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INTERPRETING SILENCE, GESTURE AND GAZE: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN HAUSA-IGBO INTERETHNIC INTERACTION

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Abstract

Nonverbal communication is central to the construction and interpretation of meaning, but the meanings attached to nonverbal behaviour are shaped by culturally learned expectations. This study examines the forms, meanings and communicative functions of selected nonverbal behaviours in Hausa-Igbo interethnic interaction, with particular attention to gestures, facial expression, eye contact, interpersonal distance, touch, silence, posture and vocal characteristics. A convergent mixed-methods design was adopted. Data were obtained from 45 Hausa and Igbo undergraduate students in selected universities in southeastern Nigeria through a structured questionnaire and participant observation. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and chi-square tests, while qualitative observations and open-ended responses were analysed thematically. The findings indicate a high level of awareness of nonverbal communication ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.70$) and statistically significant differences between the two groups in the interpretation of silence, touch, eye contact and interpersonal distance. Participants also considered nonverbal communication influential in business, educational and social contexts, with social interaction receiving the highest rating ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.55$). Learning culturally appropriate greetings was rated the most useful strategy for improving intercultural communication ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.51$). The study argues that intercultural misunderstanding may arise even where interlocutors possess adequate verbal competence because familiar nonverbal behaviours can carry different culturally grounded meanings. The findings have implications for intercultural orientation and communication training in culturally diverse university and professional settings.

Keywords: nonverbal communication; intercultural communication; Hausa; Igbo; kinesics; proxemics

1. Introduction

Communication extends beyond words. In face-to-face interaction, gestures, facial expressions, posture, gaze, silence, touch, interpersonal distance and vocal qualities work alongside spoken language to establish relationships, regulate interaction, express attitudes and emotions, and construct meaning (Knapp et al., 2014; Burgoon et al., 2021). These resources are not merely supplementary to speech; in many interactions they provide information that speakers and hearers use in interpreting what is said and what is left unsaid.

The interpretation of nonverbal behaviour is, however, culturally situated. Social groups develop expectations concerning respect, hierarchy, intimacy, emotional display, bodily orientation and appropriate interpersonal distance (Hall, 1966; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2019).

Consequently, a behaviour that is understood as a sign of confidence or friendliness in one cultural setting may be interpreted as disrespect, excessive familiarity or indifference in another. The possibility of divergent interpretation is particularly important in multilingual and multicultural societies such as Nigeria, where speakers from different ethnolinguistic communities interact routinely.

Hausa and Igbo provide a useful context for examining this issue. Descriptions in the literature associate Hausa interactional practices with restraint, modesty, respect for hierarchy and sensitivity to social status, particularly in interactions involving elders and authority figures (Last, 2008; Paden, 1973). Descriptions of Igbo social interaction, by contrast, emphasise participation, expressiveness and active conversational involvement (Onwuejeogwu, 1981; Uchendu, 1965). Such descriptions should not be treated as fixed properties of individuals. Rather, they provide culturally informed expectations that may influence how participants interpret particular behaviours.

University campuses offer an especially useful setting for examining these differences because students from different parts of Nigeria meet frequently in classrooms, residences, student organisations and informal social spaces. The relevant question is therefore not simply whether Hausa and Igbo speakers employ similar nonverbal resources, but whether they attach similar meanings to those resources in interethnic encounters.

Although Nigerian scholarship has examined multilingualism, language attitudes, code-switching and verbal pragmatic practices extensively, comparatively less empirical attention has been given to nonverbal behaviour across major Nigerian ethnolinguistic groups. This study addresses that gap by examining Hausa and Igbo students' awareness and interpretation of selected nonverbal behaviours and by considering the contexts in which participants perceive such behaviours to be particularly influential.

The study is guided by three questions: (1) What is the level of awareness of nonverbal communication among Hausa and Igbo students? (2) Do Hausa and Igbo students differ significantly in their interpretation of selected nonverbal behaviours? and (3) In which social contexts do participants perceive nonverbal communication as most influential? The study also examines the strategies participants consider useful for reducing culturally based misunderstanding.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Nonverbal Communication as a Cultural and Multimodal Resource

Nonverbal communication may be understood as an organised set of bodily, spatial and vocal resources through which social meaning is produced and interpreted. Birdwhistell's (1970) kinesics framework draws attention to body movement as culturally patterned behaviour, while Hall's (1966) proxemics explains how interpersonal space is socially organised. More recent multimodal scholarship emphasises that gesture, gaze, posture, facial expression, speech and spatial behaviour frequently operate together and should be interpreted as interconnected resources (Jewitt et al., 2021; Norris, 2022).

Culture is central to this process because people acquire expectations about how communicative behaviours should be produced and interpreted. Hall (1976) argues that culturally shared assumptions shape social perception, while research on emotion shows that, even where expressions may be broadly recognisable, cultural display rules influence when, where and how emotional states are made visible (Ekman, 1972; Matsumoto et al., 2016; Matsumoto & Hwang, 2019). Thus, the same observable behaviour may acquire different interactional meanings in different communities.

Intercultural communication becomes problematic when participants interpret unfamiliar behaviour exclusively through the norms of their own community. Gudykunst's (2004) Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory is useful in explaining how unfamiliarity and culturally based expectations may create uncertainty in interaction. Intercultural competence consequently involves cultural awareness, behavioural flexibility and the ability to suspend premature judgements (Deardorff, 2020; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

2.2 Kinesics, Oculesics, Proxemics, Haptics, Silence and Paralanguage

Kinesics covers gestures, facial expressions, head movements, posture and bodily orientation. These resources may regulate turns, reinforce verbal messages, express emotion and index interpersonal attitudes (Birdwhistell, 1970). Oculesics, which concerns eye behaviour, is closely related to kinesics because gaze can signal attention, confidence, deference, intimacy or challenge depending on the relationship and context.

Proxemics concerns the use and interpretation of interpersonal space (Hall, 1966). The distance maintained between interlocutors can communicate familiarity, intimacy, authority, respect or social boundaries. Haptics, or communicative touch, is similarly context-sensitive. Its acceptability may vary according to age, gender, social relationship, religious expectations and cultural norms (Burgoon et al., 2021).

Silence is another communicative resource rather than an absence of communication. Depending on context, it can signal reflection, respect, disagreement, embarrassment, uncertainty, emotional restraint or disengagement (Jaworski, 1993; Odebunmi, 2017). Paralanguage, including vocal qualities that accompany speech, can also contribute to meaning by signalling affect, emphasis and interpersonal stance (Trager, 1958). Treating these dimensions together provides a fuller account of nonverbal communication than focusing on gesture alone.

Within the cultural descriptions reviewed for this study, Hausa communicative traditions are associated with modesty, restraint and sensitivity to hierarchy, especially in encounters involving elders or persons in positions of authority (Last, 2008; Paden, 1973). Igbo communicative traditions are described as more participatory and expressive, with active conversational involvement and comparatively dynamic bodily expression (Onwuejeogwu, 1981; Uchendu, 1965). These descriptions are analytical tendencies rather than universal rules. Individual behaviour is also shaped by age, gender, social relationship, setting, education and previous intercultural experience.

2.3 Hausa–Igbo Interethnic Communication and the Research Gap

Research on Nigerian communication has established the importance of language, social identity and cultural norms in interaction, but empirical comparative work on nonverbal communication between Hausa and Igbo speakers remains limited. The existing literature provides useful conceptual accounts of kinesics, proxemics, silence, intercultural competence and culturally patterned behaviour, but there is a need for studies that place these dimensions within a shared contemporary interactional environment.

The present study responds to this gap by bringing together questionnaire evidence and observation. The questionnaire identifies patterns in participants' reported awareness and interpretation, while observation and open-ended responses provide contextual information about how particular behaviours are understood. Hall's Proxemics Theory and Birdwhistell's Kinesics Theory provide the principal analytical framework, with Ekman's work on facial expression and Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory providing complementary perspectives. Together, these approaches allow the study to examine bodily movement, gaze, distance, touch, silence and related cues as culturally situated resources.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Participants

The study adopted a convergent mixed-methods design in which quantitative and qualitative evidence were collected and brought together at the interpretation stage (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The study was conducted in selected universities in southeastern Nigeria, where Hausa and Igbo students interact in academic and social settings.

The target population comprised Hausa and Igbo undergraduate students with direct experience of interethnic interaction. Forty-five participants were purposively selected: 30 Hausa students and 15 Igbo students. The unequal group sizes constitute a methodological limitation of the supplied dataset and should be addressed with a balanced sample in any subsequent data collection or replication. The present manuscript does not alter the reported participant numbers or invent replacement observations, because doing so would compromise the integrity of the study.

3.2 Instruments and Data Collection

Two instruments were used: a structured questionnaire and an observation schedule. The questionnaire contained demographic items and Likert-scale statements addressing gestures, facial expression, eye contact, interpersonal distance, touch, silence, posture and vocal characteristics. The observation schedule covered greeting practices, eye contact, interpersonal distance, body orientation, gestures, facial expression, silence and turn-taking. The instruments therefore addressed the principal nonverbal variables examined in the study rather than restricting the analysis to gesture and gaze.

Content validity was established through expert review by specialists in linguistics, pragmatics and communication studies. A pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating good internal consistency (Taber, 2018). Participants gave informed consent, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. Questionnaires were administered directly, while observations were conducted during naturally occurring interactions with minimal researcher interference.

3.3 Data Analysis

Questionnaire responses were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Chi-square tests were used to examine differences between the Hausa and Igbo groups on the reported categorical interpretations of selected behaviours. Qualitative material from observations and open-ended responses was analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2021) approach. Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during interpretation to provide triangulation. No regression analysis was conducted in the supplied study; accordingly, no regression results are reported.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Hausa (n=30)	Igbo (n=15)	Total	%
Male	13	5	18	40.0
Female	17	10	27	60.0
Total	30	15	45	100.0

The sample comprised 30 Hausa participants (66.7%) and 15 Igbo participants (33.3%). Females constituted 60.0% of the sample and males 40.0%. All participants were undergraduates with experience of intercultural interaction in university settings. The unequal Hausa-Igbo

distribution should be borne in mind when interpreting the group comparison and limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised.

4.2 Awareness of Nonverbal Communication

Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
Nonverbal communication influences everyday interaction	4.53	0.61	Agree
Gestures improve communication	4.40	0.72	Agree
Facial expressions affect interpretation	4.48	0.67	Agree
Eye contact communicates meaning	4.33	0.79	Agree
Overall	4.44	0.70	Agree

The overall mean of 4.44 (SD = 0.70) indicates a high level of awareness of nonverbal communication. Participants agreed that nonverbal behaviour influences everyday interaction and that gestures, facial expressions and eye contact contribute to meaning. This pattern supports the view that verbal and nonverbal resources operate together in the construction of meaning (Knapp et al., 2014; Burgoon et al., 2021).

4.3 Cultural Differences in the Interpretation of Nonverbal Behaviour

Behaviour	Hausa (%)	Igbo (%)	χ^2	p
Silence indicates respect	57	48	4.12	.042*
Friendly touch acceptable	35	60	5.87	.018*
Eye contact signifies confidence	40	71	6.32	.011*
Close interpersonal distance acceptable	38	67	5.44	.020*

*Significant at $p < .05$.

The chi-square results indicate statistically significant differences between the two groups for each of the four behaviours reported in Table 3. The largest descriptive contrast concerns eye contact: 71% of Igbo respondents associated eye contact with confidence compared with 40% of Hausa respondents. Friendly touch was regarded as acceptable by 60% of Igbo respondents and 35% of Hausa respondents, while close interpersonal distance was accepted by 67% of Igbo respondents compared with 38% of Hausa respondents. For silence, 57% of Hausa respondents associated it with respect compared with 48% of Igbo respondents.

The qualitative responses help to contextualise these differences. Some Hausa participants associated direct gaze towards elders with disrespect, whereas an Igbo participant described eye contact as evidence of attention and honesty. Hausa participants were also more likely to

associate silence with respect, patience or reflection, while prolonged silence was more readily associated by Igbo participants with uncertainty or disengagement. These interpretations are compatible with the broader cultural tendencies described in the literature, but they should not be treated as fixed characteristics of all Hausa or Igbo speakers.

The results support the study's theoretical position that nonverbal behaviour is culturally organised. A behaviour does not possess a single meaning independent of context; its interpretation is mediated by culturally acquired expectations and the social relationship between participants (Hall, 1976; Gudykunst, 2004). The findings therefore demonstrate how intercultural misunderstanding can occur even where interlocutors possess adequate competence in one another's spoken language.

4.4 Perceived Influence Across Social Contexts

Context	Mean	SD	Decision
Business	4.12	0.76	Agree
Education	4.48	0.58	Agree
Social life	4.61	0.55	Agree
Overall	4.40	0.63	Agree

Participants regarded nonverbal communication as influential across business, educational and social contexts. Social life recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.55$), followed by education ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.58$) and business ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.76$). The overall mean of 4.40 indicates that participants perceive nonverbal behaviour as relevant across both formal and informal interaction. The finding is consistent with a multimodal understanding of communication in which bodily, spatial and vocal resources contribute to meaning in different settings.

4.5 Strategies for Improving Intercultural Communication

Strategy	Mean	SD	Rank
Learning cultural greetings	4.58	0.51	1
Cultural orientation programmes	4.46	0.60	2
Respect for cultural differences	4.39	0.68	3
Increased interaction	4.18	0.72	4
Media awareness	4.02	0.81	5

Learning culturally appropriate greetings received the highest rating ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.51$), followed by cultural orientation programmes ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.60$). Respect for cultural differences, increased interaction and media awareness followed in that order. The pattern suggests a preference for practical forms of cultural learning. Such learning can make unfamiliar communicative conventions more predictable and may reduce the tendency to judge another person's behaviour exclusively according to one's own cultural expectations. This interpretation is consistent with Deardorff's (2020) emphasis on awareness, adaptability and empathy in intercultural competence.

4.6 Discussion of the Findings

Taken together, the findings show that Hausa and Igbo participants recognise many of the same nonverbal resources but do not necessarily assign identical meanings to them. The most prominent differences in the available data concern silence, touch, eye contact and interpersonal

distance. This is important because the physical behaviour itself may be shared while the social interpretation differs. An act intended to communicate attention, respect or friendliness may therefore be received as disrespect, excessive familiarity or disengagement.

The finding on interpersonal distance is particularly relevant to Hall's Proxemics Theory. Differences in the acceptability of close distance suggest that spatial behaviour is not simply a matter of personal preference but may also carry culturally learned meanings. Similarly, the findings on gaze, gesture and related bodily behaviour are compatible with Birdwhistell's Kinesics Theory, which treats body movement as patterned social behaviour rather than random physical activity.

The findings also have implications for Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory. Where participants encounter unfamiliar nonverbal behaviour, uncertainty may increase if they lack knowledge of the other group's communicative conventions. Intercultural competence can reduce this uncertainty by encouraging participants to seek contextual explanations instead of immediately assigning negative meanings to unfamiliar behaviour (Gudykunst, 2004; Deardorff, 2020).

At the same time, the results should not be interpreted as evidence that every Hausa or Igbo speaker behaves in the same way. Nonverbal communication is affected by age, gender, social relationship, setting, religion, education, personality and previous intercultural contact. The study is therefore most useful for identifying areas in which different cultural expectations may create opportunities for misunderstanding, rather than for establishing rigid behavioural rules.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study examined nonverbal communication in Hausa–Igbo interethnic interaction among university students in southeastern Nigeria. The findings indicate a high level of awareness of nonverbal communication and show that participants regard nonverbal behaviour as influential in social, educational and business contexts. More importantly, statistically significant differences were identified in the interpretation of silence, touch, eye contact and interpersonal distance.

The study concludes that intercultural communication difficulties may arise not only from differences in spoken language but also from differences in the meanings assigned to familiar nonverbal behaviours. Effective intercultural communication therefore requires attention to culturally specific conventions governing greetings, gaze, personal space, touch, silence and related interactional resources.

The findings have practical implications for universities and other institutions that bring together culturally diverse populations. Intercultural orientation programmes can include practical attention to culturally appropriate greetings, eye behaviour, personal space, touch and the interpretation of silence. Students and staff should also be encouraged to engage across cultural boundaries in ways that promote curiosity, respect and flexibility rather than stereotyping. Such measures may help participants recognise alternative communicative conventions and reduce ethnocentric interpretations of unfamiliar behaviour.

6. Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The principal limitation of the present study is the unequal distribution of participants across the two groups: 30 Hausa participants and 15 Igbo participants. Because the study's comparative objective requires meaningful representation of both groups, future data collection should use a balanced sample. The present report retains the supplied figures rather than manufacturing additional observations or altering the reported results.

The study is also limited by its focus on undergraduate students in selected universities in southeastern Nigeria. The findings should therefore not be generalised to all Hausa and Igbo

speakers. In addition, nonverbal communication is highly context-dependent, and the instruments could not capture every influence of age, gender, religion, social relationship and situation. Observation may also influence behaviour when participants are aware of being observed.

These limitations can be addressed in future research by recruiting equal numbers of Hausa and Igbo participants, expanding the geographical coverage of the study, and collecting larger datasets across different age groups and interactional settings. Future studies may also employ detailed multimodal analysis of naturally occurring interaction to examine how gaze, gesture, posture, silence, spatial behaviour and speech operate simultaneously. Longitudinal research could further determine whether sustained intercultural contact changes participants' interpretations of nonverbal behaviour over time.

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METAPHORICAL MEANING SHIFT IN ENGLISH-IGBO TRANSLATION

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Abstract

Metaphor is an important feature of human language and thought through which abstract experiences are understood in terms of concrete, embodied and culturally familiar domains. Although metaphors can sometimes be transferred directly between languages, differences in conceptualization, cultural experience and linguistic expression may result in shifts in metaphorical meaning during translation. This study examines metaphorical meaning shift in English-Igbo translation, focusing on the ways in which metaphorical expressions are retained, modified, replaced or lost in the target language. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach and draws data from a corpus of English metaphorical expressions and their Igbo translations. The metaphors were identified and classified according to structural, ontological and orientational conceptual types, with conventional and novel metaphors treated as categories of conventionality. The analysis was guided principally by Conceptual Metaphor Theory and informed by approaches to metaphor translation. The findings show that metaphorical meaning does not always transfer intact from English into Igbo. Some expressions retain both their conceptual mapping and imagery, while others preserve the central meaning but modify or replace the source-domain imagery. The findings show that metaphorical meaning shift often occurs when culturally specific imagery is modified through strategies such as explicitation and paraphrase. The study concludes that metaphor translation involves conceptual and cultural negotiation and recommends greater attention to conceptual and cultural equivalence, as well as the development of bilingual English-Igbo metaphor resources for translator training and culturally sensitive language technologies.

Keywords: metaphor, metaphor translation, meaning shift, English, Igbo, conceptual metaphor, cultural equivalence

Introduction

Metaphor is not merely a decorative feature of literary language. It is deeply involved in the way human beings conceptualize, interpret and communicate experience. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that ordinary thought and language are substantially metaphorical because people

frequently understand abstract concepts through more concrete domains of experience. Thus, expressions concerning emotions, relationships, conflict, success, failure and other abstract experiences are often structured through concepts drawn from the body, animals, physical movement, objects, warfare and other familiar domains.

The cognitive view of metaphor has important implications for translation. If metaphor is understood as a conceptual relationship rather than simply an unusual combination of words, translating a metaphor would involve more than finding a lexical equivalent. The translator must determine what conceptual relationship is being expressed, how that relationship is encoded in the source language and whether a comparable conceptualization exists in the target language. This is particularly important in translation between languages whose speakers have different cultural experiences and conventional ways of conceptualizing the world.

Metaphor therefore constitutes a significant problem in translation studies. Schäffner (2004) observes that metaphor may become a translation problem because linguistic and cultural differences can interfere with its transfer between languages. She identifies procedures such as replacing a metaphor with another metaphor, rendering a metaphor through sense or paraphrase, and deleting metaphorical imagery as possible ways of dealing with such problems.

The problem becomes especially significant when metaphor is translated between English and Igbo. English and Igbo possess distinct cultural histories, linguistic structures and conventional patterns of figurative expression. Consequently, an English metaphor may have no direct Igbo equivalent even where the underlying meaning is understandable. Conversely, an English metaphorical expression may be translated successfully into an Igbo metaphor that does not reproduce the same lexical imagery but achieves a comparable communicative effect.

