and II in 100 level. Thus, a purposive sampling technique was used to select the undergraduate students in 200 level in the universities in Nasarawa State and then a stratified sampling technique was used to select three hundred and twenty-one students based on gender and religion. Thus, a total of three hundred and

twenty-one undergraduate students constituted the sample for this study.

A researcher-designed test was used as instrument for collecting data for this study. The test instrument entitled “Test on Undergraduate Students’ Critical Reading of Social Media Documents” contained two sections labelled “A” and “B”. Section “A” was meant to seek the students’ demographic data such as gender and religion. Section “B” comprised five different social media posts; five question items each on literal, inferential and critical reading levels were asked on the social media document/post purposively selected for the study, and options were provided for them to determine the answers to the questions. The instrument was validated using face and content types of validity by three experts - one each from English, measurement and evaluation and psychology of Education. The instrument was tested for reliability using the test-retest type of a three-week interval; the two sets of scores got for the instrument from administering the test to thirty undergraduate students, out of the target population but who were not part of the

sample, were analysed using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation. The coefficient score of 0.63 was obtained and it was high enough for confirming the reliability of the instrument for the study.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage to determine the demographic data of the respondents and to answer the first research question. The inferential statistics of t-test and One-way ANOVA were used to test Research Hypotheses 1 and 2 respectively - all at 0.05 level of significance. Moreover, the critical ranges of correct responses of 1-39, 40-59 and 60-100 on percentage and on a three-level scale of high, average and low were used to determine the undergraduates’ critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living.

### Data Analysis and Results

IBM-SPSS Statistics (Version 21 for Windows) was used for the analysis of the data. The results are presented as follows.

**Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents**

| Variable        | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Gender</b>   |           |         |
| Male            | 158       | 49.2    |
| Female          | 163       | 50.8    |
| <b>Total</b>    | 321       | 100     |
| <b>Religion</b> |           |         |
| Islam           | 167       | 52.0    |
| Christianity    | 141       | 43.9    |
| Others          | 13        | 4.1     |
| <b>Total</b>    | 321       | 100     |

Table 1 shows the demographic data of the respondents based on gender and religion. Thus, 321 undergraduate students in 200 level constituted the sample for the study.

### Answering the Research Question

**Research Question 1:** What is the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students’ critical reading level of

social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world?

In order to answer Research Question 1, the responses of the respondents to question items on the critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living were analysed and presented in the table below.

**Table 2:** Responses of Undergraduate Students on Critical Reading of Social Media Document Test

| Level of Reading Comprehension | No of Question Item | No of Respondents | Response Received | Correct Response |         | Wrong Response |         |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|---------|
|                                |                     |                   |                   | Frequency        | Percent | Frequency      | Percent |
| <b>Literal</b>                 | 5                   | 321               | 1605              | 835              | 52      | 770            | 48      |
| <b>Inferential</b>             | 5                   | 321               | 1605              | 722              | 45      | 883            | 55      |
| <b>Critical</b>                | 5                   | 321               | 1605              | 466              | 29      | 1139           | 71      |

Table shows that 5 question items each were set on each of literal, inferential and critical levels of reading comprehension, thus giving a total of 15 questions on the social documents that each of 321 respondents attempted. The table reveals that out of 1605 responses received on the literal question items from 321 respondents, 835 (52%) and 770 (48%) were correct and wrong respectively. 722 (45%) and 883 (55%) were correct and wrong respectively out of 1605 responses received on the inferential question items from 321 respondents. A total of 1605 responses on the critical questions were received from the sample of 321 respondents; only 466 (29%) were correct while

1139 (71%) were wrong. Therefore, based on the critical ranges of scores on a three-level scale, the Nasaraw-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world is low with 29%.

### Testing Research Hypotheses

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Nasaraw-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world based on gender.

**Table 3:** t-test Analysis of Difference in the Undergraduate Students' Critical Reading Level of Social Media Document based on Gender

| Variable | N   | Mean    | SD      | Df  | t-value | p-value | Decision |
|----------|-----|---------|---------|-----|---------|---------|----------|
| Male     | 158 | 21.1456 | 2.32084 | 319 | -.112   | .911    | Accepted |
| Female   | 163 | 21.1779 | 2.84132 |     |         |         |          |

\*Insignificant at  $p > 0.05$

Table 3 shows the results ( $t_{319} = -.112$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) for Research Hypothesis 1. Thus, since the p-values of .911 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, this implies that there was no significant difference in the Nasaraw-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of

social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world based on gender.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Nasaraw-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world based on religion.

**Table 4:** ANOVA Analysis of Difference in the Undergraduate Students' Critical Reading Level of Social Media Document based on Religion

| Variable        | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | f     | Sig  | Decision |
|-----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|----------|
| <b>Religion</b> |                |     |             |       |      |          |
| Between Groups  | 9.457          | 31  | .305        | 1.243 | .182 | Accepted |
| Within Groups   | 70.923         | 289 | .245        |       |      |          |
| Total           | 80.380         | 320 |             |       |      |          |

\*Insignificance at  $p > 0.05$

Table 3 shows the result ( $F_{\{31, 289\}} = 1.243, p > 0.05$ ) for Research Hypothesis 1. The p-value of .182 is greater than 0.05 alpha level; the hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there was no significant difference in the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world based on religion.

### Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world is low with 29% while their literal and inferential levels are on average. the finding tallies with those of Anyira and Udem (2020) and Kojo (2018) that social media had a negative effect on students' reading. The undergraduate students' low level of critical reading of social media documents may be attributed to their inability to differentiate among the types of information a document contains; a social media text or document may contain factual, fable, opinionated, instructional or directional information or message. This is why such a document should be read critically and then evaluated before it is employed as a basis for one's decision and reaction. Also, it appears that students do not really engage in critical thinking when reading social media documents, as they do not assess the content of the document they access based on their context, experience and knowledge of the world. Their inability to access and read more literature about the content of the social media documents may be another because of their low level of critical reading.

It is inferred that the undergraduate student's access and read social media documents.

However, a majority of them do not critically evaluate what they read on social media and thus tend to have adverse effects on their sustainable living. The finding is related to those of Ojo (2022), Mahmoud and AhmedShafik (2020), Kusuma (2020), Deepa & Priya (2020), and Fokam, Karatsoli and Nathanail's (2020), Ningaye and Koyeu (2019) who found the negative effects of social media on students' reading culture and academic performance; family relationships; students' and youths' level of greediness and fanaticalness; students' mental health; people's travel arrangements and economic growth respectively. These findings of the scholars cover the nexus of educational, social, moral and cultural, health and economic spheres, and therefore imply that social media documents have some adverse effects on the sustainable living of people.

In addition, social media is one of the causes of nomophobia; this is why Martin Cooper, the mobile phone inventor, suggested to people, who spend too much time on the phone, to "get a life!". Nomophobia is becoming a threat to human's physiological, psychological, civic, social, mental as well as physical health, as cell phones are identified as the possible biggest non-drug addiction of the 21st century. One cannot deny the fact that social media through Social Networking Sites connect people across the globe for both general and specific purposes (Adedimeji & Ibrahim, 2017); they however serve as the leading cause of nomophobia linked to a cell/mobile phone or smartphone addiction. It is an excessive use of (smart)phones which leads to hyper-activity, ADHD disorder, receptive brain injury (RIS), eating disorder, declining physical fitness and computer vision syndrome (CVS),

high rate of youths using glasses and some neurobehavioral syndromes that affect people's mental and social health (Shoukat, 2019, Ramasubbu, 2015, Chou & Hsiao, 2011). The finding tends to support Shoukat's (2019) that revealed the negative relationship between mobile phone addition and in-school adolescents' academic performance.

Also, the finding of this study shows that there is no significant difference in the Nasarawa-state undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media documents for sustainable living in the nomophobic world based on gender and religion. This implies that gender and religion of undergraduates tend not to influence their critical reading level of social documents. The findings corroborate those of Oladosu, Adedokun-Shittu, Sanni and Ajani (2020) that gender did not create any difference in the students' perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of social media for learning and Karatsoli and Nathanail's (2020) finding that gender did not influence people's use of social media for various activities such as travel arrangements, but contradict those of Fakeye (2010) and even Karatsoli and Nathanail (2020) on photo and video influence on people's decision where females more than males were found more influenced. To the contrary, the finding of Baazeem (2020) showed that religion had an indirect effect on social media as a result of the technology acceptance while Agarwal and Jones (2022) established that social media had an effect on religion because they enhanced the religious entrepreneurship where both religious entrepreneurs and consumers as well as fortune tellers and seekers meet for both monetary and spiritual benefits; social media provided a religious marketplace and made religious and spiritual information, knowledge and services easily accessible. Irrespective of religion types, services and programmes, the adherents were able to expand their connectivity to the globe through the social media.

### **Conclusion and Implications of the Findings**

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the undergraduate students' critical reading level of social media

documents for sustainable living was low; even their literal and inferential levels were on average. This implies that they tend to be less critical about the information they retrieve from the social media document and the meaning they deduce from the text. On the variables of gender and religion, the level of their difference or influence is always inconclusive in many studies; however, they did not create any difference in the undergraduate students' critical reading of the social media document. The findings have some implications for learning of and instructions on reading comprehension, critical thinking and information retrieval from discourse or print. This implies that there is a need for pedagogically redesigned and criticism-focused instructions on reading comprehension for undergraduates through the general studies courses, especially Communication in English I and II; such instructions would not only facilitate the development of their critical reading but also critical thinking and creative skills, thereby improving their learning/study and information retrieval skills through content, context and experience. The implication of the forgoing is to introduce critical and creative skills as major part of the GST language and communication courses to serve as tool for evaluating the receptive discourse such as listening and reading texts.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion and implications of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The university academic stakeholders should include and facilitate critical thinking and reading through the GST courses such as Communication in English and French/Arabic or Study Skills in order to improve students' level of reading comprehension and criticism for their survival in the nomophobic and information-influx and -nexus world.
2. Lecturers of Communication in English/French/Arabic should design reading instructions to cut across the literal, inferential, critical and creative levels of reading comprehension while

- taking the learners through critical thinking and creativity.
3. Lecturers of Communication in English/French/Arabic should structure reading instructions to crosscut all spheres of life especially social media documents; this would captivate the interest of students, thus facilitating their level of critically reading the social media discourse for sustainable living.
4. Undergraduates should engage in critical thinking whenever they are reading especially social media documents and evaluate the content of documents based on the context, condition and experience to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the encoded information.
5. Undergraduates should read extensively or read more literature on any topic or issue, discussed on Social-media, so that they can obtain factual and accurate information, thereby informing their appropriate decision or (re)action.

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# Implications of Rising Fake News, Misinformation and Identity Theft on Social-media

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## Abstract

*Social media, some integral parts of the new media, have both advantages and disadvantages. Fake news, misinformation and identity theft are some of the rising disadvantages of the social media. This study aims at making an exposition of these trends with their implications. Both primary and secondary data sources are involved viz: observation, multimodal and print internet sources. The data are subjected to qualitative approach and content analysis. The analysis shows that social media are characterised by fake news, misinformation and identity theft, among other vices. It reveals that these trends are interconnected. It also highlights the grave implications of these trends on individuals, groups and nations alike. The study concludes that compulsory demand for personal details when creating accounts on social media and mindless posts, comments and link-ups with others are the major ways through which users get exposed to social media identity theft and insecurity. Besides, identity theft is one major source of fake news and misinformation on social media. Authorities of social media and government have the exclusive responsibility of ensuring absolute security online, as users have just limited means of acting against cyber criminals and mischief makers of fake news and misinformation.*

**Key words:** Interconnected, Social-media, fake news, insecurity and mindless posts.

## Introduction

Fake news is one of the problems of social media, the internet and other new media. Fake news is confirmed to have great impact or adverse effects on the masses (Olan et al., 2022; Pérez-Escoda et al., 2021; Brianna, 2020; Khan et al., 2020; Polansky et al., 2017). Social media are channels of social communication feats brought to place by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the 21st century (Kayode-Adedeji et al., 2020, p. 823). Identity theft, also known as impersonation, characterises social media (Hanifa, Nurditasari & Natsir, 2021). The nature of social media and the activities on them make it easy for online theft (Kayode-Adedeji et al., 2020; Patchin & Hinduja, 2013).

Again, fake news can be traced to 1439, when the printing press was invented (Klyuev, 2019). Fake news on new media (also regarded as digital media) is increasingly high (Zanatta et al.,

2021). Vosoughi, Roy and Aral (2018) are of the view that it is evidential that false materials are spread widely and rapidly on the internet through social media owing to such human behaviour. According to Buchanan (2020), upon being in touch with or coming across fake news or information online, most people assume it to be true and thereby spread it further to the platforms they belong. This observation highlights why and how fake news is spread.

There are three most significant factors influencing the spread of fake news and other forms of misinformation and disinformation (Cialdini, 2009; Buchanan, 2020, p. 3). News articles on social media, usually displayed by social reader apps, could be shared by readers (Koohikamali and Sidorova, 2017, p. 216; McPeak, 2014, p. 583). The implication of this assertion is that fake news, misinformation and identity theft are some of the core characteristics

of social media. Fake news, misinformation and identity theft commonly obtain on social media. Not only graphic (written) news articles are disseminated on social media; verbal communicative contents other than written ones obtain on social media.

Hacking, identity theft, phishing scams and viruses are the commonest security attacks obtained on social media and other new media (Kayode-Adedeji et al., 2020). Personal security details are provided when creating account with each of the social media. These details are stolen for impersonation; in some cases, one's account with the details is hacked and taken over by external persons—hackers. Upon stealing one's personal security details or hacking the account(s), the thieves use the details and/or accounts for various criminal, dubious and incriminating activities as well as purposes, such as phishing scams. To achieve their goals, new media thieves also produce, acquire and spread-out viruses on the internet as well as social media in order to destroy their targeted victims' details. Patchin and Hinduja (2013) agree that the trend of theft on new media as a whole and social media in particular raises concerns among scholars, researchers, stakeholders, users and other individuals and groups in general. In view of the foregoing issues, this study seeks to examine the implications of fake news, misinformation and identity theft.

### **Fake News and Misinformation on Social-media**

According to Mavridis (2018, p. 19), fake news refers to viral posts, which are based on fake accounts made to seem like [real] news reports. Although this study agrees with Mavridis (2018) that fake news goes viral, it does not support the suggestion that only fake news goes viral. True or real news might also go viral depending on the kind of incidence. In any case, the implication of the above thought expressed by Mavridis (2018) is that because fake news is not real and has the intention of destroying someone or something and misleading the audience, it goes viral, as falsehood. Fake news makers ensure that the fake news they make and disseminate goes viral among

members of the public so as to widely destroy their targeted person(s) and/or thing(s).

The definition of fake news by Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) reflect the above observation made by this study. According to them, fake news refers to stories, which are intentionally and verifiably false, misleading and misinforming readers (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Clearly, apart from agreeing that fake news is intentionally made with the intent of destroying the person(s) or thing(s) concerned, Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) also express the reality that fake news is misleading. As they rightly point out, are untrue, misleading and misinforming stories about persons and things respectively. For Leonhardt and Thompson (2017), fake news is a kind of 'propaganda or yellow and misleading journalism that consists of deliberate misinformation, spread via traditional media outlets (their print or online editions) or online social media.' This definition centres on propaganda, unethical journalism and misinformation, which are all deliberate and misleading.

Tandoc et al. (2018, p. 147) classify fake news into six: news satire, news parody, fabrication, manipulation, advertising and propaganda. These classified sets of fake news capture the various conceptual elements of many definitions of fake news, including those given above. By news satire and parody, it means that fake news makes caricature of, and distorts real or factual news. By fabrication, it is understood to be what is fabricated and thus not true or real. Fake news makers manipulate news or communication content. The manipulation is what changes truism to falsehood on social media and other new media. The concept 'advertising', mentioned by Tandoc et al. (2018, p. 147), suggests its use for advertisement. Finally, propaganda in the above definition of fake news points to the use of fake news for misinformation, lies, deceits and falsehoods, which constitute political propaganda. The above given definitions suffice for others here. For this paper, fake news is any piece of information that is not true or real and has the intention of destroying the persons or things that the fake news is about.

It is noted that fake news, disinformation, rumour, urban legend, spam, and troll are terms associated with misinformation (Mavridis, 2018, p. 19). There are three key platforms for the dissemination of internet fake news, which are WhatsApp, Facebook and Internet browsers and (Zanatta et al., 2021). Fake news and misinformation are intended to manipulate and mislead the audience for certain hidden motives of the speaker or writer who produced the fake news and/or the misinformation. In other words, social media as well as other new media audience gets cajoled, misinformed and deceived by the producers, givers and sharers of fake news and misinformation (Pulido et al., 2020).

### **Social Media Identity Theft**

Before describing identity theft, it is important to describe social media. This is to help the reader understand the context of identity theft talked about herein. That is, since the identity theft discussed herein falls within the context of social media, it is important to describe social media. Having said this, let us consider only three definitions of social media here. The three are taken to suffice for others here. Social media is a dual concept referring to an aspect of the new media, which involves 'electronic communication that allows user-generated interaction between the media's creator and the user' (Hudson & Roberts, 2012, p. 769). Next, Kuppuswamy and Narayan (2010) describe Social-media as virtual platforms for interaction and information exchange, where issues are debated and defined. The users participate and collaborate in content creation and proactively search for information at their convenience. They exhibit value control in social media participation.

For Hanifa, Nurditasari and Natsir (2021), social media are computer-based technologies that facilitate the sharing of information, ideas and thoughts through the development of virtual networks and communities. They add that social are media platforms that different people use for exchange of texts, pictures, sound and video information with one another far and near (Hanifa, Nurditasari & Natsir, 2021). Users make use of computers,

tablets, smartphones, web-based software or web applications and so on for social media activities, with varied purposes. The commonest or most populous social media platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, MySpace (Kuppuswamy & Narayan, 2010), TikTok, Instagram, Telegram and Snapchat.

Having defined social media, we now return to social media 'identity theft'. The study begins with its own definition attempt. Thus, it defines identity theft as the act of using someone else's personal details and pictures to create fake social media accounts that are used for criminal purposes. It also involves illegally accessing, attacking and taking over someone else's account and thereby using the stolen account on the person's behalf to commit different crimes on the internet. From any perspective, identity theft is defined as the act of illegally accessing, using and taking charge of the personal information of another person for criminal purposes (Irshad & Soomro, 2018, p. 43). Social media identity theft, also regarded as cyber-bullying, stalking or online threats, takes different forms. These are trade of illegal products; uploading videos and pictures of criminal activity; robberies during vacations; hacking and identity theft; and business spying (Irshad & Soomro, 2018, pp. 45-6).

Some of the ways used years ago are still being used today for acquiring personal information. These ways are phishing, social media cons, identity spoofing, and hacking (Irshad & Soomro, 2018, pp. 46-7). Accordingly, phishing refers to a kind of fraud whereby the criminal tries to gain access to personal information, such as account information or login credentials by impersonating as a trusted entity. The phrasal term 'social media cons' refers to a common scheme, which fraudsters use on Facebook, where they steal someone's identity and send out plea messages for cash to that person's friends and family. Identity spoofing occurs when criminals create fake accounts of musicians, politicians, actors, etc. to gather sensitive data from other people or in hopes to tarnishing their image. Hacking, the commonest method, involves stealing and using some other

persons' identities through social media accounts. This is mostly due to everyone's habit of using the same password for almost all accounts (Irshad & Soomro, 2018, pp. 46-7).

The provision of personal details to social networking sites exposes many users to online dangers. Beyond this is unlimited posts made by users, such that most of them show their update location. The commonest social media dangers faced by Facebook users include malware, online scams, identity theft and harassment or bully. About half of the total users of Facebook commonly post their personal identity information online, for which they easily get attacked by online thieves, hackers and other categories of online criminals. Most social media users, not only Facebook users, do not use privacy control feature of the site, as some users are not aware of this feature on the site. Many users' accounts are hacked and hijacked for criminal activities, such as fraudulent and erotic posts, phonographs, fake news and misinformation, financial scam, unrealistic and misleading advertisement and publicity, impersonation of the account owners to deceive their friends, etc.

Many users expose security information about themselves to the general public on social media at their own peril. Kayode-Adedeji et al. (2020) observe that while on social media, people reveal information that would have ordinarily remained unknown if they had not been posted. Users' behaviours in/directly create online awareness to the online public and thereby lead to or aid identity theft and other forms of internet scam. The spate of security and privacy risks threatening users of social media and other new media and aver that users' activities have to be controlled by concerned authorities so as to check against the different phases of insecurity faced by many users. Identity theft on the new media is becoming increasingly alarming across the globe (Kayode-Adedeji et al., 2020).

Mindless registration and reveal of personal details are some core factors that make Nigerian users of the social media to large victims of social media identity theft. Internet fraudsters in Nigeria are mostly persons and associates of the erstwhile 419'ers (fraudsters), who used to

defraud only wealthy people and other members of the bourgeoisie, particularly those in Lagos (Kayode-Adedeji et al., 2020). Youths are the most affected by social media identity theft, cyber-bullying, online sexual predators and other like crimes associated with social media and new media (Putra, 2015; Nwolise, 2019). This study adds that youths are also the highest users and thieves of the new media. That is, as most populated users of social media and other new media, youths are the number one perpetrators and victims of social media theft concurrently.

### **Review of Related Studies**

It is reported that Facebook has altered the nature of American Democracy (Olan et al., 2022). Fake news is one way through which Facebook has altered American Democracy. Examples include Disinfomedia, National Report.net, USAToday.com.co, Washington Post.com (Sydell, 2016), endingthefed.com website (Townsend, 2016), Teenagers in Veles produced stories favouring both Trump and Clinton, and teenagers in a small Balkan town, who created and spread fake news about US election on over 100 sites (Dewey, 2016). Rocha's et al. (2021) study reveals that in May 2019, a video clip of Nancy Pelosi went viral on social media, showing her stammering and slurring her speech. That made many people to question Nancy's mental aptitude. The New York Times reported that it was a doctored video clip. Also, in early 2020, different myths and tales were spread by both social and traditional media about the supposed treatment of Covid-19 pandemic (Rocha's et al., 2021).

The study by Zanatta et al. (2021, p. 929) reveals that in the course of learning health measures and medicines on the internet, users also get fake health practice information. Upon implementing the fake measures spread on social media, such persons face the associated consequences. Obviously, borne not for being social media users, such persons would not have ruined themselves with the negative health measures spread on social media. Similarly, a recent study by Shahria, Uddin and Ahmed (2020) look at the increasing spate of cybercrimes, which

include identity theft. It points out that cybercriminals use social networking platforms to harass their victims personally, socially and financially. It reveals that social networking sites are vulnerable to cybercrimes because of how they are and the ways in which users divulge information on the platforms of these sites.

Cybercriminals create fake accounts with the stolen personal details of some other users of social media and use the details, inclusive of stolen pictures of other persons, for scams and criminalities. As Shahria, Uddin and Ahmed (2020) confirm, by impersonating their victims, the criminals ruin the image of the victim. The implications of the ruin include suicide attempts by victims, character defamation, causing hardship for scammed victims, etc. Shahria, Uddin and Ahmed (2020) propose 'Image Based Identity Theft Prevention' model as a mechanism for preventing social media identity theft. There are different ways in which users might put themselves at risk on social media and other new media. Let us consider a few of them hereafter, as identified and discussed by Irshad and Soomro (2018).

First, the use of low privacy or having no privacy settings on one's account exposes a user to online risk, including social media identity theft. Next, users run risk of cyber-attack when they accept friend requests and invitations to connect to unfamiliar persons, contacts or links. In the course of downloading free applications, personal security details get exposed to online criminals and hackers. Another way is giving one's password or other account details to someone else, even those close persons. Participating in quizzes, which require divulging personal information, exposes one to internet insecurity and social media theft. Clicking on links that lead one to other sites causes exposure to cyber insecurity, inclusive of social media theft. Yielding to phishing (scam emails and text messages) exposes users to online harms. The use of outdated security or failure to turn the security settings of devices makes it possible for malicious software to invade users' privacy and theft of personal information.

The following prevention techniques are emphasised by Irshad and Soomro (2018, pp. 49-

51), as firmly recommended by many other scholars:

- (i) Do not display details of personal or financial documents;
- (ii) Always turn off automatic login features;
- (iii) Never post location updates (i.e., avoid posting location updates);
- (iv) Have stringent privacy settings at all times;
- (v) Make use of strong and unique passwords that have a mixture of upper and lower cases, numbers and special characters;
- (vi) Only connect with authentic, known and verified people;
- (vii) Always use double authentication on the security settings of social media sites;
- (viii) Do not use same passwords for multiple accounts;
- (ix) Never keep credit card information and the like information (e.g., passwords) online;
- (x) Always avoid geo-tagging photos;
- (xi) Do not do without the protection services of the sites you are using; and
- (xii) Always enable (i.e., put on) alerts of unusual activity, so as to get notified of unauthorised login attempts.

The study by Irshad and Soomro (2018) sheds light on the evolution of identity theft on social media. The study points out that Facebook, Twitter and other social media 'allow users to engage in multiple simultaneous activities,' which is why they have become very prominent owing to their 'immense utilisation' (As Irshad & Soomro, 2018, p. 43). Irshad and Soomro (2018, p. 43) emphasise that despite the positive changes brought to place by the new media, there are still negative sides of these media, which include being fertile grounds for criminals and fraudsters to commit crimes. One of the crimes is identity theft on social media and other new media. Irshad and Soomro (2018) submits that social media platforms have become breeding grounds for identity thieves, who invade other users' account and personal information and use them for criminal purposes.

The study done by Popat et al. (2016) focuses on the credibility of messages spread on

the internet, particularly on social media. The study proposes methods in which the sources of news are fed to a supervised classifier for credibility check. The said check is against fake news, misinformation and identity theft. The study by McPeak (2014, p. 581) reveals that 'social media data is changing the face of civil discovery in many cases, and informal discovery of social media content on sites such as Facebook can prove extremely valuable for litigants.' Facebook, Twitter and other like new media sites reserve a comprehensive archive of each account holder's thoughts, feelings, actions and associations (McPeak, 2014, p. 583; Facebook, 2015). Apart from supplying fake data in opening accounts, users also give fake news and other forms of misinformation in the course of making posts on their own pages and timelines, and on those of other users (Koochikamali and Sidorova, 2017, p. 216). These include write-ups, videos, photos, links, comments and likes (Facebook, 2015).

On Instagram, photoshopped images are used for fake news and other forms of misinformation. For example, a fake image of President Donald Trump, in which he was presented as helping flood victims in Texas after Hurricane Harvey, was spread in late 2017. Owing to its nature and modes of operation, Twitter seems incapable of controlling or getting rid of fake news, misinformation and identity theft. There are many junk accounts on Twitter that remain a serious problem to tackle by the management of Twitter. Recently, a video clip showing a snake inside a toilet closet on Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter went viral, spreading misinformation that snake can survive the heat in the pipes of toilet closet. Thereafter, a counter audio-visual post was made by an expert, who clarifies that it is not possible for any snake to live and survive in toilet pipes.

Holm's (2014) study looks at the vulnerability of social media network users to identity theft in the course of sharing personal identification information online. Relying on extant literatures from Australia, the United States and United Kingdom, the study highlights the importance of the relationship between social

networking and identity crime. It reveals that sharing age, sex, address and other personal information like photographs exposes users to the risk of online security attacks by cyber criminals. Cyber thieves rely on these personal details provided by users to exploit them and take advantage of the weaknesses of social networking sites so as to gather the information they need to commit identity theft and identity fraud. It also reveals that since social networking sites have a vested interest in promoting rather than preventing the sharing of information, it is difficult to have tangible or realistic preventive mechanisms. Besides, because identity crime is pervasive, it is difficult to get rid of risks.

### **Methodology**

Survey design method is employed. Data are sourced from participant and non-participant observation, multimodal internet sources involving excerpts and pictographic data, and library and internet print materials such as textbooks, journals, etc. Qualitative approach and content analysis are followed in the analysis of the gathered data. The analysis is done objectively and descriptively. The content area of this study is Linguistics and Information Technology. Other than the content area, the digitalised social media global community is the combined geographical and socio-political area of the study.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

Here, three each of excerpts and pictographic figures shall be presented and analysed concisely. The aim is to empirically prove the central pursuit and viewpoint of this study.

**Excerpt 1:** Earlier this year, Derbyshire-based freelance model Elle Jones was informed by acquaintances that they had been contacted by someone claiming to be her. Investigating, Jones discovered an Instagram account had been created mimicking her own profile, which offered pornographic content through a link. Jones reported the account, but two days later received an automated response saying the account had not been removed. She then emailed Instagram,

contesting the inaction, and two days later the fraudulent account was removed ([www.techtarget.com/contributor.Peter-Ray-Allison](http://www.techtarget.com/contributor.Peter-Ray-Allison)).

The above excerpt, from Peter Allison's blog post, empirically justifies the position of this paper on social media identity theft on one hand and fake news and misinformation on the other. The implication is that fake news and misinformation are given by identity thieves in the course of using someone else's accounts and personal details. Similarly, on 19 September, 2022 Judy Austin of Nigeria's Nollywood, the second wife of Yule Edoche, make a short video of herself disclaiming fake accounts associated with her on Facebook, TikTok and Instagram.

Incriminating posts and comments have often been made by Judy's impersonators, who have been using and hiding under the guise of her identity. The impersonators claimed that any posts and comments from an account other than the fake and cloned ones they were/are not from Judy Austin. They tactically tarnished her image by using fake account with stolen identity to counter her real account on the aforementioned social media. Some of them had even gone ahead to open accounts in her name as 'Judy Edoche,' 'Judy Austin Edoche,' etc. Thus, Judy Austin had to make a video and clarify the public, disclaiming the fake accounts along with all associated with them.

**Excerpt 2:** Author Joe Dunthorne had his identity exploited when an Instagram profile, which claimed to be him, attempted to convince people to buy cryptocurrencies. Of course, the problem is not restricted to Instagram. For example, artist and cosplayer Giulietta Zawadzki had her Twitter account cloned earlier this year, in an attempt to sell pornography ([www.techtarget.com/contributor.Peter-Ray-Allison](http://www.techtarget.com/contributor.Peter-Ray-Allison)).

The above data also confirm the cases of identity theft on social media. Some of the purposes of the theft are mentioned in the excerpt. The implication includes the tarnishing of the image of these public figures. They had to spend time and resources making efforts to clarify the public that their identities were stolen and used for criminal purposes or activities, which they never

knew personally until some of their contacts drew their attention to the ugly development. As public figures with so many followers and friends, cybercriminals steal and use their identities and/or accounts. In the words of Peter Allison, 'Any account that has a significant following on social media can become a target for identity theft.'

**Excerpt 3:** In 2020, the Little Soap Company had its account cloned. Participants in its online competition were then privately contacted by the fraudulent account to be told they had won – and asked for their PayPal details.

The above excerpt further confirms the position of this study. Not only individual accounts are hacked, but those of companies and organisations too. As the above excerpt indicates, cyber criminals do steal company's new media accounts and security details and then use them for criminal purposes. Financial scam is the main reason for the attack on the new media of corporate organisations, such as the above-named company. In such cases, the thieves try to steal from the company's corporate account, and the company's partners through phishing or direct hacking of their linked bank accounts. The hard-earned reputation of such corporate organisations is threatened or ruined completely by cybercriminals, who engage themselves in various criminal activities online. It should be noted that fake news and misinformation are two inseparable embodiments of identity theft on social media as well as all forms of cybercrimes.

Meanwhile, fake news and misinformation are also the underlying features of identity theft on social media as well as all forms of cybercrimes. For example, after successfully stealing the account and special details of the above-named Little Soap Company, the thieves went on to give fake news and misinformation to the online participants of the Company's competition, so they could ask for the victims' PayPal details. The participants were deceived, misinformed and misled with lies and falsehoods. The fake information from the fraudsters to the competition participants about having won obviously had several implications. Some of them fell prey into the traps of the fraudsters and sent

their PayPal details to them. The implications of sending their details to those fraudsters are quite glaring. The message as well as other allied activities by these fraudsters had gross implications for the company. Given the

interconnectivity between identity theft and fake news and misinformation, three sets of data shall also be presented and analysed hereafter.

**Figure 1:** Social-media fake news about a Nigerian driver regarding Covid-19

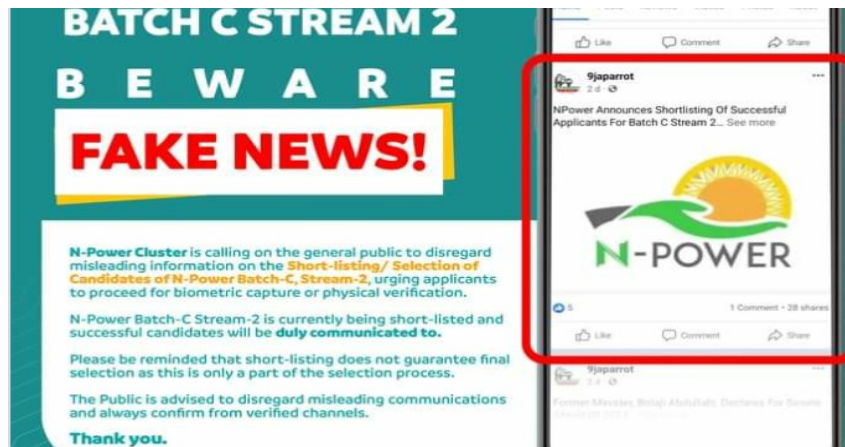


**Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022**

As the above video clip headline indicates, fake news almost ruined the life of a young Nigerian driver in Lagos during the Covid-19 period. Mischief makers' fake news, containing the video clip of the driver, went viral on social media and the internet about the driver. The driver was indicted in the video clip as being the one who drove round with the foreigner that brought in Covid-19 to Nigeria. He was said to be infected

with the Covid-19 virus by the foreigner. The driver was abandoned, avoided, rejected and dejected by all and sundry, including his family members and friends. Consequently, he suffered stigma, isolation, humiliation, rejection, dejection and what have you. He had to disclaim the allegations with a self-made video clip and posted it on social media and the internet.



**Figure 2: Fake news about job vacancies**

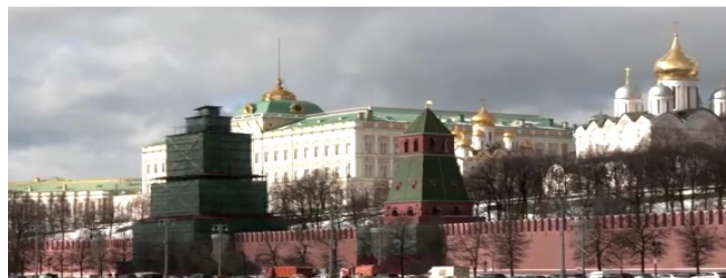
Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022

Upon realising that fake news and misinformation had been spread by mischief makers that N-Power was recruiting, the organisation (N-Power) had to make a counter post to disclaim the advertisement as well as the purported vacancies. Fake news about job vacancies commonly obtains on Jiji Nigeria, Nairaland, Monster, and most other job hiring firms across the globe. Although these sites truly advertise real vacancies, there are a lot of vacancies that are not real. Verbal and written testimonies had been made by some victims who survived the ordeals they ran into when they went to certain venues for advertised vacancies on these sites. Consider the case of one Iniobong in Akwa-

Ibom State, a fresh graduate of Philosophy, who got a social media post responding to her earlier post in search of a job. She got to the venue only to be raped, slaughtered and some of her pubic butchered out. Her killer was later caught, tried and sentenced to death by hanging. Obviously, as negative trends of the new media, fake news, misinformation and identity theft, raise concerns from among governments, other like authorities, organisations and many individuals alike. To that end, the government of several nations of the world had made legislations against these vices and the like other evils carried out on social media and other new media. Consider the case of Russian government, for an example hereunder.

**Figure 3: Law against fake news: Russian Government's example**

**Russian parliament passes a law imposing jail terms and fines for 'fake news.'**



Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2022

The above data shows that the trend of fake news on the new media, social media inclusive or even taking the lead, is a menace that has socio-political implications, among others. The governments of some nations and other civil organisations have turned their attention to the menace. The Russian government took a bold step by enacting and implementing strong policies against the trend of fake news. The above post got several thousands of likes and comments, with mixed feelings and reactions. Social media users took to their respective internet platforms to react to posts or news on Russian government's action against the trend of fake news. While some persons welcome the development, others lash the government of Russia for the imposition of jail terms and fines on defaulters of the crime of fake news. It is normal to get mixed feelings and reactions, because individuals differ and some are the agents of the fake news, while others are not.

### Conclusion

Basically, this study demonstrates that fake news, misinformation and identity theft on social media correlate. These three trends are vices that have gained reasonable attention in recent times, with legislations made against them by some governments and other bodies. Despite the efforts at combating these trends, eliminating them seems difficult because of the compulsory demand for personal details when creating accounts on social media and most users' mindless posts, comments and link-ups with others. Also, identity theft is one major source of fake news and misinformation on social media. This study calls on authorities of social media and government to exclusively ensure absolute security online, as users have just limited means of acting against cyber criminals and mischief makers of fake news and misinformation.

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# Gender Dichotomy in the Reading Difficulties of Undergraduates in South-West Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This article presents and discusses a follow up research on the perceived contrasts in the reading difficulties of male and female undergraduates. The study adopted a descriptive survey design in which questionnaires were administered on 834 students drawn from seven universities in South-West Nigeria. The response provided an insight into students' reading difficulties based on gender, and on which the following conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made. It was revealed that female students (214, 25.7%) were more challenged in their vocabulary (word power) than their male counterparts with (139, 16.9%). More so, female students (126, 11.2%) encountered more difficulties in their content analysis than their male counterparts with 94, 11.2%. Then, 239, (28.7%) and 321(38.5%) of male and female students respectively disagreed that they have difficulty in reading flexibility, whereas, 111(13.3%) and 163 (19.5%) of male and female students agreed that they have difficulty distinguishing between reading and studying. Finally, it was revealed that (24, 26.9%) of female students and (159, 19.1%) of the male students claimed that they can work effectively in a quiet library with many people around them, while, 260(31.2%) of the female students and (191, 22.8%) of the male students agreed that they can work effectively in a quiet library with many people around them. The undergraduates in South West Nigeria should be motivated to engage in both intensive and extensive reading of all literary genres, and other reading materials for the purpose of acquiring vocabulary and language use across disciplines. More so, students should be encouraged to use both conventional and e-libraries in their institutions. The college and University managements should also endeavour to establish reading clinics where reading difficulties are diagnosed, identified, and solutions are proffered.*

**Key words:** Gender dichotomy, reading difficulties, undergraduates, vocabulary difficulty, reading flexibility, content analysis, study method and problem solving.

## Introduction

The concept of gender refers to social and non-biological differences between male and female. Gender has continued to be an unresolved issue in education, and up till now, gender issue in education is very controversial because people have divergent opinions about which sex performs better in education. Women have existed long ago along with their men folk and have suffered with them through ages, yet, they have been marginalized at all fronts (Okere, 2012). Nevertheless, the biblical account of creation of

man is different from that of a woman, since man is created directly from the earth, and God breathed life into him, then he becomes a direct suppler man created from primary source of God's raw materials. His creation is different from that of a woman who was created from just a single rib of the man's many ribs. By the implication of this creation mythology, it is a common fact to reason out that man is bound to differ from woman both in physical and mental features and abilities. Wokocho and Buseri (2001) observed that peoples 'talent abilities' are not known until both men and

women are given equal opportunity that will lead to the blossoming of these innate talents. It was based on this assertion that Uchendu (1995) emphasized that the mental exercise acquired through education is very essential for the stimulation of the development of more positive thought and more creative ability.

