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FROM EDITORIAL DESK

Ékwé International Journal is one of the brain children of **Igbo Scholars Forum for Socio-Cultural Advancement** born out of the zeal to get the young Igbo scholars together to start thinking like Igbo sons and daughters through paper publications, meetings and symposia. In fact, Igbo Scholars Forum was founded by Professor Onukwube Alexander Alfred Anedo and born at the launching of a festschrift in honour of their life patron, Professor Obed Muojekwu Anizoba (Ozonwa) of the Department of African & Asian Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria on the 15th day of December 2012. In his kind gesture, Prof O. M. Anizoba established a website <http://www.Igbocholarsforum.com.ng> (which they later upgraded to <https://www.biafuluIgbocholarsforum.com.ng> and thereafter, migrated to <https://acjol.org> and making their works visible in the Google Scholars visibility site, for them to use in telling the world who the Igbo, Nigerian and African peoples are, about their life, what they believe in and their relationship with people and other cultures of the world outside theirs. Other journal outlets through which this Forum wants to let Igbo people and their culture out to the world are IgboScholars International Journal and Ideal International

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INDIGENEOUS LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR PRESERVATION OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explores the role of indigenous languages in preserving Nigeria's rich and diverse cultural heritage, applying an integrated theoretical framework that combines *Linguistic Ecology* (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2017) and the *Digital Language Vitality* perspective (Túbòsún, 2023). Linguistic Ecology emphasizes the interdependence between languages, cultures, and their sociopolitical environments, asserting that indigenous languages are crucial ecosystems for the transmission of identity, values, oral traditions, and worldviews. Complementing this, the Digital Language Vitality framework highlights the importance of digital engagement and representation in ensuring the continued relevance, use, and transmission of indigenous languages in the 21st century. Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic fieldwork with digital content analysis. Data will be collected through interviews with native speakers, language activists, and cultural custodians across

selected Nigerian communities. Additionally, the study will analyze the presence and use of indigenous languages in digital platforms—such as social media, mobile applications, Wikipedia, and podcasts—to assess their contemporary relevance and vitality. Findings from this study are expected to demonstrate that indigenous languages are not only vehicles for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage—such as folklore, traditional music, rituals, proverbs, and customs—but also adaptable tools in modern digital spaces. The study argues that the deliberate use and promotion of indigenous languages in both physical and digital cultural domains are critical to resisting linguistic marginalization and ensuring intergenerational cultural continuity. This article contributes to scholarship in language planning, digital humanities, and African linguistics, and offers policy recommendations for revitalizing indigenous languages through education, media, and technology.

Keywords: Indigenous languages, cultural heritage, linguistic ecology, digital language vitality, language preservation

Introduction

Language is a cultural archive, a repository of a people’s worldview, traditional wisdom, and communal identity. For indigenous communities, language is more than communication; it is a

medium through which oral traditions, social norms, belief systems, and ecological knowledge are transmitted (Harrison, 2007). In Nigeria, the decline of indigenous languages has become a subject of concern due to the growing threat of cultural erosion. As UNESCO (2020) asserts, the extinction of a language equates to the loss of an entire cultural world.

Nigeria, often celebrated as the “Giant of Africa,” is home to over 500 indigenous languages and more than 250 ethnic groups, making it one of the most linguistically diverse nations in the world. These languages are not merely tools of communication—they are living archives of cultural memory, oral tradition, and communal identity. Each indigenous language encapsulates a unique worldview, a repository of ancestral wisdom, and a framework for social norms, rituals, and artistic expression.

However, this rich linguistic heritage is under threat. The forces of globalization, urban migration, and the dominance of English in education and media have led to a steady decline in the use of native tongues, particularly among younger generations. As languages fade, so too do the cultural practices, values, and histories they carry. The loss of any indigenous language in Nigeria is not just a linguistic tragedy—it is the erosion of a people’s identity and a fracture in the nation’s cultural mosaic.

This paper critically examines the role of indigenous languages in cultural preservation, especially within the Nigerian context. It incorporates modern theoretical insights to explain the interdependence of language and culture, while also addressing the implications of language loss and the urgency of revitalization efforts. It also argues that indigenous languages are indispensable tools for preserving Nigeria's cultural heritage. Drawing on Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, (2017) the *Linguistic Ecology* framework and the Túbòsún, (2023), emerging *Digital Language Vitality* perspective, it explores how language functions as a vessel for cultural continuity and how digital platforms can serve as new domains for revitalization. By examining community-based efforts, educational policies, and digital innovations, this study highlights the urgent need for a multidimensional approach to language preservation—one that honors tradition while embracing modernity.

In doing so, the article contributes to the broader discourse on cultural sustainability and linguistic justice, positioning indigenous languages not as relics of the past, but as dynamic instruments for shaping Nigeria's future.

Indigenous Language and Cultural Heritage: A Conceptual Overview

Indigenous languages are languages that are native to a specific region and spoken by people who are descendants of the original inhabitant and have been traditionally spoken for generations. It is often unwritten, localized, and closely tied to the land, oral history, traditional governance, and belief systems (Harrison, 2007). Cultural heritage, on the other hand, encompasses tangible and intangible elements such as rituals, proverbs, music, folklore, dress, religious practices, and local knowledge systems. These languages are deeply tied to local environments, customs, rituals, and social institutions (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). Cultural heritage, particularly intangible heritage, includes oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, and knowledge systems—most of which are transmitted and maintained through indigenous languages.

The preservation of this cultural heritage heavily depends on the transmission of language, as culture is encoded in language. Linguistic Relativity Theory, famously linked to Sapir and Whorf (Whorf, 1956), supports the view that language shapes thought and influences cultural cognition. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis **or** Linguistic Relativity Theory suggests that language shapes cultural perception and cognitive behavior (Whorf, 1956). Thus, the loss of an indigenous language often

entails a loss of traditional worldviews embedded within the language.

Indigenous Language as a Tool of Cultural Continuity

Indigenous languages serve as repositories of oral tradition, ancestral wisdom, ecological knowledge, and communal practices. For example:

Folklore and Oral History: Indigenous languages serve as vessels for transmitting oral literature—folktales, Myths, legends, and historical accounts—that shape community identity. As Finnegan (2012) notes, oral traditions are richer and more meaningful in native tongues due to cultural nuances that may be lost in translation. He also explains that historical narratives are preserved in native tongues, providing insight into the past and reinforcing group identity.

Proverbs, Music, and Symbolism: Language is integral to indigenous music, proverbs, and ceremonial expressions. Achebe (1975) emphasized that proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten in Igbo culture, underscoring how language frames indigenous wisdom. He explains that indigenous proverbs and songs encapsulate moral teachings, social norms, and traditional knowledge. These forms lose nuance when translated into dominant global languages.

Rituals and Spirituality: Ritual performances and spiritual incantations in Nigeria are often inseparable from the indigenous language of the practitioners. These expressions lose meaning and efficacy outside the native linguistic context. That many indigenous rituals can only be meaningfully performed in native languages, as the linguistic expressions are tightly woven into spiritual meaning (Eme&Uba, 2016).

Endangerment and Threats

Despite Nigeria's rich linguistic diversity, many indigenous languages face extinction. The National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) and other studies have identified languages like Jibu, Gade, and Duguza as endangered are critically endangered. The dominance of English in schools, media, and government has marginalized indigenous languages, leading to language shift and eventual language death (Bamgbose, 2011).

This decline is attributed to:

- The dominance of English in education, governance, and media;
- Intergenerational language shift where younger generations prefer English or Pidgin;
- Lack of institutional support for indigenous language education (Bamgbose, 2011).

UNESCO (2020) estimates that over 40% of global languages are endangered, many of which are indigenous languages in Africa.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Linguistic Ecology framework (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2017) alongside the emerging Digital Language Vitality perspective (Túbòsún, 2023), to explore how indigenous languages in Nigeria serve not only as vehicles of cultural heritage but also as dynamic actors within shifting digital and sociopolitical ecosystems.

Haugen (1972) introduced the term, but it has been developed in the 21st century by scholars like Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (2017) advocate for linguistic human rights and language maintenance in postcolonial contexts. As Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2017) propose, linguistic ecology views languages as part of an ecosystem where every language contributes to the diversity and balance of the whole. Linguistic ecology views languages as part of an interdependent ecosystem, where each language interacts with its environment—social, cultural, political, and ecological. It emphasizes sustainability, diversity, and the balance between dominant and minority languages. It allows us to examine how indigenous Nigerian languages function within multilingual communities, the threats they face, and how cultural sustainability

depends on language preservation. Language death is likened to species extinction, and efforts should focus on maintaining linguistic biodiversity.

Túbòsún (2023) introduces a digital approach to language vitality; this emerging theory evaluates a language's survival not just in physical communities but in digital spaces - social media, texting, AI, online education, and digital media. It emphasizes "techno-linguistic inclusion". In today's Nigeria, many indigenous languages are missing from the internet, keyboards, apps, and AI tools. This framework shifts the conversation toward revitalizing heritage through technology.

Literature Review: Cultural Semiotics of Indigenous Language as a Tool for Preservation of Our Cultural Heritage in Nigeria

Cultural semiotics, which studies how signs and symbols function in cultural contexts, offers a potent theoretical lens for understanding the role of indigenous languages in preserving cultural heritage. As a field, cultural semiotics regards language not merely as a medium of communication but as a system of culturally loaded signs that encode traditions, identities, and worldviews (Lotman, 1990; Cobley, 2010). Within the Nigerian context, indigenous languages serve as complex semiotic systems that encapsulate centuries of communal knowledge, customs, rituals, oral literature, and philosophies.

Indigenous Languages as Semiotic Reservoirs

Languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Efik, Tiv, and others function as semiotic reservoirs, preserving culturally specific metaphors, proverbs, idioms, taboos, and worldviews (Egbokhare, 2004; Adegbija, 2004). For example, in the Igbo language, the use of proverbs (ilu) is a key semiotic device for transmitting ethical values and societal expectations (Nwoga, 1984). Similarly, Yoruba oríkì (praise poetry) reflects an intricate system of identity construction, genealogical memory, and cultural valuation (Barber, 1991). These linguistic signs are not neutral but carry deep cultural meanings that reflect and sustain communal values.

Semiotics of Oral Traditions and Performance

Indigenous languages also serve as vehicles for the performance of oral traditions - storytelling, songs, chants, and rituals—which are rich in semiotic codes (Finnegan, 2012; Okpewho, 1992). These performances are typically embedded with symbolic references to myths, deities, cosmologies, and socio-political structures. The language used in these oral forms is not just descriptive but performative - it enacts and reinforces cultural values. This performativity aligns with Eco's (1976) notion that semiotics is not limited to static signs but includes dynamic, context-driven meaning-making.

Cultural Identity and Linguistic Semiotics

Language is central to the construction and reinforcement of cultural identity. According to Hall (1997), identity is constructed through discourse, and indigenous languages constitute the primary discursive space for many Nigerian communities. When these languages decline, so too does the semiotic system that maintains cultural identity. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2017) argue that language loss leads to epistemicide - the erasure of entire ways of knowing - making the preservation of indigenous languages an ethical imperative.

Colonial Disruption and the Erosion of Semiotic Systems

The imposition of colonial languages (English, French, and Portuguese) disrupted indigenous semiotic systems in Nigeria and across Africa. This led to the devaluation of indigenous languages and a break in the transmission of cultural codes (Bangbose, 2000; NgũgĩwaThiong'o, 1986). As a result, younger generations often lack access to the deep symbolic meanings encoded in their ancestral languages, leading to cultural dislocation and identity fragmentation (Ugorji, 2022).

Digital Semiotics and Revitalization

Contemporary efforts to digitize indigenous languages through mobile apps, online dictionaries, and social media have created new semiotic spaces

for cultural expression and heritage preservation (Túbòsún, 2023; Edewor&Alu, 2022). These digital platforms recontextualize traditional semiotic signs in new media environments, creating hybrid cultural forms that can reach a global audience while preserving local identities. This aligns with the emerging Digital Language Vitality framework, which recognizes technology as a critical tool for the revitalization of endangered linguistic semiotic systems.

MethodologyMethodology adopted in this study are ethnographic fieldwork, Digital and Technological methodologies

Ethnographic fieldwork

Ethnographic fieldwork involves immersive observation and documentation of cultural practices, rituals, oral traditions, and belief systems is conducted in indigenous languages. This is used to validate the language as a medium of cultural transmission. It is carried out through community interviews, folk narratives, and participant observation. The researcher also made use of Digital and Technological Method being that in this 21st century digital methods are critical. Hence the Digital Language Vitality framework encourages the use of digital platforms for indigenous language preservation. Thus: development of language apps and online dictionaries, use of social media for

storytelling in local languages, creating subtitles and voice-overs in indigenous languages on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. These tools enable the recontextualization of cultural narratives into modern formats accessible to the youth.

The Role of Indigenous Language in Cultural Preservation

Indigenous languages perform a wide range of functions that are fundamental to the preservation, transmission, and continuity of cultural heritage. These languages are more than mere tools of communication; they are powerful vessels of identity, knowledge, values, and worldview. Scholars and organizations alike have underscored the irreplaceable roles these languages play in sustaining cultural systems (UNESCO, 2022; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2017).

a) Cultural Identity and Group Cohesion

Indigenous languages are intrinsic to ethnic and cultural identity. They reflect the shared experiences, histories, and beliefs of a people. According to Emenanjo (2015), language defines a people's existence and social reality, serving as a powerful marker of group solidarity and communal belonging.

b). Preservation of Oral Traditions

One of the most critical functions of indigenous languages is the preservation of oral traditions—folktales, proverbs, myths, songs, and epics. These oral forms encapsulate cultural memory and moral instruction. As Finnegan (2012) emphasizes, oral literature passed down in indigenous languages forms the foundation of African cultural education and historical continuity.

c) Repository of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Indigenous languages encode complex systems of knowledge related to the environment, medicine, agriculture, and spirituality. This knowledge, often unwritten, is transmitted orally across generations. Túbòsún (2023) highlights how digital tools are now being used to document such knowledge, which remains deeply rooted in native languages.

d)Spiritual and Religious Expression

Religious beliefs and traditional spirituality are best expressed through indigenous languages. Prayers, invocations, and rituals lose their full meaning when translated. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2017) observe that language holds spiritual power in many indigenous societies, making it central to sacred rites and belief systems.

e) Customary Law and Governance

Traditional governance systems, including dispute resolution and communal administration, are conducted in indigenous languages. These languages encode the legal and moral frameworks of indigenous communities. For example, in Nigeria, customary courts frequently operate in local languages such as Yoruba or Igbo (Emenanjo, 2015).

f) Symbolic Naming and Cultural Expression

Naming in indigenous cultures is deeply symbolic and meaningful. Names often reflect circumstances of birth, spiritual beliefs, or ancestral lineage. These names, given in indigenous languages, serve as historical and cultural markers (UNESCO, 2022).

g) Cultural Ceremonies and Festivals

Rituals and ceremonies such as marriages, initiations, funerals, and festivals are typically conducted in indigenous languages. These languages convey traditional chants, songs, and prayers that define the spiritual and cultural purpose of the events (Finnegan, 2012).

h) Creative Arts and Performance

Indigenous languages are critical to artistic expression - poetry, songs, dances, and storytelling.

The linguistic devices within these languages (such as idioms, metaphors, and tonal variations) enrich cultural aesthetics and communication. According to Túbòsún (2023), the use of indigenous languages in creative works also strengthens their vitality and appeal to younger generations.

i) Intergenerational Learning and Informal Education

Elders pass down traditional knowledge, ethics, and customs to children using indigenous languages. This informal system of education fosters cultural continuity. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2017) note that when children are denied access to their mother tongue; they are disconnected from essential cultural values and wisdom.

j) Worldview and Cognitive Framing

Language influences thought, perception, and behavior. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis supports the idea that indigenous languages shape unique worldviews—how people understand time, space, and existence (Finnegan, 2012). These perspectives are encoded in language-specific expressions and cultural logic.

k). Diaspora Cultural Continuity

For displaced or diasporas communities, indigenous languages help maintain ties to ancestral heritage.

Efforts to revive or maintain indigenous languages among Diasporas reflect a desire to preserve identity and cultural memory (Túbòsún, 2023).

Threats to Indigenous Languages in Nigeria or Challenges to Indigenous Language Survival

Indigenous languages across the world are facing a growing threat of extinction due to multiple intersecting challenges. These challenges, driven by historical, sociopolitical, economic, and technological forces, have undermined the vitality and intergenerational transmission of these languages. According to UNESCO (2022), nearly 40% of the 7,000+ languages spoken globally are endangered, with the majority of them being indigenous.

(a) Colonial Legacy and Language Displacement

The imposition of colonial languages such as English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish across Africa, Asia, and the Americas has led to the marginalization of indigenous languages. During colonial rule, indigenous languages were often suppressed in schools, churches, and administration, resulting in language shift and loss of prestige (Skutnabb-Kangas&Phillipson, 2017). This historical marginalization has continued into the postcolonial era, where former colonial languages remain official and dominant in most institutions.

(b) Globalization and Linguistic Homogenization

Globalization promotes dominant global languages, especially English, as the languages of international communication, commerce, science, and technology. This trend exerts immense pressure on speakers of indigenous languages to shift towards economically and socially "useful" languages, thus accelerating language endangerment (Crystal, 2000; Túbòsún, 2023). The rise of digital media in dominant languages further limits the visibility and relevance of indigenous languages.

(c) Lack of Institutional Support

Indigenous languages often lack formal recognition or support in national constitutions, education policies, and media. Many are excluded from schools, courts, public administration, and literacy programs. As UNESCO (2022) points out, when a language is absent from the formal domains of power, its status declines, and younger generations lose motivation to learn or speak it.

(d) Intergenerational Transmission Breakdown

A key factor in language survival is the consistent transmission of the language from parents to children. In many indigenous communities, this transmission is weakening as parents choose to raise their children in more dominant or urban languages for economic or social mobility. According to

Fishman (1991), the breakdown in home-based language transmission is often the final stage before language death.

(e)Urbanization and Migration

Rapid urbanization and internal migration have led to the erosion of traditional language domains. In urban centers, dominant national or colonial languages are prioritized for social interaction, education, and employment, while indigenous languages are seen as rural or backward. Children born in cities often grow up monolingual in dominant languages, distancing themselves from their linguistic heritage (Bamgbose, 2011).

(f) Negative Language Attitudes and Stigmatization

Indigenous languages are often stigmatized as “primitive,” “uneducated,” or “non-modern.” Such negative attitudes - internalized even by native speakers - lead to language shame and abandonment. According to Emenanjo (2015), many African youths reject their mother tongues in favor of English or French because indigenous languages are not seen as gateways to success.

(g) Digital and Technological Exclusion

The digital revolution has not been inclusive of most indigenous languages. The lack of keyboards,

software, mobile applications, and online content in native languages limits their use in the digital age. Túbòsún (2023) emphasizes that indigenous African languages are significantly underrepresented online, which undermines their relevance among digital-native generations.

(h) Language Policy Gaps and Implementation Failures

Even in countries where indigenous language policies exist, implementation is often weak or inconsistent. Language planning is frequently centralized, ignoring linguistic diversity and community involvement. Bamgbose (2011) refers to this as the “implementation syndrome,” where good policies on paper are not backed by practical, sustained action.

(i) Intergenerational Transmission Breakdown

A major threat to indigenous languages is the failure of parents to pass them on to their children. Many families now use English or Pidgin at home, especially in urban areas, which disrupt the natural transmission of the native language (Fishman, 1991).

(j) Educational Exclusion and Language Hierarchies

Formal education systems often prioritize one or two national languages at the expense of others. Many indigenous languages are not developed or standardized for use in schools, and there is a shortage of instructional materials and trained teachers. As a result, children are denied education in their mother tongue, which is essential for cognitive development and cultural retention (UNESCO, 2022).

(k) Climate Change and Displacement

Environmental degradation, conflicts, and development projects have displaced many indigenous communities, leading to language shift or loss. When communities are forced to relocate or assimilate into dominant linguistic environments, their language vitality is endangered. UNESCO (2022) notes the link between environmental vulnerability and linguistic vulnerability in many indigenous populations.

Importance of the Digital Language Vitality Framework in the 21st Century

The **Digital Language Vitality (DLV) framework** has become increasingly important in the 21st century as a response to the dominance of digital technology in everyday life. It recognizes that for

indigenous languages to remain relevant, usable, and transmittable across generations, they must be actively represented and engaged within digital spaces. The framework builds upon traditional measures of language vitality - such as speaker population and intergenerational transmission (UNESCO, 2003) - but expands these to include digital presence as a crucial criterion for survival in the modern era.

As highlighted by Túbòsún (2023), a language not visible or functional in digital platforms - such as social media, mobile apps, online dictionaries, and AI systems - risks being sidelined by speakers, especially among youth who primarily engage with content through digital means. The DLV framework thus shifts the focus from offline community use to digital engagement, promoting the inclusion of indigenous languages in apps, websites, voice assistants, translation tools, and learning platforms.

In doing so, the framework enhances intergenerational transmission, as younger speakers increasingly learn, use, and interact with their languages through digital storytelling, YouTube videos, and online learning apps. Furthermore, it addresses **digital inequality**, advocating for technological support and representation for marginalized languages often excluded from mainstream digital infrastructures (Baldwin et al., 2020).

In essence, the DLV framework empowers communities to document, teach, and innovate with their languages using digital tools, ensuring their survival and growth in a globalized, technologically-driven world. It redefines language vitality in a way that aligns with the realities of 21st-century communication, education, and identity.

Case Studies

Threats to the Igbo Language, despite being one of the three major languages in Nigeria, Igbo faces growing neglect among younger generations. Research by Emenanjo (2020) and Eze & Nnamani (2021) shows that many Igbo children—especially in urban areas—can neither speak nor write fluently in Igbo. Key factors are preference for English in formal education, media, and homes, Social perception that fluency in Igbo equals being “local” or “less educated.” Also digital exclusion – Igbo is underrepresented in online spaces and tech platforms.

Threats to the Yoruba Language, the Yoruba language remains widely spoken, but its standard form is endangered in urban and Diasporas contexts. Bamgbose (2019) notes increasing code-switching and the rise of "Yoruba-English hybrids" among young speakers. Key factors are Urbanization and globalization influencing language attitudes, neglect in digital/technical domains (e.g., poor Yoruba presence in AI, tech platforms), educational

policy shifts toward English-medium instruction and emigration and Diaspora influence, where children are rarely taught Yoruba.

Threats to Minority Languages in Nigeria, Region: North-Central, North-East, South-South Languages: Izere, Shanga, Ọkọ, Jju, and others. Nigeria's minority languages (spoken by fewer than 10,000 people) are the most critically endangered. Blench (2023) estimates that over 100 Nigerian minority languages may go extinct by 2050 if urgent action is not taken.

Key Factors are Language shift to dominant regional languages (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo), migration, intermarriage, and loss of cultural identity, lack of orthographies, language education, or state support and neglect in media and digital platforms. Examples:

1. Shanga Language (Kebbi State): Fewer than 5,000 speakers; youth shift to Hausa (Blench, 2019).
2. Ọkọ Language (Cross River): Spoken only by elderly; dying oral traditions (Okon&Udoh, 2022).
3. Izere Language (Plateau): Active shift to Hausa among youth (Yakubu, 2020). Etc.

Summary Table of Threats by Case Study

Language	Region	Threats	Source (Year)
Igbo	South-East Nigeria	Neglect in schools, parental disuse, English dominance	Eze&Nnamani (2021), Emenanjo (2020)
Yoruba	South-West Nigeria	Code-switching, loss of standard form, digital exclusion	Bamgbose (2019), Adeleke & Ogundipe (2019)
Minority Languages	North/South Nigeria	Shift to Hausa/English, lack of support, dying speakers	Blench (2023), Yakubu (2020), Okon& Udoh (2022)

These case studies show that both major and minority indigenous languages in Nigeria are under threat, although for different reasons. While Igbo and Yoruba face prestige and intergenerational issues, minority languages face extinction without urgent preservation measures. Revitalization efforts—including language policy reforms, mother-tongue education, and digital integration—are critical.

Strategies for Language Preservation and Revitalization

The increasing threat of indigenous language endangerment has prompted global concern and scholarly engagement on how best to preserve and revitalize these languages. Preservation involves safeguarding languages from extinction, while revitalization refers to active efforts to restore the use of endangered or dormant languages. According

to UNESCO (2022), successful strategies must be community-centered, culturally sensitive, and policy-supported.

(a) Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)

Using indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in early childhood and primary education helps promote literacy, cultural pride, and language retention. UNESCO (2022) emphasizes that children learn best in their mother tongue, and this approach also strengthens identity and intergenerational language transfer. Bamgbose (2011) argues for curriculum development in indigenous languages to ensure their formal use and pedagogical relevance.

(b) Language Documentation and Archiving

Comprehensive documentation-through dictionaries, grammars, audio recordings, and texts-is essential for languages at risk of extinction. This strategy ensures that the linguistic and cultural knowledge of a people is preserved even if the language falls out of daily use. Himmelmann (1998) identifies documentation as a “recording of linguistic practices” necessary for future revival efforts. The Endangered Languages Project (2023) and similar initiatives contribute to global preservation by archiving vulnerable languages online.

(c) Community-Based Language Revitalization Programs

Local community involvement is crucial in sustaining language revitalization. Grassroots efforts such as language nests (e.g., Māori and Hawaiian), adult immersion classes, and intergenerational transmission projects foster natural language acquisition. Fishman (1991) highlights that communities, not institutions, are the key actors in reversing language shift, especially through family and home-based transmission.

(d) Legal and Policy Recognition

Official recognition of indigenous languages in national constitutions, education policies, and public administration raises their prestige and usage. Countries like Bolivia and South Africa have granted official status to multiple indigenous languages. Skutnabb-Kangas&Phillipson(2017) argue that linguistic human rights must be protected by law to empower speakers of minority languages.

(f) Media and Technology Engagement

Incorporating indigenous languages into radio, television, film, mobile apps, and social media platforms increases their relevance, especially among youth. Túbòsún (2023) advocates for developing digital tools—such as keyboards, translation software, and content platforms—in

African languages to revitalize them in modern spaces. Projects like Wikipedia in indigenous languages and YouTube channels for oral storytelling are innovative examples.

(g) Corpus Development and Language Standardization

Developing standardized orthographies, writing systems, and vocabulary lists enhances the functionality of indigenous languages for education and publication. Standardization, while complex, enables broader use of the language in formal settings. Bamgbose (2011) calls for harmonization of dialects and creation of reference materials to aid literacy and pedagogy.

(h) Cultural and Artistic Integration

Promoting indigenous languages through festivals, theatre, literature, music, and poetry helps maintain their use in informal and artistic domains. According to Finnegan (2012), oral literature is both a form of cultural expression and a strategy for language continuity. Cultural performances in native languages foster pride and audience engagement, especially in multilingual societies.

(i) Capacity Building and Teacher Training

Training teachers fluent in indigenous languages and developing educational materials are vital for

sustainable language instruction. Without competent instructors and resources, efforts to introduce native languages into classrooms may fail. UNESCO (2022) stresses the importance of teacher education programs that include linguistic and pedagogical training in indigenous languages.

(j) Economic and Social Incentives

Creating economic opportunities tied to indigenous language use—such as publishing, tourism, or translation services—can boost their perceived value. Skutnabb-Kangas&Phillipson (2017) suggest that if language use leads to economic mobility, speakers are more likely to invest in preserving their heritage.

(k) Intergenerational and Family Language Practices

Families play a pivotal role in language survival. Encouraging parents and elders to speak indigenous languages at home fosters early acquisition. Fishman (1991) underscores that revitalization begins in the home, with informal, daily language use being more influential than formal instruction.

The survival and revival of indigenous languages depend on integrated strategies involving education, documentation, community participation, media, and supportive policies. Language revitalization is not a one-size-fits-all process; rather, it must be

tailored to the sociolinguistic realities of each community. As UNESCO (2022) affirms, preserving linguistic diversity is essential not just for cultural heritage but for human rights and sustainable development.

Recommendations and Revitalization Strategies

To preserve indigenous languages and, by extension, cultural heritage, the following strategies are recommended:

Policy Enforcement: Governments must implement and monitor mother-tongue instruction policies in basic education.

Digital Inclusion: Software developers, linguists, and cultural activists should collaborate to develop mobile applications, dictionaries, and language learning platforms in indigenous languages.

Media Engagement: Indigenous languages should be promoted in broadcasting, film, and literature. Public campaigns in native languages can raise awareness of cultural pride.

Community Involvement: Language preservation should be a grassroots effort. Communities can hold cultural festivals, storytelling nights, and local competitions in their languages.

Research and Documentation: Universities and linguistic institutions should prioritize research on endangered languages and develop orthographies, grammars, and textbooks.

Conclusion

In summary, indigenous languages are indispensable to cultural heritage. They sustain identity, preserve oral traditions, encode traditional knowledge, and ensure cultural continuity. Their loss equates to the loss of entire cultural systems. Hence, language revitalization efforts - both policy-driven and community-based - are essential for safeguarding humanity's diverse cultural wealth (UNESCO, 2022; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2017; Túbòsún, 2023).

The survival of indigenous languages is threatened by a combination of historical injustices, globalization pressures, weak policy implementation, and negative social perceptions. Without deliberate, sustained efforts in revitalization, documentation, and community empowerment, many of these languages face extinction within the 21st century. However, with inclusive language policies, digital innovation, community involvement, and positive attitudinal change, indigenous languages can be preserved and revitalized for future generations.

Indigenous languages in Nigeria are far more than means of everyday communication—they are dynamic repositories of the nation’s diverse cultural identities, traditional knowledge systems, spiritual worldviews, and social norms. As Nigeria is home to over 500 indigenous languages (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2023), each language reflects a unique worldview and contributes richly to the mosaic of Nigerian cultural heritage. From oral traditions, folklore, and music to rituals, indigenous science, and moral values, the use of indigenous languages remains central to the survival of these cultural practices.

However, despite their intrinsic value, many Nigerian indigenous languages are endangered due to globalization, lack of institutional support, urban migration, negative language attitudes, and the dominance of English in education and governance. As a result, younger generations are increasingly disconnected from their linguistic roots, leading to a gradual erosion of cultural identity and continuity.

To counter this, revitalizing and promoting indigenous languages must be a national priority. Integrating mother-tongue instruction in early education, supporting media content in local languages, documenting endangered languages, and empowering communities through language rights are essential steps toward sustainable cultural preservation. As scholars like Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2017) and organizations like UNESCO

(2022) have emphasized, safeguarding indigenous languages is not only a linguistic imperative but also a cultural and human rights responsibility.

In the Nigerian context, indigenous languages should be seen as strategic tools for decolonizing education, promoting national unity through cultural diversity, and preserving the intangible cultural heritage of future generations. Without urgent and coordinated action, Nigeria risks losing not just its languages, but also the values, wisdom, and identities they encode. Therefore, protecting indigenous languages is, in essence, protecting Nigeria's soul.

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**NARRATIVES OF THE IGBO WOMEN OF
NIGERIA: SOCIAL INTERACTIONS
ENCOUNTERED THROUGH AFRICAN
WAX-PRINTED TEXTILES DURING THE
20thCENTURY**

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Abstract

This research explores the dynamic interplay between Igbo women of Nigeria and African wax-printed textiles during the 20th century, focusing on the social narratives and interactions embodied through these vibrant fabrics which have not been given adequate attention by Igbo scholars. African wax prints served not only as decorative attire but also as potent symbols of identity, status, and communication within Igbo communities. This is a qualitative research. Through interviews, oral histories, participant observation, archival materials, and visual analysis, this study examines how women used textiles to express personal and collective narratives, negotiate social roles, and assert agency in both private and public spheres. The research finds out the multifaceted meanings embedded in patterns, colours, and motifs, which

facilitated nuanced social exchanges and reinforced communal bonds. By centering the lived experiences of Igbo women, the research also reveals how textiles functioned as active agents in shaping cultural memory, social hierarchies, and gender relations in 20th-century Nigeria. In conclusion, they were highly revered by the women in that era, and still cherished till date, therefore the messages and untold stories of the cloth should be sufficiently relayed so as to teach and enlighten the younger ones who might be ignorant of those exciting stories.

Keywords: Igbo, African-wax printed textiles, textile designs, Dutch-wax prints, Igbo women

Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, African wax-printed textiles emerged as influential mediums of expression, communication, and identity among the Igbo women of Nigeria. The Igbo people are primarily found in the Southeastern region of Nigeria. Their homeland, often referred to as Igbo land or Ala Igbo, covers several states and is characterized by a dense population, rich culture, and a history of vibrant commerce and craftsmanship. Main states where the Igbo are found: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. These five states are considered the core Igbo states.

There are significant Igbo populations in other states: Delta State (especially in the Anioma region

or rather Delta North), Rivers State (notably in the Ikwerre, Ogba, Diobu, Por Harcourt, Egbema and Ndoni areas), Benue State (Three Local Government Areas in total), Cross River State (in Western parts), Bayelsa State (in some few communities). African wax-printed fabrics are coloured with vibrancy, distinguished by their intricate, bold motifs and textured background, bright colour schemes, and symbolic patterns, transcended their utilitarian purpose to become essential elements in the social, cultural, and economic tapestry of Igbo life. These fabrics were incorporated into daily life, ceremonies, and resistance movements, becoming instruments for storytelling, status marking, negotiation of gender roles, and community cohesion. As brides, mothers, market women, and leaders, Igbo women harnessed the communicative power of textiles to articulate aspirations, maintain kinship ties, and assert their presence in public and private spheres. The patterns and colours chosen were rarely arbitrary; rather, they functioned as visual languages, conveying messages about taste, choice, status, and personal milestones.

Moreover, the commerce surrounding wax prints fostered intricate networks of female entrepreneurship and solidarity. Women's organizations, market alliances, and transnational exchanges contributed to a vibrant textile economy that both reflected and shaped shifting gender dynamics. Through oral histories, archival records,

and material culture analysis, this paper traces the ways in which Igbo women's engagement with African wax-printed textiles facilitated social interactions—enabling them to navigate the pressures of tradition, modernity, and external influence with resilience and creativity.

By centering the narratives of Igbo women, this study illuminates the enduring significance of African wax-printed textiles as more than decorative garments. They are storied objects - repositories of memory, agency, and communal identity - whose histories reveal the intricacies of social life in 20th-century southeastern Nigeria.

Igbo women are known for tying two sets of wrappers especially for meeting attendance from their waists to the ankle with a matching lace blouse or the same blouse made with the wrapper print. This dress was found to be common amongst the married females in Igbo communities. Before the 21st century, the women never joked with their cloths which they wrap about their bodies for casual and ceremonial wears. But of recent they are used to construct different styles of apparels. Eve de Negri (1976:61) noted that for some chieftaincy ceremonies in Igbo land for women, two fine white cotton cloths are wrapped about the body, one over the other. Also chudi-Duru (2017) affirmed that often for core Igbo traditional ceremonies the locally hand woven fabric called Akwete is used; this showcases interwoven geometric patterns on

the background. During 20th century, many women procured Akwete hand woven fabrics as their staple clothing but as African wax-printed fabrics which were introduced to Africa in the 18th century grew more popular they shifted their attention to them and other imported fabrics such as George fabrics, laces and other factory woven and printed fabrics.

African wax-prints were found to be used as casual wears by both genders, uniforms for women dance groups, uniforms for burial ceremonies, uniforms for wedding ceremonies and uniforms for women during the famous August meetings because of its popularity, any number of yards wanted could be bought from the market. Names given to these fabrics are not all proverbial rather majority of them are named after objects found in the living areas, recent happenings in the society, popular songs, popular catchy slangs, religious objects, masks, and funny slangs. They can also be named after and inspired by personalities, cities, building, sayings, occasions, or well-known individuals. They are worn by the Igbo either for regular occasions, formal, or special occasions. This paper investigates the multifaceted narratives woven through the experiences of Igbo women as they navigated the evolving landscapes of colonialism, post-independence transformations, and globalization, with African wax prints serving as both canvas and catalyst for social interaction.

This study answers the questions on why are the Igbo women strongly attracted and emotionally attached to Dutch-wax Hollandaise, how they derive some satisfactions when they wear them, whether they are valued and if so, to what extent? Are their names suggestive of their designs? What are their meanings? When are they worn?

Problem of the Study

Despite the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people and the central role that African wax-printed textiles have played in their society in terms of clothing, furnishing and fashion designs, there is a notable gap in scholarly research examining how these textiles have mediated and reflected the social interactions of Igbo women during the 20th century. This study has observed that most of the existing literature focuses on the economic, aesthetic, or historical aspects of textiles in West Africa, and its utilization in fashion often overlooking the personal stories, communal relationships, and gendered experiences embedded in their use and exchange. The social media has also recorded numerous styles worn by people to showcase its designs. This lack of comprehensive narrative analysis limits our understanding of how Igbo women have utilized wax-printed textiles as tools for communication, identity formation, and social negotiation within a rapidly changing socio-political landscape. Addressing this gap is essential for appreciating the various ways in which material culture intersects with gender and social dynamics in Igbo society.

Research Questions

1. In what ways do Igbo women groups utilize African wax-printed fabrics?
2. Why are the Igbo women attached to these fabrics?
3. Why do most women of the 20th century value the gift of Hollandaise fabrics?
4. Why do some women work hard to procure some pieces of African-wax prints?
5. What are some emotional attachments to these African-wax prints by the Igbo women?