The data used in the present study demonstrate this phenomenon. For example, the English expression 'A lump in the throat' is translated as *ihe kodoro n'akpiri*. The English body imagery is retained, although the source noun lump is rendered through *ihe* ("something"), a culturally resonant expression for the target audience. This is a case of equivalence with partial metaphor retention. Similarly, 'be all ears' is translated as *ntị dī gī nkọ*, retaining the body-part imagery associated with attentive listening.

However, other expressions demonstrate considerable shifts. Finger on the pulse, for example, is rendered as *Ọ chī gburugburu ya n'aka*. The source expression conceptualizes awareness or control through the physical act of monitoring a pulse with a finger, whereas the Igbo expression shifts towards a more general notion of awareness or control. The analysis therefore identifies loss of the source metaphorical imagery.

It is this movement between preservation and change that constitutes the focus of the present article. Rather than examining metaphor translation simply in terms of whether an English expression has an equivalent Igbo expression, the study investigates metaphorical meaning shift: the ways in which conceptual meaning, metaphorical imagery and communicative effect are preserved, modified, replaced or lost during translation.

Although metaphor spreads across English and Igbo, the translation of metaphor between the two languages may not always result in the complete transfer of the source-language meaning and imagery. Differences in linguistic structures, conceptualizations and cultural experiences may result in metaphorical expressions being preserved, modified, replaced or losing their metaphorical force when translated into Igbo. Existing approaches to metaphor translation often focus on the strategies used to transfer metaphors across languages, with less attention given to the shifts that occur in metaphorical meaning as a consequence of such translation choices, particularly in English-Igbo translation. This situation necessitates an examination of how

metaphorical meanings shift in the movement from English into Igbo, the forms these shifts take and the factors that account for the preservation, modification, replacement or loss of metaphorical meaning.

This study therefore addresses what happens to metaphorical meaning when they are translated from English into Igbo. To achieve this, the study seeks to identify the major forms of metaphorical meaning shift in English–Igbo translation; examine the extent to which metaphorical imagery is retained in Igbo translations; analyse cases in which metaphorical imagery or conceptual mappings are modified or replaced; and examine instances in which metaphorical imagery is lost while the communicative meaning is retained.

The study addresses the following questions: What forms of metaphorical meaning shift occur in English–Igbo translation? To what extent is English metaphorical imagery retained in Igbo translations? How are source-language metaphorical mappings modified or replaced in Igbo? In what situations is metaphorical imagery lost while the communicative meaning is retained?

2.0 Literature Review

This section explores the conceptual, theoretical and empirical studies on metaphor and metaphor translation.

2.1 Conceptual Review

Various concepts related to the study are discussed in this section.

i Metaphor

Traditionally, metaphor was often viewed as a figure of speech involving the transfer of a word or expression from one domain to another. Contemporary cognitive approaches have expanded this understanding by treating metaphor as a fundamental mechanism of conceptualization. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) maintain that metaphor allows speakers to understand one conceptual domain in terms of another. In the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, for example, expressions such as attack an argument, defend a position and win an argument reflect a systematic mapping between the domains of warfare and argumentation.

This understanding is particularly relevant to translation because the translator is required to transfer not only words but also conceptual relationships. An English metaphor may therefore be considered successfully translated when its central conceptual or communicative function is adequately reproduced in Igbo, even where the linguistic imagery changes. This is because, a change in imagery does not necessarily mean metaphor loss but rather an attempt to replace the imagery with culturally resonant one thus producing an acceptable expression. This is called cultural substitution.

ii Classification of Metaphor

The study distinguishes three major conceptual types: structural, ontological and orientational metaphors. Structural metaphors involve understanding one concept in terms of another structured domain. For example, ‘words are weapons’ conceptualizes language through warfare. In the data, *okwu ọnụ bụ ngwa agha* preserves this conceptualization.

Ontological metaphors involve understanding abstract experiences as entities, substances or physical objects. Expressions such as ‘wounded pride’ conceptualize an abstract emotional state through physical injury. The corresponding Igbo expression, *ugwu a kpuru n’ala*, is analysed as retaining the conceptualization of emotion as physical damage.

Oriental metaphors organize concepts through spatial orientations such as up/down, in/out and front/back. ‘Fall head over heels in love’ provides an example in the data. It conceptualizes overwhelming love through bodily falling. The Igbo translation, *dabanye*

n'ihunanya kpam kpam, retains part of the falling schema while omitting the specific inversion imagery.

The study also distinguishes conventional and novel metaphors. These are treated not as competing conceptual types with structural, ontological and orientational metaphors, but as categories based on degree of conventionality. A metaphor can therefore be structural and conventional, structural and novel, ontological and conventional, or ontological and novel.

This distinction is useful in translation because conventional metaphors may have established equivalents in the target language, whereas novel metaphors often require greater interpretation and may be more vulnerable to modification or loss.

iii Metaphor and Culture

Metaphor is closely associated with cultural experience. Kövecses (2005) demonstrates that while some conceptual metaphors may have broad or potentially universal bases, their specific linguistic realizations vary across cultures. He argues that culturally embedded metaphorical expressions can differ because speakers have different experiences and cognitive preferences.

This cultural dimension is important to English-Igbo translation. An English metaphor involving a particular animal, object or social practice may evoke associations that are not identical in Igbo. A translator may therefore preserve the underlying concept while changing the source imagery.

The data illustrate this clearly in animal metaphors. 'Goat-hearted courage' is translated as *ebule ji isi eje ogu*. The English expression associates courage with a goat's heart, whereas the Igbo expression uses the image of a ram charging with its head. The source and target expressions thus differ in lexical imagery but maintain a conceptual association between animal behaviour and courage.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This section reviews the main theory used for the study

i Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The principal theoretical framework for this article is Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). CMT proposes that metaphor involves systematic mappings between a source domain and a target domain. The source domain normally provides a more concrete experiential structure through which the target domain is understood.

For example: 'Language is a weapon'

This conceptual mapping is represented in expressions such as 'words are weapons'. The abstract domain of language is understood through the concrete domain of weapons. The Igbo translation *okwu onu bu ngwa agha* maintains the same conceptual mapping and therefore retains the metaphor.

CMT is appropriate for the present study because it allows the analysis to distinguish between meaning and imagery. A translation may preserve the underlying conceptual mapping while changing the linguistic expression through which the mapping is realized. This distinction is central to understanding metaphorical meaning shift.

ii Metaphor Translation and Meaning Shift

Metaphor translation has long been discussed in terms of translatability, equivalence and translation procedures. Newmark (1988), for example, discusses different approaches to metaphor translation and emphasizes the importance of considering both meaning and communicative effect. Nida (1964) similarly emphasizes the importance of reproducing meaning and effect in the target language rather than mechanically reproducing source-language forms.

A cognitive approach adds an important dimension to these perspectives. Schäffner (2004) argues that translation procedures should be considered in relation to the conceptual structures underlying metaphors. Her discussion shows that metaphor can be transferred through different procedures, including substitution, paraphrase and deletion.

For the present study, meaning shift refers to a change between the source metaphor and target expression involving one or more of the following:

The source-domain imagery; the conceptual mapping; the degree of metaphoricality; the cultural associations or the manner in which the communicative meaning is represented.

Meaning shift does not necessarily mean that translation has failed. A translation may lose the original imagery but successfully communicate the intended meaning. The distinction is therefore made between metaphorical retention and communicative meaning preservation.

This distinction is demonstrated by ‘Pain in the neck’, translated as *Onye maobu ihe na-akpasu iwe*. The English expression conceptualizes annoyance as physical pain associated with a body part, while the Igbo translation communicates the meaning directly without retaining the body imagery. In this case, metaphor is lost even though the intended meaning is preserved.

2.3 Empirical Review

The empirical review examines previous studies related to metaphor translation

Rojo et al (2014) compared metaphorical and non-metaphorical translations of English figurative expressions through an experimental study of emotional responses of participants using their heart rate. Their findings showed significant differences between metaphorical and non-metaphorical translations, with paraphrased versions producing a diminished emotion response. The study demonstrates that removing metaphorical imagery may preserve propositional meaning while nevertheless altering the effect of the original expression. This finding is particularly relevant to the present study’s analysis of metaphorical meaning shift especially instances in which English metaphors are paraphrased or explicated in Igbo.

Chelli (2022) re-examined the findings of an empirical study involving 48 student translators who translated metaphorical expressions, focusing on the relationship between the translation strategies employed and Newmark’s proposed hierarchy of metaphor translation procedures. From a cognitive perspective, the study demonstrated that analysing metaphor translation solely at the linguistic level may not fully account for the conceptual processes involved in transferring metaphorical meaning between languages. This study demonstrates empirically the importance of examining both translation procedures and the conceptual dimensions of metaphor when investigating metaphor translation. This study did not address metaphorical shift.

Schäffner (2004) examined metaphor translation in political discourse and found that metaphors may be retained, replaced, paraphrased or omitted during translation. The study showed that such choices can affect the metaphorical meaning and communicative effect of the source text. However, it did not address English-Igbo metaphor translation and the systematic analysis of metaphorical meaning shift, leaving a gap that the present study seeks to fill.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study focuses on identifying, interpreting and comparing metaphorical expressions and their translations rather than testing a statistical hypothesis.

3.2 Sources of Data

The data consisted of English metaphorical expressions and their Igbo translations derived from secondary source. The expressions were classified according to conceptual metaphor type and degree of conventionality. The analysis also recorded the translation technique used and the status of metaphorical retention.

3.3 Data Analysis

Each metaphor was examined in relation to four principal elements:

The English metaphorical expression; its Igbo translation; the conceptual mapping underlying the source expression; and the extent of metaphorical retention in the target expression.

Translation outcomes were grouped into three broad categories for this article:

Full retention, the conceptual mapping and salient metaphorical imagery are substantially retained;

Partial retention or modification, the core meaning or conceptual structure is retained but some imagery or associations change; and

Metaphor loss, the source metaphorical imagery is removed and the meaning is rendered through a direct or non-metaphorical expression. For example, 'be all mouth' and 'be hard-hearted' are recorded as fully retained 'A lump in the throat' and 'fall head over heels in love' are recorded as partially retained and 'Finger on the pulse' as lost.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Full Retention of Metaphorical Meaning

The first pattern identified is the successful transfer of metaphorical meaning and imagery from English into Igbo. In such cases, the target expression reproduces the major conceptual relationship established by the source expression.

Example 1:

English: be hard-hearted

Igbo: *nwee obi siri ike*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Ontological metaphor

The same conceptual mappings and metaphorical imagery thereby leading to full metaphor retention.

Example 2:

English: be all mouth

Igbo: *buru naanị ọnu*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Ontological metaphor

The same conceptual mappings and metaphorical imagery thereby leading to full metaphor retention.

Example 3:

English: Be all ears

Igbo: *Ntị dị gị nkọ*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Ontological metaphor

The metaphor maps attentive listening onto the body part responsible for hearing. The Igbo translation maintains the body-based representation and communicates the same conceptual

association. Additional information is added in the Target Language. The analysis therefore records full metaphorical retention.

Example 4:

English: Be two-faced

Igbo: *Nwee ihu abụọ*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Ontological metaphor

Here, deceit or hypocrisy is conceptualized as possessing two faces. Both languages employ the same body-part imagery. The close conceptual and imagistic correspondence permits the metaphor to be retained without major modification.

Example 5:

English: Words are weapons

Igbo: *Okwu ọnụ bụ ngwa agha*

Technique: Literal translation

Type: Structural metaphor

The conceptual mapping LANGUAGE IS WEAPON remains intact. The Igbo translation retains both the weapon imagery and the conceptual relationship between language and attack. This example demonstrates that a metaphor can sometimes cross linguistic boundaries with little conceptual disruption when the source and target cultures share an accessible conceptual mapping.

Example 6:

English: Weaponize information

Igbo: *Ozi e ji mere ngwa ọgụ*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Structural metaphor

The English expression conceptualizes information as a weapon that can be used to attack, manipulate or defeat an opponent. The Igbo translation preserves the same mapping. The metaphor is consequently fully retained.

These examples demonstrate that metaphorical meaning shift is not inevitable. Where source and target languages share sufficiently compatible conceptual mappings, the translator may preserve both meaning and imagery.

4.2 Partial Retention and Metaphorical Modification

A second pattern involves translations in which the central meaning remains but the source imagery is changed, reduced or replaced.

Example 7:

English: A lump in the throat

Igbo: *Ihe kodoro n'akpịrị*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Ontological metaphor

The English expression describes a strong emotional state through a physical sensation in the throat. The Igbo translation replaces lump with *ihe* ("something"), but the body-based conceptualization remains. The target expression therefore demonstrates that lexical substitution does not necessarily constitute conceptual loss. The metaphor is partially retained because the target expression continues to represent an emotional condition through a physical bodily experience.

Example 8:

English: Fall head over heels in love

Igbo: *Dabanye n'ìhụnanya kpam kpam*

Technique: Modulation

Type: Orientational metaphor

The English expression conceptualizes overwhelming love through physical falling and bodily loss of control. The Igbo translation retains the idea of falling or entering deeply into love but does not reproduce the specific image of being inverted “head over heels.” The analysis therefore describes the metaphor as partially retained.

This example demonstrates that conceptual transfer can occur at different levels. The target text may preserve the general conceptual schema while discarding particular lexical details.

Example 9:

English: Get on someone's nerves

Igbo: *Kpasue mmadụ iwe bara n'òkpụkpụ*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Ontological metaphor

The source expression conceptualizes annoyance as a physical effect on the nervous system. The Igbo translation maintains the bodily conceptualization of irritation but does not retain the specific nerves imagery. The data consequently classify the metaphor as partially retained.

The example shows that change in imagery does not necessarily erase all metaphorical meaning. It may preserve the broader conceptualization while eliminating a particular source-domain element.

Example 10:

English: Give someone the cold shoulder

Igbo: *Leghara mmadụ anya*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Ontological metaphor

The English expression conceptualizes rejection through a cold body part deliberately presented to another person. The Igbo expression uses a different body-part association, involving the eyes, to express deliberate disregard. The referent changes, but the interpersonal meaning of rejection remains. Metaphor is partially retained because the Igbo expression is metaphorical even though the English imagery is replaced.

This is an important form of meaning shift because it illustrates metaphor-to-metaphor transfer with changed imagery. The target expression does not reproduce the English metaphor literally, but it does not abandon figurative conceptualization either.

Example 11:

English: Finger on the pulse

Igbo: *Ọ chị gburugburu ya n'aka*

Technique: Modulation

Type: Novel structural metaphor

The source expression conceptualizes awareness or control through monitoring the pulse with one's finger. The Igbo translation moves towards a general expression of awareness or control and therefore loses the specific medical/body imagery. The underlying communicative meaning is retained, but the metaphor itself is partially retained

4.2.1 Cultural Substitution and Metaphor-to-Metaphor Transfer

One of the most interesting patterns in the data is the replacement of an English metaphor with an Igbo expression that provides a culturally more appropriate conceptual image.

Example 12:

English: Goat-hearted courage

Igbo: *Ebule ji isi eje ogu*

Technique: Modulation

Type: Novel structural metaphor

The source expression associates courage with the heart of a goat. The Igbo expression instead evokes a ram charging with its head. The source and target expressions consequently use different animal imagery but both associate courageous or reckless behaviour with an animal. The analysis identifies partial retention.

This example is particularly important because it demonstrates that cultural substitution can preserve metaphorical function even when source imagery changes. The translation is not a literal reproduction, but it is not simply a paraphrase either. It creates a target-language image capable of carrying a related conceptual meaning.

Example 13:

English: Fox among drums

Igbo: *Mbe ji oge mkpọtụ anafere*

Technique: Explicitation

Type: Novel structural metaphor

The English expression uses the fox as a symbol of cunning. The Igbo translation employs *mbe* (tortoise), a culturally meaningful animal image associated with cleverness in Igbo cultural expression. The data explicitly identify this as metaphor-to-metaphor transfer and partial metaphorical retention.

The example provides strong evidence that translation can involve reconceptualization rather than simple substitution. The translator recognizes the source conceptual function and searches for a culturally resonant target image.

4.3 Metaphorical Meaning Loss

A third and particularly important pattern is metaphor loss. Here, the target translation conveys the intended meaning but removes the source-domain imagery.

Example 14: Pain in the neck

English: Pain in the neck

Igbo: *Onye maq̣bụ ihe na-akpasu iwe*

Technique: Paraphrase

Type: Conventional ontological metaphor

The English metaphor conceptualizes annoyance as physical pain located in the neck. The Igbo translation simply identifies a person or thing that causes annoyance. The source metaphorical imagery therefore disappears.

Example 15: Busy bee

English: Busy bee

Igbo: *Onye anaghị ezu ike*

Technique: Paraphrase

Type: Conventional ontological metaphor

The source expression compares a hardworking person to a bee. The target expression describes the person directly as someone who does not rest. The meaning of industriousness is communicated, but the animal imagery is lost. Metaphor is also lost

Example 16:

English: Horse around

Igbo: *Ikpa aghara*

Technique: Paraphrase

Type: Conventional ontological metaphor

The English expression uses horse imagery to conceptualize playful or foolish behaviour. The Igbo translation expresses the disorderly behaviour directly. Again, communicative meaning is preserved at the expense of metaphorical imagery. Metaphor is also lost

Example 17:

English: Wave the white flag

Igbo: *Kwusi ogu maobu esemokwu*

Technique: Explicitation

Type: Conventional structural metaphor

The white flag is a conventional symbol of surrender. The Igbo translation explicitly states the action, ending a fight or conflict, without reproducing the symbolic war image. The metaphor is therefore lost although the communicative meaning remains.

These examples suggest that meaning preservation and metaphor preservation are not identical. A translator may successfully preserve what the source speaker intends while sacrificing the imagery through which that meaning is communicated.

4.3.1 Novel Metaphors and Greater Meaning Shift

The data provide particularly useful evidence concerning novel metaphors. Because novel metaphors are less conventionalized, their interpretation may depend more heavily on the source context and cultural knowledge. As a result, they may require explicitation, modulation, adaptation or paraphrase.

Example 18:

English: Glass jaw

Igbo: *Onye enweghi ume n'ahụ maobu n'obi*

Technique: Explicitation

Type: Novel ontological metaphor

The English metaphor conceptualizes vulnerability through the image of a fragile jaw. The Igbo translation makes the meaning explicit by describing a person who lacks physical or emotional strength. The source imagery is consequently removed and metaphor is lost.

Example 19:

English: Neck-deep in trouble

Igbo: *Nsogbu kodoro ya n'olu*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Novel ontological metaphor

Unlike glass jaw, this expression retains the body-based immersion imagery. The target expression maintains the association between being deeply involved in trouble and being immersed up to the neck. The metaphor is therefore fully retained.

This contrast between glass jaw and neck-deep in trouble demonstrates that novelty alone does not automatically result in metaphor loss. The possibility of retention depends on whether the target language can accommodate the source conceptualization and imagery.

Example 20:

English: Hyena laughter

Igbo: *Qchị nkịta ohia*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Novel ontological metaphor

The source metaphor associates laughter with the sound and perceived characteristics of the hyena (mockingly unpleasant laughter). The target expression preserves the animal image and the compact structure of the source expression. The metaphorical meaning is consequently retained. This is another useful evidence that novel metaphor does not automatically result to metaphor loss

Example 21:

English: Moth to cold fire

Igbo: *Onye na-asara ihe ga-egbu ya*

Technique: Explicitation

Type: Novel structural metaphor

The English expression conceptualizes irresistible attraction to danger through the image of an insect being drawn to fire. The Igbo translation removes both the insect and fire imagery and directly expresses the idea of being attracted to something harmful. The metaphor is therefore lost

Example 22:

English: Fox-minded wisdom

Igbo: *Amamihe mbe*

Technique: Adaptation

Type: Conventional ontological metaphor

This expression provides a contrasting outcome. The target expression retains the tortoise image and the association between the animal and wisdom. The data therefore classify the metaphor as replaced and meaning fully retained. ‘Fox-minded wisdom’ is a creative formulation drawing on a conventional ‘fox’ wisdom association in English.

Some of the examples demonstrate that novel metaphors are not uniformly resistant to translation. Rather, their translatability depends on the degree of conceptual and cultural compatibility between source and target languages.