However, the difference in the mental abilities of male and female are the bases for different reading abilities, as well as, reading difficulties of gender across the globe. From the biological perspective, the neurological structures within a language are not located in a single area of the brain, rather in different parts of the left brain (left hemisphere) and each of them has its specialized function (National Open University, 2015). These functions are well expressed in Broca's and Wernicke's language areas of the brain. The area is located in the front part of the left hemisphere of the brain cortex (brain surface). This area is concerned with the articulation or speech production, and the productive skill of reading. However, the reader whose left frontal cortex malfunctions as a result of disuse, brain damage, or as a result of accident, will have difficulties with reading. Contrary to this, Wernicke's language area is further back, and lower, in the brain area of the posterior part of the temporal lobe of the brain. This area is responsible for both speech production and language comprehension. Therefore, if the temporal region of the left cerebral hemisphere is damaged, the reader will have language comprehension difficulties. Okebukola (2002) investigated the impact of gender on the reading skills influencing word recognition, word-by-word analysis and reading comprehension, as well as, the interest and attitudes of emergent readers to reading, and found that disparity in reading manifest at the advanced stage of the reading process. Kommer (2006) opined that girls tend to use both hemisphere of the brain (left and right) to think while the boys are predominantly right brained. He concludes by saying that girls tend to develop academically than boys. This collaborates with Eked (1993), who reported imbalances in the achievement of boys and girls in English curriculum including reading. Similarly, Ifedi

(2009) carried out a study on assessment of reading culture among students of Nigerian tertiary institutions and discovered that there is a significant difference in the reading culture of students in favour of female students. This confirms that those who use both hemispheres to think, do better in reading and comprehension.

So, these findings agree with those of Sotiloye and Popoola (2014) who noted that gender inequality is a critical issue of global concern, meaning that there is gender gap in education. Moreover, reading difficulty and gender difference in reading difficulty are part of the major literacy concerns in pedagogy. This concern calls for the exigency of language educators to identify the inherent reading difficulties in the reading processes of students' and go a step further to ascertain gender differences in the reading difficulties of such undergraduates. The undergraduates are the university students undergoing a degree programmes. Over the years, there have been hues and cries over students' low achievement in examination and their poor reading culture (Apari, 2018). As far back as Unoh (1991), undergraduates are prone to inability to skim, slow reading rate, misunderstanding and misinterpretation, inability to comprehend main ideas, critical evaluating, and inability to comprehend details. However, gender is a factor in reading and it is necessary to explore gender difference in the reading difficulties of undergraduates with the view of determining various methods of reading as an intervention programme to the difficulties. Horn (2000) noted that education performance at schools have been varied according to students' sex. This was supported by the review of evidence that suggest that boys suffer educational disadvantage relative to girls, specifically, in terms of performance in literacy (Burkingham, 1999). The reading difficulties include vocabulary, content analysis, reading flexibility, and study method and problem-solving difficulties.

First, vocabulary is one of the reading difficulties among undergraduates in south west Nigeria. Naesll (2005) identified vocabulary as one of the reading difficulties which has different

associated terms such as word recognition, decoding, sight words and word attack difficulties. One of the causes of slow and poor reading comprehension is limited vocabulary, and its development is essential in educational system because a group of the correct technical vocabulary of one's discipline keep abreast of the ever-increasing information in the field of interest. Sybil James (1984) noted that vocabulary development involves the exploration of meaning, a thorough grasp of usage and a sensitivity to nuance. However, vocabulary difficulties arise when the reader is unable to associate meanings to words in reading contents. Okwilagwe (1992) noted that this is possible because words can have different meaning in different contexts. Consequent upon the foregoing, the reader must explore the meaning of word in a text and have a thorough grasp of it in the passage. Ogbulogo (1996) identifies total understanding of the passage, vis-an-vis recall of main ideas and application of the knowledge gained into practical use as a criteria for comprehension requirements, bring about comprehension difficulty, hence the reader who exhibits comprehension difficulty may not understand the message in the text, recall main ideas, analyse the components of a given piece of information and how they are linked together, synthesize the process of putting together different bits of information to create new information, and evaluate what is read by making judgments based on the principle of reality or fantasy, fact or opinion. Above all, difficulty in the application of the knowledge gained into practical use, speak volume of comprehension difficulty.

**Second,** the content analysis difficulty refers to the difficulty undergraduates' encounter in their content areas. The content of a selection is all about the subject matter of the text. The first difficulty, the reader is likely to encounter is difficulty with making summary of a selection. It requires that the selection be reduced to a specific proportion of the original length. The reader has to be equipped with essential ingredients which are summary making in the process of understanding location, selection and presentation of uses in the passage. However, success in making summary requires thorough

understanding of the text, which equips the reader to locate the guide information, facts and differentiate them from opinion, and select the exact information, meaning that only the Key words will be selected, after which information is presented in the acceptable format. More so, a paragraph is a piece of writing, which is unified by a central controlling idea or theme. This theme is called the key point or topic sentence (NTI, 2015). The macro reader should be able to identify the topic sentence from either the first sentence, middle or last sentence of the paragraph and distinguish it from supporting details. With this knowledge, it will not be difficult to remember the gist of the passage.

Next, reading flexibility difficulty refers to flexible reading rate or speed of reading. Two factors determine reading rate: textual difficulty and the purpose of reading. Apari (2018) noted that the purpose of reading is the major determinant of students' reading pattern, and it is the driving force of reading amongst undergraduates because reading at this level is meaningful and seeks understanding of the reader. Purpose helps the reader to seek information, sort out important from unimportant information in the reading material he is manipulating. The textual difficulty has to do with the complex nature of the language and the style of the text. Based on the foregoing factors, (Okwilagwe, 2011) stated the following are the useful practical categories of reading speed depending on the textual difficulty and poor objective for reading a passage. Thus: Skimming (extremely fast reading), Scanning (very fast reading), Rapid reading rate (medium fast reading), Normal rate (average reading rate), Careful rate (very slow and thoughtful reading rate).

However, flexibility difficulty arises when the reader could not skim to provide an answer to the specific question in the skimming process, read the first, middle and the last sentences thoughtfully to get the main idea of the paragraph. The reader's inability to skim, with the purpose of doing the aforementioned, leads to skimming difficulty within reading flexibility difficulty. More so, scanning difficulty arises when the reader is unable to scan for specific information.

The following areas can be regarded as flexibility difficulty areas in scanning when the reader could not get high degree of comprehension, understand and retain information immediately for future use, as well as, get the gist of the comprehension of the content of a passage. Nevertheless, reading flexibility difficulty arise in rapid reading rate, when the reader could not read to comprehend and summarize in order to engage in reading to review familiar material, to get the main idea, to get information for temporary use, and to read for recreational purpose. Moreover, reading flexibility difficulties in normal reading speed arise when the reader cannot read a passage with high intellectual acumen such as examination, comprehension and summary of passages. Finally, study method and problem solving is a skill in reading that can aid a reader to read effectively to solve his reading problems such as: Answering comprehension questions, decoding vocabulary, managing time while reading and reading effectively in a quite library with people around. Problem solving is the end product of every reading comprehension because comprehension must extend to solving problems. At the classroom level, the readers must apply their comprehension skill to answering comprehension questions under the reading passage. More often, such questions request both surface and implicit answers to questions, more so, the synonyms of vocabularies, and knowledge of phrases are requested for. They also requested to summarize the reading passage. At the societal level, readers must use the knowledge of what they learnt in their undergraduate days to solve problems in Health, Education, Commerce, Financial Sector Judiciary, and even legislation and governance. There should not be problem at all when people apply what they have learnt to solve both personal and general problems.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is stated below:

- (i) To determine the vocabulary difficulties of undergraduates on the basis of gender
- (ii) To determine the content analysis difficulties of undergraduates based on gender
- (iii) To determine the reading flexibility difficulties of undergraduates based on gender;

- (iv) To determine the study and problem-solving difficulties of undergraduates based on gender.

### **Research Questions**

- (1) What are the vocabulary (Word Power) difficulties of undergraduates on the basis of gender?
- (2) What are the content analysis difficulties of undergraduates on the basis of gender?
- (3) What are the reading flexibility difficulties of undergraduates on the basis of gender?
- (4) What are the study and problem-solving methods of undergraduates on the basis of gender?

### **Hypotheses**

#### **Hypothesis 1:**

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the reading difficulties of undergraduates on the bases of gender

### **Methodology**

#### **Design and Procedure**

A survey research design was employed for the purpose of gathering data. The survey investigates the reading difficulties of male and female undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. The questionnaire was administered on individual basis to make for objectivity and reflective thinking.

#### **Population and Sample and Sampling Technique**

The population for the study consisted of all 200 level undergraduate students in South-West Nigeria: Federal, State and Private Universities. The population was restricted to only the faculty of Education, Arts and Social Science Education. The study covered five South-Western States of Nigeria. From the states, only seven Universities were selected using stratified random sampling technique on the basis of ownership. All the Universities were approved to run undergraduate programmes in Education, Arts and Social Science Education and are co-educational. The faculties were also selected by stratified random sampling technique, out of which, eight hundred and thirty-four students were sampled for the study by simple random technique.

#### **Instrumentation**

Research instruments were used to collect data for the study. (1) Vocabulary Difficulty Questionnaire (VDQ) (2) Content Analysis



Difficulty Questionnaire (CADQ) (3) Reading Flexibility Difficulty Questionnaire (RFDQ) (4) Study Method and Problem-Solving Difficulty Questionnaire (SMPSDQ). Each of the instruments is described below.

### 1. Vocabulary Difficulty Questionnaire (VAQ)

This is a four- item questionnaire which was designed and used to investigate word power of the undergraduates. The items covered recognition difficulty, making sense from passage read, comprehension, retention, and summary difficulties. A reliability test of 0.62 was established in respect of the questionnaire.

### 2. Content Analysis Questionnaire (CAQ)

This questionnaire contains four items which was designed and used to investigate the content analysis abilities of undergraduates. The questions focus on difficulties in making sense of text, identifying key points in the passage read, recall and interpretation, reliability procedure and score.

### 3. Reading Flexibility Questionnaire (RFQ)

This is also a four-item questionnaire which was used to investigate reading flexibility difficulties of undergraduates. The questionnaire was critically examined by reading experts for face and content validity. The questionnaire was further

validated using Alpha statistical formula. A reliability test was established at 0.63.

### 4. Study Methods and Problem-Solving Questionnaire (SMPSQ)

This four-item questionnaire was also designed and used to elicit information from the subjects on study methods and problem solving. The questionnaire was critically examined by reading experts for face and content validity. It was further validated using Alpha statistical formula, and the reliability test was at 0.62.

### Data Analysis

The analysis was done by computing the responses in percentages where necessary and by determining the mean scores and standard deviation. The differences between the pairs of mean score were assessed by the use of t-test.

### Discussion of Results

The results are hereby presented in the order of the research hypotheses.

**RQ1: What are the** vocabulary difficulties of undergraduates in South West Nigeria on the basis of gender?

**Table 1:** t – Test summary of the effect of undergraduates' gender on students' vocabulary difficulties.

| Statement  | Sex    | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Total |
|--|--------|-------|------|----------|------|-------|
|  |        | Freq  | %    | Freq     | %    |       |
| I have difficulty recognizing and understanding many words when I am reading | Male   | 146   | 17.5 | 204      | 24.5 | 350   |
|  | Female | 215   | 26   | 269      | 32   | 484   |
| I have difficulty making sense of many of the books I have to study          | Male   | 93    | 11.2 | 257      | 30.8 | 350   |
|  | Female | 148   | 17.7 | 336      | 40.3 | 484   |
| I have difficulty understanding meaning                                      | Male   | 101   | 12.1 | 249      | 29.9 | 350   |
|  | Female | 145   | 17.4 | 339      | 40.6 | 484   |
| I have difficulty retelling or writing a story I have read in own words.     | Male   | 133   | 15.9 | 217      | 26   | 350   |
|  | Female | 186   | 22.3 | 298      | 35.7 | 484   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Male   | 139   | 16.9 | 211      | 25.3 | 350   |
|  | Female | 214   | 25.7 | 270      | 32.4 | 484   |

Table 1 shows that 146 representing 17.5% of the male students and 215 (26%) of their female counterparts agreed that they have difficulty in recognizing and understanding many words when they are reading. Conversely, 204 (24.5%) of the male students and 269 (32%) of the female students claimed that they do not have difficulty in recognizing and understanding many words when they are reading. Furthermore, 336 (40.3%) and 257 (30.8%) of female and male students respectively disagreed that they have difficulty making sense of many of the books they have to study; whereas 148 (17.7%) and 93 (11.2%) of female and male students agreed that they have difficulty making sense of many of the books they have to study. Also, table 1 reveals that 339 (40.6%) of female students and 249 (29.9%) of the male students claimed that they do not have difficulty in understanding meaning; while 145

(17.4%) of the female students and 101 (12.1%) of the male students agreed that they have difficulty in understanding meaning. Finally, 217 (26%) and 298 (35.7%) of male and female students respectively disagreed that they have difficulty retelling or writing a story they have read in their own words; whereas 133 (15.9%) and 186 (22.3%) of male and female students agreed that they have difficulty retelling or writing a story they have read in their own words. The summary in table 1 implies that female students (214, 25.7%) were more challenged in their vocabulary (word power) than their male counterparts (139, 16.9%).

**Research Question 2:** What are the content analysis difficulties of undergraduates on the basis of gender?

**Table 2:** Content Analysis of undergraduates on the basis of gender

| Statement  | Sex    | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Total |
|--|--------|-------|------|----------|------|-------|
|  |        | Freq  | %    | Freq     | %    |       |
| I have difficulty making summaries of what I have read   | Male   | 79    | 9.5  | 271      | 32.5 | 350   |
|  | Female | 114   | 13.7 | 370      | 44.4 | 484   |
| I have difficulty identifying the key point in the passage and distinguishing between these and the supporting details | Male   | 67    | 8    | 283      | 33.9 | 350   |
|  | Female | 92    | 11   | 392      | 47   | 484   |
| I have difficulty remembering what I have initially understood   | Male   | 85    | 10.2 | 265      | 31.8 | 350   |
|  | Female | 118   | 14.1 | 366      | 43.9 | 484   |
| I turn the page and I ignore all graphs, charts and Tables when I am reading   | Male   | 97    | 11.6 | 253      | 30.3 | 350   |
|  | Female | 136   | 16.3 | 348      | 41.7 | 484   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Male   | 93    | 11.2 | 257      | 30.8 | 350   |
|  | Female | 126   | 15.1 | 358      | 42.9 | 484   |

Table 2 shows that 114 (13.7%) of the female students agreed that they had difficulty in making summaries of what they have read; while 79 (9.5%) of their male counterparts agreed to the statement. However, 370 (44.4%) and 271 (32.2%) of the female and male students respectively claimed that they do not have difficulty in making summaries of what they have read. It further follows that 67 representing 8% of the male students and 92 (11%) of their female

counterparts agreed that they have difficulty identifying the key point in the passage and distinguishing between these and the supporting details. Although, 392 (47%) and 283 (33.9%) of the female and male students respectively claimed that they do not have difficulty identifying the key point in the passage and distinguishing between these and the supporting details. Also from table 2, 366 (43.9%) of female students and 265 (30.3%) of the male students claimed that they do

not have difficulty remembering what they have initially understood; while 118 (14.1%) of the female students and 85 (10.2%) of the male students agreed that they have difficulty remembering what they have initially understood. Finally, 348 representing 41.7% and 253 (30.3%) of the female and male students respectively claimed that they do not turn the page and ignore all graphs, charts and tables when they are reading; whereas 136 (16.3%) of the female and 97 (11.6%) of the male students agreed that they

do turn the page and ignore all graphs, charts and tables when they are reading. In summary, the implication from table 2 is that female students (126, 15.1%) encountered more difficulties in their content analysis than their male counterparts (94, 11.2%).

**Research Question 3:** What are the reading flexibility difficulties of undergraduates on the basis of gender?

**Table 3:** Reading flexibility of undergraduates on the basis of their gender

| Statement  | Sex    | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Total |
|--|--------|-------|------|----------|------|-------|
|  |        | Freq  | %    | Freq     | %    |       |
| I have read simple reading material at the same rate as I read difficult material.   | Male   | 80    | 9.6  | 270      | 32.4 | 350   |
|  | Female | 106   | 12.7 | 378      | 45.3 | 484   |
| I have to translate reading material into my mother tongue before I can understand it properly.                                    | Male   | 151   | 18.1 | 199      | 23.9 | 350   |
|  | Female | 239   | 28.7 | 245      | 29.4 | 484   |
| If the material seems difficult and unreadable, do I have to puzzle it out in my mother tongue before I can comprehend and retain? | Male   | 166   | 19.9 | 184      | 22.1 | 350   |
|  | Female | 237   | 28.4 | 247      | 29.6 | 484   |
| I have difficulty distinguishing between reading and studying  | Male   | 111   | 13.3 | 239      | 28.7 | 350   |
|  | Female | 163   | 19.5 | 321      | 38.5 | 484   |
| <b>Summary</b>   | Male   | 158   | 18.9 | 192      | 23   | 350   |
|  | Female | 239   | 28.7 | 245      | 29.4 | 484   |

Table 3 reveals that 80 representing 9.6% of the male students and 106 (12.7%) of their female counterparts agreed that they have read simple reading materials at the same rate as they read difficult materials. However, 270 (32.4%) of the male students and 378 (45.3%) of the female students claimed that they do not have read simple reading materials at the same rate as they read difficult materials. Furthermore, 239 (28.7%) and 151 (18.1%) of female and male students respectively agreed that they have to translate reading material into their mother tongue before they can understand it properly; whereas 245 (29.4%) and 199 (23.9%) of female and male students disagreed that they have to translate reading material into their mother tongue before

they can understand it properly. Also, table 3 reveals that 247 (29.6%) of female students and 184 (22.1%) of the male students claimed that if the material seems difficult and unreadable, they have to puzzle it out in their mother tongue before they can comprehend and retain it; while 237 (28.4%) of the female students and 166 (19.9%) of the male students agreed that if the material seems difficult and unreadable, they have to puzzle it out in their mother tongue before they can comprehend and retain it. Finally, 239 (28.7%) and 321 (38.5%) of male and female students respectively disagreed that they have difficulty distinguishing between reading and studying; whereas 111 (13.3%) and 163 (19.5%) of male and female students agreed that they have

difficulty distinguishing between reading and studying.

**Research Question 4:** What are the study and problem-solving methods of undergraduates on the basis of gender?

**Table 4:** Gender difference in study and problem-solving methods among undergraduates in South-West Nigeria

| Statement  | Sex    | Agree |      | Disagree |      | Total |
|--|--------|-------|------|----------|------|-------|
|  |        | Freq  | %    | Freq     | %    |       |
| I have difficulty getting through the reading assignment                                   | Male   | 141   | 16.9 | 209      | 25.1 | 350   |
|  | Female | 204   | 24.5 | 280      | 33.6 | 484   |
| I find it difficult to make time to consult a variety of books related to my course        | Male   | 132   | 15.8 | 218      | 26.1 | 350   |
|  | Female | 166   | 19.9 | 318      | 38.1 | 484   |
| I tend to feel 'fed up' and restless when I am doing the reading prescribed for my course. | Male   | 96    | 11.5 | 254      | 30.5 | 350   |
|  | Female | 140   | 16.8 | 344      | 41.2 | 484   |
| I can work effectively in a quiet library with many people around.                         | Male   | 191   | 22.9 | 159      | 19.1 | 350   |
|  | Female | 260   | 31.2 | 224      | 26.9 | 484   |

Table 4 shows that 204 (24.5%) of the female students agreed that they have difficulty getting through the reading assignment; while 141 (16.9%) of their male counterparts agreed to the statement. However, 280 (33.6%) and 209 (25.1%) of the female and male students respectively claimed that they do not have difficulty getting through the reading assignment. It further follows that 132 representing 15.8% of the male students and 166 (19.9%) of their female counterparts agreed that they find it difficult to make time to consult a variety of books related to their course. Although, 318 (38.1%) and 218 (26.1%) of the female and male students respectively claimed that they find it difficult to make time to consult a variety of books related to their course. Table 4 further reveals that 254 (30.5%) and 344 (41.2%) of male and female

students respectively disagreed that they tend to feel 'fed up' and restless when they are doing the reading prescribed for their course; whereas 90 (11.5%) and 140 (16.8%) of male and female students agreed that they tend to feel 'fed up' and restless when they are doing the reading prescribed for their course. Finally, table 4 also reveals that 224 (26.9%) of female students and 159 (19.1%) of the male students claimed that they can work effectively in a quiet library with many people around; while 260 (31.2%) of the female students and 191 (22.9%) of the male students agreed that they can work effectively in a quiet library with many people around.

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference in the students' reading difficulty on the basis of gender

**Table 5a:** Shows the Descriptive Statistics of Students Reading difficulties on the basis of Gender

| GROUP STATISTICS |     |         |                |                |
|------------------|-----|---------|----------------|----------------|
| Gender           | N   | Mean    | Std. Deviation | Std Error Mean |
| Male             | 350 | 42.3086 | 8.73170        | .46673         |
| Female           | 470 | 42.3486 | 8.77944        | .46497         |

Table 1a above shows that female students with a mean of 42.35 have more difficulties in reading than the male students' whose mean is (42.31) though, the difference in their reading difficulty is not statistically significant. This finding agrees with Singh (2011) in Acheaw and Larson (2014) who carried out a study on the academic achievement and study habits of higher secondary school students, and reported that the boys and girls differ significantly in the study habits. Okere (2012) collaborates with the foregoing by saying that disparity between males and females manifest in unequal access to education. The enrolment ratios at primary, secondary, and even tertiary education show that girls still have much less access to formal education than boys. To arrest this situation, the Nigerian government has increased its efforts to encourage girl child education. Based on the 2005 MDGs progress report, at the primary school level, enrolment has

been consistently higher for boys than girls by over 10% and with male-female ratio of 56% ;44%. However, at secondary school level, enrolment equally increased for both male and female, but on the higher side for male, while dropout rate is much for females, while at tertiary level, few women apply entry into higher institutions because few girls are completing senior secondary education. Therefore, the education of females has remained at a much lower level than that of boys. According to Conte (2000) as cited in Udoh (2001) figures provided by the United Nations speak of a pitiless plight;70% of the poor and two-thirds of the illiterates in the world are females. In Nigeria, Okere reported that gender in quality has remained a sore point of the educational system with the low representation and full participation of girls falling behind as they move up in the education ladder.

**Table 5b:** Shown the T-Test of undergraduates Reading Difficulty Based on Gender

**GROUP STATISTICS**

| Gender | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Df  | Std (2-tailed) | t-value |
|--------|-----|-------|----------------|-----|----------------|---------|
| Male   | 350 | 42.31 | 8.73           | 818 | .956           | -.055   |
| Female | 470 | 42.34 | 8.78           |     |                |         |

Table 5bb shows that there is no significant difference in the reading difficulty of undergraduates based on gender ( $t=-0.55$ ,  $df = 818$ ,  $p = .956$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in the reading difficulty of undergraduates based on gender is not rejected. This agrees with Mushtak and Khan (2012) who reported that gender has no significant relationship with academic achievement of students. This is a weak positive relationship because the difference is slight and minute, and of no significant. Several research efforts had also shown that there was no significant difference in the language achievement based on gender. Apari (2005) carried out a study on the reading achievement of male and female disabled readers as measured by comprehension and reported that there was no significant difference. Similarly, Brantmaier (2003) reported

that, while examining reading comprehension across multiple passages, male had no advantage over females and vise versa, meaning that gender difference does not exist in comprehension. This negates the belief of the neurologists who pointed out clearly that there is a biological basis for female good performance in reading achievement tests. Apari (2005) reported a research report into how brain works has shown that girls tended to be auditory learners and better communicators with boys being more visual- kinaesthetic learners. He supported his claim with that of Tess (2001) who provides evidence that 70% of experiences in schools which are auditory experiences and listening led to 5% retention rate, reading 10%, audio visual approaches 20%, demonstration 30%, discussion group 50%, practice by doing 70%, and explaining to others 90%. The foregoing evidence support the claim that females stand the chance of

performing better in language related courses, since they are left and right brained while the males are only right brained. Nevertheless, this position which was taken long ago cannot underestimate the influence of parental socio-economic status, topic familiarity, and background knowledge (Apari, 2005) and everyday reasoning abilities.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study have revealed that female undergraduate students in South West Nigeria have more challenges in vocabulary (word power) than their male counterparts. Similarly, females also proved to be superior to the males in content analysis. **Nevertheless**, both male and female undergraduates disagreed that they have challenges in reading flexibility, as well as study methods, and problem solving. Finally, the male undergraduates can read quietly in the library, whilst the females cannot. What is actually responsible for this wide gap is the students' negative attitude to reading, and the negative carry over effect of poor teaching from the undergraduate's previous schools (secondary schools).

Recommendations and suggestions for the reduction of reading difficulties among undergraduates in South West Nigeria have been professed by Okebukola and Apari (2021) and Apari (2011). Therefore, undergraduates should be encouraged to engage themselves in both intensive and extensive reading across disciplines to acquire more vocabulary skills, content analysis, reading flexibility, study method and problem-solving skills. This will further develop their reading habits and reading culture. With that, students should be encouraged and be motivated to read literature of all genres for acquisition of word power and language use for development in reading habits, and reading culture. More so, the library facilities are not there for decoration, rather, they are provided for students to access and use for studies effectively. Lecturers should encourage students to consult both conventional and e-library maximally whilst doing class assignment and presentations. Reading clinic is an important facility that must be put in place in

colleges and universities for diagnosing students reading problems and proffering solutions.

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# Bibliotherapy as a Form of Critical Literacy for Sustainable Living among Students of The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti

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## Abstract

*This paper considered bibliotherapy as a form of critical literacy for sustainable living among students of The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti. Bibliotherapy is the act of making use of books to help with a client's problem or for developmental adjustment and growth. It combines in this study two definitions 'for problem solving and developmental purposes' (Carla 1991). It considered how students could be helped with the use of bibliotherapy at different levels to teach or instruct them either in school or society. In this study, the literature text used is "Harvest of Corruption" by Ogbeche Frank Ogodo. The text mirrors contemporary society, evaluates its morals, ethics and returns a damning verdict that the society has been fatally wounded by its leaders which also extends to the followers in which students are included. In conclusion, the students are able to take stand as an individual to avoid the pitfalls of corruption to reshape their lives and the society. True labour pays more than cutting corners and also there is dignity in labour. Solving problems of corruption and developing right attitudes through critical literacy and sustainable living are of great values.*

**Key words:** Bibliotherapy, Critical literacy, Student, Sustainable living

## Introduction

Bibliotherapy is the act of using a book carefully selected to help solve someone's problem going through a related problem discussed in the suggested book. Solutions may be proffered to such problems in the book or comfort to the person to assure the person that he or she is not the only one going through such a thing. (Carla 1991) Bibliotherapy consists of two Greek words, *biblio* meaning book and *therapeio* meaning healing. Shrodes (1949) in her classic dissertation, defined bibliotherapy "as a process of dynamic interactions between the personality of the reader and literature as a psychological field which may be utilised for personality assessment, adjustment and growth"

Bibliotherapy is the act of making use of books to help with a client's problem or for developmental adjustment and growth. It combines in this study two definitions 'for

problem solving and developmental purposes' (Cala 1991).

Cornett and Cornett (1980) define bibliotherapy as "psychology through literature reading that it is used to solve or prevent problems". This definition can be explained in two ways. In a way, the need is not met and the other way, the reader is to personally identify in the selected text for use. According to Rubin (1978), there are three general categories of bibliotherapy namely: institutional, clinical and developmental. Institutional bibliotherapy basically gives information on literature to educate a patient in the hospital about the sickness or ailment she is going through and learning possible solutions and treatments. Clinical bibliotherapy uses imaginative or informative literature to change behaviour or have insight into their behaviour. Developmental bibliotherapy is



used to promote or advance normal development and maintain balanced mental health.

Rubin (1978) identified nine objectives of bibliotherapy:

1. Make the reader aware that he is not alone.
2. Reveal likely solutions to the problem.
3. Assist the reader to perceive peoples' motivations in specific situations.
4. Assist to identify the values in human experiences.
5. Attitudes or values change
6. Readers are encouraged to face the realities of their situations.
7. Availability of necessary tools to have easy access to discuss topics that may not be comfortable.
8. Availability of facts and information to generate solutions.
9. Relaxation and diversion.

In the same vein, Lindeman and Kling (1968) identified eight objectives of bibliotherapy “ (a) information and instruction; (b) courage to enter therapy by reading about it; (c) the opportunity to discuss a situation in a book rather than the situation as it applies to himself; (d) greater insight to problems ; (e) the acquisition of language and ideas with which to communicate his problems; (f) the opportunity for him to focus attention outside of himself; (g) skills in socialisation; and (h) relaxation and diversion. ”

According to Zaccaria & Moses (1968) affirmed that with the use of bibliotherapy children have better understanding of themselves and others, they have a sense of belonging and realise they are competent to be achievers in making escapes and crave for ethical values.

From the above objectives, bibliotherapy aids students to identify problems and find solutions even through the text they read. They can read in between the lines and make right decisions about their lives in associating or dissociating with such a character. They are also able to perceive peoples' motivations in specific situations. Considering the lives of characters, they are able to make decisions on such characters to imitate as encouragers or to check them from going in a wrong part that the character went. This

will go a long way in helping individual students to experience a sustainable living among students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti and the society at large hence the justification for this study.

### **Bibliotherapy and Critical Literacy**

Blake (2016) defines Critical literacy as “the ability to find embedded discrimination in media which is done by analysing the messages promoting prejudiced power relationships found naturally in media and written material that go unnoticed otherwise by reading beyond the author's words and examining the manner in which the author has conveyed his or her ideas about society's norms to determine whether these ideas contain racial or gender inequality.”

Critical literacy is an instructional approach through which texts are analysed, synthesised and criticised. It is the ability to uncover underlying messages. Students are practising critical literacy as they examine the writer's text or message for bias. Through the teaching of critical literacy students are able to develop the ability to assess online information in various forms of social media like articles as they read and understand, have thorough analysis of the text and their good presentations. Teachers can assist their students in teaching critical literacy by encouraging them to learn analytically.

According to Freire (1993) there are some factors that are peculiar to formation of critical literacy. The first stage is bringing awareness or consciousness to those who suffer mistreatment and the people that caused it who promote negative ideologies in politics, and positions of authority and power like schools and government. Jowallah (2015). The reason being that Frerie and Macedo opine that information from written texts are built on earlier plans of the world that those that are often mistreated do not often realise that they being oppressed in considering poverty and marginalisation as normal way of living not knowing how to stop their oppression.

The second stage of critical literacy is to transform teaching in schools for better out Ira

(1999) explains that critical literacy can easily reveal peoples' subjective beliefs majorly of the world by making them question individual assumptions in word usage. Critical literacy aids students to think in different ways pertaining to self- development, not just settling with cultural norms. The essence of this is to guide students to promote social action to change or prevent unjust structures in their communities. This is achievable through truthful dialogue between the teacher and the students that they both learn together in critical discussion of important issues rather than following conventional method of teaching which was described as banking model of education that assumes that students are empty containers that can only be filled by the teachers that are main assignments are to lecture and to instruct students when writing test. Frerie (1993) has a contrary opinion to the banking model because he opined that the model puts students in 'perpetuated oppression' rather than creating 'conscious knowledge within students. He explains further that as teachers facilitate discussions of controversial issues pertaining to the students and their society and those controversial issues serve as a bridge give room for students to query the social inequalities in their communities and the fundamental hierarchies that govern such biases. The third stage (Coffey) describes it as a reflection of applying the knowledge they have discovered through dialogue to their own life situations by taking definite actions that can change society and have justice.

### **Bibliotherapy and Critical Literacy for Sustainable Living among Polytechnic Students.**

The study examines the text by Ogbeche Frank Ogodo's "Harvest of Corruption to a textbook to be used for bibliotherapy. Looking through the thematic concerns of the text and the characters, students can easily mirror the picture of corruption in Nigeria which exposes the ills of our land from the leaders and also the followers. Also, through the different characters, the students should be able to look inward to themselves to really appreciate the good characters and emulate them or to reject the

injustices and embrace justice for a good sustainable living.

**Corruption and Embezzlement:** Corruption simply means abuse of office or using your position in an office to acquire what one does not merit or misappropriation of funds. The embezzlement of 41.2 billion in a contract awarded and recklessly inflated by Chief Haladu Ade-Amaka of the External Relations Ministry is an appalling instance of corruption, The Aloho's immediate employment recommended by Ochuole is corruption. He employed her hastily because he has a special, self-serving brief for her (Oguntuase, 2018).

The author of Harvest of Corruption, Ogbeche Frank Ogodo exposed the depth of corruption and embezzlement as one of the themes of his novel mainly for students and readers to be aware of the evil that is eating deeply to the economy of our land as we look into the lives of Chief Haladu Ade –Amaka embezzling of 41.2 billion in a contract awarded and inflated the amount. The same can be seen today among several leaders that have this same opportunity to award contracts, it has become a norm that they take ten percent of every contract, in fact this is the minimum. Politicians, government workers are guilty of this. In awarding road contracts, the contractors hardly had the 50% at their disposal to prosecute the road constructions and as a result of this, quality materials are not used and the contractors will do shady and roads that cannot stand the test of time if such roads will ever be completed. What about government building constructions and a host of other things that are haphazardly done because such monies have been embezzled.

With the application of critical literacy and bibliotherapy the students are able to see the end of Chief Haladu Ade-Amaka, Ochuole and others as they reaped their evil deeds as they faced the wrath of law. They should be able to desist from such acts not to put themselves in trouble and desisting from corruption and embezzlement can easily give an avenue for sustaining a good society that is devoid of corruption.

**Desperation:** Aloho, was forced to abandon her abiding Christian morals and to embrace what Ohcuole has to offer in the Ministry of External Relations. Even when she was apprehensive, desperation forces her to accept what she presented in spite of Ogeyi's determined efforts to dissuade her from going into ruins. No sane student will intentionally go into ruin. Considering the outcome of desperation in the life of Aloho, none will want to become a victim like her.

**Loyalty:** Ogeyi is a loyal friend and confidant of Aloho, Ogeyi tried all she could so that Aloho would not find herself in the lion's den. Ogeyi was able to be a good counsellor to Aloho after the cocaine saga and her acquittal by the court. She succeeds in preventing Aloho from terminating the life of the foetus she carried. Ogeyi, should be emulated by students and other readers. If leaders and the led could be loyal in all their doings, there will not be distrust, killing and maiming and a lot of other evil in Nigeria. People will learn to shun corruption, nepotism, in security of all sorts that Nigeria is currently bewildered with like Boko Haram, banditry, kidnapping etc. can easily be avoided and checkmate. No pretence from one tribe to the other, there will be harmony and people will not find themselves in trouble, love, peace and unity will be enhanced to have sustainable living.

**Nemesis:** Nemesis eventually caught up with Chief Haladu Ade-Ameka and his co-travellers and adequate punishment that is considered commensurate to the offences of the accused persons is meted out to all of them: the Minister, the Justice Odili, the Police Commissioner, Madam Hoha, Ochuole and Ayo, the Civil servant all served various terms of imprisonment.

When students and other readers are aware and think deeply of the way nemesis caught up with some characters, there should be a check within them not to misbehave or do wrong because sooner or later evil workers will be exposed and face the wrath of law. As much as nobody wants their evil deeds to be exposed, this can also make them tow the right part

always. Students that have been cheating in tests, examinations and were never caught before reading this book may also have a check that their nemesis may soon catch up with them.

### **Characterization**

Oguntuase (2018) described characterization as the presentation of a character in a play to an audience, from this presentation, the audience forms an opinion on him or her. There are three basic ways of character portrayal. The first is what the character says about himself. This is a personal projection which may often be jaundiced and self-adulatory. The other is what the author says about a character. This is known as authorial portrayal. This is what the author makes of such a character. The third is what others say about a character, this is likely to be factual, independent and objective. A few of the characters in *Harvest of Corruption* are portrayed in this study.

#### **(i) Haladu Ade-Amaka**

This is the unscrupulous Hon. Minister in the Federal Ministry of External Relation. His name is the author's special way of saying that corruption is not only endemic in Jabu but it has eaten so deep into the sinews and tendons of society that the effects reverberate round the entire country. Haladu is a name from the Hausa North, Ade is a Yoruba name and Amaka is an Ibo name. In that case, no section of society is spared. Haladu- Ade-Amaka is selfish, thoroughly corrupt and can bribe anybody, no matter how lightly placed, to achieve his objectives. He loaded a voucher with as much as 1.2 bn on a single contract. How much more would he have done without getting caught by the prying eyes of the media. He attempted to turn Aloho to a drug courier but this failed. For his many atrocities, he was sentenced to a twenty-five-year jail term (Oguntuase, 2018).

The character of Haladu Ade-Amaka as a minister reveals the heart of many Nigerian leaders that they are selfish, self-centered, avaricious and unable to manage the nation's

economy well at different levels. This is not limited to a particular tribe in Nigeria and this is the reason for the author to make the minister to bear three names and each representing the three major tribes of Nigeria. Haladu is a Hausa name, Ade is a Yoruba name and Amaka is an Igbo name. Students and other readers should be able to read in between the lines to be aware and let it register in their psyche, that this is a bad example of a leader. Leaders are to shield and protect their followers most especially they are to be pacesetters bearing in mind that their followers are watching them and if care is not taken the followers will soon be like them.

Bribery and corruption will always result in making the qualified people that cannot bribe to suffer and those that can bribe those that are not qualified to be employed or placed in positions they don't merit and thereby having mediocre leadership positions corrupting the society more and more. There is no mincing word that this will continue to injustice in our society and our values are trodden down.

Haladu Ade-Amaka, attempted to turn Aloho to a drug courier but this failed. Good for Aloho that the attempt failed but if not, that could have been the end of Aloho whether to terminate her life or to live the rest of her life in prison.

Students and readers reading or studying the life of this minister and the trouble he tried to put Aloho can easily avoid some offers that can make way for their pitfalls and that can destroy their lives. It is common recently that many ladies are deceived in Nigeria, taken out ignorantly with the view that they are going for greener pastures outside the shores of Nigeria only to be turned to sex workers. What if such ladies had known about this case of Aloho, it is possible that they would not have been trapped.

What about the recent case in Nigeria that the Minister and his family promised to take Abroad to make his life better only to discover that it is his kidney that they want to remove to help their own child that is faced with the ailment with kidney failure. The innocent child was already on the surgery table before the revelation came to him that one of his kidneys is to be removed.

(ii) Ochuole

She is the Chief Admin Officer in the office of the Hon. Minister for External Relations. It is

obvious that she has no other job than to recruit unsuspecting ladies for the pleasure and use of Haladu Ade-Amaka. She is a very dishonest, pretentious and avaricious lady. As an undergraduate friend of Aloho, she insulated herself from the genuine desire of her friend to get a good job and desired satisfaction afterwards. She pretended that all was well when Aloho approached the departure hall of the Airport with hard drugs in her bag. She persistently wished her good luck. For being so daft, unfeeling and complicit, she got a term of imprisonment from the no-nonsense head of the Jury that tried her.

There are many Ochuoles in our tertiary institutions today, they are skimmers and scammers. They can do anything to pull others down that only remains as best and helpers to other students when they are majorly destroying others and pulling them down. It is possible that some students or readers of the text will avoid or escape being victims of Ochuole as they study the character as a pretender and especially that for being so daft, unfeeling and complicit, she got a term of imprisonment from the no-nonsense head of the Jury that tried her. Furthermore, students or readers with characters like Ochuole should try to have a change of heart considering the fact that they may likely end their lives in prison like her (Oguntuase 2018).

### Ogeyi

Ogeyi is the centre of attraction in the play. She embodies the best of humanity. She is considerate, frank, factual and matronly. She stood by Aloho through thick and thin. She is determined to challenge the ruthlessness of the clique of power drunk elite in the text by reporting Haladu Ade-Amaka to an officer of the law that would act on the matter. In life and death, Aloho, has in Ogeyi, a very strong, unwavering pillar of support and counselor. This is probably so because she is a sound born again Christian.

Ogeyi as the centre of attraction in the play is the true picture or the type of "New Nigeria" we hope for as she embodies the best of humanity. Students and readers can observe that they can be Ogeyis of Nigeria as they can be considerate, frank and factual in their relationships with others. Standing through thick and thin with others just as she stood by Aloho. Students and readers should be determined to challenge the ruthlessness of power

drunk leaders at different levels of leadership by reporting their evil acts to law enforcement agents. They can easily call the attention of their teachers or parents to any act of indiscipline among their mates, so that they can correct and check them.

### **Aloho**

This is the tragic heroine of the drama. The play opens and ends with her or actions triggered by circumstances connected to her. She walks into a trap set by fate because of desperation. The Hon. Minister and her friend conspire to ruin her life by employing her in an office where she would work as a drug courier. She is acquitted for want of diligent prosecution. She tries unsuccessfully to abort the foetus deposited in her by the Minister but eventually dies.