Theoretical framework

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that focuses on how individuals interpret and give meaning to symbols, objects, and interactions in their everyday lives. It emphasizes the subjective meanings and the social processes through which people create shared realities. Propounded by George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) and further developed by Herbert Blumer (1900–1987). This theory helps to analyze how Igbo women use textiles as symbols to communicate identity, status, and social messages within their communities.

Feminist Theory (African Feminism/Womanism)

Feminist theory explores the social roles, experiences, and representations of women, advocating for gender equality. African feminism

(or womanism) specifically addresses the unique historical, cultural, and social realities of African women, often emphasizing community, motherhood, and resistance against both patriarchy and colonialism propounded by Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Betty Friedan (1963) - Western feminism. Date: Mid-20th century (Western feminism). African feminism/womanism was propounded by Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi (coined "womanism" in 1985), Obioma Nnaemeka (1990s). Date: 1980s–1990s (African feminism/womanism). This framework was used for interpreting the narratives of Igbo women, particularly how they negotiate gender roles and assert their identities through textile practices.

Material Culture Theory

Material culture theory examines the relationship between people and their physical objects, exploring how artifacts (such as textiles) embody cultural values, social relationships, and historical contexts. Propounded by Jules Prown (pioneered approaches in the 1980s) and Daniel Miller (1990s). It was used to describe African wax-printed textiles as cultural texts that carry stories, traditions, and social meanings among Igbo women. These theories provide frameworks for analyzing how Igbo women's narratives and social interactions are mediated through African wax-printed textiles in the 20th century.

Literature Review

African-wax printed textiles

African wax-printed textiles often referred to simply as "wax prints," have a fascinating history. Originating from a blend of Indonesian batik techniques and European industrial production, these textiles were introduced to West Africa in the 19th century by Dutch and English traders (Perani & Wolff, 1999). The Igbo people quickly adopted these textiles, integrating them into their cultural practices and social systems. By the 20th century, wax prints had become a ubiquitous feature of Igbo life, symbolizing various aspects of identity, social status, and cultural heritage. Archer gave a detailed story of how this fabric was birthed and how it made its way to Africa. The story goes thus, in the small Dutch city of Helmond, where, in 1846, industrialist Pieter Fentener van Vlissingen purchased a textile factory with the goal of selling upholstery fabric, bedspreads, and handkerchiefs abroad. Van Vlissingen began creating imitation batik fabric based on designs from Indonesia — then known as the Dutch East Indies — with the goal of capitalizing on new roller printing technology that could affect the look of batik without all the labor intensive work required to make the real thing. Batik originated in China and India in the 8th century, and it was refined in 13th-century Indonesia with the development of a new tool for applying hot wax to fabric known as *tjanting*. When Dutch imitators such as van Vlissingen entered the

business, Indonesians noticed small flaws in their fabrics — namely a “crackle” effect, the result of small veins of pigment leaking through the wax resist — and the Dutch East Indies even went so far as to ban their sale in the 19th century. But other areas of the Dutch empire provided a ready, if unexpected, marketplace. Vlisco fabrics became a popular item in a different part of the Dutch colonial ecosystem, starting in Ghana, which was then called the Gold Coast. Between 1855 and 1872, approximately 3,000 Ghanaian soldiers served in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. They returned home, as servicemen often do, with a taste for items they encountered abroad. As the story continues by Archer(), the soldiers had learned to appreciate the look of genuine batik but didn’t mind the crackle of the van Vlissingen version, so they purchased bolts of it for their female relatives back in Ghana. By the turn of the century, despite the ceding of the colony to the United Kingdom, the sale of Dutch-made faux batik in the Gold Coast was robust. By the 1930s, it was being adapted to suit Ghanaian tastes, not by accident, but by design. The trend was so popular that several companies based in England, France, and Switzerland began producing faux batik fabrics in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Van Vlissingen responded by consolidating its grip on the marketplace and buying up several smaller concerns. Thus, a fabric produced in Europe with Asia in mind never quite hit the mark in its intended marketplace, but found an enthusiastic audience at the opposite end of the

empire. In 1927, the company adopted the more modern name of Vlisco. Terms such as “Dutch Wax,” “Veritable Dutch Hollandais,” and “Wax Hollandais” were also commonly used for Vlisco fabrics, but branding became more important when World War II temporarily halted production in the Netherlands. Imitators sprang into action, producing knockoffs for the West African market. In the years following the war, purveyors of Vlisco fabrics became increasingly concerned with authenticity and protecting their business from the ersatz textiles and since 1963, they have been stamped with the phrase “Guaranteed Dutch Wax Vlisco” on every selvage, making proof of authenticity an important aspect of the product’s allure.

Dutch wax Hollandaise (African wax prints) otherwise known as *Abada* by the Igbo of South eastern Nigeria are worn in almost every part of West Africa. They have gained so much popularity that they are being utilized in global fashion. Domowitz (1992) noted that in some parts of Africa they are named after proverbs, for instance the Anyi of eastern Cote d’ Ivoire, use them as public voices, a risk-free way to communicate. In Nigeria today, they are utilized to construct some clothing for different purposes in the contemporary fashion scene. And this practice has added much status and created awareness to these fabrics. However, the Igbo women venerate these fabrics. To the extent that most of them acquire some pieces, in order to show off some degree of affluence and

class. The main focus of this paper is the emotional attachment of these women to these fabrics based on their designs, names, social interaction and experiences which have not been sufficiently told and documented by scholars.



FigureI: a group of Igbo women in a cultural dance performance, tying a wax- print named 'Santana' as their uniform.
Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2004)

Cultural Significance of wax-prints

The cultural significance of wax prints among Igbo women cannot be overstated. Each design and pattern carries specific meanings, often tied to proverbs, historical events, and societal norms. For example, certain patterns are traditionally worn during specific ceremonies, such as weddings or funerals, to convey messages about the wearer's status, role, or emotional state (Eicher, 1976). These textiles serve as non-verbal communicative tools, enabling women to express their identities and convey complex social messages. Patterns such as "Angelina" and "ABC" have become iconic, each carrying its own set of meanings and associations.

The "Angelina" pattern, for instance, is often associated with celebration and joy, making it a popular choice for festive occasions. Meanwhile, the "ABC" pattern, with its alphabet motif, symbolizes education and intellectual aspiration, reflecting the values of knowledge and progress within the community (Sylvanus, 2016).

The trade of wax-printed textiles has been a significant source of economic empowerment for Igbo women. Throughout the 20th century, these textiles were not only used locally but also became part of extensive trade networks that spanned across West Africa and beyond. Igbo women, known for their entrepreneurial spirit, played crucial roles as traders and distributors of these textiles, establishing themselves as key economic actors within their communities (Barnes, 2002).

Markets such as the famous *ogbo abada* (Chudi-Duru, 2017) and Aba market became central hubs for the trading of wax prints, where women negotiated prices, formed alliances, and established trade routes. This commercial activity provided them with financial independence and the ability to support their families and invest in community projects. The success of Igbo women in the textile trade exemplifies their resilience and adaptability in navigating the socio-economic challenges of the 20th century (Ogunleye, 2014). The social interactions facilitated by wax prints extend beyond economic transactions. These textiles play a pivotal

role in social gatherings, ceremonies, and rites of passage. In Igbo society, the choice of textile patterns and the manner of their display are critical in defining individual and collective identities. For instance, during weddings, brides often wear specific patterns that signify fertility and prosperity, while during funerals, mourners might wear patterns that honor the deceased's life and legacy (Picton, 1995). Furthermore, the act of gifting wax prints during significant life events, such as births, marriages, and deaths, reinforces social bonds and communal ties. These textiles are often passed down through generations, becoming heirlooms that carry the stories and histories of families and communities. This practice underscores the role of wax prints as vessels of cultural memory and identity.

Adaptation to Socio-Political Changes

The 20th century was a period of immense socio-political change in Nigeria, marked by the end of colonial rule and the subsequent struggles of a new nation. Igbo women adapted to these changes by leveraging their skills in textile production and trade. The patterns and motifs of wax prints evolved to reflect contemporary issues and events, from colonial resistance to post-independence nationalism (Schildkrout & Keim, 1998). During the Biafran War (1967-1970), for instance, wax prints with patterns symbolizing peace and resilience became popular, reflecting the

community's aspirations and struggles. This adaptability of wax prints highlights the dynamic nature of Igbo culture and the agency of women in responding to and shaping socio-political discourses.



Figure 2: an Igbo women dance group found in Ogidu town, decked in an African wax printed wrapper named 'ocheze' (the king's stool) Photo credit: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

Methodology

This is qualitative research. The study area was randomly selected from the core Igbo states (Imo, Anambra, Abia, Enugu, and Ebonyi). Participant observation, one on one physical interviews and photographs were used as research instruments to collect some data. Consents were provided by some interviewees in various Igbo communities.

Findings, Results and Discussions

Result 1 from research question 1

1. In what ways do Igbo women groups utilize African wax-printed fabrics?

Most women groups always want to look the same during their outings as revealed by Mrs. Bernadine Mbelu (interviewee). When a group of women in a meeting desire to change their uniform wrapper; this is usually discussed in their monthly meetings. A name of a popular wrapper will be suggested by many of them to choose from. Usually done some months to the date they will wear the uniform. After agreeing on a particular one, a vendor is contacted that will supply to the whole women. They pay the required amount of money to the treasurer. They purchase from one vendor for uniformity. The women meeting usually change to a new uniform when they want to launch a new uniform, a new dance or a building project and other projects which they might get involved in as a support to their upgrading their communities. These uniforms are worn during festivities in their various communities by the meeting members which are only women in most cases.



Figure 3: a group of Igbo women tying a wax- print as their uniform for an outing. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

Result 2 from research question 2

2. Why are the Igbo women attached to these fabrics?

This study found out that these women usually store these printed fabrics in trunk boxes which are well secured in their homes. It should be noted that, on the demise of a mother, they are acquired or shared by the daughter or daughters of the deceased after the mourning period. It is also believed that they could be resold in case one faces difficult times; hence they possess second hand value. There are many Dutch wax printed fabrics utilized by Africans but this study concentrated on the ones termed as “*Igbo Hollandaise*”. The researcher found out that these Igbo hollandaise designs are peculiar to women, some of their names are in Igbo language with symbolic meanings and some of their names are derived from the designs on the fabrics while some of the names do not have any relationship with their designs rather with the happenings in the society. Thus they are highly valued by them and most of the women have their experiences with these fabrics.

The usefulness of African wax printed fabrics cannot be ignored especially in Igbo societies today. These resin printed, hundred percent cotton fabric with vibrant and vivid patterns are known by their bright and radiant colours, patterns, designs and motifs which are purely symbolic, based on their world views, every day happenings, beliefs, politics,

traditions and customs and so on. They are industrially produced with batik printing and there is no difference in the colour intensity of front and back sides of the fabrics and the colours are fast. This could be the reason why the Igbo women believe that these fabrics lives are eternal because they do not bring out any colour when washed. Even at that a woman Mrs Uchegbu revealed that abada is not washed any how or kept anyhow. In fact she said that to use it and construct a skirt and blouse is to render it useless, the best style for abada is tying it as wrappers around the body with a blouse to match. Although these fabrics are produced in Netherlands, the West Africans utilize them quite often to showcase their rich cultural heritage from being uniforms to a day to day wear to ceremonial clothing more than their producers.



Figure 4: a group of Igbo women in a cultural dance performance, wearing a wax- print named 'ocheze' as their uniform. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

These designs are very much alive in Africa where traders and consumers give them various names for proper identification. They are identified by their names, although they have numbers given to each by *Visco* Company thus, they are usually identified

by the indigenous names given to them by the people that make use of them (Vlisco 2013). They are used as methods of communication and identification among the people. They also serve as sources of inspiration for fashion designers, who are always on the lookout for newer designs that could be used for clothing construction in the contemporary fashion world. Specifically, these fabric designs connote distinctive meanings to the Igbo women such as historical, educational, archeological, anthropological, social, economic, aesthetics and other uses.

These textiles have been conserved, protected and displayed by *Vlisco* as their designs, on the contrary, in Igbo land they are appreciated and mostly found in some of the women's' private collections because of their emotional attachment to these designed fabrics. According to Mrs Uchegbu (interviewee), a wrapper passed from a mother to a daughter is always cherished. It serves as a reminder of a bond that exist between a mother and a daughter. It also brings nostalgic feelings.

She mentioned that in Igbo culture, the act of passing fabrics from mother to daughter as a parting gift is a moment steeped in emotion, symbolism, and tradition. This exchange, often occurring during significant life transitions such as death, marriage, migration, or coming-of-age ceremonies, transcends the mere gifting of material items.

Instead, it represents a profound transfer of heritage, values, and familial bonds.

She further disclosed that African wax prints with distinctive patterns and vibrant colours are not arbitrary. Each piece may carry a story for instance, a cloth worn at the mother's own wedding, one gifted by a grandmother, or a fabric that symbolizes a particular hope or blessing. Through these textiles, mothers impart lessons of resilience, beauty, and identity. The motifs and colours can encode messages about womanhood, aspirations, and the expectations of family and community.

According to Mrs. Ejike (interviewee) receiving such a gift, the daughter becomes a custodian of family memory and cultural continuity. She is entrusted not only with the physical fabrics but with the intangible legacies woven into their threads. The act of wrapping herself in these clothes serves as a tangible reminder of her lineage, providing comfort and connection even in the absence of her mother. As she wears or displays the fabrics, she participates in a living tradition, affirming her role within the family and the broader Igbo community. Ultimately she mentioned that, the passing of fabrics is an act of love and faith. It is a mother's way of ensuring that her daughter carries a piece of home, history, and maternal embrace into the next chapter of her life. In the context of 20th-century Igbo society, where women navigated shifting social landscapes, these textiles offered a source of strength and

continuity, anchoring them to their roots while empowering them to forge their own paths.



Figure 5: a group of Igbo women in a meeting of married women, tying a wax-print named ‘*ladder*’ as their uniform. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

African wax prints hold sentimental value as they often mark important moments - weddings, festivals, rites of passage, and even periods of mourning. The vivid patterns and colours evoke memories, while the tactile quality of the fabric provides comfort and familiarity. Over time, certain prints become synonymous with specific family lineages or notable events, further reinforcing the emotional connection (Mrs. Nwaohiri, interviewee).

She further mentioned that this attachment is also nurtured by the social interactions surrounding the acquisition and gifting of textiles. Markets, where these fabrics are bought and sold, serve as hubs of conversation, negotiation, and storytelling. The act of gifting or inheriting wax prints strengthens bonds between women, creating a tapestry of relationships interwoven with shared traditions and values.

This study found out that African wax-printed fabrics serve as a living archive for Igbo women - a

canvas for personal milestones and collective memory. Their enduring attachment to these textiles reflects a profound respect for heritage and a desire to preserve the threads of identity that connect one generation to the next.

Result 3 from research question 3

3. Why do most women of the 20th century value the gift of Hollandaise fabrics?

The use of African wax prints as gifts to a wife holds significant cultural and emotional meaning in Igbo society. Presenting these textiles is more than a gesture of affection; it is an affirmation of the marital bond and recognition of a woman's place in the household and community. Husbands often choose wax prints with patterns or motifs that convey specific messages ranging from admiration to hopes for prosperity and harmony in the marriage. Receiving wax prints as gifts is a source of pride and joy for many Igbo women. The fabrics are frequently showcased during important social events, allowing the wife to display her husband's appreciation and generosity. In some cases, the gifting of textiles marks milestones such as anniversaries, childbirth, or the achievement of a significant family goal, further strengthening the couple's connection.

Beyond the personal relationship, the exchange of wax prints is embedded in broader social customs. Family members and friends may witness or

participate in the gifting process, making it a public acknowledgment of the marital relationship. This tradition also reinforces communal values of care, respect, and unity within marriage (Mr. I Nwankwo, Mr. Nonso, Mr. D. Onwujiuba - interviewees). Ultimately, giving African wax prints as gifts to a wife is both a celebration of love and a means of weaving new stories into the fabric of family life. The textiles become treasured possessions, imbued with the memories and meanings of shared experiences, and passed down as symbols of enduring partnership and affection.



Figure 6: a group of Igbo women in a function, tying a wax- print named 'ruler' as their uniform. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

According to Mrs Margaret Ejike (interviewee) Some Igbo women, especially in the mid-to-late twentieth century, experienced a sense of disdain and discomfort when they could not afford Dutch wax Hollandaise wrappers for important social functions. In many Igbo communities, the quality and vibrancy of a woman's wrapper were not merely a matter of personal taste they served as powerful symbols of status, wealth, and belonging. Dutch wax prints, particularly the

highly prized Hollandaise brand, signified modernity, cosmopolitanism, and economic success. When invited to weddings, funerals, or other significant gatherings, women who wore less expensive, locally produced, or faded wrappers often felt self-conscious and alienated. The bright and intricately patterned Hollandaise wrappers worn by wealthier women seemed to shimmer with prestige, reinforcing social hierarchies and sometimes provoking subtle or not-so-subtle exclusion. This could manifest in the way hosts or other guests acknowledged them (or failed to), the seating arrangements, or the way conversations flowed. For some, this disparity fostered resentment or quiet bitterness, as the inability to purchase such wrappers was a visible reminder of their limited means. At the same time, it could also lead to a form of silent resistance, with some women choosing to wear their less expensive wrappers with pride, attempting to assert that dignity and community participation were not solely defined by imported textiles. Nevertheless, the association of Dutch wax Hollandaise wrappers with prestige and social capital meant that many women continued to aspire to own them, sometimes saving for months or years to afford even a single piece for the next important occasion.

There are some African wax printed fabrics which are known to be Igbo hollandaise because they are utilized quite often by the Igbo women, named by Igbo cloth traders and they bear indigenous names

based on their designs and Igbo world view. Even in the markets, the researcher found out that the Igbo Hollandaise are kept separately. Through their designs they have been used to acquire insight into the social, religious, political and economic complexities of Igbo communities and beyond whose cultures people may otherwise remain ignorant about. These fabrics play important roles in the lives and ceremonies of Igbo communities. A woman was respected judging by the voluminous number of Dutch wax hollandaise fabrics acquired in the past and present years in Igbo land. These African wax printed fabric designs have had and still have a remarkable significance as a means of communication, information and mutual association in Igbo communities.

They are also used for covering the body against cold and others that might be dangerous to the body but most important of all they are used for personal body adornment. The fabrics usually come in six yards. Two sets of wrappers are cut out of the six yards in two and a quarter inches as the measurement for each. The remaining could be used to construct the blouse. Or much still the six yards could also be sewn in to a skirt and a blouse or a wrapper and a blouse to match. They have colourful, bold and attractive designs.



Figure 7: a group of Igbo women in a function, wearing a wax- print named 'sugar-cane' as their uniform. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

There is spiritual and historical significance in the symbols, colours, designs and names given to these fabrics which are mostly related to events in Igbo land, Nigeria, Africa and the world at large, Igbo historical proverbs and idioms, popular slangs, world leaders, house hold items, symbol of Christianity, well-known music, popular fashionable item, recent happenings in Igbo land, Nigeria, the world at large and Igbo world view.



Figure 8: a group of Igbo women in a function, wearing a wax- print as their uniform. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

Result 4 from research question 4

4. Why do some women work hard to procure some pieces of African-wax prints?

Some motif designs tell stories based on Igbo traditional culture taking the place of written words to convey some messages to the onlooker, admirer and the society at large. Some of the names given to these fabrics are not to insult a co-wife or neighbour, neither is it a complaint to her husband or console a bereaved neighbour rather their names serve as an attraction to the women folk who patronises these merchants always and also serve as a kind of competition among the women. They compete among themselves on the names of wrappers they have acquired and the ones they've not. Some set it as goals that need to be achieved. If there's any woman doesn't have a new design, she works hard to acquire it. Some of the women go the extent of depositing small amounts to the seller until the proper amount is completed, some will also look for ways to make their husbands happy until he buys new hollandaise wrappers for them. Some might also go into borrowing some money to acquire some pieces to show off in public places with the belief that they will command a lot of respect while wearing those fabrics. While some go into credit buying to pay later. They engage in this because they wouldn't want to be known as that woman that cannot buy a single hollandaise wrapper. According to some observations by the researcher, some of these practices usually get them into trouble

especially when they could not keep to the agreement reached with the seller.

During the period of political campaigns, these fabrics are used for social and political activities or as uniforms, for commemorative purposes in political rallies, traditional ceremonies like weddings, child naming, funerals, birthdays, fashion shows, burials, group meetings and associations, women's home and abroad meetings in their native hometowns, religious group meeting uniforms, family uniforms for chieftaincy or title taking and so many others.

Women's home and abroad meetings are held every August in all parts of Igbo land. It is usually in three stages firstly the meeting starts in the church, then it is held in the wider community and then in the kindred. It is a one week affair that ends with a thanksgiving in the church on Sunday of **that** week. In this meeting, several issues pertaining how the church and the society will make progress. They also discuss the wellbeing of the members and set some goals that will be achieved by the women in the church and the society at large. Some dues and payments are attached to it. They attend this meeting wearing their various uniforms- which are African wax printed fabrics.

Before a general uniform was adopted, women were tying hollandaise wrappers to the meetings. Lady Uchegbu (interviewee) reported that some women used this avenue for competition amongst

themselves. Some of the women are not quite happy with themselves and their loved ones for not buying these wrappers for them. This led some that could not afford them to vehemently refuse to attend those meetings to avoid ridicules. Some women also save for some months (depending on their income) to enable them acquire a piece to be used for August meeting. The person that will keep on trying different designs of hollandaise throughout the days of the meeting without tying a cheaper African printed fabric, was seen as a rich woman or a woman with a rich husband. These acts made the church uncomfortable to the extent that some church leaders introduced one uniform with a plain cheap white polyester blouse for all the meetings in the church while in the village/kindred meetings, a particular uniform of an African wax print was chosen. The ones chosen were usually the ones that have names. It could be hollandaise or a cheaper wax print provided they bear the same design. This brought an end to these problems that arose from the acquisition and usage of Dutch wax-printed fabrics by the Igbo women. The researcher observed in some women meetings she attended that some of them fold the selvedge (the type of fabric is usually written on its selvedge) of those cheaper wax-printed fabrics so as to deceive the onlooker not to know whether it is hollandaise wrapper or not because of the belief that cheaper wax are not for the rich.



Figure 9: a group of Igbo women in a function, tying a wax- print as their uniform. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

Result 5 from research question 5

5. What are some emotional attachments to these African-wax prints by the Igbo women?

During the 20th century, most Igbo women wore these prints inform of two wrappers and a blouse for almost every occasion. The women wore these wrappers to also stay at home to take care of their new born babies and other children. During this time, the babies or children sometimes mistakenly urinate or defecate on their mothers' clothing while babysitting them. Thus, according to Chief (Mrs.) Osuagwu (interviewee) it is most women's dreams that when the children grow up and start earning an income, they will replace those wrappers that were destroyed with urine or faeces. In case of a girl, when she is getting married the suitor replaces those wrappers and also from time to time, she keeps on buying those wrappers as gifts to the mother to make her happy. African wax prints were bought as gifts for the brides and their mothers as part of marriage rites. That is Dutch wax hollandaise

wrappers were among the items listed on the marriage list to be bought by the husband to be for his mother- in- law. The suitor is expected to buy the number of African wax prints written on the list. These will be displayed on the day the bride price is being paid so that her (bride's mother) fellow women will see and know that her in-law is wealthy and has shown some level of appreciation. If he does not provide Dutch wax wrappers among other items, though the cheaper ones will be accepted with mixed feelings, he will be told that these wrappers did not meet up with the customary expectation. He will also be asked to go and come back with the wrappers that have quality or pay some money which is equivalent to the ones actually expected from him.

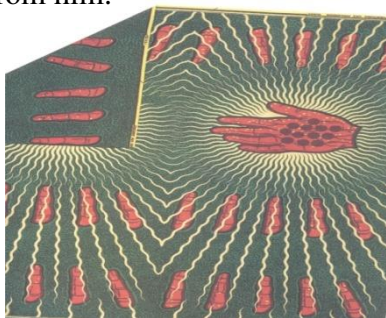


Figure10- This is known as Hand. In Igbo land it is known as “*igbaraka bia ilu m*” which means did you come empty handed to marry me? There was a time it was among the items listed to buy for the groom as part of the marriage requirements. **Source:**Vlisco since 1846



Figure 11: the name is *aka na-
agbashelltox*, which literally
means the hand that sprays
shelltox. Due to the reason of the
fact that in the south-eastern part of
Nigeria and in Nigeria as a whole,
mosquito bites are rampant,
and the foremost insecticide
utilized by people to kill
mosquitoes was shelltox. Source:
Chika Chudi-Duru (2023).

This study found out that during the twentieth century, a husband usually gifts the wife some Dutch wax fabrics to congratulate her, quite unlike now, the researcher observes that most women expect nothing less than a car as a push gift. It made news during that time that a husband bought many designs of Dutch wax prints for his wife that gave birth. When a woman gives birth, in Igbo custom, it is expected that when the mother comes to visit her to help in taking care of her and the new born child. It is expected that when the visit is over, she must be showered with some gifts to go home with. This usually lasts for a period of 3 months after which she goes home with some Dutch wax wrappers and other valuables including some foodstuffs. This is to show some appreciation from the daughter and her son-in-law. This visitation is known as “*omugwo*”. When she reaches her home, other women come to welcome her. During which she shows off the gifts bought by her daughter and her son-in-law. It is a thing of pride to show off *omugwo* gifts to her

fellow women who also do the same when it's their turn for *omugwo*. It is from this show of quality gifts and her appearance they will be able to ascertain if she was well looked after by her in-law or not. She also shares some of those gifts to her friends that came visiting, a times she also gives out some wrappers of lower quality to visitors.

In the past, most women buy or acquire trunk boxes so that they could store their various African wax printed textiles. They attach so much value to them in that they are not worn or washed carelessly. They spread them under a shade when they have stayed in the boxes for a long period so that they will not start growing mould since they are made from natural fibres which are a hundred percent cotton. These fabrics in Igbo land have second hand value, they are sold by some women when they experience a kind of difficulty so as to enable them pay their children's school fees and also take care of their families. Mrs. Okoro narrated how she sold most of her Dutch wrappers when her business collapsed to further her son's education. She further mentioned that she was happy she took that step because it paid off after the son graduated from the higher institution. The acquisition of those wrappers to her is not just to show off but to solve some financial problems when the need arises. It is also believed by the Igbo that acquiring and storing some articles in form of Dutch wax hollandaise, helps to solve a lot of problems in times of difficulties.

The women usually tie them one on top of the other. At the past, anyone that sews a Dutch wax wrapper into a gown or skirt and blouse is seen as rendering the fabric useless because it is believed that this wrapper is not supposed to be cut into pieces but kept in two piece forms.

They are also used as gifts during marriage ceremonies and burials. They are used in decorating the deceased, the spouse, the children and some of the relatives. During the demise of an elderly woman that throughout her lifetime acquired many designs of Hollandaise, the children usually fix a date after her burial rites must have been completed and the memorial done after a year to share her wrappers amongst themselves, her daughters-in-law and if any of her sons desire to keep a piece of her belongings for a sort of remembrance. The researcher observed that in some families, some of the daughters are not patient enough, as they take the design they desire forcefully without the knowledge of their siblings. An Igbo woman recounted to the researcher how her step sister was busy picking her mums wrappers from where they were packed immediately she heard she has died and was lying cold in the morgue. That really angered the whole family.

In some Igbo culture, it is believed that the last born inherits the mother's box of wrappers, while some believe that the first daughter known as "*ada*" inherits it. But for the most of the Igbo, the woman's

wrappers and wealth should be shared equally amongst her children usually after her one year remembrance.

In the earlier days a woman lying in state is surrounded by the wrappers she had bought and used during her lifetime. During the course of this study, Ms. Ngozi narrated how her grandmother was decorated by surrounding her corpse with the wrappers she acquired and used while alive. This proved to people that she was hardworking and fashionable. Her casket was also decorated with some wrappers. She further mentioned that some of those wrappers were placed on her casket and buried along with her. And this showcases the love the Igbo woman places on Dutch wax- Hollandaise wrappers even in life after death.

These Dutch wax printed fabrics have additional value when stories are attached to them. Most of these fabric designs were named according to their designs on their surfaces while some do not portray the same meaning of the designs on them. Their names usually depend on some factors mentioned above. Mostly these fabrics are named probably to attract attention to them and also promote their sales. Once a new design is out it is given a catchy name that is irresistible. In that manner, the new one becomes a hot cake and a taste for the women. Once a particular design and the colour is chosen for a women's meeting, the name is mentioned, it is left for the women to use that name and look for it in the

market. In recent times some group of women usually set up a What Sapp group and they post the samples of wrappers they want their members to choose from regarding their uniform. When eventually the choice is made they use the picture to look for the particular wrapper in the market.

During this study, the researcher had an interaction with Hon. Mrs. Margaret Ejike (60years), the President General Agulọ People's Union (Women's wing) and a long time dealer on Dutch wax prints in Eke Awka (a big market in Awka, a town in Anambra State, Nigeria). She revealed that these printed fabrics are given names to attract more buyers. Once the traders notice that the fabric is not making any sales for them, they quickly look for a catchy name to promote the designs on it. The given name is either based on the design on it or any other thing that is not suggestive of the design. She further disclosed there are more than three hundred Dutch-wax fabrics utilized by the Igbo women which bear different names in English or Igbo languages. For instance, mgbọlọdị, kpọtuba, ocheze, nnunụ nọ na cage and many others. The samples found during this study and their narratives according to the Igbo women are placed below:



Figure 12: this design is known as Mgbòlòdì (water leaf). It is an essential staple in Igbo cuisine and daily life, representing nourishment, fertility, prosperity, and the sustenance of the family and community. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 13: this design is known as okoso, traditional spinning top or toy made locally available materials such as shells, plastic or gourds. it symbolizes of youth, the cyclical nature of life, adaptability, and the enduring thread of cultural heritage passed from one generation to the next. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

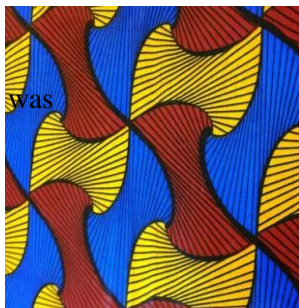


Figure 14: this design is known as Santana- a car that in vogue during the time the design was first seen in the market. Source: Chika Chudi Duru (2024).



Figure 15: this design is known as big fish. Big fish could also symbolize a wealthy person. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 16: this design is known as okeosisi. The design has endless stems and branches just like an iroko tree **okeosisi** (the great tree) embodies strength, protection, spiritual presence fertility, and the continuity of tradition. It is both a physical landmark and a profound symbol of community, ancestry, and the enduring values that hold Igbo society together. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 17 -It is called Agu na eche mba. this means the lion that guards the community or city. this design is called



Figure 18 – the name is Ezi na Ulo. Which means the family. This design is called a happy family. It showcases a farmyard family with a cock, hen, chicks and

Lion. This is the literal image of this design. The Igbo believe that the lion is a very strong animal that can challenge any being.

Source: Hommage A L'art.Vlisco (2013)

eggs.This connotes family values and instills the essential position of its wearer in the family.It shows the hen as a mother sorrouded by her chicks and her eggs.Only the head of the cock is seen that is why the story is told that it is always full of trouble.

Source: Hommage A L'art.Vlisco (2013)

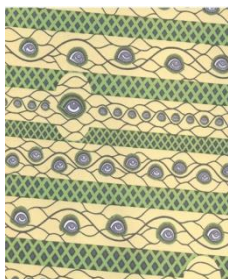


Figure 19- This design is known as “eyes”. In Igbo land, it is named *anya na ele uwa* meaning the eyes that looks upon the world. They believe there are some invisible powerful eyes (God’s eyes) that look upon the world. It is inspired by the drawing of eye. **Source:**

Hommage A L'art.Vlisco (2013).



Figure 20: this design is known as *mgbọlọdị* (wat leaf).A type of vegetable used for soups and sauces. **Source:** Chika Chudi-Duru (2024). Figure 12 is its variation.



Figure 21- This design is known as “opener” in Igbo land. They make

L’art.

use of this instrument in their day to day living. The design is inspired by the drawing of an opener. **Source:** Hommage A Vlisco (2013)



Figure 22: this design is known as bow tie. This was brought in by westernization. The bow tie motif represents modern elegance, celebration, status, and unity. It also illustrates the blending of global and

indigenous styles - a hallmark of Igbo artistic expression and cultural identity **Source:** Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

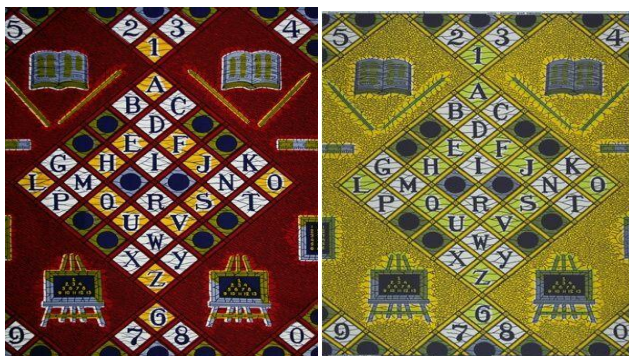


Figure 23- This design is known as “back to school or ABC” in Igbo land. The design is inspired by the English alphabets, Arabic numerals, blackboard and easel. **Source:** Hommage A L’art.Vlisco (2013)



Figure 24: this design is known as English gold. The motif design looks like a pendant of jewelry. It symbolizes wealth, status, and modernity. It represents the fusion of local and global influences, Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 25: this design is known as ladder/step/stairs. This could be found in peoples' homes. The stairs motif with meaning, symbolizing aspiration, and the journey through life. It serves as a visual encouragement to key Igbo values of ambition, resilience, and the pursuit of betterment. Source: Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 26: this design is known as obonma (sheath of a knife). The sheath of knife motif stands for protection, preparedness, responsible strength, and the prudent use of power. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 27: this design is known as one thousand blocks. Represents building blocks. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 28: this design is known as omaba. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024)



Figure 29: this design is known as mgbawa tomatoes (broken tomatoes). Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 30: this design is known as walking stick. Walking stick is part of some peoples' dressing. The walking stick motif embodies authority, respect for elders, guidance, and the preservation of tradition. It is a visual statement of leadership and wisdom, connecting the wearer to the values and structures that sustain Igbo society. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

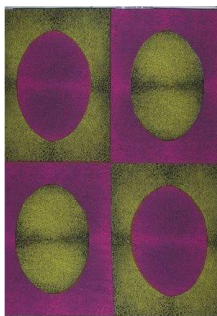


Figure 31: this design is known as jollof rice. This is a usually prepared by the Igbo with rice and some other ingredients. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 32: this design is known as sugar cane. The sugar cane motif symbolizes sweetness, joy, abundance, and resilience Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 33: this design is known as Bible and star. The major religion in Igbo land is Christianity. The design is based on the major faith of the Igbo. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 34: this design is known as scattered key. The key motif stands for access to opportunity, authority, protection, new beginnings, and knowledge. It is a powerful visual statement of aspiration, responsibility, and the readiness to unlock life's potential Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

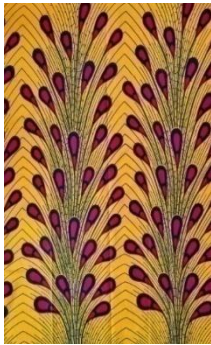


Figure 35: this design is known as electric bulb. The electric bulb motif embodies modernity, enlightenment, hope, and creativity. It is a visual celebration of progress and the illuminating power of knowledge and innovation which the Igbo are known with. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

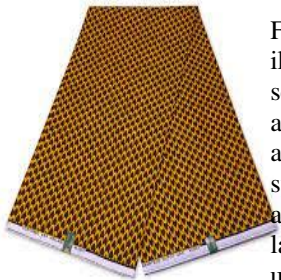


Figure 36: this design is known as ikperekpe azụ (scales of fish). The scale of fish motif communicates abundance, resilience, protection, and beauty. It draws on the symbolism of fish in everyday life and the environment, offering layered meanings of prosperity, unity, and the sustaining flow of life. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 37: this design is known as heavy rain. The heavy rain motif stands for blessing, abundance, renewal, vitality, resilience, and unity. It is a visually dynamic pattern, chosen to invoke prosperity, cleansing, and strength. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 38: this design is known as *kiri-kiri* star (tiny stars). The star motif represents aspiration, guidance, spiritual connection, celebration, and beauty. Note: some designs come in different colours schemes or backgrounds for instance white, blue, yellow and red as can be viewed above. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 39: this design is known as four umbrellas. The four umbrellas motif represents royalty, authority, protection, unity, and celebration. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 40: this design is known as carpet. The carpet design motif represents wealth, elegance, cosmopolitanism, hospitality, and a strong foundation. Its intricate patterns are chosen to convey sophistication, warmth, and a connection to both global trends and cherished local values. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 41: this design is known as anya ehi (cow's eye). The cow's eye motif embodies watchfulness, protection, wealth, spiritual insight, and beauty. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 42: this design is known as bullet. The bullet motif stands for power, protection, vigilance, and resilience. It is a bold, contemporary pattern that can express both a readiness to face challenges and a celebration of strength and survival. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

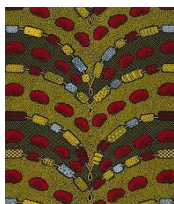


Figure 43: this design is known as necklace. The necklace motif signifies wealth, beauty, tradition, blessings, and unity. It is a graceful pattern that connects the wearer to cultural heritage and expresses aspirations for prosperity and harmonious relationships. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

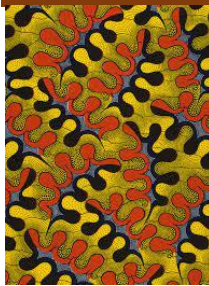


Figure 44: this design is known as Agada gbachiri ụzọ- a mighty protector has **blocked** the path. The agada gbachiri ụzọ motif stands for protection, strength, and the power to guard or defend. It is both a spiritual and social symbol, expressing the hope for safety against adversity and the resilience to overcome life's obstacles. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 45: this design is known as ruler. The ruler motif stands for precision, education, fairness, progress, and modern practicality. It conveys a respect for order, a commitment to learning, and a hope for balanced achievement. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

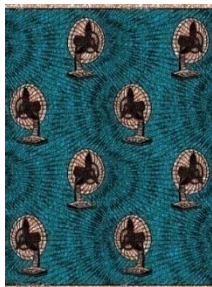


Figure 46: this design is known as table fan. The table fan motif represents modernity, comfort, aspiration, and the refreshing aspects of life. It is a celebration of progress and the pleasures of everyday living. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).