4.4 War Metaphors and Conceptual Preservation

War is a productive source domain in the data. Expressions such as ‘weaponize information’, ‘words are weapons’, ‘undeclared war’, ‘zone of conflict’, ‘ticking time bomb’ and ‘ambushed by memories’ conceptualize abstract experiences through warfare or military action. Some war metaphors are easily transferred.

Example 23:

English: Undeclared war

Igbo: *agha zoro ezo*

Technique: Equivalence

Type: Conventional structural metaphor

In this example, the conceptual mapping is maintained and metaphor preserved.

Example 24

English: A ticking time bomb

Igbo: *ihe egwu na-eche oge o ga-etipu,*

Technique: Paraphrase

Type: Conventional ontological metaphors

Here the conceptualization of danger as an explosive device is retained, meaning preserved, time-bomb imagery removed leading to partial metaphor retention

Example 25

English: Ambushed by memories

Igbo: *ncheta wakporo ya na mberede*

Technique: Modulation

Type: Conventional structural metaphor

The English expression treats memories as an attacking force, and the Igbo translation *ncheta wakporo ya na mberede* maintains the idea of memories suddenly attacking the experiencer. The analysis identifies both the military imagery and emotional intensity as retained.

In contrast, several novel war metaphors undergo loss through explicitation. These are shown in the following examples

Example 26

English: Detonate the argument

Igbo: *mee ka esemokwu puo n'egwu*

Technique: Explicitation

Type: Novel structural metaphor

This conveys the escalation of conflict but removes the explosive-device imagery. Therefore meaning preserved, imagery altered then metaphor modified

Example 27

English: Fight from the trenches

Igbo: *Mmady idoga adoga*

Technique: Explicitation

Type: Novel structural metaphor

The Igbo expression retains the underlying meaning of persistent struggle under hardship but loses the trench-warfare imagery. This is a case of metaphor losing its force. The pattern demonstrates that war as a conceptual source domain may be transferable even where individual war images are not. Thus, the translation may preserve CONFLICT IS WAR while eliminating a specific element such as trench, battlefield, gunpowder or armour.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The analysis reveals that metaphorical meaning shift in English–Igbo translation occurs along a continuum rather than as a simple distinction between successful and unsuccessful translation.

At one end of the continuum are expressions in which both conceptual mapping and metaphorical imagery are retained. Examples include ‘be all ears’, ‘be two-faced’, ‘words are weapons’, ‘weaponize information’, ‘hyena laughter’ and ‘tortoise-minded wisdom’. These expressions demonstrate relatively strong compatibility between source and target conceptualizations.

At the middle of the continuum are expressions in which the central meaning is retained but the metaphorical imagery changes. ‘Goat-hearted courage’ and ‘fox among drums’ illustrate this pattern. The source animal images are replaced or modified, but the target expressions remain figurative and culturally meaningful.

At the other end are expressions in which the source metaphor is removed altogether. ‘Pain in the neck’, ‘busy bee’, ‘horse around’, ‘wave the white flag’, ‘finger on the pulse’ and moth to

cold fire’ demonstrate this pattern. In these cases, the translator prioritizes semantic clarity and communicative meaning over preservation of source imagery.

The findings therefore support the argument that metaphor translation involves at least two levels of equivalence: conceptual/communicative equivalence and imagistic/metaphorical equivalence. A translation can be communicatively successful even when it does not preserve the metaphor itself.

This distinction is important for evaluating translation quality. If evaluation focuses only on whether the target text conveys the dictionary or propositional meaning of the source expression, the loss of metaphorical imagery may remain invisible. However, from a cognitive and stylistic perspective, the loss may be significant because source-domain imagery contributes to how the reader understands and experiences the message.

The findings also reinforce the importance of cultural factors in metaphor translation. Kövecses (2005) emphasizes that metaphorical conceptualization varies across cultures because people differ in experience and cognitive preferences. The English–Igbo data demonstrate this principle through animal and body-part metaphors. The use of fox, goat, tortoise, hyena, bee, horse and other animal images does not necessarily evoke identical associations in English and Igbo. Consequently, translators may retain, replace or eliminate such images.

Another important finding is that translation technique and meaning shift are related but not identical. The same technique can produce different outcomes. For example, equivalence can result in full retention, as in ‘be hard hearted’, or partial retention, as in ‘a lump in the throat’ or ‘give someone the cold shoulder’. Similarly, modulation can result in partial retention or metaphor loss. This means that the name of a translation procedure alone cannot adequately describe the outcome. What matters is the relationship between the source conceptualization and the target realization.

The findings also demonstrate the usefulness of metaphor classification for translation analysis. Classification helps identify what is being transferred. For example, when ‘words are weapons’ is classified as structural, the translator and researcher can identify the mapping LANGUAGE IS WEAPON and determine whether that mapping survives in Igbo. When ‘fall head over heels in love’ is classified as orientational, attention can be directed to the spatial schema of falling. Classification therefore serves as a diagnostic tool for analysing translation rather than merely as an exercise in categorization.

5.2 Conclusion

The study achieved its objectives by identifying the major forms of metaphorical meaning shift in English–Igbo translation, including retention, modification, replacement, and loss of metaphorical imagery. It established that metaphorical imagery may be retained, partially modified or replaced, or lost while the communicative meaning is preserved. The study further showed that such shifts arise from differences in conceptual mappings and cultural associations between English and Igbo. It concludes that English–Igbo metaphor translation is a process of linguistic, cognitive, and cultural negotiation in which preserving communicative meaning may sometimes require modification or loss of the source metaphorical image.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

Translators should identify the conceptual structure of a metaphor before selecting a translation strategy. This will help distinguish between cases requiring literal transfer, cultural substitution, paraphrase or explication.

Metaphor translation should prioritize conceptual and cultural equivalence rather than lexical equivalence alone. Where direct transfer is unnatural in Igbo, a culturally meaningful target metaphor may provide a more effective solution.

Translator training should include cognitive approaches to metaphor. Translators should be trained to identify source and target domains and recognize the implications of metaphorical imagery.

Bilingual English–Igbo metaphor corpora should record metaphorical retention status. In addition to English expressions and Igbo translations, such corpora should indicate whether the metaphor was fully retained, partially retained, replaced or lost.

Further research should examine metaphor translation across other Nigerian languages. Such comparative research would reveal similarities and differences in the conceptualization of metaphor across Nigerian linguistic and cultural communities.

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A NEW NORMAL IN TECHNOLOGY, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND DIGITAL MEDIA: CATALYST FOR MUSIC TEACHING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The new normal in technology, driven by artificial intelligence (AI) and digital media, is changing educational practices worldwide; these including music teaching in Nigeria. Inadequate infrastructure, limited teaching resources, and insufficient exposure to new digital tools have constrained traditional music education in Nigeria. These issues have reduced learner engagement and restricted access to modern music production and performance skills. This study engages the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework and the Constructivist learning theory. The research uses a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with music educators and students from selected Nigerian institutions. This method allows for assessing current levels of AI and digital media integration, perceived barriers, and teaching outcomes. Findings show that AI-supported tools, such as adaptive learning platforms, virtual instruments, and digital audio workstations, greatly improve lesson delivery, personalized learning, and practical musicianship. Digital media platforms also support collaborative learning, content creation, and remote teaching. However, challenges remain, including poor internet access, inadequate teacher training in AI, and gaps in policy. The study suggests a framework focusing on building digital skills, redesigning the curriculum, and adopting AI-driven teaching technologies. Its implementation model shows how music researchers can integrate AI and digital media research into music education to improve teaching effectiveness, boost learner motivation, and enhance global competitiveness.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Digital Media, Music Teaching, Educational Technology, Nigerian Music Education.

Introduction

Music education in Nigeria is evolving. Rapid advances in artificial intelligence and the spread of digital media are changing how teachers create lessons, how learners access music, and

how communities interact with music. This article argues that these technologies create a new normal. When used thoughtfully, they can improve access, diversify teaching methods, and make music education more relevant to the culture in Nigerian classrooms and communities. For decades, music education in Nigeria has combined rich local traditions with formal curricula from colonial and post-colonial systems. Today, affordable smartphones, better internet access, and cloud-based platforms provide new ways to share resources, teach remotely, and collaborate on music. At the same time, AI-driven tools like smart practice assistants, adaptive learning platforms, and automated transcription and composition aids are lowering technical barriers. They enable personalized learning paths that were previously difficult to achieve in many local areas. Despite these advances, the adoption of technology in Nigerian music education is still inconsistent. Many teachers lack training in digital teaching methods, schools face infrastructure challenges, and curricula often do not reflect the benefits of AI and multimedia. This article explores how AI and digital media can support music teaching in Nigeria. It will identify practical ways to integrate these tools, highlight challenges and ethical issues, and suggest actionable recommendations to connect technology with local teaching goals and cultural values.

Literature Review

Teachers' ability to turn technology into valuable learning relies on a solid understanding of content, teaching methods, and technology. The TPACK framework developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006) remains the most commonly used tool for examining this combination. Effective teaching happens at the intersection of Content Knowledge (CK) - music content, Professional knowledge (PK) - teaching methods, and Technological Knowledge (TK) - tools. Studies in Western music education highlight that technology is valuable only when tasks focus on musical thinking rather than just mastering the tools (Bauer, 2014; Ruthmann & Mantie, 2017). Research shows that teachers with better TPACK create tasks using DAWs (digital audio workstations) and compositions that encourage reflection, revision, and musical decision-making (Gai, 2024). However, in Nigeria, research shows a consistent issue: music teachers have strong subject knowledge but lack confidence in specific technological areas (Modeme, 2022; Amaegbe, 2023). Professional development (PD) often consists of general ICT workshops that do not address music-related tasks (notation, DAW routing, audio capture) or the skills needed for interpreting algorithmic feedback. This gap leads to two main problems: (a) under-use of powerful tools and (b) misuse, where technology becomes an end goal instead of a means to enhance musical learning. There is a need for thorough evaluations comparing PD models that focus on music-specific TPACK (e.g., micro-credential plus coaching versus one-time workshops). The solution is to implement and assess practice-based PD pilots that mix hands-on DAW labs, planning and teaching cycles, and reflective assessments, measuring both teacher TPACK improvements and student learning results.

AI tools like adaptive tutors, automated transcription, and generative composition systems provide immediate, data-rich feedback and new creative ideas (Li, 2023; Merchán Sánchez-Jara et al., 2024). From a sociocultural viewpoint (Vygotsky, 1978), these tools act as cultural mediators that can extend the zone of proximal development by providing support when human tutors are unavailable. Research in Western contexts shows short-term improvements in specific skills (intonation, rhythm) and increased practice motivation with AI tutors (Li, 2023). Generative systems also inspire ideas by providing students with musical material to adapt and critique (Merchán Sánchez-Jara et al., 2024).

However, algorithmic feedback often focuses on measurable aspects and may not capture expressive details and stylistic interpretation. Additionally, introducing AI creates a mixed

feedback environment where teacher, peer, and machine feedback interact in complex ways. Few empirical studies explore how learners balance and combine these feedback sources, and even fewer examine how teachers manage algorithmic evaluations to maintain musical values. There is limited research on mixed feedback environments in classrooms and on teaching methods for handling AI feedback. Classroom trials should compare different feedback setups (teacher-only, teacher plus AI, peer plus AI) and document their effects on expressive performance, compositional reasoning, and learner agency, alongside teacher methods for interpreting algorithmic results.

DAWs have expanded the definition of musical literacy, making arrangement, sound design, and multimodal composition key learning outcomes (Bauer, 2014). Research indicates that scaffolded DAW tasks, combined with reflective portfolios, more effectively demonstrate ongoing creative growth than single-performance assessments (Gai, 2024). In European contexts, reliable assessment of production work validates rubrics and inter-rater training (Wiggins & Forth, 2015). In Nigeria, some excellent programs (university studios, private academies) highlight the potential of DAWs, but many programs lack validated assessment tools and face infrastructure challenges that make regular DAW use difficult (Modeme, 2022; Amaegbe, 2023). Without process-focused assessments and clear authorship guidelines for AI-assisted work, evaluations risk favoring students with access to home studios or private resources. Therefore, there is a need for validated, context-sensitive rubrics that include process (drafts, reflections) and product (mix, arrangement), as well as AI authorship disclosure. Collaborating to develop and test portfolio rubrics with Nigerian departments, including training for raters and ensuring inter-rater reliability, is essential, as is incorporating AI authorship disclosure into standard assessment practices.

National policy documents (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019) and international reports (UNESCO, 2020) outline ICT goals, but many African institutions face implementation challenges like unreliable power, limited bandwidth, and tight maintenance budgets (Modeme, 2022; Amaegbe, 2023). These systemic issues influence who benefits from the "new normal." Local innovations—including mobile recording workflows, studio partnerships, and regional hubs—show promise but are often uneven and ad hoc. Equity concerns are pressing; technology can widen existing gaps unless paired with intentional access strategies (such as loan programs, scheduled lab time, and regional hubs). Translating policy requires discipline-specific plans that include costs for maintenance, technician roles, and PD, rather than just one-time equipment purchases. Existing models for sustainable music technology (solar-powered labs, offline DAW workflows, regional hubs) are few in number. There is a need to pilot and assess scalable infrastructure models with detailed budgets and maintenance strategies, and to push for funding that supports technician jobs and professional development linked to measurable outcomes.

AI systems often rely on Western data, raising issues of stylistic bias and cultural fit when used in African musical traditions (Merchán Sánchez-Jara et al., 2024). Unresolved questions about authorship and how to credit AI contributions in student work remain in many institutional policies. Ethical use also includes considering data privacy and consent when analyzing student performances. There is a lack of ethical guidelines tailored to the specific needs of music education that address cultural bias, authorship questions, and data governance. There is a need to bring together interdisciplinary groups (musicologists, ethicists, technologists) to create contextually relevant guidelines and classroom protocols for AI use, including diverse training datasets and clear authorship statements.

Methodology

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate how artificial intelligence (AI) and digital media enhance music education in Nigeria. The methodological choices are grounded in two primary theories. The first theory is Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), which highlights the essential teacher knowledge required for effective technology use (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). The second theory is on sociocultural/constructivist principles, which view digital tools as cultural resources that facilitate learning within social environments (Vygotsky, 1978).

The study will use an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The first phase (quantitative) focuses on examining prevalence, relationships, and predictors (including TPACK and infrastructure) across various institutions. The second phase (qualitative) consists of targeted case studies aimed at elucidating mechanisms, classroom dynamics, and contextual challenges. This sequence enables statistical generalization regarding patterns and provides a purposeful depth for interpreting causal mechanisms. TPACK highlights quantifiable teacher knowledge, whereas sociocultural theory centers on interactional processes. The research includes samples from eight institutions across Nigeria's geopolitical regions to capture differences in resources and practices. These consist of two federal universities, two state universities or colleges, two colleges of education, and two private music academies. The researcher will craft all tools to apply the theoretical concepts in practice.

The quantitative analysis involves descriptive statistics that summarize access and usage trends. EFA and CFA are used to validate the TPACK instrument. Inferential analyses, such as t-tests and ANOVA, are performed to compare different types of institutions. Multiple regression analyzes student outcomes in relation to TPACK, infrastructure, and participation in professional development. Pre- and post-paired tests assess the impact of professional development. The researcher will use effect sizes and confidence intervals to aid in comprehending the findings. The qualitative analysis consists of transcripts and observational notes, which the researcher will use to scrutinize through thematic analysis employing both inductive and deductive approaches. Initial codes are derived from TPACK and sociocultural frameworks, while inductive coding uncovers new practices, such as hybrid feedback environments. Two independent coders assess a portion of the transcripts to ensure consistency, utilizing Cohen's κ . Analytic memos document interpretive decisions made throughout the process. Microethnographic case studies illustrate how teachers facilitate interactions, how students adapt, and how equity issues surface.

The researchers confirm validity by piloting the tools, combining surveys, observations, artifacts, and interviews, and consulting with participants on emerging themes. The researchers improve reliability through discussions among raters for the rubrics and the process involves double data entry for surveys, complemented by reflexive memos and an audit trail to enhance reliability. Limitations in purposive sampling restrict statistical generalizability, particularly given the rapid development of software tools. To tackle these challenges, the analysis prioritizes teaching methods and resilient workflows over specific software versions.

Ethical Considerations

Regarding ethical considerations and data governance, the researcher obtained approval from the lead institution's review board. We obtained informed consent and parental permission for participants under 18; participants may withdraw at any time. Data are anonymized and securely stored on encrypted drives. There are specific protocols in place for AI contributions: students

are required to disclose any AI work in their portfolios, and usage logs that contain personal data are kept confidential and destroyed after the designated retention period. Findings are reported in aggregate to protect the identities of both institutions and individuals. The approach offers validated resources such as TPACK-for-Music, evidence of the effectiveness of professional development, frameworks for hybrid feedback systems, and established workflows. These results actively apply the TPACK framework by assessing and enhancing integrated teacher knowledge. They also illustrate how tools impact learning in social settings. This study provides both theoretical understanding and practical guidance for advancing equitable, contextually aware music technology integration in Nigeria.

Data Presentation

This research examined the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital media in enhancing music education in Nigeria. Utilizing survey responses (N = 298; 183 educators, 115 students), twelve classroom observations, and 24 semi-structured interviews, the outcomes reveal a varied situation. While there are effective practices, overarching issues and gaps in teachers' technological preparedness limit broader influence. The findings below connect to the study's theoretical frameworks (TPACK and constructivist theory) and depict the existing condition of music education in Nigeria.

1. Teacher's knowledge and readiness: TPACK as a significant predictor Educators indicated strong content knowledge (CK mean $\approx 4.02/5$) and moderate pedagogical knowledge (PK ≈ 3.45). However, technological knowledge (TK) emerged as the area needing the most improvement (≈ 2.58). The mean score for the integrated TPACK composite was approximately 3.12. Regression analysis indicated that TPACK emerged as the most significant predictor of perceived student learning improvements (standardized $\beta \approx .36$, $p < .001$), even after accounting for factors such as infrastructure and participation in professional development (PD). These findings align with the central premise of the TPACK framework: possessing knowledge of content and teaching strategies is insufficient for effective technology integration. Educators must also have hands-on skills to select and modify tools that align with musical objectives (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Interview insights reinforced this notion. Numerous teachers were able to articulate specific musical goals, such as ensemble balance, phrasing, and compositional intent. However, they felt uncertain about which DAW workflows or AI tutors would aid those aims without simplifying learning to just technical exercises.

2. Infrastructure and accessibility: ecological limitations affect opportunities: Infrastructure is a crucial factor. A significant 71% of participants reported regular power outages. Only 22% said they have stable, high-speed internet that supports synchronous remote collaboration. Access to institutional hardware varied widely. About 46% reported having at least one lab with audio interfaces, while many relied on personal devices or informal studio collaborations. Tools serve as cultural mediators, but their potential is only fully realized in supportive environments (Vygotsky, 1978). The findings from Nigeria show that the same technologies yield different educational outcomes depending on infrastructure, technical support, and institutional practices. Teachers' creative solutions, such as smartphones for recording, installing offline digital audio workstations, and scheduling after-hours studio time, demonstrate both resilience and creativity. However, these examples highlight that individual resourcefulness cannot replace the need for systemic investment in maintenance, technical staff, and reliable infrastructure.

3 Patterns of technology use: DAWs are dominant while AI is still developing. Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) were the most commonly used production tools. 19% of participants used them weekly, and 22% monthly. In contrast, the use of AI-enabled tools, like ear tutors and composition assistants, was low, with about 4% using them weekly. The frequency of DAW use showed a strong association with technological knowledge ($r \approx .61$), suggesting that hands-on experience supports classroom application. DAWs serve as a basic entry point for production education in Nigeria. While AI tools have potential for personalized practice and creative generation (Li, 2023; Merchán Sánchez-Jara et al., 2024), they are mostly in the experimental stage. This gradual spread indicates that building technological knowledge through engagement with DAWs may be crucial for confidently and effectively incorporating AI into teaching.

4. When instructors combined sufficient technological knowledge with helpful infrastructure, observations showed constructive learning processes. These included repeating composition cycles in digital audio workstations, organized peer evaluations, reflective entries in portfolios, and structured use of algorithmic feedback. Students in these settings expressed greater independence, saying, “I can try out an idea and hear it back instantly.” They also created portfolios that illustrated their revisions and musical thought processes. This trend shows sociocultural dynamics. Digital tools enabled socially based activities such as collaboration, evaluation, and modification, which expanded learners’ zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The TPACK framework explains this. Educators who effectively integrate technology with teaching strategies create assignments that focus on musical decision-making rather than purely technical performance (Bauer, 2014; Ruthmann & Mantie, 2017).