There may be some students or readers facing one or two things that Aloho went through in this drama and have been going through mental torture believing that something is against them but with such, this may bring them succor that all is not over if they can see that they are not the only set of people going through such. This may make them open up to their teachers, friends and parents to bear their burden with them so that such will not lead to depression or even untimely death. An adage says 'A problem shared is already half solved'

Students and other readers can also think deeply never to be desperate to have anything in life especially, that it is all over the place to go into 'yahoo yahoo' or 'yahoo plus' to make quick money at the detriments of their own lives and jeopardizing lives of closed ones as they make rituals at one level or the other.

Aloho as the heroine of the drama is full of impatience and a novice indeed. She was trapped up because of desperation and impatience and the minister milked on her desperation and gullibility. Had it been that she took time to study the minister, she would have realised that all that glitters is not gold. Her life is a food thought for those that are easily swayed away with people's wealth especially for young ladies that haunt after married men and for students in most cases giving in for sex for marks among their male lecturers.

### **ACP Yakubu**

ACP Yakubu is the last and only standing in the entire police force in the play. He is the lone

voice in the wilderness of corruption and injustice. He defied his boss and damned the consequences to remain a police officer with conscience. His diligent prosecution of the case and the investigations before the court session assisted greatly to cage the fat cats of corruption, his boss inclusive (Oguntuase 2018)

How many police officers can stand to the end like ACP Yakubu in Nigeria today? Majority of them have got their consciences seared with hot iron. It is like they have dead consciences. It is of worthy encouragement to have ACP Yakubu who defied his boss and damned the consequences to remain a police officer with conscience. If not for his diligent prosecution of the case and the investigations before the court session, the minister would have escaped the right judgment.

ACP Yakubu's character is worthy of emulation to the students and the readers. More also, the rays of a better tomorrow of Nigeria can be more real to them than ever before. Also, they can see that there is no sacred cow or any room to cage fat cats of corruption. Standing for truth and discharging one's duty accordingly is all about one's choice. ACP Yakubu shunned intimidation to forge ahead and to be successful. With the success of ACP Yakubu, it is evident if students and readers take him as a model, Nigeria's corrupted forces will turn around for better because injustice or bribery would surely be crushed and there will bring sustainability of justice among students and people in the society at large.

### *Police Commissioner*

This character contrasts sharply with ACP Yakubu. Whilst Yakubu represents a dim hope that all may be well with the police Force in due course, the Police Commissioner is the archetype of the irredeemable bastion of corruption, injustice and immorality that the traditional Police force represents. It is heart-warming that he is destroyed in the end. There is hope that sanity will return to the force with the gradual but steady elimination of the bad brass hats in the force (Oguntuase, 2018).

### **Justice Odili**

Justice Odili was seen as a monumental disservice to the legal profession. It is paradoxical that as a law maker and defender, he becomes a law breaker and outlaw. He is seen throughout the play in league with Haladu Ade-Amaka to find ways of

breaking security checks and circumventing extant laws of the land. He received no mercy, no mitigation when he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. He fell from grace to grass.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, with the use of bibliotherapy and critical literacy the students are able to learn about lives of people and the society through the text used for this study about problems of corruption and embezzlement, desperation, injustice and characters that are good for emulation and those that are that they should desist from which are described as 'for problem solving and developmental purposes' in their lives as they are able to think through. Students could be helped with the use of bibliotherapy at different levels to teach or instruct them either in school or in society. They should be able to avoid the pitfalls of such characters in their individual lives and also to be their brothers' keeper so that they can have a better school and society for sustainable living. This will go a long way to make them take their stand as an individual to avoid the pitfalls of corruption to reshape their lives and the society. True labour pays more than cutting corners and also there is dignity in labour. Solving problems of corruption and developing right attitudes through critical literacy and sustainable living are of great values.

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# A Phenomenological Analysis of Reading Aloud Culturally Relevant Children's Literature in Nigerian Early Childhood Classrooms

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## Abstract

*Culturally-responsive teaching is one manifestation of critical literacy, which is typically applied by reading multicultural literature. The purpose of this study was to examine Nigerian early childhood educators' experiences reading aloud culturally-relevant storybooks. A qualitative phenomenological design was used to tap into participants lived experiences reading aloud culturally relevant storybooks. Twelve educators teaching from Nursery 1 to Primary 2 participated in an open-ended interview. Thematic analysis was used to answer three research questions. The results showed the most important benefits of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature were that pupils were able to relate to the content of the story, pupils learned academic content, pupils developed an interest in reading, and pupils learned important lessons. Participants reported only one challenge to reading aloud culturally-relevant literature, which was difficulty in accessing it. Therefore, reading aloud culturally-relevant literature develops pupils' critical literacy through culturally-responsive teaching.*

**Key words:** Phenomenological Analysis, Reading Aloud, Culturally, Relevant, Literature in Nigerian

## Introduction

Reading is a highly complex activity, including various important aspects, such as, recognizing symbols quickly and accurately, apprehending clearly and with discrimination the meanings implied by the author, reacting to and using the ideas, secured through reading, and integrating them into definite thought and action patterns (Harris, 1981). In other words, reading is the ability to give meaning and understanding to written document.

Read aloud is an instructional practice where teachers, parents and caregivers read text aloud to children. The teacher incorporates variations in pitch, tone, pace, pause, eye contact, questions and comments to produce a fluent and enjoyable delivery (Beauchat et al., 2012). This implies that reading aloud creates opportunity for readers and pupils to share the pleasure of reading, experience the excitement of a good story, and wonder about the world around them (Beauchat et al., 2012).

Korb (2018) stated that children begin to develop interest in reading from birth through observation of their parents, teachers and siblings. Reading aloud as an important instructional practice should begin very early in life starting from infancy (Snow et al., 1998). Even though young children may not be able to read print and may not be considered ready to learn how to read, they are still developing skills that will prepare them to read in future (Korb, 2018). Reading aloud is important because it provides exposure to complex texts before pupils are capable of reading those texts independently, it provides opportunities for active participation and collaboration with peers, it provides opportunity to think and speak at high levels of cognitive thinking, and motivates pupils to want to read (Price & Bradley, 2016).

Furthermore, strong readers are developed through good instruction by their teachers on the specific skills that are necessary for reading (GRAND Reading Study Group, 2002). As such young children who are exposed to

read aloud on a daily and consistent basis are provided with the tools for future literacy and language success. To prepare children for learning to read and to keep them reading as they learn and grow, they should participate in read aloud as this will boost their literacy success and overall educational development. Lack of reading aloud – especially culturally relevant literature – may account for poor reading culture and lack of interest in reading among school children. This affects their educational development and performance generally, as lack of reading success at the pre-school level may affect performance at the primary school level, which is a great concern for educational stakeholders. A scan of literature on school children's performance portrays that almost a quarter of eight grade students do not read well enough to understand important concepts and make simple inferences from text-based materials (National Centre for Statistics, 2015). This shows that parents and teachers need to deliberately teach reading skills in read aloud among school children for an improved performance.

There are many reasons why reading aloud is rarely used as an instructional strategy in Nigerian early childhood classrooms. The main reason is a lack of reading materials, especially culturally-relevant reading materials (Oyetunde et al., 2016). Other reasons include teachers' poor understanding of how children learn to read as well as lack of training in using read aloud to teach reading skills. Furthermore, the timetable in nursery and lower primary levels rarely include time for reading aloud. Reading aloud helps children develop the critical literacy and language skills that they will use in school and throughout their lives. Reading aloud culturally-relevant literature is especially important in developing critical literacy because critical literacy is culturally responsive (Norris et al., 2012). Therefore, reading aloud culturally relevant literature is vital for sustainable reading culture and creating a critically literate society. This phenomenological study takes a qualitative approach to exploring teachers' experiences with having access to culturally relevant literature to read aloud.

### **Critical Literacy**

Critical literacy involves carefully reading, studying, examining or analysing a particular text. Critical literacy has been defined by Anderson and Irvine as "learning to read and write as part of the process of becoming conscious of one's experience as historically constructed within specific power relations" (1993, p. 82). Critical literacy is a method that equips educators and pupils with a structure that helps to alter inequality (Vasquez, 2014). Critical literacy has contributed immensely to the learning, growth, and development of both educators and young children because it encourages them to think outside the box, look at a text in a different way. Teachers and young learners enjoy critical literacy when they are exposed to developmentally appropriate literature and culturally relevant reading materials. According to Clarke and Whitney, "Through application of critical literacy young children and teachers explore and come to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences that they have and share with each other" (2009, p. 530). Critical literacy encourages interactions or discussions about gender, power; social class, culture, race and religion that are usually presented in books children read or listen to during read aloud (Comber, 2003).

"We can either teach critical literacy as a series of skills, or we can teach it as if words matter" (Powell et al., 2001, p. 780). Lewison and colleagues (2002), found four common dimensions to critical literacy after they reviewed 30 years of professional literature. First, critical literacy can interrupt a common understanding or situation where pupils can gain perspective by understanding the text or situation in a different way. Second, critical literacy empowers pupils to examine multiple viewpoints by being encouraged to think about texts from the perspectives of different characters or from those not represented in the text. It can also help pupils focus on socio-political issues by examining power relationships between and among individuals. Finally, critical literacy affords taking action and promoting social justice by inviting pupils to determine a course of action to bring about change in an inappropriate unequal power relationship.



### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culturally responsive teaching is one manifestation of critical literacy (Norris et al., 2012). Culturally responsive teaching is a way of teaching that values the inclusion of students' cultural backgrounds in all parts of the teaching-learning process (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally responsive teaching infuses the culture of pupils into the school curriculum and makes meaningful connections with community cultures. Gay (2000) defined culturally responsive teaching as making learning activities relevant and effective by using pupils' cultural knowledge and experiences.

Most early childhood classrooms have a culturally diverse student population – especially in urban centres. As a result of this, it is imperative that early childhood classroom embraces this rich diversity and provide experiences that affirm the culture of all students. It is important that early childhood educators seek to educate the whole child and bridge gaps between home, school and community practices by engaging student's cultural knowledge, experiences, practices and perspectives (Gay, 2000). Because literacy is a social process, culturally-responsive teachers bring all pupils into a transformative learning process by using culturally-relevant literacy activities. Mitchell (2019) says that storytelling gives pupils the opportunity to include their culture, heritage, and language into the learning process at school. When teachers integrate pupils' culture into the authentic literacy process such as by including storytelling and reading aloud culturally-relevant literature, pupils find that their culture, heritage, and language have value. When a culturally responsive teacher encourages storytelling in pupils' cultures in the classroom, whether through traditional storytelling or read aloud, they help to merge both the home, school and community together through literacy (Gay, 2000).

### **Culturally Relevant Literature**

In reading instruction, culturally responsive education is typically applied by reading multicultural literature (Bennett et al., 2018). Literature is text materials designed to

inform, teach or just to entertain. Culturally relevant literature connects to a reader's culture, whether through specific intention or not. In other words, it talks about the reader's familiar environment, food, sense of fashion, language, dialect, music and so many other unique identities of the reader. The reader finds a common ground to relate to the material so interest is aroused.

Culturally relevant literatures perform the function of teaching, informing or entertaining by leveraging on the cultural values of the readers where these literatures are used. They could be authored by the natives of the area themselves or foreigners who have studied the culture deeply and have enough in-depth knowledge to be recognized as authorities in a culture that is not traditionally theirs.

### **Objectives of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine Nigerian early childhood educators' experiences reading aloud culturally-relevant storybooks. This study was part of a larger study that provided early childhood educators (Nursery 1 through Primary 2) with access to one culturally-relevant storybook per week for one academic term. At the end of the term, early childhood educators were asked to describe their experience having better access to culturally-relevant storybooks for reading aloud.

### **The following questions were answered in this study:**

1. What do Nigerian Early Childhood Educators believe are the benefits of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature?
2. What challenges do Nigerian Early Childhood Educators have with reading aloud culturally-relevant literature?
3. What academic concepts do Nigerian Early Childhood Educators believe pupils can learn from reading aloud culturally-relevant literature?

### **Methods**

A qualitative phenomenological design was used for this study to tap into participants lived experiences reading aloud culturally relevant

storybooks. Phenomenological studies are designed to carefully and thoroughly capture and describe how participants make sense of a specific experience (Patton, 2002). This is done through in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon. Therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted with educators who directly experienced one term of having access to culturally-relevant storybooks for reading aloud.

Participants were 12 educators who taught in an early childhood classroom at different schools, including public and private as well as low-income and high-income schools. Two participants taught Nursery 1, four taught Nursery 2, five taught Nursery 3, and one taught Primary 2. Of those participants, one was a male. They ranged in teaching experience from 1 to 30 years, with a mean of 12 years teaching experience. Five completed NCE/Diploma certificates, whereas seven completed first degrees. Half had completed their training in the field of education, while the other half did not receive formal training in education.

#### Instrumentation and Data Collection.

The study participants were interviewed using open-ended questions. The data for this study was collected as part of a larger interview. This study focused on responses to the question, "Please describe your experiences with having better access to culturally relevant storybooks." Probing questions were used to draw out more information on participants' experiences with reading aloud culturally-relevant storybooks in their classroom.

After learning and engaging with culturally relevant storybooks for one academic term, all

participants were interviewed following an interview protocol. Interviews were conducted and audio recorded for transcription purposes. The interviews with the 12 participants took 10 working days to be completed. Full interviews ranged in length from 14 minutes and 52 seconds to 56 minutes and 19 seconds. The interviews were conducted at the individual schools where the participants taught with the exception of one which was conducted at the participant's apartment. They were conducted between the hours of 8am and 1:30pm. Interviews were then transcribed verbatim for data analysis.

#### Data Analysis and Results

Thematic analysis was used to answer the research questions. After interviews were conducted and transcribed, the responses underwent thematic qualitative content analysis to discover similar patterns, called themes. The themes that were discovered brought to focus the experience the participants had reading aloud culturally relevant story books. In the first reading of the transcripts, the research team identified preliminary themes. These themes were then defined. In the second reading of the transcripts, the research team coded responses for each theme. The research team compared their coding and came to a consensus through discussion.

The first research question asked, what Nigerian Early Childhood Educators believe are the benefits to reading aloud culturally-relevant literature. The themes, definitions of each theme, and number of participants who mentioned each theme are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Nigerian Early Childhood Educators' Beliefs of the Benefits of Reading Aloud Culturally-Relevant Literature.

| Theme             | Definition  | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|---|-----------|---------|
| Relate            | Pupils are able to relate to the content in the story, or the content is familiar | 10        | 83.33   |
| Academic Content  | Pupils learn academic content   | 6         | 50.00   |
| Interest          | Pupils develop an interest in reading or have fun                                 | 5         | 41.67   |
| Learn             | Pupils learn important lessons  | 5         | 41.67   |
| Attention         | Pupils pays attention during read aloud   | 4         | 33.33   |
| Remembers         | Pupils remember the story and/or lessons learned from the story                   | 4         | 33.33   |
| Cultural Identity | Develops pupils' cultural identity  | 3         | 25.00   |
| Understand        | Pupils are able to better understand the story                                    | 3         | 25.00   |
| Write             | Inspires the reader to write stories based on their own experiences               | 2         | 16.67   |

The most frequently perceived benefit of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature is that pupils are able to relate to the content of the story. Because the content is familiar, they are able to make connections between the stories and their experiences. This theme was mentioned by 10 out of the 12 participants. For example, Participant 8 said, "Children were able to relate better to these stories because these are things they see, these are things that we are used to here."

The next most frequently perceived benefit was that pupils are able to learn academic content, which was mentioned by half of the participants. This theme was further explored by the third research question.

Interest and learn were themes tied for the third most frequently perceived benefit of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature, both mentioned by 5 participants. The Interest theme captured both that pupils developed a greater interest in reading and that they enjoyed reading. For example, Participant 3 said, "I got to see a change in their attitude towards reading. They got more excited to read books." The Learn theme captured responses about broader lessons that pupils learned, such as learning that they are special.

Other perceived benefits related to learning included that pupil paid better attention (N=4), they remembered better (N=4), they understood better (N=3), and would be more motivated to write stories (N=2). Another interesting theme was that listening to culturally-relevant stories would develop pupils' cultural identity (N=3). For example, Participant 8 said, "Those stories with a cultural touch you know has really given some of them the chance to like connect very well with their roots...definitely it will help the children have a sense of belonging."

The second research question asked, what challenges Nigerian Early Childhood Educators have with reading aloud culturally-relevant literature. Only one challenge was mentioned by participants: the culturally-relevant storybooks were difficult to access. This was mentioned by 4 (33.33%) of the participants. For example, Participant 12 said, "They [culturally-relevant storybooks] were so unique and

wonderful so I went to the market to see if I could get some of them." The experimenter then asked, "And did you get?" Participant 12 replied, "Honestly, I didn't get the ones that suit the ones [we had access to]."

The third research question asked, what academic concepts Nigerian Early Childhood Educators believe pupils can learn from reading aloud culturally-relevant literature. The following academic concepts were mentioned (in alphabetical order): *animals*, *colours*, knowledge of different *countries*, awareness of different *cultures* (social studies), *numbers and counting*, *print awareness* (including letters and different parts of the book), *reading fluency* (the ability to read words or sentences), and *vocabulary* (the meaning of new words).

### Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine Nigerian early childhood educators' experiences reading aloud culturally-relevant storybooks. The first research question examined Nigerian Early Childhood Educators beliefs of the benefits of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature. The results showed the most important benefits were that pupils were able to relate to the content of the story, pupils learned academic content, pupils developed an interest in reading, and pupils learned important lessons. These findings were supported by the principle of culturally-responsive teaching that teachers should relate literature to children's culture and what the pupils are familiar with (Ladson, 1994).

The second research question examined challenges that Nigerian Early Childhood Educators had with reading aloud culturally-relevant literature. Participants reported only one challenge, which was difficulty in accessing culturally-relevant literature. Oyetunde and colleagues (2016) also reported that the main reason why reading aloud was rarely used was lack of reading materials, especially culturally-relevant reading materials.

The third research question examined academic concepts that Nigerian early childhood educators believed pupils learned from reading aloud culturally-relevant literature. Participants

reported five academic concepts, including mathematics (counting), social studies (knowledge of cultures), science (animals and colours), and English (vocabulary). Therefore, each of the major academic subjects can be taught in a culturally-responsive manner through reading aloud culturally-relevant storybooks. In addition to being culturally-responsive, reading aloud is also an interesting and playful teaching method.

Through the lens of critical literacy, both pupils and educators were able to explore, understand, and appreciate the similarities and differences in cultures through reading aloud culturally-relevant literature (Clarke & Whitney, 2009). Culturally-responsive teaching is critical literacy (Norris et al., 2012). Therefore, culturally-relevant literature is vital for sustainable educational development in early childhood classrooms in Nigeria. The results of this study found multiple benefits of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature, with the only disadvantage being access.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study found Nigerian early childhood educators reported several benefits to reading aloud culturally-relevant literature, including that children can relate to culturally-relevant literature, they can learn academic content, and it develops their skills and interest in reading. The only challenge that Nigerian early childhood educators experienced was difficulty in accessing the culturally-relevant literature. Reading aloud culturally-relevant literature develops pupils' critical literacy through culturally-responsive teaching. Based on the findings and the conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Schools should provide varieties of culturally-relevant reading materials for educators. Benefits of having access to culturally-relevant reading materials include learning academic content, nurturing holistic development, enjoyable learning activities, and develops pupils' cultural identity.
- School administrators should make time in their classroom timetable for reading aloud so pupils can reap all of the benefits of reading aloud, especially culturally-relevant literature.
- Authors and publishers should create children's literature that relates to children in their immediate cultural environment to realize the benefits of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature.
- Both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs should create awareness of the importance of reading aloud culturally-relevant literature.
- Early childhood educators should integrate academic content into reading aloud as an interesting, playful, and effective teaching method.
- Educators should encourage pupils to write their own stories based on their own cultural experience.
- Further studies should examine reasons why culturally-relevant literature is hard to access. Furthermore, because reading aloud is rarely on the classroom timetable, further studies should examine school administrators' perception of reading aloud.
- Parents should be encouraged to read aloud culturally-relevant literature to their children in order to further maximize the benefits.

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## مقياس المقبولة في تقويم النصوص المترجمة: دراسة لسانية نصية تقابلية الدكتور نوح الأول جنيدي، قسم اللغات الأجنبية، جامعة ولاية لاغوس، نيجيريا

### ملخص

تعدّ الترجمة قضية مهمة من قضايا التواصل الإنسانيّ الفعليّ عبْر الحدود الثقافيّة، وذلك لأنّ تفاهم شعوب العالم بعضها مع بعض يعتمد عليها اعتماداً قوياً. تعاني الترجمة وممارستها من بعض الإشكاليات المتمثلة في مشكلة تلقي النصوص المصدر، ونقل المعنى، وتقويم الترجمة وتحقيق التكافؤ الترجميّ، وقد حاول الباحثون اللسانيون النصيون تقديم بعض نظريات ومقاربات لسانية يرحى أن تذلل بعض الإشكاليات المحددة. تعد النصية (Textuality) ومعاييرها من مبادئ لسانيات النص التي ينتجاً إليها لتقديم حلول ناجعة للمشاكل الترجمة المذكورة. يحاول هذا المقال التعريف بمقياس المقبولة (Acceptability Standard) - بوصفه أحد معايير النصية - وبيان مفاهيمه وعناصره النصية. ويبيّن علاقته بالترجمة، كما يقوم المقال بتحويله إلى إطار معرّفٍ مغيّرٍ لتحليل النصوص المترجمة وتقييمها، وتطبيقه على نصوص سياسية مختارة. ويتم اختيار النصوص المترجمة النموذجية من التقارير والمقالات الصادرة من منظمات ومؤسسات حكوميّة وغير حكوميّة لها مواقع على الإنترنت. وانتهى المقال إلى أن عملية الترجمة القائمة على استخدام مقياس المقبولة تُمكن المترجم من توفير وسائل المقبولة وإثباتها في النصّ الهدف حتى يكون - في نهاية المطاف - نصاً مقبولاً ومناسباً.

## Acceptability Standard in Translated Texts: A Linguistic and Contrastive Study

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### Abstract

*Translation is considered one of the significant issues in human communication across cultural limits. This significance is premised on the fact that mutual intelligibility and understanding of people with different languages and cultures largely depends on it. Translation practices are confronted with some challenges namely: problem of source text deconstruction, transfer of meaning, Target text translation assessment and realisation of translational equivalence. Researchers in text-linguistic have presented some theories and approaches which are intended to proffer some solutions to the identified challenges. Textuality and its standards stand out as one of the text-linguistic principles that is expected to deal with the translation problem. This paper therefore aimed at discussing the concept and elements of Acceptability standard. It appraises the relationship of the standard with Translation studies. The paper essays at transforming the Acceptability standard into a useful cognitive theoretical framework to analyse and assess translated texts. The selected translated texts in this paper are sourced from political reports and articles from (non-) governmental organizations who has accessible websites online. The paper concludes on the note that translational procedure that is based on the use of acceptability textual standard enables the translator to provide acceptability elements and input it in the target text which will eventually render it a relevant and acceptable text.*

**Key Terms:** Textuality, Textuality Standards, Acceptability, Translational Equivalence, Translated Text

## تمهيد

صحيحاً من التاحية القواعدية، وأن الاتصال اليومي يحتاج إلى المقبولية وليس إلى القواعدية، لأن علم القواعد لا يمكن أن يقدم وصفاً لجميع الجمل المشروعة في اللغة. وفي هذه التفرقة يعرض الاتجاه الذي تبعه وليام لايوف (William Labov) ومفاده: "أنه بالإمكان تفسير فروق الاستعمال في مختلف الفئات الاجتماعية بحسب قواعد متغيرة لا قواعد متجمدة متحجرة معصومة عن الخطأ، وفي وسع منتجي التصوص -بالاعتماد على بعض العوامل الاجتماعية- أن يتخذوا خياراً من قواعد بديلة، أو مجموعة من القواعد".<sup>6</sup> ويُستنتج من الاقتباس أن المقبولية تختلف باختلاف الفئات الاجتماعية، وكذلك المقاييس التي تملكها كل فئة اجتماعية.

ومما انتهى إليه دي بوجراند في التفرقة التي يعقدها بين المقبولية والقواعدية الاعتبار الحاسم المتمثل في أن اللغة لا يمكن وصفها أو شرحها إلا باعتبارها نصاً في بيئة واقعية أو سياق واقعي.<sup>7</sup> وإنما المهم -حسب ملاحظة يوسف نور عوض- هو أن يكون النص فعالاً ومؤثراً ومناسباً.<sup>8</sup> وهذا يعني أن الجملة - وإن كانت قواعدية - لا يحكم عليها بالقبول إلا بالنظر إلى السياق الذي وردت فيه، وإنما يحكم الزاوي، في العادة على الجمل بأنها "قواعدية" إذا كان من السهل عليه تحيّل سياقات ممكنة لتلك الجمل، وبذلك تصبح القواعدية "محدّداً جزئياً للمقبولية، متفاعلاً مع غيره من العوامل".<sup>9</sup> ومن الجدير بالذكر أن المقبولية تُضَمّن معنى القبول وهو رغبةً نشيطة للمشاركة في الخطاب ومشاطرة الهدف، وهو فعلٌ حدث قائم بذاته. ومن التقديرات في المشاركة قبول المشاركين في الحادثة أهداف مشاركين آخرين، لأن الاتصال الناجح متمثل في قدرة المشاركين على تحديد أهداف مشاركين آخرين واستنتاجها من خلال كلامهم ومحاوراتهم.

وقد حدّد من شروط المقبولية المتعلقة بالنص ومنتجه ومتلقيه، أن يتوافر في النص الاتساق والانسجام ليكون النص متماسكاً مقبولاً، ومن الشروط الخاصة بمنتج النص توافر المقصودية في النص لأنها هي التي تدفع المنتج إلى تحديد هدف ما في خواطره من أمور نفسية وعقلية وثقافية تثيره المتلقي وتشده إلى النص قارئاً وناقداً. ومن شروط المقبولية أن يُعتبر المتلقي عنصراً مهماً في تقبل النص وأن يُفوّض له السلطة على النص حتى يستطيع أن يدخل إلى

يعد مفهوم النصية (Textuality) من أهم مفاهيم لسانيات النص الحديثة . وهو مبدأ يعتمد عليه التحليل للتصوص اللغوية الطبيعية، كما يدل على مجموعة معقدة من الخصائص التي يجب توافرها في النص للحكم عليه بأنه نص، وتنطبق على جميع التصوص التي لها قيمة تواصلية وتعمل في الخطاب عملاً وظيفياً. وللنص سبعة معايير تستند بحملتها إلى عوامل علمية أربعة (لغوية ونفسية واجتماعية وذهنية)، فهي بمنزلة مبادئ عامة تصلح للحكم بنصية التصوص على اختلاف أنواعها، ولا تكتسب صفة القوانين الصارمة،<sup>1</sup> وذلك لأنها مجرد مؤشرات مهمة في إنتاج التصوص وتقويمها.

يفرض المترجم -المنطلق من مبدأ النصية- على نفسه فهم العناصر التي اجتمعت لخلق النصية لتكون في مصلحة قراء النص الهدف. ويمكن في سياق دراسات الترجمة استخدام مبدأ النصية لتحديد الحالات التي يمكن القول فيها بأن النص المصدر ونظيره النص الهدف يتكافأان تكافؤاً نصياً، والتكافؤ النصي هو الحالة الغائية التي تُجر إليها عملية الترجمة.<sup>2</sup> بمحاول هذا المقال تحويل معيار المقبولية إلى إطار معرفي مرجعي لتقويم النصوص المترجمة.

## مفهوم المقبولية في لسانيات النص وتحليل النص

## المقبولية Acceptability

إن معيار المقبولية معيار نسبي، وهو حسب تعريف دي بوجراند (Robert Alain De Beaugrande) " اتجاه متلقي النص إلى أن تُؤلف مجموعة الوقائع اللغوية نصاً متسقاً منسجماً ذا نفع له وصلة ما به، ومن ثم اكتسابه معرفة جديدة أو قيامه بالتعاون لتحقيق خطة ما".<sup>3</sup> وللمقبولية أيضاً مدى من التفاضل في حالات تؤدي فيها المواقف إلى ارتباك حيث لا توجد شراكة في الغايات بين المتلقي والمنتج.<sup>4</sup> ويلاحظ من بيان دي بوجراند أن المحافظة على اتساق النص وانسجامه من جانب المتلقي هدف قائم بذاته.

إن النص المقبول من منظور دي بوجراند ليس النص الصحيح نحوياً فقط، وإنما هناك أمور أخرى مهمة لا تقل عن الصحة النحوية تتضافر جميعاً لنتج نصاً مقبولاً. وقد عقد التفرقة بين القواعدية (Grammaticality) والمقبولية (Acceptability) وذكر أنه ليس كل نص مقبول في الاتصال

<sup>1</sup> انظر عوض، يوسف نور، علم النص ونظرية الترجمة، المملكة المتحدة: مانستر، 1988م، ص: 50.

<sup>2</sup> See Neubert A, and Shreve G.M., **Translation as Text**, Ohio/London: Kent State University Press, 1992, p.71-72

<sup>3</sup> انظر: أبو غزالة إلهام وحمد علي خليل، المرجع السابق، ص 31. وانظر: الشامي، محمد أشرف عبد العال، المرجع السابق، ص: 280.

<sup>4</sup> انظر: بوجراند، روبرت دي، ترجمة: تمام حسان، المرجع السابق، ص: 104.

<sup>5</sup> انظر: أبو غزالة، إلهام وحمد، علي خليل، المرجع السابق، ص: 174-175.

<sup>6</sup> المصدر السابق، ص: 176.

<sup>7</sup> See Beaugrande R. De and Wolfgang Dressler, **Introduction to Text Linguistics**, (London/ NewYork: Longman,1981), p. 132.

<sup>8</sup> انظر: عوض، يوسف نور، ص: 51.

<sup>9</sup> انظر: المرجع السابق، ص: 131-132.

عالمه ويشارك في ملء فراغ النَّصِّ، وإعطاءه الفرص لقيام مهمة الإدراك المباشر والاستدْهان.<sup>10</sup>

### مِيار المقبولة في التراث العربي

كان سيبويه من علماء العربية الذين تنبَّهوا إلى المقبولة بدلالاتها الواسعة التي تتجاوز حدود القواعد النحوية وتعدّها إلى مستوى الدلالة، ويُستفاد معنى المقبولة من قوله: "هذا باب الاستقامة من الكلام والإحالة، فمنه مستقيم حسن، ومحال، ومستقيم كذب، ومستقيم قبيح، وما هو محال كذب". ثم جعل المستقيم من الكلام في ثلاثة أقسام، وجعل المحال في قسمين:

1. الكلام المستقيم الحسن: ومثاله ( "أتيت أمس"، سأتيك غداً).
2. الكلام المستقيم الكذب: ( "حملتُ الجبل"، "شربتُ ماء البحر"،
3. الكلام المستقيم القبيح: ( "قد زبدًا رأيت"، "كفي زبدًا يأتيك"،
4. الكلام المحال: ( "أنتك غداً، سأتيك أمس"،
5. الكلام المحال الكذب: ( "سوف أشرب ماء البحر أمس").

وقد تمكّن سيبويه- وإن مثلًا بأمثله بعضها تجريدية- من الوصول إلى هذه المقاييس بملاحظاته الدقيقة الخلفية معرفية يمتلكها المتكلم بلغته الأولى في مجتمع لغوي واحد. وقد جعل سيبويه كلاً من هذه التشكيلات اللغوية كلاماً يمكن العثور عليه في كلام الناس المتداول، وفي تصنيفه إحالات إلى فكرة الانتقال من الحقيقة إلى المجاز، وذلك لمعرفة أن الإنسان ليس له قدرة على حمل الجبل وليس بوسع شرب ماء البحر.

ولقد اهتم ابن طباطبا في "عيار الشعر"<sup>11</sup> بأربعة عناصر وجد أنها ركائز أساسية للإبانة عن أصول صناعة الشعر، وهي الشاعر، والمتلقي، والنص، والمقام، ووضح كيف تتفاعل هذه الركائز، وذكر أنه يسهم كلٌّ منها في جعل النص مقبلاً. وقد تناول ابن طباطبا الشعر من خلال تحليله لعملية نظم الشعر وما يلزمها من شروط وأسباب، كما تناول المتلقي وعملية فهمه للنص، وصرّح في استنتاجاته الأدبية بأن المتلقي يمكنه الحكم على النص بالقبول، وبعبارة أخرى يمكنه قبول النص إذا كان قد فهمه، وإلا فكيف يقبل المتلقي شيئاً لم يفهمه.

وتناول فضلاً عن هذا علاقة الشاعر بالمقام والمتلقي من خلال تأكيده مراعاة الشاعر لكلٍّ منهما، وهو يركّز على مبدأ الملازمة والتأدّب.

### مِيار المقبولة في الترجمة

تعني المقبولة محافظة المتلقي على اتساق النصّ وإنسجامه وقيامه بالتعاون مع منتج النصّ لتحقيق خطة ما. والحقيقة أن المقصودية تصاحب المقبولة من حيث المبدأ، لأن أهداف منتج النصّ الأصلي لا يمكن تحقيقها في حالة يتعدّر على المتلقي فهم الغرض الذي أُنتج النصّ لأجله، ذلك لأن من شروط قبول النصّ بوصفه عنصراً لغوياً اتصالاً ذا هدف مباركة المتلقي عليه وتقبله له. وما يجب التنبّه إليه في مِيار المقبولة أنه لا يمكن وجود مقياس واحد لتحديد مقبولة النصّ، لأنّ التصوُّص بأنواعها خاضعة لقيود مختلفة، وإلا فلا يمكن اعتبارها نصوِّصاً. ويقصد بهذه القيود احتمال بعض التصوُّص على خصائص نصّية معيّنة ظاهرة في ترتيباتها النحوية والدلالية.

وقد لاحظ نيوبيرت وشراف (Neubert & Shreve) -وهما منطلقان من مفهوم المقبولة- أنه إذا أراد المترجم إنتاج نصّ هدف مقبول فعليه أن يفهم مقاييس المقبولة لمجتمع اللغة الهدف وخاصة إذا تشابحت مقاييس المقبولة للغتين (المصدر والهدف- Source/Target Languages)،<sup>12</sup> وأنه لا يمكن للمترجم إبداع النصّ الهدف استعمالات نحوية ودلالية للغة المصدر بدون نقدٍ فاحصٍ ثاقب<sup>13</sup>. ومن الملاحظ أن مقياس المقبولة يبنّي على التوقعات النصّية لمجتمع اللغة الهدف، وهي توقعات تأصلت وتأثرت عبر العصور بتجربتهم النصّية المتميزة، وهي نتيجة للتطور التاريخي للتصوُّص في المجتمع. ومن وظائف المقبولة النصّية تنظيم العلاقات الاجتماعية وتثبيتها بآلية عناصرها مما يساعد على استعمال مقاييس المقبولة للقيام بافتراضات من تنم عن المعرفة المشتركة التي هي شرط الاتصال بالتصوُّص.<sup>14</sup>

ويوافق هذا المفهوم النصّ بعض الأبحاث الترجمة الموسومة بالترجمة الموجهة للمتلقى وتقول قاعدتها: "عدّل طبيعة النصّ في مصلحة قارئ اللغة المستهدفة".<sup>15</sup> وتنبيه هذه القاعدة المترجمين إلى محاولة إنتاج نصّ مستهدف مقبول للمتلقين الذين يُحتمل أنهم -يجهلون الوضعيات اللغوية المتحركة على اللغة المصدر.

ومن المبادئ التي تتعلق بمفهوم المقبولة مبدأ فلسفي تقدّم به جرائس (Grice)<sup>16</sup> وصفاً للمفاوضة الجارية في المحادثات، وسمّاه مبدأ التعاون

<sup>10</sup> انظر: الشامي، أحمد محمد عبد العال، المرجع السابق، ص: 332351.

<sup>11</sup> انظر: أبي الاحسن محمد بن أحمد بن طباطبا العلوي، عيار الشعر، ت: عبد العزيز بن ناصر المناع، (القاهرة: مكتبة الخانجي)، ص: 13.

<sup>12</sup> Holz-Manttari, J. *Translatorisches Handeln: Theorie und Methode*. (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia, 1984), p. 40, culled from Neubert A. and Shreve G., op. cit. p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> See Neubert A. and Shreve G., op.cit. p 74.

<sup>14</sup> See See Neubert A. and Shreve G., op.cit. p. 74

<sup>15</sup> See Neubert A. and Shreve G., op. cit. p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> Grice, H. P., *Logic and Conversation*, in P. Cole and J. L. Morgan (eds) *Syntax and Semantics*, vol. 3: *Speech Acts*, (New York: Academic Press), p. 41-48.



(Cooperative Principle/Maxim)<sup>17</sup> الذي نصّه: "ليكن إسهامك في المحادثة رهناً بما تقتضيه الغاية المقبولة أو الاتجاهات المقبولة في تبادل الحديث الذي تشارك فيه". ويدلّ هذا المبدأ على استعداد مستعمل اللغة المستهدفة لمفاوضة معنى النصّ وتقبله نصّاً، ومن الإمكان -حسب قول نيوبرت وشرايف- أن تتمّ المفاوضة في حالة عدم تعارف الطرفين في الاتصال، إذ يعدّ التعاون شرطاً لقابلية الترجمة وافترضاً يجب أن يقوم به المترجم.<sup>18</sup>

إن المترجم الذي يتأثر بمبادئ السلوك والتعاون يخضع لمبدأ الكمية (Maxim of Quantity) فيعيد خلق النصوص المترجمة لمتلقي اللغة الهدف (Target Text Receiver) بتوسيع ألفاظها وضغطها أو حذفها ويجعلها مناسبة لبني أو تشكلات اللغة المصدر، وأنه يلتجئ إلى هذه العملية نظراً للفروق في الأنظمة اللغوية والثقافية وتنظيم الإطار المعرفي (Cognitive Frame)، ويتخذ هذا القرار لمصلحة القراء، لأن المبدأ يحث المترجم على أن يستعمل إجراءات الترجمة التي تُنتج نصّ الهدف يخدم القراء ومصالحهم أكثر. يُحرّز المبدأ المترجم من توهم وجوب المحافظة على التساوي النصّي، فيمتنع من استخدام الألفاظ والعبارات غير المناسبة ويتجنبها خصوصاً عند جهله عن خيارات لغة الهدف المتكافئة. وتقيداً بمبدأ النوعية (Maxim of Quality) يتنبه المترجم لأهمية المحافظة على استمرارية الصدق في المفاهيم داخل النصّ، ويرى من الواجب تحقيق الاستمرارية الداخلية فيما يتعلق بالإحالات إلى الكيانات المتأثرة والأحداث والأماكن والأشخاص في عالم النصّ. هذا ويفرض المبدأ على المترجم خلق الاستمرارية الداخلية في النصّ الهدف إلى أن تكون الترجمة تحويلاً خالفاً ومحافظاً للصدق.

واعتماداً على مبدأ المناسبة (Maxim of Relevance)، يحاول المترجم جعل النصّ الهدف نصّاً يستطيع القارئ به أن يتجاهل المعلومات غير المناسبة ويتعرّف إلى العناصر التي تنتسب إلى العلاقات والمفاهيم الأولية، حتى يتحقّق الفهم، ويتمكّن القارئ من التركيز على بعض العلاقات والتغاضي عن علاقات أخرى. ويُرى استرشاداً بهذا المبدأ أنه من مسؤولية المترجم خلق شبكة من العلاقات الدلالية والمفاهيمية داخل نصّ الهدف، التي كانت مناسبة لتشكلات النصّ المصدر حتى يهتدي القارئ للنصّ الهدف إلى اتخاذ قرار أو

نتيجة شبيهة بتلك التي انتهى إليها القارئ للنصّ المصدر. وقد ذكر نيوبرت وشرايف أن الحدّد الملائم للمناسبة Relevance هو تقويم مقصد النصّ، وأضافا أنه عندما يتغيّر المقصد من الترجمة فعلى المترجم أن يبرز في النصّ الهدف مقصودية المتلقين للنصّ الهدف.<sup>19</sup>

يتنبه المترجم -استناداً إلى مبدأ الهيئة (Maxim of Manner) - إلى قيمة تنظيم النصّ وتشكيله كما يمكن أن يكون نصّاً فعالاً وملائماً حسبّ المواقف. ويتحدّده نوع النصّ ومقصوديته يتمتّع المترجم بحرية في تطوير نوعية النصّ الهدف وقيمه بدون اختراق مناسبة أساسية للنصّ المصدر.