Figure 47: this design is known as big star.(see figure 38)
Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024)



Figure 48: this design is known as umbrella and shoe. These are fashion accessories used to compliment a dressing. Source: Chika Chudi-Duru (2024).

Conclusion

The study of Igbo women's narratives through African wax-printed textiles during the 20th century offers profound insights into the interplay of gender, culture, and economy in Nigeria. These textiles, with their vibrant patterns and deep cultural meanings, serve as a window into the lives of Igbo women, revealing the complexities of their social interactions and the pivotal roles they played in their communities. By examining these narratives, researchers gain valuable perspectives on the historical and contemporary social dynamics of the Igbo people, highlighting the significance of material culture in understanding broader societal changes. Since the Igbo women are still using Dutch wax printed textile fabrics as one of their cultural garbs to create fashion statements till date, newer designs based on their worldview keep on making their ways into the market to aid its continuity in usage. These printed textiles have come to stay as theirs and there's no occasion they attend without

finding someone decked in them. They are highly revered by them therefore the messages and untold stories on the cloth should be sufficiently relayed so as to teach and enlighten the younger ones who might be ignorant of those exciting stories.

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Interviewees

Mr. Ifeanyi Nwankwo
Mr. Nonso
Mr. David Onwujiuba
Lady Bernadine Mbelu
Lady Love Uchegbu
Mrs. Okoro
Mrs. Margaret Ejike
Mrs. Chinelo Nwohiri
Mrs. P. Ugoala
Mrs. C. Ezenna
Mrs. N. Okoye
Mrs. C. Nwaohiri
Chief (Mrs.) D. Osuagwu

**EFFECTS OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT
METHOD ON STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT
IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS
GEOGRAPHY IN FAGGE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF KANO STATE,
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Abstract

This study was examined to investigate the effects of formative assessment method on students' achievement in senior secondary schools geography in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State, Nigeria. Three specific objectives and three hypotheses guided the study. The study employed the quasi-experimental research design.

Experimental and control group. Experimental group was taught using the formative assessment method while the control group was taught using traditional lecture method. A total of 78 students (44 males and 34 females) from two public senior secondary schools in Fagge LGA participated in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used. The formative assessment technique employed for the study included open-ended questions, written test and Geography Achievement Test (GAT). A validated test instrument was used to collect data from the students for this study, with the instrument adapted. Data collected were analysed using paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test statistical tools. They show that formative assessment method has a significant effect on the students' achievement in geography, that is, in the pre-test and the post-test, the mean scores of the post-test is significant higher than the pre-test. It also revealed that there is significant difference in the mean achievement scores of student who are exposed and students who are not exposed to formative assessment method. Also, there is no gender difference in the achievement scores of geography students that are exposed to formative assessment. It was recommended that teachers should be trained on how to effectively implement formative assessment in their teaching and that evaluation of student learning should be continuous, providing feedback in a timely manner to help in the promotion of learning.

Key word: formative Assessment, Students Achievement, Geography

Introduction

Assessments play an important role in education because they provide valuable information about student performance and help educators make informed decisions about teaching strategies and curriculum development. While learning outcome assessment assesses the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired by students over a period of time, learning outcome assessment focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of teaching methods and strategies used by educators. Assessment of learning outcomes is the most important component of the training process. This helps teachers see how well students are achieving their desired learning goals and identify areas that need further improvement. This type of assessment can take many forms, including tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, and portfolios.

By assessing student performance, teachers can provide feedback and support to improve the learning experience. One of the main purposes of learning assessments is to measure a student's knowledge and understanding of a subject. This allows teachers to identify gaps in instruction and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. Assessments also help students to clearly understand their strengths and weaknesses and focus on areas that need improvement. It also

motivates students to actively participate in the learning process and take responsibility for their education.

According to Bernard (2013), he defined “assessment” as the use of various procedures to gather information about teaching and learning. There are two types of evaluation: summative evaluation and formative evaluation. Formative assessment provides immediate feedback to both teachers and students regarding the teaching and learning process.

Formative assessment is an important aspect of the teaching and learning process. This involves gathering information about students' understanding and progress during their studies and providing feedback that can be used to improve learning. Filas (2012) cites Bloom, Hasting, and Madus (1971) who believed that formative assessment is beneficial to both students as a way to diagnose student learning.

Implementing formative assessment methods can have a significant impact on student achievement. Formative assessment methods such as quizzes, class discussions, and peer assessments have been shown to improve students' academic achievement in geography. These methods provide immediate feedback to students, allowing them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. By understanding the areas in which they can improve, students can take the necessary steps to improve their learning. This

process of self-reflection and self-correction is critical to academic growth. Formative assessment methods also encourage active participation in the learning process. Students are more motivated to learn when they know their progress is being tracked and assessed. Formative assessment methods also improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills as students are required to analyze and evaluate their own work and the work of their peers. Introducing formative assessment methods in Geography in secondary schools will improve the overall learning environment. These methods promote a learner-centered approach to learning, shifting the focus from the teacher to the student. Pupils actively participate in their own learning and take responsibility for their own development. This change in dynamic promotes a positive, collaborative learning environment where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas and engaging in discussions. Formative assessment methods also promote effective communication between teachers and students. Regular feedback helps teachers identify student misconceptions and provide targeted support. This personalized learning approach ensures that students receive the guidance they need to overcome their challenges. Moreover, formative assessment methods allow teachers to tailor instruction to students' needs and allow the curriculum to be tailored to students' learning styles and abilities.

Statement of the Problem

The frequent failure of Nigerian students in internal and external geography subject examinations such as West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) is a matter of concern to all stakeholders in the education sector. The problems identified are poor teaching methods, inadequate teaching materials and infrastructure facilities, and poor assessment practices used by many secondary school geography teachers. This study investigated the effects of formative assessment methods on the achievement of geography students in Fagge Local Government Secondary School, Kano State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

This study investigated the effects of formative assessment methods on the performance of Geography students in Fagge Local Government Secondary School, Kano State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study looked at the following:

1. To examine the effect of formative assessment method on students' achievement in secondary schools geography in the study area.
2. To examine significant difference between students exposed to formative assessment method and students in control group.
3. To examine significant gender difference in the achievement of geography students who are exposed to formative assessment method of evaluation.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test formative assessment method on students' achievement mean scores of geography students in the study area.
2. There is no significant difference between students exposed to formative assessment method and students in control group in the achievement mean scores of geography students in the study area.
3. There is no significant gender difference in the achievement mean score of geography students who are exposed to formative assessment method of evaluation in the study area.

Methodology

Quasi-experimental design with experimental and control group was used in this study to examine effect of formative assessment method on students' achievement in secondary schools geography in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State, Nigeria. Two (2) groups were purposeful selected for the experimental and control group. Experimental group was taught using the formative assessment method while the control group was taught using traditional lecture method. The targeted population comprises of all senior secondary school two (SS II) geography students in Fagge Local Government in Kano State, Nigeria. A total of 78 students (44 males and 34 females) from two public senior secondary schools in Fagge LGA

participated in the study. Purposive sampling technique was used. The formative assessment technique employed for the study included open-ended questions, written test and Geography Achievement Test (GAT). A validated test instrument was used to collect data from the students for this study, with the instrument adapted from the work of Ahmodu (2023) with reliability coefficient of 0.78. The researcher further subjected the instrument to reliability coefficient test using Cronbach's Alpha and the instrument established a reliability coefficient of 0.83. The instrument for data collection was administered two times at different intervals of six weeks, that is, before treatment (pre-test), after treatment (post-test) to determine the effects of the treatment. The instrument was administered by the researchers and the researcher assistants. Data collected were analysed using paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test statistical tools.

Results

The results of the study were analysed based on the research hypotheses stated.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test formative assessment method in the students' achievement mean scores of geography students' in the study area.

Table 1: Summary of t-test of mean scores of the Achievement Scores for the pre-test and post-test when using the formative assessment method.

Variable	N	X	SD	D	T	p-value	Decision
Pre-test	4						
	4	21.32	6.335	43	-20.702	.0000	Rejected
Post-test	4	43.27	4.189				
	4	7	9				

Note: $p > 0.05$

Table 1 shows the achievement scores of the pre-test and post-test when using the formative assessment method. The pre-test has a mean score of 21.32 with a standard deviation of 6.335 while the post-test has a mean score of 43.27 with a standard deviation of 4.189. The computed t-value = -20.702 and p-value = 0.000 was significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicates There is significant difference in the pre-test and post-test formative assessment method in the students achievement in secondary schools geography in the study area. Thus, we rejected the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between students exposed to formative assessment method and students in control group in the achievement mean scores of geography students in the study area.

Table 2: Summary of t-test of mean scores of the Achievement Scores for the experimental and control groups

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	T	p-value	Decision
Experimental Group.	44	43.02	4.123	76	19.460	.000	Rejected
Control Group.	34	21.06	5.841	61			

Note: $p > 0.05$

Table 2 shows the achievement mean scores of the experimental and control groups on formative assessment method. The experimental group has a mean score of 43.02 with a standard deviation of 4.123 while the control group has a mean score of 21.06 with a standard deviation of 5.841. The computed t-value = 19.460 and p-value = 0.000 was significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicates there is significant difference between students exposed to formative assessment method and students in control group in the achievement mean scores of geography students in the study area. Thus, we rejected the null hypothesis. The result is in favour of experimental group.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant gender differences in the achievement mean scores of geography students who are exposed to formative assessment method of evaluation in the study area.

Table 3: Summary of t-test of mean scores of the Achievement Scores based on gender.

Variabl e	N	X	SD	Df	T	p- value	Decision
Male	4						
	4	43.1	4.02	7	-	.88	Accepte d
		8	5	6	.14	3	
Female	3	43.3	4.41				
	4	2	6				

Note: p>0.05

Table 2 shows the achievement mean scores of the male and female on formative assessment method. The experimental group has a mean score of 43.02 with a standard deviation of 4.123 while the control group has a mean score of 21.06 with a standard deviation of 5.841. The computed t-value = 19.460 and p-value = 0.000 was significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant gender differences in the achievement mean scores of geography students who are exposed to formative assessment method of evaluation in the study area. Thus, we accepted the null hypothesis.

Discussion of Results

This study investigated the effects of formative assessment methods on the academic performance of Geography students in Fagge Local Government Secondary School, Kano State, Nigeria. Research has shown that formative assessment has a significant effect on students' geography achievement in senior secondary schools. It was

found that there were significant differences in the pre-test and post-test formative assessment methods for student achievement depending on the geography of secondary schools in the study area. The results showed that the post-test was favorable, which means that using formative evaluation methods in teaching and learning has a positive effect. This is consistent with Ajogbeje (2013) who stated, “When formative assessments are used effectively, they ensure that students are adequately prepared for exams, and these frequent tests make students more engaged and committed to learning.” Increase academic achievement in the subject through the learning process. In the same vein, Olagunju (2015) stated that “formative assessment improves student achievement by making a large significant difference in the average achievement of secondary school students.” Ojugo (2013) also agreed that “formative assessment is beneficial to students because it helps diagnose their learning disabilities and prescribe alternative remedial interventions to improve academic performance in the subject.” The problem is. As a result, it was found that there was a significant difference in the scores of geography students in the learning area between students exposed to the formative assessment method and students in the control group. The results were favorable to the experimental group. This is consistent with Udukpong and Okon (2012) finding that “there are significant differences in the average academic achievement scores of students studying using

formative assessment methods.” Students who had positive dispositions toward their teachers' formative assessment practices performed better than their peers who perceived these practices as unhelpful to learning. These results are consistent with Bernard (2013) who stated, “Formative assessment is one of the assessment strategies that diagnose a student’s learning difficulties in a subject with the goal of improving the student’s academic achievement.” “There is a significant positive difference between students who are exposed to formative assessment and students who are not exposed to formative assessment,” Barnard added. Lastly, it was found that there was no significant difference by gender in the ratings of geography students who had been exposed to formative assessment methods in their major field. This suggests that gender does not have a significant impact on how students' achievement is formatively assessed in high schools in the study area. This finding is consistent with Adjobgeje (2013) who stated that “gender differences are not a significant issue when using formative assessments of boys and girls to determine the problem of poor performance.” Women may perform much better than men if the boys are not committed to the learning process. Similarly, Udukpong and Okon (2012) argue that male and female gender does not matter when using formative assessment methods.

Conclusion

In conclusion, assessment of learning and teaching outcomes is an important aspect of education. It provides valuable information about student performance, helps educators improve their teaching methods, and promotes accountability in the education system. By conducting assessments, educators can ensure that students are achieving desired learning outcomes and receiving a high-quality education. Therefore, prioritizing assessment in educational settings is essential to promote effective teaching and learning practices. Formative assessment plays an important role in learning and achieving educational goals. This promotes accountability, provides valuable feedback, helps set realistic goals, and ensures continuous improvement of teaching methods. However, it is important to ensure that formative assessments include both quantitative and qualitative measures to ensure a comprehensive assessment of a student's abilities. By embracing assessment as an integral part of the learning process, teachers and students can work together to achieve academic success. The impact of formative assessment methods on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Fagge Local Government Area of Kano State, Nigeria is undoubtedly positive. These methods improve students' academic performance by providing immediate feedback, promoting active participation, and developing critical thinking skills. Additionally, implementing formative assessment

practices improves the overall learning environment by promoting student-centered learning, effective communication, and personalized learning. It is therefore important for educators in Fagge Local Government Area and beyond to use formative assessment methods as a means of improving students' Geography achievement and creating a positive learning environment.

Recommendations

Based on the study results and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should be trained on how to effectively use formative assessment in the teaching and learning process.
2. Student learning should be assessed on an ongoing basis and feedback provided in a timely manner to help promote learning.
3. Governments and school administrators should allow and encourage teachers to attend seminars, workshops, conferences, and in-service training to improve their performance and acquire the skills necessary to develop formative tests and how to integrate formative assessments with classroom procedures.

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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE
INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGICAL
PROCESSES OF EZIỌSỤ AND EGBEMA
DIALECT OF IGBO**

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Abstract

This work is aimed at investigating the inflectional morphological features that exist between Eziọsụ and Egbema dialects of the Igbo language. Eziọsụ and Egbema Igbo have not got the attention of researchers in the past and resent times. The objective of the study is focused on discovering the similarities and differences in the dialects under inflectional morphology. The study adopted the framework of concatenative theory. The analysis was carried out using the descriptive approach while focusing on tense, aspect and negation. The findings reveal that the simple past tense is marked in both

dialects through the ‘-rv’ suffix. This suffix undergoes verb movement in the environment of a third person plural subject. The future auxiliaries of these dialects are complemented by the participle form of verb which does not take cognizance of vowel harmony. Also, the auxiliaries responsible for past in the future tense are capable of existing independently without attaching themselves to the verb or other elements. More so, the perfective aspect in Eziọsụ and Egbema dialects are marked by a non-harmonizing suffix ‘-na’ and ‘-la’ respectively. The habitual morpheme for Egbema has the grammatical freedom to exist independently in a construction while that of Eziọsụ does not. Negation in both dialects is formed by verbal inflection. In this aspect, the simple declarative and perfective negatives are formed with both prefix and suffix. Also the future negative of Eziọsụ and Egbema is formed by both prefix and suffix. Lastly, this research can be used as a source of information or subsequent studies on various components of linguistic structures. It would also provide a premise for the study and analysis of morphological processes in the various dialects in Igbo language.

Introduction

In linguistics, morphology according to Aronoff and Kirsten (2015), refers to the mental system involved in word formation, or the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed. Chukwu (2012) states that it originally means the study of shapes or forms used

in biology, but since the middle of 19th century, it has been used to describe the type of investigation which analyzes all those basic linguistics elements which are usually found in language. Yule (1996) explains that these elements are technically known as morphemes in linguistics.

Morphology, therefore, studies how words are put together from their smallest parts and the rules governing this process. It is the branch of linguistics which deals with forms of words in different constructions. Chukwu (2012) sees morphology as the grammatical study of words on construction of morphemes. Yule (1996) states that morphology is the study of morphemes and their arrangements in word formation. According to him, morpheme may be identified by its distribution and other certain characteristics.

The need for scholars and researchers to delve into dialect studies has been harped by Ikekeonwu (1986) and Nwaozuzu (2008) particularly, giving the many challenges of identifying oral classification of Igbo dialects. The direction has been on the grammar of dialects of the Igbo language as part of the ways of formalizing these varieties. Even in Igbo language, there are many contentious issues regarding word structure, affixes, derivations and inflections as well as extensional affixes which make any adventure into morphological variations or peculiarities in the varieties of the Igbo language very apt.

Furthermore, Emenanjo (1985) believes that in spite of the dialect situation and highly individualistic and republican nature of the Igbo, there has always been mutual intelligibility among them. On the question of an extensive and in-depth study of Igbo dialects, Nwachukwu (1980, p.24) holds thus:

There is need for scholars to begin to delve into studies on dialect of the Igbo language by focusing on all aspects of the dialects such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and other wider scope of language study. That way, we would have set the Igbo language on the path of rapid growth and development.

The variety of the observation cannot be over-emphasized and thus has necessitated the present study on the inflectional morphological processes of Egbema and Eziọsụ Igbo.

According to Okoro (2022), Egbema occupies a strategic place in the geography of Igbo as a border town in the North with Ọgba/Egbema /Ndoni L.G.A. in Rivers state. So, it is part of the so called border clans of Igbo. Nwaozuzu (2008) holds that Egbema and Eziọsụ are part of the South Western Group of dialects of Igbo. She states that South-Western group of dialects are spoken in Ikwere, Ọhaji, Egbema, Mgbirichi, Ụmọagwo, Eziọsụ etc. From the classification above, Egbema and Eziọsụ are therefore identified as distinct dialects of Igbo with distinct linguistic characteristics.

On the other hand, Eziọsụ is an autonomous community on the South bank of the Ugwuta Lake, southeastern Nigeria. It's one of the foremost territories that witnessed western or European expedition during colonization and used as a gateway by the British to advance the Igbo land further. As at the 1991 census in Nigeria, the population of Eziọsụ was estimated at 14,560. It is one of the Oil and Gas producing communities in Imo State, being the second largest producing community in Oguta L.G.A after Izombe.

This study makes use of descriptive research design since the study is aimed to undertake a comparative study of inflectional morphological processes of two different dialects, Eziọsụ and Egbema. The Linguistic field method was adopted in data collection involving oral interview of informants. The informants were selected from people between forty (40) years and above who live in Eziọsụ and Egbema and speak the two Igbo varieties. These are people we believe would provide relevant information or data for the study for the reason that they live and have spent greater part of their lives immersed in the dialects. The informants represent the nine and sixteen communities in Eziọsụ and Egbema clan respectively. We selected 18 and 32 informants, two from each of the communities that make up the two clans. The researcher, being a native speaker of Eziọsụ dialect of Igbo made a great deal of her personal observation and analysis of the Eziọsụ word formation processes. Equally, through in-depth interview using unstructured

questions in the form of oral interview, the researcher had obtained data from renowned native speakers of Eziọsu and Egbema speech communities

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Concatenative Morphology

The theory is one of the bases for the early generative approaches to morphological processes propounded in the early 1970s as championed by the works of Siegel (1971), Aronoff and Fudeman (2007), Anderson (1982) among others. Spenser (1971) holds that the theory which is often referred to as a perspective to morphological analysis, linear model or agglutinative approach to morphology, partly influenced the work of Chomsky (1981) which resulted in full blown generativist approach. According to Bender (2000, p.90), the theory assumes thus:

That all morphological contrasts consist of segmentable materials correlating on a one-to-one basis with meaning contrasts . . . segmentable because they reflect from either suffixation or prefixation (rarely infixation) Also, that complex words are created through dynamic processes; these processes operate on a specified input and produce a specified output.

The theory further assumes that morphemes are homogeneous, indivisible atomic units of linguistic form, each linking some component (s) of meaning with a set of mutually exclusive allomorphs that

express it. Each morpheme has a determinate semantic content, and each allomorph has a determinate phonological form. Words are composed exhaustively by joining such morphemes together in hierarchically organized structures. The relation between a base and a derived form with an additional morpheme is incremental, monotonic, non-decreasing in the domains both of form and of content.

According to Obuasi (2016), the theory has dominated the area of linguistics most of this century and assumes that all languages have segmentable morphemes as their smallest meaningful unit, as such have affixation as the only morphological process while taking other processes like reduplication as special affixation. Though, some languages like the Chinese may not fit into this, majority of world languages fit in.

According to Stump (2017), the theory assumes the following as basically concatenative:(a) Compounding: This is simply bringing of free morphemes together to form new words, for example:

News + paper = Newspaper;

wrist + watch = wristwatch;

foot + ball = football;

time + keeper = timekeeper.

b) Affixation: This involves the insertion of morphemes to a root word: that is, forming morphologically complex words by the addition of

morpheme(s) to the base, illustrated in the following example:

Infix, is as in some informal English words like Uni+bloody+versity uni-bloody-versity,

Prefix is as in dis+ability: disability,

Suffix is as in affix+ation: affixation,

Interfix: The handout couldn't get examples from the English language for this, so it can be regarded in some languages as empty morph.

Circumfix is as in un+grateful+ness: ungratefulness

Theory of Concatenative Morphology explains the process which deals with the formation of new lexical items by putting at least two distinct morphemes together. Concatenative processes are by far the ones which happen to be the most productive in the Indo-European language family. Thus, they are of major concern when it comes to discussing word-formation processes in English. These include: compounding, affixation and incorporation. Their presence in the language varies with the last one being even non-existent in English. Concatenation: morphological process involving the combination of morphemes.

Affixation: morphological process involving the attachment of an affix (prefix, suffix, infix, etc.).

Literature Review: The Concept of Morphology

Morphology originally did not emanate from linguistics but rather emanated from physical sciences. According to Lyons (1986), morphology appears to have been invented by Goethe and to have been first applied in biology, to study the form of living organisms. However, in the view of Agbedo (2015), the history of morphological analysis dates back to the ancient Indian linguist Parini, who formulated the 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology in the text Astadhyayl.

In linguistics, morphology is a basic concept in grammar, in this respect, Akmajian, Demers, Farmer, Harnish (2010) avert that morphology is the subfield of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and the relationship among words. Furthermore, while emphasizing the view of Mathew (1974), Okeke (2008) states that “the term morphology is a Greek-based concept which is different from the German ‘formmenlehre’ (the study of forms). In its linguistic sense, morphology as a branch of linguistics can be defined as the study of forms of words. Morphology is simply a term for that branch of linguistics which is concerned with the forms of words in different constructions”

Morphology is basically related to other aspects of grammar. Based on this Agbedo (2015) suggest that morphology is a bridge between the syntax of a language and its phonology. Furthermore, Nwala,

(2015) defines morphology as the word morphology is derived from the Greek word, ‘morphē’ meaning form. The term morphology is said to have a biological identity, which defines how to form things. It is part of the grammar of a language which a child or learner acquires.

In the light of the foregoing, it could be seen that morphology is a vital aspect of linguistic study and its main domain is the morpheme/word.

In line with this, Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme (2010), observe that morphology is the level of grammar that studies the ways morphemes organize themselves to form words. This according to Okeke (2008) means that morphology is concerned mostly with the study of internal structure of words thus, it is sometimes described as “word grammar”; the study of the process involved in word formation. Specifically, according to Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme (2010):

Morphology is the level of grammar that studies the ways morphemes organize themselves to form words. It is concerned mostly with the study of the internal structure of words, it is sometimes known as ‘word grammar’, that is, the study of the processes involved in the formation of words.

The meaning of morpheme has received a lot of controversial ideas from many linguists. Morpheme can be said to mean the way units are ordered to give meaningful words. Some linguists approach the

issue of the meaning of morpheme as form of units which have a meaning but base their combinations on distribution, while other linguists see morpheme as a form of composite unit. Ndimele (1999) further asserts that morphemes are the smallest indivisible meaningful elements in the utterance of a language. This means that morphemes cannot be broken down. That is, they cannot be divided and still have meanings. For example, the word ‘compound’ cannot be sub-divided into com + pound. Furthermore, Aronoff and Fudeman (2005) defined a morpheme as the smallest bit of a language which has meaning and, moreover, this meaning is different from the meaning of all other morphemes in the language. What he’s saying is that if a morpheme is added or removed from an utterance, the meaning of the utterance changes.

Inflectional Morphology

Inflectional morphology is concerned with the morphological process by which such things as past tense, plural and present participle are arrived at. The sorts of morpheme which assign inflectional process are described as grammatical morphemes and their functions usually are to indicate relationships demanded by grammar. Inflectional morphology leaves untouched the syntactic category of the bases, through which it adds extra elements to the base, unlike derivational morphemes; they do not create new words or new lexemes.

This is a form of morphological process that marks certain grammatical functions. As Palmer (1974) puts it, inflectional morphemes are bound morphemes affixed to the free morphemes usually to derive or mark number, tense, gender, case, aspect, mood, person and voice. They are simply described as morphemes of the outer layer, whenever attached to a word no other morphemes can be attached to the same word. They are always added to the root or stem words.

This example reveals the characteristics of inflectional morphemes. The word class of the root words did not change after inflection. Secondly, each of the words cannot host any other affix. We can simply conclude that the inflectional morphemes are simply grammatical marking morphemes. According to Anagbogu, Mbah & Eme (2010), inflectional morphemes are suffixes which operate within the domain of syntax where they are used to mark plural forms (e.g. goat-goats) tense or aspect (e.g. rape-rape) etc. Inflectional affixes are morphemes which are used to give extra linguistic information about the already existing meaning of a word (e.g. number, person, gender, case, etc., expressing syntactic relations between words (e.g. possession, comparison).

According to Oha (2006), inflection is a morphological process by which a word is adjoined with an affix to undergo a pattern of change to express grammatical and syntactic relation in terms of case, number, gender, person, tense/aspect and

polarity. The most popular distinction between inflection and derivation is that while the former is class maintaining, the later is class changing. In Igbo language, both inflection and derivation are verb-centred, thus, only the verbal categories (tense, aspect, mood, modality, polarity) are affected by inflection. This shows that, as Nweya (2013) affirms, inflection is relevant to syntax while derivation is relevant to morphology.

Empirical Studies

Okoro (2022) carried out a study on “aspects of the morphology of Egbema Igbo. In this study, the investigation was on the three major branches of morphology which includes derivational, inflectional and extensional morphology on Egbema dialect of Igbo language while employing the theory of concatenate morphology. The study revealed that verbal inflections in *Egbema Igbo* involves basically suffixation which operates in conjunction with prefixes and auxiliaries as well as other verbal categories like tense, aspect and negation marking. Devoiding the study from the heated and unsettled debates on tense, and its types in Igbo but with recourse to *Egbema Igbo* specific data, the study shows that the simple past, and future tense hence other verbal categories are classified as aspectual and they include the Durative continuous, the Durative habitual, the Terminative and the Intentional (unfulfilled). In the area of derivational morphology, the study shows that in *Egbema Igbo*, words are derived from simple verb roots through

such processes as prefixation, suffixation, and interfixation.

Okoro's study also show that in Egbema Igbo, some suffixes do not perform derivational functions but simply modify the meaning of the verbs to which they are attached and they are classified as extensional suffixes.

In a study carried out by Obuasi, (2016) titled "morphological processes in Anaku Igbo: situating universality". Its objective is to reveal that most of the morphological processes available in other world's languages also exist in Anaku Igbo. It also exposed the morphological processes available within Anaku Igbo language group in comparison with some universal morphological processes. The major finding of the study is that languages of the world have a lot in common when it comes to morphological processes as many of the universal processes in the sketches are applicable to Igbo language and its associated languages. The data was analyzed descriptively.

In another study, Arukwe (2012) presents a re-appraisal of Igbo tense patterns. The study holds that the debate on Igbo tense system hinges on two issues: whether or not the notion of tense is typical of Igbo, and what the tense patterns in Igbo should be. The author holds that some agree that tense is not obtainable but aspect, mood and polarity in Igbo while others hold there is tense. Yet, those who recognize the occurrence of tense are not agreed on

the nature and number of the patterns. The investigation reveals that “Painfully, over 60 % of these recognized patterns of tense do not meet the linguistic requirements of tense. The study uses the linguistic criteria to re-analyze Igbo tense patterns. Two tense patterns were realized from this perspective namely: simple past and perfective tenses. The present study does not venture into appraisal of tense types in Igbo but focuses on tense as seen in Eziọsụ and Egbema

Igbo in our morphological analysis of the dialects.

	Eziọsụ	Egbema	Igbo Izugbe	Gloss
1	Eze gbatara miri	Eze gbatara miri	Eze churu mmiri	<i>Eze fetched water</i>
2	Okoro na Ada gbara akwụkwọ n'izu ụka gara aga	Okoro na Ada gbara akwụkwọ l'izu ụka gara aga	Okoro na Ada gbara gbara akwụkwọ n'izu ụka gara aga	<i>Okoro and Ada wedded last week</i>
3	Chike hichara uno	Chike fichara ụlọ	Chike hichara ụlọ	<i>Chike cleaned the house</i>
4	A sụrụ akwa wo na uhuruchi na	A sụrụ akwa we la anyashị ni	Ha sụrụ akwa ha na mgbede a	<i>They washed their clothes this evening</i>

5	A gbara wo egwu nke oma	A gbara we egwu amaa	Ha gbara egwu nke oma	<i>They danced so well</i>
6	E shiri wo nri toro uto	E shiri we nri toro uto	Ha siri nri toro uto	<i>They cooked a delicious meal</i>

Data Presentation and Analysis

Inflectional morphology In Eziorsu and Egbema

The simple past tense

This is marked by the ‘-rv’ past tense marking. In other words, the inflectional suffix is the –rv pattern where ‘v’ is the vowel of the verb root to which it is attached. The simple past tense is illustrated in the following examples:

Table 1: The simple past

Our analysis of -rv suffix as simple past formation suffix is in accordance with the views of Emenanjo (1978), (2015), Ezikeojiaku (1979), and Arukwe (2012). From the examples above, we can deduce that the two dialects under study expressed higher degree of similarities. Firstly, the ‘rv’ past tense marker is applicable in both dialects as shown in examples 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Secondly, as shown in examples 4, 5 and 6; there appears a change and verb movement in the sentence structure unlike other examples in 1, 2, and 3. This movement or change in structure is caused when the subject is a third person plural. A dummy impersonal pronoun ‘A’ or ‘E’ comes before the verb, followed by the

subject- ‘wo’/’we’ and the subject of the sentence. The dummy pronouns also obey the rule of vowel harmony.

Future Tense

In both dialects, the future tense is marked by the auxiliary “ya-” and “je-” which are complemented by the verb in the participle form. Examples are shown below:

Table 2: The future tense

	Eziọsụ	Egbema	Igbo Izugbe	Gloss
1	Ada ya-eje afĩa	Ada je-eje afĩa	Ada ga- aga ahĩa	<i>Ada will go to the market</i>
2	Nnekwu miri ya-ezo n’ututu na	Nnekwu miri je- ezo la ututu ni	Nnukwu mmiri ga- ezo n’ ututu a	<i>Heavy rain will fall this morning</i>
3	Ada ya-eje ụnọ akwukwọ	Ada je-eje ụlọ akwukwọ	Ada ga- aga ụlọ akwukwọ	<i>Ada will go to school</i>
4	Uche ya- abĩa echi	Uche je- abĩa echi	Uche ga- abĩa echi	<i>Uche will come tomorrow</i>
5	Ugo ya-eri agwa	Ugo je-eri agwa	Ugo ga-eri agwa	<i>Ugo will eat beans</i>

Here, it is observed that the future tense markers for both dialects and standard Igbo goes hand in hand with the participle form of the verb, and it does not take cognizance of vowel harmony as shown in examples 1-5. With this, we say that the two dialects possess a similar structure for future tense constructions.

Past in the Future Tense

In Eziọsụ and Egbema dialects, this tense is marked by the auxiliaries “ana” and “ala” respectively, and complemented by the same forms of the verb (the participles) used for the future tense above. The auxiliaries are capable of existing independently in the sentence without attaching themselves to other word elements. Examples:

Table 3: Past in the future tense

	Eziọsụ	Egbema	Igbo Izugbe	Gloss
1	Ugo ana abja	Ugo ala abja	Ugo gaara ibja	<i>Ugo would have come</i>
2	Okeke ana eri nri	Okeke ala eri ife	Okeke gaara eri nri	<i>Okeke would have eaten</i>
3	Ada ana añu miri wa	Ada ala ara miri ya	Ada gaara añu ahụ	<i>Ada would have drank that water</i>

4	Ugo ana egbu onwe ya	Ugo ala egbu onwe a	Ugo gaara egbu onwe ya	<i>Ugo would have killed himself</i>
5	Ana wo eje ụka	A we eje ụka	Ha gaara aga ụka	<i>They would have gone to church</i>
6	Ọ na eme nke ọma na nnene	Ọ la emezi amaa n' ule	Ọ gaara eme nke ọma n'ule	<i>He would have passed his examinati on</i>

The two auxiliaries together with that of the standard Igbo are similar in terms of word and syllabic structures. They co-occur with the participle form of verbs and as well express the same low tone when used in associative construction. The auxiliaries of Ezioṣu and Egbema, when used with the third person singular pronoun suffer an elision of its initial alphabet while reducing them to monosyllabic elements. This is exemplified in example '6'. As shown in the 5th example, the auxiliaries have the ability to begin a sentence and maintain grammaticality unlike the standard Igbo. This only happens when the subject is the third person plural pronoun.

The Perfective

The perfective aspect in Eziọsụ and Egbema dialects is marked by the non-harmonizing suffix ‘-na’ and ‘-là’ respectively. If the subject is a noun or a plural pronoun, the verb takes a harmonizing a/-e- prefix. Examples:

Table 4: Perfective aspect

	Eziọsụ	Egbema	Igbo Izugbe	Gloss
1	Ugo eriena osikapa	Ugo eriela arusu	Ugo eriela osikapa	<i>Ugo has eaten rice</i>
2	Ebere eriena azụ	Ebere eriela azụ	Ebere erielazụ	<i>Ebere has eaten fish</i>
3	Ada ataana ahụ	Ada ataala ahụ	Ada ataala ahụ	<i>Ada has become slim</i>
4	Nwaanyi a amaana ezigbo mma	Nwaanyi ni amaala mma amaa	Nwaanyi a amaala ezigbo mma	<i>This woman has become very pretty</i>
5	Abịana wo ọzọ	Abịala we ọzọ	Ha abịala ọzọ	<i>They have come again</i>
6	Okoro adọkaana akwụkwọ ya	Okoro adọkaala akwụkwọ a	Okoro adọkaala akwụkwọ ya	<i>Okoro has torn his book</i>

7	Ngozi ejeena igbasha okwuchuk wu	Ngozi ejeela igbasha okwuchuk wu	Ngozi agaala igbasa okwuchuk wu	<i>Ngozi has gone for evangelism</i>
8	Ugo anonyana azu	Ugo alonyaala amaa	Ugo anoteela aka	<i>Ugo has stayed long</i>

From our analysis above, the two perfective makers (-na/-la) exhibit the same grammatical function in perfective constructions. They are non-harmonizing; they are always attached as suffix to the verb without observing the rule of vowel harmony or the vowel in the verb root. This is also the case with verbs that begin with the syllabic nasals m/n as well as the nasal ‘n’ in the dialects as seen in examples 4, 8, 9 and 10. It means that in the perfective form, the nasal features of the consonants of the verb root do not spread to the perfective suffix “-là” as it is in some other Igbo dialects. The above description is applicable to the dialects under study and standard Igbo. Apart from the alphabetical difference in the morphemes, we can say that the two dialects are similar in terms of perfective aspect.

The Imperfective

Habitual

The habitual aspect is marked with the inflectional morphemes “kari” in both dialects, and the verb takes a harmonizing prefix a-/e-. This can be seen in the illustrations below:

Table 5: Habitual aspect

	Eziọsụ	Egbema	Igbo Izugbe	Gloss
1	Ngozi na- atakari onugbu	Ngozi la- atakari olugbu	Ngozi na- atakari olugbu	<i>Ngozi is used to chewing bitterleaf</i>
2	Emeka na- awulikari elu	Emeka la- awulikari elu	Emeka na- awulikari elu	<i>Emeka is used to jumping</i>
3	Ada na- agbakari egwu	Ada la- agbakari egwu	Ada na- agbakari egwu	<i>Ada is used to dancing</i>

From our analysis above, the two dialects (Eziọsụ and Egbema) displayed notable similarities. Firstly, the habitual sentence for Eziọsụ Igbo and Egbema Igbo is usually in the present continuous form which is shown by its marker ‘na’ and ‘la’. This is accompanied by the verb which harbours the habitual morpheme as a suffix.