5. The inclusion of AI added a non-human element to classroom feedback systems. Teachers valued algorithmic feedback for its speed and its ability to measure aspects such as intonation and timing. However, they stressed the need to musically interpret these outputs, taking into account phrasing, style, and expressive intention. Many educators showed how to interpret algorithmic scores alongside their auditory judgments, thus preserving human interpretive authority. The educational challenge does not involve only using AI but also coordinating how machine feedback corresponds with teacher and colleague feedback. This interpretive effort is a key skill that needs development through professional training and classroom modeling (Merchán Sánchez-Jara et al., 2024).

6 Equity and evaluation: The danger of worsening inequalities without intentional policies. Access inequities were clear. Students in private schools or urban areas had more consistent access to digital audio workstation (DAW) tools and built stronger portfolios than those in underfunded public schools. Without assessments focused on the process and a clear recognition of AI contributions, technology-driven evaluation may favor students with extra resources outside of school. Using process-oriented portfolios, clarifying authorship for AI contributions, and presenting diverse assessment methods can help tackle disparities and better demonstrate incremental learning (Wiggins & Forth, 2015).

The music education scene in Nigeria includes dynamic, localized examples where AI and digital technology improve learning. However, the national situation is uneven overall. The main obstacles are teachers’ confidence in technology and the availability of institutional infrastructure. The findings show three important priorities that match the study's framework: (1) dedicate resources to professional development that prioritize practical skills and music-specific TPACK, (2) build strong infrastructure and regional hubs to close access gaps, and (3) use

process-oriented evaluation methods and maintain ethical standards for AI authorship and data management. By adopting these steps, we can turn individual successes into a fairer and increasingly sustainable "new normal" for music education across Nigeria.

Discussion

The evidence collected in this study provides a clear picture of music teaching in Nigeria during a period of technological opportunity. Surveys, classroom observations, and interviews revealed a consistent pattern: technology and AI can enhance musical learning, but only when three factors, including teacher knowledge, lesson design, and institutional environment, come together. This finding is not just descriptive; it makes theoretical sense. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework explains why connected teacher knowledge is crucial (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Meanwhile, sociocultural theory holds that tools acquire meaning only through social practices and supportive settings (Vygotsky, 1978). The study combined key implications, linked them to theory, and provided clear, actionable recommendations by interpreting the main findings through a theoretical lens. The TPACK framework acts as the center of effective integration. Teachers in this study demonstrated solid musical content knowledge and strong teaching instincts, but their technological knowledge (TK) was limited. Statistically, TK was the weakest part of the TPACK framework, while the overall TPACK score was the best indicator of perceived student progress. This pattern supports the TPACK claim that content and teaching methods are necessary but not enough. Teachers also need to know how to use specific technologies to reach musical goals (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Practically, professional development should go beyond general ICT training and focus on music-specific tool skills, such as DAW workflows, audio capture, and understanding algorithmic feedback.

The socio-cultural and constructivist approaches explain why the same tools yield different results in classrooms. Digital media and AI are cultural artefacts. Its benefits are realizable when they are part of social practices such as peer critique, teacher modeling, and iterative revision, which provide support (Vygotsky, 1978). In places where infrastructure and technical support were in place, tasks using digital audio workstations (DAWs) and collaborative projects showed clear improvements in student agency and creativity. However, where infrastructure was lacking—due to frequent power outages, a lack of technicians, or limited bandwidth—teachers had to make do with smartphones and offline methods. This study demonstrated teachers' resilience, but it also highlighted the limitations of individual creativity without systemic support.

Hybrid feedback systems require interpretive work. The introduction of AI brought in a new element to classroom feedback: machine-generated metrics and prompts. Both teachers and students appreciated the quick feedback from algorithms on measurable aspects such as intonation and timing. Nonetheless, teachers often stressed the need to interpret these outputs musically by connecting numeric scores to phrasing, style, and expressive intent. This interpretive work is a teaching skill in its own right. Teachers need to translate algorithmic signals into musical learning actions. This task is crucial to the TPACK framework and to socio-cultural interaction.

Implications for policy and practice

1. Professional development must focus on practical, music-specific skills. One-time ICT workshops are not enough. PD should include hands-on DAW labs, collaborative planning and teaching, and reflective assessment practices. This approach helps teachers develop integrated TPACK. This study's evidence shows that teachers who participated in ongoing, contextual PD

were more likely to create tasks that emphasized musical reasoning rather than just technical skills (Bauer, 2014; Ruthmann & Mantie, 2017).

2. Assessment must prioritize process and authorship transparency. Portfolios that show drafts, version histories, and reflective commentary capture ongoing learning better than single performances. With AI-generated material present, assessment protocols should require clear disclosure of AI contributions. They should also include rubrics that evaluate musical choices and technical skills (Wiggins & Forth, 2015).

3. Infrastructure investments must focus on resilience and maintenance. Buying equipment without maintenance plans and technician support leads to rapid capacity decay. Realistic roadmaps that include power backups, scheduled maintenance, and technician roles are necessary to turn policy goals into classroom reality (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019).

4. Equity must be a priority, not a secondary concern. Technology can increase existing disparities unless institutions implement clear access strategies. These include device loan programs, scheduled lab time for disadvantaged students, regional hubs that share resources, and partnerships with local studios for supervised access. These actions help ensure that assessments and learning opportunities do not favor those with private access.

5. Ethical and culturally responsive use of AI is necessary. AI tools trained on Western data may misrepresent or marginalize African musical styles. Institutions should adopt ethical guidelines that tackle cultural bias, data management, and authorship. They should also encourage the development or curation of relevant local training data when possible (Merchán Sánchez-Jara et al., 2024).

Recommendations

This study focuses on conditional possibility rather than technological determinism. Nigerian music teachers are dedicated, resourceful, and keen to use new tools. Students show creativity when they have access and support. The challenge ahead is practical: enhance teacher skills by combining technology with teaching methods and content (TPACK). We must invest in strong institutional environments that enable tools to facilitate learning (sociocultural conditions). Additionally, we need to adopt assessment and ethical practices that uphold equity and cultural integrity. If we take these steps thoughtfully and collaboratively, AI and digital media can be a sustainable force for richer, more inclusive music education across Nigeria. Based on this, the study makes the following recommendations for what, who, and how to measure effective implementation:

1. Launch targeted professional development pilots (0–12 months). Two complementary models: (a) a six-module micro-credential with hands-on DAW labs; (b) semester-long coaching cycles (co-planning, co-teaching). Use the Departments in partnership with teacher education units and professional associations to assess pre- and post-TPACK scores, observe lesson enactments, and evaluate student portfolios.

2. Adopt portfolio assessment with AI disclosure (6–12 months). Implement a standard portfolio rubric (process + product + AI authorship statement) and hold rater calibration sessions with examination committees and course leads to ensure inter-rater reliability ($ICC \geq .70$) and track student learning progress.

3. Create resilient infrastructure plans (6–24 months). Develop detailed three-year roadmaps that include UPS/solar backups, technician positions, and maintenance contracts in collaboration with department heads, institutional finance offices, and state education ministries. Aim to enhance lab uptime and minimize lesson disruptions.
4. Establish regional resource hubs and partnerships (12–24 months). Create shared DAW labs and studio partnerships in each geopolitical zone. Formalize MOUs for access and internships in collaboration with institutions, private studios, and alums networks to provide adequate support for students and internship placements.
5. Develop ethical guidelines and culturally responsive materials. Form interdisciplinary working groups to draft AI use policies, authorship standards, and data governance protocols, partnering with music departments, ethicists, technologists, and cultural practitioners. Ensure that departments adopt the published guidelines.

Conclusion

This study shows that artificial intelligence and digital media can genuinely improve music teaching in Nigeria, but their educational value depends on certain factors. When teachers have solid technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge, when tasks emphasize musical reasoning, and when institutions provide reliable power, technical support, and access, digital tools can spark iterative composition, reflective practice, and greater student involvement. However, in areas plagued by unstable electricity, limited internet bandwidth, and insufficient training, these technologies often go unused or are applied incorrectly, widening the gaps in learning opportunities.

The findings highlight two connected truths. First, solid knowledge in teaching technology is crucial; investing in teachers' ability to link musical goals with the right tools yields the best educational outcomes. Second, social and cultural factors influence whether these tools serve as effective learning resources; technology only enhances development when integrated into social practices such as peer feedback, teacher support, and guided revisions that make algorithm-based feedback and production processes understandable.

Moving forward, the approach should be clear and compassionate: focus on ongoing, practice-based training that improves music-specific tool skills; implement process-oriented assessments (such as portfolios with clear AI-authorship statements) that emphasize revision and musical thinking; and commit to realistic, well-planned infrastructure that includes maintenance and technician roles. Also important are policies and ethical guidelines that promote cultural relevance, data management, and fair access, ensuring that technological advancements support rather than undermine local musical traditions and educational fairness.

In summary, achieving a "new normal" requires collaboration among teachers, students, technicians, and policymakers to transform tools into effective teaching instruments. With targeted capacity-building, thoughtful assessment practices, and sensible infrastructure planning, AI and digital media can become lasting drivers of a more creative, inclusive, and resilient music education across Nigeria.

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N'utoasụsụ Igbo, nsọkwunye bụ otu n'ime isiokwu ndị gbara ọkpurukpu putara ihe. Nsọkwunye bụ otu n'ime nkejiasụsụ nke nwere ike iso ngwaa. O na-etinyekwu nghota n'okwu ọbụla o na-eso. E nweela ọtụtụ ndị mmadụ, o kachasi ndị odee nakwa ndị ọkammuta ndị deela ma mekwaa nchọcha gbasara ya. Nchọcha nke a tinyekwuru aka na nnyocha nsọkwunye: Ihe o bụ, ụdị ọrụ o na-arụ, ọmụmaatụ ya dị icheiche nakwa ọnọdụ ya n'usoro okwu Igbo n'olundị Ụmụahịa. E sitere n'akwukwọ dị iche iche nakwa okwu ọnụ ndị mmadụ bụumụafọ Ụmụahịa biterela ọtụtụ afọ n'Ụmụahịa wee nwete ngwa nchọcha. E ji atụtụ echiche nhazi asụsụ na usoro nkwasị wee tuchasịa ngwa nchọcha a. Nsọkwunye na-agbatikwu nghota dị n'ahiriokwu, ọnọdụ ya n'ahiriokwu na-egosi ụdị nsọkwunye o bụ. Na mmechi, a chọputara na nsọkwunye nwere ike inọ ọnọdụ ọbụla n'usorookwu Igbo. Ha nwere ike inọ na mbido, etiti maọbụ na ngwụcha usorookwu. Nsọkwunye anaghị agbanwe mputara dị n'okwu ma o buru na e wepu ya n'ahiriokwu, kama o na-etinyekwu nghota n'okwu.

Nduba

Ntọala Nchọcha

Ihe mejuputara asụsụ ọbụla bụ mkpuruokwu dị icheiche ndị a haziri nke ọma n'usoro dị mma nke ga-ekwe nghota maọbụ nwere mputara. Nke a bụ nke e nwere ike ikpo usorookwu, n'ime usorookwu a, mkpuruokwu niile mejuputara ya nwere ọrụ dị icheiche ha na-arụ, ya ka a na-akpo nkejiasụsụ.

Nkejiasụsụ bụ nkewa e kewara mkpuruokwu, ọdịdị nakwa ọrụ ha na-arụ n'asụsụ Igbo. Asụsụ ọbụla nwere nkejiasụsụ dị iche iche nke nsọkwunye bụ otu n'ime ha.

O dị mkpa ka anyị mata na asụsụ bụ onyinye ọkpụ Chineke nyere mba niile. Ndị ọbụla nwere asụsụ ha, nke a ka e nwere ike ịjị sị na mba na-achị n'olu n'olu n'ihị nkụ dị na mba na-eghere mba nri. Asụsụ bụ ihe nne na nna na-akuziri umụ ha. O bụ nwa nwa tote, o mụta. Asụsụ bụ usoro ọbụla mmadụ ji egosi ihe dị ya n'obi, nke o choro ka a mata. Asụsụ abughị sọ ekwuru n'ọnụ (Okolo na Ezikeojiakụ, 1999).

Asụsụ Igbo bụ asụsụ malitere mgbe gboo nke a putakwara na asụsụ Igbo sokwa buru asụsụ ọkpụ. Asụsụ Igbo bidoro mgbe ndị Igbo bidoro ndụ ha. Asụsụ Igbo bụ otu ejirimara ndị Igbo. Asụsụ Igbo bụ asụsụ ụdaolu. O bụ asụsụ Igbo ka ndị Igbo ji egosiputa omenaala, ọdinaala na agumagu Igbo.

Asụsụ Igbo bụ otu n'ime asụsụ e nwere na Naijiria. O bụ otu n'ime asụsụ kacha apụta ihe n'ala Naijiria. O bụ naanị na mpaghara ala Igbo ka a na-asụ ya karịa. Asụsụ Igbo nwere olundị dị iche iche bụ nke e ji mara mpaghara ala Igbo dị iche iche ma nwekwaa izugbe ya, ya bụ asụsụ Igbo nke nwaafọ Igbo ọbụla maọbụ onye ọbụla mụtara asụsụ Igbo na-asụ na-aghotakwa.

Umụahịa bụ otu mpaghara olu e nwere n'asụsụ Igbo nke so n'otu Igbo nnọnetiti ọwụwanyanwụ. Ufọdu na-akpokwa ya Igbo bi na ndịda (Ugwuona, Nwankwo na Nweze, 2020)

Okafo na Ewelukwa (2018:180) na-akọwa Nsòkwunye dika mkpuruokwu nwere ike idabanye n'ebe ọbụla n'ahiriokwu iji mee ka ahiriokwu ahụ nwewaga nghota dika ọ dị na mbụ. Ofomata (2018:79) kwuru na nsòkwunye bụkwa mkpuruasụsụ mgbakwunye ọzọ e nwekwara n'asụsụ Igbo. Na ọ bụ nsòkwunye bụ mgbakwunye ikpeazu a na-etinye na mkpuruokwu iji were nweta nghota ihe e bu n'uche. Ogechukwu (2013:46) hụtarar nsòkwunye dika otu n'ime nkejiasụsụ anyị nwere n'asụsụ Igbo nke na-esote mkpọaha maọbụ ngwaa n'azụ n'ahiriokwu. Ọ gakwara n'ihu kwuo na nsòkwunye na-enye ahiriokwu nghota, na dika aha ya siri di, ọ bughị na ọ bụrụ na ọ dighị n'okwu na okwu ahụ agaghị enwe nghota kama ọ na-abụ mkpuruasụsụ a gbakwunyere n'okwuiji were wetaruo nkọwa okwu ahụ n'isi. Mgbe a na-edes ya, a naghị edekọ ya na okwu ọ na-eso kama a na-edesa ya edesa.

Ihe gbasara nsòkwunye dika otu n'ime nkejiasụsụ e nwere awaala otutu ndi isi n'ebe ọ di ukwuu, ufodu na-enwe ihe mgbagwojuanya n'ebe nsòkwunyena mgbakwunye di, ebe otutu na-ajụ maobu n'ebe ọbụla ka e nwere ike ihu ya n'usorookwu Igbo tumadi n'olundi di iche iche. Nke a mere ka ndi nchocha were ya dika ihe di mkpa ichoputa onodu nsòkwunye n'usorookwu Igbo tumadi n'olundi Umuahia.

Ihe gbasara nsòkwunye na-ebute mgbagwojuanya nye ndi mmadu tumadi ndi na-amu asusu Igbo. Ufodu anaghi am andiche di n'etiti nsòkwunye na mgbakwunye. Mgbe ufodu, onodu ya n'usorookwu olundi ufodu na-abu nsonye nyekwa otutu ndi. Nke a mere anyi ji choo ime ka ihe gbasara nsòkwunye doo anya nke oma ma mekwa ka a mata onodu o nwere ike ino n'usorookwu n'olundi Umuahia.

Mbunuche nchocha bu ichoputa nsòkwunye di iche iche e nwere n'olundi Umuahia, imata onodu nakwa oru ya n'olundi Umuahia. Nchocha a ga-abara ohanaze uru n'ebe ọ di ukwuu, ọ kachasi ndi umuahia. Nchocha a ga-enye aka mee ka olundi Umuahia putakwuo ihe ma gbochie nledanya a na-eleda ufodu olundi n'asusu Igbo. Nchocha a ga-abukwa ihe nlere anya nye ndi choro imatakwu ihe gbasara nsòkwunye. N'ebe ndi nkuzi na umuakwukwo no, tumadi ndi na-amu ihe gbasara sayensi asusu ọ ga-enyere ha aka n'ebe ọ di ukwu. N'ikpeazu, nchocha a ga-abu ihe nlere anya nye ndi nkuzi nakwa umuakwukwo na ndi na-eme nchocha n'ihe gbasara nsòkwunye n'odiniihu.

Ntuleghari Agumagu

Nkọwa Nsòkwunye

Nsòkwunye (*clitics*) bụ okwu ndi Grik putara "Ndabe". Nke a gosiri na nkọwa niile e nyere maka nsòkwunye gbadoro ukwu na ọ naghị akwuru onwe ya, dabara adaba. Ọ na-adabere n'okwu ọzọ wee weputa nghota a choro.

Emenanjo (1978) na-akwọwa na nsòkwunye na-aputa ihe nke ukwuu n'asusu Igbo nke na o toruru i huta ya di ka nkejiasusu n'Igbo. Ọ gara n'ihu kwuo n'oge gara aga a na-achikota nsonaazu na nsòkwunye dika nsonaazu ma ọ dighi otu a ugbu a. Nke a kwadoro Green na Igwe (1963) ndi na-ekwu na otutu nsòkwunye dika -kwa, -si, tu, -di, dgz bu ndi nke a na-akwọwa dika nsonaazu. Ezeomeke (2004) n'aka nke ya gosikwara na nsòkwunye di ka mgbakwunye, mana Ezeomeke gara n'ihu kwuo na nsòkwunye nwere udi agwa ọ na-akpa nke a mere o jiri wepu ya n'ihe gbasara mgbakwunye. O kwukwara na agwa nsòkwunye a bu mgbe ọbula ọ na-eso okwu ọbula abughi ngwaa maobu isingwaa dika mkpọaha, ọ na-anopu iche, kwuru onwe ya. Mana mgbakwunye na-eso maobu tado na ngwaa.

Nzidiegwu, Okonye-Ogbalu na Ofoegbu (1997) si na nsokwunye na-eme ka ahiriokwu kwudosie ike ma na-egosi nrutu aka. Ikekonwu, Ezikeojiaku na Ugoji (1999) na-ekwu na nsokwunye bu kwa mkpuruasusu (mofim) bu nke e nwere ike igbakwunyere ngwaa ahụ.

Emenanjo, Okolie na Ekwe (2004) kowara na nsokwunye bu irighiri okwu nwere ike iso aha maobu ngwaa. Na nkowa ha, o putara na o bu so ngwaa maobu aha ka nsokwunye nwere ike iso. Aha ebe a gunyere ngalaba niile di na mkpoha.

Ezeomeke (2004) gosiri na nsokwunye di ka mgbakwunye; mana Ezeomeke gara n'ihu kwuo na o nwere udi agwa nsokwunye na-akpa mere ya jiri wepu ya n'ime mgbakwunye. Ezeomeke kwukwara na agwa nsokwunye na mgbakwunye bu na mgbe obula o na-eso okwu obula abughi ngwaa maobu isingwaa dika mkpoha, o na-anopu iche, kwuru onwe ya. Mgbakwunye na-eso maobu atapado so na ngwaa. E nweghi nkejasusu ozu ya na mgbakwunye na-agako mana nsokwunye nwere ike iso nkejasusu obula o kachasi ngwaa na mkpoha. Nsokwunye noro n'ihu ngwaa, a na-edoko ya na ngwaa ahụ onu.

Ume, Ugoji na Dike (2015) ruturu aka na nsokwunye bu otu n'ime nkejasusu nke nwere ike iso ngwaa. O di ka mgbakwunye ebe o bu na okwu si na nkejasusu ndi ozu nwere ike ikwu ya n'ihu e wezuga mbuuzo. Iji kowaputa ndiche di n'etiti nsokwunye na nsonaazu, ha kowara na nsokwunye yiri nsonaazu ma o buru na o na-eso ngwaa.