### مقياس المقبولية إطاراً معرفياً مرجعياً لتقييم النصوص المترجمة

ينبّه مقياس المقبولية بصفتها إطاراً مرجعياً معرفياً المترجم (الذي هو المحلّل والمراجع في آن واحد) للنصوص المترجمة إلى الأسئلة المهمة أثناء الترجمة وفي تحليلها ومراجعتها وتقييمها، وهي: كيف يتقبّل المتلقي (أو المترجم) العادي النصوص وعناصرها وكيف يقدّرها؟ وتمثّل الإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة تحليلاً شاملاً وتقويماً للنصوص المترجمة.

وينظر المترجم أو المحلّل المنطلق من هذا المقياس في عناصر الاتساق والانسجام التي يتوقّع توافرها في النصّ الهدف، ويبحث في مظاهر تمكّن المترجم من توفير الوسائل وإثباتها في النصّ، وهو متمتّع بخلفية معرفية تجعله يتتبع العلاقات المفهومية الكامنة في النصّ. وإن النجاح في هذه الإجراءات يمثّل جواباً للسؤال المطروح.

### تحليل وتقييم للنصوص المترجمة المختارة

ينحصر التحليل والتقويم في هذا المقال في التقارير والمقالات السياسية المختارة والمنشورة بالعناوين التالية:

أ. "خطاب بوش عن الحرب العالمية على الإرهاب"، تستمد نصوص الخطاب المصدر والهدف من (مكتب برامج الإعلام الأمريكي).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup>. وهو اتفاق ضمني للتعاون في الاتصال

<sup>18</sup> See Neubert A. and Shreve G., op cit. p. 79-80, see also Baker, Mona, op. cit. p. 225-254.

<sup>19</sup> See Neubert A. and Shreve G., op. cit. p80.

<sup>20</sup> بوش، جورج (الابن)، خطاب بوش عن الحرب العالمية على الإرهاب، البيت الأبيض، مكتب برامج الإعلام الأميركي، تاريخ الزيارة والنقل: سبتمبر 26، 2007، الساعة 17:48 صباحاً، موقع المكتب: www.usinfo.state.gov، وموقع النص العربي:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile->

arabic&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906220953ssiss  
irdile0.9468653 وموقع النص الإنجليزي:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906155503eai>  
fas0.8319666

ب. "اللوبي الإسرائيلي وسياسة أمريكا الخارجية" (مجلة المستقبل العربي)<sup>21</sup>

ت. "من هم المتمردون: القوار من العرب السنة في العراق"، (معهد السلام الأمريكي)<sup>22</sup>

ث. إيران في العراق: ما مدى التفوذ (كرايسز جروب)<sup>23</sup>

مظاهر معيار المقبولة في النصوص المترجمة (تحليل وتقييم)

ا. "خطاب بوش عن الحرب العالمية على الإرهاب" الخلفيات المعرفية:

إن قدرة المترجم - وهو أيضاً متلقٍ للخطاب - على إدراك عناصر الاتساق والانسجام المتوافرة في النص المصدر، مع تمكّنه الملحوظ من توفيرها وإثباتها في النص الهدف دليل صريح على مقبولة النص، إذ إنه بإمكان أي عربي عارف باللغة العربية أن يفهم النص نظراً لخلفيته المعرفية عن هذا النص السياسي الدبلوماسي، وشخصية الرئيس، وتتبعه للأحداث والحوادث والمواقف، ومن المتوقع أن يُدرك الوسائل الاتساقية المتميزة الظاهرة والعلاقات المفهومية الكامنة في النص. وإنما يختار الرئيس الأمريكي عناصر الاتساق والانسجام لمعرفته بالأمريكيين أحوالهم ووعيه بأنهم يشركونه في مفاوضة مواقفه وأهدافه في النص، والأمريكيون بدورهم يُدركون العناصر والخطط التي يديرها الرئيس، ومن المحتمل أنهم قد يعيّنون الفراغ الذهني المتكوّن من شبكة المفاهيم والعلاقات التي تمثّلها العناصر النصية التي اعتمدها.

ولعل المترجم موفقٌ في توسّطه بين النصّين المصدر والهدف، حيث يستند إلى معيار المقبولة والمبادئ التعاونية بإبداع النصّ الهدف عناصر الاتساق والانسجام الملائمة والمتأصلة في الثقافة العربية، ويتجلى ذلك في تأثره بمبدأ المناسبة في اختياره ألفاظاً وعبارات مثل: "حاضرة" ترجمة لـ (Mr.)، و "أهلاً بكم في

البيت الأبيض" ترجمة لـ (Welcome to the White House)، وهذا الاختيار يبنى على الفروق الملحوظة في الأنظمة اللغوية والثقافية وتنظيم الإطار المعرفي، وعلى التوقعات النصية مجتمع العرب اللغوية.

وتنبّهاً لمعيار المقبولة ولمبدأ غرايس الكمّية (Maxim of Quality) تنحى المترجم عن تكرار اللفظ "Intelligence" الوارد في: "This intelligence—this is intelligence that cannot be found any other place". والذي تكرر في النصّ المصدر، فاكفَى المترجم بذكر العبارة (المعلومات الاستخباراتية) مرة واحدة وذلك في التّركيب: "وهذه المعلومات الاستخباراتية... لا يمكن العثور عليها في أي مكان آخر". وتجنّب أيضاً تكرار اسم الإشارة "these" الذي جاء مكرّراً في التّركيب: "These enemy—these are enemy combatants, who were waging war on our nation". وورد اسم الإشارة (هؤلاء) مرة واحدة في التّركيب الذي ترجم إلى: "وهؤلاء مقاتلون أعداء يشتون حرباً ضد بلدنا"، لعلّهم ومعرفته وضعيات اللّغتين المصدر والهدف، وما تتميّز به كلتاها من التّركيبات النّحوية والدلالية والتداولية.

ومن مظاهر المقبولة والتنبّه لمبادئ غرايس التعاونية في ظاهر تشكيلات النصّ الهدف استخدام المترجم أداة الوصل "أما...فـ" التّركيبية المتأصلة في الأسلوب التعبيري العربي المتداول في: "أما الأعداء فهم مختلفون، لكن المصلحة في هذه الحرب واحدة." فمن المتوقّعات أن يتقبّل المتلقي العربي مثل هذا التّركيب كنصّ عربيٍّ مؤثّر.

نلاحظ أن المترجم كان متأثراً تأثراً كبيراً في بعض فقرات النصّ الهدف بالتّركيبات الإنجليزيّة النّحوية في النصّ المصدر، ومنها: "شنّ تحالفنا عمليات في جميع أنحاء العالم للقضاء على ملاذات الإرهابيين الآمنة والقبض على، أو قتل، الإرهابيين الناشطين وقادتهم. وقد قمنا، بالتعاون مع حلفائنا، بالقبض على، واحتجاز، الآلاف من الإرهابيين والمقاتلين الأعداء في أفغانستان". والعبارة التي تحتها خطّ ترجمة متأثرة بالعبارة الإنجليزيّة (and capture or kill

[http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr134\\_arabic.pdf](http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr134_arabic.pdf)

موقع النصّ المصدر: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr134.pdf>

إنترناشونال كرايسز جروب، (مارس 2005م)، إيران في العراق: ما مدى التفوذ؟ تقرير الشرق الأوسط: رقم 38، عمان/بروكسل، 21 آذار (مارس)، تاريخ التّجارة: يوليو: 18، السنة: 2007، الساعة: 12:10 غداً، ص 13-31. موقع المنظمة:

www.crisisgroup.org، وموقع النص العربي:

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3328&>

وموقع النصّ المصدر: 6=  
<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3328&>  
=1

جون ووولستين، اللوبي الإسرائيلي وسياسة أمريكا الخارجية، ترجمة ونشر: ميرزايمر<sup>21</sup> مجلة المستقبل العربي، مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية، (بيروت: العدد 327، مايو 2006 م)، ص 27-57. وهو مقالة إنجليزية منشورة تحت عنوان:

"The Israel Lobby", London Review of Books, Vol, 28, No. 6 (March 2006) (قَدّمت ضمن RWP 06-011 وهي في الأصل ورقة عمل رقم 6 (March 2006) سلسلة أوراق عمل بحثية من هيئة التدريس" إلى كلية كينيدي لنظم الحكم (جامعة هارفارد) في 13 آذار/مارس 2006م. وموقع النصّ الإنجليزي على الإنترنت: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=891198](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=891198)

22 أماتريا بارام، (أبريل) من هم المتمردون؟ القوار من العرب السنة في العراق، تقرير خاص، رقم 134، معهد السلام الأمريكي، 2005م، تاريخ الزيارة: سبتمبر 17 ليلاً، السنة: 2006، موقع المعهد: [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org) وموقع النص العربي:

terrorist operatives)، ولعل هذا التأثير دليل على عدم تنبّه المترجم لمعيار المقبولية، فاستخدم تركيبات غير شهيرة ومألوفة في اللغة العربية الفصحى (الكتابية) بخل ذلك بتكافؤ النص الهدف، ولعلّ الأفصح أن يستخدم: "والقبض على الإرهابيين الناشطين وقادتهم أو قتلهم" ترجمةً بديلةً لتركيب النص المصدر الإنجليزي.

ومن التعابير المتأثرة بالنص المصدر، والتي قد تخلّ بمقبوليته تعبير المترجم: "تعزيز وإيضاح قوانيننا" ترجمة لـ "to strengthen and clarify our laws" في: "ولذا سأواصل أثناء عملي مع الكونغرس لتعزيز وإيضاح قوانيننا هنا في بلادنا". ونقترح مراعاةً لمعيار المقبولية التركيب التالي: (لتعزيز قوانيننا هنا في بلادنا وإيضاحها) بديلاً له قد يكون أفصح وأكثر تقبلاً لدى العرب. وجدير بالذكر في هذا المجال أن مثل هذه التركيبات لها وجود في التراث العربي، إلا أن استعمالها يثير الجدل، وقد درست التركيبات في مسألة التنازع تحت الفصل بين المتضامين أو إضافة مضامين إلى مضاف إليه واحد<sup>24</sup> أو التنازع في الحروف<sup>25</sup>، فكان التّحاة واللّغويون في المسألة بين مؤيدين ومعارضين. وقد درس —حديثاً— المجمع اللّغوي في القاهرة هذه المسألة، فأجاز إضافة مضامين إلى مضاف إليه واحد، وانتهت لجنته الخاصة بدراسة المسألة إلى أن الأفصح فيها عدم الفصل بين المتضامين.<sup>26</sup>

#### ب. اللّوي الإسرائيلي وسياسة أمريكا الخارجية الخلفية المعرفية:

ومن مظاهر التنبّه لمعيار المقبولية والاستناد إلى مبادئ غرايس التعاونيّة الضمّنيّة في النصّ الهدف حشوّه بعناصر الاتّساق الملفوظة الظاهرة التي تتسم بها اللغة العربية، ومن ذلك كثرة استعمال أدوات الرّبط العربيّة، مثل "إنّ" الاستنافية و"الفاء" الرّابطة والجواب، والرّتيب، و"الواو" الواصلة التركيبية والنّصيّة (بين الفقرات المكوّنة للنّصّ، و"أمّا..ذ" الفاتحة للموضوع. ومن أمثلة ورود "إنّ" أداةً للرّبط النّصّي: "إنّ لجوء الفلسطينيين إلى الإرهاب خطأ، ولكنه ليس مفاجئاً". ومن أمثلة استخدام الرّابط "الفاء" في التركيب: "مع ذلك فإنّ ثمة شعاع أمل. فعلى الرّغم من أنّ اللّوي يبقى عاملاً قوياً فإن إخفاء الآثار العكسية لنفوذه يزداد صعوبة".

وقع "أمّا..ذ" الفاتحة للموضوع في التركيب: "أمّا عما يسمّى بالدّول المارقة في الشرق الأوسط فإنّها ليست خطراً جسيماً على المصالح الحيوية الأمريكية، إلا في حدود كونها تهديداً لإسرائيل".

ومن مظاهر المقبولية اختيار الكلمة "تقانات" في التركيب: ولقد زودت إسرائيل منافسين محتملين مثل الصين بتقانات عسكرية حساسة، الأمر الذي وصفه المفتش العام لوزارة الخارجية (الأمريكية) بأنه "مخطّ منظم ومتزايد من النقل غير المأذون فيه، بدلاً من الكلمة "تكنولوجيا" التي هي معرّية من technology، ولعلّ المترجم اختار كلمة "تقانات" التي تستخدم جمعاً لـ "تقانة" لورودها على صيغة متأصّلة في النظام الصّريّ العربيّ.

ومنها نقل المترجم الكلمة: "shorthand" إلى "اختزال" في التعبير: "نحن نستخدم كلمة "اللّوي" كاختزال لذلك الائتلاف الفضفاض من الأفراد والمنظّمات التي تعمل بصورة نشطة لتوجيه السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية في اتّجاه موالٍ لإسرائيل". ونلاحظ أن هذه الكلمة تثير في النصّ الهدف معرفة خلفيّة عن نظام من النّظم التحريرية في اللغة الإنجليزية، وإن هذا النظام يوميّ إلى أهميّة التلخيص والاختصار. ولا يوجد هذا النظام في اللغة الهدف (العربية)، فخلص إلى اختيار كلمة "اختزال" لدلالاتها على قيمّة دلاليّة لـ shorthand.

ومن مظاهر تأثّر المترجم بالنصّ المصدر ترجمته كلمة (centerpiece) الواردة في العبارة: "the centerpiece of US Middle Eastern policy has been its relationship with Israel".

إلى العبارة العربية: "النقطة التي تحتل المركز في السّياسة الأمريكيّة"، وتشير هذه الترجمة إلى عدم تنبّه المترجم لمعيار المقبولية القائل بمحتمية تعديل طبيعة النصّ في مصلحة قارئ اللغة المستهدفة، وفي محاولتنا البحث عن معنى الكلمة (centerpiece)، وجدنا أن للكلمة في الإنجليزية معنيّين، أولهما: الشّيء أو الآلة مثل زخرف أو وسام يوضع في المركز لجذب الانتباه. والثاني: أهمّ خصائص الشّيء<sup>27</sup>. والترجمة قريبة جدّاً من الدّلالة الأولى التي هي احتلال الشّيء المركز، فيبدو أن المترجم في هذه العمليّة متقيّد ومتأثّر بحرفيّة اللفظ (centerpiece) المركّب من كلمتي (center) و (piece)؛ وكأنّه يعبر

<sup>24</sup> يعقوب، إميل بديع، المعجم المفصل في دقائق اللغة العربية، (دار الكتب العمليّة، بيروت، 2004)، ص: 291.

<sup>25</sup> العصيمي، خالد بن سعود بن فارس، القراءات النحوية والتصرفية لمجمع اللغة العربية بالقاهرة، (الرياض: دار التدرية، 2002)، ص: 118-122.

<sup>26</sup> مجمع اللغة العربية، الجمعية في الألفاظ والأساليب، أعدها وراجعها محمد شوقي أمين وإبراهيم التّريزي، (القاهرة، 1989، ص: 64. وقد جاء في قرار المجمع ما مفاده: "يخطئ بعض الباحثين مثل قولهم: "مديريات ومحافظات مصر"، ويرون الأصوب أن يقال: "مديريات مصر ومحافظاتها"، بحجة أن الفصل بين المتضامين غير جائز هنا، إذ إنه ليس من المسوغات

التي نصّ عليها التّحاة. وترى اللّجنة أن التعبير الأوّل جائز، وإن كان التعبير الآخر أفصح. وقد استندت اللّجنة في جواز التعبير الأوّل إلى قول ابن مالك في الألفيّة:

ويجذّف الثاني فيبقى الأوّل كحاله إذا به يتصل

بشرط عطف وإضافة إلى مثل الذي له أضفت الأوّل

وانظر: حميدة، مصطفى، نظام الارتباط والرّبط في تركيب الجملة العربية، (القاهرة: لوجمان، الشّركة المصرية العالمية، 1997م)، ص: 168.

<sup>27</sup> Allen R.E., The Concise Oxford Dictionary, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 182,

عن نقطة تحتل المركز في الشّيء، ونرى أن "النقطة" فيها تلميحات إلى مركز أو محور أو مجمع، واستعماله في سياق المركز قد يؤدي إلى الحشو أو تكرار المعنى دون فائدة. ومن المتوقع في هذه الحالة أن يستوعب المترجم مدلول الكلمة المتداولة في تركيب النصّ المصدر ويبنّيه فينقل المدلول بما يوافق المفهوم في عالم النصّ الهدف.

وتبنّيها لمعيار المقبولية نستطيع القول إن التركيب "كانت النقطة التي تحتل المركز في السياسة الأمريكية..." "قد لا ينسجم مع المفهوم المتداول لدى العرب وربما يستشفّ القارئ ذو الخلفية الواسعة من العبارة تعبيراً إنجليزياً، فيعتبره ترجمة حرفية، ونقترح استخدام (نقطة التركيز) أو (النقطة المحورية) أو (مركز) ونفضّل العبارة: (محور السياسة الأمريكية في الشرق الأوسط) ترجمةً بديلةً للتركيب.

ومما يمكن أن يخلّ بمقبولية نصّ الهدف ترجمته العبارة "unwavering support" إلى "تأييد لا يلين" في التشكيل: "فقد أدى الجمع بين تأييد لا يلين لإسرائيل ومحاولة نشر الديمقراطية في أرجاء المنطقة، إلى إشعال الرأي العام العربي والإسلام وشل الأمن الأمريكي، بل أمن أنحاء كثيرة من العالم."

ترجمة إلى:

"The combination of **unwavering** support for Israel and the related effort to spread 'democracy' throughout the region has inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion and jeopardised not only US security but that of much of the rest of the world"

لأنّ الفعل المنفي "لا يلين" الوارد صفةً للمصدر المنكر "تأييد"، قد يخيّل للقارئ أن الحار والحرور (لإسرائيل) يتعلّق بالفعل (يلين) بدلاً من تعلّقه بالمصدر (تأييد)، وبذلك يتغيّر المعنى ولا تستقيم رسالة النصّ عند متلقّي النصّ الهدف، ويبدو أن الإشكالية هنا تكمن في التركيب وخاصةً في خصائص الفعل نفسه وفيما تعلّقت به العبارة (لإسرائيل). وبوسع المتلقّي من أجل تفادي مثل هذا التأويل الخاطئ، أن يرصد سياق هذا التركيب وينظر نظرة فاحصة في النصّ كلّ. ولعلّ من الحلول للمشكلة اللجوء إلى أسلوب التقديم والتأخير، ولذلك نقترح العبارة: "فقد أدى الجمع بين الدّعم المتواصل من أمريكا لإسرائيل وبين..." ترجمةً بديلة.

ت. "من هم المتمردون: الثوار من العرب السنة في العراق"

الخلفيات المعرفية:

من مظاهر التنبّه لمعيار المقبولية والاستناد إلى مبادئ غرايس التعاونية الضمنية (Grice Cooperative principles) في النصّ الهدف، تضمنين المترجم النصّ بعناصر الاتساق العربية المتأصلة. ومن هذه العناصر أدوات الربط

"إنّ" الاستثنائية، و"الفاء" العاطفة، والجواب، والترتيب والإضافية، وكذلك "الواو" الواصلة. وردت "إن" الرابطة الاستثنائية في:

"إن الكثير من ضباط الجيش السابقين، وأفراد قوات الأمن وأعضاء حزب البعث فقدوا مكانتهم المميّزة في العراق الجديد ومازالوا يشعرون بالمرارة والغضب والإحباط."

واستخدمت "الفاء" كثيراً في النصّ الهدف، ومن ذلك: "ففي الأجزاء العربية السنية من العراق، يوجد المئات من العشائر الصغيرة والمتوسطة الحجم، والبيوتات والأفخاذ."

ومن مظاهر المقبولية ورود أداة الوصل "الواو" بين عناصر الجمل، وبين الجمل والفقرات المكوّنة للنصّ. ويضاف إلى هذا استعمال التعبير "أما... فـ" في: "أما بالنسبة للوطنية العراقية بين السنة، فهذه أيضاً قد تفسّر على أنها تخدم مصالح ذاتية". فإنّ استخدامه الملحوظ في النصّ الهدف مما يُضفي عليه بّمة عربية، وهي سمة يتوقّع المتلقّي العربي العادي أن يتضمّن نصّ عربيّ متسق منسجم مقبول.

ومن مظاهر المقبولية في النصّ الهدف استخدام المصطلحات السياسية التي ترد غالباً على صيغة المصدر الصّناعي (التي تتجسّد في اللاحقة الصّرفية "ية" ترجمة لـ "ism" و"y") مثل: علمانية ترجمة لـ (Secularism)، وعقائدية (Ideologism)، الأقلّيّة (Minority)، السلفيّة (Salafism)، الإنسانية، الهوية، السنية (Sunnism)، الشيعيّة (Shi'ism)، الصداميّة (Saddamism)، التقليديّة (Traditionalism)، اللاسلطيّة (Anti-salafism)، القليّة (Tribalism)، القوميّة (Nationalism)، الشرعيّة (Legality)، الوطنيّة (Patriotism)، المذهبيّة (School of thought)، إجرامية (Criminality)، دبلوماسية (Diplomacy)، الوهابيّة (Wahabism)، الرادكاليّة (Radicalism)، الشعبيّة (Popularity)، مؤسّسيّة (Institutionalism)، الديمقراطيّة (Democracy)، الأغليّة (Majority)، العشائريّة (Tribalism)، معادية (Hostility)، الإرهابيّة (Terrorism)، حياديّة (Neutrality)، مصداقيّة (Credibility)، الشفافيّة (Transparency). فهذه المصطلحات مما يتوقّع المتلقّي العربي أن يتضمّن نصّ سياسيّ تقريريّ، وبها يتقبّلونه نصّاً تقريرياً سياسياً معلماً.

ث. إيران في العراق: ما مدى التّفوذ

الخلفيات المعرفية:

ومن مظاهر التنبّه لمعيار المقبولية والاستناد إلى مبادئ غرايس التعاونية الضمنية في النصّ الهدف تضمنين النصّ الهدف عناصر الاتساق الملفوظة الظاهرة التي تتّصف بها اللّغة العربيّة، ومن أدوات الربط العربيّة التي يتوقّع توظيفها تحقيقاً للاتساق:

"إن" الاستثنائية و"الفاء" العاطفة والإضافية والجواب والترتيب، وكذلك "الواو" الواصلة من حيث استخدامها تركيبياً ونصياً.

استعملت "إن" الرابطة الاستثنائية في التركيب:

"إنّ الفصل الثاني المنبثق عن حزب الدعوة وهو حزب

الدعوة - تنظيم العراق...".

واستخدمت "الفاء" بكثرة في النصّ الهدف، ومنها: "فالجالية الكردية على وجه الخصوص في إيران تتشكل من مجموعات عرقية وقبلية - عابرة للحدود". وتجدر الإشارة إلى أن التركيب "أمّا... فـ" نادر وقوعه في النصّ الهدف. وفي إحصائنا يقع هذا التركيب مرةً واحدةً في: "وأما التهريب عبر الحدود وهو ظاهرة مرضية في كل مكان، فقد تدهور نتيجة لغياب سيطرة الحكومة العراقية".

ومن مظاهر المقبولة استخدام المصطلحات السياسية مثل: (مصلحة)، و(التحالفات)، و(سقوط جمهورية)، و(النظام)، و(السلطة المدعومة بالقوة)، و(الأقليات)، و(الانتخابات)، و(المفاوضات)، و(الدولة)، و(المخابرات)، و(الأحزاب)، فهذه مما يتوقع قراء العرب أن يتضمنها نصّ سياسيّ تقريريّ وبها يتقبلونه نصّاً تقريرياً سياسياً مُعلّماً ومؤثراً.

وعلى الرغم من وجود قدرٍ لا بأس به من التراكيب التي أنشئت نظراً لمقتضيات معيار المقبولة، فإننا نصادف بعض التراكيب التي قد يتحاشاها بعض العرب الملمّين بأسباب التعبير منها استخدام أدائي الرّبط "الواو" و"أو" العاطفتين بين عنصريين ترجمة لـ "and/or" في: "تجمع إيران وجارات العراق الأخرى مصلحة مشتركة تتمثل في منع تفكك العراق نتيجة للحرب والتمرد، وأو الانفصال". وواضح أن العبارة متأثرةً بنظيرتها "and/or" الواردة في النصّ المصدر، ويدو كأنها ترجمة حرفية (Word for Word Translation) متأثرةً بنظيرتها في النصّ المصدر، وذلك لأنّ اجتماع أدائي الوصل "الواو" و"أو" بين العناصر المتعاطفة على هذا النوع نادرٌ وغير متداول، أو غير وارد في العربية<sup>28</sup>، والمتوقع في ضوء معيار المقبولة أن يلتزم المترجم بأسلوبٍ عربيّ فصيحٍ محض.

ومن التعابير التي قد لا تحظى بالقبول عند كثير من متكلّمي اللّغة العربية: "وتأييد، بشكلٍ من الأشكال، المتمردين الإسلاميين". حيث يُفصل بين المتضايقيين (تأييد والمتمردين)، بعبارة ظرفية "بشكلٍ من الأشكال"<sup>29</sup> وقد يكون هذا الأسلوب

أقلّ تقبلاً وتداولاً، ونفترض تأخير العبارة الظرفية "بشكلٍ من الأشكال" عن المتضايقيين نظراً لتعلق التعبير بالمسألة الخلاقية التحوية. ويحلّ بمعيار المقبولة أسلوب المترجم المتمثل في استعمال اختصارات إنجليزية أو ما يستقى بأوائل الكلمات مثل: UIA'S, IRGC وغيرها داخل التعبيرات العربية، فإن كثرة وقوعها في النصّ الهدف بدون إيراد المصطلحات العربية الكاملة لها قد تجعله أقلّ تقبلاً لمتلقي النصّ الهدف.

## الخاتمة

تصدى هذا المقال لمعيار المقبولة باعتباره أحد معايير النصية، وأبرز مفهومه في لسانيات النص والتراث العربي، ووضّح ارتباطه بالترجمة، وجعل من المعيار إطاراً مرجعياً معرفياً مفيداً صالحاً لتحليل النصوص المترجمة وتوقعها، قام المقال بتطبيق المعيار على أربعة التقارير السياسية المنشورة وهي: "خطاب بوش عن الحرب العالمية على الإرهاب" (من مكتب برامج الإعلام الأمريكي)، "اللوبي الإسرائيلي وسياسة أمريكا الخارجية" (مجلة المستقبل العربي)، "من هم المتمرّدون: الثوار من العرب السنة في العراق" (معهد السلام الأمريكي)، و"إيران في العراق: ما مدى التفوذ" وقد استمدت النصوص المصادر والهدف من المصادر السياسية المذكورة بين القوسين عبر شبكة العنكبوتية.

ويصّر المقال بآراء علماء الغرب والشرق حول مفهوم المقبولة، وذكر المبادئ الفلسفية التي تقدّم بها جرائس (Grice) ووضح آلياتها في عملية الترجمة وتحليلها، فاستعرض من التراث العربي المسائل اللغوية المتعلقة بالمقبولة، والتي تعرّض لها العلماء العرب (من أمثال سيبويه، وطباطبائي، وغيرهما) تحت مسميات مختلفة. وتتجسد هذه القضايا في باب الاستقامة من الكلام والإحالة، ومسئلة أصول صناعة الشعر: الشاعر، والمتلقي، والنصّ، والمقام.

وتبيّن في المقال أن المقبولة ينبّه المترجم (المحلل والمراجع) إلى البحث في مظاهر تُمكنه من توفير وسائل المقبولة وإثباتها في النصّ. كما أظهر التحليل أهمّ مظاهر المقبولة والتأثير بالمبادئ التعاويّة في النصوص المترجمة منها استخدام المترجم عناصر الاتساق العربية المتأصلة (مثل إنّ الاستثنائية، والفاء الرابطة والترتيب، والواو العاطفة والرابطة، و"أما-ف" الفاتحة للموضوع)؛ وتبيّن بعض مظاهر عدم تنبّه المترجم لمعيار المقبولة، ومنها ورود العبارة "والقبض على،

محرم 1423هـ)، ص: 198-236. والعبارة التي نحن بصدها في الترجمة هي من نوع خاص حيث أتى المترجم بأداتين بينهما خط مائل، ووضع الأداتين بين عنصريين متعاطفين في النصّ الهدف.

<sup>29</sup> وهذا التركيب يذكّرنا بمسألة نحوية خلافية حيث تحامل كثيرٌ من النحاة على قراءة الآية القرآنية التي فصل القارئ فيها بين المتضايقيين، مما أدى إلى تلحين النحاة لقراءة ابن عامر في الآية: (وَكُلُّكُمْ رُزْقٌ لِكَبِيرٍ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتَلَ أَوْلَاهُمْ شُرَكَاءَ وَهُمْ لِيُؤْذَوْهُمْ) بنصب دال (أولادهم) وخفض همزة (شركائهم) وإضافة (قتل) وهو فاعل المعنى، ونتج عن هذه القراءة قضية إجازة الفصل بين المضاف والمضاف إليه بالظرف في الكلام والشعر وعدم إجازته.

<sup>28</sup> وحدير بالذكر قرار الجمع اللغويّ بالقاهرة الصادر في الجلسة السادسة من جلسات المؤتمر في دورته السابعة والأربعين، حيث تجيز لجنته التنارع في الحروف، وهو وارد في التعبير العصريّ مثل قولهم: إن صورتها لم ولن تغيب عني، ومثل قولهم: إن موقفك لا ولن يغير رأي، ويرى الجمع أخذاً برأي البصريين الذي يجعل العمل في المعول للعامل الثاني، أهما من باب تنازع العاملين معمولاً واحداً، مع السعة في تطبيق تلك القاعدة على الحروف". والقضية ما زالت خلافتها، إذ إنّ جمهور التحوّين لم يدخلوا الحروف في باب التنارع. أنظر: العيصي، خالد بن سعود بن فارس، القرارات التحوية والتصريفية لمجموعة اللّغة العربية بالقاهرة، (الرياض: دار التدمرية، 2002م)، ص: 118. وانظر كذلك: عبد السلام، أحمد شيخ، الازدواج الوظيفيّ لمكوّنات التراكيب العربية، مجلّة الأحمديّة، (دبي: الإمارات العربية المتحدة، العدد: 10،

أو قتل الإرهابيين"، والعبارة: "النقطة التي تحتل المركز" و"تأييد لا يلبس لإسرائيل" في التماذجين الأوليين من النصوص السياسية المترجمة، وورود "أو" بين العنصرين المترابطين، والعبارة "بشكل من أشكال" بين المتضامين، وغيرها في النموذجين الباقيين. وقد تم باقتراح عبارات بديلة لهذه الملاحظات.

وانتهى المقال إلى أن الترجمة لا يمكن إنجاحها بدون الاعتبار بالمقبولية، وأنه - بوصفه معياراً تقييمياً وإطاراً مرجعياً لتحليل النصوص المترجمة - آلة فعالة في تقويم الترجمة.

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# A Survey of Effect of Substance Abuse among Senior Secondary School Muslim Students in Lagos State

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## Abstract

*This study investigated the influence of substance abuse on learning outcome of Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos state. The study was guided by three research questions and two research hypotheses. The target population was all Muslim Students available in all Senior Secondary schools in Education District V area of Lagos State. The sample consisted of 10 senior secondary schools selected using simple random sampling technique, 180 Muslim Students selected using convenient sampling techniques and 10 school principals were selected using purposeful sampling technique. Data was collected using Questionnaire and interview. The data collected was analysed using simple percentage for the discrete variables and mean and standard deviation to answer all the posed research questions with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme. The study found among others that the level of substance abuse among Muslim students in Senior Secondary schools in Lagos State is low; also, that substance abuse usually led Muslim students to become school dropouts and also suffer other clinical consequences. The study recommends among others that all schools should set up guidance and counselling offices facilitated by professionals to counsel students who indulge in substance abuse. Parents, teachers and religious groups should discourage and be firm in ensuring that the Muslim students do not take alcohol and other substances at home and in the schools. Schools and Parents should always encourage their students (wards) to attend and partake in religious activities at home and in school, as this will help increase their consciousness about prohibition of substance.*

**Key words:** Islam, Muslim, Substance Abuse

## Introduction

Intoxicants which has its root in Arabic as *Khamr* signifies any alcoholic drink which causes intoxication with great harmful effects on individual (his/her mind, health, religion and work); family and society/nation (spiritual, material and moral evils) that proliferate due to widespread of its consumption were forbidden in the Qur'an through several separate verses revealed at different times over a period of years (Sulaiman 2022). At first, it was forbidden for Muslims to attend to prayers while intoxicated (Q4:43). Then a later verse was revealed which said that alcohol contains some good and some evil, but the evil is greater than the good (Q2:219) (Jiang 2021). This was the next step in turning people away from consumption of it. Finally,

“intoxicants and games of chance” were called “abominations of Satan’s handiwork”, intended to turn people away from God and forget about *prayer*; and Muslims were ordered to abstain (Q5: 90-91) (Alam et al. 2022). (Note: the Qur’an is not arranged chronologically, so later verses of the book were not necessarily revealed after earlier verses) (Islam et al., 2021).

In the first verse cited above, the word for “intoxicant is *sukara* which is derived from the word “*sukar*” and means drunk or intoxicated (Adi et al. 2022). It was reported by Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “Gods curse falls on ten groups of people who deal with alcohol. The one who distils it, the one or whom it has been distilled, the one who drinks it, the one who transports it, the one to

who it has been brought the one to who it has been brought, the one who utilize money from it the one buys it and the one who buys it for someone else (Islam et al., 2021).

In the Qur'an: "O ye who believe! Intoxicants and Gambling, (Dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an Abomination of Satan's handiwork; Eschew such (abomination) that ye may prosper." (Al-Qur'an 5:90). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said; "Alcohol is the mother of all evils and it the most shameful of evils" (Ibn Majah, No 3371). The Prophet (PBUH) also said: "Anything which intoxicates in a large quantity, is prohibited even in a small quantity." (Ibn Majah No 3392) (Alam et al. 2022). Thus, there is no excuse for a nip or a tot. Not only those who drink alcohol are cursed but also those who deal with them directly or indirectly are cursed by Allah. It was reported by Anas (May Allah be pleased with him), that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said "*God's curse falls on ten group of people who deal with alcohol.*"

Petalongi, Atika and Rusdin (2022) defined drug "*as a substance used to treat illness, protect against diseases and promote better health*". However, a drug is any chemical or biological substance, synthetic or non-synthetic, that when taken into the organism's body will in some way affect the functions of the organism. The broad definition can be taken to include such substance as food. But then, more strict application of the word "drug" prevails in everyday life. In these cases, the word "drug" is usually used to refer specifically to medicine, Vitamins, entheogenic sacraments, consciousness expanding or recreational drugs (Amri et al. 2022).

Many natural substances such as beer, wine, and some Mushroom, local gins such as *Ogogoro*, *Opaeyin*, herbal mixture, *Paraga*, etc., blur the line between food and drugs which has become a global problem among adolescents affect the functioning of both mind and body respectively when ingested (Osamika et al. 2021).

The word "drug" is etymologically derived from the Dutch/German word "droog" which means "drug", hence, Gabriel (2021) gives

two conditions under which drugs are to be tagged. Misused or abused, namely:

- a. Obtaining drugs illegally or legally and misusing them.
- b. Self-administration of drugs rather than medical personnel administration. Substance abuse commonly leads to drug dependence, which is a condition whereby the user has compelling desire to continue taking drugs either to experience its effects or avoid the discomfort of its absence.

### Classification of Drugs

Borrowing from Gabriel (2021) classification of drugs, the classifications of drugs can be explained under the following sub-headings:

1. **Depressants:** are sedative that act on the nervous system. They provide artificial relaxation and relief from anxiety and mental stress.
2. **Psychotropic Substance:** are drugs that affect the mind.
3. **Tranquilizers:** are drugs used for emotional state, quieten or calm the person without affecting consciousness, so called minor-tranquilizer, such as diazepam (valium) were used in the treatment of anxiety and tension or psychoneurosis major-tranquilizer such as chiorpromazine are used to reduce psychotic symptoms.
4. **Stimulants:** are agents that activate enhance or increase activity of the central nervous system.
5. **Narcotics:** is a sticky resin from the capsule of the plant paper somniferum (the opium poppy).
6. **Alcohol:** This is a colourless liquid that is found in drinks such as beer, alcoholic wine, fine brandy etc. that can make peep (users) drink after drunk it and capable of making them unconscious partially depending on the amount consumed i.e., its level of consumption. It is also used in *medicines* and cleaning products.
7. **Hallucinogens:** These are which make the persons taking them to lapse into dream like state and into the realm of fantasy, thus



escaping from reality. They might also cause acute mental upset, often resulting in violent behaviour i.e., insanity or madness.

Investigating the reasons for the drugs abuse among selected Muslim youths is way of solving the problems of drugs abuse among them because every problem to which the root cause is found is definitely half-solved (Al et al. 2021).

Amri et al. (2022) identifies the effects of drugs on the students' social interactions in the society cannot be over emphasized. Any student who has taken excess of drugs to the point of abnormal disposition vain talk, violence, partial unconsciousness or even mental illness could no more fit into the society not to talk of being fit for the contribution to the national development, rather it will cause catastrophe to the nation. No reasonable employer would ever want to associate with such irresponsible youth or need his service even at emergency time (Jimainal et al. 2022). The normal rapport needed with Mends and family would no longer be there i.e., friendship with reasonable normal people would elude such irresponsible students except with only his counterparts with whom he takes the drugs together since ontological specimen of identical plumage invariably conglomerate to the closest or nearest proximity i.e., Birds of a feather flock together. Substance abuse thus brought defects to the addict's personality. Besides, the drug addicts often move in gangs to perpetrate quite number of evils ranging from street fight, robbery, rape, assassination among others (Putra et al. 2022).

Knowing the reasons why Muslim youths involve themselves in drugs abuse will help a lot in finding solution to the problems associated with drugs abuse among this category of our population (Islam et al., 2021.). The problems include psychological, negative effects of drugs abuse, violence and crimes, mental illness, physical dullness among others (Petalongi, Atika, and Rusdin 2022). In as much as there is strong relationship between causes and effects since nothing occurs without a cause, under normal circumstances in the real sense. Thus, what we human beings call abnormality or refer to abnormal occurrences are merely seemed so, so called or referred to be so, because, they are all as

a result or consequence of omission or commission of one thing or the other somewhere or somehow, sometime due to imperfect nature of human beings as well as the entire world, and also due to negligence, carelessness, ignorance or any other means either artificially or naturally (Amri et al. 2022). No gainsaying the fact that there is always a reason behind every action or occurrence the question whether the reason is tenable, genuine, valid, good or bad is another matter subject to further query, debate or investigation to prove its tenability genuineness, validity or moral justification (Sujan, Tasnim, and Hossain 2021).

Certainly, there have been remarkable changes in human attitudes to psycho active drugs in Western societies over the years. As a matter of fact, what was considered safe and beneficial in one era often comes to be seen or viewed as an evil scourge to a later generation (Amri et al. 2022). Nowhere is this more obvious and glaring than in the role that opium had played in British history. Imported as important trade commodity from Turkey and India, opium was widely used in all strata of British society in the eighteen and nineteen centuries respectively (Alam et al. 2022).

Jiang, (2021) For the poor sought solace *from* the miseries of their daily lives, working mothers used opium containing "Cordials" to calm their children. While they went out to work, middle class house wives used laudanum (an alcoholic extract of opium) to calm their nerves, and artists too sought inspiration from it. In the same vein, the literary movement in Europe known as the Romantic Revival relied extensively on opium to free the users from flights of fantasy and imagination and included such figures, as schiegel, Madame de steal, and push kin, in continental Europe as well as Byron in British (Sujan et al. 2021).