Progressive

This is usually in form of the present continuous tense, and is marked by the auxiliaries –na and –la in both Eziọsụ and Egbema dialects. However, the auxiliary for Eziọsụ dialect has an absolute similarity with that of standard Igbo. In other words, they have the same structure and equally perform

the same grammatical function. This is shown in the examples below:

Table 6: Progressive aspect

	Eziọsụ	Egbema	Igbo Izugbe	Gloss
1	Ugochi na-azụ afịa (ụdụ)	Ugochi la-azụ afịa (ụdụ)	Ug ochi na-azụ ahịa (ugbua)	<i>Ugo is trading (now)</i>
2	Ada na- akpa íshí (ụdụ)	Ada la- akpa íshí (ụdụ)	Ada na- akpa isi (ugbua)	<i>Ada is making hair (now)</i>
3	Ọ na- aza uno (ụdụ)	Ọ la-aza ụlọ (ụdụ)	Ọ na-aza ụlọ (ugbua)	<i>He is sweeping the house (now)</i>
4	Ọ na- eshi ife (ụdụ)	Ọ la-eshi ife (ụdụ)	Ọ na-esi ihe (ugbua)	<i>She is cooking something (now)</i>
5	A na wo eri iri (ụdụ)	A la we eri nri (ụdụ)	Ha na-eri nri (ugbu a)	<i>They are eating food (now)</i>

The similarities of the auxiliaries including that of the standard Igbo are exemplified in their word structure. All are monosyllabic and

monogrammaric. A certain similarity which we have observed earlier in both dialects is the movement of the subject when it is a third person plural as shown in example (5) above. As seen in the analysis, this movement does not occur in standard Igbo. In the grammatical environment where the subject is a third person plural pronoun, the auxiliaries precede the subject (wo/we) with a non-harmonizing dummy pronoun ‘A’ attached to it.

Negative: Simple declarative negative

Table 7

	Eziọsụ	Egbema	Igbo Izugbe	Gloss
1	Ngozi ejeadiafia wa	Ngozi ejeyeafia	Ngozi agaghị ahia	<i>Ngozi did not go to the market</i>
2	O shiadi nri	O shíye nri	O sighị nri	<i>She did not cook food</i>
3	Ugo akụwadi kalama	Ugo akụwaye Ololo	Ugo akụwaghị karama	<i>Ugo did not break the bottle</i>
4	Emeka etiadi ube	Emeka aririye mkpu	Emeka etighị mkpu	<i>Emeka did not shout</i>
5	Ada asadi ugboala wa	Ada asaye moto ya Ada asaye moto ya	Ada asaghị ugboala	<i>Ada did not wash the car</i>

6	Okoro aruadi ujọ	Okoro ewuye ụlọ	Okoro arughị ụlọ	<i>Okoro did not build the house</i>
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From the analysis above, the simple declarative transforms to negation by verbal inflection. The verb root is inflected by both prefix and suffix. While both dialects accept the harmonizing ‘a/e’ prefix, the morphemes ‘-adi’ and ‘-ye’ are suffixed to the verb roots or base of Eziọsụ and Egbema Igbo respectively. It is pertinent to state that the negative prefix for both dialects align with that of standard Igbo but differs in its suffix (ghị) as shown in examples 1-6.

Summary and Conclusion

In this study, we have examined the inflectional morphological operations of Eziọsụ and Egbema dialects within the framework of Concatenative morphonology. The simple past for Eziọsụ and Egbema Igbo is marked by ‘-rv’ as shown in examples 1, 2, and 3 in *table 1*. As indicated, we also observed that the two dialects also undergo a verb movement when the subject is a third person plural.

Furthermore, future tense is marked in Eziọsụ and Egbema dialects with the auxiliaries “ya-” and “je-” respectively in *table 2*. The future auxiliaries of these dialects are complemented by the participle form of verb which does not take cognizance of vowel harmony. Moreso, the auxiliaries used for

marking ‘past in the future tense’ “ana”/ “ala” in *table 3* are capable of existing independently without attaching themselves to other word elements. These auxiliaries are also complemented by participle and are similar in terms of syllabic structures. The auxiliaries when used with the third person singular pronoun suffer elision of its initial letter while reducing them to monosyllabic elements. This is exemplified in example ‘6’. They equally have the ability to begin a sentence and maintain grammaticality unlike that of standard Igbo. With these, we can say that Egbema and Eziọsụ dialects possess proximity and similar structure for all tense constructions.

In the area of aspect, the perfective aspect in Eziọsụ and Egbema Igbo is marked by the non-harmonizing suffix ‘-na’ and ‘-la’ respectively as seen in *table 4* and are always attached as suffix to the verb. The two perfective markers exhibit the same grammatical function in perfective constructions. We also found out from our analysis that the verb takes a harmonizing a-/e- prefix if the subject is a noun or plural pronoun. Eg. Ugo eriena nri > O riela nri.

The imperfective aspect comprises the habitual and the progressive. The habitual in Eziọsụ and Egbema Igbo is marked with the inflectional morphemes “kari” and “kari” respectively as seen in *table 5*. It is pertinent to state that the verb in a habitual construction takes a-/e- prefix as can be seen in the examples. While the habitual morpheme for Eziọsụ

can be attached to the verb as a suffix that of Egbema dialect is not. In other words, the habitual morpheme for Egbema by default exists independently in such constructions.

On the other hand, the progressive aspect of Eziọsụ and Egbema Igbo is usually in form of the present continuous tense and is marked by ‘-na’ and ‘-la’ respectively as seen in *table 6*. From our analysis, the two morphemes are monosyllabic and monogrammatic. In other words, they produce one and same meaning.

On the angle of negation, the simple declarative transforms to negation by verbal inflection which has to do with both prefix and suffix. While both dialects accept the harmonizing ‘a/e’ prefix, the morphemes ‘-adi’ and ‘-ye’ are suffixed to the verb roots or base of Eziọsụ and Egbema Igbo respectively. It is pertinent to state that the negative prefix for both dialects align with that of standard Igbo but differs in its suffix (ghị) as shown in the examples in *tab*

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**AN EVALUATION OF IGBO LANGUAGE
ENDANGERMENT AND PRESERVATION
IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Language is an indispensable tool of communication in every society. Societies vary, so do their languages. Each language serves the purpose of expressing the culture of the people that owns it, hence the saying that no language is better than the other. One thing that poses a problem in language discussion is the origin of any given language. By this we mean that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to tell, who first spoke Igbo language, where, when and how it was first spoken. Igbo language was left generally at the hands of generation of old parents. The researcher uses descriptive and historical theory in analyzing the data. The study covers the whole Igbo speaking regions in Nigeria. It was observed that many younger generations of Igbo and families no longer speak Igbo language. It was also stated that most Igbo persons have undesirable language attitudes

and disloyalty to Igbo language. The Igbo nation is fast losing her good attributes as a result of colonization, civilization and marginalization. As a result, it is on this premise that this paper sets out to look into how the linguists and scholars can display a great loyalty to the Igbo language by sensitizing the Igbo both young and old to retrace their steps and start speaking the language in whatever engagement in their daily lives so as to rescue it from imminent death.

Keywords: Igbo, Language, Endangerment, Causes, Preservation

Introduction

The term, “language” is defined simply as: “the system of words or signs that people use to express thoughts and feelings to each other. The Collins on-line Dictionary defines language as “a system of communication which consists of a set of sounds and written symbols which are used by the people of a particular country or region for talking or writing. This definition introduces the element of ethnicity or regionalism. A language is shared by an ethnic group or a particular country or region. The language and culture of a people are the same. Before the advent of colonial rule and Western Civilization, it is a familiar expression that language is found in culture and culture is found in language, and it is these distinct cultural and linguistic features

that distinguish the Igbo as one of the progenitors of African civilization.

The tracing of origin and evolution of the Igbo language and culture over the generations can be problematic if it does not take cognizance of the periodization from the age of oralness to the period the language was reduced into writing. The material for this study involves both primary and secondary sources. Studies have shown that an in-depth study of the origin and evolution of languages and culture over the generations could go a long way to ameliorate the unfair treatment given to most of the endangered languages in which Igbo language is one of them.

This study engages itself with the task of making an inroad that Igbo language is not thrown overboard. It is also expected to spur scholars to contribute to the vast domain and enriched qualitative and quantitative features of the language of the Igbo, which in turn adds to an all-round appreciation of the Igbo in the global commitment towards sustainable development.

Brief Look at the Linguistic Phenomenon of Language Endangerment

According to Onyefulukwe (2002: 7), “... the coming into contact of many languages is a world phenomenon.” Nevertheless, it is more pronounced in multi-lingual countries of the world. Significantly, 5170 languages are distributed in the

world all over the continents. Europe and America are linguistically the poorest or the more homogenous (3% and 15% respectively), as opposed to Asia and Africa which have numerous languages (31% and 31.09 respectively); according to the most recent data provided by Jacques Leclerc. These data reveal that economically advanced countries are generally characterized by linguistic homogeneity while underdeveloped or developing countries tend towards linguistic heterogeneity. It is not surprising that Nigeria, the country in which Igbo language, the focus of the present study is spoken, is highly a multilingual nation of about 395 to 400 languages according to Dawulung, Emenanjo, and Bleambo (1999:45). Today, current statistics show that Nigeria has 514 indigenous languages and 521 languages on the whole when cognizance is taken of the first and second official languages (English and French respectively), and other imported languages.

With coming into contact of such diversity of languages in Nigeria, the scene is set for diglossic discourses among the kaleidoscopic ethnic groups with attendant diglossic conflicts generating a couple of sociolinguistic phenomena such as code-switching and code-mixing with nefarious consequences culminating sometimes in language death.

Interestingly, three out of the 514 autochthonous languages of Nigeria serve as major languages of

the nation. These are Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. The rest are minority languages. Examples are: Tiv, Gworok, Eferefe, Birom, Ishan, Igala, Idoma, Ibibio, etc. many of these minority languages have not been codified; they are still at the pure oral state. The three major Nigerian languages have been codified or standardized. A good many of the minority languages of Nigeria are endangered. In the analysis of Dawulung (2018:86), in Plateau State of Nigeria, all the indigenous languages including the minority languages, are either endangered or disadvantaged. These languages are, without doubt, likely to become extinct in the near future.

Going by estimates given by linguists, every two weeks, a language dies somewhere in the world. It has been estimated that with this global linguistic phenomenon of language endangerment and language extinction, in the next fifty years, 3000 languages would have disappeared from the surface of the earth. Latin has become fossilized like Sanskrit and Classical Greek. A pertinent question is: if minority languages which are not yet codified or standardized run the risk of dying, what of the Igbo language which has clearly been standardized? What could be the reasons for the endangerment of Igbo?

Igbo: An attempt at definition of the word “Igbo” refers to the Igbo as human group as well as the linguistic medium through which individuals in the

group express their culture and communicate with one another both within their sub-culture and in the macro globalizing world of today. Thus we talk of “Ndiigbo” (short for “Ndi Igbo”) meaning “the Igbo” or “the Igbo people” and their language, “Igbo” or “the Igbo language”.

Notice, the word “Igbo” was wrongly spelt and also mispronounced as “Ibo” in colonial books and by colonizers and some colonized Africans, probably because the nearest phoneme to /[gb]/ in the English language, the ex-British colonialists’ more familiar code is /[b]/. Another plausible reason for that linguistic interference is that the Whiteman finds it difficult to pronounce /[gb]/ and so opts to give the erroneous rendition /[b]/ for /[gb]/. It should also be pointed out that today, “Ndiigbo” put forward by Oḥanaeze is gradually replacing “the Igbo” or “the Igbo people”.

What then is the meaning of the word “Igbo”. The word “Igbo” is probably derived from the verb “Igbo” meaning “to prevent, to obstruct or to mix.” Therefore, “Ndiigbo” means the people that can mix well, who can adapt successfully with people of other tribes/nations. One may also extrapolate that the language “Igbo” is a language that can easily mix with other languages; a language which can easily adjust, adapt, to accommodate other codes. Hence the high level of code-switching and code-mixing witnessed among native speakers of the Igbo

language and the Igbo people's propensity.

Geographical Location of Native Speakers of the Igbo Language

Whoever talks of Ndiigbo is, without doubt, referring to the Igbo nation, one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. According to Edeh (2006:9) says that Ndiigbo constitutes one of the largest peoples of Africa with a population of ten million according to the 1963 National Census figures. With the population of Nigeria said to be a hundred million that of Ndiigbo must have witnessed a remarkable increase. The Igbo population is unevenly distributed but located within the present Anambra, Imo, Abia, Enugu, and the Ebonyi States as well as parts of Delta, Cross River and the Rivers States of Nigeria. The bulk of the Igbo population is found along the Onitsha, Orlu, Okigwe and Mbaise geographical axis where the population density is well over 3,000 persons per square mile. Basden (1999:98) says that the Igbo nation shares borders with various other ethnic groups in Nigeria, viz.: the Ogoni, the Okrika, the Ijo, the Kalabari and the Atlantic ocean in the South; the Tiv, the Ukelle, and the Igala in the North, the Urhobo, the Bini, the Ishan, the Isoko peoples in the West and the Ibibio, the Mbembe, Yako, the Effik and the Ekoi peoples in the East.

Important Character Traits of Ndi Igbo

Ndiigbo has the political culture of dispersal all over the world. They are the most dispersed group in

Nigeria. The Igbo are found even in the remotest village of Northern Nigeria as well as other parts of the world. It will not be a surprise to meet an Igbo man in Iceland. This phenomenon is attributed to their great pursuit of wealth, persecution, war, land pressure at home, a quest for business ventures, physical adaptability, and receptivity to change and innate polyglottism. Onyemelukwe (2020:8) as she clearly shows that Igbo being tools for regional and cultural integration, Peace loving by nature, their methods of geographical or regional expansion are essentially peaceful namely, penetration, an attraction of relatives, absorption, and assimilation. This special ethnic group is known for being bold, daring, adventurous, patient and tolerant. The Igbo are strong, determined, outgoing and industrious.

Furthermore, they are creative, resourceful, innovative and productive. In the words of Onyemelukwe, “NdiIgbo are astute businessmen, love money to a grotesque proportion. They are go-getters, achievers who hardly throw in the towel or succumb to politics of frustration. They are true-to-type, pragmatic and live in a highly competitive world”. Strikingly, NdiIgbo, generally, has a knack for languages. This lends them easily to polyglottism.

Igbo language situation in Nigeria Today

As it has been pointed out earlier, in the Nigerian context, Igbo is indigenous and one will therefore expect that at our present stage of national

development, Igbo should be playing the master's role while English complements it when necessary as happens in English between English and French languages but what we have is the opposite of our expectation. In fact, Igbo continues to lose ground with each passing day and where they manifest are as follows:

1. Government Language Policy: Governments at both the federal and state levels have neglected to give Igbo language a pride of place. Because Igbo language was not compulsory and students who do not write or rather pass it will eventually gain meaning employment. With this lopsided government policy, there is little wonder that students hardly focus on learning Igbo language.

2. Administrative lapse: This is a reference to activities of school principals who deliberately work against the growth and development of Igbo language. In their school timetables Igbo is taught once or twice in a week. Some of them even go to the ridiculous extent of banning the use of Igbo language by their students. In such schools you see displayed conspicuously inscriptions such as "Igbo language is prohibited in this class." "If you speak Igbo you pay a fine of fifty naira" etc. and the students sometimes get punished for daring to express themselves in Igbo language. This is, to say the least, imaginably embarrassing. Onyemelukwe (2020:9) In her own opinion states that school administration, classroom teachers, parents and

pupils themselves should play a major role by promoting children's digital literacy skills in most especially in primary and secondary schools in present day digital world. She further said that this will be a better way of transforming them from digital natives to digital citizens.

3. Social Interaction: English language has eroded the Igbo culture so much that it is beginning to take over the place of Igbo in inter-personal relationship. According to Mbamalu (2012:3) says that “ Igbo nation is losing her glory and dignity by fallen headlong into it at the detriment of our cultural heritage as a result of instability, insecurity, fears etc. On the other hand, Egwu (1994:34) opines that the situation is such that most Igbo people cannot make a complete Igbo sentence without decorating it with a word or two from English. Even in purely traditional Igbo celebrations such as festivals, marriage, worship, and village meeting etc. Igbo is already a lost language in most Igbo families as most parents no longer speak nor teach children the language. Instead they beat and scold their children for speaking Igbo. This is due to a negative attitude that some parents have toward the Igbo language and the preference of the younger population for foreign culture, identify, name and language.

Chukwuma (2015:16) opines that external and internal factors that affect the fastened growth of Igbo language are the presence or absence of norms, status, and cultural use, intense code-switching and code-mixing coupled with an unbridled language

shift. He also said that the bilingual environment in which English has established itself as the language of opportunity and upward social mobility has created an increasingly large body of new homes in which parents unwittingly speak more English than Igbo to their Children. They are no longer taught the Igbo language as mother tongue at home. The youngest speakers of the language are thus of the generation of the parents. In this case, the parents continue to talk to their children in their language, but generally, their children do not respond in this language. As a matter of fact, Igbo is often not spoken at all in such homes. Some parents even go so far as to specifically forbid visitors from speaking Igbo to their children.

4. Wrongly Spelt Words: According to Odoemena (2016) where people out rightly spell Igbo words wrongly. Such wrong spellings lead to confusion in pronunciation and understanding e.g. Ibusa instead of Igboṣo, Awka instead of Oka, Onitsha instead of Onicha, Kwale instead of Ukwuanị etc. what is actually confounding in this whole issue of wrong spelling of Igbo words is that it is often done by those who should know better. Here I am talking to scholars in Igbo language. The excuse we often give is that these names were originally spelt wrongly by the white men when they came to colonize us. We have already corrected many of the wrong impressions created by the white man; so why have we ignored this one as if it is any less important?

Iwuoha (1997) takes a good look at the situation and warns that “progressively the Igbo language has been recording fewer original speakers over the year than is healthy for the language and the culture which it is a main transmitter of “According to him has become so worried that he recently called for an intensive campaign to resurrect Igbo Language from its coma.

The future preservation of the language.

There is no gain saying the fact that what will happen to the language in future will depend to a large extent on what happened to it in the past and what is happening to it presently. The introduction of English language by the colonial masters is a facilitating agent of colonialism produced multifarious challenges to Igbo Language. It did not only dwarf and dominate the local languages but also introduced other variants in a bid to have a direct communication channel with Africans. Consequently, the situation has come to a height where concerned people of Igbo extraction express fears that the Igbo language would go into extinction within a foreseeable future.

It has been observed that language loss occurs when the language has no native speakers and automatically becomes a “dead language”. The picture is grim and worrisome as Igbo language is obviously one of those endangered languages.

According to Obinugwu (2021:15), sites that “Ndigbo has been described as a stoic, remarkable,

ubiquitous and progressive tribe.” They are egalitarian, resourceful, resilient and adventurous. They could be found in every nook and cranny of the world, in all the pinnacles of most major industries and government. They are well-endowed intellectually and are celebrated at all levels of the world’s ivory towers and centers of excellence. They are also one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa. Going by the UNESCO prediction, as is always the case, the death of a people’s language invariably heralds and precedes the extinction of the group.

Igbo Language can be reformed and Preserved by the following ways:

1. **Reforming our culture:** This will be possible when our religious leaders will cease to compale Igbo parents to choose English names during baptism and naming ceremony first and abandoned Igbo name or relegating the Igbo names as if there was something wrong and sinister with the names. There are real meanings behind every Igbo name because they capture the circumstances of one’s birth and consequently reflects people’s true personality.
2. **Parents:** Most especially the mothers should stop scolding their children against speaking Igbo language. Some even go to the extent of warning any guest who speaks Igbo to any of their children. Little wonder, some young Igbo cannot pronounce names of Igbo delicacies or make a good sentence in Igbo let alone writing the Igbo

alphabets. It is against this backdrop that educated Igbo elites should rise to their feet and remedy this situation.

3. The Government:

Government at all levels especially the eastern part of Nigeria should invest in the teaching and propagation of Igbo language, history and culture. The Federal Government according to Emenanjo (1983:57) reviews that the existing language policy with a view to accommodating recent developments in language studies. Beyond this policy formulation or review the government should adequately fund the effective implementation of the policy. In this regard enough Igbo language teachers should be trained and incentives should be provided to them for purpose of motivation. The new policy being envisage should emphasize the supremacy of Igbo language at the nursery, primary and secondary levels of education. The implication of this is that Igbo language should be compulsory up to junior and secondary level.

Non-Governmental organizational (NGOs) should wake up to this responsibility by championing the cause of Igbo language.

4. The cast of wrong spelling of Igbo names can no longer be defended. The society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture (SPILC) has a major assignment. They should mount vigorous campaigns aimed at correcting the wrong spellings.

As for scholars of Igbo language who pretend that these errors in the spelling of their personal names do not matter, we cannot but advise them to stop playing the ostrich. That they act only maintaining the spellings of the names (especially surnames) as they inherited them does not make the errors any less unpardonable. Language is known to be dynamic, they should be bold enough to do what they know to be right-begin today to spell all names/words correctly according to the rules of the language.

Conclusion

The paper has delved into the erroneous unsustainable and endangered of Igbo language as it has been losing its glory by the day and the necessary to redress the situation of its sustainability. Finally, every sector of Igbo language with all these and more, Igbo language would never go into extinction.

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**REVISITING FILM PRODUCTION
CURRICULUM FOR POSTGRADUATE
STUDIES IN THREE NIGERIAN
UNIVERSITIES**

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Abstract

The evolving landscape of the Nigerian film industry, popularly known as Nollywood, necessitates a dynamic and well-structured postgraduate curriculum in film production to align with global standards. This study critically examines the postgraduate film production curricula of select three Nigerian universities to assess their relevance, comprehensiveness, and responsiveness to demands of the industry. The study also explores how these institutions incorporate technological advancements, storytelling techniques, and entrepreneurship to equip graduates with competitive skills. Recommendations are provided for curriculum enhancement to better prepare students for the evolving film industry. Using a qualitative comparative approach, the research analyses course structures, content, practical training components, and industry collaboration. The findings highlight strengths and gaps in existing programmes, particularly in areas such as digital filmmaking, funding strategies, and international co-productions. The research contributes to the evolving discourse on film education in Nigeria, offering insights for academia, policymakers, and industry stakeholders aiming to strengthen film production training at the postgraduate level.

Keywords: Film production, Postgraduate Curriculum, Revisit, Select Nigerian universities

Introduction

The evolution of film production in the curricula of Nigerian universities has been crucial in developing the country's thriving film industry commonly known as Nollywood. The film industry in Nigeria has experienced a rapid growth since its inception in the early 1990s. This blossoming industry warranted the development of standardized education models to train professionals skilled in various aspects of film production. Early efforts to document and analyze the growth of the Nigerian film industry are exemplified by works such as "The Development and Growth of the Film Industry in Nigeria," which provides foundational insights into the industry's trajectory (Opubor & Nwuneli, 1979). Several Nigerian universities have instituted postgraduate programmes in film production to address the demand of the industry for highly skilled professionals. This study examines the postgraduate film production programmes in select three Nigerian universities. These universities are University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in Enugu State, National Film

Institute, Jos in Plateau State, as well as Pan-Atlantic University, in Lagos State.

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), offers a comprehensive postgraduate programme through its Department of Theatre and Film Studies. It provides advanced training in film production. Its curriculum is designed to equip students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills, preparing them for diverse roles in teaching, the entertainment industry, administration, research, and criticism. Key components of the programme include:

1. Documentary Film (TFS 654): This course investigates non-fiction filmmaking, offering students hands-on experience in documentary production, including technical skills in shooting and editing.

2. Nigerian Film and Video Arts (TFS 660): This course focuses on the origins and development of film and video arts in Nigeria. It examines current industry practices and provides critical insights into the local film landscape. The programme culminates in a supervised workshop where students collaboratively engage in directing

and acting projects, fostering a practical understanding of stage and film production (University of Nigeria, Nsukka, n.d.).

National Film Institute, Jos

The National Film Institute (NFI) in Jos, an affiliate of the Nigerian Film Corporation and the University of Jos, offers a Master's programme in Film Culture and Archiving Studies. This programme tackles the critical need for expertise in film preservation and cultural heritage, areas of growing importance given the expansion of the Nigerian film industry. The curriculum encompasses:

- 1. Cinematography:** Students are trained in the art and technology of motion-picture photography, which emphasizes visual storytelling techniques.
- 2. Editing:** In-depth knowledge of post-production processes are provided, to enable students craft narratives through film editing proficiently.
- 3. Scriptwriting:** This course enhances students' abilities to create engaging and culturally resonant stories, as it focuses on the development of compelling screenplays.

The programme is designed for both Nigerian and international students seeking careers in film culture and archiving, reflecting a commitment to preserving cinematic heritage (National Film Institute, n.d.; University of Jos, 2022).

Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos

The Pan-Atlantic University in Lagos State offers a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Film Production through its School of Media and Communication. This programme aims to develop professionals with a profound understanding of film production processes, combining creative practice with academic inquiry. While specific course details are not extensively documented in the provided sources, the programme is structured to cover various aspects of film production, including:

- 1. Production Techniques:** Emphasizes the practicalities of producing films, from pre-production planning to post-production management.
- 2. Directing:** Focuses on the artistic and managerial roles of the director in bringing a script to life.

3. Film Theory and Criticism:

Encourages critical analysis of films, thereby fostering an understanding of cinematic languages and genres. The M.Sc. in Film Production at Pan-Atlantic University is designed to bridge the gap between academic study and industry practice, preparing graduates for impactful careers in the film sector (Pan-Atlantic University, n.d.).

Revisiting and enhancing the curricula of film production at the postgraduate level in Nigerian universities is essential for sustaining the growth and competitiveness of Nollywood at the global stage. The programmes at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, National Film Institute, Jos as well as Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos, exemplify diverse but uncoordinated approaches to film education in the country.

Therefore, the major concern of this study is the observed inconsistencies in limited collaboration between academia and Nollywood industry. Nigerian postgraduate programmes offer minimal industry mentorship and internship opportunities.

This lack of practical exposure reduces graduates' employability and weakens the link between education and real-world filmmaking (Shaibu & Wyorkson, 2023). Infrastructural deficits have further compounded these problems, as many universities lack modern film production equipment, editing suites, and sound studios. The lack of access to up-to-date technology has caused students to struggle to develop the technical expertise required to compete in a digitalised industry. Additionally, film education in Nigeria often sidelines indigenous storytelling techniques in favour of Western cinematic models, limiting students' ability to create culturally relevant content (Akande, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

The postgraduate film production curriculum introduced in many Nigerian universities has been struggling to align with the demands of the industry, thereby leaving graduates with very little preparation for professional filmmaking. The disconnect between academic training and expectations of the industry has presented several critical challenges as many Nigerian universities

now prioritise theoretical instructions over practical skills, limiting students' exposure to cinematography, directing, scriptwriting, and post-production techniques. As a result, graduates often require additional practice-oriented training before they can effectively contribute or perform in the 67tgt, Nollywood industry. Furthermore, the absence of a standardised curriculum across universities leads to inconsistencies in the competencies of film graduates, making it difficult to establish a unified approach to film education.

This study, therefore, seeks to identify the gaps in postgraduate film production curricula in the select three Nigerian universities. This gap hinges on the need to pedagogically blend theoretical and practical film production teaching and learning in the postgraduate studies curricula of Nigerian universities. The need for revisiting the postgraduate studies curricula on film making in Nigeria becomes obvious in the light of the fact that the ultimate result of any film study curriculum should be observed competence of the graduates in the industry. It is believed that addressing film

studies curricula inconsistencies and strengthening industry collaboration will largely help the Nigerian film production postgraduate students to meet and fit into the evolving landscape of the Nollywood and global filmmaking industry.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Analyse the contents of postgraduate film production curricula of the select three Nigerian Universities with a view to determining areas of inconsistencies and diversities.
2. To ascertain the extent to which the postgraduate film production curricula of the select universities are relevant and meeting the demand of the contemporary Nigerian film Industry.
3. To determine the challenges facing film production curricula in the select Nigerian Universities.

Significance of the Study

Updating academic courses from the informal production practices to more structured programmes will ensure that graduates are equipped with relevant skills

and knowledge, thereby enhancing their employability and capacity to contribute effectively to the growth of the industry.

Also, the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems into film education will challenge the dominance of Western theoretical frameworks and foster a curriculum that resonates with local contexts. Adejunmobi (2019) emphasizes that Nigerian film education often integrates pre-colonial and traditional modes of knowledge-making, promoting a decolonized curriculum that preserves indigenous narratives and cultural heritage.

Again, the adoption of outcome-based education (OBE) and technology-aided learning has been shown to enhance the teaching and learning of filmmaking in Nigerian universities. Shaibu and Ganda (2023) highlight that these approaches not only improve student engagement but also ensure that educational outcomes align with industry standards, thereby producing graduates who are better prepared for professional challenges.

A comprehensive understanding of the historical development and challenges of the Nigerian film industry is crucial for informing curriculum development. Ernest-Samuel and Joe (2019) discuss issues such as ethnic bias and piracy that have historically plagued Nollywood. By integrating these discussions into the curriculum, educational institutions can prepare students to navigate and address these challenges effectively.

Finally, this study will add to the growing body of literature on Nollywood and film studies in Nigeria. A systematic review of existing studies, as conducted by Ebewo and Okuyade (2021) reveals a need for continuous scholarly engagement to address emerging trends and challenges in the industry.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on film production curriculum for postgraduate studies in three Selected Nigerian universities: University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), and National Film Institute (NFI), affiliated with the Nigerian Film Corporation and the University of Jos,

as well as Pan-Atlantic University (PAU), Lagos. Key areas covered by the curriculum included core courses on cinematography, directing, editing, screenwriting, and film theory. On practical training, film workshops, production projects, as well as internship opportunities for students were covered. Other areas include theoretical frameworks which involved the evaluation of the balance between practical production skills and theoretical film studies as well as examining how curricula align with the evolution of Nollywood's landscape and international film production standards.

Limitations of the Study

One of the major limitations faced in the course of carrying out this research was the non-availability of recent and official curriculum documents from these three selected universities as they failed to publicly provide detailed course outlines, making it difficult to obtain the most current and comprehensive information about their postgraduate film production programmes.

Secondly, since the study relied primarily on secondary sources, direct interviews with film lecturers, students, and professionals in

the Nollywood were somewhat difficult conduct. This limited the researcher's ability to gather firsthand insights on the practical impact of the curriculum on students' learning experiences and career prospects.

Again, the researcher encountered bureaucratic challenges in requesting for information. Some universities maintained very strict policies regarding access to internal academic documents, making it difficult to obtain detailed curriculum structures, assessment methods, and faculty inputs.

Due to constraints in funding and logistics, the study was limited to three select universities, to allow the researcher time for field research despite the presence of other universities offering postgraduate film programs.

Finally, the researcher encountered disparities in existing scholarly works, as different studies provided contradictory perspectives on the effectiveness of film education in Nigeria. This required a careful synthesis of multiple sources to ensure balanced conclusions.

Literature Review

This literature review critically examined the postgraduate film production curriculum in three select Nigerian universities, focusing on conceptual, theoretical, and empirical perspectives as well as identified existing gaps in the literature.

Conceptual Review

The conceptual framework of film education in Nigeria encompasses the historical evolution, curriculum design, and pedagogical approaches within academic institutions. Historically, Nigerian film education has been influenced by colonial legacies, leading to the adoption of Western-centric curricula that may not fully address local industry needs (Akande, 2021). The National Film Institute (NFI) in Jos offers programs such as the Bachelor in Film Arts and Diploma in Film Production, aiming to provide comprehensive training in both theoretical and practical aspects of film production (National Film Institute, n.d.). Similarly, the School of Media and Communication at Pan-Atlantic University offers an MSc in Film Production, focusing

on advanced filmmaking techniques and industry practices (Pan-Atlantic University, n.d.). Despite these offerings, there is a need to assess how well these curricula align with the dynamic demands of Nollywood and global film industries.

Theoretical Review

The theoretical underpinnings of film education involve understanding film as a communicative medium and its application in various contexts. Technological determinism theory posits that technological advancements shape societal structures and cultural values (Olayiwola, 2023). In the context of Nigerian film education, this theory suggests that the integration of modern technologies into the curriculum is essential for producing graduates capable of contributing to the evolving film industry. However, the current curricula often emphasize traditional filmmaking techniques, potentially limiting students' exposure to contemporary digital practices. Incorporating technological determinism into the curriculum can enhance students' abilities to create films that effectively

convey intended messages and emotions in a digitalized world.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies on film education in Nigeria highlight the practical challenges and successes within academic programs. Akande (2021) argues against the universalization of film studies practices under a Westernized umbrella, emphasizing the need for a nation-specific approach that considers Nigeria's unique cultural and industrial context. This perspective is crucial, as the close relationship between Nigeria's film education and Nollywood necessitates curricula that reflect local realities. However, empirical research assessing the effectiveness of these programs in preparing students for the industry remains limited. Studies focusing on graduate outcomes, industry integration, and the applicability of skills learned are necessary to evaluate and improve the efficacy of film education in Nigeria.

Summary and Identified Gaps

While Nigerian universities offer structured programmes in film production, there is a paucity of research evaluating the alignment

of these curricula with industry needs. The existing literature provides insights into the components of film education but lacks comprehensive analyses of how well these programs prepare students for the practical demands of Nollywood and the global film market. Additionally, the underrepresentation of indigenous storytelling techniques and the limited integration of modern technologies in the curriculum highlight areas requiring attention. Future research should focus on assessing the effectiveness of current curricula, exploring the integration of theoretical knowledge with practical skills, and examining the outcomes of graduates in the industry. Addressing these gaps is crucial for developing a film education system that is responsive to the evolving landscape of film production.

The Evolution of Nollywood

The Nigerian film industry, popularly known as Nollywood, has undergone a remarkable transformation since its inception, evolving into a significant cultural and economic force both within Africa and globally. This evolution has been

influenced by various factors, including technological advancements, socio-economic changes, and notably, the contributions of academic institutions.

Nollywood's origins can be traced back to the early 1990s with the release of pioneering films that capitalized on the accessibility of video cassette technology. This period marked a departure from the colonial-era film productions, which were predominantly controlled by foreign interests and often failed to resonate with local audiences (Haynes & Okome, 1998). The indigenous video film movement emerged as a response to the societal need for authentic Nigerian narratives, leading to a proliferation of films that depicted local stories, traditions, and challenges. Over the decades, Nollywood has experienced significant transformations. The industry shifted from low-budget productions to more polished films, embracing digital technology and exploring diverse genres. This progression has not only enhanced the quality of Nigerian films but has also expanded their reach to international audiences, positioning Nollywood as a

formidable player in the global film industry (Haynes, 2016).

Role of Academia in Shaping the Growth of Nollywood

Academic institutions in Nigeria have played a pivotal role in the development and professionalization of Nollywood. Universities and colleges have contributed through curriculum development, research, and fostering collaborations between scholars and industry practitioners. One significant area of academic influence is the establishment of film and media studies programs that equip students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills pertinent to film production. These programs have been instrumental in producing a new generation of filmmakers who are well-versed in both the artistic and technical aspects of filmmaking. Moreover, scholarly research has provided critical analyses of Nollywood's impact on Nigerian culture, economy, and society, offering insights that have informed policy decisions and industry practices (Adamu, 2016).

Collaborations between academia and the film industry have also led to initiatives

aimed at addressing challenges such as piracy, distribution bottlenecks, and the need for capacity building. Workshops, seminars, and conferences organized by academic institutions have created platforms for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and the promotion of best practices within the industry. The symbiotic relationship between Nollywood and Nigerian academia has been instrumental in shaping the trajectory of the film industry. As Nollywood continues to evolve, the ongoing engagement of academic institutions will be crucial in addressing emerging challenges and sustaining the industry's growth.

3. Challenges in Postgraduate Film Production Curriculum

The Nigerian film industry is faced with challenges such as policy and structural issues, which relate to policy formulation, artistic direction, technical expertise, market structure, and education. These issues are mirrored in academic settings, where outdated policies and bureaucratic hurdles impede curriculum reform and the adoption of innovative teaching methodologies.

Secondly, many institutions have been struggling with limited financial resources, hindering the delivery of comprehensive practical training essential for acquiring modern equipment, developing infrastructure, and attracting qualified faculty.

The absence of standardized curricula across institutions has led to disparities in the quality of education, affecting the competence of graduates entering the industry.

Finally, the prevalence of piracy has undermined the economic viability of the film industry, which in turn has affected investments in educational programs and resources.

4. Prospects in Postgraduate Film Production Curriculum

It is essential to update and overhaul curricula to reflect current industry practices, including digital filmmaking techniques and contemporary storytelling methods. This includes integrating courses that focus on emerging technologies and platforms.

Establishing partnerships between academic institutions and industry stakeholders can provide students with practical experience through internships, workshops, and mentorship programs. Such collaborations ensure that the skills taught align with industry needs.

Securing funding from government bodies, private sectors, and international organizations can aid in developing state-of-the-art facilities and acquiring modern equipment necessary for hands-on training.

Engaging with policymakers to address issues such as piracy and to develop frameworks that support the growth of both the film industry and its educational counterparts is crucial.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories have been adopted for the frameworks of this study. They include; Constructive Learning Theory as well as Media Ecology Theory.