Nsokwunye na-egosiputa mputara di iche iche nke ahiriokwu o no na ya. Dika aha ya siri di, o bughi na o buru na o dighi n'okwu na okwu ahụ agaghi enwe nghota kama o na-abu mkpuru asusu a gbakwunyere n'okwu iji were wetaruo nkowa okwu ahụ n'isi.

Usorookwu bu uzu e si ewekota mkpuruokwu iji nweta nkebiokwu, nkebiahiri maobu ahiriokwu nwere nghota zuru oke. Ndimele (1999) kwenyere na ndi mmadu anaghi asu asusu site n'isere mkpuruokwu obula soru ha, kama, ha na-asu asusu site n'isere mkpuruokwu ma hazie ha nke oma dika iwu na-achi mmebe usoro asusu siri di. O kwukwara na asusu obula nwere usoro ndoko ahiriokwu.

Anigbogu, Mbah na Emeh (2001) kwuru na usorookwu bu nhazi mkpuruokwu si otu ahụ wube ahiriokwu, nkebiahiri na otutu ndoko ndi ozu. Mbah (2014) hutara usorookwu dika isi sekpu nti n'amumamu utuasusu. O kwenyere na tupu e nweta ahiriokwu diziri adizi ma nwee echiche, na o bu oru usorookwu ikwudosi ike ma kowaa ka asusu di iche iche ji enweta ihe a choru. Udemmadu na Egwuonwu-Chimezie (2022) na-akowa usorookwu dika ngalaba sayensi asusu na-eleba anya n'usoro e si edeko okwu n'uzu ziri ezi ka e wee meputa nkebiokwu, nkebiahiri maobu ahiriokwu

Usorookwu bu mwekota a na-ewekota mkpuruokwu site n'akuku nkejasusu di icheiche iji nweta nkebiokwu, nkebiahiri na ahiriokwu nwere ezi nghota.

Atutu Nchocha

Atutu metutara isiokwu a bu Atutu Echiche nhazi Asusu (*Structuralist Theory*)

Echiche nhazi Asusu bu otu n'ime echiche sayensi asusu kacha baa uru n'imụ nhazi na usoro asusu. Ferdinand de Saussure, bu onye guzobere echiche a, kwusiri ike na a ghaghi ile asusu anya di ka usoro zuru oke (*system*) nke mejuputara akuku di iche iche na-aruko oru onu. Ya mere, ihe putara asusu adighi n'otu mkpuruokwu naani ya, kama o di na mmekorita di n'etiti mkpuruokwu na ihe ndi gbara ya gburugburu n'usoro asusu.

Echiche nhazi Asusu na-adabere n'echiche ufodu di mkpa. Nke mbu bu *langue* na *parole*. *Langue* na-ezo aka n'usoro asusu nke obodo dum na-ekerita. iwu na nhazi nke asusu.

N'omumu a gbasara nsokwunye na usorookwu n'olundi Umuahia, a na-elekwasị anya karisịa na *langue*, ya bu iwu na nhazi e ji emeputa mkpuruokwu ohuru n'olundi a, o bughi naani etu onye obula si kwuo ha.

Echiche nhazi Asusu na-ekwu na njikọ dị n'etiti ha abụghị nke eke kama ọ bụ nke ọha mmadụ kwadoro. Nke a dị mkpa n'ime nsòkwunye n'olundi Umụahịa n'ihu na mgbe mkpuruokwu abụọ jikọtara, a na-enweta akara asụsụ ọhụrụ nke nkọwa ya abụghị naanị ngụkọta nkọwa nke mkpuruokwu abụọ ahụ, kama ọ na-enweta nkọwa ọhụrụ n'usoro asụsụ.

N'omumụ a gbasara ọnọdụ nsòkwunye na usorookwu n'olundi Umụahịa, echiche nhazi Asusu na-enye ntọala sayensị iji nyochaa nhazi ime (*internal structure*) nke mkpuruokwu nsòkwunye. Ọ na-enye aka ikọwa etu mkpuruokwu si ejikọ n'okpuru iwu na nhazi olundi Umụahịa, ma gosi na e nwere usoro doro anya e ji emepụta okwu ọhụrụ, ọ bụghị ihe e ji n'efu mee.

Echiche a na-enyekwara nchọcha a aka imata isiokwu (*head*) na mgbakwunye (*modifier*) n'ime nsòkwunye, ya na etu nhazi a si emetụta nkọwa mkpuruokwu dum. Site n'echiche usoro nhazi Asusu, a na-ahụta na nsòkwunye na usorookwu n'olundi Umụahịa so n'akụkụ usoro asụsụ zuru oke nke na-achikwa etu a ga-esi kee ma ghọta mkpuruokwu.

Nchọcha E Merela Metụtara Isiokwu

Nke bụ eziokwu bụ na e meela ụfọdụ nchọcha ndị metụtara isiokwu nchọcha a nke bụ ọnọdụ nsòkwunye n'usorookwu Umụahịa Igbo. E lebara anya n'ụfọdụ n'ime ha ebe a.

Kari (2002) mere nchọcha na ndịiche dị n'etiti nsòkwunye na mgbakwunye na Degema, Naijiria. Mbunuche nchọcha a bụ ichoputa ma nyochaa ndịiche dị n'etiti nsòkwunye na mgbakwunye na Degema nke dị na Naijiria. O nwetara njiatule site n'ederede ma jiri nkọwa ziputa nchọcha ya. Nchọcha a choputara na ụfọdụ myiri dị n'etiti nsòkwunye na mgbakwunye dabeere na ndakorita ụdaume, ụdaolu na ndabere na mbudo. Ndịiche ndị e nwere ike ihuta na nsòkwunye na mgbakwunye na Degema bụ; ụzọ e si ahoro ha, inwe ohere oge ụfọdụ na mkpuruokwu, nsogbu na ụda nakwa na mputara. Na nchikọta, nchọcha a kowaputara n'agbanyeghi etu nsòkwunye na mgbakwunye siri yie onwe ha, na ha abụghị otu ihe. Nchọcha Kari (2002) na nchọcha nke a yitere n'ihu na ha abụọ na-ekwu maka nsòkwunye kama ihe dị iche na nchọcha Kari na nke a bụ na Kari mere nchọcha ya na ndịiche dị n'etiti nsòkwunye na mgbakwunye na Degema Naijiria mana nchọcha a bụ Ọnọdụ nsòkwunye n'usorookwu olundi Umụahịa.

Udemmadu na Anidobe (2017) mere nchọcha na nsòkwunye n'asụsụ Igbo. Nchọcha ha hiwere isi na nsòkwunye iji choputa ọnọdụ ha na orụ ha. Njiatule nke ha ji mee nchọcha ha bụ nke ha nwetara site n'oba akwukwọ bụkwa nke ndị odee bụ ndị Igbo nyochara. Ha jiri usoro nkọwa nyochaa njiatule ha. Nchọcha ha kwadoro nchọcha ndị e meburu n'oge gara aga nke si na nsòkwunye nwere ike isote nkejiasụsụ ọbụla. Nchọcha ha choputara na nsòkwunye nwere ike iso mbuuzo. Orụ dị mkpa nke nsòkwunye na-arụ bụ orụ echiche. Ha na-ebuputa mputara nke okwu ha na-eso ma n'oge ụfọdụ na-ebuputakwa mputara na echiche nke usorookwu ha nọ n'ime ya. Nchọcha Udemmadu na Anidobe (2017) yiri nchọcha nke a na-eme ugbo a n'ihu na ha lebara anya na nsòkwunye, iji choputa ọnọdụ ha nakwa orụ ha mana nchọcha nke a na-eleba aya naanị n'ọnọdụ ha n'usorookwu olundi Umụahịa.

Akidi, Anumudu na Mgborogwu (2021) mere nchọcha na nnyocha nsòkwunye n'olu Mbanaasaa. Nchọcha a lebara anya na nsòkwunye n'olu Mbanaasaa. Njiatule e ji mee nchọcha a bụ mkparịtaụka nke ha na ndị mmadụ bụ ndị mbanaasaa mere. Ha sitere na mkparịtaụka ndị a wee wepugasị nsòkwunye ndị e nwegasiri n'olu Mbanaasaa. Nchọcha a choputara na e nwere nsòkwunye ebe ọ dị ukwuu n'olu ndị obodo ahụ. Ha gakwara n'ihu igwa ndị ọzọ ka ha mee nchọcha na nsòkwunye olumba ndị ọzọ dị iche iche. Nchọcha Akidi, Anumudu na Mgborogwu (2021) na nchọcha nke a yituru n'ihu ha abụọ na-ekwu maka nsòkwunye kama ihe dị iche bụ na

nke ha lekwasiri anya na nsokwunye n'olu ndi Mbanaasaa ebe nchocha nke a lebara anya n'onodu nsokwunye n'usorokwu olundi Umuahia.

Anyajemba na Mbagwu (2023) mere nchocha na ntulekorita di n'etiti nsokwunye Igbo na nke Chainizi. Mbunuche nchocha a bu itulekorita nsokwunye Igbo na nke Chainizi iji weputa myiri na ndiche di n'etiti ha. Njiatule e ji mee nchocha a bu nke e nwetere site n'oru ndi e meburu gbasara isiokwu nchocha a. Usoro nkowa ka e ji sekasia njiatule ndi e ji ruo oru na nchocha a. N'amumamu uda, ndabere nke udaolu ha nye mbudo n'asusu abuo ndi a bu nke doro anya. Na mmebeokwu nsokwunye Igbo na-aputa ihe n'ogo mkpurukwu ebe nsokwunye Chainizi na-enwe udiri mgbakwunye nke nkebiokwu. Nchocha a chikotara na o bu ezie na ihe banyere nsokwunye zuru uwa onu ma e nwere ndiche di n'etiti nsokwunye nke Igbo na nke Chainizi n'ihu na ha abuo abughi otu ihe. Nchocha Anajemba na Mbagwu yiri nchocha nke a n'ihu na ha abuo nyochara nsokwunye Igbo; ma ha di iche n'ihu na nchocha ha lebara anya naani na nsokwunye Igbo na nke Chainizi ebe nchocha nke a lebara anya n'ondu nsokwunye n'usorokwu olundi Umuahia.

N'isiokwu a, ndi nchocha jiri nwayo kowaa ihe niile gbasara nsokwunye ma deekwa ihe ndi odee derela maka ya bu okpurukwu okwu bu isi sekpu nti na nchocha a. Ha gakwara n'ihu kowaa ihe bu usorokwu ebe o ga-edo ewu na okuko anya. N'ihu usoro nchocha, na nchocha obula ga-agbado ukwu na nke ndi bu ya uzo, ndi nchocha gara n'ihu weputa ufodu nchocha otutu ndi merela gbasara nsokwunye, myiri na ndiche di na nchocha ndi ahụ na nke ugbo a.

Usoro Nchocha

Usoro nchocha a gbasoro bu usoro ntulekorita. A ga-esite na mkparitauka ndi nchocha na umuafu Umuahia nwere nakwa ufodu akwukwo ederela gbasara nsokwunye wee mee nchocha a. Ndi omenchocha jikwa akonuche ha nwere n'asusu Umuahia wee nwetakwa otutu ihe e ji eme nchocha.

Ngosiputa na Nsekasi ihe a Choputara

N'ebe a ka ndi nchocha ga-eme ka o doo anya bu ihe ndi o choputara site n'isekasi ya n'usoro ga-ekwe nghota. Ya bu ime ka a mata ma e nwere nsokwunye n'olu Umuahia, onodu ha na oru ha n'usorokwu.

Nsokwunye Olu Umuahia

Nchocha a choputara na nsokwunye di n'olundi Umuahia na-agbaso usoro nkejiokwu ndi a:

Omumaatu 1.

CV: cha, du, fu, kwa, ri, zi, kwu, kwa, du, nu, nu, si, hu, tu, tu, to, hu, tu, to, ga, so, te, ta

CVV: fuu, kaa, nno

CVCV: kwanu, godu, kete, kene, toro, ohoo, tunu, tukwa

Iji ahiriokwu gosiputa nsokwunye ndi a:

Akwukwo iri cha gbara oku.

Olee ihe wudi ihe a?

I tinyetughi ya ji?

Ego ole ka a ga-enye gi nno ya ezuo?

Bia nso ka i nu ihe o na-ekwunu.

Leziezi anyi ma unu na-aga.

Kporutunu n'ala ka agadi nwaanyi a kporuo n'oehe.

Gi nwa bi ebe a?

Taata ka anyi huru ya.

So ji ka o nyere m.
I gaga ụlọ ụnụ?
I kwuru ya ri ma a maghi m.
O na-ebeta akwa nke oma
Ụlọ ise zi ka o wuru.
Olee du ihe o mere gi?
Mezigha ya otu di mma.
Legodi ihe i na-eme ebe ahụ.
Ishi o di gi mma?
Lee ka o na-atu ya ahia.
Chefufuo ya, o meela wu o meela.
Gosiputakwuo omumaatu ndi ozo
Nwaanyi ojii fu ka ha na-achọ.
Ihe a nnoo I ji bia?
Ngozi, Nkiru na kwa Uche bịa taa.
Uwe ya niile zi ka ha dokara.

Onodu Nsokwunye n'Olu Umuahia

A na-ahuta nsokwunye n'ebe di icheiche n'usorokwu olu Umuahia nakwa usoro ndi ozo. N'ebe a, ahiriokwu di icheiche bu ndi ga-egosi onodu nsokwunye n'olu Umuahia.

cha

Omumaatu 3:

- Ube ise cha ka I nyere m.
- I riri ji na ede niile ahụ cha.

Omumaatu (a) na (b) gosiri na nsokwunye cha nwere ike ino n'etiti maobu na ngwucha usorokwu.

du

Omumaatu 4:

- Gini du ka m mere gi?
- O bu gini bu ihe a du?

Omumaatu (a) na (b) gosiri na nsokwunye du nere ike ino n'etiti maobu bu na ngwucha usorokwu.

kọ

Omumaatu 5:

- Nyekọ m mmiri
- Weta mmiri ko.

Ko dika nsokwunye nwere ike iso ngwaa bu ụzọ n'usorokwu maobu noro na ngwucha ya.

kaa

Omumaatu 6:

- Kaa biko haa m aka.
- Emela ihe a i choro ime kaa.
- ch. Ngozi kaa haa m aka

Kaa dika nsokwunye nwere ike ino n'ihu, etiti maobu na ngwucha

nnoo

Omumaatu 7:

- Ihe a nnoo ka i ji ekwu okwu.
- Nke a ka i ma nnoo.

ch. Nnọọ ihe i kwuru ka i ji bia.

Nnọọ nwere ike inọ n'ihu, etiti maọbụ ngwụcha usorookwu

nụ

Ọmụmaatụ 8;

a. Bianu echi

b. Bia echi nụ.

ch. Unu bianu shie nri.

Ọmụmaatụ a na-egosi na nụ nwere ike inọ ọnọdụ ọbụla n'usorookwu.

zi

Ọmụmaatụ 9:

a. Ndịi ihe wụzi nke a?

b. Ndịi ihe wụ nke a zi?

ch. Ndịi zi ihe nke a wụ?

Zi dika nsọkwunye nwere ike inọ n'etiti maọbụ na ngwụcha.

nwa

Ọmụmaatụ 10:

a. Ha nwa mere ya, enweghi onye ọzọ.

b. Anyi ma na ọ bụ gi nwa.

'Nwa' nwere ike inọ n'etiti maọbụ na ngwụcha ma o nweghi ike inọ na mbido usorookwu.

kwanu

Ọmụmaatụ 11:

a. Ọ bụ gini kwanu?

b. Ọ bụ kwanu gini?

ch. Onye kwanu riri ya?

kwanu dika ọmụmaatụ nsọkwunye nwere ike inọ n'ihu, etiti nakwa ngwụcha.

godu

Ọmụmaatụ 12:

a. Uche biagodu biko

b. Bikogodu lee ihe a.

ch. Ngwa i biagodu.

Ọmụmaatụ a na na-egosi na godu dika nsọkwunye nwere ike inọ n'etiti na, na ngwụcha usorookwu.

Ọmụmaatụ ndi a niile anyi rutugasiri aka na-egosi na ọnọdụ nsọkwunye nwere ike ibi na mbido, n'etiti maọbụ na ngwụcha usorookwu Igbo. Iji kwado nke a, Emenanjo, Okolie na Ekwe (2004:48) kwuru na nsọkwunye nwere ike inọ ebe ọbụla n'usorookwu olu Umuahia.

Ufodu nsọkwunye ka ọnọdụ ha bu so n'etiti ihe o soro si mee. E webata ha ebe ọzọ, usorookwu ahụ agaghị enwe nghota. Ọmụmaatụ ha bu: ga, tu, to, nunta, toọ, kete, ka, ha, zu, ta, kọọ, dgz.

Nchikọta na Mmechi

Na nchọcha a, ndi nchọcha chọputara na e nwere otutu nsọkwunye n'olu Umuahia. Otutu n'ime ha dika nke e nwere n'Igbo Izugbe. A chọputakwara na nsọkwunye nwere ike inọ ọnọdụ ọbụla n'usorookwu Igbo nke gunyere, n'ihu, etiti maọbụ na ngwụcha usorookwu maọbụ ahiriokwu. Ufodu nsọkwunye na-ahọ ọnọdụ ha ga-anọ n'usorookwu. Nsọkwunye na-arụ ọrụ itinyekwu nghota n'okwu.

A na-ahuta nsọkwunye n'olu Umuahia nwere ike iwere ọnọdụ ya ebe ọbụla masiri ya n'usorookwu. O nwere ike inọ n'ime ngwaa. N'ọnọdụ a, ọ ga-eso ngwaa ozigbo tupu

mgbakwūnye ọbụla. Nsòkwūnye nwere ike iso aha, njụajụjụ, nnọchiaha, ọnuogugu, njikọ, nkwuwa, nruaka, mkpokota nkowa wdg. Anyị akwadola ọrụ nchọcha ndị ọzọ kwuru na nsòkwūnye nwere ike iso nkejasusu dī ichieiche site n'ileba anya na nsòkwūnye olu Ụmụahia (lee ọmụmaatụ 2).

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ON IGBO PRIMER AND IGBO LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: REVISITING THE LEGACIES OF CROWTHER, TAYLOR AND JONAS

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Abstract

On the establishment of Christianity and the church, the introduction of western education, and the development of Igbo language, researchers have trammelled the efforts of the clergy, voyagers, risk takers, and dedicated persons whose efforts cannot be ignored. In the voyage that brought the first church into Ala Igbo, established the first public literacy in Igbo language, and set up modern schools which began in 1857, the name: Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther a freed slave of the Yoruba extraction looms large due to his unflinching efforts to actualize these projects. A second name that looms large was Reverend John Taylor, who was born in Sierra Leone by parents who were also freed slaves of the Igbo extraction. Consequently, the two personalities that dot the pages of literatures in topics on early development of the Church in Igbo land, and functional literacy in Igbo language were Crowther and Taylor. We shall briefly examine the works of these two missionaries as well as a third missionary: Simon Jonas in the development of Igbo written works that served as pivots to literacy in the Igbo language, and possible reasons for the non-inclusion of Jonas amongst these Great Two. The present paper adds to the body of knowledge on the history of Igbo literacy and writing which is an important area of Igbo studies that seeks to unlock cultural roots and social evolution as well as provide a roadmap on changes in language over time. The study adopts a historical – descriptive methodology based on documentary analysis of early Igbo publications and relevant scholarly works.

Key words: *Igbo Language, Igbo Primer, Literacy, Translation, Language development.*

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The development of Igbo language transitioned from precolonial *Nsibidi*, a set of indigenous non-alphabetic scripts to a Latin-based standardized alphabet. This transition, which spanned over a century, has witnessed a series of political and linguistic debates ranging from orthography controversies viz: Lepsuis, Union Igbo, Ida Ward, and the Onwu, Orthographies. Indeed, these were modern controversies which the earlier researchers on Igbo language did not have to contend with, as they groped through the dark alleys of an indigenous language that should be documented and kept alive by the language owners. These researchers were Ajayi Crowther, John Taylor and Simon Jonas.