The need to recognize the causes and effects i.e., the reasons for and consequences of drugs abuse among selected Muslim students in senior secondary schools with a view to finding lasting solution to the problems of drugs abuse among students has prompted the researcher to investigate into the reasons for drugs abuse among Muslim students in Education District V area of

Lagos State. The researcher believes that the reasons behind the problems in question are accurately identified, (i.e., the cause of the problem) definitely, valid prevention and solution to the problems are quite possible and achievable.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the Socio-Religious effects of substance abuse on learning outcome of senior secondary school Muslim students in Lagos. The specific purposes are to determine: -

1. the various substances frequently use by Muslim students in senior secondary schools;
2. the home factors that influence substance abuse among Muslim students in Senior secondary schools in Lagos State;
3. the school factors that influences substance abuse among Muslim students in Senior secondary schools in Lagos State;
4. the level of prevalence of substance abuse among Muslim students in Senior secondary schools in Lagos State;
5. the effect of substance abuse on learning outcome of Muslim students in Senior secondary schools in Lagos State;
6. the socio cum religious steps taken to curb substance abuse among Muslim students in Senior secondary schools in Lagos State;

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the various substances frequently abused by Muslim students in senior secondary schools?
2. What are the home factors that influence substance abuse among Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos State?
3. What are the school factors that influence substance abuse among Muslim students

in senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

5. What is the Socio-Religious effects of substance abuse on learning outcome of Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos state?
6. What is the socio-religious steps to curb substance abuse among Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

### **Methodology**

The researcher adopted survey research design for the study. This involves systematic collection of data from the target population. The population for this study will consist of all Muslim youths and Principals in the 68 public senior secondary schools in Education District V area of Lagos State. A sample size of 10 senior secondary schools was selected using simple random sampling technique. A total of 180 SSS 3 students' respondents and 10 School principals were selected using convenient sampling technique. Students in SS3 were selected majorly because of their level majority and likely exposure in regards the subject of discuss. The instruments used for this study is adapted Substance Abuse Questionnaire by Montgomery (2020) and a self-designed Interview Guide for school Principals on substance abuse in schools. A total of 180 questionnaires were distributed to SS3 Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Education District V area of Lagos State. The questionnaire was divided into three parts; the first part consisted of information on demography, while the other parts contained information on predisposing factors, substance use and abuse respectively. The Interview guide was administered to school principals and responses were recorded accordingly. A total of 132 questionnaires were retrieved and responses were gathered from school principals and analyses using SPSS statistical package.

**Data Analysis and Presentation and discussion****Table 1: Age of the Respondents**

| Age Range                  | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 16-18 years                | 123        | 93.2         |
| 19-21 years                | 8          | 6.1          |
| 21 years and above         | 1          | 0.8          |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>132</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Gender                     | Frequency  | Percentage   |
| Male                       | 77         | 58.3         |
| Female                     | 55         | 41.7         |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>132</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Who the Students Live With | Frequency  | Percentage   |
| Parents                    | 108        | 81.8         |
| Guardian                   | 9          | 6.8          |
| Relatives                  | 15         | 11.4         |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>132</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The analysis in Table 1 indicates that, 93.2% of the respondents were between 16-18 years, 6.1% were between 19-21 years and 0.8% were 21 years. This is in line with the normal expected age for SS (3) students. 58.3% of the respondents were male and 41.7 % were female. This shows there are more male Muslim students' available in school at in secondary schools than

female students. The analysis in Table 1 also indicates that 81.8% of the respondents lived with their parents, 11.4% lived with their relatives and 6.8% lived with guardians.

**RQ 1:** What are the various substances frequently abused by Muslim students in senior secondary schools?

**Table 2: Various substances abused in schools**

| Substance | Mean  | Standard Deviation |
|-----------|-------|--------------------|
| Alcohol   | 2.632 | 1.414              |
| Tobacco   | 2.122 | 0.500              |
| Cigarette | 2.106 | 1.113              |
| Marijuana | 2.064 | 0.645              |
| Others    | 1.254 | 0.753              |

According to the results in Table 2, the respondents indicated that alcohol was frequently used in the schools as indicated by a mean of 2.632. The respondents also indicated that tobacco and Marijuana were fairly frequently used as expressed by a mean of 2.122, 2.064 respectively.

**RQ 2:** What are the home factors that influences substance abuse among Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 3:** Home factors that influences students to substance abuse in schools

| <b>Factors</b>                                   | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard Deviation</b> |
|--|-------------|---------------------------|
| Stress at home                                   | 2.834       | 0.822                     |
| Availability of money to buy drugs               | 2.621       | 0.546                     |
| Family background for example parent also drinks | 2.564       | 0.757                     |
| Peer pressure                                    | 2.453       | 0.655                     |
| School failure                                   | 2.325       | 0.655                     |
| Influence by mass media                          | 1.048       | 0.708                     |
| To keep me awake so as to read more              | 1.009       | 0.572                     |

The findings summarized in Table 3 shows that, the respondents indicated that stress at home such as lack of school fees, availability of money to buy and family background, parent also drinks were influential to the students abuse of drugs as expressed by a mean of 2.834, 2.621 and 2.564 respectively. The respondents also indicated that peer pressure and school failure were moderately influential to the students abuse of drugs as expressed by a mean of 2.453 and 2.325 respectively.

In addition, the respondents indicated mass media and students' desire to stay awake so as to read more were not influential to the students' abuse of drugs as expressed by a mean of 1.048 and 1.009 respectively.

**RQ 3:** What are the school factors that influence substance abuse among Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 4:** School factors that influences substance abuse among Muslim Students

| <b>School Factors</b>                                      | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Standard Deviation</b> |
|--|-------------|---------------------------|
| Poor role modelling by teachers                            | 4.391       | 0.679                     |
| Failure in school academic performance                     | 4.002       | 0.524                     |
| Conflict between students and teachers?                    | 3.873       | 1.414                     |
| Perceptions of approval of substance use behaviour         | 3.277       | 1.247                     |
| Ineffective classroom teaching                             | 3.217       | 0.545                     |
| Poor communication between students and the Administration | 2.764       | 0.576                     |

The analysis in Table 4 shows that, the respondents agreed that poor role modelling by teachers, failure in school academic performance and conflict between students and teacher contributed to substance abuse among students as expressed by a mean of 4.391, 4.002 and 3.873 respectively. The respondents were undecided on the contribution of perceptions of approval of drug using behaviour, ineffective classroom teaching

and poor communication between students and the administration to substance abuse among students as expressed by a mean of 3.277, 3.217 and 2.764 respectively.

**RQ 4:** What is the Socio-Religious effects of substance abuse on learning outcome of Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos state?

**Table 5:** School Principals' perception on effects of substance abuse on learning among Muslim students in senior secondary schools

| Effects   | Mean  | Standard Deviation |
|---|-------|--------------------|
| School drops out                                | 3.424 | 0.298              |
| Strained relationship with other students       | 3.005 | 0.464              |
| Lack of interest in studying                    | 2.789 | 0.457              |
| Low concentration span                          | 2.594 | 0.493              |
| Declining grades                                | 2.578 | 0.491              |
| Lack of interest in extra curriculum activities | 2.387 | 0.298              |
| Theft   | 2.354 | 0.493              |
| Bullying  | 1.647 | 0.661              |
| Truancy   | 1.231 | 0.298              |

The results on the effects of drugs abuse on participation among students in the schools in Table 5 indicate that the effect of drugs abuse on participation in learning among students in the schools was severe on school dropout, strained relationship with other students, lack of interest in studying, low concentration span and declining grades as expressed by a mean of 3.424, 3.005, 2.789, 2.594 and 2.578 respectively. The study

also found that effect of drugs abuse on participation in learning among students in the schools in terms of interest in extra curriculum activities, theft and bullying as expressed by a mean of 2.387, 2.354 and 1.647 respectively was low. In addition, the study found out that effect of drugs abuse also included truancy as expressed by a mean of 1.231.

**Table 6:** Students' perception on effects of substance abuse experienced by the students

| Effects               | Mean  | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Anxiety               | 3.042 | 0.781              |
| Headache              | 2.786 | 0.971              |
| Sleepy                | 2.643 | 0.789              |
| Confused              | 2.574 | 0.876              |
| Vomiting              | 2.546 | 1.113              |
| Nervousness           | 2.423 | 1.457              |
| Red eyes              | 2.236 | 1.124              |
| Lack of co-ordination | 2.202 | 1.157              |
| Tiredness / fatigue   | 2.096 | 0.678              |

The results on the effects of substance abuse experienced by the students in Table 6 indicate that anxiety, headache, sleepy, confused and vomiting were serious effects of substance abuse that the respondents experienced as expressed by a mean of 3.042, 2.786, 2.643, 2.574 and 2.546 respectively. In addition, the study found out that nervousness, red eyes, lack of co-

ordination and feeling tired were moderate effects of substance abuse as indicated by a mean of 2.423, 2.236, 2.202 and 2.096 respectively.

**RQ 5:** What is the socio-religious steps to curb substance abuse among Muslim students in senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 7:** Attendance of guidance and counselling against drugs by students

|              | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Attended     | 88         | 66.7         |
| Not Attended | 44         | 33.3         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>132</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The analysis in Table 7 indicates that 66.7% of the respondents had attended guidance and counselling against drugs in their schools

while 33.8% of the respondents had not attended guidance and counselling against drugs in their schools.

**Table 8:** Attendance of religious activities both at home and in school where preaching against substance abuse by students is done

|              | Frequency  | Percentage   |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Attended     | 58         | 44.9         |
| Not Attended | 74         | 56.1         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>132</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The analysis in Table 8 indicates that 44.9% of the respondents usually attend religious activities both at home and in school where preaching against substance abuse by students is done while % 56.1% of the respondents usually do not attended religious activities both at home and in school where preaching against substance abuse by students is done.

### Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study indicated that alcohol was the most frequently used substance by Muslim students in public senior secondary schools. This is in agreement with Adedoyin, Bola, Ayoku and Adebayo (2019) study which attempted to describe the prevalence, and impact of alcohol abuse on students in selected secondary schools in southwest Nigeria as their study revealed that the prevalence of alcohol consumption is alarming as 66% of the respondent (students) that are between the age of 12 and 20 years take alcohol. This is also in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) report that 43% of adolescents. Ejodamen and Ogini (2021) also found that the most abused drug is Alcohol with a mean response of 1.21 which was followed by Tobacco (Cigarette) with 1.14 mean responses. However, their study emphasized that, even though Alcohol tops the list of abused drugs, only

39 students (12.8%) out of the 304 surveyed had tasted Alcohol at one time or the other.

Additionally, the results of this investigation showed that, that stress at home such as lack of school fees, availability of money to buy and family background, parent also drinks were influential to the students' abuse of substance in schools. This fact is substantiated by Amy (2021) who submitted that parents' consumption of alcohol goes a long way in justifying the idealness of talking alcohol regardless of the age of the child. In addition, the findings show that mass media and students' desire to stay awake so as to read more were not influential to the Muslim students' abuse of substance in schools.

The findings of the study indicated that poor role modelling by teachers, failure in school academic performance and school conflict between students contribute to substance abuse among Muslim students in schools and at the same time increased the rate of school dropout, strained relationship with other students, and lack of interest in studying, low concentration span and decline in grades. This result is in consonant with Ejodamen and Ogini (2021) who submitted that that drug abuse affects students' concentration as the cumulative percentage of respondents who agreed that drug abuse has a way of affecting concentration is 81.3%. Owing to this, for a student's academic performance to be impressive,

it becomes parents, teachers, school administrators and other stakeholders to eliminate the factors that can alter student's concentration. The study find out that anxiety, headache, feeling sleepy, confused and vomiting were serious effects of substance abuse that the students who take drugs suffered from. However, the study revealed that in attempt to curb this illicit behaviour, most of the schools covered offer guidance and counselling to students who engage in substance abuse and campaigns against substance abuse is more usual than not.

The study's results also revealed that the majority of Muslim students who engaged in substance abuse usually do not attend religious activities both at home and in school.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that alcohol is the most abused substance abused by Muslims students in Education District V area of Lagos State. Its negative effects on students' wellbeing are also evident in this study as its negative influence on both students' academic, social and moral behaviour in and outside the school are devastating.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends that:

- All schools should set up guidance and counselling offices facilitated by professionals to counsel students who indulge in substance abuse. This will help take care of the students with emotional needs that they wish to share in confidence but lack the platform to do so and in return end up turning to substance abuse. Principals also should invite specialists often to talk to students on dangers of substance abuse.
- Parents and teachers and religious groups should discourage and be firm in ensuring that the Muslim students do not take alcohol and other substances at home and in the schools.

- Parents should handle their issues like breakups in a better manner to avoid hurting the children and avoid conflict with the children which can lead to them engaging in substance abuse. The parents should also, ensure they do not give so much money to their children and if they do so they should ensure that the money is put into constructive use. The fact that some students have access to a lot of money tempts them to buy drugs.
- Parents and teachers should monitor the company that the students keep to ensure they do not involve themselves with Muslim students or non-students who abuse drugs.
- Also, the teachers should set a good example to the students. They should avoid going to school when they are drunk or using other drugs in the presence of the students. They should also work to have better relationships with the students.

Schools and Parents should always encourage their students (wards) to attend and partake in religious activities at home and in school, as this will help increase their consciousness about prohibition of substance.

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# Investigating the Relationship between the Objective of Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV) and Students' Population with Students' Interest in Instructional Technologies in Learning French

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the objective of Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV) and the students' population with students' interest in instructional technologies in learning French. The importance of the French language in Nigeria cannot be underrated, since the introduction of the French language in Nigeria; it has become a language of interest to Nigerians. Being the language of culture and commerce, it has a lot to contribute to the educational progress, prestige, labour and reasonable status of Nigerians. In 1961 at Yaoundé Conference, French was accepted to be a school subject and should be introduced, taught, and examined as teaching school discipline in Anglophone African countries, including Nigeria which resulted in improved international relations for the country. Both France and Nigeria signed cooperation and agreements. By September 1991, the NFLV Badagry came into existence and the first set of students was admitted on 6 January 1992. This study utilizes two research questions using a descriptive survey, and a self-developed questionnaire were used to collect data from selected students and lecturers. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.70. The Study population consists of French undergraduate students from higher institutions in Lagos State in which four institutions were randomly picked. One hundred students with ten French lecturers were randomly selected for this study. There are however gaps to be filled in terms of available instructional technological facilities concerning the population served and students' attitudes to learn French. This paper recommends better facilities development for the successful integration of the right attitude into visiting undergraduate students as well as a benchmark based on the school population.*

**Key words:** French, Attitude, Students population, Higher Institutions, Facilities

## Introduction

Education is a conscious and deliberate effort to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that learners are actively developing the potential for him to have the spiritual strength of religion, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed to develop themselves and develop society in general. Education is an avenue whereby people live in harmony despite the differences in the language of communication. Education is a formidable weapon for nation-building (Tomé and Coelho 2023). With good

quality education, it becomes so easy to intermingle with other people in the global community, and this could culminate in the standard of having the kind of education that would submerge in children's mentality the reality of positive international rapport.

The importance of the French language in Nigeria cannot be underrated, since the introduction of the French language in Nigeria; it has been recognized as the second official language after the English language. It is one of the lifeblood of the educational system at the secondary and tertiary levels. French is one of the

languages of culture and commerce, It has a lot to bring to educational progress, prestige, labour and reasonable status of the people. Apart from English French is indeed a medium of getting awareness of the world around us. In 1961 at Yaoundé Conference, it was accepted that French should be a secondary school subject in Nigeria and other Anglophone countries. It should be taught and examined as a teaching school discipline (Faniran, 2016, Lami, 2023).

Nigeria as a country bounded by French colonized and French-speaking countries is left with no choice but to get acquainted with the French language for easy integration of ideas, culture and developmental benefits; thereby fitting into the globalized world. Given this, the first French trading company and other expatriates began to have an interest in Nigeria's educational system. This brought cooperation and a series of agreements that both France and Nigeria signed.

By September 1991 the Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV) Badagry came into existence and the first set of students was admitted on 6 January 1992. The Nigeria French Language Village is an Inter-University Centre for French Studies, located along the Lagos-Seme highway, in the coastal and historical city of Badagry. The Village is located in Ajara-Badagry, about 50 kilometres away from Lagos. The Village, as it is usually called, has been designed as a centre to replicate the realities of a francophone environment from both linguistic and socio-cultural perspectives. Students are the key asset of universities, and they have a major role to play in uniting people, therefore they should feel socially excluded in whatever they do, especially within the school environment (Isopahkala-Bouret, Siivonen and Haltia 2023). In this regard, the relationship between the existence of their interest in learning a new thing, and the mode of acquiring knowledge, especially in learning other people's languages will go a long way in bringing global peace. It would enhance peaceful coexistence in the different regions of the world. Understanding the language of communication of different people has a lot to do with bringing harmony and development to people which eventually brings global peace

There is a strong relationship between students' attitudes and language learning. Student attitude is important in producing the best quality graduates whose knowledge would form a strong base for solid future international interactions. A positive attitude toward learning other people's languages will not only bring global unity it will lead to unified global technology development. Graduates that learned others' languages with a keen interest and positive attitude are bound to become great leaders and manpower developers for their country's economic and socio-development.

The result of any human activity is subjected to the appreciation of whatever would be the result of the task carried out as this determines the performance of the individual either positively or negatively.

Students are the key asset of culture and the weapon of university education to bring about good relationships in society; they are agents of change and meaningful interaction among people. Their interest in learning a new thing cannot be over-emphasized, in the process of acquiring new knowledge the existence of their consideration in enjoying the content of the knowledge in question is highly paramount. Student attitude plays an important role especially if there is the desire to produce high-quality graduates who will become great leaders, and high-level manpower for the future of any country's economic and socio-development.

In the French village are students motivated to learn under good conditions and availability of the required technologies? How about the population of the students that come to the village to learn French, is the population commensurate with the technological facilities on ground?

School population and facilities are two inseparable elements, if students should be encouraged to learn different languages for the betterment of our world, the two elements have to be harmonised. Croatia and Croatia (2021) believe that the main reason for positivity in a person's attitude to learning a foreign language is to build up personal knowledge and be a better listener and learner. It is also an opportunity for them to get a

great chance by students to discover new cultures, meet new people and be able to talk with them. It makes learners grow up to manifest a unique standard of living and operate at a higher level of global advancement.

Instructional technologies are very vital in this century as they constitute the strong yardstick that will make the instructional system efficient and bring students to the optimum of knowledge acquisition. Teachers should see the relevance of these technologies in the effective delivery of their services to students (Lazar, 2015).

Crompton, Bernacki, and Greene, (2020) stated that teachers enjoyed to see the power and beauty of the rapid expansion of technological tools for teaching and learning. It should be realised that instructional design has made concomitant leaps in course design and development. New titles have emerged for this role, such as learning experience designer and learning engineer. These designers focus on user experience integrated course design and how students learn.

Instructional technologies have helped in bringing transformation into pedagogy they have made the instructional process renewed, and classroom activities had been remodeled. It made it easy for students to acquire any form of knowledge at an individual pace and independently, Learners are now able to find several alternatives in finding solutions to their problem situation and coming to the right solution. It is against this background that the researchers embark on investigating the relationship between the objective of Nigeria French Language Village (NFLV) and the student population with students' interest in instructional technologies in learning French.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Nigeria French Language Village was established to take Nigerians to a higher level of speaking French, especially main education in schools. French undergraduate students coming to the Nigeria French Language Village Badagry are to participate in a language immersion or acculturation program to enable them to be

acculturated to French culture. The village was found to make undergraduate students receive a good grasp of the language and compete with their colleagues in the global village. It is also to help some students solve more problems they might encounter, especially a language-related barrier.

Universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria as well as colleges of education are mandated to send their 300-level French undergraduate students to participate in a compulsory one-year-abroad course in any francophone country before such a student could graduate. Given this, the Federal Government of Nigeria has committed itself to invest in French education thereby establishing French Language Village. The village is to first, ensure that it befits the Inter-University Centre for French Studies, exposes undergraduates to solid French language education and culture and should be able to provide certification for other professionals who need French education to serve in their duty.

It has been observed that without a positive attitude learning a foreign Language could become burdensome, but a positive attitude would not only enhance the quality of French education it will also rob the culture and international relations among people. The population is a great component in the process of learning the density of the population could mar or make the process of instruction. The available facilities and population within the system could serve as a yardstick for the quality of education within it. It is against this background that these researchers embarked on investigating the relationship between the role of the Nigeria-French Language Village (NFLV students' population and interest in instructional technologies in the Learning of French.

### **Methodology**

The research design employed in this project is descriptive design using the survey method. The population of interest in this research consists of French undergraduate students from different universities in Lagos State. Four randomly selected Lagos State higher institutions students that came for the mandatory one-year-abroad program in NFLV were the institutions

selected as samples for the study. A total number of one hundred students with (10) French lecturers were randomly selected for this study as samples. The research instrument for data collection used for this study is a self-developed questionnaire. These items were designed to determine responses based on the variables of the study. In validating the instrument, the instrument questionnaire was given to experts in research study to help the researchers make necessary corrections and amendments before administration. This was necessary to establish fact and content validity for the instrument. The reliability of the instruments of this study was accomplished by using the test-retest to get information on what the study will look like. This is done by selecting neutral students different from the one used for the study and the reliability was found to be 0.70

### Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and the population of students that visit the village.
2. There is no significant relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and students' interest in using instructional technologies to learn French.

### The Findings of the Study

The level of the role played by the population of students that visit NFLV is not significantly related to the objective of establishing the Centre.

**Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) analysis shows the relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and the population of students that visit the village.**

| Variable                                      | N   | DF | SL | $X^2_{cal}$ | $X^2_{tab}$ | Decision |
|---|-----|----|----|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Level of roles played by students' population | 110 | 9  | 5  | 68.435862   | 16.919      | Rejected |

The tabulated value of s Degree of Freedom (DF) is 16.919, the calculated value of 68.435862 is greater than the table value of 16.919 therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected.

This shows a significant relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and the population of students that visit the village.

**Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) analysis shows the relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and students' interest in using instructional technologies to learn French.**

| Variable   | N   | DF | SL | $X^2_{cal}$ | $X^2_{tab}$ | Decision |
|--|-----|----|----|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Role of Students' Interest in using instructional technologies | 110 | 9  | 5  | 25.8188     | 16.919      | Rejected |

The tabulated value of a Degree of Freedom (DF) is 16.919, the calculated value of 25.8188 is greater than the table value of 16.919 therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected.

This shows a significant relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and students' interest in using instructional technologies to learn French.

### Discussion

The test of the first hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and the population of students that visit the village. This finding is in congruent with Ade-Ojo (2012) that thousands of French-Village students are entwined with counterparts around the

world's largest educational networks. The knowledge of French, the second most important human language by Anglophone Africans will empower them to respond more positively and confidently to the realization of their affective goals. This was buttressed by Nimako, 2014 and Faniran (2016) who stated that Late General Sani Abacha, through an executive order made a pronouncement in favour of the adoption of French as the second official language of the country. This was also reiterated by Ade-Ojo (2012) who emphasised the importance of French as a second official language. Test of the second hypothesis shows a significant relationship between the objective of establishing the Nigeria French Language Village and students' interest in using instructional technologies to learn French. This finding was braced by Keser, Uzunboulou, and Ozdamli, (2012) interests are a major factor in guiding learning.

The more interested one is in a particular area, the more he is motivated to learn in the area. Interest in knowledge acquisition is a strong weapon that could be explored to raise children to build a great nation in the future (Egbule, 2019). Interests are activities or pastimes which we voluntarily engage in because we enjoy them. The enjoyment derived from them gives us a sense of fulfilment. Using instructional technologies could be used to restructure and redesign the classroom to produce an environment that promotes the development of higher-order thinking skills. Technology also increases students' collaboration and is a highly effective tool for learning.

### Conclusions

The population should be considered in stating the objective of establishing any institution within the country, and the objectives should be stated in clear terms to reflect the care required for the expected population. Instructional technologies to learn French should take priority and should be emphasised to be of the quality that befits the status of a given institution.

### Recommendations

French education should be taken seriously by the government to bring about peaceful and meaningful interaction with neighbouring countries and the global community at large. Concrete efforts should be made by the authorities to involve

philanthropists, the private sector as well as parents in jointly financing year-abroad programme for students that comes from not well-to-do families. This will go a long way in reducing the financial burden on students.

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# **The Influence of Security Challenges in Teaching and Learning in Senior Secondary Schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State**

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## **Abstract**

*The study focused on security challenges in teaching and learning in senior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A total of 400 respondents, made up of 10 teachers and 40 students from each of selected eight (8) senior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State were used for the study. Simple random sampling was used to select the actual population. This ensured equal opportunities for students and teachers from the eight groups who were represented in the study. Structured questionnaire entitled "Security Teaching, and Learning in Izzi Local Government Area" (STLILGA) was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation. The result of the study showed that insecurity affects teaching and learning in senior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State; that spread of diseases affect students' and teachers' school attendance, as well as provision of instructional delivery in senior Secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, and so affect the academic achievement of senior secondary schools' students. Based on these findings, the study then recommends that Nigerian government should develop strong political will towards curbing activities that constitute threats to lives and property, and that host communities should as well complement government efforts by forming local vigilance groups to provide adequate security to schools, among other.*

**Key words:** Security challenges, Teaching and Learning, Senior Secondary school students, local Government Area

## **Introduction**

Any environment rid of peace and tranquillity, obviously suffers in terms of human development and progress. In any education system, peace and security are quite necessary for successful teaching and learning processes. In recent times however, millions of school children in Nigeria are caught up in unfortunate conflicts that result in insecurity of lives and property.

The new English Dictionary and thesaurus (2012) defines security challenges as the condition of being insecure, lack of confidence or sureness. So, security challenges then is when life in the society is insecure, and there is lack of confidence and sureness among the people of a particular society. Security challenges, in other words referred to as social insecurity can equally

be viewed as indiscipline among the members of the society as it generates disorderliness, corruption and every other moral decadence among the members of the society.

Niemela, Rank and Fosuwa (2010), view social insecurity as insufficient cares which are expressed in anxiety and uncertainty. Rank (2012), sees insecurity as violence such as aggravated assault, robbery, rape attempts, homicides, sex abuse which are capable of causing injuries, health problems, psychological traumas, social problems and death. Okorie (2011), sees social insecurity as situations that create fear and wants. Social insecurity may also include all the menaces that threaten human survival, and equally pose danger to daily life and dignity; for instance, environmental degradation,

violation of human rights, transnational organized crimes in illicit drugs, social and economic displacement, poverty, including the incidences of infectious diseases such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Social security is the absence of threat to life and property and economic wellbeing of people. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), the security and welfare of people shall be the primary responsibility of government and the participation by the people in their governments shall be ensured in accordance with provisions of this constitution. Augustine, Eze and Udegbuma, (2017) define security as “feeling of being free from harm or threats. Edinyang (2015), further classified security into objective and subjective cases. In objective case, it measures the absence of threats to acquired values while in a subjective case, it is the absence of fear of possible attack on such values. Eric (2012) reports that it is not just the pupils or students at targeted schools that end up being affected, teachers and others are also affected. According to Bwala (2012), as a result of insecurity, school enrollment in the region has gone down by 28 percent more than any other region in the country. Department for children and family (DCF, 2012) views social insecurity as a situation caused by parent care-givers or members of the society that is capable of imposing fear or threat and harms.

According to Aderoumu (2021), crime rate defines the number of misdemeanours committed within a particular time within a particular place, and avers that there has been an increase in crime rate in Nigeria. Aderoumu identified the major crimes committed to include kidnapping, murder, burglary, fraud, terrorism, robbery, cyber-related crimes, rape, among others and implied that these have increased nearly six-folds. Many school children do not go to school any more, due to insecurity and fear of the unknown; whereas those who are bold to attend, do not normally learn freely and peacefully due to fear and distractions resulting from insecurity. Consequent upon this, schools record poor attendance of students to school.

Iyabo (2018) affirms that regular school attendance is quite crucial to education and

development of school children in any country. When students do not attend school, they will lose the lessons for the day, and this has the tendency of impacting negatively on their academic achievement. There is always a number of negative impacts on the educational development of the child in the school and the community at large when children do not attend school freely and regularly. In many countries, there are laws that mandate every child to attend school until eighteen years of age. Children who attend school regularly no doubt, are likely to learn more and become more useful and successful in school, than their counterparts who do not. Parents who make regular school attendance of their children a priority are obviously helping the children to learn. Regular school attendance is therefore an important and immeasurable routine and ingredient for academic success and a successful life.

Iyabo (2018) observed that school attendance habit is formed early in life. Any child who develops a good attendance habit in the early age of education is more likely to continue with that habit throughout his/her school career and even beyond. It will be quite understandable that a child who misses school, misses carefully planned sequences of instruction. No wonder Patic (2012) observed that such a child who misses active learning experiences and class participation of academic activities such as the opportunity to learn and ask questions; is more likely to fall behind and drop out of the school.

Security challenges in the teaching and learning institutions is not peculiar to the northern region of Nigeria; it is also a major challenge among schools in Izzi local Government Area of Ebonyi State. This unfortunate situation has in no doubts, brought about various untold hardship to formal teaching and learning in schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Formal teaching and learning should take place in an environment that is serene and free from any form of fear and uncertainties, as total concentration and commitment of the learners and the teacher alike is needed. According to Edinyang (2015), security challenges in the educational institution brings about a disconnection in the teaching and

learning process because they are social problems or issues that affect a majority of people in a given environment.

Within an environment, there are sometimes prevailing illnesses which result in social insecurity as the lives of both parents and their children are put at very high risk. An outbreak of cholera or any viral disease will hinder students from attending school, and if that persists for a long time, it weighs very negatively on the academic achievement of learners. According to Mahdy (2020), many universities and colleges worldwide suspended classroom teaching due to the menace of corona virus. In Izzi Local Government Area, which comprises Agbaja, Igbeagu, Mgbala ukwu, Ndieze, Ezzi-Inyimagu, Edukpachi, Ophuruekpe, and Okpoduma, there are high cases of boundary disputes, poverty, rape, youth restiveness, unemployment, cultism, social violence; land dispute, human trafficking, abduction all of which combine to put the lives of school children at a very high risk and have been posing serious threats and challenges to formal education and teaching and learning process.

Between the nights of 14<sup>th</sup> through to the early hours of 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2014, about two hundred and seventy-six (276) innocent school children were massively abducted from their school dormitory at Government Girls' Secondary School, Chibok, Bornu State, Nigeria, by armed militia, suspected to be members of the Islamic sect called Boko Haram. Wikipedia.org (2022) reports that prior to that unfortunate night, the school had been closed for the period of four weeks due to deteriorating security threats; that the girls had arrived the school for their final examinations in Physics when the armed men attacked and abducted them. On February 19, 2018, at about 5:30 pm, another batch of about one hundred and ten (110) school girls were again abducted from Government Girls' Science and Technical school Dapchi, Yobe State. en.m.wikipedia.org. (2018) reports that Dapchi town lies approximately 275 km (170 miles) north west of Chibok where the hoodlums marauding as Islamic fundamentalists kidnapped about 276 school girls about four years before.

Abdulai (2018) reports that out of the 10.5 million children in Nigeria who are out of school, 60 percent are in the north and most of them are girls, and those are the primary target of Boko Haram's brutal hate campaign against western education. With this level of insecurity, most parents have developed cold feet, especially in the north east Nigeria to sending their children to school. Even teachers are afraid of attending school, and when children enrol in school, many do not complete their educational career as a result of disruptions in their academic cycle occasioned by security challenges. All these culminate in depriving learners of quality academic achievement. Abduhi (2018) reports that 30 percent of pupils drop out of the primary school, and only about 54 percent finally transit to junior secondary schools due to security challenges bedevilling our schools. Forces of insecurity also extend to include; child labour, economic hardship, early marriage for girls, kidnapping, abduction, rape, murder and the menace posed by Boko Haram insurgents in the north and that of the unknown gun men in the southern part of the country.

Femi (2015) avers that Nigeria cannot achieve real social security and rule of law in a democratic setting without addressing the issues and challenges posed by insecurity. Current security challenges bedevilling the country is however, an indication that whatever the country has done in this regard, needs additional efforts from government. According to Saleh (2011), constant attacks on schools makes it even harder for teachers and other stakeholders to persuade parents to allow their children stay on at school.

A study carried out in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria by Ajayi (2015), identified lack of humanitarian services, social welfare, lack of good government, poor family orientation, indiscipline, lack of sexual education, corruption and poor knowledge of physiological changes as causes of security challenges. *This Day* Newspaper (2012) writes that it is lack of job, employment and poverty, bad governance and political instability among the people that cause the insecurity. These cases are not different in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, where



there is a high rate of boundary dispute, cultism, murder, rape, abduction, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, robbery, destruction of property in the society and in the secondary schools. It is observed that secondary school students in Izzi L.G.A have declined significantly in learning formally due to insecurity. The enrolment of students in schools in the area has been equally affected.

Security challenges destroy positive attitudes towards learning and the educational vision of the students as it beclouds students' minds from learning and, changes their positive orientation into the negative. These result to challenges of hopelessness, helplessness, frustration, health challenges, psychological trauma, social problems and high rate of drop-out from school as they cannot learn freely in the class and the school environments. This study investigates security challenges in teaching and learning in senior secondary schools in Izzi local government area of Ebonyi State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Security challenges appear to be rising by the day in Nigeria since the year 2009 when the first incidence of Boko Haram insurgency was recorded. Then, Boko Haram members were reported to have beheaded some people in Maiduguri. The summary execution of the leader of Boko Haram radicalized that group making them more violent than ever. Following after that, many other militant groups have emerged, thus increasing the incidences of insecurity in Nigeria. A radical group of herders emerged, unleashing terror on farmers; there have been several cases of abduction of school children, rape of girls and women, some of whom are either attacked on their way to school, within the school premises, at farms, and work places. There are incidences of inter communal clashes as a result of dispute over territorial boundaries, violent robbery, cultism among others. Apart from the physical violent occurrences, there are incidences of diseases that ravage the communities from time to time, causing serious health challenges. The result of these scenarios among the school population is loss of concentration to teaching and learning.

Disruption of academic activities gives room to poor instructional delivery by teachers, leading to poor academic achievement by students. There is the fear that if the security situation among schools is not promptly and properly addressed, academic achievement among senior secondary school students will remain poor especially in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The problem of this study is to find out the influence of security challenges in the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Izzy local government area of Ebonyi State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of security challenges in the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Izzy local government area of Ebonyi State.

Specifically, the study will;

1. Investigate the impact of communal violence on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.
2. Find out the impact of diseases on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the impacts of communal violence on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?
2. What are the impacts of diseases on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey design method. A total of 400 respondents, made up of 10 teachers and 40 students from randomly selected 8 senior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, were used for the study. Simple random sampling technique was

used to ensure equal opportunities for students and teachers from the eight groups to be represented in the sample.

For the purpose of data collection, a structured questionnaire entitled “Security Challenges in Teaching and Learning in secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area” (SCTLILGA) was developed and used to collect data from teachers and students. The four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) was adapted for the questionnaire. Data were analysed

using mean and standard deviation. Decision rule was determined by dividing the summation of frequency by the number; that is,  $\sum fX \div N = 4+3+2+1 = 10 \div 4 = 2.5$ . Therefore, any item that has the mean of 2.5 and above was accepted, while any item with below 2.5 mean was rejected.

## Results

**1. Research Question I:** What are the impacts of communal violence on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Izzi Local

**Table I:** Mean Rating on the Impacts of Security Challenges on Teachers and Students.

| S/N               | ITEM FOCUS  | SA  | A   | D  | SD | N   | $\bar{x}$   | STD  | DECISION RULE |
|-------------------|---|-----|-----|----|----|-----|-------------|------|---------------|
| 1                 | Most teachers do not come to school during communal crises period due to fear of attacks.                                   | 210 | 120 | 40 | 30 | 400 | 3.50        | 0.87 |               |
| 2                 | Most teachers do not stay till the end of school hours due to fear.   | 200 | 150 | 30 | 20 | 400 | 3.70        | 0.92 | Agree         |
| 3                 | Most students avoid schools due to fear of attack during inter-communal clashes   | 200 | 160 | 20 | 20 | 400 | 3.70        | 0.92 | Agree         |
| 4                 | Some teachers apply for transfer due to fear of attacks during communal clashes   | 200 | 120 | 60 | 20 | 400 | 3.40        | 0.85 | Agree         |
| 5                 | Students from both communities that are involved in communal conflict reject posting to schools of their rival communities. | 240 | 120 | 18 | 22 | 400 | 3.50        | 0.87 | Agree         |
| <b>Grand mean</b> |   |     |     |    |    |     | <b>3.56</b> |      |               |

Table 1 shows the mean rating of the impacts of security challenges on teachers and students in senior secondary schools in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi state. With the grand mean score of 3.56, respondents agreed that most teachers in Izzi Local council area absent themselves from school whenever villages engage themselves in communal clashes. Often, most teachers leave school before the official dismissal periods. This might possibly be to leave the

environment before it became too risky to escape. Respondents equally agreed that most students do avoid schools at such crises periods for fear of falling victim to attacks, while some teachers, out of fear, would apply for transfer. Above all, during such conflict periods, new entrants into secondary schools would reject posting to their own neighbouring communities for fear of being cheap targets to their angry neighbours with whom they have been at war.

From the foregoing, it would not be in doubt because performance would be poor. When most teachers omit schools, they omit their lessons and students would not learn. In such situations, there would be poor academic achievement. When teachers would hurriedly leave school at the detriment of their lessons, students are half taught and the scheme of work would hardly be covered. When students are half taught, they enter for their examinations ill-prepared and come out with poor results. When teachers, due to security threats, apply for transfer, there is shortage of teachers in such

affected schools, and such teacher shortage would lead to poor classroom instruction as some subjects would not be taught due to teacher shortage. This would lead to poor performance by students. Since intending students cannot accept posting to schools in their neighbouring community for fear of losing their life, there is mutual suspicion among such communities, and such cannot make for desired peace that guarantees progress. Above all, many students whose parents cannot afford the cost of distant schools would likely drop out of school.

**Table 2:** Mean rating on Impacts of Diseases on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

| S/N | ITEM FOCUS   | SA  | A   | D  | SD | N   | <sup>a</sup> | STD  | DECISION RULE |
|-----|--|-----|-----|----|----|-----|--------------|------|---------------|
| 1   | Most students deliberately avoid school during disease outbreaks for fear of contacting diseases.              | 210 | 120 | 40 | 30 | 400 | 3.40         | 0.85 | Agree         |
| 2   | Most students change school to other safer places at outbreak of influenza.                                    | 160 | 120 | 75 | 45 | 400 | 3.50         | 0.87 | Agree         |
| 3   | Most students end up spending a whole term in the hospital to get well during disease outbreaks.               | 180 | 140 | 50 | 30 | 400 | 3.40         | 0.85 | Agree         |
| 4   | Most teachers who are affected by sicknesses as a result of diseases do not teach their lessons at such times. | 200 | 100 | 62 | 38 | 400 | 3.40         | 0.85 | Agree         |
| 5   | Some teachers do seek transfer during disease outbreaks with no replacements.                                  | 180 | 120 | 48 | 52 | 400 | 3.50         | 0.87 | Agree         |
|     | <b>Grand Mean</b>  |     |     |    |    |     | 3.44         |      |               |

With a grand mean score of 3.44, respondents agreed that most students deliberately avoid school during disease outbreak for fear of contacting diseases. They equally agreed that Most students change school to other safer places at outbreak of influenza; that most students end up spending a whole term in the hospital to get well during disease outbreaks; that most teachers who are affected by sicknesses as a result of diseases do not teach their lessons at such times; and that some teachers do seek transfer during disease outbreaks with no replacements. All these point to the fact that

disease outbreak is often the reason for poor academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. When most students deliberately avoid school at the outbreak of diseases for fear of contacting them, such students miss classes. Students that miss classes will hardly have the required knowledge to face examinations and so, perform poorly. When students change schools often, depending on the quality of the teaching staff of the new school, their concentration is affected and this has the capacity of lowering their performance.

When students get admitted in the hospital, their learning is disrupted as sicknesses have physical, mental psychological and emotional effects on the victim. All these conditions admitted by respondents negatively impact on the academic achievement of senior secondary students of Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. That Nigerian government should as a matter of priority, develop strong political will towards curbing insecurity and activities that constitute threats to lives and property in the urban, as well as in the rural communities like those of Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Host communities should as well complement government efforts by forming local vigilance groups to provide adequate security to schools. Public enlightenment campaign and advocacy should be carried into all localities in order to sensitize the populace of the need for brotherliness and the essence of peaceful co-existence.
2. Well-equipped health facilities should be located in rural communities of Ebonyi State. This would help in carrying out prompt medical treatment to victims of diseases.