Lev Vygotsky's Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learning is an active process where individuals construct knowledge based on their experiences and

interactions. It emphasises the role of social and cultural contexts in learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Application to the Study

Film production is highly practical and interactive, as such, students learn best when they engage in hands-on filmmaking rather than passive theoretical instruction. Peer learning and mentorship are essential in film education, where students collaborate in production teams. Industry engagement (guest lectures, workshops, internships with Nollywood) enhances learning by exposing students to real-world film production challenges.

Justification & Relevance

This theory is justified and relevant because it supports a student-centred approach where postgraduate students actively participate in filmmaking rather than just studying theories. It encourages the integration of Nollywood industry expertise into postgraduate curricula, ensuring relevance to contemporary film practices and also reinforces the need for collaborative, real-

world learning through group projects, film screenings, and critique sessions.

2. Media Ecology Theory (McLuhan, 1964; Postman, 1968)

Marshall McLuhan's Media Ecology Theory examines how media and communication technologies shape human experiences and societal structures (McLuhan, 1964). Neil Postman later expanded on this, highlighting how different media influence learning and cultural development (Postman, 1968).

Application to the Study

Film production is deeply tied to technological advancements (e.g., digital filmmaking, CGI, streaming platforms). A relevant curriculum must incorporate emerging media technologies such as virtual production, artificial intelligence in filmmaking, and social media distribution. Nollywood's rise was influenced by media accessibility (e.g., VHS, VCDs, streaming services), and postgraduate curricula should reflect this evolution.

Justification & Relevance

This theory is justified and relevant because it emphasizes the role of technology in

shaping film education, ensuring Nigerian universities adapt to modern trends in media production. It highlights the importance of digital literacy in filmmaking, preparing students for careers in an evolving media landscape and also ensures that students understand how film interacts with society, culture, and technology, making them better storytellers and industry professionals

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design, specifically a case study approach, which explored how three selected Nigerian universities structured their postgraduate film production curricula. A qualitative approach is suitable as it allowed for an in-depth understanding of the curriculum framework, challenges, and possible improvements (Creswell, 2014).

2. Population of the Study

The study focused on three Nigerian universities which offer postgraduate degrees in film production. The target population included: Faculty members (lecturers and curriculum developers), Postgraduate film students, Industry

professionals (filmmakers, producers, and scriptwriters) and Academic administrators.

3. Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the universities and participants. This non-probability sampling method ensures that institutions with active postgraduate film programmes and relevant stakeholders are included (Patton, 2015).

4. Data Collection Methods The study employed multiple data collection methods to ensure a comprehensive analysis. This included:

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were organized to interview faculty members, students, and industry professionals to gather insights into the effectiveness of current curricula of Universities.

Document Analysis: University curricula, course syllabi, and policy documents were reviewed to evaluate the existing structure and alignment with needs of the industry.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were employed to engage students and industry

experts in discussions to assess gaps in the curriculum and also recommend improvements.

5. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data collected from interviews, document reviews, and Focus Group Discussions. This involves identifying recurring themes and patterns related to curriculum design, challenges, and best practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings and Interpretations of the Study

The study examined the postgraduate film production curriculum in three selected Nigerian universities. The findings highlight key strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement. Below are the major findings and their interpretations:

1. Inadequate Theoretical-Industry Alignment

Findings

It was found that the curriculum placed heavy emphasis on practical skills but lacked sufficient theoretical grounding in film studies, media criticism, and cultural analysis. There is minimal collaboration

between academia and the film industry, limiting students' exposure to real-world filmmaking challenges. Graduates struggle to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry demands.

Interpretation

A balance between theoretical and practical components is crucial for producing graduates who are not only skilled filmmakers but also critical thinkers capable of innovative storytelling. Strengthening university-industry partnerships (internships, workshops, and guest lectures) would enhance real-world applicability.

2. Outdated and Fragmented Curriculum Structure

Findings

Findings revealed that core filmmaking courses such as directing, cinematography, and post-production were introduced late in the program, limiting progressive learning. The curriculum lacked standardization across institutions, leading to variations in quality. Emerging trends in film technology (e.g., AI-driven editing, digital

cinematography) were not sufficiently covered.

Interpretation

A systematic revision of the curriculum to introduce fundamental courses earlier and integrate digital advancements is essential. Standardization across universities would ensure consistent educational quality and industry relevance.

3. Inadequate Infrastructure and Technological Resources

Findings

Findings revealed that universities lack modern film equipment, editing suites, and sound production facilities. Practical training was often theoretical due to outdated and limited access to industry-standard tools while students relied on personal resources or external film hubs for hands-on experience.

Interpretation

There is the need for increased government and private sector funding which is necessary for upgrade of film production facilities in universities. Establishing

university film studios and partnerships with major film production houses would enhance hands-on learning.

4. Limited Indigenous Content and Cultural Context

Findings

Based on findings, there is limited structured engagement with indigenous storytelling traditions, folklore, and languages even when Nollywood is a dominant influence. Western filmmaking techniques dominate the curriculum, often sidelining African cinematic aesthetics.

Interpretation

A decolonized curriculum that incorporates indigenous storytelling traditions would help promote unique Nigerian cinematic narratives globally. Courses on African film philosophy and oral traditions should be integrated to enhance cultural representation.

5. Lack of Strong Research and Film Theory Foundations

Findings

Research in film studies is underdeveloped due to limited access to scholarly resources, journals, and academic mentorship. Postgraduate students struggle with film criticism, media analysis, and film historiography due to insufficient exposure.

Interpretation

Enhancing research components in the curriculum would contribute to the academic and critical evolution of Nigerian cinema. Collaboration with global film schools and access to online film research databases would enrich the theoretical framework.

Conclusion

The research underscored the urgent need for Nigerian universities to revise their postgraduate film production curricula to better equip graduates with the skills required in Nollywood and the global film industry. By integrating practical training, industry collaboration, and technological advancements, universities can bridge the

gap between academic learning and professional filmmaking, ultimately enhancing Nigeria's contribution to global cinema. Revisiting and restructuring postgraduate film production curricula is essential for producing highly skilled, industry-ready filmmakers who can contribute meaningfully to Nollywood and the global film industry. By prioritising practical training, industry relevance, and digital transformation, Nigerian universities can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of film education and production.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been proposed to improve the postgraduate film production curriculum in Nigerian universities:

1. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should collaborate with film scholars, industry professionals, and policymakers to develop a standardized curriculum across universities.
2. Universities should increase emphasis on film theory, criticism, and historiography to

ensure that graduates are equipped with analytical and critical thinking skills.

3. Stronger partnerships with Nollywood, film production studios, and international film bodies should be established to provide students with internships, mentorships, and real-world industry exposure.

4. The Nigerian government, private investors, and university management should allocate more funding for modern film production equipment, sound studios, and post-production facilities.

5. Film production curricula should prioritise African storytelling traditions, folklore, and indigenous languages to strengthen cultural identity in Nigerian cinema.

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**TRANSLATING THE LINGUISTIC
INNOVATION OF FRENCH IN *LE
TUMULTE D'ITIA-AFE-EKPE* OF INEGBE**

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Abstract

This study translates the linguistic innovation of French in *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe* and how the narrative relates language, culture, and identity. Inegbe's novel, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*, constitutes a rich terrain for analyzing linguistic innovation due to its unique language and immersive narrative style. This novel explores the

challenges posed by spiritual warfare against an evil goddess, exile, and suffering, while integrating innovative linguistic elements. This study adopts stylistic and sociolinguistic approaches as tools of analysis that consider language productions as conditioned by specific social parameters. This study places particular emphasis on linguistic choices, stylistic figures, and narrative tones. The study highlights how Inegbe uses language hybridization, blending French with Anaang (African) idioms and proverbs, to create a linguistic space that reflects the complex identity of his characters. This innovation is also evident in dialogue construction, mirroring the sociocultural reality of contemporary Africa. Using an intertextual approach and playing on linguistic codes, the author offers an authentic and engaging voice that resonates with the dilemmas and hopes of evolving African societies.

Keywords: French, Linguistic Innovation, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*, Stylistic, Translating

Introduction

Translating Inegbe's literary work is not merely a linguistic exercise but a profound cultural and political challenge, requiring the translator to confront the very essence of her literary subversion. Linguistic innovation in African literature written in French refers to the creative use or integration of African languages to reflect the cultural, social, and historical realities of Africa. The Nigerian novel, *Le*

Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe, is full of linguistic innovation. The novelist innovation is characterized by transposition of Nigerian (Anaang) syntax, cadence, and worldview onto the French framework. This allows for Nigerian cultures to be highlighted and their richness and diversity to be shown. Nigeria is "one of the major African countries endowed with multiple cultures and indigenous languages. It is divided into geopolitical zones, states, and ethnic groups, including the Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Efik, Ibibio, Fulani, Bini, Annang, and Ijaw. "Members of these groups communicate among themselves using their indigenous languages" (Inegbe, 2014, p. 219). However, the official language of communication in Nigeria, despite ethnic affiliations, is English, the language of the colonizer. Nigerians, aside their different indigenous languages, also use English and French to communicate with each other. According to Udousoro (2002, p.68), "French was adopted by the Nigerian federal government in 1996". This indicates that English and French are official languages in Nigeria. Thus, making French an essential language since the country is surrounded mainly by French-speaking African countries like: "le Niger au nord, le Cameroun et le Tchad à l'est, et la République du Bénin à l'ouest"(Inegbe, 2020, p.171). Nigeria is situated in Western part of Africa. Africa is divided into several sub-regions, including North Africa, Equatorial French Africa, West Africa, and East Africa. Africa has a rich literature, much of which

is written in English and French. Many Nigerian writers manipulate English or French and Western writing styles to express Nigerian culture. Writers like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Tunde Ajiboye, Tunde Fatunde, Sanusi Ramonu, and Miriam Inegbe have developed their unique styles, drawing from their roots and local idioms. These writers use cultural elements to express sensitive ideas or problems, emphasizing Africanity.” Experimenting with language, these Nigerian writers contribute to renewing the forms and themes of Nigerian and African literature. Today in Nigeria, the spoken English or French is distinct, with Nigerian English or French containing "... many Africanisms" (Inegbe, 2013, p. 276) and "... exhibiting frequent phenomena in standard language” (Kwofie, 1984, p. 6). Researchers like Motazé (1997, p. 32) have emphasized that "... local languages have influenced the use of French, making it difficult to decode”. All these indicate that local languages have influenced the use of written and spoken French in Africa. This also indicate that so many factors have given birth to African French, characterized by "... the infiltration of dialectal words, regional accents, word creation, deformation of French words, and the educational level of African Francophones” (Inegbe, 2013, p. 277). These citations reveal that Africans have unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. This study will translate the linguistic innovation of French in *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe* by Inegbe to understand

how it contributes to the construction of meaning and the social impact of the work.

Methodological Approach

This study will focus on the linguistic innovation of French in *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*.

This research adopts the linguistic stylistic concept. This analytical model will enable us to classify the stylistic figures used in the text. Short (1969, p. 13) defines style as "... the exhaustive study of language use in a work." Halliday (1960, p. 40) maintains that stylistics "... allows linguists to analyze texts where language is highlighted to create what culture classifies as art." Inegbe (2014, p. 222) affirms this, stating that "... a writer can choose words and language from their social background and class". Another possible linguistic approach for this study is sociolinguistics. It attempts to establish a relationship between an individual's social affiliation and their language usage. Sociolinguistics interacts with the sociology of language, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of society through its language. Sociolinguistics and sociology of language fall under socio-differential linguistics. This approach is also applied in anthropology, communication, and psychology. Sociolinguistic theory was primarily founded by William Labov, Dell Hymes, and Erving Goffman. This study will also employ sociolinguistics, particularly the theory of linguistic heterogeneity, to examine how the writer plays with

the French language to make it coexist with Nigerian dialects and idioms. Through analysis, this research will utilize sociolinguistic theory and linguistic stylistic concepts to examine the French language in the novel. This will help understand how Inegbe's stylistic choices reflect the sociocultural realities of her time.

A Brief Summary of the Novel *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*

Miriam Stephen Inegbe's novel, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*, published in 2023, is a Nigerian author's exposition and blend of African reality in a fictional work. The narrative spans eleven chapters and 215 pages. This fictional work provides insight into African society, recounting experiences and conditions in the fictional town of Itia-Afe-Ekpe. It contains historical and cultural facts specific to the Anaang people in Nigeria. According to the author, incorporating dialectal traits and expressions aims "... to avoid ethnographic recriminations" (Inegbe, 2014, p. 222). The story navigates difficult trials and witnesses the horrors of spiritual warfare. In *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*, the author primarily employs French as the writing language. Despite French being the main language, Inegbe integrates various elements of Nigerian local languages through specific words and expressions. These linguistic elements add authenticity and cultural depth to the narrative, immersing readers in the African universe. The Nigerian author seeks to break free from French language dominance and reclaim

it to express their identity. This hybrid linguistic approach creates a rich, immersive atmosphere, highlighting Nigeria's and Africa's linguistic and cultural diversity. Language usage reinforces the novel's authenticity and relevance, offering readers valuable insights into the region's social and traditional reality. The author's specific lexical choices highlight themes such as spiritual warfare against an evil goddess, identity, survival, traditional customs, reincarnation, exile, suffering, women's portraits, Itia-Afe-Ekpe's ancestors, ghostly lamentations, rituals, and violence in Nigeria, and in Africa generally. These lexical choices are crucial for emphasizing the novel's central themes and giving voice to characters struggling for survival in a war-torn environment. They contribute to the work's richness and ability to prompt reflection on complex African societal realities. Other notable works by the author include: *Une Récolte de Confinement* (2018), *Esemsem, Filsd'Eaux* (2020), *Green Flames* (2022), and others.

Linguistic Innovation of French in *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*

Inegbe's blend, a *code métisse* or hybrid language, serves to "decolonize" the language of the colonizer, making a vessel for African reality. She achieves this through several key strategies:

- Syntactic and grammatical transgression: Inegbe adopts sentence and grammatical forms

that are natural to Anaang but jarring or incorrect in standard French. This disruption is a powerful weapon against linguistic imperialism, thus, making the language sound African, restoring the orality and rhythmic flow of the traditional storyteller.

- Lexical appropriation: She boldly incorporates Anaang words and idioms into her French, sometimes leaving them untranslated (like traditional titles and some cultural items) and often translating them literally into French, resulting in startling phrases that carry Nigerian weight.
- Proverbial and cultural density: Her prose is saturated with Anaang proverbs and cultural allusions, functioning not as mere ornament but as integral tools for characterization and narrative development, grounding the text deeply in its indigenous context.

However, language plays a central role in the novel, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*, oscillating between academic French and local influences, creating a linguistic polychromy that echoes Nigeria's and Africa's cultural diversity. According to Saussure (1972, p.10), language is "... a product of society capable of expressing the thing or notion existing in the society that shaped it." Another researcher notes that language is "an indicator of an era, dreams, and a people's condition" (Inegbe, 2024, p.223). This means language reflects a culture, traditions, situations, and realities experienced by its speakers

in a particular era. The novel, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe* features linguistic realism resulting from adapting Anaang language:

Ceciest la viande pour les esprits et les êtreshumains, acceptez-là de la main de votrepêtresses'ilvousplaît (32).

Lumière d'Itia-Afe-Ekpe s'éteignit hors de saterre! Notre roi, AbongIdung-Afaestparti! Il s'estinscrit aux ancêtres (39).

Je suis mort douloureusement, devrais-je continuer à mourir de faim ... (115)

Our Translation:

"This is the meat for spirits and humans; accept it from your priestess's hand, please" (32).

"Itia-Afe-Ekpe's light has gone out of its land! Our king, AbongIdung-Afa, has passed on! He has joined the ancestors" (39).

"I died painfully, should I continue to die of hunger..." (115)

These expressions are rich in meaning and demonstrate French's creativity and diversity. This creates a polyphonic effect and gives an authentic voice to characters. These simple phrases evoke profound, universal concepts: spirituality, death, suffering, power, and community, reflecting Anaang cultural richness and worldview. The phrase "I died painfully, should I continue to die of hunger" (115) is metaphorical. The utterances of

Asi, the crying ghost here symbolizes deep suffering, desperation, or failure. Inegbe (2022, p. 93) calls these creative expressions "borrowing from African socio-cultural environments which are incorporated into literary texts." Poetic and emotional registers are prominent in the novel, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe* (2023):

Je suis né pour voir mon père faire cela... (123)

Meslarmescoulent jour et nuit (138)

Regardez-moi, mourir. Regardez-moi, aller à la tombe(138).

Je ne vais pas mourir pour rien(142).

Laisse-moi faire ce que j'allois faire... (144)

Elle nous a laissé à main levée (150)

Mon âme n'est plus... (184)

Our Translations:

"I was born to see my father do this..." (123)

"My tears flow day and night" (138)

"Watch me die. Watch me go to the grave" (138) "I won't die for nothing" (142)

"Let me do what I must..." (144)

"She left us helpless" (150)

"My soul is no more..." (184)

These expressions are familiar, imaginative, and colorful, frequently used in Nigerian or African French to intensely express emotions. The phrase "meslarmescoulent jour et nuit" (138) is poetic, conveying profound sadness and suffering. It emphasizes the duration and intensity of pain. The extract "Regardez-moi, mourir. Regardez-moi, aller à la tombe" (138) is dramatic, expressing deep despair, potentially used in contexts of resignation or protest.

"Je ne vais pas mourir pour rien" (142) expresses the desire to give life meaning and leave a legacy, possibly related to struggles for justice or a greater cause. "Laisse-moi faire ce que j'adois faire" (144) shows determination despite obstacles. "Mon âmen'ère plus" (184) is poetic, touching on spiritual themes. The use of "ère" is uncommon in standard French, indicating a specific cultural or regional linguistic influence. All extracts are literal translations, which Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) describe as translating the source language word-for-word without changing word order or grammatical structures. In the novel, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*, Nigerian local languages significantly influence popular Nigerian French. Another type of borrowing is code-switching. Code-switching plays a crucial role in postcolonial literature, reflecting the complexity of colonized peoples' identities and cultural heritage. Postcolonial writers often combine languages and dialects to express experiences of colonization, resistance, and identity quests. Inegbe adopts code-

switching between French, English, and Anaang. She integrates French and Anaang codes, explaining their meanings within the narrative. Examples include:

- "Yak adentere!" (19), meaning "thus be it!"
- "Nne mmi eeei! Kop si tie!" (97), meaning "listen to them"
- "Ugwa idem ida" (108), meaning "my misfortune"
- "NungUkod E-come!" and "NungUkod E-see" (16)

Through language mixing, "... the writer subjugates African culture and society to the French language..." (Inegbe, 2022, p. 98). All dialectal expressions evoke cultural contexts in Anaang.

Symbolism is also present in the novel: "Un vent fort souleva le chien dans les airs et lançaversune destination inconnue" (112); "C'était un esprit du fantôme qui pleure à travers le village" (119). The "vent" (wind) symbolizes escape, desire for freedom, or uncontrollable forces. The "fantôme" (ghost) represents death, mortality, and potentially unresolved traumas or fears. The "vent" and "fantôme" are nuanced literary tools exploring human depths and creating specific atmospheres. The appearance of a ghostly spirit reflects Anaang cultural beliefs.

Vocative language and omnipresent female portraits are also evident in *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe* (2023):

"Notre mèreéternelle!

Mère de tous les êtreshumains!

Mère de tous les esprits!...

Notre reine et la déesse de la terre, Eka-Awasi"
(pp.72, 73, 112)

This symbolizes divinity; representing an Anaang mythological goddess. Inegbe employs numerous Nigerian names: "Usiere, Asuabiat, Edeghe-Udim, Sutoidem, Mbukitiehe, Ndiok Ekarika, Akwa-Mbuk, etc." (pp. 7, 11, 16, 29, 33, 37, 131). These names symbolize Anaang society events and facts. People's names are "centrally important in their genealogy" and also "... a people's social, cultural, and mythological orientation is reflected in the names they bear" (Inegbe, 2021, p. 8). Anaang names are distinct from European names based on meaning.

The author of *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe* uses repetition, everyday vocabulary, and oral style. Examples from the text are:

- "Venezooo! Venezooo!" (5)

- "Pas encore! Pas encore!" (21)

- "Non! Non! Et non!" (56, 59)

- "Écoutez! Écoutez! Mon peuple, écoutez-moi"
(59)

- "Arrêtez! Arrêtez mesmères! Arrêtez!" (163)

Proverbial expressions are also abundant in the novel. Extracts from the novel are:

Il n'y a pas d'homme qui fait l'amour avec l'épouse d'un autre homme qui n'est pas prêt à mourir(37).

Quandune concubine sait comment prendre soin d'un homme, elle devient son épouse.(123)

Il n'y a aucun moment que les larmes peuvent devenir une rivière(129)

Ça sera possible quand la vache met au monde les veaux deux fois dans uneannée(129)

The first proverb, "Il n'y a pas d'homme qui fait l'amour avec l'épouse d'un autre homme qui n'est pas prêt à mourir", emphasizes the severe consequences of adultery, warning against physical and social risks. It reflects traditional values on marriage, adultery, and women's roles. Another proverb, "Quandune concubine sait comment prendre soin d'un homme, elledevient son épouse", highlights the importance of companionship and care in relationships. The proverb "Il n'ya aucun moment que les larmes peuvent devenir une rivière" suggests suffering is temporary.

The proverb "Ça sera possible quand la vache met au monde les veaux deux fois dans uneannée"

emphasizes impossibility. Proverbs effectively convey complex ideas and cultural values.

Inegbe uses figurative language to create vivid imagery and explore themes like joy, change, and loss: "J'aientendu un rire du joie par les valléesrieuses... Regarde-là, l'épaulé de la collineportant les cadeaux pour le nouveau-né." (8-9); "La montagne est de venue vallée et la colline a quittésa place" (57); "Mon âme a disparu" (157). These extracts evoke intense joy, radical change, and deep despair.

Vituperative expressions also appear in the novel: "Tais-toi! Une prostituée!" (29);

- "Que mon sang soit sur l'esprit qui m'a fait cela..." (29). Neologisms characterize the French language in *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe*: "Non! pas mon premier sang..." (3), instead of "mon premier enfant"; "Notre roi, Abong Idung-Afaestparti! Il s'estinscrit aux ancêtres" (39), instead of "ilest mort!"; "...mon premier sang qui n'est pas encore né" (121), instead of "mon premier enfant qui n'est pas encore né".

Graphological features include lexical usage with hyphens: "Affiong-etok" (4), "afia-ndom" (4), "Idim-Ibom" (6). Exclamation marks: "Non! Non! Non! Non! Je nelâcherai pas ceroyaume" (56). Nigerian terms are introduced in italics with meanings:

Ikpeke-Abang (2), *Inyang-Aside* (49)

The Translation Challenge: Preserving Subversion

In translating this literary text, we were faced with formidable task of transferring this linguistic subversion into the target language. The primary challenge lies in Anaang terms and culturally specific expressions—which Inegbe often leaves for the reader to infer or explains only implicitly. We adopted foreignizing strategy, maintaining the otherness of the text and getting engage with the Anaang worldview on its own terms.

Translating the linguistic innovation of Inegbe is an act of cultural mediation par excellence. One has to be an ethnographer and a literary critic, intimately familiar with both the formal literary conventions she is defying and the Nigerian culture she is championing. Inegbe’s work demands that translators move beyond a strict fidelity to standard grammatical forms and instead seek a dynamic equivalence that prioritizes the effect and intent of the text.

Conclusion

The analysis of linguistic innovation of French in *Le Tumulted’Itia-Afe-Ekpe* reveals not only Inegbe’s mastery of language but also her commitment to the complex realities of her sociocultural context. Her use of unusual grammatical structures to create a specific rhythm and emphasize certain ideas is remarkable. Inegbe’s linguistic innovation testifies

to the vitality of Nigerian literature and its ability to adapt to contemporary societal issues.

Inegbe's linguistic choices go beyond simply narrating a story; they weave a narrative that questions and redefines representations of Nigeria and contemporary Africa. Her work also serves as a meeting point between French and African languages, highlighting the richness of literary expression that speaks to both the heart and mind.

Ultimately, *Le Tumulted'Itia-Afe-Ekpe* is a powerful testament to the resilience of a generation, a work that reminds us that despite challenges, there is always room for hope and creativity.

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**AFRICAN DIASPORA AND THE
SCATTERED AFRICAN COMMUNITIES
ABOARD: INTERROGATING THE
HISTORIC AND CONTEMPORANEOUS
WAVES OF AFRICAN DISPERSALS IN THE
NEW WORLD**

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Abstract

The term African diaspora, as George Shepperson (1993) reiterated, did not emerge in the Anglophone world until the 1950s and 1960s, however, African diaspora existed long before then, and so did ideas and movements of African and black internationalism, which were captured by the concept and ideology of Pan Africanism. Furthermore, interventions by George Shepperson (1968), and Joseph Harris (1968, 1982, 1993), played prominent role to popularize diaspora studies in the Anglophone academy, particularly in the United States where the civil rights and the black studies movements were assaulting the barricades of Eurocentric scholarship and white institutional exclusion. Thus, the term African Diaspora, today, enjoys pride of place in the increasingly crowded

pantheon of diaspora studies. Often times, the term diaspora is used in a fuzzy as well as uncritical manner in which all manner of movements and migrations between countries and also within countries are encapsulated in its generous conceptual bosom, and besides, no adequate attention is paid to the historical conditions and experiences that produce diaspora communities. Indeed, not all dispersals result in the formation of diaspora and once formed a diaspora does not exist in perpetuity. To this end, some Diasporas disappear, some dispersals turn into Diasporas long after the original dispersals. The term diaspora is simultaneously a state of being as well as a process of becoming, a kind of voyage that encompasses the possibility of never arriving or returning, a navigation of multiple belongings, of networks of affiliation. Undoubtedly, it is a mode of naming, remembering, living and feeling group identity molded out of experiences, positioning, struggles, and imaginings of the past and the present, and often times, the unfolding, unpredictable future, which are shared or seen to be shared across the boundaries of time and space.

Keywords: African diaspora, dispersals, Historic, Contemporaneous, waves

Introduction

Intellectual African diaspora studies as an area of study has in recent times drawn the attention of the academic community and even beyond. Thus, this development is partly because of the chequered as well as tortuous history of the black people among the inhabitants of the region. The African diaspora study is an important area for academic enquiry because of the strong African physical and cultural presence as well as the nature of the relationship between Africans in that area and their ancestral homeland.

A diaspora identity, in a broad sense, implies a form of group consciousness constituted historically through expressive culture, politics, thought and tradition, in which experiential and representational resources are mobilized, in varied measures, from the imaginaries of both the old and the new worlds. Moreover, diaspora are indeed complex social as well as cultural communities created out of real and imagined genealogies and geographies (cultural, racial, ethnic, national, continental, transnational) of belonging, displacement, and recreation, constructed and conceived at multiple temporal and spatial scales, at different moments and distances from the putative homeland.

Undoubtedly, African diaspora consist of all those peoples dispersed from the continent in historic and contemporary era, who have constituted

themselves or been constituted into diasporas. In a technical workshop convened by the African Union (2004) in Trinidad in 2004, the following definition of diaspora was adopted after several days of heated debate:

The AU has committed itself to providing representation to the African Diaspora in its policy process. For this purpose, we recommend that the definition of African Diaspora refer to the geographic dispersal of peoples whose ancestors, within historical memory, originally came from Africa, but who are currently, domiciled, or claim residence or citizenship, outside the continent of Africa, (African Union, 2004).

Drawing from Rosenblatt's statistics of 1940, Frank Tannenbaum concluded that there are 41 million blacks and mulattoes in North and South America, or approximately fifteen percent of the total population (274 million). He further points out that at some time between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, every country in the Americas has had a measurable presence of blacks, Tannenbaum shares with us the nineteenth century perception of Humboldt:

From Rio de Janeiro northwards, the coastal stretches of Brazil, French, Dutch, and British Guiana, Venezuela, Colombia on both the Atlantic and the Pacific, Ecuador, and Peru have significant and in certain districts

preponderant numbers of people of African origin. This same holds true for both coasts in Central America. If Humboldt's reference is taken in a demographic rather than a political sense, the colonization of the Western Hemisphere has involved the settlement of many thousands of square miles by peoples who came from Africa rather than from Europe, and if we draw an arc from Rio de Janeiro to Washington D.C., and include the West Indian Islands within it, we shall have, in outline, the empire Humboldt talked about, (Frank Tannenbaum, 1947: 5-6).

This merely points to the complexities of the African diasporas and underscores, (Kim Butler 2000: 125-139), point that 'conceptualizations of diaspora must be able to accommodate the reality of multiple identities and phases of diasporization over time'. She offers a simple but useful schema for diaspora study divided into five dimensions: '(1) reasons for and conditions of, the dispersal; (2) relationship with homeland; (3) relationship with host lands, (4) interrelationships within diasporan groups; (5) comparative study of different diaspora. For Darlene Clark Hine (2001), black diaspora studies as she calls the field, need to have three features: a transatlantic framework, an interdisciplinary methodology, and a comparative perspective. However, it appears that the last two are acceptable and revise the first that African diaspora studies need to have a global structure.

This paper's central theme is to discuss the historic and contemporaneous dispersals and diaspora, and how we might examine their interrelationships, against the background, composed of multiple communities, different waves of migrations and diasporization.

The Historic Waves of Dispersals

Over time, there are multitudinous dispersals associated with African peoples. The physical presence of the Africans in the western hemisphere has never been an issue of controversy or that of debate. Rather what is not known or that is uncertain and also generated much debate and controversy is the issue of the actual number that was transported from Africa to the Americas. In this respect, our finding is that the demographic spread of the Africans in the New World was and is still, not even. The factors of geography and the nature of economic enterprise that was involved in slavery period, determined the degree of density (*vis-à-vis* the sparsity) of the Black populations in the Western hemisphere.

An attempt to categorize African diaspora is by no means a herculean task. Colin Palmer (2000), has identified at least six: three in prehistoric and ancient times (beginning with great exodus that began about 100,000 years ago from the continent to other continents) and three in modern times, including those associated with the Indian Ocean trade to Asia, the Atlantic Slave trade to the

Americas, and the contemporary movement of Africans and peoples of African descent to various parts of the globe, (Colin Palmer, 2000: 56-59), with respect to our common origins and humanity, although, such a broad historical conception of diaspora could be a useful clue, however, it in fact expands the notion of diaspora too far beyond analytical recognition to be stunningly useful. Put differently, indeed most scholars are inclined to lean more on the historical waves of the global African diaspora.

A task of trying to pigeonhole African Diasporas is a daunting task. With regards to dispersal of populations we can single out four broad movements to wit: intra-African, trans-Indian Ocean, Trans-Mediterranean, and trans-Atlantic. Obviously, the last three are invariably constitutive of African diaspora. Undoubtedly, there is historical literature such as on trading diasporas, conquest diasporas, slave diaspora, refugee diaspora and pastoral diaspora, but the first in terms of dispersal of population stated above, are indeed referred to ethnic or national diaspora. It is in fact worthy to note that distinctions are often made between historic and contemporaneous or contemporary diaspora. In other words, it can be referred to as old and new diaspora respectively; and this is in terms of periodization. In this context, three broad periods are discernable. They are pre-fifteen century, fifteenth-nineteenth centuries, and the twentieth century. More often, the periodizations vary for the diverse regions, however; more significantly, it is

useful to pay attention to transformations in global political economies and their intersections as well as local and regional dimensions.

Although, it is important to note that the literature is growing on the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Diasporas, which antedate the trans-Atlantic dispersals and diaspora, but it is pertinent to realize the fact that studies of African diaspora largely focus on the Atlantic world. In fact, one proximate and likely effect of the Atlantic model is the proclivity to reduce all historic African diaspora to the dispersals of slavery. Using Robin Cohen's (1997) typology, African diaspora are often seen as victim diasporas (in Cohen's schema the others are labour, trade, and cultural diasporas), (Robin Cohen, 1997). Similarly, this development appears to abate African diaspora history, homogenize African diaspora as well as racialize them exclusively as Negro.

Thus, many centuries before the rise of the Atlantic world, the eastern African region from Egypt to Mozambique was integrated into the Indian Ocean World. Contemporary Studies obviously show that the African diaspora has very old roots in Asia-from Western Asia, the so-called Middle East, to South Asia and India and Sri Lanka, to which Africans traveled as traders, sailors, soldiers, bureaucrats, clerics, bodyguards, concubines, servants and slaves. The Indian Ocean diaspora were comprised of both forced as well as free migrants, unlike the historic Atlantic diaspora.

Thus, in the Mediterranean worlds of Western Asia and Southern Europe, exploration of the African diaspora, has been laden with considerable difficulties not least the fact that until contemporary times this was the most intensive zone of cultural traffic as well as communication, in which communities straddle manifold spaces in complex networks of affiliation. Following the rise of Islam in the seventh century, there was the case of the Arabs from the Arabian Peninsula who swept through northern Africa is a case in point that is incontrovertible. However, with the rise of the modern nation-state and national identities, notwithstanding the enduring dreams of the Arab nation, it is possible to talk of, say, the Egyptian diaspora in the Gulf. Thus, the Arabs traversed northern Africa, Western Asia and the so-called Middle East.

Undoubtedly, the first major region of African settlement was in Europe, in the Southern-flanks of the Mediterranean from ancient Rome to Andalusia Spain. In the works of several classicists, the African presence is well documented including writers of African and diasporan descent. As an African diaspora, it is of course well known that northwestern Africans-the so-called Moors-occupied and ruled parts of the Iberian Peninsula between 711 and 1492, although, they are rarely discussed in diasporic terms.

The renowned Moroccan scholars, AnouarMajid, contended that Andalusian Spain was

an ‘African Kingdom in Europe’, (AnouarMajid, 2000: 77). In so far as some of the earliest Africans to settle in the Americas came from Spain and Portugal, this is so because in the Iberian Peninsula, the trans-Mediterranean and trans-Atlantic dispersals and Diasporas met. In other words, it should be noted that not all the African-descended arrivals in the Americas originated in Western Africa and the Atlantic Islands. On the other hand, the historiography on the development of an Afro-Iberian population and their role in the Spanish occupation and settlement of the Americas has not been given the attention it deserves but is improving.

There are ancient African communities from Russia to Britain, beyond the Mediterranean littoral in Europe. Some historians argue that the scattered African communities on the Black Sea Coast of the Caucasus Mountains were brought there between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries as slaves for the Turkish and Abkhazian rulers, while others trace their origins many centuries earlier as remnants of an Egyptian army that invaded the region in antiquity. Allison Blakely (1986, 1994) who was also written on early African settlements in the Dutch world, believes the two explanations may not necessarily be contradictory, in that there were probably different waves of African dispersals in Russia, (Alison Blakely, 1986). The African presence became more evident as a result of the rise of the Atlantic Slave trade but the history of Africans in Britain can be traced back to two

thousand years. A sizeable proportion of Africans worked as domestic servants, tradesmen, soldiers, and sailors as well. In the eighteenth century, a growing stream of Africans coming for education became a tradition and accelerated in the nineteenth as well as the twentieth centuries.

Moreover, the degree to which the diverse Africans became constituted into diasporasis remarkably problematic. Often times, they disappeared, invariably, they were eventually absorbed into the host populations. As is the case with the Sidis of India, they have survived to the present as a distinct community. New African diaspora, in yet other cases, are emerging from cultural memories rekindled by recent African migrations as well as the current circuits of global racial ideologies as well as solidarities. In part, the transition from dispersal to diaspora is contingent on the regimes of integration, representation, as well as repression in the host society and gestures as well as impulses of connectivity from the homeland. Thus, there is a lot of debate, in this context, for instance, on the integrative mechanisms of Islam in Western Asia as well as Islamic Africa. In this respect, Hunwick and Powell have contended that in the Mediterranean lands of Islam religious precepts prevented the emergence of the racialized voice of 'black consciousness even among enslaved Africans, (Joseph Harris, 1993: 289-323; Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 2008: 10).

The imperatives of racialized slavery and later segregation ensured the differentiation and distancing essential to the formation and reproduction of diaspora identities; and the shift from dispersal to diaspora is far less obstreperous in the Americas largely because these dispersals are historically far more recent. On account of national and regional diversity in the political economy of race, the demographic and cultural weight of the African presence and the cultural ecologies of belonging and alterity, however, the patterns of diasporization vary across the Americas. During the four long, horrific centuries of the Atlantic Slave trade, according to Joseph Inikori, whose estimates are, in my view, the most reliable, 15.4 million Africans landed in the Americas.

More Africans had come to the Americas than Europeans, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, which had led Sheila Walker, to contest the conceptualization of America as a European construct, as some kind of Eurogenic creation, and to restore the African and African diasporic contributions to their rightful place, (Sheila S. Walker, 2001: 1-44). 'For more than three hundred years of the five-hundred year modern history of the Americas', she writes, 'Africans and descendants were Americans' largest population, (Sheila S. Walker, 2001: 2-3). Therefore, the demographic foundation of the Americas was African, not European... In the necessary process of re-creating themselves in their new milieu, these Diasporan Africans invented and participated in the inventing

of new cultural forms such as languages, religions, foods, aesthetic expressions, and political and social organizations’, Sheila S. Walker, 2001: 2-3).