Fifty years after Britain abolished slave trade in 1807 the first group of Igbo freed slaves, also referred to as *re-captives*, arrived in Onitsha onboard the ship called Dayspring, in the company other liberated missionaries of the Nigerian descent, prominent among whom were Bishop Ajayi Crowther, Reverend John Taylor, and Simon Jonas. The term “recaptives” was used to refer to Africans who had been liberated by British Royal Navy, from slave ships heading out of Africa. These recaptives had been settled first in Sierra Leone; they got baptized, received education, and learnt different trades. Before the Dayspring expedition into Igboland, the first expedition to return to Igboland began in 1853 when a party of three prominent Igbo ex-slaves, under the leadership of Reverend Edward Jones (principal of Fourah Bay College) visited Nigeria but was prevented from entering Igboland. The primary reason for this hitch was the inadequacy of their ship which could not berth on Niger’s more shallow waters, lack of government backing (in terms of finance, and insufficiency of arms to protect voyagers from hostile

factions along that region. Indeed, the primary reason for the voyage of Reverend Edward Jones was to “test the waters” and survey how the local leaders would be willing to accept the liberated Christian slaves back into the community. However, a year later, in August 1854, a specialized iron-steamer named the *Pleiad* was utilized by William Baikie (a doctor in the British Navy) to successfully navigate the waters and arrive at Aboh and Asaba. Subsequently in July 26, 1857, Baikie returned as the leader of the New Niger exploration train, alongside Samuel Ajayi Crowther, John Taylor, and Simon Jonas. The next day: July 27, 1857, the team held the first church service at the palace of the Obi of Onitsha, Obi Okazua. This service marked the beginning of the Church Missionary Society in *Alaigbo*.

The first subtitle of this paper discusses in brief the arrival of the missionaries into Onitsha, and an introduction of each of the significant voyagers on board the *Dayspring* ship that berthed at the river Nigeria, Onitsha.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Arrival and Settlement

When the crew comprising Ajayi Crowther, John Taylor and Simon Jonas arrived in Alaigbo in 1857, they first settled at Onitsha waterside, where they started Christian evangelism, while also establishing trade in the region. Other historical figures that facilitated this resettlement were the Sierra Leonean Igbo Community (called The Saro), and Obi Okazue: the traditional ruler of Onitsha who granted land to the British Missionaries and traders to establish their first permanent stations and schools. While the British merchants traded majorly in palm oil, the missionaries were into evangelism and education. With an end to slave trade, these foreign merchants quickly adapted to a “legitimate trade” in palm oil which were exported in massive quantities to England, where they were processed into soaps, and lubricants for heavy machinery and steam engines. With the absence of an official legal tender, the economic exchange were textiles, firearms, metal tools, and salt which the British used in trading with the Igbo middlemen.

Language Primer and Igbo Language Development

WHAT IS A LANGUAGE PRIMER? A language primer is an introductory guide to a beginner who wishes to learn a new language. It is characterized by short, controlled vocabulary and structured lessons, focused on the foundational principles of a language. A language primer deals with simple, inductive learning with a focus on everyday usage of the language rather than heavy theoretical linguistic principles. Its core characteristics include structured lessons, inductive approach, practical focus, and clear formatting. As introductory tools, primers are helpful to specific groups including the novice language learners (students, tourists), and educators and parents (to guide young learners through early reading and writing as well as phonetics). Primers are also used by writers and editors (as reference manuals and touchups to the established rules of grammar and punctuations). Today, they are used by software professionals (for programming language primers into AI coding tutorials). There is no doubt that language primer is a foundational introductory text which teaches the language basics. Consequently, it builds the core architecture for effective communication, reduces the cognitive load of a learner, and prepares the ground for an understanding of a new culture. Indeed, a primer is a first step into formal language learning of a language.

Backgrounds of Crowther and Jonas

Despite the undeniable huge role of Simon Jonas in the writing of the first Igbo primer, the credit had often been given to Samuel Ajayi Crowther. Perhaps, the background of each of these missionaries would shed more light on the contentious issue of authorship and/or contribution to this significant work. We shall approach our discussion from three perspectives: the exposure, educational background/experience, and each writer’s link to his family roots.

Exposure:

Ajayi Crowther's Exposure: Crowther was widely traveled. Having been rescued from a slave ship, educated by the missionaries, and traveled across the oceans to meet with the whitemen, Crowther is no doubt fulfills the persona in an Igbo proverb: *OnyeIje (ka onyeisiawoihemara)*. The Great Awakening which began in America and spread quickly to Germany and England was influential in the spread of Christianity into West Africa, and the ordination of indigenes into the clergy. Crowther was first an Anglican priest, then a Bishop, who was ordained in England before returning to Africa to continue his work. While the experience and education of Simon Jonas was undeniable, Crowther was indeed the *isisekpunti*; the primus inter pares; in the Dayspring Voyage to Onitsha.

SIMON JONAS' EXPOSURE: Simon Jonas was a trained interpreter, catechist and evangelist before his journey from Sierra Leone to Aboh and Onitsha. Unlike Crowther who traveled vastly across two continents, Jonas' travels were between Sierra Leone and what is now called Nigeria. He lived and worked in Freetown, which he regarded as home after his rescue from a slave ship. Being educated and trained as a catechist, Jonas was part of the team that journeyed to Aboh in the company of Ajayi Crowther in 1941 to discourage slave trade. His inclusion in the voyage was not by accident: Jonas spoke competent Igbo, thereby acting as a bridge between the missionaries (Rev. Crowther and Rev. Schon) and the Igbo Monarchs. Jonas knew his job well, and his linguistic competence helped to quell the suspicion of the indigenous peoples. Jonas' first trip to Aboh and the goodwill fostered amongst the missionaries and the local population paved a way for the 1857 return to the Coastal areas of Igbo land; this time, Onitsha.

Education and Experience:

SAMUEL AJAYI CROWTHER'S EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: It was also a known fact that amongst all the missionaries that arrived at Onitsha, Ajayi Crowther was apparently the most educated and the most widely traveled. Crowther attended a Missionary School in Bathurst, Freetown; he attended Fourah Bay College also in Freetown where he studied theology, Greek and Latin Classics, and linguistics in 1827; In the 1840s, he traveled to CMS Missionary College, Islington, London where he underwent intensive seminary instruction in Anglican doctrine, biblical language, and homiletics; He was ordained as a priest in 1842 by the Bishop of Oxford. His experience equipped him with the necessary qualifications for his ordination as an Anglican Priest and as a linguist. He was later awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity by the University of Oxford for his great scholarship in theology and linguistics.

Before his arrival at Onitsha in 1957, Crowther had arrived as a missionary in his homeland Yoruba via Badagry in the company of British missionary: Henry Tonwnsend. Crowther published the first grammar in his indigenous language, Yoruba in 1843, Yoruba vocabulary in 1852, and a translation of four books of the New Testament. Crowther no doubt, understood the importance of language, communication and translation hence his reliance on Simon Jonas as the linguistic pivot for this trip. Elaborating further on the role of Bishop Ajayi Crowther in Igbo language development, Obaro Ikime [1980] pointed out that Crowther was the driving intellectual force behind the Igbo project, even as he relied heavily on translators and native speakers. Thus, the concept, organization, and publishing were the result of Crowther's determination to do the needful:

[I]f he [Crowther] did not conceive of the idea of the book, there wouldn't have been the need for a translator... Thus, the claim to authorship is valid (Obarolkime, quoted in Olatunbosun, 2021).

Drawing a parallel to the above statement, a publicist blog, Myafrik, stated that the publication of Isoama-Ibo not only paved the way for Igbo literature but also showcased Crowther's expertise in African languages (Myafrik blog, 2025).

Simon Jonas's Education and Experience:

The towering personality of Bishop Ajayi Crowther notwithstanding, the education background of Simon Jonas also consisted of western missionary schooling as well as training as a catechist in Freetown. Jonas was trained as an interpreter and translator of English and Igbo. His vast knowledge of Igbo made him a huge asset to Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther hence he assisted in the translation of biblical texts into the Isuama Igbo dialect. Simon Jonas not only co-authored the first Igbo Book called *Isoama-Ibo: A Primer* (1957) by providing the precise phonetic and vocabulary translations for the 17-paged work; his linguistics prowess was also showcased in his translation of the opening chapters of the Gospel of Mathew; which was used by J.C. Taylor when the first missionary school was opened in July, 1857.

Before the 1857 expedition in Onitsha, during the visit of the missionaries to Obi of Ossai, King of Aboh in 1941, Simon Jonas demonstrated his linguistic prowess by his oral interpretation of the Beatitudes (of Mathew 5:3-12). This led to the quick conversation of the Royal Household and the request from the Obi that Jonas should live with them for some time in order to continue his evangelical work. Jonas was not only skilled in interpreting English and Isoama-Igbo, he easily adapted to regional dialects of Igbo including Aboh and Onitsha dialects, which he encountered along the River Niger. The translation materials provided by Simon Jonas laid the linguistic foundation for subsequent scholars including Archdeacon T.J. Dennis who eventually compiled the first Igbo Bible.

It has been stated that Simon Jonas taught Igbo Bishop Crowther in 1856 through intensive tutorials, lexical dictation and word-gathering, collaborative scriptural translation- all of which culminated to their successful publication of *Isoama-Ibo: A Primer*. As clearly stated by Frances Pritchett (1983), below:

While Crowther was the formal academic publisher, the entire intellectual substance, vocabulary, and grammar patterns of the 17-page book were the direct result of the language lessons he received from Simon Jonas (Pritchett, 1983: francpritchett.com).

LINK WITH FAMILY ROOTS: The importance a person's knowledge of his or her own background accords a person quite some special foundational impetuses to service, in the public sphere. Not only does it provide a strong sense of identity which anchors one to the past while guiding the future, it also builds cultural resilience as well as improves mental well-being, providing a framework of shared values to pass on to the next generation. Both the Igbo and Yoruba ex-slaves expressed strong interest in their homeland and wished to be reunited.

SAMUEL AJAYI CROWTHER'S LINK WITH FAMILY ROOTS: Prior to his arrival at Onitsha in 1857, Crowther's first major missionary journey was to Badagry in Yorubaland in August 1845. Then, he reunited with his family, after his ordination in England. He was born in Osogun in the present Oyo State, where he and his family were captured by Fulani slave raiders during the famous Yoruba (Owu) war of 1821 to 1829, when he was about 12 years old. The slave raiders sold little Crowther to Portuguese slave dealers, and he was transported through the Atlantic Ocean to the New World. Fortunately, the Portuguese ship was intercepted by the British Royal Navy anti-slave patrol, and he was safely brought to Freetown, Sierra Leone where he resettled among other liberated Africans, converted to Christianity, acquired his education, and rose to become the first Anglican Bishop in West Africa. In 1846, he traveled inland with Rev. Townsend into Abeokuta his homeland to establish the first Church in Yoruba land.

SIMON JONAS' LINK WITH FAMILY ROOTS: While Crowther traced and reunited with his family in Abeokuta, there did not appear to be a similar effort by Jonas to do same with his original family in Alaigbo. Nevertheless, Jonas dedicated his life to contributing immensely in the development of Igbo land through his linguistic expertise and evangelical work. Until his death, there was little reference to his particular region in Igbo land. Part of the reasons for the failure of Jonas to reconnect were as follows:

- i) During their first Niger expedition which took them to Aboh in 1841, their steamship was HMS Albert, Crowther was assigned the role of not only an interpreter but also the facilitator of the meeting between the Obi of Aboh and the missionaries. Part of Jonas' message to the Obi of Aboh was the suppression of slave trade. When the royal father hesitated over this plan, Jonas described to him the realities of the misery of slave trade in the entire Igbo land: the desolation, the wars, uncultivated farms, and ruined villages. Finally, Jonas described his own experience as a boy slave who suffered with over two hundred other boys on their forced journey to the coast for shipment to the new world; the untold hunger, fatigue, and death, and suicide by many. Perhaps the above harsh experiences of young Simon Jonas in slavery influenced his desire not to be reunited with his original home and family.
- ii) There were indications that Jonas knew his background even as he did not wish to look in that direction. A case in point was with a historic moment, dubbed by historians as "The Anya Encounter". During one of his evangelical works, Jonas and his group met a man, said to be from the "Anya Community". Jonas recalled that this place was the exact area in which he had been enslaved as a young man. Interestingly, Jonas recognized the man he was speaking with, as somebody that nursed him during an illness while he was a slave in that community. That was the closest reference made by Simon Jonas about his ancestral connection with Igbo land. Until his death, history simply knew Jonas as a native of "Isoama region of Igbo".

The Isuama Igbo People and Their Dialect

Isuama Igbo people are a major group of Igbo speakers who primarily inhabit the south-central regions of Igboland. The area includes Okigwe, Orlu and Owerri zones in Imo State. It also includes Isuikwuato, primarily Imenyi, Amawu and Oguduasaa) and Bende in Abia State. The dialect of Isuama was a crucial foundation in the first formal writing of a standardized form of Igbo language, specifically, *Isoama-Igbo: A Primer*, compiled by Samuel Ajayi Crowther with the assistance of Simon Jonas. There was mass displacement and forced slavery of the people of this region during the transatlantic slave trade. Consequently, the major dialect of the Igbo people in slavery was the Isuama dialect. With the abolition of slavery and the settlement of the freed slaves in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Isuama dialect became the lingua franca of the Igbo people in Sierra Leone. As evangelism was being carried by missionaries into the Igbo region, there was the need to utilize the expertise of a known indigene and competent speaker of the Isuama dialect, hence the inclusion of Simon Jonas in the project. Consequently, it became the official Igbo form, used to transcribe Igbo. Today, the modern standardized version of Igbo language, known as Igbo Izugbe is a combination of Isuama and Umuahia dialects to form the basic grammatical and vocabulary forms of the standardized Igbo language.

Early Efforts at Igbo Primer Before 1857

OLDENDORP: Earlier than Crowther, there had been some published materials in Igbo, by Oldendorp: a German Missionary, in 1777. This book titled *Geschichte der Mission der EvangelischenBruder auf den Carabischen* (*History of Evangelical Mission of the Brothers in the Caribbean*). Oldendorp's book contained some Igbo words, numerals, 2 sentences, and 13 nouns. However, this effort was categorized under "Materials" because it did not compare with the works attributed to Crowther and his co-workers especially Simon Jonas.

RICHARD LEMON LENDER: Meanwhile, Richard Lemon Lender, a 19th Century voyager who sailed through the coast of the Niger before returning to England, wrote down a few Igbo words collected in his journey, which he submitted in his report to England.

SIGISMUS WILHELM KOELLE: One of the greatest researcher of Igbo language in his time was Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, who made important collection of words, phrases and sentences in African languages. His work, titled *Polyglotta Africana* which he collected from freed Igbo slaves in Freetown, and published in 1854. Koelle's *Polyglotta African* comprised of 280 items which were structured around everyday expressions in Igbo: numerals, body parts, and basic words. Koelle recorded Igbo language across five different dialects he accosted namely, Isuama, Ishielu, Abaja, Aro, and Mbofia.

CMS RESEARCH TEAM BEFORE 1857: With the abolition of slave trade and the repatriation of most slaves in England and America into a slave camp in Sierra Leone and Fernando Po, three missionaries: Hannah Kilham, J.F. Schon, and Ajayi Crowther were officially assigned by CMS to document the languages of the freed slaves in Sierra Leone and Fernando Po. Hannah Kilham was able to collect a few words in Igbo, and focused on other African languages that were widely spoken at the slave camp; Schon showed a deep interest in Igbo languages; while Crowther was focused on Yoruba language.

J.F. SCHON'S CONTRIBUTION BEFORE 1857: Apart from Oldendorp discussed above, James Frederick Schon was a linguist and missionary of the Church Missionary Society who demonstrated sustained interest in Igbo language. In 1840, and seventeen years before the Dayspring Voyage into Onitsha, Schon compiled a large wordlist that contained 1,600 Igbo lexical items, which he translated into basic prayers. Armed with his "book", Schon boarded the 1840 Niger Expedition that arrived at Aboh, where he attempted to communicate with the Obi of Aboh, using his Almighty Igbo: Isuama Dialect. To his utmost shock, the local community found his utterances very strange and unintelligible. This made him develop cold feet on working with Igbo language; he dropped that study entire and focused rather on Hausa. It took another seventeen years after 1840 for Crowther, Taylor, and Jonas to develop a revisit Igbo language studies.

SAMUAL AJAYI CROWTHER'S CONTRIBUTION BEFORE 1857: Before the Onitsha expedition onboard Dayspring, Ajayi Crowther, who opted to study his language, Yoruba, had published the first grammar in his indigenous language in 1843, had published Yoruba vocabulary in 1852, and already had a translation of four books of the New Testament by 1857. Schon who initially took up the study of Igbo, had abandoned the project in 1840 when his work failed to meet up to expectations in his communication with Aboh people of Igboland. Thus, there was a vacuum in the Igbo language studies and development until the arrival of Crowther and his team seventeen years later: 1857.

Contents of A Language Primer

A language primer is a basic guide or foundational course designed to teach the absolute basics of a language. A primer is often made up of the alphabet, essential vocabulary, core grammar, and common conversational phrases designed to help beginners to start speaking and writing quickly. The major building blocks of a primer are:

- i) The core foundation which consists of learning the scripts and alphabets and their pronunciations
- ii) Essential grammar such as parts of speech, sentence structure, and the basics of tense in the language
- iii) Daily phrases such as greetings, polite words, and how to make requests in the new language. The *Isoama-Ibo: A Primer* fulfilled these conditions at a time where there was nothing of such for literacy in the Igbo language, even for indigenous speakers.

A List of Earliest Igbo Primers in the 19th Century

Below is list of early Igbo Primers compiled by early missionary workers in Igboland.

- i) *Isoama-Ibo*: (1857). This 17-paged book is recognized historically as the first book written in the Igbo language, for public use. It was compiled by Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther with the assistance of Simon Jonas and published by the Church Missionary Society (CMS).
- ii) *Isoama-Ibo Primer, Revised Edition* (1859). This is a revised version of the 1857 Primer; this time, published by Reverend John Christopher Taylor. Taylor used this revised version to establish the first mission school in Onitsha.
- iii) *Oku Ibo* (1861): This coauthored work of J.F. Schon and John Taylor, dealt with the Grammatical Elements of Ibo Language. It served as a more comprehensive structural guide to Igbo.
- iv) *Vocabulary of the Ibo Language* (1882). Written by Samuel Ajayi Crowther, this focused more on lexicography and dictionary than a standard primer. The book served as an important foundational text as well as a pivot for further works by subsequent educators in the Igbo language.

2.1 Empirical Studies

For the Empirical Studies, we present a comparative summary as seen below.

Researcher	Period	Main evidence	Main concern	Major contribution
Crowther S. A	1857 – 1859	Isoama Ibo Primer	Orthography Literacy translation	Foundational written Igbo text
J. C. Taylor	1859 – 1866	Primer, Catechism, Sermons, Gospel/NT translations	Translation and language elaboration	Expanded Functions of Written Igbo
Simon Jones	1850 – 1860	Mission records, Linguistic collaboration	Interpretation and Indigenous mediation	Indigenous Linguistic knowledge.
Schon J. F.	1861	Oku Igbo	Grammar and description	Early Systematic grammatical analysis.
Hair. P. E.H.	1967	Historical documentary evidence	Early Study of Nigerian Languages	Reconstruction of missionary Linguistic work.
Van den Bersselaar	1997	Historical Records	Union Ibo and Standards sation	Demonstrated Problems of Imposed Language Unification
Ugochukwu, F.	2000	Archival document	Later missionary Igbo Studies	Long – term development of Written Igbo.
Igboanusi, H.S	2006	Historical/documentary sources	Missionary language development	Balanced progress and problems
Falford, .B.	2002	Bible history and translation records	Union Ibo Bible	Demonstrated limitations of Forced Linguistic unification.

Together these studies reveal five major stages in the development of written Igbo.

- i. There was documentation which was a collection of vocabulary and linguistic information.
- ii. There was codification which was represented precisely by the Primer and early grammatical descriptions
- iii. Elaboration was shown as translation, Catechisms, Sermons and other materials required Igbo to express increasing complex ideas.
- iv. There was standardization as the missionaries attempted to establish a wider written variety.
- v. There was also negotiation and resistance because the presumed standard does not always correspond to the Linguistic preferences of the Igbo communities.