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# **The Political Economy of Yoruba Legislative Business in the Lagos State House of Assembly**

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## **Abstract**

*It is a great feat achieved by the Lagos State Government Legislative arm for passing in to law the bill that mandates Yoruba Language as a medium of transacting the legislative business of the country's commercial nerve centre and the business hub of the of Nigeria, Lagos State. The introduction of this Yoruba as a compulsory subject at all level of education will elevate the Yoruba culture in no small measure. It will preserve the Yoruba culture and heritage it will also project the Culture of the Yoruba in the international community, Lagos being the fourth largest economy in Africa. The call for concern in the aforementioned feats is the enforceability of these laws and the ability of these laws to stand the test of time. The paper seeks to look at the political economy of the Yoruba Legislative business of the Lagos state House of assembly, investigate the challenges that come with these laws and suggest the enforceability of all the laws on Yoruba language speaking in Lagos. The paper argues that speaking of Yoruba language at all levels of education will not only rejig and revitalize Yoruba culture in Nigeria but also in the global space, that Government can only sustain this tempo with a strong will and determination.*

**Key words:** Bill, Business, Law, Legislative Business, Legislation, Political Economy.

## **Introduction**

It is pertinent to note that any civilization that does not attach importance to its cultural identity will soon be displaced in the scheme of things, particularly in this globalized world that we live in the recent times. More importantly, a time that is characterized by cultural globalization that tends to homogenize all global cultures in to a single and formidable world culture which is most likely influenced by world dominant cultures. Language is the most important element of culture; hence, if a culture is to be caged what is only needed is to capture it by way of distortion, erosion or total displacement which could be achieved through assimilation, acculturation or imperialism. Undoubtedly, the Yoruba language is internationally recognized and certified language; with codes such as ISO639-1, ISO639-2 and ISO639-3 under the International Standard Organization (ISO) Native speakers of the language constitute 30% of Nigeria's population

and about 40 million speakers through the West African region. Yoruba language was one of the first West African Languages to have written grammar and dictionary in 1849 (Akinkulore, S. O. & Akinfenwa, M. O, 2018).

It is instructive to note that Yoruba language has aptly been classified as one of the major languages in Nigeria simply because of the population that speaks it within and outside the country. The language has been developed to the point of being a school subject from the primary school to the University level mainly in the southern part of the country. (Dada, S.A 2007). From the forgoing, it could be inferred that Yoruba Language has been maximally utilized so much that it has achieved great feats, not only as language of instruction in secondary schools, subject and course of study in institution of leanings, but has also been remarkably recognized in the international world stage and in various best professional communication practices such as

BBC Yoruba, Alaroye News Paper, Owuro lawa, Labe orun etc.

It is against this background that the Lagos State House of Assembly deemed the introduction of Yoruba Language necessary to carry out its legislative business on a specified day of the week so that the Yoruba language which is the major Language of the Yoruba and Lagos being a Yoruba Speaking State in the South West Region of Nigeria will be prominent as the Yoruba cultural Legacy, easy interaction and communication among members of the State House and bring government closer to the people at the grass root level. The Bill that authorized the use of Yoruba language to carry out Legislative business in the Lagos house of Assembly was passed under the Leadership of Rt. Hon. Ikuforiji in 2007, the Former Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly.

This paper seeks to investigate the gains, prospects and challenges that have been experienced since 2007 when Yoruba has been officially recognized as language for proper legislative business in the Lagos State house of Assembly. This will unfold facts about Yoruba legislative business in the said House, the work will also find out whether this legislative practice and experimentation has led to the adoption of same project in neighbouring States and other Western states even beyond and to pin point whether it has achieved desired results in the legislative house and Lagos has a whole.

### **The English Language as a Lingua Franca**

There is no gain saying that the English Language, the official Language adopted as our medium of communication throughout the Federation since independence, also known as our lingua Franca, met the need of that time due to the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria, diversity in all ramifications, unequal historical backgrounds of various ethnicities and cultural extractions. It is also important to note that despite the integration purpose that the English official language was introduced for, it has caused more harm than good to the cultural heritage and identity of the South West Region. The Yoruba Language which is the most important element of the South West region's

culture; has been distorted, eroded and almost becoming a mirage rather than reality that it is truly our indigenous and customary language so much that it has been alienated to the position of second-class fiddle rather than being the main medium of communication in Lagos State being our mother tongue.

It is a truism that the Lagos state house of Assembly has used the vantage position occupied by it to legalize the use of Yoruba as a medium of communication in the legislative Assembly, this is just a means to an end and not an end in itself, it is very important to investigate the efficacy of the Yoruba legislative business, its impact on law enactment in Lagos, is it practicable or a matter of written law that was not enforceable, it is also crucial to note whether the practice is still operational or has gone in to oblivion. This research paper argues that legalizing Yoruba legislative business is a welcome development and good initiative but that is not enough, what is very germane is the positive impact it will have on our law-making system, the repositioning of the Yoruba language as our official Language which will engender preservation of our mother tongue and cultural identity. This research paper seeks to investigate the political economy of Yoruba Legislative business in order to ascertain its benefits, prospect and challenges for future projection and above all for the preservation of Yoruba Language in this generation and generation yet unborn

### **Conceptual Clarification Legislature**

It is important to note that the concept, legislature is very key and central to the research that is being undertaken, the term legislature has been defined by different scholars based on their orientation and conception of the concept. Johari, J. C. (2013) asserts that the word legislature is commonly seen as parliament and occupies the most celebrated position in the political organization of any given country. He argues that the word parliament is derived from the French word "Parler" which means to speak or parley. Accordingly, the term legislature is regarded as the mirror of the will of the nation, a body that

speaks on behalf of the people. It is indeed the grand inquest of the nation.

Cariton, Clymer et al. (1983) argue that the legislative arm is responsible for law making, constitutional prescription, policy making initiatives and watch dogging against other arms of government, particularly the executive but how ever note that these roles are drastically diminishing overtime. It is crystal clear from the above assertions that legislature is the arm or organ of government that enact the law and perform oversight role over other arms of government particularly the executive arm of government.

### **Legislative Business**

According to Nova Scotia Legislature (2021) the legislative business is the business before the house each day and these are often set out on an agenda called the Order Paper, this is usually prepared by the clerk and circulated to each member on a sitting day. It is the dialling sitting proceedings of the parliament ([www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)). It could be vividly inferred from the above that legislative business is the sitting proceedings, business and routings anchored in the legislative chamber and are usually prepared by the Clerk of the House.

### **House of Assembly**

The house of assembly in Nigeria is the State's legislature or the State Legislative Assembly that is saddled with the duty of enactment of the state law, it is established by section 90 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended and endowed with the powers to legislate as well as privileges and immunities to enable it exercise these powers as guaranteed by the constitution without any hindrance ([Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng](mailto:Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng)). Therefore the Lagos house of Assembly is the state Legislature of Lagos State which section 90 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria as amended endows with the power to legislate as well as privilege and immunities to allow it perform its duties and exercise its powers without any limitation, ([Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng](mailto:Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng)). The organ is so powerful that it

performs oversight function over other arms, making it the most important arm of government from time immemorial to date.

### **Yoruba Indigenous Language**

Kehinde, Opeyemi & Abiodun, Salawu (2019) argues that Indigenous Language is a language spoken by a group of people that live in a locality; it is indeed a local medium of communicating with members of the same community. Yoruba is one of the ethnic groups in Nigeria, Yoruba language is particularly spoken by the people in the South West Region of Nigeria, and it is indigenous local language of communication.

Legislative business is a serious business that must be carried out in language that will guarantee effective communication such that the business of the parliament will be easily communicated, understood and orchestrated effectively and efficiently. It is believed that it is on this basis that the Lagos Legislative arm passed and promulgated the law on Yoruba legislative business.

### **Historicity of the Yoruba Legislative Business in Lagos State House of Assembly**

The Lagos State House of Assembly commenced the plan to introduce Yoruba as the official language during its proceedings and deliberations in 2007. A motion to this effect was extensively deliberated upon yesterday by members of the Assembly. It was the Majority Leader of the House Hon. Kolawole, Taiwo who moved the motion for the adoption of Yoruba as official language, he notes that the idea was to carry more people along to enable them know more about vital decisions of the House. Hon. Rotimi, Olowo (Shomolu II) said it would be of great importance if the House adopts Yoruba as the official language during proceedings. According to Hon. S. O. Agunbiade (Ikorodu), the mover of the motion should be commended, as it was in line with the constitution of the House. The former Speaker of the House Hon. Adeyemi, Ikuforiji argues that section 8(2) of the House's constitution provided that the House should employ the use of English language as the official

language for deliberations with volition that a local dialect could also be used. Ikuforiji stated that local languages were already being used in some advanced countries of the world, adding that the House would look critically into it before its adoption (Daily Trust News Paper, November 29, 2007).

Lagos State House of Assembly (LSHA) approved the use of Yoruba language in addition to English in the conduct of legislative business on the floor of the Lagos Assembly chamber as it also called on the leadership of the House to urgently set in motion the necessary machinery and other supportive equipment for its implementation. It must be noted that the resolution was largely influenced and subsequently adopted due to a letter written by Dr. (Mrs.) Ohiri Anuche, an Associate Professor in the University of Lagos who urged the House to conduct legislative business in Yoruba. This according to her would enhance participation of the grassroots in governance (Daily Trust News Paper, December 10, 2007).

This was a good development that Lagos state took the lead in the promotion of the South Western cultural heritage; language is one of the vital tools that can promote core cultural values which most youth lack today. It is an exemplary achievement that must be followed by other States in the federation to further promote cultural identity and to resuscitate our ethical standard in the indigenous parlance. It must be noted that it was Governor Fashola that finally gave assent to the bill into law under the Leadership of Rt. Hon. Obasa, the speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly.

The Lagos State House of Assembly 19<sup>th</sup> 2017, passed the bill which makes the teaching of Yoruba language compulsory in schools in the state into law. The passage of the bill came after it scaled through the third reading on the floor of the House. The bill, among others, makes the teaching of Yoruba language compulsory in all schools in the state, both in private and public schools, by including it as a core subject at all levels. State-owned tertiary institutions are also mandated to incorporate the use of the language as a course unit into their General Nigeria Studies (GNS)

(Daily Post News Paper, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007). The bill indicates, 'a fine of N500, 000 for a corporate offender while any school in the state which fails to comply with the law faces closure and a fine of N250, 000.00 The bill was finally passed with the Speaker of the House, Rt. Hon. Mudashiru Obasa, ordering the Clerk of the House, Mr. Azeez Sanni, to send a clean draft copy of the bill to the state Governor, Mr. Akinwunmi, Ambode for his assent (Daily Post News Paper, October 20, 2007).

Lagos is known for its excellent performance in all ramifications, it has also taken the lead in the introduction of Yoruba in secondary schools as a compulsory subject and a medium of instruction for students, this will further promote the Yoruba cultural heritage in Nigeria. The dream of making Yoruba an official language started in 2007. Yoruba legislative business started in 2007 and was achieved in same year, but in 2017 under Governor Ambode, Yoruba finally achieved the status of a compulsory subject in secondary schools.

### **A cursory look at Yoruba Legislative Business in Lagos State**

The Lagos State House of Assembly has set to strengthen the use of Yoruba Language in all the schools in the state and across the state generally. This was revealed during plenary on Thursday by the Chairman of the House Committee on Education, Hon. Olanrewaju, Ogunyemi as he read the committee's report on a proposed law. The bill is entitled, "*A bill for a law to provide for the preservation and promotion of the use of Yoruba language and for connected purposes.*"

According to the Bill, which has passed second reading, it would be compulsory for all primary and secondary schools in the state to include teaching of Yoruba Language as a core subject at all levels (Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng). The bill also provides that all the laws in the state would be translated into Yoruba Language. More so, all state-owned tertiary institutions are to incorporate the use of Yoruba Language in the General Studies (GNS) courses. According to the bill, the use of Yoruba



Language shall be an acceptable means of communication between individuals, establishment, corporate entities and government in the state if so desired by the concerned. "It shall not be an offence for a person to speak Yoruba Language (Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng). It was added that any school that fails to comply with the provisions of Section 2 of the law commits an offence and is liable on first violation to issuance of warning and on subsequent violation be closed down and also pay a fine of N500, 000.00. Ogunyemi added in an interview with journalists later that the committee might change a provision in the bill that it would take effect after two years of its passage as most of the members wanted it to start immediately after it is signed into law by the Governor (Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng). The lawmaker added that the Lagos State House of Assembly is passionate about Yoruba Language, which is why it adopted the language for plenary on Thursdays. According to him, "the National Policy on Education provides that the language of an environment should be spoken in schools, which is why Yoruba Language is being adopted in Lagos schools (Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng). After the passage of the bill into law, it would become compelling for schools to speak Yoruba Language. We want to preserve the language for generations yet unborn. On private schools, the lawmaker stated that they were part of the foundation of the bill and that they were at meetings the committee held across the education districts in the state. He added that the private schools would have no choice than to key into the project as the school owners have been properly mobilized and that the state Ministry of Education would ensure compliance Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng).

On the translation of the laws into Yoruba Language, Ogunyemi said that this was to ensure that illiterates were taking along in the scheme of things in the state. The Speaker, Rt. Hon. Mudashiru, Obasa in his remarks observed grey area in the new section of the Bill which gives necessary implementation of the provisions of the law and recommended that it should be deleted. In his response, Hon. Ogunyemi stated that "the

recommendation arose from the stakeholders who had pleaded for more time due to lack of teachers and to provide necessary facilities to aid its teachings." Members thereafter adopted the recommendations as a resolution of the House (Info@lagoshouseofassembly.gov.ng). The Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye, Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, has appealed to State Houses of Assembly in the South West to take a cue from the Lagos State House of Assembly in the promotion of Yoruba language and cultural heritage. The Ooni made this appeal when he led some chiefs on a courtesy visit to the Lagos State House of Assembly and expressed delight and satisfaction with the legislators who conduct proceedings in the Yoruba Language. (*The Guardian*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2017).

Oba Ogunwusi said the approach of the Lagos House of Assembly will not only help in the preservation of Yoruba language, but the cultural values and tradition. His words "I am very happy to be here and see the Lagos State House of Assembly, using Yoruba language to conduct its activities. I therefore enjoin all other Houses of Assembly in Yoruba Land to take a cue from this House. People in other countries honour and cherish Yoruba language, but sadly here at home, we seem not to cherish what is ours. (*The Guardian*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2017)

Ooni of Ife therefore urges the Lagos State House of Assembly, to do all within its power to persuade other state Assemblies in Yoruba speaking areas, to see the sense, in conducting their house businesses in Yoruba, as this, is one of the surest ways to promote our language and cultural heritage". (*The Guardian*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2017). The Ooni frowned at a situation, where many children from Yoruba parents, who are supposed to be from Yoruba speaking areas in the country, could hardly communicate in their native language, saying deliberate efforts should be made henceforth to promote and teach our children the use of Yoruba language. As this is the only way of ensuring that the language does not go into extinction (*The Guardian*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2017).

From the forgoing, the following are the gains of Yoruba legislative business:

1. It engenders the practice of Yoruba Cultural values.
2. It strengthens the Yoruba cultural ethos.
3. The move of the Lagos state House of Assembly to use Yoruba as a Legislative business has encouraged the Youth in the Speaking of Yoruba.
4. It makes communication easy during legislative business.
5. It brings government closer to the grass root.
6. It solidifies the cultural identity of the South Western Nigeria.
8. It affords the legislators and Lagos indigenes and non-indigenes in general the opportunity to communicate in Yoruba mother tongue.
9. It has made Yoruba an official Language in Lagos.
10. It has also revitalized Yoruba Language among the Yorubas as well as non-Yoruba speaking people residing in Lagos.
11. Using Yoruba as a medium of carrying out legislative business in the Lagos State House of Assembly puts clarity in the subject of discourse for all the indigenous law makers on all matters arising. This in a way prevents ambiguity in the course of discussion.
12. The use of Yoruba in the State legislative Chamber also improves people understanding on the issues that are being discussed.
13. The use of indigenous language is in its self a source of security, such that all legislators will be on the same page and having sense of belonging based on their common history, heritage and identity.

### **Challenges of Yoruba Legislative Business**

It is a fact that colonialism and neo colonialism has affected the mother tongue of all the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. It has reduced indigenous language to a forgotten and archaic language that people hardly speak and use as a medium of interaction. A careful review of above

literatures reveals the following challenges of Yoruba legislative business:

Most of the law makers cannot speak Yoruba fluently without mixing it with English the official language of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; this is due to so many factors which range from family background, peer influence and scholarship. Another point that is very close to that is that most of the legislators studied abroad before coming back to contest and eventually won. They have spent a lot of time abroad such that they can hardly adjust to Yoruba legislative business.

Lack of effective training given to law makers to prepare them for Yoruba Legislative business, workshop and courses have not been organize for Lagos law makers to have effective Yoruba legislative business the period between public hearing and the passing of the bill was very short; this also hindered the ability of some law makers to effectively prepare for the Yoruba legislative business in the Lagos house of assembly are not Yoruba and this makes it difficult for them to effectively communicate in another challenge is that some representatives Yoruba. It must be noted that Yoruba Language passage in to law as medium of communication may not really see the light of the day, the reason for this is not far- fetched in that most of the law makers do not cling tenaciously to Yoruba Language as the life wire, major custodian and preserving mechanism for the Yoruba cultural identity and heritage. Through language, culture can be preserved from one generation to the other. Language can also serve as a catalyst that can project the culture of the Yoruba people beyond Nigeria and African content.

### **Recommendations**

Yoruba experts should be employed as resource person who will teach the law makers in Lagos assembly how to effectively communicate in Yoruba:

1. training on indigenous language and communication should be facilitated in the Lagos assembly;

2. the Yoruba legislative business should be continuous so that many law makers will comply;
3. the enforcement of the law that makes Yoruba language a compulsory subject at all levels must be properly implemented in all institutions and establishments where such laws are made for;
4. scholarship should be introduced for students with outstanding performance in the Yoruba language at all level of education;
5. Lagos State Government should make it a point of duty to always organize Yoruba Cultural competitions for students across the state, this can be in form of debate competition, quiz completion as well as cultural dance and performing day for students at all levels of education.
6. Government should set aside a day for Yoruba cultural identity and heritage Remembrance Day for all residents in Lagos State.

### Conclusion

The introduction of Yoruba Language as a medium of communication and interaction in the Lagos house of assembly is a commendable and epoch-making achievement; however, there is this fear that it may not stand the test of time. Law makers should not give in to attitudes that suggest that the Yoruba language is not Nigerian official language and should be taken with levity. Enforcement agents within the Assembly should be appointed for a long-lasting Yoruba legislative business. It must also be noted that it has started affecting the political economy sphere of the State as a whole.

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# Transitivity Process in Yoruba Oral Poetry: A Stylistic Study of *Orin Etiyeri* (Yoruba Musical Satire)

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## Abstract

*This paper examined the stylistic properties and the intricacy of Yoruba oral poetry using Michael Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly the Transitivity system. It analyses Yoruba oral poetry, with focus on the processes and participants in the verbal art, to identify the link between linguistic form and literary effect. In the process, the study identifies the psychology, philosophy and cosmology of Yoruba people who constitute one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. SFL is based on the concept of linguistic function, while Transitivity system analyses clauses, both isolated clauses and clauses in context, offering explanations as to how language is used to represent human experiences. Yoruba oral poems are categorised according to their use and style into chant, recitation and song. The sub-genres of chant include ekun iyawo (bridal chant) and ijala (hunters' chant); those of recitation include ofo or ogede (incantation), owe (proverb) and aloapamo (riddle); while the common types of Yoruba traditional song include apala, dadakuada and orin etiyeri. The stylistic analysis of Yoruba oral poetry, using orin etiyeri (musical satire) as a sample, establishes the capacity of stylistics to examine literary texts in verbal forms; it highlights the attributes of oral poetry – particularly beauty and elegance of language, content and style – attributed to the best of written poetry.*

**Key words:** Style, Yoruba oral poetry, Systemic-functional linguistics, Linguistic form, Literary effect

## Introduction

Language is a systematic resource for expressing meaning in context; and linguistics, according to Halliday, is the study of how people exchange meanings (Chapelle, 1998). Indeed, stylistics aims to explain the connection between linguistic form and literary effect, and to account for what it is that a reader is responding to when they commend or criticise the quality of a given piece of writing (McIntyre, 2012). Several literary genres have been subjected to stylistic investigations, but there has been little or no significant effort to subject the language of Yoruba oral poetry to rigorous stylistic analyses with a view to investigating how language is organised in the oral art to achieve social functions, and establishing the link between linguistic form and literary effect, hence this study.

With particular attention to processes and participants, this paper examines the stylistic features of Yoruba oral poetry, the verbal art that tends to define Yoruba people, with particular focus on *Orin Etiyeri* (Yoruba musical satire). It identifies the link between linguistic form and literary effect, revealing how language is organised in Yoruba oral art to achieve social functions, and evaluating the potential of stylistics as a research tool that can benefit from other disciplines and approaches, such as translation studies, corpus-driven analysis, phraseology, discourse analysis and sociolinguistic approaches.

Using Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly the system of Transitivity, propounded by M. A. K. Halliday, the study attempts to unravel the literary complexity lying

behind Yoruba oral poetry to, among other things, identify the link between linguistic form and literary effect and discover how language is manipulated by Yoruba people to “represent their perceptions of reality” (Bloor & Bloor, 1995, p. 109). In Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL), the system of Transitivity is a means of analysing clauses, both isolated clauses and clauses in context; it offers explanations as to how language is used to represent human inner and outer experiences (Bartley, 2018). This study is thus another significant effort towards disproving the assertion credited to “some European and Eurocentric scholars,” according to Sotunsa (2009, p. 1), that, “there was no poetry in Africa until the arrival of European **civilisation**.” Citing Okpewho (1985), Sotunsa adds that, “such scholars argue that poetry is a mark of advanced culture or civilisation and the business of men of specialised skill and training who devote their time to observing and commenting on life with beauty and seriousness.”

The study was inspired by the need to identify the stylistic properties of Yoruba oral poetry with attention to the semantics of the syntactic elements employed in the verbal art for relational processes; and accordingly, counter the impression harboured by some scholars, particularly in the West, who, according to Finnegan (2012), view African oral literature as a sort of “written literature *manqué* – apparently lacking the elaboration of wording and recognisability of associations known from familiar forms, and without the particular stylistic devices peculiar to oral forms being made clear” (p. 8). This notion, suggestive of inadequate knowledge leading to misrepresentation of the resources of African oral poetry, tends to underrate the African poetic tradition, creating the impression that Africans, possibly lacking in poetic insight, have made little or no significant contribution to world literary tradition and/or civilisation. The knock-on effect of this inaccurate perception of the impact of African cultural heritage on global literary canon is reflected in the continent’s socio-cultural, political and economic problems.

## Style

Style may be viewed as a choice of linguistic means, as deviation from a norm, as recurrence of linguistic forms, and as comparison. Its common features include “the use of dialogue, including regional accents and individual dialects (or *idiolects*), the use of grammar, such as the observation of active voice and passive voice, the distribution of sentence lengths, the use of particular language registers,” according to Mukherjee (2021, p. 3). Mukherjee groups the stylistic factors that influence preference for certain linguistic forms as “user-bound factors and factors referring to the situation where the language is being used.” User-bound stylistic factors are said to include “the speaker’s or writer’s age; gender; idiosyncratic preferences; and regional and social background,” while situation-bound factors are said to “depend on the given communication situation, such as medium (spoken vs. written); participation in discourse (monologue vs. dialogue); attitude (level of formality); and field of discourse (e.g., technical vs. nontechnical fields).”

## Yoruba Oral Poetry

Poetry could be defined as an exciting composition in which the presenter expresses strong feelings in verse form. Viewing poetry from the perspective of language, Widdowson (1992) describes poetry as unorthodox language, which vibrates with inter-textual implications, quite unlike words set in stone in a graveyard. Oral poetry, manifesting fundamental features of the oral equivalent of literature, is the poetic verbal aspect of manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads and proverbs. *Ewi*, Yoruba verbal art forms are defined by details of performance, audience, and occasion.

“Orality is often, but not always, open,” according to Turin (2012, p. xx), adding that, “Orality is also public, both in its production, display and in its eventual consumption.” This is an accurate characterisation of Yoruba oral poetry. Yoruba oral poetry is not only open, but also public in its production, presentation – that is, performance – and in its ultimate consumption. Oral poetry, a verbal art perceived, in this context,

within the parameters of Yoruba folklore or orature, refers to the poetic verbal aspect of manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads and proverbs. Yoruba culture deploys the human voice to document history and pass comment on social realities (Olomo, 2003). The various genres of Yoruba oral poetry could be categorised – according to their use and mode of rendition – into chant, recitation and song. The

sub-genres of chant include *ekun iyawo* (bridal chant or nuptial chant) and *ijala* (hunters' chant or hunting poetry); those of recitation include *ofo* or *ogede* (incantation), *owe* (proverb) and *alo apamo* (riddle); while the common types of Yoruba traditional song include *apala*, *dadakuada*, *sakara*, *waka* and *orin Etiyeri* (Yoruba musical satire).

**Table 1: Genres and Subgenres of Yoruba Oral Poetry**

| Genres    | Chant  | Recitation                               | Song                                 |
|-----------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Subgenres | <i>Ìjálá Ọdẹ</i> (hunters' chant)                  | <i>Oríkì</i> (panegyric/praise poetry)   | <i>Orin Etiyeri</i> (musical satire) |
|           | <i>Èkùn Ìyàwó</i> (bridal/nuptial chant)           | <i>Ofo</i> or <i>Ogede</i> (incantation) | <i>Agidigbo</i>                      |
|           | <i>Èsà Egúngún</i> (poetry in praise of ancestors) | <i>Alo Apamo</i> (riddle)                | <i>Apala</i>                         |
|           | <i>Arò Èyò</i> (Adámú-Òrìṣà chant)                 | <i>Owe</i> (proverb)                     | <i>Sákàrà</i>                        |

**Orin Etiyeri (Yoruba musical satire)**

Lilé: *E máa pé "Yìó se!"*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *E máa pé "Yìó se!"*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Odé roko, odé peran*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Eran kí lodé pa?*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Ode peran òketé*

Ègbè: *A a se!*

Lilé: *Ikú á ré wa kété!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Àrùn á ré wa kété!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Òfò á ré wa kété!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Ìyà á ré wa kété!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *E máa pé "Yìó se!"*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *E máa pé "Yìó se!"*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Odé roko, odé peran*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Eran kí lodé pa?*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Ode peran òwàwà*

Ègbè: *A a se!*

Lilé: *Owó á wá wa wálé!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Omo á wá wa wálé!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Olá á wá wa wálé!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

Lilé: *Olà á wá wa wálé!*

Ègbè: *Á á se!*

**Translation**

Call: Say "So be it!"

Response: So be it!

Call: Say "So be it!"

Response: So be it!

Call: Hunter went to farm, hunter killed game

Response: So be it!

Call: Which animal did hunter kill?

Response: So be it!

Call: Hunter killed pouch rat

Response: So be it!

Call: May death pass over us!

Response: So be it!

Call: May disease pass over us!

Response: So be it!  
 Call: May loss pass over us!  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: May suffering pass over us!  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: Say "So be it!"  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: Say "So be it!"  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: Hunter went to farm, hunter killed game  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: Which animal did hunter kill?  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: Hunter killed cheetah  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: May money locate us at home!  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: May children locate us at home!  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: May glory locate us at home!  
 Response: So be it!  
 Call: May wealth locate us at home!  
 Response: So be it!

### Performance and the Performer

Performance is the soul of oral literature. According to Finnegan (1972, p. 4), "Oral literature is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion — there is no other way in which it can be realized as a literary product." In any performance, the performer enlivens the oral material, giving it life, and stirs excitement in the audience. An assessment of the quality – the success or failure – of a performance depends on how creative, innovative and eclectic the performer is in the given oral presentation. As Finnegan (1972) avers, a good performer studies his audience and alters his style of delivery according to the mood or countenance of his audience, whom he has to always carry along.

### The Audience

In oral lore, performances are not staged in abstraction. A living audience is a necessity. The performer performs at his zenith when the

audience is active, overwhelming. The audience in an oral performance is mostly participatory.

### Processes and Participants in Yoruba Oral Poetry

The major participants in Yoruba oral poetry are the performers and the audience, the performance could be said to constitute the process, while the circumstance refers to the occasion that calls for the performance.

### Theoretical Framework Systemic-Functional Linguistics

The **theoretical framework** used for this study is Michael Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL), a theory that accounts for the syntactic structure of language, having been founded on the concept of linguistic function. Unlike structural approaches that tend to centralise the elements of language and their combinations, SFL stresses the centrality of linguistic function. The theory begins at social context, investigating how language acts upon, and is constrained by, this social context. It analyses language in terms of four strata: Context, Semantics, Lexico-Grammar and Phonology-Graphology (Halliday, 1994). Context, for instance, has to do with the Field ("what is going on"), the Tenor (concerned with the social roles and relationships between the participants) and the Mode of discourse (concerned with aspects of the channel of communication, for instance, whether monologic or dialogic, spoken or written).

A vital aspect of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) is the system of Transitivity, which is a means of analysing clauses, and giving explanations as to how language is deployed to represent human inner and outer experiences (Bartley, 2018). Systemic-Functional Linguistics identifies three main functions of language, which are: the ideational (or experiential) through which speakers or writers express their world view; the interpersonal through which users of a given language establish and maintain social contact; and the textual, which enables the first two to be brought together and organised in a communicatively effective way (Halliday, 1985).

In the process of communication, experiences are expressed linguistically by organising information into clauses; for example: They are going to the village for a meeting. This utterance is made up of four phrases, viz.: They / are going / to the village / for a meeting. It can be analysed syntactically as follows: subject + verb + adjunct + adjunct (SVA structure).

When considered semantically, the utterance can be said to imply a process: the process of *going*; and it identifies at least one participant, “we”, participating in the process of *going*. Thus, a participant is the constituent of a clause that denotes who or what is involved in the process (Chapelle, 1998), human or non-human. Besides the participant-process combination, the other phrases in the utterance appear to describe a circumstance that is related to the process. The phrase *to the village* says something about the location of the process; and the phrase *for a meeting* says something about the purpose of the process. The phrases that make up the clause thus reflect one of three semantic functions: process, participant or circumstance. (Toolan, 2013).

## Methodology

Mixed methods of data analysis were employed in this study. The qualitative method accounted for the content and textual analysis, while the quantitative method was used for percentile findings. Purposive sampling technique was used in this research to select the data representative of Yoruba oral poetry. *Orin Etiyeri* (musical satire), a type of Yoruba traditional song, sub-genre of song was selected for this study as its features encapsulate the linguistic and literary elements of Yoruba oral poetry, besides the sociocultural elements and its popularity among members of the Yoruba ethnic community. The selected sample was documented, transcribed and then translated from the source language (Yoruba) into the target language (English), aided by adequate knowledge of interlingua communication. It was then described, classified and analysed, using Halliday’s Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL), to examine the processes and participants in Yoruba oral poetry in

order to identify the linguistic functions of the verbal art.

## Discussion of Findings

### *Transitivity Features in Yoruba Oral Poetry*

The system of transitivity features three fundamental elements; that is, any given clause features three main components, which are participants, processes and circumstances.

1. A process (a verbal group), as in *They sat down again*;
2. A participant (a nominal group), as in *They sat down again*; and
3. A circumstance (an adverbial or prepositional phrase), as in *They sat down again*.

According to Bartley (2018, quoting Fontaine, 2013), “circumstances are not inherent to the clause and, rather, serve to provide additional meaning” (p. 9). In other words, while the process and participant are believed to be inherent elements of the clause, circumstantial elements are taken to be an optional element.

The main participants in the musical satire (*Orin Etiyeri*) examined, signified by Nominal Groups (NGs), are:

- (1) the lead performer; (2) the chorus and (3) the audience.

**Actors:** Lead performer rendering invocative utterances; and his backup serving as chorus rendering the refrain “Á á se!” meaning “So be it!” in response to the lead performer’s invocative utterances.

**Agent/Medium:** Dialogue; **Theme:** Invocative song, a prayer for blessings.

**Mood:** Indicative: declarative: *Hunter went to farm, hunter killed game*; and interrogative: *Which animal did hunter kill?* Imperative: *Say “So be it!”*

The lead performer’s introductory clauses are commands realised as marked imperatives: *E máa pé yóó se!* (You) Say “So be it!” = You (subject) Say (predicator) “So be it” (complement)



**Table 2: Transitivity Features in *Orin Etíyèrí* (Musical Satire)**

| No. of words | No. of clauses | Call     | Response | No. of clauses | VGs indicating Processes (No./%) | NGs indicating Participants (No./%) |
|--------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 181          | 36             | 18 (50%) | 18 (50%) |                | 19 (31.2%)                       | 35 (68.8%)                          |

As expressed in Table 2, the performance constitutes the process, signified by Verbal Groups (VG); while the circumstance, signified by Adverbial Phrases (AP) and Prepositional Phrases (PP), refers to the occasion or situation (or substance) that calls for the performance of the poetry – a ceremony, such as wedding or naming ceremony.

### Thematic Features of *Orin Etíyèrí*

*Orin Etíyèrí* is a musical satire with which meaning is negotiated by Yoruba people. It is a call-and-response with a melodic phrase, serving as a refrain, which can be vocal or played on a musical instrument, such as talking drum, or a combination of the two. It is usually performed by a band of five or more young men who move round the community as they sing. The leader of the band – who, in times past used to be dressed in the costumes of a masked spirit (*egungun*) – makes the call, usually with his voice – rather than with musical instruments, and the other members forming the audience respond to it.

*Orin Etíyèrí* is meant to inform, educate and entertain members of the community. The poetic rendition is meant to inform, educate and entertain members of the community. The performance is also used to praise, or pray for, and bless people.

### Semantic Content of *Orin Etíyèrí*

Semantically, the name of the song, *Etíyèrí*, translates, literally, as “the ear befits the head.”

Denotatively, it denotes the physical attributes of the ear and the head, suggestive of compatibility. Connotatively, the term “*Etíyèrí*” stresses the significance of ears, emphasising the function of ears in relation to the head. The head may be the most significant part of the body, but it will hardly be able to function effectively without the ear.

### Allusion in *Orin Etíyèrí*

*Orin Etíyèrí* is usually performed by a band of young men who move round the community as they sing. The leader of the band usually dons the costumes of a masked spirit (*egungun*), makes the call, usually with his voice, rather than with musical instruments, and the other members forming the audience answer it. The whole performance is an enactment of the activities of the ancestors of the land.

### Lexico syntactic Features of *Orin Etíyèrí* (Yoruba musical satire)

The song, *Orin Etíyèrí*, comprises 36 clauses made up of 181 words. A total of 22 clauses, representing 61% of clauses in the poem, feature as the refrain, “Á á se!” (“So be it!” or “Amen!”). This signifies harmony between the chanter and the chorus, accentuating the importance the people attach to the invocative clauses rendered by their leader.

The clauses in the musical satire (*Orin Etíyèrí*), mostly rendered by the lead performer, can be classified as:

(1) Indicative; that is:

Declarative: *Hunter went to farm, hunter killed game*; and

Interrogative: *Which animal did hunter kill?*

Statements realised as declarative sentences:

hunter (subject) went (“past” infinitive/predicator) to farm (complement);

hunter (subject) killed (“past” infinitive/predicator) game (complement)

Question realised as an interrogative:

*Eran kí lodé pa?* Which animal did hunter kill?

(2) Imperative: *Say “So be it!”*

The lead performer’s introductory utterances are commands realised as marked imperatives.

He asks the questions, which he answers by himself. His utterances bear the illocutionary force associated with invocative poetry. The clauses are mainly performative, always stimulating an action (a response). Performative clauses are used to operate or act something.

Total No. of clauses: 36

Call: 18 (50%)

**Response:** 18 (50%). This is a manifestation of the participatory character of the performance.

**Imperative:** 22 (61%): So be it

**Declarative:** 4 (11%): *Hunter went to farm, hunter killed game.* (Rendered twice)  
*Hunter killed pouch rat and Hunter killed cheetah*

**Interrogative:** 2 (5.5%): *Which animal did hunter kill?* (Rendered twice)

**Invocative/Optative:** 8 (22%)

*May death pass over us!*

*May disease pass over us!*

*May loss pass over us!*

*May suffering pass over us!*

*May money locate us at home!*

*May children locate us at home!*

*May glory locate us at home!*

*May wealth locate us at home!*

The main performer utters a sentence (*lilé orin*), to which the chorus (*ègbè*) responds with a refrain, “Á á se!” meaning, “So be it!” The refrain is an example of foregrounding, a technique in Systemic Functional Linguistics which denotes “a prominent portion of text that contributes meaning, contrasted with the background, which provides relevant context for the foreground” (Nordquist, 2020).

**Table 3:** Lexico syntactic Features of *Orin Etiyèrì* (Musical Satire)

| Imperative      | Declarative                             | Interrogative                 | Invocative/Optative            |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Say “So be it!” | Hunter went to farm, hunter killed game | Which animal did hunter kill? | May death pass over us         |
|                 | Hunter killed pouch rat                 |                               | May disease pass over us       |
|                 | Hunter killed cheetah                   |                               | May loss pass over us          |
|                 |   |                               | May suffering pass over us     |
|                 |   |                               | May money locate us at home    |
|                 |   |                               | May children locate us at home |
|                 |   |                               | May glory locate us at home    |
|                 |   |                               | May wealth locate us at home   |

| Imperative<br>(No./%) | Declarative<br>(No./%) | Interrogative<br>(No./%) | Invocative/Optative<br>clauses<br>(No./%) | Refrain<br>(No./%) |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------|
| 22 (61%)              | 4 (11%)                | 2 (5.5%)                 | 8 (22%)                                   | 22 (61%)           |

In the process of the performance, experiences being communicated are expressed linguistically by organising information into clauses. In syntax, phrases are taken to represent an intermediate level of organisation between the

word and the clause; that is, words combine into phrases, and then into clauses. Many of the clauses in the rendition are optative clauses. Optative clauses are expressions that verbalise a hope, wish, keen desire or prayer. They usually end with

an exclamation mark. They are different from exclamatory sentences which denote sudden expressions of surprise, disgust, admiration, sorrow or any intense emotion or feeling, for example “What a lovely scenery!” The performance features 8 optative clauses, such as: *May money locate us at home! May glory locate us at home! May wealth locate us at home!*

The optative clauses, introduced by the modal auxiliary verb “May” (occurring 8 times, 22%), each comprises four phrases: Nominal Groups – e.g., “money” and “us” (subject and complement), a Verbal Group (“locate”), and an Adverbial Phrase (“at home”).

*May money /locate / us / at home.*

*May glory / locate / us / at home.*

*May wealth / locate / us / at home*

= Modal auxiliary verb-Subject-Lexical Verb-Complement-Adjunct (Adverbial Phrase)

The rendition comprises 36 clauses, 22 (61%) out of which is the refrain, signifying harmony between the chanter and the chorus, accentuating the importance the participants attach to the invocative or optative clauses. Call: 18 (50%); Response: 18 (50%). This shows the participatory character of the performance. Imperative: 22 (61%); Declarative: 4 (11%); Interrogative: 2 (5.5%); Invocative/Optative: 8 (22%). The song, mainly performative, stimulating an action (a response), features a preponderance of invocative clauses rendered by the lead performer: a mark of invocative poetry.

### Musicality

*Orin Etiyeri* is a call-and-response that features a melodic phrase, serving as a refrain, which can be vocal or played on a musical instrument, such as talking drum, or a combination of the two. The poem is usually performed by a band of five or more young men who move round the community as they sing. The leader of the band, who, in times past used to be dressed in the costumes of a masked spirit (*egungun*), makes the call, usually with his voice, rather than with musical instruments, and the other members forming the audience answer it. The musical poetry illustrates the submission of Olajubu (1981, as cited in Sotunsa, 2009) that,

“The poem in Yoruba is essentially a song, and its performance is a musical dramatic opera” (p. 3).