Across the Americas, African diaspora of various sizes were formed from Canada to Argentina (yes Canada and Argentina had slavery too and have had long standing black communities notwithstanding their whitening campaigns). Similarly, African Diasporas emerged in North America’s Southern cone, Mexico and Central America, as they did in South America’s Southern cone, Venezuela, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Paraguay. In the U.S. and Brazil, the largest diasporan communities developed and they were the leading political and economic powers of the two continents, each with its own brand of racial ideology, the racial separatism of the US as well as the mythical ‘racial democracy’ of Brazil, both of which engendered as well as sustained the exclusions that produced the complex as well as the contradictory processes of diasporization. Africa diaspora retained their demographic superiority only in the Caribbean region. Thus, as it were, perched in the Atlantic in the middle of the Middle Passage, the Afro-Caribbean diaspora typify all the complex connections, crisscrossing; and cultural compositions of the African diaspora of the Atlantic. What is more, Caribbean activists and intellectuals played a crucial role in all the trans-Atlantic Pan-African ideologies including movements.

Studies of African diaspora in the America, on the whole, continue to be heavily centred on national histories. Although transnational histories usually betray narrow analytical or linguistic affairs. Noteworthy is (Paul Gilroy, 1993) in his magnum opus, the *Black Atlantic*, is indeed a celebration of the supposedly new and distinctive Anglophone diasporic cultural modernity in which not only Africa is an irrelevant reality, but much of Latin America is disregarded. More often, in most Atlantic studies, the diaspora in the United States often stands on the pedestal, the one against which to judge the identities of the other diasporas. However, the fact that Brazil has the largest African slave holding diaspora in the Americas, in fact in the world, is often neglected.

Contemporaneous Waves of Dispersals

Thus, there were several new waves of dispersals from Africa, in the twentieth century, a continent now divided into colonial territories and subsequently into independent nation-states. On the contrary unlike their predecessors, whose communities of identity, either as imagined by themselves or as imposed by others, were either ethnic or racial or sometimes religious, the new African diaspora had to contend with the exigency of the modern nation-state, and transnational networks which often framed the political and cultural itineraries of their travel. Thus, the structural adjustment programmes imposed on African countries by the international financial institutions

from the late 1970s and early 1980s, the ‘new’ or ‘contemporaneous’ African diasporas, as they are oftentimes referred to, can be divided into three main waves: the diasporas of colonization, of decolonization, and of structural adjustment programmes as earlier stated.

Basically, in the first category, the diaspora of colonization are among others the students who went to study overseas and stayed, seamen who became settlers, as well as a host of others who could migrate as well as become citizens in line with the prevailing immigration law in the host state. Furthermore, during the struggles for independence and immediately after, the diasporas of decolonization include the so-called ‘indigenous’ Africans, European as well as Asian settlers, who relocated abroad. Also in this category were victims of Structural Adjustment Programme since the 1980s out of the migrations stimulated by economic political and social crises include traders, students, refugees, and professional elites otherwise referred to as brain drain.

Undoubtedly, of course, African migrations are part of a much larger narrative of complex global emigration. In fact, the late twentieth century has been designated as ‘the age of migration’. The available evidence shows that while the volume of international emigrants has in fact grown considerably in absolute numbers since the 1960s and yet there have been significant changes in the character and direction of international migration,

the percentage of people who have left and remained outside their countries of origin has remained remarkably steady as well as small: while the number of foreign-born persons, and refugees, migrations including asylum-seekers, worldwide increased from 75.5 million in 1960 to 190.6 million in 2005, the change in the proportion of migrants in the world population changed only slightly, from 2.5 percent in 1960 to 3 percent in 2005.

However, this indeed equate to 2 percent in 1910 and 2.1 percent in 1930. Thus, as elsewhere Africa's migrant population increased, nearly doubling from 9.1 million to 17.1 million, although like the other regions in global South-Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania-Africa's share of the world's migrant stock declined from 12.1 percent in 1960 to 9 percent in 2005. In yet another genre, there was equally a decline in the share of migrants in the African population, from 3.2 percent to 1.9 percent. However, defined, notably rapid in the closing decades of the twentieth century was African migration to Europe, which was characterized by increasing diversification in the number of countries both sending and receiving the immigrants.

In Britain and France, the old colonial superpowers, dispersals from the continent of Africa and the diaspora itself grew considerably in these countries aforementioned. Therefore, the emergence of immigrant countries of southern European countries to wit: Portugal, Spain as well

as Italy was quite remarkable, themselves emigration countries, a development that was a function of the improving economic fortunes in these countries as well as their integration into the prosperity and political sphere of western Europe as it was of mounting immigration pressures on their border to the east as well as south. Consequent upon the end of the cold war, new African immigrant communities was also formed in central and eastern Europe.

Also the growth of African migration to North America, particularly the United States, was equally a rapid phenomenon. There were in fact by 2005, approximately 1.5million African-born residents in the United States, up from 700,000 in 2000, 363,819 in 1990, 199,732 in 1980, 35,355 in 1960, 18,326 in 1930, 2,538 in 1900, and 551 in 1850. In recent decades, the growth in African migration is indeed remarkable yet Africans still accounted for a small proportion of immigrants to the United States, 3 percent of the nearly 33 million foreign born residents in 2005, up from 0.4 percent in 1960 and 1.9 percent in 1990. Until the 1960s, the relatively low rates and levels of voluntary immigration from Africa to the United States can be associated with both the restrictive United States policies against non-European immigration and the reluctance and inability of colonized African populations to migrate in any significant numbers outside the continent.

Invariably, changes in both Africa as well as destination countries and regions are indeed important, so are the transformations in the receiving countries. With respect to the United States, the role of the civil rights struggles of the 1960s is of cardinal significance. Infact and quite frankly, the post-colonial migrants from Africa to the United States owe their breakthrough or fortunes to the activities and doors opened by African American struggles. In terms of the theoretical literature on the causes, courses as well as the consequences of international migration there are several theories, each employing radically different concepts, assumptions, and frames of references, that seek to explain the factors that first, initiate, and second perpetuate international migration and third, that attempt to assess the effect of international migration on both sending and receiving countries. In some cases, some underscore economic factors and motivations; while others offer political or sociological perspectives as well as propositions.

Undoubtedly, the economic theories are to wit: the neoclassical economic model, the ‘new economics of migration’ theory, dual labour market theory, as well as world systems theory. Although, there is no doubt that these theories of course are not mutually exclusive thus, at various levels in space and time, a process as complex as international migration is obviously the result of equally complex forces operating. Therefore, in the global political economy: the migration flows are determined by conditions in both the sending and receiving

countries, and the state of the economy, political stability and freedoms, and immigration law, all of which are affected by broader forces. Nevertheless, no matter what engender immigration, the factors as well as forces that protract it can be in fact different. Numerous theories have been developed and are responsible for the rise of new conditions that emerge in the course of international migration that sustain it as well as function as independent causes for further migration. What is more, they include network theory, institutional theory, and cumulative causation theory. Among the three theories, however, there is little that is inherently incongruous among them. Put differently, it means that migration consists of both social networks as well as enabling institutions and a cumulative process. It stands to reason therefore, that in specific contexts, the mutual action or interchange of action and reaction between these factors obviously varies.

Invariably, there is no agreement, as might be expected, on the consequences of migration for the migrants themselves and for their countries of origin and their countries of immigration. Besides, a diversity of models seeks to explain the performance of migrants. The first is human capital theory, in which education and training are important determinants of income and occupation. Second, is the split labour market thesis that postulates the market is divided along racial, gender and other hierarchy lines along which rewards are unequally distributed? Accordingly immigrants are positioned. In yet another genre, the succession

model prognosticate that a group that arrives last occupies the bottom position in economic rankings as previous groups progressively move up the occupational hierarchy, (Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 2008: 14). Thus, African migrants from this perspectives can be expected to suffer subordination: as immigrants, as people who arrived recently, and as people many of whom are black, (Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 2008: 14).

Significantly, it is trite to state here that there are Diasporas within the diaspora. Thus, the entire diaspora world is constituted by what Earl Lewis (1997) terms with reference to the United States ‘overlapping diasporas’, (Earl Lewis, 1995: 765-787). Indeed, there are at least four groups that can claim an African diasporic identity in the United States and they include: First, the historic communities of African Americans, themselves formed out of complex internal and external migrations over several hundred years; second, migrant communities from other diasporic locations, such as the Caribbean that have maintained or invoke, when necessary or convenient, hyphenated national identities; third, the recent immigrants from the indigenous communities of Africa some of whom share racialized affinity with the two groups; and finally, African migrants who are themselves diasporas from Asia or Europe, such as the Ugandan Asias or South African whites.

Conclusion

More often, the tremendous and enormous interest the African diaspora in the Americas has generated as obscured a gigantic significant forced migration of Africans from their aboriginal homelands to alien societies-that vast exodus of enslaved human beings to the lands of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and South Asia that took place after the establishment of an Islamic world empire in the seventh and eight centuries of the Christian period. Beginning some eight centuries before the transatlantic slave trade, and not ending until several decades after the latter was halted, the movement of slaves across the Sahara, up the Nile Valley and the Red Sea, and across the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf and India, societies as did the transatlantic trade, (H. Gemery and J.S. Hogendorn, 1979: 23-76; Proceedings 5th International Conference on Ethiopian Studies, 1979:433-467).

Yet, to date this phenomenon has stimulated little interest among either historians of Africa, historians of the Islamic world or those concerned more broadly with diaspora studies (Joseph Harris, 1993: 289). Joseph Harris's study of the role of African slaves in India remains the only monograph to deal with the problem from the perspective of a receiving society, (Joseph E. Harris, 1971), while the Mediterranean and the Near Eastern dimensions of the problem have been relegated to a handful of articles and papers, most of which deal with the

trade in slaves rather than the more interesting (and in many ways more pertinent) question of the fate of these slaves in the societies that received them, (M.L. Kilson and R.I. Rotberg, 1971:36-56; Ibrahim K. Sundiata, 1977: 1-29; J.O. Hunwick, 1978: 20-40).

Gerhard Kubik (1998) provides a useful typology that divides the interpretative schemes of diaspora cultures into six categories; what he calls, first, biological reductionism, second, socio-psychological determinism, third, pseudo-historical reductionism, fourth; historical particularism, fifth, cultural materialism, and sixth cultural diffusionism, (Gerhard Kubik, 1998: 203-227)

In conclusion therefore, it stands to reason in the final analysis, that all these elements, the imagined ontologies of blackness, constructions of racial hierarchies, selective appropriations of African memories and alterity, material imperatives of cultural change, and the diffusionist trails of cultural transfer, have played a role in the development of diaspora cultures as distinctive cultures marked by similarities, differences, parallels, connections and exchanges with the numerous cultures of continental Africa.

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**ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION AND ETHNIC
AWARENESS IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS
FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

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Abstract

Nigeria by its composition is undoubtedly a nation comprising of multi-ethnic groups and therefore, in the face of competition for scarce resource, ethnicity obviously is going to be encountered. Ethnicity in Nigeria is rooted in the fact that Nigerians have since the amalgamation in 1914 been forced out of their familiar linguistic, social, political, and cultural units, and brought face to face, with others whose ways of life appear to constitute mutual threat. The root of ethnicity is fear, that is fear of the unknown; fear of losing the predictability of one's way of behaving which one's already acquired attitudes and values have guaranteed; fear of having one's established and cherished values changed or destroyed; fear of competition for scarce resources; fear of domination by privileged groups/minorities; fear of loss of control, etc. these fears keep social and psychological distances wide, too wide for a feeling of Nigerianness to be easily created. Nevertheless, Nigerians can derive formidable social, political, economic and psychological strength from this

collection of ethnic groups if their perceptions are not dominated by prejudice. One group that can have a significant role in this is social workers. Social work is described as the profession that helps society work better for people and helps them function better within society. This paper argues that treating citizens unequally on the basis of ethnicity is anti-developmental and a major problem in Nigeria. It has caused resentment among marginalized ethnic groups, fuelled conflicts and sometimes wars, and discouraged investments, retarding growth and development prospects.

Key words: Ethnic Awareness, Ethnicity, Ethnic group, Socialization, Social Work

Introduction

Ethnic socialization involves the ways in which group membership affects development and the development processes by which we acquire the behaviors, perceptions, values, and attitudes of an ethnic group to come to see ourselves and others as members of such groups. The developmental processes shape our self-concept and play a role in shaping our self-esteem, our attitudes and behavior toward our own and other groups, as well as the way we are evaluated by others. Understanding of such processes will help the social workers facilitate the personal development and cross-ethnic interactions of those they work with.

Most definitions of ethnic groups focus on a number of themes, including a common religion, culture,

physical appearance or some combination of these. Gordon (1988) defines an ethnic group as a population entity which considers itself to have a common historical ancestry and identity- a sense of people hood, of constituting a “people”- and is so regarded by others. It may be co-extensive with a particular nation, or it may be based on a common religion, a common racial ancestry or frequency, or some combination of several of these factors.

Ethnicity and ethnic group membership/socialization are among major concerns to society and to the social work profession. The roots of social work in United States are closely tied to meeting the needs of diverse groups (Cox & Ephross, 2018). Ethnicity is a complex term that involves objective and subjective attributes and both social and psychological identity. Ethnicity is not a constant; its saliency alters with the life course. It is not the same as race although the terms are frequently interchanged; a plethora of ethnic groups can be subsumed within one racial group. The person-in-environment framework may not be fundamental object of interaction, and thus social Workers must be knowledgeable about the group’s emphasis on individuals, family, or past generations. Cox and Ephross (2018) therefore said that ethnic identity provides lenses through which persons perceive, attributes meaning to experiences, and decide actions. The Social worker’s lens must be free of distortion if interactions with ethnic groups are to be effective.

The Concept of Ethnicity

The concept of ethnicity is associated with culture and is often used interchangeably with culture as well as race, or nationality. Usually, ethnicity is used in reference to groups that are characterized in terms of common nationality, culture, or language (Fenton, 2010). Members of ethnic groups may see themselves as culturally distinct from other groups, but the most usual are language, history or ancestry (real or imagined), religion, and styles of dress or adornment (Giddens & Sutton, 2013). The concept of ethnicity is related to the Greek concept of *ethnos*, which refers to the people of a nation or tribe, and *ethnikos*, which stands for national. Hence, ethnicity refers to the ethnic quality or affiliation of a group, which is normally characterized in terms of culture (Bentacourt & Lopez, 1993). Although cultural background can be a determinant of ethnic identity or affiliation, being part of an ethnic group can also determine culture. As members of an ethnic group interact with each other, ethnicity becomes a means by which culture is transmitted. According to Berry (1985), because an ethnic group is likely to interact with other ethnic groups, such interactions should not be ignored as possible sources of cultural influences.

When individual or group behaviours are perceived as manifesting elements of distinctiveness, separateness, and exclusivity (Desmet, Ortuno - Ortin, & Wacziarg, 2015), the adjective “ethnic”

tends to be used to describe such perceived manifestations. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is a noun which Hoffneyer-zlotnik and Warner (2010) define it as discriminations and strife based on differences in inter-ethnic symbols. Ethnocentrism (i.e group/race centeredness) is defined as the exaggerated tendency to think that the characteristics of one's own group or race are superior to those of other groups or races. Ethnocentrism (Njoroge & Kirori, 2014) is a tendency to view one's own group as the centre of everything and to rate all other people with reference to it. Adetiba, and Rahim (2012) defined ethnicity in a more expanded way by regarding it as an attitude and/or ideology concerning the relationship between an individual's own group and other groups, whereby positive characteristics of the individual's own group are strongly emphasized while features and members of other group are denigrated. Thus, easy rejection of unfamiliar things is characteristics of ethnocentrism which therefore, becomes a component of general prejudice. Hence, both concepts of ethnicity and ethnocentrism convey notions of negative inter group perceptions and relationships. It has been observed that ethnicity has always been important to people because it not only locates them in group, but also helps them to answer the question, "who am I?" (Gordon: 1988). The nature of an ethnic group's relationship with the society as a whole and with other groups in it constitutes one of the main problems in describing and analyzing such societies. In contemporary

Nigerian society, people have been expected to subordinate their particular ethnic identity to national identity (e.g. Ogoni), and in the process experience problems in assimilation, in asserting their unique ethnic identity and tradition. Such problems are compounded by the past historical neglect of these groups as recognized contributing members of Nigerian society which in turn, lead to social, psychological, economic, and recently political problems of disadvantaged Nigerian minorities.

The Concept of Socialization and Ethnic Socialization

Every society has its own codes and conducts, rules and regulations, and norms and values. Infect human beings as cultural animals have to figure out ways to adapts to their world and pass those ways to their children (Owoeye, 2012). Every human groups passes to their children what they believe would enable them adapt to their world. Therefore, Osuji (2005 in Owoeye, 2012) stated that all human beings intervene to help their children learn appropriate behaviors, ignoring the adults because they are more amenable. However, socialization occurs throughout an individual life which means that socialization is a means of passing culture from one generation to another.

During socialization, humans learn the language of the culture in which they are born into as well as the roles to be played in life, In addition, they learn

about the occupational roles that their society has in stock for them. This process of socialization is not limited to languages only but also the learning and adoption of cultural norms which are conceptions of appropriate and expected behavior that are held by most member of the society. Socialization is a learning process that begins shortly after birth, and each society has its own socialization culture and process. This is mostly referred to as the rite of passage. Socialization processes are therefore shown in the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. According to Owoeye (2012), socialization process in Hausa land usually begins about a week after a child is born, when the child is given a name, during an Islamic naming ceremony. In their mid- to- late-teens, young men and women may become engaged. The marriage ceremony may take as long as several days. Music and art are important in their everyday life. From a young age, Hausa children participate in dancing, which are held in meeting place such as the market. Again, Hausa society has a strong division of labor according to age and sex. The main activity in towns is thread while in rural areas, it is agriculture. The Yoruba's are not left out. The family is the most sacred as significant institution to the Yoruba, who are child centered, ruled by the elderly, and controlled by adults. Yoruba culture places extremely high value on children. It is safe to say that children are the highest good of the Yoruba. Therefore, the value of children seems to show nature of immortality of the soul which flows cyclically in the lineage through the

birth of children. Among the Igbo, offspring is a product of his father's lineage. The Igbo culture perceives socialization primarily as rite of passage. One of the highest occasions in the life of Igbo girls and boys is the initiation into adulthood through the rite of passage. Also, it is essential to point out that when one attains the age of puberty in most Igbo societies, one is introduced to both the mother's mother's lineage and the father's father's lineage, in other words grandmother's and grandfather's.

Ethnic socialization is the ways in which group's membership affects development and development processes by which we acquire the behaviours, perceptions, values and attitudes of an ethnic group to come to see ourselves and others as members of such group. These developmental processes shape our self-concepts and play a role in shaping our self-esteem, our attitudes, and behaviours towards our own and other groups as well as the way we are evaluated by others. Understanding of such processes will help us facilitate the personal development and cross-ethnic interactions of those we work with. Ethnic socialization is widely practiced in Nigeria. It has been identified as one of the critical task of Nigerian people particularly the social workers. Family ethnic socialization refers to parents' and other family members' efforts to expose young ones (youths) to the values and behaviors of their ethnic culture (umana-Taylor et al. 2009). Also Umana Taylor and Guimond, (2010) supports the notion that family ethnic socialization

is positively associated with youths' ethnic identity exploration (i.e the degree to which youth have explored their ethnicity) and ethnic identity resolution (i.e the degree to which they are clear about the meaning that their ethnic group membership has in their lives).

The Growth of Ethnic Awareness

One of the major personal and social needs of a young child is to be able to acquire an identity. He needs to be able to answer the question “who am I”. He cannot answer that question until his society has answered the question “who he is” The attitudes, values and behavior of his society towards him will act as a mirror for him to identify himself and distinguish it from other selves around him. This consequently led Coolley (1902) to conceptualize what he called “... looking glasses self”. Man's dependent nature makes the existence of human societies necessary as sources of his learning and survival. This implies that the existence of ethnic groups is crucial since such group enable the young child to acquire both personal and social identity. This means that the young child needs not only to identify and distinguish himself from other individual in his ethnic group but also to identify and distinguish his ethnic group from other ethnic or social groups. The question then is, how does the young child development ethnic awareness/identity? Part of the answer is that in the course of his socialization, the agents of socialization reinforce in him the need to belong and

adhere to the worldviews of a specific and identifiable, linguistic and cultural goal in terms of which his personal identity can emerge. That group obviously has to be his ethnic group.

Socialization and Growth of Ethnic Awareness

Socialization is the root of all forms of social behavior whether adaptive or maladaptive. Socialization is a complex process. It involves being “led” by more able people into the ways of a society. Therefore socialization maybe defined as the process of learning to think and to act like other members of one’s society. According to Thompson (1975), socialization refers to the organized social learning experiences through which the individual comes to acquire the conceptual and behavioral standard characteristic of the human aggregate in which he or she grows to adulthood. Unlike the instinctual emergence of behaviors in subhuman animals, socialization in human involves the development of thought and evaluative or judgmental processes. It covers a wide range of society, through the acquisition of language, gestures, symbols and communication media, to learning the traditions and accepting the attitudes and values of one’s own culture. Moreover, socialization spans the entire life span of every individual in the course of which the individual observes, learns, adopts and adapts the behaviours relevant or pertinent to every stage of his development.

Human beings even when tender in age, have very strong observation powers. The people from whom they learn by observation are called models. A model for example, a mother, father, teacher, or any significant other in the community, may have the objective of transmitting to the learner or young person, certain predetermined bits of knowledge, information, skill, habit, value, attitude, etc. but in doing so, he or she often exhibits styles, mannerisms, uses of words, slangs or gesture which he or she may not be conscious of or consider important, but which the learner observed keenly and in many instances, practices and effectively and/or efficiently acquires.

Implication of Social Work Practice in Nigeria

As a profession, social work's principal mission is to intervene and change human and social phenomena rather than solely to describe or explain them. Social workers must develop sensitivity towards ethnic populations. Sensitivity will ensure that assumption regarding the needs of the population is not entwined with those of majority population that are better equipped for clinical practice. There is a need for clinical practice to consider the impact of racial discrimination and racial identity development (Zayas, 2001). Perhaps the most effective method of developing sensitivity is to become aware of the historical, cultural, societal, and familial differences that impact the group's social functioning and mental health. This strategy will be increasingly important as social

workers encounter greater numbers of immigrant children who have relocated with their families to urban areas for employment opportunities. Once social workers have an understanding of the differences in socialization experiences, their practice with groups can be sensitive to the hardships that these groups face in everyday life based on historical events. It is imperative for the social worker to understand the client's culture and perspectives on critical issues. In essence, the social worker is to have some adequate knowledge about clients' cultural background and worldview in order to know how to approach issues presented by the client. Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures. Since Nigeria is a multicultural society, the promotion of cultural diversity should be the ethos of Nigerian social workers. It behoves on social workers to equip them with the right knowledge so that they can reconcile the different objectives of their service provision to different groups. In other words, they need to have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

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**RADIO MESSAGES AND APPLICATION OF
INSECTICIDES TREATED NET FOR
MALARIA PREVENTION AMONG
PREGNANT WOMEN IN ABAKALIKI
METROPOLIS**

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ABSTRACT

Malaria has been posing serious health challenge in Nigeria, and has often affected pregnant women

who are highly susceptible due to pregnancy-related immunosuppression. This study investigated the influence of radio messages on the knowledge and consistent use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) among 400 pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, Ebonyi State, Nigeria, using a quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-intervention phases. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed with descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. Results revealed that radio messages significantly enhanced ITN knowledge, with most respondents reporting improved understanding of malaria prevention, proper ITN use, and pregnancy-related risks. However, only a minority consistently used ITNs due to radio messages, with high neutral responses indicating limited behavioral impact. Major barriers included difficulties accessing ITNs and lack of awareness about distribution points, though cost was less prohibitive. The study recommended that radio's efficacy in urban settings, emphasizing the need for targeted messaging to address access and practical barriers. Recommendations included integrating radio campaigns with antenatal care and providing clear information on ITN distribution to improve uptake and reduce malaria prevalence among pregnant women.

Keywords: Insecticide, Malaria, Insecticides
Treated Net (ITNS), Radio Messages

Background to the Study

Malaria continues to pose a significant public health challenge in Nigeria, particularly affecting pregnant women who are highly susceptible due to pregnancy-related immunosuppression. Nigeria accounts for approximately 27% of global malaria cases, with *Plasmodium falciparum* being the predominant species responsible for severe outcomes, including maternal anemia, low birth weight, and preterm delivery (World Health Organization, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) advocates for the use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), intermittent preventive treatment with sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (IPTp-SP), and prompt case management to mitigate malaria in pregnancy (MiP). However, the uptake of these interventions, particularly ITNs, remains suboptimal in Nigeria due to knowledge gaps, socio-cultural barriers, and limited access to health resources. In urban settings like Abakaliki metropolis, where access to mass media such as radio is relatively high, there is potential for radio messages to address these barriers and enhance ITN utilization among pregnant women. Despite this potential, the specific impact of radio-based health communication on ITN use in this population remains underexplored. Research conducted across Nigeria highlights persistent challenges in malaria prevention among pregnant women. For instance, Idris, Umar, Auta and Abdulmalik, (2023) reported a 42.9% malaria prevalence among 140 pregnant women attending

Muhammad Abdullahi Wase Teaching Hospital in Kano, with primigravidae (23.6%) and those in the first trimester (25%) showing the highest infection rates. Despite ITN distribution during antenatal care, consistent use was low; indicating that awareness alone is insufficient without effective health communication strategies. Similarly, Valentine, Ndidi., Ndubuisi and Ugbo (2020) documented a 70.8% malaria prevalence among 284 pregnant women in Aboh Mbaise, Imo State, identifying non-use of ITNs ($p < 0.05$) and lack of IPTp as significant risk factors, alongside environmental factors like mosquito breeding sites and low educational status. These studies underscore the need for targeted interventions to bridge the gap between awareness and practice in urban Nigerian contexts. In Ebonyi State, where Abakaliki metropolis is located, similar challenges are evident. Okedo-Alex, Akamike. Nwafor, Agu, Abateneh, and Uneke. (2022) found that while 63.5% of 817 respondents in three Ebonyi communities were aware of ITNs, only 37.5% knew about IPTp, with radio messages serving as a primary information source and 77.2% supporting community-directed interventions. This suggests radio's potential to enhance ITN uptake in urban settings like Abakaliki.

Again, Akpa., Azuogu, Akpa, Umeokonkwo, Denwigwe, Azuogu and Uzochukwu (2022) reported that although 65% of 340 women in Ebonyi owned ITNs, only 35% used them consistently, citing inadequate education on proper use as a

barrier. Radio messages were noted as a key awareness tool but required reinforcement to improve usage. Given the widespread access to radio in urban areas and the persistent gap between ITN awareness and consistent use, this study seeks to investigate the influence of radio messages on the knowledge and consistent use of ITNs among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis. By addressing this gap, the study aims to contribute to the development of effective mass media strategies to reduce MiP and improve maternal and fetal health outcomes in urban Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Malaria poses a significant health challenge in Nigeria, particularly for pregnant women, who face increased risks due to immunosuppression, leading to maternal anemia, low birth weight, and preterm delivery. Despite WHO recommendations for insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) and intermittent preventive treatment (IPTp-SP), ITN uptake remains low due to knowledge gaps and socio-cultural barriers. Idris et al. (2023) reported 42.9% malaria prevalence among 140 pregnant women in Kano, with low ITN use despite distribution, indicating ineffective health communication. Similarly, Valentine et al. (2020) found a 70.8% prevalence in Aboh Mbaise, Imo State, linking non-use of ITNs ($p < 0.05$) to environmental and educational factors. Both studies highlight a gap between ITN awareness and consistent use. However, the specific impact of radio messages, a

widely accessible medium in urban areas like Abakaliki metropolis, on ITN utilization among pregnant women remains underexplored. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how radio messages influence ITN knowledge and use among pregnant women in Abakaliki, seeking to enhance malaria prevention strategies and improve maternal and fetal health outcomes.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of radio messages and application of insecticides treated net for malaria prevention among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the level of awareness among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis regarding the use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) for malaria prevention, as influenced by radio messages.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of radio messages in promoting the consistent and correct use of ITNs among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis.
3. Explore the barriers and challenges faced by pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis in accessing and utilizing ITNs, despite awareness campaigns through radio messages.

Research questions

1. What is the level of awareness among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis regarding the use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) for malaria prevention, as influenced by radio messages?
2. How effective are radio messages in promoting the consistent and correct use of ITNs among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis?
3. What are the barriers and challenges faced by pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis in accessing and utilizing ITNs, despite awareness campaigns through radio messages?

Hypothesis

H₀: Exposure to radio messages does not significantly increase the consistent and correct use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) for malaria prevention among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis.

Scope of Study

This study examined the influence of radio messages on the knowledge and consistent use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, Ebonyi State, Nigeria, from 2015 to 2024, the period when ITNs were first introduced in Ebonyi State. It targeted pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in selected urban health facilities. The research

assessed the effectiveness of radio-based health communication in enhancing ITN awareness and adherence for malaria prevention, exploring socio-demographic factors such as age, education, and gravidity. The study was limited to Abakaliki metropolis, excluding rural areas, and focused solely on radio messages, not other malaria prevention methods or media platforms.

Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the study will contribute to literature for further studies. Practically, the findings of this study will help NGO's and government of Ebonyi state to formulate policies that will make or encourage pregnant women in Ebonyi State to use mosquito treated net.

Review of Related Literature Conceptual Review Malaria

Malaria in pregnancy (MiP) remains a significant public health challenge in Nigeria, where the country accounts for 27% of global malaria cases and 31% of malaria-related deaths, with pregnant women and children under five being the most vulnerable groups (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). MiP is caused primarily by *Plasmodium falciparum* in sub-Saharan Africa, leading to adverse maternal and fetal outcomes. This section reviews the epidemiology, health risks, and preventive measures for MiP, focusing on Nigeria and similar contexts, to provide a foundation for understanding the role of health

communication in promoting natal malaria vaccination uptake. Malaria is hyperendemic in Nigeria, with year-round transmission facilitated by a tropical climate (WHO, 2020). Studies report a high prevalence of MiP, particularly in rural areas. For instance, Agomo and Oyibo (2013) found a 59.9% prevalence of asymptomatic malaria parasitemia among pregnant women in rural Ebonyi State, with the highest rates in the first trimester (84.1%). Similarly, a cross-sectional study in northwestern Nigeria reported a 41.6% prevalence of malaria infection among pregnant women attending antenatal care (ANC), with younger women and primigravidae at greater risk (Daboer et al., 2010). These findings underscore the widespread burden of MiP in Nigeria, exacerbated by limited healthcare access in rural settings like Ebonyi Central Senatorial District.

MiP poses significant risks to both mother and fetus. Maternal complications include severe anemia, which contributes to 11% of maternal deaths in Nigeria (WHO, 2020). A study by Ugwu et al. (2014) in southeastern Nigeria found that 62.4% of pregnant women with malaria had anemia, linked to placental parasitemia. Fetal outcomes include low birth weight (LBW), preterm delivery, and increased neonatal mortality. Okafor and Mbah (2019) reported that MiP was associated with a 2.27 times higher odds of LBW (95% CI: 0.98–5.28) and a 1.93 times higher odds of preterm birth (95% CI: 1.08–3.44) in Ibadan. These adverse outcomes

highlight the urgent need for effective interventions to mitigate MiP's impact.

The WHO recommends three key strategies for MiP prevention: insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), intermittent preventive treatment with sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (IPTp-SP), and prompt case management (WHO, 2012). Despite these recommendations, uptake remains low in Nigeria. A 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) revealed that only 17% of pregnant women received three or more doses of IPTp-SP, far below the 80% target set by the Roll Back Malaria initiative (National Population Commission [NPC] & ICF, 2019). ITN usage is similarly low, with only 20.1% of pregnant women in Ibadan reporting consistent use (Okafor & Mbah, 2019). The National Malaria Elimination Programme (NMEP) in Nigeria promotes free distribution of ITNs and IPTp-SP through ANC, yet implementation challenges persist (Federal Ministry of Health [FMoH], 2014).

Several barriers hinder the effective prevention of MiP. Oladimeji et al. (2018) identified knowledge gaps, with only 43.5% of Nigerian women demonstrating good knowledge of malaria prevention, influenced by low education levels and rural residence. Socio-cultural factors, such as misconceptions about malaria causation (e.g., attributing it to sunlight or dirty environments), further reduce uptake of preventive measures (Singh et al., 2019). Health system barriers include stock

outs of IPTp-SP, inadequate training of health workers, and poor ANC attendance, particularly in rural areas (Hill et al., 2013). In Ebonyi State, Agomo and Oyibo (2013) noted that poverty and limited access to health facilities exacerbate these challenges, contributing to high MiP prevalence.

Mosquito Treated Net: Knowledge and Use of Insecticide Treated Nets

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), particularly long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLINs), as a cornerstone of malaria prevention, especially in high-transmission areas like sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2020). ITNs are highly effective, reducing malaria incidence by up to 50% and all-cause child mortality by 17% when used consistently (Lengeler, 2004). WHO advocates for universal ITN coverage, targeting at least 80% usage in endemic regions, with free distribution and health education to ensure proper use. Globally, ITN distribution has increased, with 68% of households in sub-Saharan Africa owning at least one ITN by 2020 (WHO, 2020). However, consistent use lags behind ownership due to behavioural, environmental, and socio-economic barriers, necessitating targeted interventions to bridge this gap.

In Nigeria, which accounts for 27% of global malaria cases, ITN use remains suboptimal despite widespread distribution campaigns (WHO, 2020).

Valentine et al. (2020) reported a 70.8% malaria prevalence among 284 pregnant women in Aboh Mbaise, Imo State, identifying non-use of ITNs as a significant risk factor ($p < 0.05$). The study highlighted environmental factors, such as mosquito breeding sites, and low educational status as barriers to ITN adoption. Similarly, Idris et al. (2023) found 42.9% malaria prevalence among 140 pregnant women in Kano, noting low consistent ITN use despite antenatal care distribution. These findings underscore a critical gap between ITN availability and consistent use, driven by inadequate health education and socio-cultural misconceptions, such as discomfort from net use or perceived low malaria risk.

In Ebonyi State, local studies reveal similar challenges. Akpa et al. (2022) surveyed 340 women, reporting that 65% owned ITNs, but only 35% used them consistently, citing inadequate education on proper use as a key barrier. Okedo-Alex et al. (2022) also found that among 817 respondents in three Ebonyi communities, 63.5% were aware of ITNs, but consistent use was low, with only 37.5% knowledgeable about IPTp. Both studies emphasize that while ITN ownership is relatively high, effective utilization is hindered by limited understanding of correct application and maintenance, particularly among pregnant women. These findings highlight the need for tailored health communication strategies, such as radio messages,

to enhance ITN use in urban settings like Abakaliki metropolis.

Role of Radio Messages in Health Communication

Radio messages are audio-based health communication tools broadcast through radio stations, designed to educate and influence behaviour. Their effectiveness stems from radio's wide reach, affordability, and ability to deliver messages in local languages, making them accessible in urban settings like Abakaliki (Okedo-Alex et al., 2022). Radio messages can increase knowledge by providing clear instructions on ITN use (e.g., nightly application, maintenance) and dispel myths, such as discomfort from nets. They also leverage repetition and storytelling to reinforce behaviour change, aligning with HBM's emphasis on sustained cues.

Radio messages influence ITN use by enhancing awareness, shaping attitudes, and prompting action. First, they increase awareness by disseminating information about malaria risks and ITN benefits, addressing knowledge gaps noted in Ebonyi State, where only 35% of women used ITNs consistently despite 65% ownership (Akpa et al., 2022). Second, they shape attitudes by framing ITNs as essential for maternal and fetal health, countering socio-cultural barriers like low perceived risk. Third, they prompt action through calls to action, such as encouraging

pregnant women to obtain ITNs from antenatal clinics. Unlike other media, radio's accessibility ensures repeated exposure, critical for behaviour reinforcement in urban populations with high media access.

While radio is effective for awareness, its impact on sustained ITN use may be limited without complementary strategies. Studies like Idris et al. (2023) and Valentine et al. (2020) highlight low ITN use despite awareness, suggesting that radio messages alone may not address practical barriers (e.g., net availability, discomfort). Additionally, the urban focus of this study may limit generalizability to rural areas with lower radio access.

Empirical Review

The study by Idris, Umar, Auta, and Abdulmalik, (2023), titled "Prevalence of Malaria among Pregnant Women Attending Muhammad Abdullahi Wase Teaching Hospital, Kano State, Nigeria," aimed to determine malaria prevalence, identify risk factors, and assess insecticide-treated net (ITN) use among pregnant women. Employing a cross-sectional design, Idris, Umar, Auta, and Abdulmalik collected data from one hundred forty pregnant women using microscopy for malaria diagnosis and questionnaires on socio-demographic factors and ITN use, analyzed with descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. They found a forty-two point nine percent malaria prevalence, with primigravidae and

first-trimester women most affected. Only thirty percent used ITNs consistently, due to inadequate health education and misconceptions. Idris, Umar, Auta, and Abdulmalik recommended intensified community-based education and integrating ITN promotion into antenatal care. However, their study did not explore radio messages as a health communication tool to improve ITN use, limiting insights into media-driven behaviour change. This research addresses this gap by investigating radio messages' influence on ITN knowledge and consistent use among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, leveraging radio's urban accessibility to enhance malaria prevention strategies.