Most of the studies reviewed here examined the missionaries as a group, the creation of the union Ibo, later Bible translation, or the general history of Igbo Linguistic Scholarship. They also gave important information about Crowther, Taylor and Jonas, but there was the need for a study that will discuss about the individual contributions of Crowther, Taylor and Jonas toward the development of Igbo literacy and writing.

This present study therefore adopts a historical and linguistic analytical approach to examine the individual complementary contributions of Crowther, Taylor and Jonas to the development of literacy and written Igbo.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a historical – descriptive research design, which is most appropriate for this work because the study investigates historical documents and describes their contributions to the development of written Igbo.

3.2 Sources of Data

This work relies primarily on documentary sources. These include:

- I. Crowther's Isoama – Ibo primer;
- II. Early Igbo grammatical and translation works;
- III. Scholarly studies of missionary linguistic activities in Igbo land;
- IV. Studies of Igbo orthography and standardization;
- V. Historical records on Crowther, Taylor and Jonas; their works, Education and experience.

3.3 Method of Analysis.

The analysis compares the individual works of Crowther, Taylor and Jonas rather than treating their contribution as same.

4.0 Data Presentation & Analysis.

For the Analysis we present the individual works of Crowther, Taylor and Jonas.

A Brief on The Works of Crowther, Taylor, Jonas

BISHOP AJAYI CROWTHER: Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1809-1891), an ex-slave of the Yoruba extraction, a pioneer linguist, a clergy, was the leader of the Church Missionary Society in Igboland. He was a rescued slave who rose to become a linguist and the first African Bishop in the Anglican Communion. With the assistance of Simon Jonas, Crowther was to publish a book accredited to his name: Isoama-Ibo: A Primer (1857). Crowther also published another book titled Vocabulary of the Ibo Language (1882). Many subsequent subchapters are centered on this great man.

REVEREND JOHN TAYLOR: Reverend Taylor was one of the early pioneers in Missionary work in Igbo land, and translated several religious texts in the Isuama dialect. Some works of Taylor included translations of scriptures, liturgy and hymns, catechisms, primers and vocabularies. John Taylor was born in 1815 to Igbo ex-slaves: an Isuama father and Arochukwu mother in Sierra Leone. He was a catechist, evangelist, translator and co-founder of the first school in Igbo land. Taylor had his early education at Charlotte Primary School from where he gained admission to Fourah Bay Institution in Freetown. He joined the missionary expedition to Igboland onboard the Dayspring Ship and arrived at Onitsha on July 25, 1857, where he and other voyagers (Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther and the Catechist: Simon Jonas) were welcomed on July 27 by the Obi of Onitsha: Oba Okazue and his elders. Taylor translated portions of the scriptures namely, the Gospel, Acts, and a large portion of the Epistles into Igbo. He used the Onitsha dialect in his translations.

SIMON JONAS: Simon Jonas. Jonas was an Igbo, also an ex-slave and catechist who worked in Sierra Leone before returning to Onitsha, Alaigbo on board Dayspring. The family background of Simon Jonas is unknown except that he was an ex-slave of Isuama-Igbo region who was amongst the recaptured peoples that were baptized and educated in Sierra Leone. He served as an Anglican catechist in the Temne mission. Temne Tribe came from Fouta Djallon in present-day Guinea. Jonas assisted both Taylor and Crowther in their linguistic efforts in Igboland. Isuama-Igbo was the only dialect of Igbo spoken by a large population of Igbo ex-slaves in Sierra Leone hence this was the only dialect of Igbo that the two reverend gentlemen had to work with. Whereas some researcher claimed that Jonas was ordained as an Anglican Priest in 1859, others claimed that he was not an ordained clergyman or priest rather, he remained a catechist and interpreter for the Church Missionary Society. However, the reference to the Bishop of London as the officiating Bishop in the ordination of Jonas in 1859 and his

contributions to Igbo language development cannot be quickly ignored in future research about this unsung hero. According to T.N.O. Okpe (2025) below,

Far from being peripheral assistants to European missionaries, Jonas and Taylor were at the epicenter of the missionary enterprise in Igbo land. Their fluency in the language, familiarity with the sociocultural intricacies of the Igbo worldview, and unyielding commitment to the Christian mission, uniquely positioned them as bridges between the foreign theology and indigenous spirituality.

Interestingly, both Crowther and Taylor relied heavily on their only source of information, Simon Jonas: a competent speaker of his dialect of Igbo called Isuama Igbo. From this Brief Data on the works of Crowther Taylor and Jonas presented above this study concludes that Jonas was the main man behind Igbo Primer as he was the only direct source of information as a competent speaker of Isuama Igbo.

Controversies On Crowther's Authorship Of The Igbo Primer

Historians have continued the debate on the linguistic competence of Crowther, to be attributed as the original author of *Isoama-Ibo: A Primer*. Consequently, critics have disproved the authorial right of Bishop Ajayi Crowther on this famous book. People have continued to cite the contributions of Simon Jonas which they claimed had been wrongly attributed to Crowther alone. The pro-Crowther group submits that Crowther indeed wrote the book; and only engaged little or no services from a handful of Igbo slave resettlers with whom he traveled to Onitsha from Sierra Leone. It was also claimed that with continued stay in Igboland, Crowther perfected his knowledge of the Igbo language, and with the help of Schon, the duo was able to "put their hands on a book using Igbo as a language. Consequently, rather than admitting the contributions of Igbo interpreters and translators, pro-Crowther group preferred to acknowledge the "help" of a non-Igbo whom we cited earlier as abandoning his research on Igbo when he encountered a "glitch" in Aboh in 1840.

It is important to note that Crowther did not stay for up to a year in Igbo land before the publication of *Isoama-Ibo: A Primer*. Thus, the probabilities of recruiting Schon as a language-informant, or perfecting his linguistic capacities under 12 months, were far-fetched.

CONCLUSION

Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther was by every means a towering figure in Christian evangelism in *Alaigbo*, and a primus inter pares in the development of literacy in his indigenous language of Yoruba. His two co-workers from Igbo extraction: Reverend John Taylor and Simon Jonas played important roles not only in evangelism but in creating primers for the indigenous language literacy amongst the Igbo people. Simon Jonas was a humble, unassuming figure, who lived a selfless life. Jonas was a devoted spiritual mentor for the people, serving as a living testament to faith, who patiently guided others by embodying core Christian virtues, viz: steadfast compassion, unconditional love, and humble service. Simon Jonas was an Igbo language mentor for his principal, Bishop Crowther, helped in writing the book, and faced his task as a catechist, language teacher, and human model of emulation in Christendom. Even as the debate about his authorial right to the first Igbo primer continues amongst today's intellectuals, Simon Jonas did not notice the ambiguity; if he noticed, he did not complain. Here was a man who followed the Christ-like admonition, never bothered to reconnect with his own community; who preferred to be *not for one but for all*. There is need for more studies on Simon Jonas, the ex-slave of Igbo land, who accompanied Samuel Ajayi Crowther to *Alaigbo*, wrote the first Igbo Primer with the renowned Bishop, lived among his people, and died as an unsung hero without a recorded year birth and death or place of death. Jonas was without a known burial place. This challenge is for us all.

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LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY AND EMERGING PATTERNS OF LANGUAGE CHANGE IN
NIGERIAN SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Linguistic creativity in Nigerian social media discourse is indicative of the interplay of multilingual resources, digital circulation and sociocultural identity in forming incipient trends in language change. This thesis investigated evidence taken from the 120 linguistic and semiotic creative linguistic strategies found in 32 different texts, using a qualitative interpretive sociolinguistic approach. Practices have been categorized into lexical-semantic, multilingual, graphological, pragmatic and multimodal, and their digital circulation, social uptake, adaptation and stabilization processes studied. Lexical-semantic (25.8%) and multilingual (24.2%) creativity are found to be the most prevalent linguistic practices, and repetition, recognition and adaptation more common than stabilization-most invented expressions appear to be transient rather than routinised. Multilingual and multimodal strategies play a significant role in creating identity, humor, solidarity and social positioning, thus showing digital discourse to involve more than just lexemic invention, but holistic semiotic creation. The paper is concluded by the finding that language change in Nigerian social media communication, is derived through a slow process of circulation, social absorption and reuse, not individual inventions; and offers a fully integrated sociolinguistic answer as to how and why language change is emerging from digitally influenced multilingual communication.

Keyword: Nigeria, Social Media, Linguistic Creativity, Multilingualism, Language Change, Sociolinguistic, Digital Communication.

1. Introduction

Multilingualism in Nigeria is vast and linguistic development enduring. In the current environment English, Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous language forms like Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa are plainly evident and intermesh in social media usage and communication. X (the formerly Twitter) WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok all encourage generation, dissemination, modification and assessment of linguistic types across social networks. Online content therefore sees social media become a significant region for the growth of lexical and communicatory patterns and writing conventions, which are commonly analyzed throughout a linguistic group or group of individuals (Jebaselvi et al, 2023). Multilingual activities are vital part in this imaginative on the internet ecosystem. Mixed usage of languages in Nigerian social media messages is tied not simply random as well as unpredictable exchange but rather determined by audience preference, the register employed, as well as the sociable proximity between users (Miriam & Ofodu, 2023). Similar is true also in Nigerian on the web skits where by the alternation and modification of the languages (English, Pidgin, and native tongues) perform to produce hilarity and also personalize the characters and the context of situation (Iyanuoluwa & Oyinlade, 2024).

Lexical and pragmatic innovation provides another important dimension. Nigerian English users creatively extend existing linguistic resources through borrowing, semantic extension, slang formation and pragmatic reworking. The Yoruba-derived form *omo*, for example, has developed a range of discourse-pragmatic functions in Nigerian multilingual online interaction (Oladipupo & Akinola, 2025). Research on Nigerian English proverbs and morphosemantic slang similarly demonstrates the productive repurposing of existing linguistic material for contemporary communicative purposes (Unuabonah & Akinwotu, 2024; Aboh & Okpo, 2024). Digital communication also expands linguistic

creativity beyond words and grammatical structures. Emojis function as paralinguistic resources that convey tone, emotion and emphasis, while memes combine linguistic and visual resources to construct evaluative, humorous and ideological meanings. Nigerian studies have demonstrated the relevance of emojis to digitally mediated interaction (Udoudom et al., 2024; Aina et al., 2026), while research on #EndSARS, election-related discourse and other Nigerian memes shows how image, text and intertextual references contribute to political and social positioning (Okesola & Oyeboade, 2023; Adebomi, 2025a; Olarewaju, 2026).

The relationship between digital communication and language change is therefore broader than the emergence of new words. Naming practices, evaluations of Nigerian English varieties and changing orientations towards American and British norms also demonstrate the interaction between digital exposure, identity and linguistic attitudes (Nwosu & Inyima, 2025; Ekechi & Okorie, 2025; Olatoye, 2026). Recent work on Nigerian English further positions the variety as a dynamic system undergoing continuing lexical, discourse-pragmatic and sociolinguistic development (Jowitt & Ugwuanyi, 2026; Ugwuanyi, 2026). Despite this growing scholarship, linguistic creativity and language change in Nigerian social media have often been examined through separate phenomena. Code-switching, lexical innovation, multimodality, protest discourse and language attitudes are frequently treated as distinct objects of analysis. Less attention has been given to the relationship among these practices and to the social processes through which creative forms may circulate, acquire uptake and become conventionalized. The central issue is therefore not whether Nigerian social media contains linguistic creativity, which existing studies clearly establish, but how creative practices relate to emerging patterns of language change. This article addresses that issue through four questions:

- i. What forms of linguistic creativity are prominent in documented Nigerian social-media communication?
- ii. How does digital circulation facilitate the uptake and adaptation of creative linguistic forms?
- iii. How do multilingual and multimodal resources contribute to the interpretation of creative forms?
- iv. What sociolinguistic functions influence the persistence and possible conventionalization of creative practices?

The article presents a sociolinguistic analysis where language change is understood and separated from language creativity whilst its interdependence is accounted for. Creativity is thus defined as generation and transformation of language resources, whereas language change enters the stage when new, creatively generated forms are spread, accepted, further copied, iterated, and thus develop wider and wider social salience, instead of anything creatively new being interpreted as established language change.

2. Analytical Framework

Here linguistic creativity is understood not in terms of straying from established norms but a deliberate making use and reconfiguration of available language and signs; this is relevant to Nigeria, as in the present day multiple linguistic resources are employed in complex multilingual repertoires as English, Nigerian Pidgin and mother languages. In Nigerian scholarship of English 'errors' are now increasingly investigated as structured products of contact, transfer, identity and pragmatic need (Ugwuanyi & McKenzie, 2026; Ugwuanyi, 2026), forming a multilingual creativity, the first part of the frame-work. Such code switching, code mixing and translanguaging do more than the sheer selection and sequencing of codes: it refers to 'making available an additional resource' (Markham, 2021: 139).

In Nigerian internet studies, multilingual alternation on social media has been shown to be functionally coordinated with the design of the interaction between participant and addressee, with humor, with stance, with individual and collective identity (Miriam & Ofodu, 2023; Iyanuoluwa & Oyinlade, 2024); these serve as multilingual creativity. Lexical and pragmatic reworkings constitute a second element: borrowed elements can come to have different meanings and communicative roles than the target language item; the discourse-pragmatic use of *omo* exemplifies this with the continuous

interaction adding to the existing item and its functionality (Oladipupo & Akinola, 2025); similar use has been found for Nigerian English proverbs, offers, gratitude and apologies (Unuabonah & Akinwotu, 2024; Gut et al., 2024; Gut & Unuabonah, 2024; Unuabonah et al., 2026). A third part consists of multimodality in that, as mentioned above, communicative actions now frequently fuse words and signs and pictures, and emojis communicate not only emotion and pragmatics but memes also combine the two sources into recognizable communicational items or genres; in Nigeria this has appeared in research into memes in protest movements, in elections, in association with football, and political comments (Zappavigna & Logi, 2024; Udoudom et al., 2024; Adebomi, 2025a, 2025b; Okesola & Oyeboode, 2023). Digital circulation forms a fourth part: the architecture and specific characteristics of digital platform provide different constraints on communication, which include their affordances for repetition, commentary, forwarding and remixing, which themselves may contribute to the potential and rate of dissemination of linguistic items beyond their sites of origin (Steen et al., 2023); in Nigeria this is evident for algospeak and in particular the specific discourse on WhatsApp (Oyeboode & Unuabonah, 2024). Finally, a sociolinguistic function element.

Creative output does the 'work' of signalling identity and of forming solidarity, of humoring or expressing positive evaluations and of taking a stand regarding societal, cultural or political occurrences. Furthermore, language use also signals something about stances on variations and on what can be called norms in a variety (Aboh, 2023; Ekechi & Okorie, 2025; Nwosu & Inyima, 2025; Olatoye, 2026); this could be framed using similar analysis about Nigerian name use and Americanisms, or people's attitudes to Nigerian English. These five aspects are synthesized in Table 1: the framework explicitly contrasts innovation from change with social uptake and internalization bridging the two.

Table 1. Linguistic Creativity and a Framework for Analysing the Emergence of Language Change

Analytical dimension	Principal focus	Relationship with emerging change	Author/Source
Lexical and semantic creativity	Coinage, blending, borrowing, semantic extension	Generates potentially novel or extended forms	Oladipupo & Akinola (2025); Unuabonah & Akinwotu (2024); Gut et al. (2024)
Multilingual creativity	Code-switching, code-mixing, translanguaging	Expands functional and stylistic repertoires	Markham (2021); Miriam & Ofodu (2023); Iyanuoluwa & Oyinlade (2024)
Graphological creativity	Spelling, punctuation, capitalization, stylization	May establish recognizable digital conventions	Aboh (2023); Nwosu & Inyima (2025); Ekechi & Okorie (2025)
Multimodality	Emojis, memes, image–text combinations	Extends the semiotic resources of communication	Zappavigna & Logi (2024); Udoudom et al. (2024); Adebomi (2025a, 2025b); Okesola & Oyeboode (2023)
Digital circulation	Sharing, forwarding, reposting, commenting, imitation	Creates opportunities for diffusion and uptake	Steen et al. (2023); Oyeboode & Unuabonah (2024)
Social uptake	Recognition, repetition, adaptation and acceptance	Determines whether creative forms gain wider relevance	Steen et al. (2023); Oyeboode & Unuabonah (2024)
Conventionalization	Repeated and stabilized use	Provides stronger evidence of emerging linguistic change	Unuabonah et al. (2026); Olatoye (2026)

3. Methodology

A qualitative interpretive sociolinguistic design was adopted to examine documented linguistic and semiotic practices in Nigerian digital communication. Structured descriptive analysis was used to organise the analytical material without treating the study as a population-level statistical investigation. The methodology was organised around four interconnected dimensions corresponding to the research questions: forms of linguistic creativity; digital circulation, uptake and adaptation; multilingual and multimodal meaning-making; and sociolinguistic functions associated with persistence and possible conventionalisation. A total of 120 documented linguistic and semiotic instances derived from 32 source studies constituted the analytical material. The unit of analysis was an individual linguistic or semiotic practice rather than a source study or digital platform. An instance was included when it

occurred within Nigerian digital communication or a clearly identifiable Nigerian sociolinguistic setting, represented a discernible linguistic or semiotic phenomenon relevant to the research questions, and contained sufficient contextual information for interpretation. Where multiple records referred to the same underlying practice, duplicate occurrences were consolidated where appropriate.

The analytical corpus comprised documented Nigerian digital communication practices reported across the 32 source studies. The corpus included linguistic and semiotic forms associated with lexical innovation, multilingual practices, graphological variation, pragmatic expression and multimodal communication. Selection focused on practices that demonstrated identifiable linguistic creativity or semiotic reconfiguration and provided sufficient contextual information for sociolinguistic interpretation. Table 2 summarises the composition and methodological characteristics of the analytical corpus, distinguishing the source material, unit of analysis, selection basis and coding dimensions used in the study.

Table 2. Data Corpus and Analytical Structure

Component	Description
Research design	Qualitative interpretive sociolinguistic study
Source material	32 studies documenting Nigerian digital communication practices
Analytical material	120 documented linguistic and semiotic instances
Unit of analysis	Individual linguistic or semiotic practice
Context	Nigerian digital communication and identifiable Nigerian sociolinguistic settings
Inclusion basis	Relevance to linguistic/semiotic creativity, sufficient contextual information, and relevance to the research questions
Primary analytical categories	Lexical-semantic, multilingual, graphological, pragmatic and multimodal
Coding dimensions	Form, linguistic resources, communicative function, sociolinguistic context, circulation and change-related evidence
Coding approach	Non-exclusive where a practice involved multiple linguistic resources or functions
Analytical orientation	Qualitative interpretation supported by structured descriptive frequencies

The analytical dataset was not constructed to estimate the prevalence of linguistic practices among Nigerian social-media users. Its purpose was to provide a structured body of documented practices through which linguistic forms, communicative functions, circulation patterns and indications of emerging change could be interpreted. Frequencies were therefore used as descriptive summaries of the analytical material rather than as inferential measures of the wider Nigerian social-media population.

Each selected practice was coded according to its linguistic or semiotic form, linguistic resources, communicative function, sociolinguistic context and evidence relevant to emerging language change. The five principal analytical categories were lexical-semantic, multilingual, graphological, pragmatic and multimodal creativity. Table 3 illustrates the coding structure through representative examples from the analytical material, connecting each practice with its principal analytical category, communicative function and relevant change-related indicator.

Table 3: Representative Linguistic and Semiotic Practices and Coding Dimensions

Representative practice	Analytical category	Illustrative function	Change-related evidence
<i>E choke!</i>	Lexical-semantic	Evaluation/emphasis	Repetition/uptake
<i>Steeze</i>	Lexical-semantic	Identity/style	Uptake/circulation
<i>Japa</i>	Lexical-semantic	Social commentary	Wider circulation
<i>Wahala</i>	Lexical-semantic	Evaluation/problem framing	Reuse
<i>Abeg, no vex</i>	Multilingual	Appeal/politeness	Repetition/uptake
<i>No wahala</i>	Multilingual	Solidarity/reassurance	Reuse
<i>Omo!</i>	Multilingual	Stance/emotion	Uptake
<i>Yawa don burst</i>	Multilingual	Problem evaluation	Wider circulation
<i>9ja</i>	Graphological	National identity	Reuse/stabilization
<i>Naija</i>	Graphological	Identity construction	Uptake
Extended punctuation (!!!/???)	Graphological	Emphasis/stance	Repetition

<i>Las las</i>	Pragmatic	Discourse organisation	Reuse
<i>Oya now!</i>	Pragmatic	Directive/solidarity	Repetition
Emoji-only response	Multimodal	Emotion/stance	Reuse
Political meme with caption	Multimodal	Political positioning	Circulation
Recontextualised meme	Multimodal	Humour/audience alignment	Adaptation

Note: Table 3 presents representative analytical examples from the 120 coded linguistic and semiotic instances. The examples illustrate the principal analytical categories, communicative functions and change-related indicators used in the coding process.