The poetic rendition features a preponderance of invocative clauses made by the leader of the performance, which is a clear mark of invocative poetry. His clauses are more of performative than constative clauses, which merely refer to some fact. The other features of the rendition, with which meaning is achieved and exchanged, include foregrounding and turn taking. Foregrounding is achieved with the aid of repetition, employed both as “a literary device and a compositional technique” (Sotunsa, 2009, p. 47), for emphasis and musicality, to achieve aesthetic effect and enhance meaning. According to Okpewho (1985, as cited in Sotunsa, 2009), “There are two types of music which we generally hear in the performance of oral poetry. One of these is the instrumental music... the other kind of music we hear in oral poetry is vocal or tonal” (p. 2). In other words, music (instrumental or vocal) is one of the elements of oral poetry.

Besides repetition and musicality, the use of ideophones, such as “kete”, is another feature of oral poetry. The ideophone is realised in the rendition from the word “okete” (pouch rat); the ideophone “kete” is used repeatedly in the first part of the prayer.

“Owawa” (cheetah) is used because of its phonological harmony with “wa” (“wale”) used in the second part of the prayer.

According to Adeniji-Neill (2014), “The Yoruba language is tonal; the meaning is often dependent on the rising and falling inflection of the voice” (p. 174). Tone markings are an integral aspect of Yoruba orthography, with the use of which new words and meanings are realisable. For example: “Olá” in *Olá á wá wa wálé* means “glory”, whereas “Olà” in *Olà á wá wa wálé* denotes “wealth”.

### Conclusion

Yoruba oral poetry is an ancient art form that manifests basic components of performance art – an art form in which the artist creates a live performance, which combines visual art with dramatic performance. The components of the verbal art are time, space, the performer's body, or

presence in a medium, and a relationship between performer and audience. The art is a participatory form, and the oral artist is a performer that plays a central role in every performance. Oral poetry encapsulates the socio-cultural life of Yoruba people. This study, thus, aligns with Olajubu (1981, as cited in Sotunsa, 2009) who states that “Oral poetry possesses all the beauty of language, content and style associated with the best of written poetry. The case for the recognition of oral poetry as true poetry has been most successfully made” (p. 1).

As reflected in Orin Etiyeri (musical satire), much of Yoruba oral poetry also features interjections, which, like ideophones, serve to enhance the style of the oral art, heightening its poetic beauty. The beauty of Yoruba oral poetry is enhanced with the aid of foregrounding, rhetoric, chants, incantation and invocation achieved through repetition, parallelism, tonal counterpoint – an essential element in tonal word-play (Olatunji, 2005), word-play, rhythm, non-casual language and figurative language. Yoruba oral poetry serves social functions, besides its entertainment value.

Experiences communicated in the rendition were expressed linguistically by organising information into clauses featuring word-play, rhythm, rhyme, figurative language and other stylistic elements with which meaning is exchanged in Yoruba oral poetry, thus establishing the link between linguistic form and literary effect. The study established the capacity of SFL to analyse utterances effectively and facilitate language users’ effort to express their experiences, perceptions and aspirations.

This study would be of interest to a wide academic readership, particularly stylisticians and scholars conducting corpus analysis, translation studies, phraseology, discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. Stylisticians in particular would be interested in applying the analytical tools, which have to do with lexical choice, that is, words employed in a given language, which have grammatical meaning and function, and methods deployed in this study to various literary analyses to test their efficiency, and thus prove the replicability of the methods employed in the study.

With the perception of poetry as a linguistic art that features figurative language, the study identified the stylistic features and the functional as well as aesthetic and thus, educational values of Yoruba oral poetry.

Also, the study examined the place of oral poetry in the life of Yoruba people, highlighting the psychology, philosophy and cosmology of the people, who are renowned for their rich culture encapsulated in their oral lore. The study would stimulate effort towards the collection, transcription, preservation, exposure and study of the various genres and sub-genres of Yoruba oral poetry. Lastly, this study would inspire further research and publications on the subject of the stylistic study of Yoruba traditional poetry.

### **Recommendations**

1. The study highlights the need for further research and publications on Yoruba oral poetry, with focus on how linguistic elements are organised in the verbal art to achieve literary and social functions.
2. The stylistic properties and the literary complexity lying behind Yoruba oral poetry deserve further study, particularly the processes and participants in the verbal art through which and whom the culture of Yoruba people deploys the human voice to document history and pass comment on social realities (Olomo, 2003). According to Sotunsa (2009), citing Bamikunle (1985), oral literature scholars should be concerned with the textual analysis of African literature rather than defensive criticism.
3. Efforts should be made to nurture such oral creativity and devise systematic means of cataloguing and preserving the whole corpus of Yoruba oral poetry for easy reference by present and future generations of scholars, critics, art practitioners, art connoisseurs and other interested individuals or corporate bodies. Methods of digital collection of information, audio and visual collection, should be explored.

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# Critical Literacy and Christian Religious Studies: Causative Variables for Tolerance and Peaceful Co-Existence

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## Abstract

*The utilization of critical literacy in education has been one of the effective means of inculcating the norms and values which promote tolerance and peaceful co-existence in a society. The Nigerian society has witnessed much intolerance, violence and disunity among her citizenry over the years. The alarming effect of the challenge which include insecurity has been a huge barrier to sustainable development. Sensitizing the young ones on the way out of the menace is needful. This paper has examined the use of bible stories to teach religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence among primary and secondary school learners. The content of Christian Religious studies curriculum at the primary and secondary school levels includes a lot of stories that can be harnessed through critical literacy to inculcate moral values for peace and unity. The study concluded that bible storytelling to learners at the basic education level will expose them to norms and values which promote tolerance and peaceful co-existence.*

**Key words:** Critical literacy, Christian religious studies, tolerance, peaceful co-existence, violence

## Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian society has witnessed a lot of cynicism, insurgency, violence and injury as a result of religious, ethnic, economic and political intolerance. This condition is very evident among the populace in all the geo-political zones. According to Akanbi and Mayanchi (2014), this situation has various negative effects on the nation. Lack of tolerance and peaceful co-existence impedes sustainable development in any society, it breeds insecurity. Idikwu (2013) observes that the state of insecurity and instability currently in the nation has become a concern to the peace-loving citizens both within and outside the Country. Cases of youth restiveness, kidnapping and the activities of the hydra headed Boko Haram gives credence to this assertion. It is then safe to say that the integration of such values as tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the lessons of the young ones will encourage and restore tolerance and peaceful co-existence. Christian Religious Studies taught using critical literacy has the potential to play this role. It is against this backdrop the paper aims at

examining the use of bible stories to teach religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence among primary and secondary school learners.

## Concept and History of Critical Literacy

Critical literacy has been accorded various definitions. Hat (2022) defined it as an awareness induced by reading and writing of materials related to one's experience. Oyinloye and Osanusi (2013) view it as a method used by researchers to examine written materials for the purpose of exposing the hidden meanings. Wikipedia sees it as a process involving activities beyond the reading idea because it includes the analysis of the text for imbedded power relationship which are common features of written materials and the media. It further explains that these features are implicit but can be uncovered through criticality.

The underpinnings of the various definition's points to an in-dept study of the text and the act of drawing out the hidden meaning. Critical literacy is therefore seen in this work as the analysis of text to discover the silent messages

embedded in it for practical application to real life situations.

This disposition for text analysis and taking actions based on the criterion that are considered to be contextually approximate involves critical thinking which is both a process and a skill. Oyinloye and Osanusi (2013) Critical thinking incorporates the development and application of thoughts on a useful target. It is a skill which is possible but not easy to be developed. However, practice makes perfect. Frequent practice of critical thinking will develop individuals who are thoughtful and inquisitive. Such practice is what critical literacy offers. It avails the learners of the opportunity to discuss a text based on logical reasoning. It also provides opportunities for decision making and consequent actions. It is evident therefore that critical thinking is the bedrock of critical literacy. According to Madhisudan (2017), critical thinking serves the purpose of helping an individual to be intellectually self-improved and a better team player. It enhances improvement of creative reasoning and stress management. From the preceding points, it can be said that critical literacy is a way of teaching. It is therefore relevant and applicable to Christian Religious Studies which is taught in the primary schools as Christian Religious Knowledge and in the post primary school as Christian Religious Studies. This subject includes different biblical stories which can be taught to address the menace in the society for possible reformation. Lack of tolerance and peaceful co-existence is one of such menace. The history is traced to Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and theorist who advocated for the social justice pedagogy. According to Wikipedia, Freire described the strategy in his 1967 *Education as the practice of freedom* and in 1968 as *pedagogy of the oppressed*. According to Eghtesedi and Sadeglu (2015), the emphasis of critical literacy is democracy. It gives room for individuals to be prepared as informed citizens with freedom. Based on this, one of the core elements of a typical critical literacy class is encouraging learners to give their voices through dialogues and discussion as they reflect on written materials to decode the messages embedded in them.

According to Spady and Jeaves (2013) Freire has been well known to occupy the centre of the front line in critical literacy globally over the years. His critical pedagogy is a belief that education should make learners reflect on the power structures and patterns of inequality within the existing state of affairs. In other words, Freire's aim is for teaching to awake the critical consciousness of the learners. Such learners are to examine every subject matter and instead of accepting every information, memorizing and repeating it the way it is, they check if it is fair, just, and possessing equality. According to Curnel (2020) Paulo's position stems from the values of love, care, and solidarity. Curnel goes further to point out the three tenets of Freire's pedagogy which every teacher ought to incorporate into their lessons for the production of thoughtful and compassionate personalities. These implications include the following:

- The equality of the teacher and their class as both learners.
- Building up the learner's criticality.
- Facilitating observation and inquisitiveness, dialogues and discussions and other means of active participation in the classroom.

These basic elements in Freire's advocacy x-rayed his belief that learning is a cooperative affair between the teacher and the learner. An ideal learning situation is social in nature rather than authoritarian. Freire also holds that learning should be an instrument for the development of critical literacy. The learners are not empty vessels ready to receive wholly the knowledge and information of the teacher. Rather the learners are expected to reflect on the information they are given with curiosity. Additionally, they should demand for possible explanation of the status quo. To Freire, this way, the learners will grow into mature and critical individuals who will impact positively on their world.

### **The Concept of Christian Religious Studies**

- Christian Religious Studies (CRS) which can be used interchangeably with the term Christian Religious Knowledge

(CRK) and Christian Religious Education (CRE) stands for the study of God, His provisions and demands on man as revealed through the scriptures. According to Amele (2022), it is the study of Gods revelation to human beings about himself, the persons of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit via the bible. The subject of Christian Religious Studies is essential and are taught in school at all levels. Some of the reasons why it is taught in schools as highlighted by Amele (2022) include:

- The development of individualized fellowship with God
- The acquisition of fundamental belief in Jesus Christ
- The development of discipline and respect of others
- The inculcation of positive relationship and values to face life realities
- The development of moral and spiritual growth of students
- The transformation of the learners and the society at large
- The understanding of the mysteries of death and eternal life
- The establishment of unity among people
- The promotion of cultural integration
- The provision of guidance in career choice
- The appreciation of African traditional religion and others
- The development of essential existent values including love, compassion, kindness, peace, tolerance and unity.

To achieve this goal the content of Christian Religious Studies is structured to provide the basic bible principles which are provided to inculcate the necessary knowledge and skills needed for the development of the mature and well-behaved individual. Consequently, according to Federal Ministry of Education 9 years Basic Education Curriculum for Religion and National Values some of the topics listed for the lower and middle basic classes are:

- Showing love and unselfishness

- Showing desire for peaceful co-existence
- Social injustice
- Conflict and cooperation

For JSS1 the curriculum contains the following topics among others:

#### Reconciliation

- Relationship in the family
- Relationship in the school
- Relationship in the community and school

According to Adeyinka, Okeke, and Orebanjo (2015), the topics are expanded with concepts and stories which illustrates them efficiently. For example. "Esau reconciles with Jacob is one of the stories which illustrates reconciliation. The significant points include:

- Reconciliation involves the process of settling a quarrel between people or communities through the confession of guilt, repentance, forgiveness and restoration of strained relationship.
- There is merit in the statement that is a worthless exercise for people to quarrel over anything under the sun because the world is wide enough to accommodate all of us and our ideas.
- When someone offends us and a quarrel develops, we must try to forgive and forget the wrong done to us.
- Some people wrong others, but find it hard to apologize and ask for pardon and forgiveness. This is indeed very ungodly.
- Once we have forgiven anybody who offended or hurt us in anyway, we must also be willing to put it behind us whatever wrong they had done to us.

In the same vein, some of the topics contained in the JSS II curriculum are:

- Jesus' teaching on forgiveness
- Jesus' teaching on revenge and retaliation
- The parable about forgiveness
- Love as the supreme law
- The qualities of love
- The beatitudes



It is notable that one of the points of the beatitudes which is recorded in Matthew Chapter 5 verse 9 says, “Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the children of God”. This is a strong basis for tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

Additionally, the JSS III curriculum, according to Quarcoopome, Shyllon and Obinna (2016) contains the following topics:

- Explanation of peaceful co-existence
- People desiring peaceful co-existence in the Bible
- The need for peaceful co-existence
- Dramatization of Biblical story relating to peaceful co-existence

As relevant as these subject matters are in the context of tolerance and peaceful co-existence, it is important to point out that the method of teaching will enhance or hamper the learner’s ability to understand and practice them. Ezeobi (2022) pointed out that the current context of studying religious knowledge in a secular society through the process of individualization makes it hard for learner’s participation. Participation in a lesson has a way of driving it deeper into the consciousness of the learner. It also enhances application. Learners can be active in working to understand the information being given to them.

### **Concepts of Tolerance and peaceful Co-existence**

Cambridge dictionary defines tolerance as the willingness to accept behaviour and beliefs that are different from your own although you might not agree with or approve of them. Tolerance is a virtue which is needed anywhere if peace and progress must be attained. Peaceful co-existence on the other hand is defined by Meriam Webster dictionary as living together in peace rather than in constant hostility, according to Yusuf (2013) peaceful co-existence and tolerance imply the capacity to live together in harmony. Tolerance breeds peace. Tolerance and peaceful co-existence are indispensable elements in the progressive existence of a nation like Nigeria populated with different ethnic groups, religions and political parties. According to Dede (2017),

social welfare and economic growth can only be attained when there is stability in the nation. Stability demands harmonious relationship among members of the society. Such harmonious relationship can only exist where tolerance and peaceful co-existence strive.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This discourse is anchored on the theory of pluralism, humanism and behaviourism. According to Wikipedia (2023), pluralism is a political theory propounded by E.J. Lasky, Ernest Barker and Follet. The theory holds that political power in democratic societies fundamentally belongs to the government but it is dispersed among the various veto groups who consistently bargain for it for the acquisition of power and influence. However, the government actively participates in the electoral process as an impartial referee to ensure that the various groups lose and win equally. The theory holds that there is bound to be conflict in any society that is pluralistic. Nigeria is a society made up of diverse individuals, families, religious groups, associations and political groups with divergent views and interest. In line with the pluralistic ideology, conflict which escalates to violence remain constant features of the country over the years despite its opposition to the provisions of the law guiding the country. Apart from the pluralistic perspective the reason for intolerance, conflict and violence in Nigeria can also be explained with Abraham Maslow’s humanistic theory of 1950s. Humanism is a psychology theory which posits that humans are inherently good but the quest for better life transforms an individual into being better or worse. The theory also holds that humans are free will agents. This means that humans have and exercise will power. Their actions are based on what they are determined to do which may be with or without reference to any past experience. Intolerance and the various shades of violence in Nigeria today can be attributed to this revelation from humanism. Although the law for tolerance and peaceful co-existence are in place, decisions towards the perpetration of some injurious and detestable acts of violence still prevail in the nation. While the government set the democratic

rules to enhance the realization of an atmosphere of peace for national growth and prosperity, various individuals and groups believe that bigotry, fanaticism, and intolerance are preferred means of satisfying their desire and achieving their life goals. However, the authors believe that the application of John Watson's behavioural theory in educating the young ones will go a long way to curb the evil of conflict and violence and restore tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society. According to Gilles (2023), Watson's behaviourism holds that a child's environment is responsible for his behaviours. Watson believes that he can take a dozen children and train any one of them into any specialist of his choice. He holds that this feat can be achieved by exposing the child to certain forces which is sure to affect and mold the child into someone like a medical doctor or a beggar-man. In the same vein, leveraging this theory, the teacher through critical literacy and Christian religious knowledge can train up the child through learning and imitation to jettison intolerance and violence thereby creating a pattern of tolerance and peaceful co-existence that can become habitual.

### **Nigerian Stand and Situation on Tolerance and Peaceful Co-existence**

The pluralistic structure of Nigeria as a nation which is both naturally and artificially constituted calls for the need for tolerance and peaceful co-existence. In pursuance of a society where tolerance, justice, peace and harmony exist, the founding fathers and their successors have put in much effort to develop a diversified but united nation with the aim of achieving the goals of social welfare and sustainable development. Based on this, the constitution of the federation has placed a demand on the citizenry in order to regulate the interrelationship of individuals, families, religious groups and associations towards peaceful coexistence and unity.

Unity and peace which can only be realized through tolerance stand out as pillars in the Nigerian ideology. The Nigerian constitution, section 15, subsection 1 stipulates that the motto of the Federal republic of Nigeria should be unity and faith, peace and progress. It means that

Nigeria will be able to achieve the set objectives of the country in the context of harmonious relationship between the different citizens and diverse religious, political and social groups. It means that Nigeria upholds peace and unity for progress. Based on this, subsection 2 of the same section states that national integration is to be encouraged while discrimination on any ground is unacceptable and prohibited. To actualize this state of unity and peace, in subsection 3, the state is charged with the duty of providing adequate facilities for the mobility of the people, securing of full residence right for all citizens in all parts of the nation, supporting intermarriages among all the citizens and encouraging the formation of associations which cut across all ethnic, language, religion and other sectional barriers.

Also, section 23 of the constitution asserts that the national ethic shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance self-reliance and patriotism. Discipline as a virtue is a demand on every citizen to enable an orderly and harmless co-existence with others. It enables the individual to live within the boundaries of the rules and regulations set by the government to guide the actions and reactions of the citizens. The actualization of the virtue of discipline in any man goes along with integrity and dignity in labour which produce social justice, self-reliance and patriotism.

Furthermore, in section 24 of the constitution, all citizens are mandated to respect the dignity, right and legitimate interest of others cohabiting in unity and harmony and in the spirit of brotherhood. This means that Nigerians are not allowed to do whatever they like as social animals who must exist with others. The constitution has no provision for, impatience, intolerance and lack of understanding which lead to violence or the destruction of lives and properties.

Unfortunately, despite the clear stand of the nation on the matter of tolerance and peaceful co-existence, violence, insurgency, war and disunity have been consistent with the Nigerian history for many decades now. This is evidenced daily on various levels ranging from interpersonal relationships, families and other groups including political and religious groups. Intolerance and the

resultant conflict and violence is more pronounced in the political and religious spheres to a great extent.

On the political perspective for instance, interparty tussle goes beyond verbal attack and escalates to assault and even murder. The various elections conducted since the restoration of democracy in 1999 have been beset with violence and loss of lives. Reporting this situation, Ibok and Ogar (2018) lamented that Nigeria has experienced a degree of unprecedented political violence that has crippled the effort towards her development since democratic rule was renewed in May 1999. Instances of such violence include the 2008 Jos riot caused by the result of a local election. According to Wikipedia, the riot claimed about three hundred and eighty-one souls. Still on the political sphere, the just concluded 2023 election like other past election did not take place without violence. Lives were wasted in various states including Benue, Lagos and Enugu to mention but few. The assassination of the Labour Party senatorial candidate and five others in Enugu State few days before the presidential election according to Premium Times (2023) is one out of many cases.

On the aspect of religion, Nigerians are adherents of different religious beliefs. Unfortunately, the diverse religious groups with their divergent views and doctrines have made peaceful co-existence a mirage in the nation. Intolerance and violence especially between the two leading groups (Christians and Muslims) are expressed by one group against the others as observed by Abdulateef, Yusuf and Olurunfemi (2015) through verbal abuse to those worshipping or passing by, the use of dangerous weapons for attacks, physical combats, denial of fundamental social rights like access to land acquisition for the building of worship centres and destruction of holy books. An instance of religious violence in the country is the June 2012 Kaduna church burnings by religious terrorists which destroyed three churches and got 89 people injured. Another incident is the kidnap of about two hundred and seventy-six secondary school girls from Chibok Girls' Secondary in Borno State in 2014, (Wikipedia 2023).

Violence which stems from intolerance and lack of peaceful co-existence has been attributed to various factors including fanaticism, the claim that one's party or group is the best, lack of good neighbourliness and selflessness (Akintan, 2014). Additionally, greed and ignorance are obviously some of the reasons behind these obnoxious acts which have led to untold damages in the country. According to Sulaiman (2016), religious violence in Nigeria has claimed many lives and properties worth billions of naira. Generally, intolerance and violence on any ground is dangerous to the future of any society and Nigeria is not exempted. It is therefore critical to implore effective means to combat the menace.

### **Promoting Tolerance and Peaceful Co-existence through Christian Religious Studies and Critical Literacy Based Instruction**

Considering the aims of teaching Christian Religious Studies in primary and post primary schools, it is evident that learners who are well instructed in the subject will be flag bearers of tolerance, peace and unity both in and outside the school. This can be easily achieved by teaching this subject through the approach of critical literacy.

### **A Sample Lesson Guides for JSS1- III**

Peaceful Co-existence: The Story of Abraham and Lot

Peaceful co-existence is a situation whereby people of different background, culture, tradition, religion, political parties, Nationality and ideas live together in peace, harmony, tranquility, calmness, love, forgiveness, friendship, understanding, tolerance, unity and love. This happens when people appreciate, forgive and tolerate others and are willing to let others live as they do.

Lack of peaceful co-existence occurs when people fail to tolerate and forgive others and do not appreciate or respect their opinion and practices. Lack of peaceful co-existence will endanger the lives of individuals, families, properties, communities and the entire society. It hinders and destroys development.

**Question:**

- a. What is the meaning of peaceful co-existence
- b. Why should we live peacefully with one another?
- c. How can one show tolerance in his environment
- d. How can you demonstrate tolerance in your class?

**Introduction**

The teachers should show the students the picture of Abraham and Lot viewing the land they occupied together and ask the students to make predictions.

**Step 1:** Then the teacher reads the story pausing for partner discussions.

**Step 2:** At the end of the story and discussions, the teacher should ask the students the following questions:

- i. What led to the conflict in the story and who are affected?
- ii. What do you think Abraham wished Lot knew about him?
- iii. Relate the mood and reaction of Abraham when he heard about the strife?
- iv. How is your attitude towards others in conflict? is it like or different from Abraham's attitude towards Lot?
- v. Was Lot right in his response to Abraham's proposal?
- vi. What will you do if you were Abraham or Lot?

**Step 3** The teacher should ask the students to act a short drama on the story to help them draw a deeper meaning from the passage.

**Evaluation**

The teacher should discuss ways of promoting peaceful co-existence in the class, school and family and the children should relate what they will do to promote tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the class, school and home.

The teacher should give students homework to:

- list ways they can show tolerance and promote peaceful co-existence with their classmates, school mates and neighbours

- write a true story about a conflict they had with some persons and how it has been resolved.

**Conclusion**

Promoting tolerance will enhance peaceful co-existence in every society. Since the child of today is the adult of tomorrow, it is expedient to start from the basics to impact the knowledge and practice of tolerance, peace and unity in the learners. The scripture instructs everyone to train up a child in the right way and when he grows, he will not deviate from it (Proverbs 22:6). If the seed of tolerance and peaceful co-existence is planted in the hearts of the learners from the foundational classes, they will grow up to be tolerant and peace-loving adults. This will provide a new Nigeria with peaceful people, sustained development and progress.

The ball is in the court of basic schools and specifically the Christian Religious Studies' teachers. Their duty is to mold the learners into peace loving and tolerant individuals for a generation devoid of conflict, violence and damages to lives and properties.

**Recommendations**

Curriculum planners of Christian religious studies should suggest critical literacy-based means of inculcating the tenets of love, forgiveness, tolerance peace and unity in the learners.

Pupils and students should be encouraged to actively participate in class through question dialogues and discussions for better understanding and application of the ingredients of tolerance and peaceful co-existence.

Pupils and students should be given opportunities to mime, act out play-lets and sing songs with meanings that encourage tolerance and peaceful co-existence on regular basis.

Curriculum planners should suggest ways through which the teachers can help the learners to connect the Bible stories and teachings to their personal life experiences or environment.

Students should be encouraged to write their true-life stories similar to the Bible stories for criticality and self-improvement.

The government and the authors of this work should organize seminars and workshops to educate Christian Religious Studies teachers on how they can utilize critical literacy for optimum teaching outcome.

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# Critical Religious Upbringing and Religious Tolerance among Undergraduate Students

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the relationship between critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance among undergraduate students. The study explores the concept of critical religious upbringing, its potential effects on religious tolerance, and the factors that may influence this relationship. It also discusses the significance of fostering religious tolerance in diverse educational settings. The findings suggest that a critical religious upbringing can contribute to the development of religious tolerance among undergraduate students. The implications of these findings are discussed in the context of promoting inclusivity and fostering interfaith dialogue in higher education institutions.*

**Key words:** Critical Religious Upbringing, Religious Tolerance, Undergraduate Students, Diversity, Inclusivity, Interfaith Dialogue

## **Introduction:**

Religion plays a significant role in shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and identity. For many individuals, religious upbringing forms an integral part of their socialization process. However, the impact of religious upbringing on religious tolerance, particularly among undergraduate students, remains a topic of interest and concern. This work provides an overview of the background and rationale behind studying the relationship between critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance among undergraduate students. By exploring the potential effects of critical religious upbringing on religious tolerance, this article aims to shed light on the importance of fostering inclusivity and interfaith dialogue in higher education institutions.

## **Methodology**

This is an explanatory study that sheds more light on an issue which has been discussed extensively in the literature with the aim of providing different angle to the issue and give more depth into the work so as to widen the scope of the discourse around critical religious upbringing. It is basically a qualitative study and

a positional paper. The issues under consideration are segmented and discussed under various subheadings.

## **Conceptual Review**

- a. Religious diversity is increasingly prevalent in contemporary society, and higher education institutions are reflective of this diversity. Universities and colleges are home to students from various religious backgrounds, necessitating an inclusive environment that promotes religious tolerance. The development of religious tolerance among undergraduate students is crucial for fostering social cohesion, interfaith understanding, and peaceful coexistence (Gopin, 2000).
- b. Critical religious upbringing refers to an approach that encourages individuals to engage in critical thinking, questioning, and reflection about their religious beliefs and practices. It entails examining religious teachings, doctrines, and rituals from a rational and analytical perspective (Ysseldyk, Matheson and Anisman,

2010). By promoting critical religious upbringing, students are encouraged to explore and understand diverse religious perspectives, challenging dogmatic beliefs and fostering a more tolerant worldview.

- c. Religious tolerance encompasses the acceptance and respect for individuals' religious beliefs, practices, and traditions, irrespective of one's own religious background. It goes beyond mere tolerance and promotes a positive attitude towards religious diversity. Religious tolerance is crucial in promoting social harmony, reducing religious conflict, and cultivating an environment conducive to interfaith cooperation and dialogue.

### **The Relationship between Critical Religious Upbringing and Religious Tolerance**

- a. **The Role of Critical Thinking:** Critical religious upbringing fosters critical thinking skills, enabling students to question religious beliefs and practices. By critically examining their own religious traditions, students become more open-minded and develop a greater appreciation for different perspectives. This critical engagement facilitates the development of religious tolerance by challenging preconceived notions and biases.
- b. **Empathy and Perspective-Taking:** A critical religious upbringing encourages empathy and perspective-taking. Students are exposed to diverse religious narratives, beliefs, and experiences, allowing them to understand and appreciate the religious perspectives of others. This empathetic understanding reduces stereotypes and prejudice, promoting religious tolerance among undergraduate students (Gopin, 2000).
- c. **Exposure to Diversity and Pluralism:** Higher education institutions provide an ideal platform for exposure to religious diversity. Students from various religious backgrounds interact and engage in

intellectual discussions, contributing to the development of religious tolerance. Exposure to diverse perspectives challenges ethnocentric views and encourages students to embrace religious pluralism (Ecklund & Park, 2009).

Therefore, understanding the relationship between critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance among undergraduate students is essential in fostering inclusive and diverse higher education environments. By promoting critical thinking, empathy, perspective-taking, and exposure to religious diversity, universities can play a pivotal role in cultivating religious tolerance. Embracing religious diversity not only enhances students' educational experiences but also prepares them to thrive in a multicultural society. It is imperative for institutions to create spaces that encourage interfaith dialogue, respect, and appreciation for religious differences.

### **Critical Religious Upbringing among Undergraduate Students**

Religious upbringing plays a vital role in shaping individuals' religious beliefs, values, and practices. However, traditional religious upbringing often focuses on instilling adherence to specific doctrines and may discourage critical thinking and questioning. In recent years, the concept of critical religious upbringing has gained attention, highlighting the importance of encouraging undergraduate students to engage in thoughtful reflection and examination of their religious beliefs (Ecklund, & Park, 2009). Critical religious upbringing refers to an approach that encourages individuals to engage in critical thinking, questioning, and reflection regarding their religious beliefs and practices. It involves examining religious teachings, doctrines, rituals, and values through a rational and analytical lens. This session explores the concept of critical religious upbringing, its potential benefits, and its implications for the personal and intellectual development of undergraduate students. Critical religious upbringing encompasses various components, including encouraging open dialogue, promoting critical thinking skills,

fostering intellectual curiosity, and providing opportunities for self-reflection and exploration of diverse religious perspectives (Narayanan, Menon, & Raj, 2021).

### **The Benefits of Critical Religious Upbringing**

- i. **Development of Critical Thinking Skills:** Engaging in critical religious upbringing cultivates critical thinking skills among undergraduate students. It encourages them to question and analyse their own religious beliefs, as well as consider alternative perspectives. This process enhances their ability to evaluate religious teachings critically and make informed decisions about their faith.
- ii. **Encouraging Personal Growth and Autonomy:** Critical religious upbringing empowers undergraduate students to develop their own beliefs and values based on thoughtful reflection rather than blind adherence. It promotes personal growth and autonomy by allowing students to explore and shape their religious identity in a more meaningful and authentic way.
- iii. **Fostering Interfaith Understanding:** By engaging in critical religious upbringing, undergraduate students are exposed to a broader range of religious perspectives. This exposure fosters interfaith understanding and empathy, enabling students to appreciate the diversity of religious beliefs and practices.

### **Implications and Challenges**

- a. **Intellectual Development and Academic Discourse:** Critical religious upbringing contributes to the intellectual development of undergraduate students by encouraging them to engage in meaningful discussions and critical analysis of religious concepts. It prepares them for academic discourse on religion and equips them with the skills necessary to navigate diverse viewpoints.
- b. **Navigating Conflicts and Identity Formation:** Critical religious upbringing

can present challenges for students who experience conflicts between their own beliefs and those of their families or religious communities. It requires a delicate balance between critical inquiry and respecting individual and communal religious identities.

- c. **Fostering Inclusive Campus Environments:** Higher education institutions play a crucial role in fostering inclusive campus environments. Embracing critical religious upbringing can contribute to creating a climate that respects diverse religious perspectives, encourages dialogue, and promotes religious tolerance.

Therefore, critical religious upbringing provides a valuable framework for undergraduate students to engage in thoughtful reflection, critical thinking, and exploration of their religious beliefs. By promoting intellectual curiosity, interfaith understanding, and personal autonomy, it empowers students to develop a more nuanced and authentic religious identity. It is essential for higher education institutions to recognize the significance of critical religious upbringing and create supportive environments that encourage students to explore and critically examine their religious beliefs.

### **Religious Tolerance among Undergraduate Students**

Religious diversity is a defining characteristic of modern society, and higher education institutions serve as microcosms of this diversity. As undergraduate students engage in the pursuit of knowledge and personal growth, developing religious tolerance becomes crucial for fostering inclusivity, respect, and social harmony. This section explores the concept of religious tolerance among undergraduate students, its significance, and the factors that contribute to its cultivation.

Religious tolerance refers to the acceptance, respect, and appreciation of diverse religious beliefs, practices, and traditions. It involves creating a space where individuals can



freely express their religious identities without fear of discrimination or prejudice. Dimensions of religious tolerance include openness to diverse perspectives, empathy, and the ability to engage in constructive dialogue.

ii. Differentiating Tolerance from Mere Coexistence: Religious tolerance goes beyond mere coexistence. It implies actively embracing religious diversity and promoting positive attitudes towards religious differences. Tolerance requires acknowledging and respecting the right of individuals to hold differing religious beliefs, even if one does not agree with them personally.

### **The Importance of Religious Tolerance among Undergraduate Students**

- a. Fostering Social Cohesion: Religious tolerance contributes to the development of inclusive and harmonious campus communities. It reduces the likelihood of religious conflicts and promotes peaceful coexistence among students from diverse religious backgrounds.
- b. Enhancing Personal and Intellectual Growth: Religious tolerance provides opportunities for personal and intellectual growth. It encourages students to engage with different religious perspectives, challenging their own beliefs and broadening their understanding of the world. This exposure fosters critical thinking, empathy, and a deeper appreciation for the complexities of religious pluralism (Smith, 2022).
- c. Preparing Global Citizens: In an increasingly interconnected world, religious tolerance is essential for preparing undergraduate students to be global citizens. By cultivating an understanding and appreciation for diverse religious beliefs, students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to navigate multicultural societies and contribute to a more peaceful and just world.

### **Factors Influencing Religious Tolerance among Undergraduate Students**

- a. Education and Knowledge: Access to education and knowledge about various religions plays a significant role in fostering religious tolerance. Undergraduate students who are exposed to diverse religious perspectives and engage in interfaith education are more likely to develop tolerance and appreciation for religious differences.
- b. Interpersonal Relationships: Positive interpersonal relationships with individuals from different religious backgrounds contribute to the development of religious tolerance. Meaningful interactions foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, and humanize religious others, promoting understanding and acceptance.
- c. Campus Climate and Institutional Support: The campus climate and institutional support within higher education institutions greatly influence religious tolerance among undergraduate students. Institutions that prioritize inclusivity, interfaith dialogue, and provide resources for religious diversity create an environment conducive to religious tolerance.

Therefore, religious tolerance is a vital characteristic to cultivate among undergraduate students. By promoting religious tolerance, higher education institutions contribute to the development of inclusive and respectful campus communities. Fostering religious tolerance enhances personal and intellectual growth, prepares students for global citizenship, and contributes to the promotion of social harmony (Kalsky, 2006). By prioritizing education, interpersonal relationships, and creating supportive campus climates, higher education institutions can play a significant role in nurturing religious tolerance among undergraduate students.

### **The Relationship between Critical Religious Upbringing and Religious Tolerance among Undergraduate Students**

Religion holds great significance in the lives of individuals and societies, shaping their values, beliefs, and behaviours. In the context of higher education, understanding the relationship between critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance among undergraduate students is of paramount importance. Critical religious upbringing encourages students to engage in thoughtful reflection, questioning, and analysis of their religious beliefs, while religious tolerance promotes acceptance and respect for diverse religious perspectives (Plante, 2010). This section examines the relationship between critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance, highlighting the potential influence of critical thinking, empathy, and exposure to diversity.

- a. **The Role of Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is a key element of critical religious upbringing. It enables undergraduate students to question and evaluate their religious beliefs critically, fostering intellectual autonomy and encouraging a more nuanced understanding of their faith. Through critical thinking, students develop the capacity to recognize biases, challenge dogma, and engage in open-minded exploration of diverse religious viewpoints.
- b. **Religious Tolerance:** Religious tolerance encompasses the acceptance and respect for diverse religious beliefs, practices, and traditions. It involves recognizing and valuing the right of individuals to hold different religious perspectives. Dimensions of religious tolerance include open-mindedness, empathy, and the ability to engage in constructive dialogue. Religious tolerance is essential in higher education as it contributes to the development of inclusive and harmonious campus environments. It fosters interfaith understanding, reduces religious conflict, and promotes social

cohesion among undergraduate students from diverse religious backgrounds. Religious tolerance also encourages the exploration of different perspectives, facilitating personal growth and intellectual development.

### **The Relationship between Critical Religious Upbringing and Religious Tolerance**

- a. **The Role of Critical Thinking:** Critical religious upbringing enhances the development of religious tolerance by promoting critical thinking skills. Through critical analysis of their own beliefs and exposure to diverse religious perspectives, undergraduate students gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of religion (Kumar, Kumar, & Mahapatra, 2021). This understanding cultivates open-mindedness, respect, and acceptance of diverse religious viewpoints.
- b. **Empathy and Perspective-Taking:** Critical religious upbringing encourages empathy and perspective-taking among undergraduate students. By engaging with different religious perspectives and considering the experiences and beliefs of others, students develop a greater appreciation for religious diversity. This empathetic understanding facilitates the development of religious tolerance by reducing stereotypes, prejudice, and promoting positive interfaith interactions.
- c. **Exposure to Diversity and Pluralism:** Exposure to diverse religious perspectives is a significant factor in fostering religious tolerance. Critical religious upbringing encourages undergraduate students to explore and engage with different religious traditions. This exposure broadens their knowledge and appreciation for diverse beliefs, practices, and cultural contexts, contributing to the development of religious tolerance.

It is important to note that the relationship between critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance among undergraduate students is evident. By promoting critical thinking, empathy, and exposure to diverse religious perspectives, critical religious upbringing plays a crucial role in fostering religious tolerance. Higher education institutions can create inclusive environments that encourage critical reflection, interfaith dialogue, and the appreciation of diverse religious perspectives, ultimately fostering a culture of religious tolerance among undergraduate students.

### **Rationale on Critical Religious Upbringing and Religious Tolerance among Undergraduate Students**

- a. **Religious Diversity in Higher Education:** Higher education institutions are becoming increasingly diverse, with students representing a wide range of religious backgrounds. This religious diversity highlights the importance of creating inclusive environments that promote understanding and respect for different religious beliefs and practices.
- b. **The Significance of Religious Tolerance:** Religious tolerance refers to the acceptance and respect for diverse religious beliefs, practices, and traditions. It fosters an environment of inclusivity, encourages interfaith dialogue, and contributes to social cohesion. Religious tolerance is crucial in higher education as it prepares students to engage with diverse perspectives, promotes critical thinking, and cultivates an appreciation for religious diversity (Hidayatullah, 2019).
- c. **Rationale behind Critical Religious Upbringing:** Critical religious upbringing involves encouraging individuals to engage in critical thinking, questioning, and reflection about their religious beliefs and practices. It entails examining religious teachings, doctrines, and rituals from a rational and analytical perspective. By promoting critical religious upbringing, students are

encouraged to explore and understand diverse religious perspectives, challenging dogmatic beliefs and fostering a more tolerant worldview.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

- a. **Campus Policies and Programmes:** Higher education institutions should develop policies and programmes that promote critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance. These may include interfaith dialogue initiatives, multicultural awareness programs, and religious diversity courses, providing opportunities for students to engage in meaningful conversations and enhance their understanding of different religious traditions (Sherkat and Ellison, 1999).
- b. **Faculty and Staff Training:** Faculty and staff play a crucial role in creating a supportive environment for critical religious upbringing and religious tolerance. Training programs can enhance their understanding of religious diversity and equip them with the skills to facilitate respectful discussions, address religious bias, and promote interfaith understanding among undergraduate students (Doe, 2021).
- c. **Research and Assessment:** Further research is needed to assess the effectiveness of critical religious upbringing programs in fostering religious tolerance among undergraduate students. Longitudinal studies and qualitative assessments can provide valuable insights into the impact of such programs on students' attitudes, behaviours, and interfaith interactions.

In sum, understanding the background and rationale behind critical religious upbringing and its relationship to religious tolerance among undergraduate students is essential in fostering inclusive and diverse higher education environments. By promoting critical thinking, empathy, and exposure to religious diversity, higher education institutions can equip students with the skills and attitudes necessary to navigate

religious pluralism and contribute to a more tolerant society.

### **Implications of Religious Upbringing and Religious Tolerance among Undergraduate Students: challenges and considerations**

Religious upbringing and religious tolerance play vital roles in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of undergraduate students. Religious upbringing influences individuals' beliefs and practices, while religious tolerance fosters acceptance and respect for diverse religious perspectives. Understanding the implications of religious upbringing and its relationship to religious tolerance among undergraduate students is essential for promoting inclusivity and interfaith dialogue. This session explores the implications of religious upbringing on religious tolerance, highlighting its impact on personal development, campus climate, and societal cohesion.