The study by Valentine, Ndidi, Ndubuisi, and Ugbo, (2020), titled "Prevalence and Risk Factors of Pregnancy-Associated Malaria in Pregnant Women Attending a General Hospital" in Aboh Mbaise, Imo State, sought to assess malaria prevalence, risk factors, and preventive measures like ITN use. Using a descriptive cross-sectional design, Valentine, Ndidi, Ndubuisi, and Ugbo studied two hundred and eighty-four pregnant women, diagnosing malaria via blood smear microscopy and collecting data with questionnaires, analyzed using chi-square tests. They reported seventy point eight percent malaria prevalence, with non-use of ITNs as a significant risk factor; only twenty-five percent used ITNs consistently, hindered by low education and environmental factors. Valentine, Ndidi, Ndubuisi, and Ugbo recommended targeted

education for primigravidae and environmental management. Their study overlooked the potential of radio messages to promote ITN use, missing an opportunity to explore mass media's role in behavior change. This research fills this gap by examining how radio campaigns enhance ITN knowledge and adherence among pregnant women in Abakaliki, capitalizing on urban radio access to improve malaria prevention outcomes.

The study by Ankomah, Adebayo, Arogundade, Anyanti, Nwokolo, Inyang, and Meremikwu (2014), titled "The Effect of Mass Media Campaign on the Use of Insecticide-Treated Bed Nets among Pregnant Women in Nigeria," aimed to evaluate the impact of mass media campaigns, including radio, on ITN use among pregnant women. Using a cross-sectional design, Ankomah, Adebayo, Arogundade, Anyanti, Nwokolo, Inyang, and Meremikwu surveyed 2,348 pregnant women across six Nigerian states, employing questionnaires to assess media exposure and ITN use, analyzed with logistic regression. They found that 54% of women exposed to media campaigns used ITNs, compared to 39% without exposure, with radio being the most effective medium. They recommended sustained media campaigns and community-based distribution to enhance ITN uptake. However, the study did not focus on urban-specific contexts or barriers like access. The current research addresses this by examining radio messages' influence on ITN knowledge and use in Abakaliki metropolis,

emphasizing urban accessibility and specific barriers like distribution awareness to improve malaria prevention strategies.

The study by Amoran, Fatugase, and Fatugase (2017), titled "Determinants of Insecticide-Treated Nets Use among Pregnant Women in Nigeria: Evidence from the Nigeria Malaria Indicator Survey," sought to identify factors influencing ITN use among pregnant women. Amoran, Fatugase, and Fatugase analyzed data from 1,872 pregnant women in the 2015 Nigeria Malaria Indicator Survey using a cross-sectional design, with multivariate logistic regression to assess socio-demographic and knowledge-related determinants. They found that 41% of women used ITNs consistently, with higher education and media exposure, including radio, significantly increasing usage (OR=1.67, $p<0.05$). They recommended integrating media campaigns with antenatal care to boost ITN adherence. The study did not isolate radio's specific impact or urban barriers like access. The current study fills this gap by focusing on radio messages' role in enhancing ITN knowledge and use among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, highlighting urban-specific barriers and leveraging radio's accessibility for targeted health communication.

The study by Ozodiegwu, Mhlanga, Bamgboye, Fagbamigbe, Ademu, Okoronkwo, Akinyemi, Ogunwale, Ajayi, and Galatas (2025), titled "Co-

creation and Application of a Framework for the De-prioritization of Urban Communities during Insecticide-Treated Bed Net Mass Campaigns in Kwara State, Nigeria," aimed to develop a framework for targeted ITN distribution in urban areas. Using participatory action research, Ozodiegwu, Mhlanga, Bamgboye, Fagbamigbe, Ademu, Okoronkwo, Akinyemi, Ogunwale, Ajayi, and Galatas collected data in Ilorin, analyzing malaria risk scores and stakeholder inputs. They found that prioritizing high-risk areas improved ITN allocation efficiency, with radio aiding awareness. They recommended stakeholder-driven frameworks for resource-constrained settings. The study did not focus on pregnant women or radio's direct impact on behavior. The current research addresses this by examining radio messages' influence on ITN knowledge and use among pregnant women in Abakaliki, emphasizing urban-specific barriers and radio's role in behavior change.

Theoretical Framework: Health Belief Model (HBM)

This study is anchored on the Health Belief Model (HBM), a framework for explaining health behaviour change (Rosenstock, 1974). This model was first developed in the 1950s by social psychologists Hochbaum, Rosenstock and Kegel who were working in the United States Public Health Services (Ogbuoshi, 2020, p. 197). The HBM suggests that individuals adopt

preventive behaviors, such as consistent use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), when they perceive a health threat and believe the recommended action is effective and feasible. It includes six constructs: perceived susceptibility (belief in the risk of contracting malaria), perceived severity (belief in the seriousness of malaria in pregnancy, e.g., maternal anemia, low birth weight), perceived benefits (belief in ITNs' ability to prevent malaria), perceived barriers (challenges to ITN use, e.g., discomfort, lack of knowledge), cues to action (triggers for behavior, e.g., radio messages), and self-efficacy (confidence in using ITNs correctly).

In this study, radio messages act as cues to action, informing pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis about malaria risks and ITN benefits. They address perceived susceptibility and severity by highlighting malaria's dangers during pregnancy, emphasize perceived benefits by promoting ITNs' protective role, and reduce perceived barriers by clarifying proper use and dispelling misconceptions. Radio messages also enhance self-efficacy by offering practical guidance on ITN application, fostering consistent use. The HBM provides a robust lens to examine how radio messages influence knowledge and behaviour regarding ITN use.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review highlights the significant burden of malaria in pregnancy (MiP) in Nigeria, which accounts for 27% of global malaria cases, with *Plasmodium falciparum* causing severe outcomes like maternal anemia and low birth weight (World Health Organization, 2020). Despite WHO recommendations for insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), studies reveal a gap between ITN ownership and consistent use. Valentine et al. (2020) reported a 70.8% malaria prevalence in Aboh Mbaise, identifying non-use of ITNs ($p < 0.05$) as a risk factor, while Idris et al. (2023) noted a 42.9% prevalence in Kano, with only 30% consistent ITN use due to inadequate education. In Ebonyi State, Akpa et al. (2022) and Okedo-Alex et al. (2022) found 65% ITN ownership but only 35% consistent use, citing knowledge gaps. Radio messages, a primary information source in Ebonyi (Okedo-Alex et al., 2022), show potential for health communication, yet their specific impact on ITN use among urban pregnant women remains underexplored. Grounded in the Health Belief Model, this study addresses this gap by investigating how radio messages influence ITN knowledge and consistent use in Abakaliki metropolis, aiming to inform effective malaria prevention strategies.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-intervention phases to assess the impact of radio messages on the knowledge and consistent use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, Ebonyi State. An intervention group received targeted radio messages, while a control group did not, enabling comparison of ITN knowledge and usage outcomes. A quantitative survey method was used, with structured questionnaires administered to 400 pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in four purposively selected health facilities. The questionnaires captured socio-demographic details, ITN knowledge, usage frequency, and exposure to radio messages. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to evaluate associations. The quasi-experimental design is suitable for assessing the intervention's effectiveness in an urban setting without full randomization, controlling for external factors via the control group. This approach aligns with the study's objectives, leveraging radio's accessibility in Abakaliki to drive behavior change, and builds on prior health communication research.

Area of the Study

The study is conducted in Abakaliki metropolis, the capital of Ebonyi State, Southeast Nigeria. This

urban center, spanning Abakaliki and Ebonyi local government areas, hosts a population engaged in trading, civil service, and farming. With a tropical climate favoring year-round Plasmodium falciparum malaria transmission, Abakaliki has multiple health facilities, including the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, providing antenatal care. Its widespread radio access makes it ideal for studying radio messages' influence on health behaviors. The study targets pregnant women in four selected antenatal clinics, assessing their knowledge and consistent use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) for malaria prevention, leveraging the urban media infrastructure.

Population of the Study

The study targets pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, Ebonyi State's capital, Southeast Nigeria. Based on National Population Commission (NPC) projections from the 2006 Census and United Nations data via Macro Trends, Abakaliki's 2025 population is estimated at **723,000**, up 4.33% from 693,000 in 2024.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size for this study is calculated using the formula: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error (expressed as a decimal)

Using the 2025 projected population of Abakaliki metropolis, $N = 723,000$ (Macro Trends, 2025), and a margin of error $e = 0.05$ (5%), the calculation is as follows:

$$n = 723,000 / (1 + 723,000 (0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 723,000 / (1 + 723,000 (0.0025))$$

$$n = 723,000 / (1 + 1,807.5)$$

$$n = 723,000 / 1,808.5$$

$$n = 399.78$$

Rounding to the nearest whole number, the sample size is approximately 400.

Sampling Technique

For this study: investigating the influence of radio messages on the knowledge and consistent use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, the multistage sampling technique was used for this study. This technique is suitable given the urban setting, the specific target population (pregnant women attending antenatal clinics), and the need for a representative sample within logistical constraints.

1. Stage 1: Purposive Sampling of Health Facilities

Abakaliki metropolis has multiple health facilities providing antenatal care. Four facilities (e.g., Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital

and Mile 4 hospital) were purposively selected based on high antenatal clinic attendance and geographical spread across the metropolis. This ensures coverage of diverse socio-economic groups and maximizes access to the target population.

2. Stage 2: Simple Random Sampling of Participants

Within each selected facility, a list of pregnant women attending antenatal clinics was obtained. Using a random number generator or lottery method, 200 pregnant women were selected from each facility to achieve the calculated sample size of approximately 400 (as determined using the 2025 population projection of 723,000 and a 5% margin of error). This random selection minimizes bias and ensures representativeness within the chosen facilities.

Measuring Instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data from 400 pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in Abakaliki metropolis. The questionnaire includes sections on demographics, knowledge of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs), frequency of ITN use, and exposure to radio messages, using multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected via structured questionnaires administered to 400 pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in four purposively selected health facilities in Abakaliki metropolis, ensuring access to the target population.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) to summarize demographics, ITN knowledge, usage, and radio message exposure. Chi-square tests were used for hypothesis testing to examine relationships between radio message exposure and ITN knowledge/use, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Section B: Knowledge of ITN Use

s/n	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Radio messages have improved my understanding of how ITNs prevent malaria.	92 23%	193 48.2%	65 16.2%	33 8.3%	17 4.3%
2.	I learned proper ITN use and maintenance from radio messages.	84 21%	178 44.5%	81 20.2%	45 11.2%	12 3%

3.	Radio messages have increased my awareness of malaria risks during pregnancy.	169	78	79	26	48
		42.3%	19.5%	19.7%	6.5%	12%

Fieldwork, 2025

The table above reflects responses from 400 pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis on radio messages' impact on ITN knowledge. For Question 1, 71.2% (23% strongly Agree, 48.2% Agree) confirm improved understanding of ITN malaria prevention, with 12.6% disagreeing. Question 2 shows 65.5% (21% strongly Agree, 44.5% Agree) learned ITN use and maintenance, but 14.2% disagreed. Question 3 indicates 61.8% (42.3% strongly Agree, 19.5% Agree) agree radio messages raised malaria risk awareness, though 18.5% disagreed. Neutral responses (16.2%–20.2%) suggest indecision, possibly due to unclear messaging. Radio messages effectively enhance ITN knowledge, but clearer delivery could reduce neutral and dissenting responses.

Section C: Consistent Use of ITNs

s/n	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutra	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Radio messages motivate me to use ITNs every night.	72	99	104	66	59
		18%	24.7%	26%	16.5%	14.8%

2	Radio messages help me overcome barriers to using ITNs, like discomfort.	77	33	146	66	78
		19.2%	8.3%	36.5%	16.5%	19.5%
3	I use ITNs consistently due to information from radio messages.	62	74	177	54	33
		15.5%	18.5%	44.2%	13.5%	8.3%

Fieldwork, 2025

The table shows responses from 400 pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis on radio messages' impact on consistent ITN use. Question 1 indicates 42.7% (18% strongly Agree, 24.7% Agree) feel motivated by radio messages to use ITNs nightly, but 31.3% disagree, and 26% are neutral. Question 2 reveals only 27.5% (19.2% strongly Agree, 8.3% Agree) agree radio messages help overcome barriers like discomfort, with 36% neutral and 36% disagreeing. Question 3 shows 34% (15.5% Strongly Agree, 18.5% Agree) use ITNs consistently due to radio messages, but 44.2% are neutral, and 21.8% disagree. High neutral responses suggest limited behavioral impact, indicating a need for more compelling radio messaging to enhance consistent ITN use.

Section D: Barriers to ITN Access and Use

s/n	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I face difficulties accessing Insecticide-Treated Nets (ITNs) in	156	81	77	29	57
		39%	20.3%	19.3%	7.2%	14.2%

	Abakaliki metropolis.					
2.	Lack of awareness about where to obtain ITNs prevents me from using them	82	149	57	63	49
		20.5%	37.3%	39.3%	15.7%	12.2%
3.	The cost of ITNs is a major barrier to my ability to access and use them.	63	28	79	133	97
		15.7%	7%	19.8%	33.2%	24.3%

Fieldwork, 2025

The table presents responses from 400 pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis on barriers to ITN access and use. Question 1 shows 59.3% (39% Strongly Agree, 20.3% Agree) face difficulties accessing ITNs, with 21.4% disagreeing and 19.3% neutral, indicating significant access challenges. Question 2 reveals 57.8% (20.5% Strongly Agree, 37.3% Agree) agree that lack of awareness about where to obtain ITNs hinders use, with 27.9% disagreeing and 14.3% neutral, highlighting awareness as a key barrier. Question 3 indicates only 22.7% (15.7% Strongly Agree, 7% Agree) view cost as a major barrier, with 57.5% disagreeing and 19.8% neutral, suggesting cost is less prohibitive. High agreement on access and awareness barriers underscores the need for

improved ITN distribution and education in Abakaliki.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: Exposure to radio messages does not significantly increase the consistent and correct use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) for malaria prevention among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis.

s/n	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2.	Radio messages help me overcome barriers to using ITNs, like discomfort.	77	33	146	66	78
		19.2%	8.3%	36.5%	16.5%	19.5%

From the computed table, use ($fe = fo \div n$) to get the expected frequency (fe)

Where fo = total of observed frequency,

fe = expected frequency and n= number of variables

fe = 400/5

fe = 80

Category	FO	FE	FO - FE	(FO - FE) ²	(FO-FE) ² ÷ FE
Strongly Agree	77	80	-3	9	0.1125
Agree	33	80	-47	2209	27.6125

Neutral	146	80	66	4356	54.45
Disagree	66	80	-14	196	2.45
Strongly Disagree	78	80	-2	4	0.05

$$\chi^2 = 0.1125 + 27.6125 + 54.45 + 2.45 + 0.05 = 84.675$$

Degree of Freedom (df)

$$df = n - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4$$

Critical Value

At 0.05 significance level, $df = 4$, $\chi^2_{tab} = 9.488$

Decision

Since the calculated χ^2 (84.675) is greater than the critical value (9.488), the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis, that radio messages significantly increase consistent and correct ITN use, is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from Section B show that radio messages significantly boost pregnant women's knowledge of insecticide-treated net (ITN) use in Abakaliki metropolis. Most respondents agreed that radio messages improved their understanding of ITN malaria prevention, taught proper use and maintenance, and raised awareness of malaria risks during pregnancy. These results echo Okedo-Alex et al. (2022), who found radio to be a key

information source in Ebonyi for malaria education. However, some disagreement and neutral responses suggest issues with message clarity or reach, aligning with Idris et al. (2023), who noted weak health education as a barrier. Neutral responses may reflect limited engagement with radio due to complex messaging or other information sources. This study fills a gap by highlighting radio's effectiveness in Abakaliki's urban setting, where strong radio access enhances impact, unlike rural-focused studies. Using the Health Belief Model, it shows radio's role in raising awareness and confidence, though clearer messaging is needed to reduce neutral responses. By focusing on urban pregnant women, this research advances understanding of how media can improve malaria prevention, guiding future radio campaigns for better engagement.

Section C findings reveal that radio messages have a limited but statistically significant impact on the consistent use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, with a notable portion of the 400 respondents showing mixed engagement. Approximately 42.7% felt motivated to use ITNs every night, 27.5% reported overcoming practical barriers such as discomfort, and only 34% attributed their consistent ITN use to radio messages, with high neutral responses (26%–44.2%) and disagreement (21.8%–36%) indicating hesitancy or resistance. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 84.675$, $p < 0.05$) for Question 2

rejects the null hypothesis, suggesting radio messages have a modest effect on behavior, aligning with the Health Belief Model's focus on cues to action. These results contrast with Valentine et al. (2020), who found only 25% consistent ITN use in Aboh Mbaise despite awareness, pointing to persistent barriers beyond knowledge, such as discomfort or accessibility. Compared to Idris et al. (2023), where 30% used ITNs consistently in Kano, this study's urban focus highlights radio's partial success in driving behavior change, likely due to Abakaliki's robust media access. However, the high neutral responses suggest messaging may lack specificity or emotional appeal to overcome practical challenges. This study extends prior research by addressing the knowledge gap in urban contexts, revealing the need for targeted, action-oriented radio campaigns that address specific barriers like discomfort to enhance ITN adherence among urban pregnant women, offering insights for future health communication strategies.

The findings from Section D highlight substantial challenges hindering the access and use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, revealing critical barriers that impede effective malaria prevention. A majority of the 400 respondents reported significant difficulties in accessing ITNs and a lack of awareness about where to obtain them, underscoring persistent gaps in the distribution and communication systems. In contrast, far fewer

identified cost as a major obstacle, suggesting that financial barriers are less pronounced in this urban setting. These results resonate with Akpa et al. (2022), who observed similar access and awareness challenges in Ebonyi State, despite widespread ITN ownership, pointing to systemic issues in ensuring nets reach those in need. However, the minimal concern about cost diverges from rural studies like Valentine et al. (2020), where economic constraints were a dominant barrier, reflecting Abakaliki's urban advantage, likely due to free or subsidized ITN distribution through health facilities like the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital. This study extends prior research by pinpointing urban-specific barriers, emphasizing the critical role of awareness and accessibility over financial limitations. It fills a knowledge gap by demonstrating how radio campaigns, leveraging Abakaliki's robust media infrastructure, must incorporate practical details about ITN distribution points to bridge these gaps. By aligning with the Health Belief Model's focus on reducing barriers, this research underscores the need for targeted, urban-focused radio messaging to enhance ITN uptake, offering valuable insights for designing more effective malaria prevention strategies for pregnant women in similar urban contexts.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary:

This study looked into how radio messages could help pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, Ebonyi State, Nigeria, better understand and regularly use insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) to prevent malaria. Using a practical research approach, we found that radio messages really helped women grasp why ITNs matter, how to use them properly, and the risks malaria poses during pregnancy. Still, some women were not fully convinced, possibly because the messages were not clear enough. When it came to actually using ITNs every night, the impact was less impressive—many women did not feel motivated or found issues like discomfort hard to overcome, showing it’s one thing to know about ITNs and another to use them consistently. The biggest hurdles were getting hold of ITNs and knowing where to find them, though cost wasn’t a major issue. The study shows radio can be a powerful tool in urban areas like Abakaliki, but we need sharper, more practical messages. Suggestions include teaming up radio campaigns with antenatal clinics, sharing clear details on where to get ITNs, and crafting messages that connect with different groups of women to boost ITN use and cut down malaria cases.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that radio messages significantly enhance knowledge of insecticide-treated net (ITN) use among pregnant women in Abakaliki metropolis, though their impact on

consistent use is limited due to persistent barriers like access and awareness. While urban advantages like radio access and free ITN distribution reduce cost barriers, the findings highlight the need for more targeted messaging to address practical challenges and improve ITN uptake.

Recommendations

1. Government and health communication specialists should develop radio campaigns with clear, action-oriented messages to enhance awareness and address ITN discomfort among pregnant women.
2. Local radio stations should include practical information in broadcasts about where pregnant women can obtain ITNs in Abakaliki metropolis.
3. Health facility administrators should collaborate with radio stations to integrate campaigns with antenatal care education to encourage consistent ITN use among pregnant women and effective radio campaigns must be tailored, using local dialects and trusted voices to resonate with pregnant women in Abakaliki..

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**CHINA SHOPS AS AN INSTRUMENT
OF DIPLOMACY:
A STUDY OF CHINESE COMMERCIAL
PRESENCE IN NIGERIA.**

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Biodata

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Abstract

The existence of expansive piece of land housing Chinese shops and trade hubs in Lagos, Abuja and Kano has shown that raw military or economic power is not the only measure of a country's strength or the only means of a country exercising

power in the comity of nations. These shops and trade hubs and other ancillary additions like schools, films, are all intangibles and constitute what we call soft power. It is this soft power that is at the heart of people-to-people strategy of the Chinese nation in its African dealings and pursuits. The effect is that goods are imported from China and trade hubs established and those are sold directly to Nigerians at reduced prices thereby ensuring favourable opinion of the Chinese by ordinary Nigerians. The impact of this on the generality of our people is overwhelming. The research, therefore, aims to find out how China market shops – a group of Chinese retails outlets across Nigeria- function as instruments of China's soft diplomacy. Writers have written about infrastructure projects but this is about informal sector and the impact on the economy as Chinese entrepreneurs' interface with the local communities. The research draws on soft power theory, and employs a qualitative case study with emphasis on secondary data.

Keywords: Soft power, China-Nigeria Relations, China Shops, Informal Economy, Public Diplomacy, Commercial Diplomacy.

Introduction

Ever since the emergence of China on the global stage in 1971, it has tried as much as possible to assert itself in the international arena using every possible instrument at its disposal to achieve its national interest. This interest varies from time to time but the major fulcrum has always been to erase

the so-called hundred years of humiliation and assert the preeminence and predominance of the Chinese nation. The easiest way of asserting this preeminence in the comity of nations is through relations with other nations and these relationships can occur through the lens of trade, military, cultural and commercial sectors of the economy. In the area of trade, the economic relations of China with other nations ensures positive relationship and helps to foster economic growth and development which makes it possible for a nation to effectively play its role in the global economy. (Levy, 2013).

In Africa, soft power is a major area where the dominant world powers still compete but China as the leading power in Asia has special interest in order to tap natural resources to feed its industries back home. The large African market, the abundant natural resources in Africa and its expanding middle class all appeal to China and this made China to position itself as the continent's partner through investments in infrastructure, educational exchanges, cultural diplomacy, and trade networks. (King, 2013; Alden and Large, 2011). Despite the government-to-government contacts and relations, China's influence and penetrations reach almost all African societies through the Chinese media, and the rampant increase in Chinese businesses all over African major cities. These practices reflect China's way of projecting soft power and embedded in this approach is state driven diplomacy and grassroots economic and cultural interactions.

Thus, in Africa, this soft power is felt at local level by the advent of many Chinese market clusters and shops which constitute major pillars of local economies (Gadzala, 2015). These market clusters impact directly on the citizens by offering affordable goods, visible infrastructure and social contacts with Chinese traders.

Economic and infrastructural investments apart, there are other small and not more visible forms of diplomacy manifesting in people to people interactions in the market place and these are observable and are everyday reality; there are also the many other cinema centres where Chinese films and by implications culture are shown daily; there are diverse language study groups domiciled in Confucian institutes in diverse universities in Nigeria and then there are the proliferation of gargantuan Chinese markets all over the Nigeria landscape in major Nigeria cities like Abuja, Kano, Lagos and Ibadan. Since Nigeria is one of China's largest trading partners and these markets are many, its impact on changing and reshaping consumer taste, consumer behaviour and finally consumer culture cannot be over emphasised. This study, therefore, situates China shops as a veritable instrument of soft diplomacy and probably serves as a vehicle of influencing perceptions and fostering cultural exchange. These markets are situated in strategic locations around the major towns of Nigeria as enumerated before like Ibadan, Enugu, Kano and Lagos and serves as non - kinetic approach to winning the hearts of Nigerians. The

result is that there is a favourable perception of the Chinese by ordinary people or citizens of Nigeria and this shows the place of commercial spaces or trade in public diplomacy.

The advent of China retail shops and trade or commercial spaces in massive enclosed compounds in Nigeria selling all types of good from China at a lower price and drawing many Nigerians daily helps to position China in a favourable manner or way in public and even draws sympathy. The products sold at the China shop are usually of comparable quality to the one from the west. The favourable perception of China by the buying public of Chinese goods makes it easier for them to accept anything that comes from China as good, truthful and reliable.

Research Questions

1. What perception do Nigerian consumers and traders have about China market shops?
2. To what extent do China shops engender informal or cultural diplomacy in Nigeria?
3. Can we link local tensions or resistance or challenges to these China shops?
4. What policy or governance gaps exist in controlling this informal diplomatic network or space?

Significance of the Study

The research is significant or contributes to the advancement of knowledge because it shows that

China does not only focus on mega projects and state -to -state diplomatic engagements but also on every day spaces that involve people to people interactions. It looks at the daily informal interactions between Nigerians and ordinary Chinese shop owners. It enhances synergistic analysis of Joseph Nye soft power by combining practical with theory by showcasing grassroots economic diplomacy. It also offers perspective on trade, informal and cultural interactions and people to people relations between China and Nigeria. These interactions and their consequences are what is at the foundation of what made it possible for China and Nigeria to sustain their relationship despite all turbulent turns in the relationship. One of these turbulent turns was during the civil war in Nigeria when China supported the Biafra side and this caused a strain in the relationship between both nations. This was later amicably resolved and relations came back to normal. This relationship has been marked by an upward trajectory that some scholars have asked whether this interaction can be linked to a tale of two great powers or, on the other hand, whether it is a tale of Nigeria, one of many small third world powers, serves to sustain the interest and status of China, a great power (Idrees et al, 2024).

Literature Review

Soft power and its foundations

Joseph Nye (2004), an undersecretary of state at USA department of state was the first to conceptualize and bring forth the idea of soft power as a counterbalance to the physical power of the state encapsulated in such known indices like military power, economic power and physical power. It emphasizes the power of a state to achieve stated outcomes through attraction rather than coercion or force. It relies on persuasion, normative values, legitimacy and culture. Consequent upon this postulation, other scholars and eminent academics like Kurlantzick (2007) has expanded the soft power concept to include public diplomacy and informal networks and Melissen (2005) opined that even non state actors and every day interactions should be captured. Another writer Cull (2009) was of the view that commercial culture or public culture that includes music, films, food, and all constitutes symbols of soft powers. The study is of the view that while China market shops serve as an instrument of economic importance at face value, but it also plays the dual role of diplomacy as it helps in changing the perception of Nigerians about China.

In Africa, the concept of soft power has always revolved around big and gargantuan ideas like the massive expansion of Confucian institutes in Nigeria and the recent addition of Chinese language to Nigeria secondary school curriculum and all are

geared to spreading the Chinese language (King, 2013). This also includes media diplomacy (Wasserman, 2016) and the institutionalization of the FOCAC summits which helps in strengthening Sino-African relations. Some scholars are of the view that all the Chinese are doing is to offer a competitive and alternative model to Western development strategy (Alden & Large, 2019) and yet others are of the opinion that the effectiveness of soft power rests on the lived experiences and perception of Africans (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012).

China in Nigeria: Nigeria is the largest market in Africa and a gateway for Chinese merchandise in the continent. The focus has always been on mega and big projects and many have not taken pains to look at other aspects that emphasise intangibles. The big-ticket transactions like the Lagos -Ibadan standard gauge rail also serves as symbol of Chinese influence in Nigeria (Ogunlana, 2020; Olayiwola, 2021). Despite this mega projects China still interface through the shops with average people thereby building healthy image of the Chinese. Many scholars have studied the China shops and markets and believe that they represent more than trading or shopping outlets. Haugen (2019) in his studies showed how Chinese traders are entrepreneurs and informal diplomats and trying to shape perceptions through their daily interactions with native Africans, Nigerians inclusive. Tracking Chinese encounters in retail spaces and its “globalization from below” was done by Giese & Marfaing (2019). Other scholars like Haugen &

Carling (2005) are of the view that Chinese migrants use their shops as both business and cultural bridges to enhance the image of their nation. Wu and Sheel (2018) opined that products from China does not only have or serve utilitarian purposes or value but also embody or convey Chinese aesthetics, values, norms and practices. All these works prove that China employs soft diplomacy in actual practice in the course of its engagement with Africa. This involves spreading familiarity with China -made products, strengthening interpersonal ties and helping to change or dilute our appetite for western goods, thereby altering Nigerian's consumption pattern in favour of China made products.

Finally, all works have always dwelt on infrastructure but this work will dwell on soft diplomacy that takes into consideration the micro-diplomacy of everyday trade and commercial interactions. The study fills the gaps as it shows that China shops serve as grassroots or micro unit diplomatic outposts.

Theoretical Framework

Nye (1990, 2004) advanced the theory of soft power where he said that a country can influence others not only through economic or military coercion but also through soft power. The soft power he proceeded to categorise in terms of culture, political values and foreign policy. Principally, soft power has been explored in the dimension of state-to-state relation with emphasis on elite diplomatic interactions,

educational exchanges, media influence and cultural promotion. Yet, despite this, other scholars like Melissen (2005); Giese & Marfaing, 2019) etc. focused their work on non-state actors and people to people interactions which can also be seen as channels of soft power. The implication is that shops, traders and consumer goods are not only economic tools but diplomatic tools that transmit culture, business ways and patterns and ideas that affect African perception of China.

The shops in Nigeria helps in projecting Chinese power by cultural transmission via clothes, foods, machinery, films, electronics and aesthetics that creates everyday cultural familiarity. This makes it possible to attract Nigerians through the mass appeal of cheap, accessible goods from China.

The market shops also help in value projection and exposition. This can be achieved through business, interpersonal relations and negotiation styles. The Chinese convey attitudes of diligence, frugality, seriousness and workaholism. The corollary is that people to people interactions and encounters between Nigerian consumers and Chinese traders and all other people that come in contact with them are in one way or the other affected by this behaviour.

The ultimate effect of soft power is that the daily interactions between Nigerians and Chinese directly or indirectly rob off on the foreign policy of both nations and reinforce perception or destroy

stereotypes. It helps in constructing, reconstructing or deconstructing images, build trust, remove suspicion, deepen respect and expose dependency. Soft power theory helps to link empirical and practical cases like shops to issues of theoretical paradigm like cultures, values and policies. The shop serves as a rallying point for the community where it is sited and conveys a positive and favourable image of China to the people. The result is that people's lives are touched more by the ubiquitous shops dotted along the landscape of the country than by anything else.

Methodology

The study employs a qualitative research design and this involves:

1. Document Analysis: Reviewing existing academic works, government reports and media coverage on China - Nigeria relations and soft power.
2. Field observations: Conducting observations in, major Chinese market clusters like in Lagos in order to examine and understand market dynamics, interactions and movements.
3. Semi-structured interviews: Engaging traders, consumers and policy makers to explore perceptions and realities.

Findings, Discussions and Implications

This study looks at Chinese soft diplomacy through soft power theory which emphasizes attraction

rather coercion as the basis of international influence and engagement. The findings reveal that the soft power exercised in Nigeria by China extends beyond official state policies, infrastructural projects, and Confucian institutes to the lowest unit of a society that rest on the micro-level spaces of everyday trade where ordinary Nigerians and ordinary Chinese interact. The first key finding establishes that China market shops are not merely commercial venues but grassroot sites of China- Nigeria engagement. These trading spaces facilitate direct source of interaction between Chinese entrepreneur and Nigerian consumers functioning as informal platforms for cross - cultural understanding and image building and refinement. It dovetails to what was called globalization from below to depict African-China market interactions and this is seen from the prism of economic and social exchange. The result is that soft diplomacy operates very well when it rhymes with daily human contact and not through elite or official channels. Also, it was discovered in the course of the research that Chinese goods and products are attractive because of affordability and accessibility. The corollary is that they became an integral part of life of low - income Nigerians. This represents economic attraction and shows that power extends beyond culture and ideology to include material attraction that makes life worth living. This makes it possible to see China as a development partner in their lives. Sometimes concerns over quality of products and goods create

ambivalence in the perception of China in the eyes of Nigerians and the consequence is that credibility issues may arise. What we are saying is that sustained soft power requires quality assurance and ethical business practices to stop or prevent gradual erosion of self-confidence.

It was also noted and found by the study that Chinese traders carry themselves as unappointed ambassadors of their country; embodying the ethos, norms and behaviours of real or official diplomats of their country. Daily interactions - ranging from haggling to customer service - become clever and subtle channels of diplomacy. When handled very well, they serve as avenue of mutual and beneficial understanding between Chinese entrepreneurs and Nigerian consumers. These contacts also showcase industriousness and discipline of the Chinese traders and their entrepreneurs. The end result is that diplomatic channels see and view the traders as strategic partners in image and brand management, providing them with cultural orientation, language training, and ethical templates that support positive representation. This positive representation translates to a deeper form of economic interdependence as China's trade presence lowers consumer costs and enhances market efficiency. On the other hand, it also entrenches dependency by marginalizing local manufacturers and limiting and degrading local industrial growth and expansion. That is to say it empowers the Chinese and makes them to look attractive and indispensable as a trade and business partner and at same time ensures neo-

dependency and economic vulnerability on the part of Nigerians. The other insight gained from the study is that the expansion of “China town” shops and markets in Nigeria ensures that it serves as an instrument for the advancement of the country’s foreign policy especially under the BRI policy. The traders may be rural -based yet their activities enhance their country’s presence in Nigeria urban economy without formal diplomatic intervention. This shows that Nigeria’s boundaries in commercial and diplomatic terms are now blurred as private traders and entrepreneurs from China are now playing unofficial role in shaping bilateral relations.

The study also found out that Nigerian’s perceptions of China and its people is from the everyday interactions and experiences in markets and shops than from official or cultural mediums. This shows that public diplomacy may advance but is not the only source of perception of Nigerians on China. Nigerians develop views, perceptions and ideas either positive or negative about China based on trader behaviour, quality of goods and personal daily encounters. China therefore, must continue to engage the public comprising the ordinary consumers and people ensuring that people to people interactions align with broader image or brand exposures.

The study shows that China market shops as instruments of diplomacy are situational: the location, community and the experience of the traders and entrepreneurs about their environment.

China's soft diplomacy must be localized and adaptive to the local community. This ensures that cultural sensitivities are observed.

Implications

The study shows that everyday interactions between the nationals of both nations are also a good pathway to diplomacy and influence. It proves that and sees soft power as a multi-level phenomenal theory that operates at state, corporate and grassroots level. It shows that Chinese diplomacy deserves strategic recognition and engagement. The training, regulation and cultural mediation for Chinese traders and entrepreneurs enhance the credibility of China's image abroad. On the part of Nigeria policy makers, balanced engagement will leverage on the benefits of Chinese trade while ensuring that local enterprises and industries are protected and ensuring that good product quality monitoring leads to mutual benefits. This study fills an academic gap by shifting attention from top level diplomacy to every day spaces of life.

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**INTÉGRATION DE WHATSAPP DANS
L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE LA TRADUCTION :
OPPORTUNITÉS PÉDAGOGIQUES, DÉFIS
TECHNOLOGIQUE ET PERSPECTIVES
PROFESSIONNELLES**

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Résumé

Cet article examine l'intégration de WhatsApp comme outil pédagogique dans l'enseignement de la traduction, explorant ses implications pour la formation des futurs traducteurs professionnels. Alors que les technologies numériques transforment profondément les pratiques traductives professionnelles, la formation à la traduction doit s'adapter pour préparer les étudiants aux réalités du marché contemporain. WhatsApp, plateforme de messagerie instantanée omniprésente, offre des

affordances spécifiques qui correspondent aux besoins pédagogiques de l'enseignement de la traduction : communication synchrone et asynchrone, collaboration en temps réel, partage multimodal de contenus, et simulation d'environnements professionnels. À travers une analyse théorique ancrée dans la didactique de la traduction, les théories de l'apprentissage collaboratif, et les études sur les technologies éducatives, cet article explore comment WhatsApp peut faciliter l'apprentissage de compétences traductives essentielles telles que la révision collaborative, la recherche terminologique, la gestion de projets de traduction, et le développement de réseaux professionnels. L'article examine également les défis spécifiques liés à l'utilisation de WhatsApp dans ce contexte, notamment les questions de confidentialité professionnelle, de gestion de la qualité, et de préparation à l'utilisation d'outils professionnels plus sophistiqués. Des recommandations pédagogiques sont proposées pour une intégration réfléchie de WhatsApp dans les programmes de formation à la traduction.

Mots-clés : WhatsApp, enseignement de la traduction, technologies éducatives, apprentissage collaboratif, compétence traductive, formation professionnelle

Abstract

This article examines the integration of WhatsApp

as a pedagogical tool in teaching of translation, exploring its implications for the training of future professional translators. As digital technologies profoundly transform professional translation practices, translator education must adapt to prepare students for the realities of the contemporary market. WhatsApp, a ubiquitous instant messaging platform, offers specific affordances that align with the pedagogical needs of translation instruction: synchronous and asynchronous communication, real-time collaboration, multimodal content sharing, and simulation of professional environments. Through a theoretical analysis grounded in translation pedagogy, collaborative learning theories, and educational technology studies, this article explores how WhatsApp can facilitate the learning of essential translational competences such as collaborative revision, terminology research, translation project management, and the development of professional networks. The article also examines the specific challenges associated with the use of WhatsApp in this context, including issues of professional confidentiality, quality management and preparation for the use of more sophisticated professional tools. Pedagogical recommendations are proposed for the thoughtful integration of WhatsApp into translation training programs.

Keywords: WhatsApp, teaching of translation, educational technologies, collaborative learning, translational competence, professional training

Introduction

Les technologies numériques ont profondément transformé les pratiques éducatives contemporaines, notamment dans l'enseignement des langues et de la traduction. Le nom même « WhatsApp » d'après Deloffre est un jeu de mots sur l'expression anglaise *What's up?*, signifiant « quoi de neuf ? » (Deloffre, 2025 :1). WhatsApp est une application de messagerie instantanée multiplateforme qui permet aux utilisateurs d'envoyer des messages textuels, vocaux, des images, des vidéos, des documents et de passer des appels audio et vidéo via Internet. Selon Khan, « WhatsApp est l'une des applications de messagerie les plus utilisées au monde, servant à des fins sociales, professionnelles et éducatives, grâce à sa simplicité d'utilisation et à sa compatibilité avec la plupart des appareils mobiles) (Khan, 2021 : 2). Dans un contexte éducatif, WhatsApp n'est pas seulement un outil de communication, mais aussi un espace d'apprentissage numérique favorisant la collaboration, la flexibilité et l'interaction entre enseignants et apprenants. Pour Karen Ferreira-Meyers, « WhatsApp a évolué d'une simple application de discussion vers un outil pédagogique qui soutient l'interaction, la collaboration et la construction de communautés d'apprentissage en enseignement des langues » (2020 :6). Quant à Candrika Citra Sari, « WhatsApp fonctionne comme une plateforme d'apprentissage mobile où enseignants et apprenants interagissent en temps

réel, échangent des rétroactions et réalisent des activités collaboratives en dehors de la classe » (2024 :24). On peut définir alors WhatsApp comme une application mobile de messagerie instantanée devenue un outil pédagogique multimodal, favorisant la communication, la collaboration et l'apprentissage autonome en contexte éducatif, notamment dans l'enseignement des langues et de la traduction

L'avènement des réseaux sociaux et des applications de messagerie instantanée, telles que WhatsApp, a créé de nouveaux espaces d'apprentissage où la communication, la collaboration et l'échange de savoirs deviennent plus dynamiques et interactifs. La traduction, activité millénaire de médiation linguistique et culturelle, connaît aujourd'hui une transformation profonde sous l'effet des technologies numériques. Les traducteurs professionnels contemporains travaillent dans des environnements hautement technologisés, utilisant des mémoires de traduction, des logiciels de traduction assistée par ordinateur (TAO), des bases de données terminologiques, des plateformes de gestion de projets, et collaborant avec des collègues dispersés géographiquement à travers divers outils de communication numérique. Cette réalité professionnelle appelle à une reconfiguration de la formation à la traduction pour préparer adéquatement les futurs traducteurs aux exigences du marché contemporain. Dans ce contexte de transformation numérique, WhatsApp,

application de messagerie instantanée comptant plus de deux milliards d'utilisateurs actifs dans le monde, émerge comme un outil potentiellement pertinent pour l'enseignement de la traduction. Bien que WhatsApp ne soit pas un outil professionnel de traduction au sens strict, ses caractéristiques de communication instantanée, de collaboration facilitée, et de partage multimodal de contenus offrent des affordances pédagogiques qui peuvent enrichir la formation des traducteurs. Comme le note Pym dans son analyse de la formation en traduction à l'ère numérique, « les technologies de communication utilisées quotidiennement par les étudiants peuvent servir de ponts vers l'adoption ultérieure de technologies professionnelles plus spécialisées, à condition que leur utilisation pédagogique soit intentionnelle et réfléchie » (45).

Dans le cadre de l'enseignement de la traduction, l'utilisation de WhatsApp offre un potentiel considérable pour renforcer l'interactivité entre enseignants et apprenants, faciliter la pratique traductive, et encourager la réflexion collaborative. Comme le souligne Henri Holec, « apprendre, c'est avant tout participer activement à la construction de son propre savoir » (Holec 45). Ainsi, l'intégration de WhatsApp peut transformer la classe traditionnelle de traduction en un espace d'apprentissage flexible et participatif, où la technologie devient un outil d'autonomisation et de construction du sens. L'intégration de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement de la traduction soulève

plusieurs questions fondamentales et cet article propose une exploration théorique et critique de ces questions, en examinant l'intégration de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement de la traduction à travers plusieurs dimensions. Nous commencerons par situer cette problématique dans le contexte de l'évolution de la didactique de la traduction et de la transformation numérique de la profession. Nous analyserons ensuite les caractéristiques de WhatsApp qui le rendent potentiellement pertinent pour l'enseignement de la traduction. Nous explorerons les applications pédagogiques spécifiques de WhatsApp pour le développement de diverses compétences traductives. Nous examinerons les défis et les limites de cette intégration, avant de proposer des principes directives pour une utilisation pédagogiquement efficace et professionnellement responsable de WhatsApp dans la formation à la traduction.

Didactique de la traduction et transformation numérique

La didactique de la traduction a connu une évolution significative au cours des dernières décennies, passant d'une conception de la traduction comme talent inné ou art mystérieux à une compréhension de la traduction comme ensemble de compétences professionnelles pouvant être systématiquement enseignées et développées. Gouadec souligne dans son ouvrage sur la formation des traducteurs que, « la professionnalisation de la

traduction a nécessité une didactisation, c'est-à-dire une décomposition analytique de l'activité traductive en compétences identifiables et enseignables » (23). Cette évolution s'est accompagnée d'un passage de méthodes pédagogiques traditionnelles centrées sur la correction d'erreurs vers des approches plus constructivistes et orientées vers le développement de compétences. Le modèle de compétence traductive développé par le groupe PACTE identifie cinq sous-compétences essentielles : la compétence bilingue, la compétence extra-linguistique (connaissances culturelles et spécialisées), la compétence instrumentale (utilisation d'outils), la compétence stratégique (résolution de problèmes), et les composantes psycho-physiologiques (Hurtado Albir 28). Cette décomposition de la compétence traductive en dimensions multiples a des implications importantes pour la pédagogie, suggérant qu'un enseignement efficace de la traduction doit adresser systématiquement chacune de ces dimensions.

De plus, la reconnaissance croissante de la dimension sociale et collaborative de la traduction professionnelle a influencé les approches pédagogiques. Contrairement à l'image romantique du traducteur solitaire travaillant dans son bureau, les traducteurs professionnels contemporains travaillent souvent en équipes, collaborent avec des réviseurs, des terminologues, des chefs de projet, et des clients, nécessitant des compétences

interpersonnelles et communicatives en plus des compétences linguistiques (Kiraly 67). Cette dimension collaborative de la profession appelle à des pédagogies qui intègrent le travail d'équipe, la négociation, et la communication professionnelle. La traduction professionnelle a été profondément transformée par les technologies numériques au cours des trois dernières décennies. L'introduction des mémoires de traduction dans les années 1990, suivie par le développement de logiciels TAO sophistiqués, de bases de données terminologiques, d'outils de gestion de projets, et plus récemment de systèmes de traduction automatique neuronale, a radicalement modifié les pratiques de travail des traducteurs (Bowker et Fisher 15). Ces technologies ont plusieurs implications pour la profession. Premièrement, elles ont augmenté la productivité, permettant aux traducteurs de traiter des volumes plus importants en moins de temps. Deuxièmement, elles ont facilité la cohérence terminologique et stylistique, particulièrement dans les projets de grande envergure ou les traductions récurrentes. Troisièmement, elles ont rendu possible de nouvelles formes de collaboration et de division du travail, avec des projets distribués entre plusieurs traducteurs travaillant simultanément sur différentes sections.

Toutefois, ces technologies ont également créé de nouveaux défis et exigences. Les traducteurs doivent désormais posséder une littérarité numérique sophistiquée, être capables de naviguer

dans des interfaces logicielles complexes, de gérer des fichiers dans divers formats, et de résoudre des problèmes techniques. De plus, la dépendance croissante à la technologie soulève des questions sur le rôle humain dans la traduction : que reste-t-il de spécifiquement humain dans la traduction à l'ère de l'intelligence artificielle ? Comment les traducteurs peuvent-ils ajouter de la valeur au-delà de ce que les machines peuvent faire ? Ces transformations ont des implications directes pour la formation à la traduction. Selon Kelly, « les programmes de formation à la traduction doivent non seulement enseigner l'utilisation d'outils technologiques spécifiques, mais aussi développer une compétence technologique plus large qui permettra aux futurs traducteurs de s'adapter continuellement aux évolutions technologiques rapides » (89). Cette compétence technologique ne se limite pas à la maîtrise technique d'outils mais inclut une compréhension critique de comment et quand utiliser différentes technologies, de leurs limites, et de leurs implications éthiques et professionnelles.

Utilisation de technologies grand public comme WhatsApp dans la formation professionnelle

L'utilisation de technologies grand public comme WhatsApp dans la formation professionnelle à la traduction soulève des questions sur la relation entre outils quotidiens et outils professionnels. D'une part, il existe une tension : WhatsApp n'est pas conçu pour la traduction

professionnelle et manque de fonctionnalités essentielles comme les mémoires de traduction, le contrôle qualité systématique, ou la gestion de la confidentialité conforme aux standards professionnels. Former les étudiants avec WhatsApp pourrait créer de mauvaises habitudes ou des attentes irréalistes sur les pratiques professionnelles.

D'autre part, WhatsApp peut servir d'introduction accessible aux principes de collaboration numérique, de révision par les pairs, et de communication professionnelle à distance avant que les étudiants ne passent à des outils plus sophistiqués. Prensky suggère dans son analyse de l'apprentissage numérique que, « les technologies familières peuvent réduire la charge cognitive liée à l'apprentissage de nouveaux concepts en permettant aux apprenants de se concentrer sur le contenu plutôt que sur l'outil » (5). Dans cette perspective, WhatsApp pourrait servir de « technologie de transition » qui prépare progressivement les étudiants aux environnements professionnels plus complexes. De plus, l'utilisation de WhatsApp reflète une réalité professionnelle souvent négligée dans la formation formelle : beaucoup de traducteurs freelance et de petites agences de traduction utilisent effectivement des outils de communication grand public comme WhatsApp pour communiquer avec les clients, coordonner des projets, et échanger des fichiers, particulièrement dans des contextes où les clients ne disposent pas

d'infrastructures technologiques sophistiquées. Former les étudiants à naviguer professionnellement dans ces environnements technologiques hybrides peut donc avoir une pertinence pragmatique.

WhatsApp comme environnement d'apprentissage pour la traduction

1. Caractéristiques de WhatsApp, pertinentes pour la formation en traduction

La multimodalité : WhatsApp présente plusieurs caractéristiques qui, bien que conçues pour la communication sociale générale, peuvent être mobilisées pédagogiquement pour l'enseignement de la traduction. WhatsApp permet le partage de messages textuels, d'images, de documents, d'enregistrements vocaux, et de vidéos. Cette variété de formats correspond à la nature multimodale de beaucoup de projets de traduction contemporains qui peuvent inclure la traduction de textes, la transcription et traduction d'enregistrements audio, la traduction de sous-titres vidéo, ou la localisation d'interfaces graphiques.

La communication synchrone et asynchrone : WhatsApp permet à la fois des échanges en temps réel et des communications différées, offrant la flexibilité nécessaire pour différents types de collaboration traductive. Certaines décisions de traduction nécessitent une discussion rapide et

interactive, tandis que d'autres bénéficient d'une réflexion plus prolongée et d'échanges asynchrones. Cette flexibilité temporelle reflète les rythmes variés du travail de traduction professionnel.

La facilité de création de groupes : WhatsApp permet de créer rapidement des groupes de travail, facilitant la collaboration entre plusieurs étudiants-traducteurs sur un même projet, simulant ainsi les environnements de traduction collaborative caractéristiques de beaucoup d'agences de traduction. Les fonctionnalités de gestion de groupe (ajout/retrait de membres, attribution de rôles d'administrateur) permettent également de simuler la hiérarchie et la structure organisationnelle des projets de traduction professionnels.

La facilité de création des questions sur WhatsApp : WhatsApp offre désormais une fonctionnalité appelée « poll » (sondage) qui permet aux utilisateurs de créer facilement des questions à choix multiples directement dans les discussions individuelles ou de groupe. Cette option facilite la collecte rapide d'opinions, de réponses ou de notes sur un sujet donné, sans recourir à des outils externes. Dans un contexte éducatif, cette fonction favorise l'interactivité : les enseignants peuvent poser des questions de traduction, et les étudiants y répondent instantanément. Cela renforce la participation, l'évaluation formative et le retour immédiat sur les apprentissages. En traduction, par exemple, un enseignant peut créer un sondage pour

demander : « *Quelle est la meilleure traduction de cette expression idiomatique ?* » — ce qui permet de comparer les choix et d'encourager la réflexion collective sur la langue. Khan soutient que WhatsApp permet aux enseignants d'utiliser des *micro-activités interactives*, telles que des questions rapides ou des quiz, pour maintenir l'attention des apprenants et évaluer leur compréhension en temps réel (2021 :11).

L'accessibilité et la familiarité : La plupart des étudiants utilisent déjà WhatsApp quotidiennement, réduisant ainsi la courbe d'apprentissage technologique et permettant une intégration rapide dans les activités pédagogiques. Cette familiarité peut réduire l'anxiété technologique et permettre aux étudiants de se concentrer sur l'apprentissage de la traduction plutôt que sur la maîtrise d'un nouvel outil.

La traçabilité des échanges : Toutes les conversations sur WhatsApp sont automatiquement archivées, créant un historique consultable des décisions de traduction, des discussions terminologiques, et des processus de révision. Cette traçabilité peut avoir une valeur pédagogique importante, permettant aux étudiants et aux enseignants de revisiter les processus de réflexion, d'identifier les patterns d'erreurs, et de documenter l'évolution des compétences.

2. Théories d'apprentissage soutenant l'utilisation de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement

La théorie de socioconstructivisme : l'utilisation pédagogique de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement de la traduction peut être ancrée dans plusieurs cadres théoriques de l'apprentissage. Le socioconstructivisme, particulièrement tel que développé par Vygotsky, offre un cadre particulièrement pertinent. Selon cette approche, « l'apprentissage est fondamentalement un processus social où les interactions avec les pairs et les figures plus expérimentées, dans ce que Vygotsky appelle la zone proximale de développement, jouent un rôle crucial dans la construction des connaissances » (86). WhatsApp, en facilitant les interactions continues et diversifiées entre étudiants-traducteurs, crée précisément les conditions d'un apprentissage social riche. Comme le suggère la théorie de la zone proximale de développement de Vygotsky, « l'apprentissage est optimisé lorsqu'il commence dans la zone de confort de l'apprenant et progresse progressivement vers de nouveaux territoires avec un support approprié » (cité dans Kramsch 89).

La théorie de l'apprentissage situé : la théorie de l'apprentissage situé de Lave et Wenger suggère que « l'apprentissage est plus efficace lorsqu'il se produit dans des contextes authentiques qui ressemblent aux situations où les connaissances et compétences

seront ultérieurement appliquées » (29). WhatsApp peut servir à créer des simulations d'environnements professionnels de traduction, où les étudiants jouent des rôles différents (traducteur, réviseur, chef de projet, client) et négocient des décisions de traduction dans des contextes quasi-authentiques.

La théorie de la charge cognitive : la théorie de la charge cognitive de Sweller offre également des insights pertinents. Cette théorie suggère que « l'apprentissage est optimisé lorsque la charge cognitive est gérée de manière à maximiser la capacité de traitement de l'information pertinente » (53). La familiarité de WhatsApp peut réduire la charge cognitive extrinsèque (liée à l'outil lui-même), permettant aux étudiants de concentrer leurs ressources cognitives sur la charge intrinsèque (liée à la complexité de la tâche de traduction) et la charge pertinente (liée à la construction de schémas de connaissances).

La théorie de connectivisme : le connectivisme, théorie d'apprentissage développée pour l'ère numérique, postule que « la connaissance est distribuée à travers des réseaux et que l'apprentissage consiste à créer et à naviguer dans ces réseaux » (Siemens 5). WhatsApp facilite la création de réseaux d'apprentissage où les étudiants peuvent partager des ressources, des stratégies de traduction, des solutions terminologiques, et des feedback, créant une intelligence collective qui dépasse les connaissances individuelles.

3. WhatsApp et le développement de la compétence collaborative

La traduction, particulièrement dans les contextes professionnels contemporains, est de plus en plus une activité collaborative plutôt qu'individuelle. Les projets de traduction de grande envergure sont souvent divisés entre plusieurs traducteurs travaillant simultanément, nécessitant une coordination étroite, une cohérence terminologique et stylistique, et une révision mutuelle. De plus, les traducteurs collaborent régulièrement avec des réviseurs, des terminologues, des experts du domaine, et des chefs de projet. Cette dimension collaborative de la traduction professionnelle est souvent sous-représentée dans la formation traditionnelle à la traduction qui privilégie des exercices individuels où chaque étudiant traduit un texte seul, reçoit une correction individuelle de l'enseignant, et peu d'interaction avec les pairs. Comme le critique Kiraly, « cette pédagogie individualiste prépare mal les étudiants aux réalités du travail collaboratif qui caractérise la profession » (78). WhatsApp offre une plateforme pour développer des compétences collaboratives essentielles. À travers des projets de traduction de groupe sur WhatsApp, les étudiants peuvent apprendre à : négocier des décisions de traduction, maintenir la cohérence, se donner du feedback mutuellement et à gérer des conflits.

4. Simulation d'environnements et des interactions professionnelle

Au-delà de la facilitation de la collaboration entre étudiants, WhatsApp peut être utilisé pour simuler des environnements et des interactions professionnelles. L'enseignant peut jouer le rôle d'un client (fictif) qui envoie des demandes de traduction via WhatsApp, spécifiant des délais, des contraintes de format, des publics cibles, simulant ainsi les communications client-traducteur caractéristiques de la pratique freelance. Ces simulations peuvent être conçues pour exposer les étudiants à des scénarios professionnels variés : gestion de demandes ambiguës, communication interculturelle, gestion de crises, éthique professionnelle, recherche terminologique et construction de glossaires.

5. Révision collaborative

La révision est une étape cruciale du processus de traduction professionnelle. Dans les agences de traduction, les traductions passent typiquement par plusieurs étapes de révision : auto-révision par le traducteur, révision par un pair, et révision finale par un réviseur senior. WhatsApp peut faciliter l'apprentissage de ces pratiques de révision à travers plusieurs modalités.

Révision par les pairs structurée : Les étudiants peuvent être organisés en binômes où chacun traduit

un segment de texte puis partage sa traduction avec son partenaire via WhatsApp pour révision. Le réviseur peut utiliser diverses fonctionnalités de WhatsApp pour fournir son feedback : messages textuels pour des commentaires généraux, messages vocaux pour des explications plus nuancées, ou photos de la traduction annotée manuellement. Cette pratique développe à la fois les compétences de révision (identifier les erreurs, suggérer des améliorations) et la capacité à recevoir et intégrer des critiques constructives.

Révision en temps réel : Pour certains types de traduction, particulièrement la traduction de contenus urgents ou la traduction lors d'événements en direct, une révision rapide est nécessaire. WhatsApp peut simuler ces conditions à travers des exercices où les étudiants doivent traduire et réviser dans des délais serrés, développant la capacité à travailler sous pression tout en maintenant la qualité.

Discussions de qualité : Les groupes WhatsApp peuvent servir d'espaces pour des discussions sur les critères de qualité en traduction. Quand constitue une "bonne" traduction ? Comment équilibrer la fidélité au texte source et l'idiomaticité dans la langue cible ? Ces discussions métacognitives sur la qualité développent une conscience critique essentielle pour l'auto-évaluation et l'amélioration continue.

6. Gestion de projets de traduction

La gestion de projets est une compétence souvent négligée dans la formation à la traduction mais essentielle en pratique professionnelle, particulièrement pour les traducteurs freelance qui doivent gérer simultanément plusieurs projets avec différents clients et délais. WhatsApp peut servir d'outil d'introduction à la gestion de projets de traduction à travers plusieurs applications. Un projet de traduction peut être simulé du début à la fin via WhatsApp : réception de la demande du client, analyse du texte source, négociation de délais et tarifs, division du travail (si collaboratif), réalisation de la traduction, révision, livraison, et feedback du client. Chaque étape peut être documentée et discutée, donnant aux étudiants une vision holistique du processus de traduction professionnel au-delà de l'acte de traduire lui-même. Pour les projets collaboratifs, un étudiant peut jouer le rôle de chef de projet, responsable de coordonner l'équipe de traducteurs via WhatsApp : assigner des segments de texte, établir des échéanciers, suivre les progrès, résoudre des problèmes, et assurer la cohérence du produit final. Cette expérience développe des compétences de leadership et de gestion essentielles pour ceux qui aspirent à des rôles de gestion dans l'industrie de la traduction. La fonction de rappel et les notifications de WhatsApp peuvent être utilisées pour enseigner la gestion du temps. Les étudiants peuvent établir des jalons pour différentes étapes de leurs projets, recevoir des

rappels, et apprendre à prioriser et à gérer leur charge de travail. WhatsApp peut servir à enseigner l'importance de documenter les décisions de projet, de maintenir des archives organisées, et de créer des traces consultables pour référence future ou en cas de litiges.

7. Feedback immédiate et l'apprentissage juste-à-temps

Une des limitations de l'enseignement traditionnel de la traduction est le délai souvent significatif entre la soumission d'une traduction et la réception de feedback. Ce délai peut réduire l'efficacité pédagogique du feedback, les étudiants ayant déjà « oublié » leur processus de réflexion au moment où ils reçoivent les commentaires. WhatsApp peut faciliter un feedback plus immédiat et contextualisé. Lorsqu'un étudiant est bloqué sur un problème de traduction spécifique, il peut poser une question rapide sur WhatsApp et recevoir des suggestions de pairs ou de l'enseignant en temps quasi-réel. Cette réponse immédiate, où l'aide arrive au moment du besoin peut être plus efficace que l'apprentissage différé. Par ailleurs, plutôt que de soumettre une traduction complète et d'attendre une correction globale, les étudiants peuvent partager des segments de leur travail en cours pour un feedback partiel. Cette approche itérative permet des ajustements progressifs et prévient l'accumulation d'erreurs systématiques qui se propagent à travers toute une traduction. WhatsApp

permet différents formats de feedback adaptés à différents types de problèmes. Un message texte peut suffire pour une correction factuelle, tandis qu'un message vocal peut être plus approprié pour expliquer une nuance subtile de sens ou pour discuter des choix stylistiques. Cette multimodalité enrichit la communication pédagogique. L'immédiateté de WhatsApp encourage les étudiants à se donner du feedback mutuellement sans attendre l'intervention de l'enseignant. Cette pratique développe non seulement les compétences de révision mais aussi une autonomie d'apprentissage où les étudiants deviennent des ressources les uns pour les autres.

Défis et limites de l'utilisation de WhatsApp

Malgré ses atouts, l'usage de WhatsApp dans la formation traductive comporte des défis. L'utilisation de WhatsApp pour l'enseignement de la traduction soulève des préoccupations sur la préparation des étudiants à respecter ces standards de confidentialité. La confidentialité est un pilier fondamental de l'éthique professionnelle en traduction. Les traducteurs sont souvent exposés à des informations sensibles, propriétaires, ou confidentielles, et ont une obligation déontologique de protéger ces informations. Ferreira-Meyers souligne le risque de dérive informelle : les interactions peuvent devenir « moins académiques » si elles ne sont pas structurées (2020 :6). WhatsApp, bien que proposant un chiffrement de

bout en bout, n'est pas conçu pour la gestion sécurisée d'informations sensibles selon les standards professionnels. Les métadonnées (qui communique avec qui, quand, à quelle fréquence) ne sont pas chiffrées. De plus, WhatsApp est propriété de Meta (Facebook), une entreprise dont le modèle économique repose sur la collecte et la monétisation de données utilisateurs, soulevant des questions sur la confidentialité à long terme. Former les étudiants à utiliser WhatsApp pour partager des textes à traduire sans discussion explicite sur les limites de confidentialité de la plateforme pourrait créer de mauvaises habitudes qui se transféreraient à la pratique professionnelle. Comme le souligne Drugan dans son analyse de l'éthique en traduction, « les habitudes de gestion de l'information développées pendant la formation ont tendance à persister dans la pratique professionnelle, rendant crucial d'inculquer dès la formation une conscience rigoureuse de la confidentialité » (134). Pour adresser ce défi, plusieurs stratégies peuvent être adoptées. Premièrement, utiliser uniquement des textes non-confidentiels, du domaine public, ou créés spécifiquement pour la pédagogie dans les exercices WhatsApp. Deuxièmement, accompagner l'utilisation de WhatsApp de discussions explicites sur ses limites en matière de confidentialité et sur les différences entre outils grand public et outils professionnels sécurisés. Troisièmement, introduire progressivement les étudiants à des plateformes de collaboration plus sécurisées utilisées en pratique professionnelle, positionnant WhatsApp comme un

outil pédagogique transitoire plutôt que comme un modèle de pratique professionnelle.

Néanmoins, l'instantanéité et l'informalité de WhatsApp peuvent encourager une approche « rapide et approximative » de la traduction qui est antithétique à l'exigence de qualité caractéristique de la profession. La traduction professionnelle nécessite du temps pour la recherche, la réflexion, la révision, et le polissage. L'environnement de WhatsApp, caractérisé par des échanges rapides et informels, peut créer des pressions implicites pour des réponses rapides au détriment de la qualité. De plus, la traduction sur WhatsApp se fait souvent sur de petits écrans de smartphones, rendant difficile la visualisation du contexte plus large, la consultation simultanée de ressources, et l'attention aux détails de formatage et de présentation qui sont importants en traduction professionnelle. Comme le note Ehrensberger-Dow dans son étude de l'ergonomie de la traduction, « l'environnement physique et technologique du travail de traduction influence significativement la qualité du produit final » (2014 :45). Pour mitiger ces risques, il est important de cadrer clairement les attentes sur les types de tâches appropriées pour WhatsApp versus celles qui nécessitent des environnements de travail plus structurés. WhatsApp peut être excellent pour des micro-tâches (recherche terminologique ponctuelle, clarification d'ambiguïtés, feedback sur des segments courts), mais ne devrait pas remplacer le travail de traduction approfondi effectué dans des

conditions optimales. Les enseignants doivent explicitement enseigner et modéliser l'importance de la qualité, en établissant des standards clairs, en fournissant des rubriques d'évaluation détaillées, et en insistant sur la révision et le polissage même pour les exercices effectués via WhatsApp. Le message doit être que la rapidité de la plateforme ne justifie jamais la compromission de la qualité.

De plus, l'accessibilité constante de WhatsApp (24/7) crée des défis de gestion des frontières entre vie professionnelle et vie personnelle, un problème déjà bien documenté chez les traducteurs freelance. Pour les étudiants et les enseignants, l'utilisation de WhatsApp pour l'apprentissage peut brouiller les frontières entre temps d'étude et temps personnel, créant des attentes implicites de disponibilité constante. Les étudiants peuvent se sentir obligés de répondre immédiatement aux messages de groupe, de contribuer en dehors des heures de cours normales, ou de maintenir une présence constante pour ne pas "manquer" des discussions importantes. Pour les enseignants, la frontière entre heures de bureau et temps personnel peut s'éroder, avec des étudiants envoyant des questions à toute heure et s'attendant à des réponses rapides. Ces dynamiques peuvent conduire à un stress, une fatigue, et un épuisement qui sont particulièrement problématiques dans le contexte de l'apprentissage de la traduction, une activité déjà cognitivement exigeante. Comme le note Katan dans son analyse du stress chez les

traducteurs, « la gestion de l'équilibre travail-vie est cruciale pour la durabilité à long terme dans la profession de traduction » (89). Pour adresser ce défi, il est essentiel d'établir des règles claires dès le départ sur les attentes de disponibilité et de temps de réponse. Par exemple, spécifier que les messages peuvent être envoyés à tout moment mais que les réponses ne sont attendues que pendant certaines heures, ou désigner certains jours comme « sans WhatsApp » pour préserver du temps de récupération. De plus, enseigner explicitement les compétences de gestion des frontières comme partie de la préparation professionnelle peut aider les étudiants à développer des habitudes saines qu'ils maintiendront dans leur pratique future. Le cadre de conception pédagogique TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) de Mishra et Koehler suggère que « l'intégration technologique efficace nécessite une compréhension des interactions complexes entre la technologie, la pédagogie, et le contenu disciplinaire » (1017).

Un risque majeur de l'utilisation de WhatsApp dans la formation à la traduction est qu'il crée un écart potentiellement problématique entre les outils utilisés dans la formation et ceux utilisés en pratique professionnelle. Les traducteurs professionnels travaillent avec des logiciels TAO sophistiqués (SDL Trados, MemoQ, Wordfast), des bases de données terminologiques (MultiTerm, TermStar), des systèmes de gestion de projets (XTRF, Plunet), et des plateformes de traduction

cloud (Memsources, XTM Cloud) qui offrent des fonctionnalités bien au-delà de ce que WhatsApp peut fournir. Si les étudiants sont formés principalement ou exclusivement avec WhatsApp, ils peuvent être mal préparés à la transition vers ces outils professionnels, créant un « shock technologique » au moment de l'entrée sur le marché du travail. De plus, certaines compétences spécifiques à l'utilisation des outils TAO (gestion de mémoires de traduction, utilisation de glossaires intégrés, contrôle qualité automatisé, gestion de formats de fichiers complexes) ne peuvent tout simplement pas être développées à travers WhatsApp. Bowker affirme dans son analyse de la formation technologique des traducteurs, « qu'il existe un risque que l'utilisation d'outils simplifiés en formation crée une fausse confiance technologique qui ne se traduit pas par une compétence avec les outils professionnels réels » (2010 :78). Cette discontinuité entre formation et pratique peut désavantager les diplômés dans un marché du travail où la maîtrise d'outils TAO est souvent une exigence de base. Pour mitiger ce risque, WhatsApp devrait être conceptualisé comme un complément pédagogique plutôt qu'un substitut aux outils professionnels. Les programmes de formation robustes doivent inclure une formation substantielle sur les logiciels TAO standard de l'industrie. WhatsApp peut servir d'introduction accessible à certains principes (collaboration, gestion terminologique, révision) avant que les étudiants ne progressent vers des outils plus

sophistiqués. Cette approche par échafaudage utilise la familiarité de WhatsApp pour réduire la charge cognitive initiale, tout en assurant une transition progressive vers les outils professionnels.

Bien que WhatsApp soit largement accessible, des inégalités persistent qui peuvent créer des désavantages pour certains étudiants. Certains étudiants peuvent ne pas posséder de smartphones capables de faire fonctionner WhatsApp efficacement, ou peuvent avoir un accès limité à Internet, ou être préoccupés par les coûts de données associés à l'utilisation intensive de WhatsApp pour l'éducation, notamment dans les contextes Nigériens, où tous les étudiants ne disposent pas d'un accès Internet stable (Shittu, 2023: 2). Ces inégalités d'accès peuvent créer des disparités dans la participation et l'apprentissage. Les étudiants avec un accès limité peuvent manquer des discussions importantes, être incapables de contribuer en temps opportun, ou se sentir marginalisés dans les activités de groupe. Selwyn note dans son analyse critique des technologies éducatives que, « l'introduction de technologies dans l'éducation, sans attention aux inégalités d'accès préexistantes, peut exacerber plutôt qu'atténuer les désavantages » (2014 :134). Pour adresser ces inégalités, plusieurs stratégies sont possibles. Premièrement, évaluer au début du cours les capacités d'accès des étudiants et fournir des alternatives ou un support pour ceux qui ont des limitations. Deuxièmement, concevoir les activités

WhatsApp de manière à ce qu'elles complètent plutôt qu'elles ne remplacent les activités en classe, assurant que les étudiants sans accès optimal ne soient pas pénalisés. Troisièmement, privilégier les messages textuels sur les médias riches (vidéos, audios longs) qui consomment plus de données. Quatrièmement, créer des moments en classe où les étudiants peuvent utiliser le WiFi de l'institution pour rattraper les activités WhatsApp.

Conclusion

L'intégration de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement de la traduction représente à la fois une opportunité pédagogique significative et un défi complexe qui nécessite une réflexion approfondie et une mise en œuvre réfléchie. Cette application de messagerie instantanée, omniprésente dans la vie quotidienne de millions d'utilisateurs, offre des affordances qui correspondent à plusieurs besoins de la formation en traduction : facilitation de la collaboration, communication synchrone et asynchrone, partage multimodal de contenus, et accessibilité. WhatsApp, bien qu'initialement conçu pour la communication sociale, peut devenir un outil d'enseignement professionnel lorsqu'il est intégré de manière planifiée. Sujarwo et al. recommandent de « scénariser les activités traductives » en fixant des objectifs précis et en évaluant les productions collectivement » (2024).

L'analyse théorique révèle que WhatsApp peut enrichir l'enseignement de la traduction de plusieurs manières. Il peut faciliter la révision collaborative et l'assurance qualité, permettant aux étudiants de développer des compétences de révision par les pairs essentielles en pratique professionnelle. Il peut soutenir la recherche terminologique collaborative et la construction de glossaires, transformant une activité traditionnellement individuelle en une entreprise collective plus efficace. Il peut servir à enseigner la gestion de projets de traduction, simulant les flux de travail et les défis de coordination caractéristiques de la profession. Il peut faciliter le développement de réseaux professionnels et de communautés de pratique qui soutiennent l'apprentissage continu. Et il peut permettre un feedback plus immédiat et contextualisé que les méthodes traditionnelles.

Toutefois, l'intégration de WhatsApp dans la formation à la traduction n'est pas sans défis significatifs. Les questions de confidentialité et d'éthique professionnelle sont centrales, WhatsApp n'offrant pas les garanties de sécurité requises pour la gestion d'informations sensibles en pratique professionnelle. La gestion des frontières entre vie professionnelle et personnelle pose des défis, l'accessibilité constante de WhatsApp pouvant conduire à un épuisement. L'écart entre WhatsApp et les outils professionnels sophistiqués utilisés dans l'industrie nécessite une attention pédagogique pour assurer une transition efficace. Et les inégalités

d'accès doivent être adressées pour éviter de désavantager certains étudiants. Les enseignants et les chercheurs en didactique de la traduction doivent rester attentifs à ces évolutions et explorer de manière critique comment elles peuvent être mobilisées pédagogiquement. Cette veille technologique devrait être accompagnée d'une évaluation critique plutôt que d'une adoption enthousiaste non-réfléchie de toute nouvelle technologie. Comme le met en garde Selwyn, « l'histoire des technologies éducatives est jonchée de promesses non-tenues et d'adoptions prématurées de technologies qui se sont révélées inadaptées ou inefficaces » (67).

La traduction, au cœur, demeure une activité profondément humaine de médiation linguistique et culturelle qui nécessite créativité, sensibilité, jugement, et expertise. Aucune technologie, aussi sophistiquée soit-elle, ne peut remplacer ces qualités humaines. Le rôle des technologies, qu'il s'agisse de WhatsApp ou de logiciels TAO avancés, est de soutenir et d'amplifier les capacités humaines plutôt que de les remplacer. La formation à la traduction doit donc naviguer une voie qui intègre judicieusement les technologies tout en cultivant les compétences humaines irremplaçables qui définissent l'excellence en traduction. WhatsApp, outil modeste de communication quotidienne, peut jouer un rôle dans cette formation holistique s'il est utilisé de manière intentionnelle, critique, et contextualisée. Il ne résoudra pas tous les défis de la

formation en traduction, mais il peut contribuer à créer des environnements d'apprentissage plus collaboratifs, interactifs, et connectés qui préparent les étudiants non seulement aux compétences techniques de la traduction mais aussi aux dimensions sociales et professionnelles de la pratique traductive contemporaine.

Recommandations

1. L'intégration de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement de la traduction doit être guidée par des objectifs d'apprentissage clairs et spécifiques plutôt que par un enthousiasme non-critique pour la technologie. Cette clarté d'objectifs prévient l'utilisation de WhatsApp pour des tâches pour lesquelles il est mal adapté.
2. WhatsApp devrait être positionné comme un pont entre les pratiques de communication familières des étudiants et les outils professionnels plus spécialisés qu'ils devront maîtriser. Cette approche reconnaît la valeur pédagogique de la familiarité tout en maintenant une trajectoire claire vers la maîtrise d'outils professionnels.
3. Toute utilisation de WhatsApp dans la formation à la traduction doit être accompagnée d'une pédagogie explicite sur les questions de confidentialité, de sécurité des données, et d'éthique professionnelle. L'objectif est de développer un jugement

éthique sophistiqué plutôt qu'une simple conformité aux règles.

4. Pour prévenir les problèmes de gestion des frontières et d'épuisement, il est essentiel d'établir dès le départ des normes claires sur l'utilisation de WhatsApp. Ces normes devraient idéalement être co-construites avec les étudiants plutôt qu'imposées unilatéralement, favorisant ainsi leur appropriation et leur respect. De plus, ces normes devraient être périodiquement révisées et ajustées en fonction de l'expérience collective.
5. L'utilisation de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement de la traduction devrait être accompagnée d'une évaluation continue de son efficacité et de son impact. Cette évaluation devrait informer des ajustements progressifs des pratiques.
6. L'utilisation efficace de WhatsApp dans l'enseignement de la traduction nécessite que les enseignants eux-mêmes développent des compétences spécifiques. Les programmes de formation des enseignants de traduction devraient donc inclure des modules sur l'intégration pédagogique des technologies de communication, et les institutions devraient offrir un développement professionnel continu dans ce domaine.

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