#### **a. Personal Development**

- i. **Identity Formation:** Religious upbringing significantly impacts the development of students' religious identities. It provides a foundation from which individuals explore and navigate their beliefs, values, and moral frameworks. Students who have experienced positive and inclusive religious upbringing are more likely to exhibit a greater sense of self-assuredness, confidence, and authenticity in their religious identities.

- ii. **Moral and Ethical Development:** Religious upbringing often instills moral and ethical values within individuals. This can contribute to the development of a strong moral compass, guiding students' decision-making processes and actions. However, it is essential to promote critical reflection and open-mindedness within religious upbringing to prevent the potential negative consequences of rigid or intolerant moral frameworks (Doe, 2021).

#### **b. Campus Climate:**

- i. **Inclusivity and Diversity:** Religious tolerance is instrumental in creating an inclusive and diverse campus climate. Institutions that prioritize religious tolerance foster an environment where students from various religious

backgrounds feel valued and respected. This climate encourages interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration among students, promoting understanding and appreciation for religious diversity.

- ii. **Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation:** Religious upbringing can influence students' willingness to engage in interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Those who have been exposed to inclusive and tolerant religious upbringing are more likely to be open to engaging with individuals from different religious backgrounds. Interfaith dialogue contributes to enhanced understanding, empathy, and the building of relationships across religious boundaries (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001).

#### **c. Societal Cohesion:**

- i. **Promoting Social Harmony:** Religious tolerance among undergraduate students promotes social harmony within the broader society. Students who have developed religious tolerance through their upbringing are more likely to demonstrate acceptance and respect for diverse religious beliefs and practices beyond the campus. This contributes to a more cohesive and inclusive society, reducing religious-based conflicts and fostering peaceful coexistence.

- ii. **Contributions to Social Justice:** Religious upbringing that emphasizes social justice values can empower undergraduate students to actively work towards promoting equality, fairness, and justice within society. Students who integrate their religious beliefs with social justice principles may be more inclined to address issues of inequality, discrimination, and injustice in various spheres, making positive contributions to their communities.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

- a. **Navigating Religious Differences:** Diverse religious upbringings can lead to challenges in navigating religious differences among undergraduate students. It is crucial for institutions to provide spaces for dialogue, education, and respectful engagement to

- bridge these gaps and foster understanding (Sherkat and Ellison, 1999).
- b Addressing Intolerance and Prejudice: Religious upbringing can sometimes perpetuate intolerance and prejudice towards other religious groups. Institutions must actively address these issues by promoting critical reflection, challenging stereotypes, and fostering dialogue to cultivate a more inclusive and tolerant campus culture.

### Conclusion

The implications of religious upbringing and religious tolerance among undergraduate students are far-reaching. Positive religious upbringing can contribute to personal development, promote inclusivity within the campus climate, and foster social harmony in society. It is essential for higher education institutions to prioritize religious tolerance and create environments that facilitate interfaith dialogue, respect for diversity, and the development of inclusive religious identities among undergraduate students.

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# Social Deixis in Social Media Communication and Work Relationship among Teacher Educators in Akwa Ibom State College of Education

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## Abstract

*This paper is aimed at identifying usage frequency and types of social deixis (Relational social deixis and Absolute social deixis) in communication on 'Teaching Practice Supervisors forum' WhatsApp, social media chats among teacher educator of College Education, Afaha Nsit. The study looked at social relationship determined by work place culture between the interlocutors is indicated in the choice of social deixis used in the forum. The research is premised on social deixis theory by Cruse's (2006) and Levinson's theory (1983) as a supporting theory. The descriptive and qualitative designs were adopted and two research questions were formulated to guide the study. A sample size of forty (40) participants was selected from 197 lecturers, using the criterion reference and random sampling techniques. The population consisted of 197 teacher educators. Only 40 active WhatsApp communicators chats that were self-generated post were selected while all forwarded posts were eliminated. The number of social deictic words used by respondents was 3,114 words. The relational social deictic words used was 2344 (91.33%) while the absolute social deictic words were 270 (8.67%). Findings revealed that lecturers in their official conversational WhatsApp chat forum used more relational social deictic words than the absolute terms. On types of relational social deixis analysis, the following percentages were realised: occupational title (28.67%), personal names (16.32%), kinship terms (97.88%) and pronouns (47.15%). The high percentage of pronouns was an indication of the prevalent toxic social relationship in the workplace culture. The factors of work place culture were propaganda, sycophancy, cabalism and patriotism. Hence, more name avoidance strategies were used in their conversations and in – fighting.*

**Key words:** Social Deixis, Social Media Communication, Work Relationship, Educators.

## Introduction

Communication is an essential part of everyday life. It is a process of carrying and giving message or information from the speaker or writer to the hearer or reader, to make each other understand the message or information. There are many expressions used in a language that refer to someone, something or some ideas. Indeed, many expressions have fixed referent in the real world; however, there are some words or expressions that do not have fixed referent points and they are always changing their referents in the verbal communication based on who the encoder is, when they are uttered, and in which context they are used. Linguists use the term deixis to refer to such types of words or expressions. Deixis is one

of the most important domains of linguistic pragmatics derived from Greek which means "pointing or indicating" (Levinson 1983, p.54). According to Yule (1996, p.9), "any linguistic form used to accomplish this 'pointing' is called a deictic expression". In a nutshell, deixis is concerned with the relationship between the structure of languages and the contexts in which they are used. By implication, a deictic expression or deixis is a word or phrase such as *this, that, these, those, now, then, here* that points to the time, place, or situation in which a speaker is speaking. Deixis is expressed in English by way of personal pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs, and tense.

Levinson (1983) identified types of deictic words to include person deixis, place

deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis and social deixis. This study is concerned with the category of social deixis. Social deixis is understood here as various means by which information of social nature is coded and grammaticalized in English language. Such information concerns the situational context of the communication, social roles of its participants and their reciprocal relations. Social deixis has two basic forms, namely relational and absolute social deixis. Relational social deixis is social deixis that relates to relative or respectful ratings addressed by speakers to their references, opponents, or something they talk about. Absolute social deixis is the form of language that has been set for speakers or only the speakers. Absolute social deixis is sometimes associated with different social status (higher and lower).

Social media in the view of Kaplan (2015) is the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network. It creates the opportunity to network with other members who share similar or common interest, dreams and goals. With the social media network like WhatsApp, individuals whether in an organisation or on family ties can initiate and build strong business partnership in any part of the world without meeting in person. Social media has to do with transforming the ways in which people interact, maintain relationships and get things done through language and other communicative resources. The term 'social media' employed in academia refer broadly to 'online environments which enable social interaction' (Leppänen, Kytölä, Jousmaki, Peuronen & Westinen 2014, p.113). This came into use with the proliferation of internet platforms in the first decade of the twentieth century. Such social network and media sharing sites include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube as well as mobile messaging app such as WhatsApp.

The English language, as a global online lingua franca, plays a key role alongside other languages in the way people manage these social network and media transformations. One key transformation brought about by social media is

the availability of multimedia and networked resources, access to which enables users to connect with wider conversations, align with virtual communities and share their lives meaningfully with others across social media platforms, as well as draw on resources from languages in which they may not have full proficiency. These new possibilities for communication are illustrated by a sample analysis of WhatsApp messages which, as with other forms of social media, innovatively extend the meaning-making potential of English, with implications for what it means to be an effective communicator in the twenty-first century.

According to Levinson (2005), social deixis is concerned with the elements of sentences that is determined by certain participants or situations in which the speech event occurs. In communicating with others, the speaker and the hearer or the writer and the reader may use their names or nicknames to indicate respect or disrespect, familiarity, anger and social status from the participants. For instance, the communication can be seen from this conversation below:

CHAT 4 from TPSF SCRIPT: *'My dear brother, the mess and unprecedented rejection of the proposed and imposed 2 percent deduction from the sweat of intellectuals for the daily consumption of ewot\*\* ebote and ewot\*\* ewa at enyong mbot in Uyo by few unpatriotic elements of the chapter exco is the provocative reason for the empty, ineffective, baseless and laughable query issued by few frustrated individuals, we shall continue to say no to this unholy act, my brother keep calm, better is the end of a matter than the beginning thereof, the game has just begun.'*

The message is indirectly addressing a particular teacher educator (colleague), whom the writer is obviously angry at. The avoidance of naming strategy and the use of occupational position 'chapter exco' is intentionally used to avoid direct attacks on persons while intending to accuse them of poor performance as leaders. The writer addresses the message to his friend using

endearment term. The use of the initial social relational term means that the message is sent to a friend - 'My dear brother' - while also targeting colleagues he knows will read the chat on this general forum. The above excerpt sample from teacher educators chat script shows that social deixis is also a deictic expression used to distinguish social status and is related to the aspect of sentences reflecting or establishing the social situation when the speech event occurs. This is in line with Purwati (2015) opinion that social deixis is also a deictic expression to distinguish speakers' social class.

Social deixis has to do with social relationships between participants, their status and relations to the topic of discourse. Relationships that are relevant in this type of deixis include communication between the writer or speaker and the addressee, between other participants, the writer or speaker and the object of discussion. Jaszczolt (2002, p.197) states that some of the grammatical devices that are used for the purpose of social deixis include pronouns of politeness, titles of addressee, kinship terms, and honorifics. However, for the purpose of this study, the researchers are considering occupational titles, personal names, kinship terms and pronouns as relational social deictic words while for the sake of the area of study which is a tertiary institution, terms like His Excellency, Sir, Madam, Boss are considered under absolute social deictic words. This study is aimed at identifying and determining the frequency of social deictic words used on self-generated chats, the social relationship between the interlocutors based on choice of social deixis used in WhatsApp work place chats by lecturers. It also indicated the prevalence of social deixis types (relational social deixis and absolute social deixis).

### **Social deictic do you mean deixis? And WhatsApp Communication**

In Nigeria, given the role of English as a language of wider communication (LWC), literate people of different languages interact without much linguistic barrier. The English language facilitates communication and the choice of words and context of usage determine the effect on the

hearers or readers. Language can be used to unite and to disintegrate people. Gardezabal (2011) opines that language can be an instrument to unify and separate people. Deixis entails the way in which the reference of certain elements in a sentence is determined by means of an expression whose interpretation is relative to the extralinguistic context of the utterance such as *who is speaking, the time or place of speaking, the gestures of the speaker or the current location in the discourse*. It concerns on the interpretation of utterances depends on the analysis of that context of utterance (Levinson, as cited in Larasati, 2020). That is, a speaker uses deixis and deictic elements while producing language. These deictic elements' meaning comes from the speaker or writer and his or her location, time of speaking the utterance, and position of the utterance in the discourse.

The phenomenon of social deixis is viewed to be the clearest single example of language's embeddedness in context. However, contexts explored in the study of social deixis have come to be restricted to those that are phenomenally immediate, rather than to those that represent the broader indexical order of society. Social deixis deals with forms of address and the way they are used by the communicators. Social Deixis concerns the encoding of social distinctions that are relative to participant-roles, particularly aspects of the social relationship holding between speaker and addressee(s) or speaker and some referent (Levinson, 1983, p. 63). Social deixis does not deal with three main components (person, place and time) of the coordinate system of subjective orientation, but they show how different social rankings and the participants of communication utter relationships within society through language use. The way utterances are organised is influenced by the writer's or speaker's social status and the addressee's social rank depending on context and relationship (Grundy, 2000, p. 26).

Concurrently, Levinson (2005), opines that social deixis marks social relationships in linguistic expressions with reference to the social status or role of participants in the speech event. Social deixis encodes the social identities of



participants (properly, incumbents of participants roles), or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to. In Fillmore's word cited in Dewanti (2014), in communicating, the speaker and the hearer use their name, nickname, or title to indicate respect or familiarity with others. This is the aspect of sentences which reflect or establish or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs. In other words, social deixis is a kind of expression used to categorize some people based on their social situations. Therefore, social deixis has many forms based on each culture that affects the society itself. Therefore, it can be concluded that social deixis is a term that is used to show the position of the participants on the level social status.

Social deixis shows the differences of individuality in each participant's roles especially the social status between the addressees. Social deixis has to do with the marking of social relationship in linguistics expression, with direct or oblique reference to the social status or role of participants in the speech event. Social deixis is also concerned with the aspect of sentences that reflect certain realities of the social situation in which the utterances or communication occurs.

Baran (2004) defines communication as the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver. It requires a sender, a message and a recipient, although the receiver needs to be present or aware of the sender's intention to communicate. Communication can be written, spoken or computer-mediated or mobile text. The computer-mediated form of communication includes Facebook, twitter, Yahoo, WeChat and WhatsApp. Consequently, the WhatsApp social media platform has developed into universal and virtually inevitable phenomenon that has transformed the method by which lecturers communicate, interrelate, mingle and socialize, and has become an integral portion of teacher educators' social and cultural lifestyle. WhatsApp is a social media application that allows users to generate and share content and to participate in official or social conversation. It opens up the possibilities of discovering and learning new

information, sharing ideas and interacting with colleagues, who share similar or common interest, dreams and goals (Sharma & Shukla, 2016).

Even in a language like English, in which the social attributes of a writer or speakers and addressee are not grammaticalised, the wider social context of an utterance is often essential to the location of a person's referent. Consider the following example: 'Would Sir Robert care for a drink?' It is an employee-employer relationship that exists between the speaker and the addressee respectively (Cummings, 2005). English is not like other languages that use respectful pronouns to exemplify social deixis; politeness enters into the choice of forms of addressee such as Peter, Smith, Mr. Smith, Sir Smith, and so on (Cruse, 2006).

The objectives of this study are:

1. to find out types of social deixis frequently used by interlocutors in Teaching Practice Supervisors' Forum WhatsApp chats script among Teacher educators; and
2. to find out social relationships between the interlocutors based on social deixis used in Teaching Practice Supervisors' Forum WhatsApp chats script.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the percentage of social deixis frequently used by interlocutors in Teaching Practice Supervisors' Forum WhatsApp chats script among Teacher educators?
2. How is social relationship between interlocutors portrayed in social deixis used in Teaching Practice Supervisors' Forum WhatsApp chats script?

Theories used in this research are premised on social deixis theory by Cruse's (2006) and Levinson's theory (1983) as a supporting theory. All are evolved around the rhetoric authority concept which is distinguished by the superordinate's right to command and subordinate's duty to obey. The rhetorical authority according to Cruse is subdivided into:

1. traditional moral authority, which is built upon the traditional hierarchy of society and reflects the social relationship between order and obedience;
2. the charismatic authority, which indicates that the audience can be influenced by someone's personal charm instead of the constriction of particular rules.
3. bureaucratic authority, which is built upon social position in particular governmental department;
4. professional authority, which can be achieved by professional knowledge in certain field.

This study will identify the frequency of social deixis, types and relationship between interlocutors in Teaching Practice Supervisors' Forum WhatsApp chat script.

Social deixis is regarded as essential since its use can be inspected either in direct or indirect interactions (Khalil, 2020) as well as its use to identify the social status, the relationship between the interactants or the addressee or the entities being addressed or talked about (Zulyanputri, Indrayani, & Soemantri, 2020).

### Types of Social Deixis

Each language has its own terms and expressions to show courtesy or respect and it is different from one language to another. Politeness in conversation refers to the linguistic items that show a friendly attitude towards speakers and listeners. It lies not in the words and expressions themselves, but in the intended social meaning and function (Clark, 2007).

The polite expressions consist of prefixes or suffixes which are basically used as reference forms. English language has many polite forms including expressions used to address others for greetings or showing respect, e.g., specific expressions which are most related to social status, age, sex or occupations (Dzaye, 2014, p. 149). Social deixis concerns the encoding of social distinctions that are relative to participant-roles, particularly aspects of the social relationship holding between speaker and

addressees or speaker and some referent (Levinson, 1983). By implication, social deixis is concerned with the aspects of sentences which reflect, establish or is determined by certain realities of participants or the social situation in which the speech event occurs (Levinson, 1983). It means that social deixis is a category that indicates the social status of participants or referents in a speech event. In other words, we can say that social deixis is a kind of expression used to categorize some people based on their social situations. Levinson adds that there are two basic kinds of social deixis information that seems to be encoded in language around the world. They are: relational social deixis and absolute social deixis.

### Relational Social Deixis

Relational social deixis is a deictic reference to some social characteristic of referent apart from any relative ranking of referents or deictic reference to a social relationship between the writer or speaker and addressee. In English, relational social deixis may be lexical items (e.g., my husband, teacher, cousin, etc) or pronouns (e.g., you, her). In Nigerian society, kinship terms are used to show respect especially with aged people. These terms are used even if participants are not relatives. Such terms are *uncle*, *mummy* and *aunt*. Religious titles are used to express politeness when they occur before personal names, for example, *pastor*, *reverend*, *elder* etc. Also, there are some political (Honourable), military (General), academic and occupational titles (Professor, Doctor) which occur before personal names.

Relational social deixis is more important than absolute social deixis and is mainly concerned with socially deictic information encoded in languages of the world. Relational social deixis can be expressed by many qualities of relationships that may be grammaticalized, for example, kinship terms, clan membership, etc. as made available by the relevant social system. All societies have expressions or terms to address or refer to one's kin. There are multiple terms used by people during interaction that reflect the kinship relation between speaker and listener.

- a. **Kinship Terms:** Kinship terms indicate the intimacy among family members and are used to demonstrate the hearer's relationship with other family members. Family is the nucleus in composing society and society consists of a number of families which are tied by a certain bond. Kinship terms are the systems of lexical terms used in a language to express personal relationships within the family, in both narrow and extended senses (Crystal, 2008). In line with this, Saeed (2011) claims that the division of kinship terms is different from one language to another and this relates to the social relation between members in society.
- b. **Personal Names:** Personal names can be used as a form of address. In Nigerian society, personal names are used by powerful people to address people who are less powerful, young or people of the same status. In speech act one should consider social position, age and the relation between the communicators as using personal name indicates that the relationship between the participants is friendship.

### Absolute Socially Deictic Information

Absolute social deixis is a deictic reference usually expressed in certain forms of address which will include no comparison of the ranking of the speaker and addressee. Some examples are *Your Highness, Mr. President, The Provost, Your Majesty*, etc. The absolute social deixis is the other main kind of socially deictic information. It includes certain forms which are particularly reserved for certain speakers (Levinson, 1983, p. 91). Similarly, other forms reserved for authorized recipients, including restrictions on most titles of address which show specific social rank, like *Your Highness, Mr. President, dear Sir, Sir*, are examples of absolute social deixis (Dzaye, 2014, p.149). Some constructions of words in the official post's chats are used to show social positions and those who

are cadres in the government e.g., minister, chairman, senator etc. In different occupations, people are usually addressed with particular address forms such as: professor (Prof), doctor (Dr), etc.

### Literature Review

Studies on the favourite social media platform have made known that WhatsApp remains the most widespread social media platform (Mingle & Adams, 2015). Findings have also shown that the largest percentage of teachers and others use WhatsApp most extensively in social media platform followed by Facebook and tweeter (Mingle & Adams, 2015). The ensuing reasons FOR WHAT? are some of the impetuses for using Teaching Practice Supervisor WhatsApp forum (social media) among participants. First, teacher educators use the social media to share information, discuss current work issues and sort out union matters as the platform does not involve management staff.

Studies on social deixis have? HAS been done by many researchers. Sabir and Muhammad (2019) for instance carried out a study on social deixis in *Twelfth Night*. Their research was aimed to find out the types of social deixis that mainly occur in the text by William Shakespeare. The findings reveal that there were two types of social deixis; relational and absolute, with relational deictic words as the type of social deixis that mostly occur in the play. Another research on social deixis was conducted by Khidhir and Majeed (2019 REMOVE COMMA AFTER INTENT QUOTATION entitled *Analysis of Social Deixis in A Night in Khanzad's Life*. Apart from the research that was conducted by Sabir and Muhammad (2019), this research was not only concerned with both types of social deixis, but also how each type is related to social identity, relative power, and social relation between the characters in the play.

Other studies conducted by some previous researchers are: Noerofi'a and Bahri (2019), Abdullameer (2019). All the researchers used deixis as the object of the study and the data sources of those researches are from the plays, novel, movie, movie script and song lyrics. This

work uses WhatsApp (social media) script and teacher educators' chats script as sources of data. It analyses the type of social deixis and the social relationship factors among participants.

### Method

This research adopts the descriptive and qualitative design to describe types of social deixis and social relationship between the teacher educator's communication in a WhatsApp chat. The focus of this research is to investigate social deixis which is divided into two, namely, relational social deixis and absolute social deixis, following pragmatic approach to social deixis theory. The social deixis theory that would be used in this research is stated by Cruse's (2006, p. 166) and Levinson's theory (1983, p. 63) as a supporting theory. The area of study is Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit. The population consisted of one hundred and ninety-seven (197) teacher educators at the College. Only active WhatsApp communicators were qualified and self-generated post of participants' chats and not forwarded post formed the research data. There were several steps in collecting data, namely, reading the chats, identifying, taking notes, and classifying. Furthermore, the researchers analyzed and explained the data by using Levinsons theory and counted the data to find out the type of social deixis which mostly occur in the Teaching Practice Supervisors WhatsApp forum chats. Based on the analysis of

the data, there were two types of social deixis: relational and absolute. The relational social deictic words that have been used in the chat script are classified into four types (kinship terms, occupational titles, personal names, terms of endearment), with the total number of their frequencies. The method used in collecting data for this study was documentation technique while the analysis adopted simple percentage.

### Findings

The WhatsApp chat script used as data comprised forty chats generated by teacher educator in the social media forum. Out of a total number of five thousand and ninety-eight (5,098) words from selected forty chats, as data source on the chat scripts, the number of social deictic words used by respondents in the study is three thousand one hundred and fourteen (3,114) words. The total number for relational social deictic words is two thousand eight hundred and forty-four (2,344), while the absolute social deictic words identified are two hundred and seventy (270). The percentages are  $2844 \div 3114 \times 100 = 91.33\%$  and  $270 \div 3114 \times 100 = 8.67\%$  respectively. All the relational terms are classified under their own classes such as kinship terms, occupational titles, personal names and pronouns.

In research question 1, the percentages of social deictic words frequently used by interlocutors on WhatsApp chats script among Teacher educators is as follows.

**Table 1: The Analysis of the Social Deixis Variables used in the Study**

| Social Deictic Words     | Total Identified | Percentages |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Relational social deixis | 2844             | 91.33%      |
| Absolute social deixis   | 270              | 8.67%       |

The percentages between relational social deixis and absolute social deixis are 91.3% of relational social deixis and 8.67% of absolute social deixis. The reason relational social deixis is higher than absolute social deixis is because relational social deixis has four ways to communicate to the readers namely: occupational title, kinship, personal names and pronoun, while the absolute social deixis just has one way to

address the readers, and the way is using their title. So, it can be concluded that relational social deixis is more often used in Teaching Practice Supervisors' WhatsApp chats script than the absolute social deixis.

Furthermore, the analysis of the variables of relational social deictic words used in the study is classified under: (a) occupational titles (b) personal names (c) kinship terms (d) pronouns.

**Occupational Titles:** Occupational titles offer information about the jobs that people do or the duties they carry out (Aminzade, cited in Khidir & Majeed, 2019). All occupations have great importance in society, but they show difference due to power and solidarity relation between them and even within the same field as the relation between senior ranking lecturer and junior ranking lecturer or doctor and nurse. The percentages are  $2844 \div 3114 \times 100 = 91.33\%$  and  $270 \div 3114 \times 100 = 8.67\%$  respectively. Analysis of percentage of occupational relational social deixis reveals that out of the 815 times the selected forty chats had used this type, it stands at 28.8%. This could be as a result of the type of forum, the type of members of the group and work place tone which has triggered cabalism, sycophancy and unionism perspective into all chats.

**Personal Names:** Personal names can be used as a form of address. In Kurdish society, personal names are used by powerful people to address people who are less powerful, young or people of the same status. In speech act, one should consider social position, age and the relation between the communicators as using personal name indicates that the relationship between the participants is friendship. The percentage observed is 16.32% out of a frequency of 464. This is probably due to the effect of rhetorical authority concept mentioned earlier, which is distinguished by the superordinate's right to command and subordinate's duty to obey in the forms of traditional moral authority, bureaucratic authority and professional authority.

**Kinship terms:** Kinship terms indicate the intimacy among family members and are used to demonstrate the readers' or hearers' relationship with other family members. Family is the nucleus in composing society and society consists of a number of families which are tied by a certain bond. Kinship terms are the systems of lexical terms used in a language to express personal relationships within the family, in both narrow and extended senses (Crystal, 2008, p. 261). In Nigerian setting, kinship term is at times used to show solidarity or as endearment term depending

on context of use. The percentage of kinship words used is 7.88%. This is either used on grounds of solidarity or sarcastically. In line with Hedican (2012) assertion, kinship terms are linguistic labels which are used in all societies to make reference to person's relatives. Kinship terms are different in that some of them have a very limited content such as "father" meaning the male kinsman from whom a person directly originates from. On the other hand, "cousin" as a kinship term is an expansive term since many people can be put under this term. There are two types of kinship terms, namely, consanguinity and affinity. Consanguinity means to be related by blood. This relation has the strongest root among society members and this is related to patriarchy society (Nawkhosh, 2010). It includes grandfather, father etc. This type is not applicable in this context as participants is occupational colleagues. Affinity means to be related by social processes such as marriage. This relation is weaker than the former and it includes wife, co-wife, in-law etc. In Nigerian setting, affinity could be used socially to show oneness for a particular course as may be the case in this study. According to Saeed (2011), the division of kinship terms differs from one language to another and this relates to the social relation between members in a society.

**Pronoun:** Social deixis has to do with social relationships pointed out in linguistic expressions, thus, the T-V distinction is derived from the Latin pronouns *tu* and *vos*) is a contrast, within English language, between various forms of addressing one's conversation partner or partners. This may be specialized for varying levels of politeness, social distance, courtesy, familiarity, age or insult toward the addressee. It can be considered a form of social deixis. Levinson (1983) introduced the following four aspects defining social deictic forms: 1. Speaker to referent - Referent honorifics (Titles); 2. Speaker to addressee - Addressee honorifics (Address forms); 3. Speaker to non-addressed participant - Bystander honorifics (Taboo vocabularies) and 4. Speaker to setting - Formality levels (Register). The frequency of use is 1,341 and 47.15%. This data is

workplace based as such avoidance of naming or indirect address terms are often used. This is also because of the tone of environment and the toxic relationship among members because of power struggle in unionism and sycophancy.

Of course, the choice of a polite or informal pronoun is closely related to the other linguistic encodings listed by Levinson (2004). Depending on the situation, a pronoun might also be chosen because of a certain setting that involves a specific register, thus falling into the fourth aspect.

Fillmore (1971) points out that social deixis appears in the utterance between communicators, and the deixis information can be represented on the following occasions: (1) personal deixis, e.g. pronoun; (2) various

utterance platforms, e.g., honorific phrase; (3) speech context; (4) people's names, work titles and relatives; (5) utterance forms of social acts, e.g., greeting, gratitude; (6) directional information transmitted by the speaker/writer to the hearer/reader. Levinson (1983) and Jaszczolt (2002) state that some of the grammatical devices that are used for the purpose of social deixis include pronouns of politeness, titles of addressee, kinship terms, and honorifics. For the purpose of this study, the contemporary form is pronoun usage as a form of name avoidance strategy.

For research question 2, the display of social relationships between interlocutors portrayed in social deixis used on WhatsApp chats script is portrayed.

#### Analysis of Types, Frequency and Percentage of Social Deixis Data

| SOCIAL DEIXIS     | DEICTIC WORD       | SAMPLES  | Σ   | %     |
|-------------------|--------------------|--|-----|-------|
| Relational Deixis | Occupational Title | 1. Good morning, Dr, Few supervisors supervised student in group 39.i.e. salvation army nur. And primary school. Ikot Ebo, Etinan.<br>2. The Directors of Degree program, GST, Heads of Departments are requested to submit the above mentioned subject to properly guide the operations of the Directorate. Please respond timely.  | 815 | 28.67 |
|                   | Personal names     | 1. Dr. Godwin Sam Akpan, please run your EXCO and Chapter, and leave Gloria Wilson Inyang alone. Run your Union and leave me alone. *ENOUGH IS ENOUGH*<br>2. Reports reaching T.P unit shows that so many supervisors have not gone to all the schools assigned to them. Failure to do this will most likely attract penalties. Please let's comply to avoid problems  | 464 | 16.32 |
|                   | Kinship terms      | 1. My dear brother, the mass and unprecedented rejection of the proposed and imposed 2 percent deduction from the sweat of intellectuals for the daily consumption of ewot** ebote and ewot** ewa at anyong mbot in Uyo by few unpatriotic elements of the chapter exco is the provocative reason for the empty, ineffective, baseless and laughable query issued by few frustrated individuals. We shall continue to say no to this unholy act, my brother keep | 224 | 7.88  |

|  |          |  |       |       |
|--|----------|--|-------|-------|
|  |          | calm, better is the end of a matter than the beginning thereof, the game has just begun.   |       |       |
|  |          | 2. I missed my Prof, my supervisor, my academic father, my mentor and friend. Rest on great and fearless teacher till we meet again.   |       |       |
|  | Pronouns | What do you expect when you see a group of people who forced their way to become leaders without possessing the needed characteristics? These are people who have nothing positive to offer members other than blindfold the gullible ones. Ask them what they have achieved since they were sworn in to office. They will say it's anti-union activity, you are fighting the union. | 1,341 | 47.15 |

This research contains two types of social deixis, namely, relational social deixis and absolute social deixis. The relational social deixis contains four types namely: occupational title, personal names, kinship terms and pronoun, while the absolute social deixis has two types, namely, higher status and lower status.

Absolute social deictic words show gender and they are mostly used to denote politeness and deference. They are usually expressed in certain forms of address that do not display comparison of the ranking of the speaker and addressee.

| Words/Phrases                                   | Type                 | Sample   |
|---|----------------------|--|
| Provost   | Position and title   | The working Provost is doing what is considered the 'very best' regarding valid outstanding financial balance. |
| His Excellency, the education friendly Governor | Honorific adjectives | His Excellency, the education friendly Governor of Akwa Ibom State...  |

Comparing to the relational social deixis, absolute social deixis indicates that there is no comparison of ranking between the speaker and the addressee. The addressee is absolutely higher above the speaker and mostly the absolute type is a reserved term for someone who has an essential position in the organisation or government. Most likely, depending on the context, the usage might be sarcastic depending on the tone of chat.

## Conclusion

Social deixis is the linguistic expression that cannot be apprehended properly without the knowledge of the context of utterance. Social deixis has great roles to play in showing the

identity, the age, the sex, the occupation, the social status and the social relation of those involved in a speech event (WhatsApp chat). Based on the chat analysis, it is found that the lecturers used both types of social deixis: relational social deixis and absolute.

Based on the findings of social deixis in this study, it is concluded that social deixis is the manifestation of the identity and social position of the communicators in the speech event as well as the formality and familiarity relation between participants, which is determined pragmatically and contextually. Research into English language social deixis and social media is important to the on-going development and conceptualisation of digital humanities. It illustrates the role of digital tools in conversations and draws attention to the

way in which digital technologies are transforming what it means to be human. The participating lecturers due to favouritism, sycophancy, or patriotism battled each other over administration policies as against the general staff welfare.

What tends to unite researchers of social deixis in English language and social media is an interest in understanding the ways in which communication is increasingly shaped by the availability and use of various social media platforms, for instance, WhatsApp. Social deixis is proven as the aspect of language structure that is anchored to the social identities of participants in a speech event, or relations between them, or relations between them and other referents. Thus, through the use of social deixis by teacher educator the organisational conflict and work culture of the institution are highlighted.

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# Communicating the Health Implications of Mothers Knowledge and Compliance to Routine Immunization for Healthy Living in Ekiti State

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## Abstract

*This study examined communicating the health implications of mother's knowledge and compliance to routine immunization for healthy living in Ekiti State. The level of knowledge and compliance of mothers to routine immunization was determined, the prevalence of diseases that are preventable through immunization was examined, the relationship between their knowledge and compliance and the health implications of immunization on the children. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted. Population for the study comprised of 92,967 nursing mothers in Ekiti State out of which 400 mothers were selected. Multi-stage random sampling technique which involved simple random, stratified and purposive sampling techniques was used. The instrument was a structured, questionnaire which was used to generate data for the study. The instrument was validated by experts while the reliability was ensured through a test-retest method which yielded a co-efficient of 0.85. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed moderate level of mothers' knowledge on immunization and high level compliance. Conclusion was drawn on the need to communicate the health implications of the immunization through various means of creating awareness to improve their knowledge and compliance.*

**Key words:** Communication, Immunization, Knowledge, compliance, health.

## Introduction:

World Health Organization (2000) defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely absence of disease or infirmity. A healthy mother has a duty to the health of her children.

Communication is a means of imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or using some other acceptable medium such as verbal instructions, television, phone lines or computers

Immunization is a strategy for combating deadly diseases among children. It is a process of giving vaccine to protect people against diseases. Immunization according to National Primary Health Care Development Agency (2017) is a process whereby an individual is immune to

deadly diseases through administration of vaccines. Immunization is similar to the immunity a person would get from exposure to a disease but instead of getting the disease, a vaccine is introduced to combat the effect of the disease.

The world Health Organization (WHO, 2015) defined immunization as a process of administering special vaccine into a person to make the body resist certain vaccine preventable diseases. In Nigeria, immunization is made available for mothers and their children from birth till school age (0-5yrs) using a schedule designed by World Health Organization (WHO) based on the diseases that are prevalent among children in the country.

Tagbo, Weanya et al (2012) posted that the main aim of immunization is to deliver a

complete number of doses of potent vaccines in a timely, safe and effective way to all children and mothers ultimately inducing immunity against the targeted diseases. Knowledge constitutes facts, information and skills acquired through experience or education, the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It could also be described as awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation.

The health implications of knowledge and compliance of mothers to immunization services as a preventive measure to occurrence of diseases cannot be overlooked. Knowledge has to do with information acquisition about something. Mother knowledge on immunization has to do with how informed about the importance and hence insuring proper utilization of the vaccines as made available by the World Health Organisation, WHO. When health matters are communicated to mothers, it is to make them knowledgeable about the issue. It has been observed that mothers could have general knowledge about health related matters but lack specific knowledge about them such as immunization and other health issues.

Mothers' level of knowledge and compliance cannot be separated. Compliance is an action communicated verbally or non-verbally which is put in place in accordance with a request or command in order to agree to do things that are expected at a specific time.

Yunus et al (2017) posted that mothers are said to comply to immunization schedule when they follow the national schedule on vaccine administration at specific ages or when they receive appropriate doses of vaccines as at when due.

Guerra (2007) discovered that when recommended doses of immunization are not followed, the health implications on the affected children could be deadly as the possibility of completing the immunization could be missed hence, such children will be exposed to diseases such as poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, diphtheria etc. which could have been prevented through compliance to instructions as communicated through the health workers or health care giver.

## **Statement of the Problem**

It was observed by World Health Organization (2012) that globally about 20% of deaths occurs annually among children as a result of non-compliance to instructions on vaccines preventable diseases. National Primary Health Care (2019) discovered that despite the evidence-based successes recorded in reducing vaccine preventable disease among children morbidity and mortality rate due to immunization compliance in Nigeria is still suboptimal.

National Demographic and Health Survey (2013) discovered that about 25% of children are not fully immunized and that mortality rate is still as high as 37.69 and 128 deaths are still recorded by 1000 live births (National Population Commission 2013)

It was observed that the proportion of children who has received immunization in Ekiti State is still low when compared with other states in the country. Statistics showed that Ekiti State has 26.8% coverage.

It was observed that the goal of National immunization Programme (NPI) which was to ensure all children 0-5 years are fully immunized seemed not to be achieved.

The reason might be attributed to factors such as mothers' knowledge and their compliance to information communicated to them on immunization.

Mother's educational qualification may also determine their knowledge and compliance to their health and that of their children Akinsola (2003) observed that illiterate mothers lack the knowledge to take care of their health and that of their children. They also lack the knowledge of the health implications of their compliance to the health benefits of their wards.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate into communicating the health implications of mother's knowledge and compliance to routine immunization services in Ekiti State.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised for the study

1. What is the level of knowledge of mothers on immunization of their children?
2. What is the level of compliance of mothers to immunization services in Ekiti State?

### Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated for the study. There is no significant relationship between mother's knowledge and their compliance to immunization services in Ekiti State.

### Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. This enables the researcher to describe the existing situation regarding communicating knowledge and compliance of mothers to immunization services for healthy living in Ekiti State.

The study covers a large area from where the respondents were sampled to represent the entire population.

The population for the study comprised of all nursing mothers in Ekiti State out of which 480 were sampled using simple random sampling technique.

The instrument used for the study was a self-structured questionnaire titled "communicating knowledge and compliance of mothers to immunization services for healthy living in Ekiti State". Face and content validity was ensured by giving the instrument to experts in Test and Measurement, Human Kinetics, Health Education and Arts and Language. The connections made were effected to ensure the validity of the instrument. The reliability was ensured by using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and a reliability of 0.85 was obtained which was considered high enough and reliable for the study.

The data collected were analysed using percentage and inferential statistics to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result is as presented below

### Results and Discussions

The results of the study are presented as follows; Question1: what is the level of knowledge of mothers on immunization services for healthy living in Ekiti-State?

The result is as presented in table 1

**Table1:** level of knowledge of mothers on immunization services for healthy living

| Level of Mother's Knowledge | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Low(0.00-12.84)             | 58        | 12.1       |
| Moderate (12.85 – 19.35)    | 319       | 66.5       |
| High                        | 103       | 20.5       |
| Total                       | 480       | 1000       |

Table 1 presented the level of mother's knowledge as communicated to them on immunization. The result showed that 58 respondents representing 12.1% had low level of knowledge. 319 had

moderate level representing 66.5% while those with high level were 103 representing 21.5% this showed that the level of mothers' knowledge as communicated to them was moderate

Question 2: What is the level of compliance of mothers to immunization?

**Table 2:** level of compliance of mothers on immunization services

| Level of Compliance of mothers on immunization | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Low  | 89        | 18.5       |
| High   | 391       | 81.5       |
| Total  | 480       | 100        |

Table 2 showed the level of compliance of mothers to immunization services. The result showed that 89 respondents representing 18.5% had low level while 391 respondents representing 81.5% had high level of compliance.

This showed that the level of compliance of mothers to immunization services for healthy living is high

### Research Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was formulated of the study:

There is no significant relationship between mother's knowledge and compliance to immunization services.

**Table3:** Pearson Correlation of mother's knowledge and compliance top immunization services

| Variables                                    | N   | Mean  | SD    | R     | P    |
|--|-----|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Mothers' knowledge on immunization services  | 480 | 16.10 | 3.260 | 0.385 | .000 |
| Mothers' compliance to immunization services | 480 | 33.63 | 0.789 |       |      |

$P < 0.05(0.000)$

Table three showed that the computed r-value (0.385) with a p-value  $< 0.05$  was significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected which means there is significant relationship between mother's knowledge and their compliance to immunization services for healthy living in Ekiti

### Discussion

The study examined communicating knowledge and compliance of mothers to immunization services for healthy living in Ekiti State. Findings of the study showed that the level of knowledge of mothers on immunization services was moderate. This showed that their knowledge was high enough to ensure compliance. The level of knowledge of mothers might be due to government's efforts in creating awareness through effective communication

The study further revealed that the level of compliance to immunization services was high. This implies that the efforts of Donor agencies like World Health Organization and Unite Nation Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in ensuring a nation free from vaccine preventable diseases

are appreciated by mothers for their healthy living.

The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between mother's knowledge and compliance to immunization services and occurrence of vaccine preventable diseases. This findings is in line with the findings of Guerra (200) which established a relationship between mother's knowledge and compliance to immunization services for healthy living

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the level of mother's knowledge on immunization services for healthy living was good and that the level of compliance was also high to ensure healthy living of children and mothers

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. More awareness should be created by government and stake holders in health sectors to improve the knowledge of

- mothers on immunization services for healthy living
2. Government should ensure compliance to immunization services by enforcing attendance on mothers and relevant penalty on defaulters.

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