Lexical-semantic creativity covered coinage, borrowing, semantic extension, slang and lexical reworking. Multilingual creativity included code-switching, code-mixing and the incorporation of indigenous-language resources. Graphological creativity concerned spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and visual stylisation. Pragmatic creativity captured humour, irony, stance, evaluation and interpersonal positioning. Multimodal creativity concerned combinations of linguistic and visual resources, including emojis, memes and image-text constructions. Coding was non-exclusive where an individual practice incorporated multiple linguistic resources or performed more than one communicative function, allowing a single practice to be interpreted across linguistic, pragmatic and semiotic dimensions where the contextual evidence warranted such treatment.

Digital circulation was examined through evidence of repetition or reuse, social recognition or uptake, adaptation or recontextualisation, wider circulation and stabilization. These indicators were treated as non-exclusive because a creative form could demonstrate repetition without necessarily achieving wider circulation or stabilization. The analytical procedure therefore distinguished linguistic creativity from emerging language change. Novelty was treated as evidence of creative practice, whereas repeated use, social uptake, adaptation, wider circulation and stabilization were considered progressively stronger indications of persistence and possible conventionalisation. No isolated occurrence was treated as evidence of established language change.

Multilingual and multimodal practices were examined according to their contribution to meaning rather than being treated merely as formal features. Particular attention was given to the ways Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin, indigenous Nigerian languages and visual resources contributed to identity construction, solidarity, humour, stance, evaluation, cultural positioning, audience orientation and social positioning. This procedure addressed the third research question by connecting linguistic-resource selection with communicative and sociolinguistic interpretation.

The fourth research question was examined by relating communicative functions to evidence of persistence and emerging change. Functions were coded as identity construction, social positioning, humour, solidarity, stance/evaluation, cultural positioning, audience orientation and political positioning. These categories were non-exclusive because a single practice could simultaneously construct identity, express stance, create humour and establish solidarity. The analysis subsequently considered whether practices performing particular sociolinguistic functions demonstrated repetition, uptake, adaptation, wider circulation or stabilization.

The numerical distributions reported in the Results section represent the composition of the 120 documented analytical instances and do not constitute estimates of population-level prevalence among Nigerian social-media users. Numerical summaries were therefore used to organise the qualitative evidence, while interpretation remained focused on linguistic form, contextual meaning, circulation, uptake and sociolinguistic function. The methodology consequently establishes a distinction between the constitution of the analytical corpus, the coding of linguistic and semiotic practices, and the interpretation of their circulation, functions and potential contribution to emerging language change.

4. Results

The results are based on 120 documented linguistic and semiotic practices drawn from 32 source studies of Nigerian digital communication. The individual practice constituted the unit of analysis, with the documented expressions and semiotic forms coded according to linguistic creativity, digital circulation, multilingual and multimodal meaning-making, and sociolinguistic function. The complete set of documented practices is presented in Appendix A, while Table 3 provides representative examples of the coded evidence. The findings are organised according to the four research questions

and use descriptive frequencies only to show patterns within the qualitative corpus, rather than to make population-level statistical claims.

Forms of Linguistic Creativity

Analysis of the 120 documented Nigerian digital-language practices revealed five forms of linguistic creativity: lexical-semantic, multilingual, graphological, pragmatic and multimodal. Table 4 presents the distribution of these categories, with lexical-semantic creativity recording the highest frequency at 31 cases (25.8%), followed by multilingual creativity with 29 cases (24.2%). Graphological creativity accounted for 22 cases (18.3%), multimodal creativity for 20 cases (16.7%), and pragmatic creativity for 18 cases (15.0%). Lexical-semantic and multilingual practices jointly constituted 60 cases, representing 50.0% of the analytical material.

Table 4: Distribution of linguistic creativity categories

Creativity category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lexical-semantic	31	25.8
Multilingual	29	24.2
Graphological	22	18.3
Pragmatic	18	15.0
Multimodal	20	16.7
Total	120	100.0

The lexical-semantic category is illustrated by expressions such as “*E choke!*”, “*Steeze*,” “*Japa*,” and “*Wahala*,” which demonstrate the creation, extension or circulation of locally meaningful lexical forms in digital communication. Multilingual creativity is evident in expressions such as “*Abeg, no vex*” and “*No wahala*,” where linguistic resources associated with Nigerian multilingual practices are combined to convey meanings that are readily recognised within particular communicative contexts. These examples demonstrate that lexical and multilingual creativity are not merely numerical categories but observable practices through which users construct meaning and social identity.

Graphological creativity is represented by forms such as “*9ja*” and “*Naija*,” as well as the strategic use of extended punctuation and other orthographic modifications. Pragmatic creativity is illustrated by expressions such as “*Omo!*”, “*Yawa don burst*,” and “*Oya now!*”, whose meanings and communicative effects depend substantially on context, stance and interactional purpose. Multimodal creativity extends linguistic expression through combinations of textual and visual resources, including emoji-only responses and political memes with captions. These illustrations provide direct evidence of the linguistic practices represented by the categories in Table 4.

The distribution shown in Table 4 is also reflected in Figure 2, which illustrates the relative prominence of the five forms of creativity. Lexical-semantic creativity formed the largest category, while multilingual creativity occurred at a closely comparable level. Graphological, multimodal and pragmatic practices were less frequent individually but collectively accounted for 60 cases, representing 50.0% of the analytical material. The findings therefore demonstrate that linguistic creativity in Nigerian social media communication operates across lexical, multilingual, orthographic, pragmatic and multimodal resources rather than being concentrated in a single form.

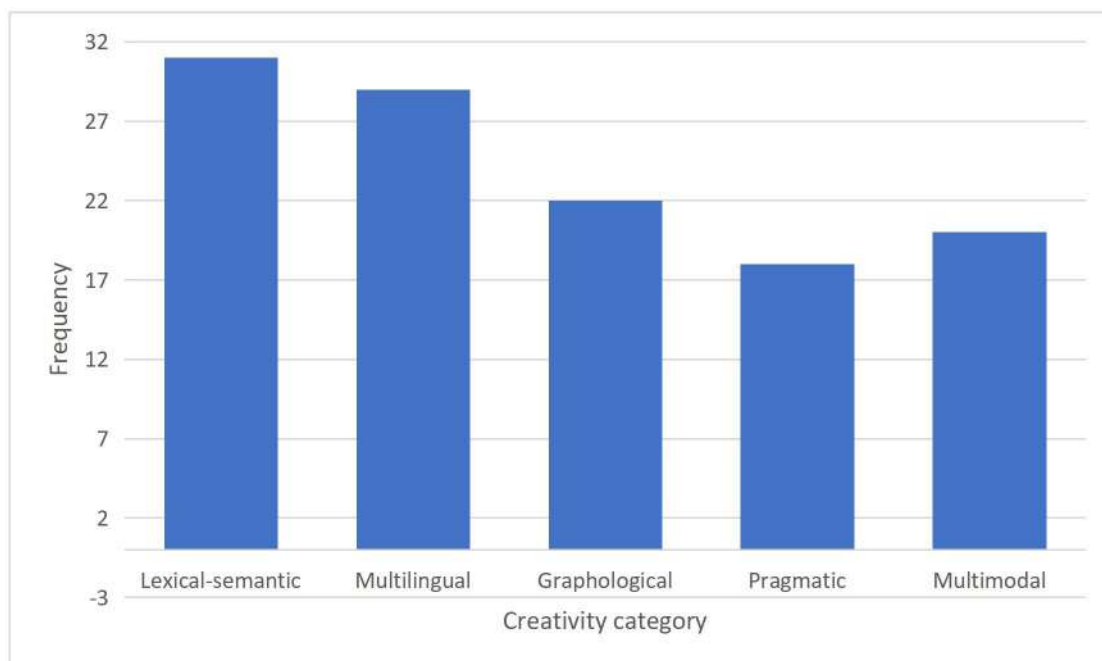


Figure 2: Distribution of documented linguistic creativity categories

Digital Circulation, Uptake and Adaptation

The second research question examined evidence associated with the circulation and development of creative forms. Table 5 presents six change-related indicators identified across the 120 practices. Creativity or innovation was present in all 120 cases (100.0%), while repetition or reuse occurred in 76 cases (63.3%). Social recognition or uptake was recorded in 68 cases (56.7%), followed by adaptation or recontextualization in 59 cases (49.2%). Wider circulation occurred in 54 cases (45.0%), whereas stabilization was identified in 37 cases (30.8%).

Table 5: Change-related evidence in documented creative practices

Change-related indicator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Creativity/innovation	120	100.0
Repetition/reuse	76	63.3
Social recognition/uptake	68	56.7
Adaptation/recontextualization	59	49.2
Wider circulation	54	45.0
Stabilization	37	30.8

As represented by the pattern in Figure 3 recurrence/social recognition seem to have been more prominent then, stabilization. There were twice as many instances of reuse/repetition when measured against the cases analyzed and over half the number with social recognition/adoption indicators. Both adaptation and broad diffusion appear in less then, half the cases while, stabilization remains the lowest measure besides the creative/innovative process.

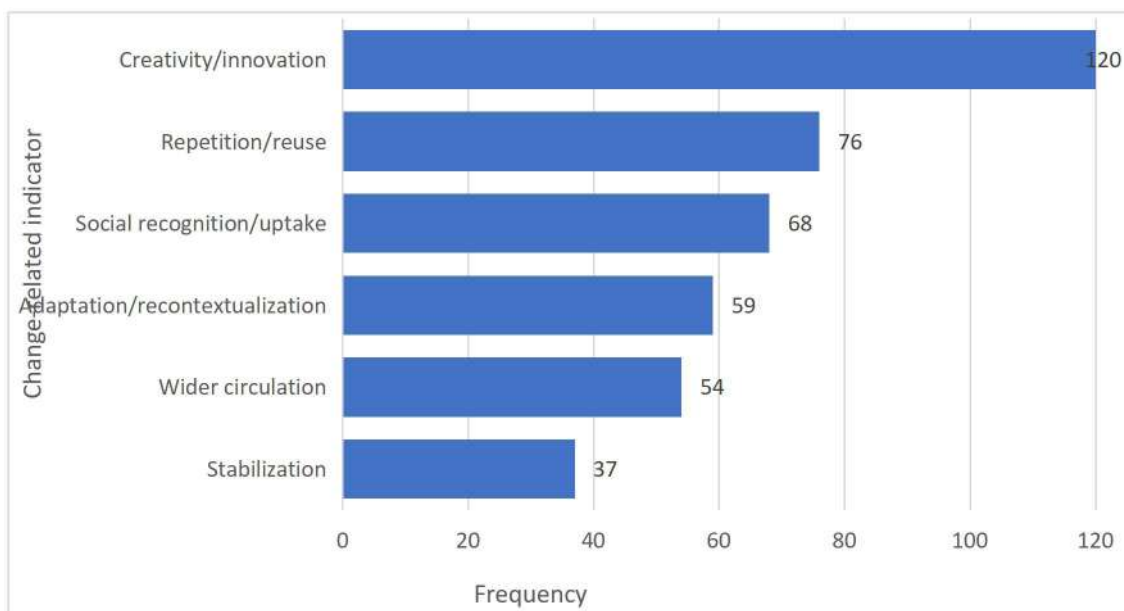


Figure 3: Distribution of change-related indicators

This study isolates creative productivity from evidence of impending language change. That many creative forms were repeated and incorporated by others was signaled by their higher frequency of repetition and uptake, whilst the lower frequency of stabilization shows how few had evidence that points to further, more established conventionalization. It may therefore be claimed that digital language change is non-automatic, with creative forms being repeatable, adopted and re-appropriated without necessarily becoming 'fixed'.

Multilingual and Multimodal Meaning-Making

Multilingual and multimodal resources played important roles in this creativity documentation. Table 4 shows that there are 29 cases (24.2%) of multilingual practices and 20 cases (16.7%) of multimodal practices. The frequency of both types is indicative that Nigerian digital creativity often relied on blending or recombining existing linguistic and semiotic repertoires. Quality analysis reveals that for multilingual cases, multilingualism involved both Nigerian English, Nigerian Pidgin, as well as various indigenous Nigerian languages in ways that facilitated identity construction, social positioning, humor, solidarity and cultural framing.

Therefore, language alternation and insertion in the online spaces should not be solely considered as just grammatical instances of multilingualism, rather as the strategies that facilitate relational practices, affiliations, positioning in a specific linguistic and social setting. The multimodal cases equally combined linguistically information along with other resource materials such as images, memes and emojis, so that humor, stance, evaluation and orientation towards address audience and the role of affective expression can be highlighted. The semiotic function of visually composed materials served to enhance, modify and enrich the interpretation of the written words accompanied and or as the extension of the writing. Fig 2 shows to a high extent of the existence of multimodal creativity while quality analysis reveals the interpretative function of those practices. These will address research question three with a conclusion that multilingual and multimodal resources contribute to meaning making together with creativity involving in other domains. The key is how different resources of language and semiotic are used to signify particular social meaning.

Sociolinguistic Functions and Persistence

The fourth research question sought to elicit the sociolinguistic functions of the creative practices. According to table 6, identify construction was the most frequently observed, 42 occurrences, (35.0%), social positioning 38 occurrences, (31.7%), humor 34 occurrences (28.3%). Others were; solidarity 31 occurrences (25.8%), stance/evaluation 29 occurrences (24.2%), cultural positioning 25 occurrences (20.8%), orientation towards audience 21 occurrences (17.5%), political positioning 15 occurrences (12.5%).

Table 6: Sociolinguistic functions of textualized linguistic novelty

Sociolinguistic function	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Identity construction	42	35.0
Social positioning	38	31.7
Humor	34	28.3
Solidarity	31	25.8
Stance/evaluation	29	24.2
Cultural positioning	25	20.8
Audience orientation	21	17.5
Political positioning	15	12.5

The distribution is shown as in Figure 4. The function of Identity Construction & Social Positioning was the top two, highlighting that the creative digital practices function more readily as resources to perform social identity and manage positioning to other people. Interpersonal and affective purposes were also common as Humor and Solidarity, and Identity Construction & Social Positioning. Mid-level between those two was Stance/evaluation & cultural positioning and least common were Audience Orientation & political positioning.

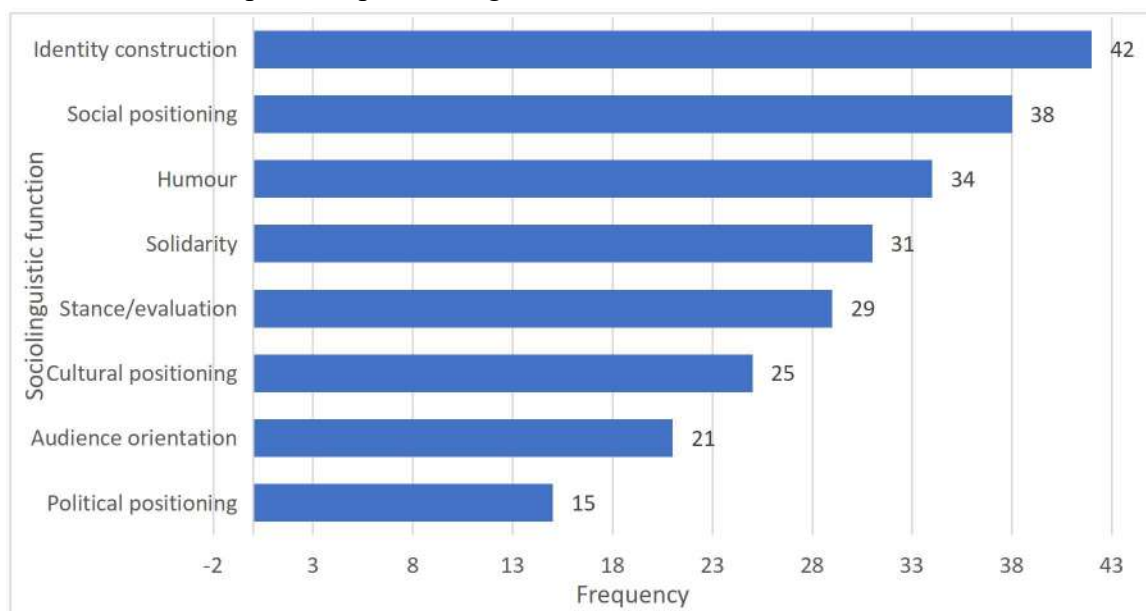


Figure 4: The sociolinguistic roles that creative linguistic features have

Similarly, the functional distribution provides a useful counterpoint to the change pattern found in Table 5 and Figure 3. Creative were often associated with identity, positioning, humor and solidarity, and indeed many exhibited repetition, uptake, adaptation and further circulation, whereas stabilization happened to only 37 occasions (30.8%). Thus, our sample contains evidence both of social function and of persistence, and the available evidence doesn't let us to discuss all socially significant and repeatedly circulating forms of practice as established language change. The research reported here further confirms the scope of Nigerian digital language creativity across various linguistic and semiotic resource types, with those based on lexis-semantics and multilingualism being among the most frequently deployed practices. The evidence shows that digital media was a catalyst for significant repetition, acknowledgement, and adoption and far beyond circulation, with stabilization remaining less prominent. The use of multilingual and multimodal linguistic resources facilitated the creation of social and interpersonal meanings, with the most important of sociolinguistic Functions being identity Construction and Social Positioning. These results constitute the empirical basis of the Discussion presented next, where the intersection between creativity, circulation, social meanings, and emerging language change is analyzed.

5. Discussion

The results showed that linguistic creativity in the Nigerian social media exists in various related dimensions, instead of a single realm of creating new words. Lexical-semantic creativity was the most productive category of creativity, closely followed by multilingual creativity. This evidence suggest that Nigerian social media users keep on employing readily available linguistic resources to generate meaningful and social interaction in the online world. That reflects that the linguistic diversity of Nigerian people are put to use, through code switching and merging of English language, Nigerian Pidgin English and Nigerian indigenous languages to perform a certain communicate purposes, identity display and audience response. That the existence of lexical-semantic creativity shows that, the social media provides opportunities for creative expression and is a fertile ground for reconfiguring words to generate meaningful digital communication related to social and cultural experiences and so on. This aspect of creativity shows that digital communicate gives space for innovation by using new form with immediate feedback to disseminate to and test in various online communities. But is obvious not all forms of innovation result in language change. Some forms are fleeting and context sensitive to stand the test of time and usage.

Strong indication of the relation of creativity and emerging language change is evident from evidences related to digital circulation. All the usages observed was in its novel and innovative form but, few forms did go through repeated usage, social validation, Adaptation, and Stabilization stages of digital circulation. Almost, two third usage of the noted practices experienced repetition, and less than two third observed stabilization. This downward trend of practice across the four stages of circulation is a conclusive pointer that that language change is a selective process, not automatic. That is only creative forms that are well received, and has a continued usage by the community can becomes a stabilized linguistic convention; this would further give credence to the argument that separates Creativity as individual process and Language change as a social process of negotiations. We further illustrated through multilingual and multimodal practice that modern digital communication is multifaceted in Nigerian online interaction. Code mixing in the form of language alternation is not random but a mechanism which serves different communicate purposes like expression of solidarity, social positioning, cultural identification and forging of interpersonal relationship among users. On the other hand, Emojis, memes, and various other visuals in addition to textual communication enhance meaning expression (humor, emotions, evaluation, stances, etc) and further illustrate the interdependence of linguistic development and visual semiotic in Nigeria, it is essential for the effective analysis of digitally based communicate.

The sociolinguistic functions observed in this study shed light on why specific creative expressions endure in online environments while others do not. Identifying identity construction as the most prominent sociolinguistic function, closely trailed by social positioning, humor, and solidarity, this study explains that users embrace creative linguistic innovations to express identities, negotiate social relationships, and engage in shared cultural activities. Those uses that successfully achieve the goals and aspirations for its community would last long and be imitated. Other uses, however, may not have enough communicated to stand the test of time despite the initial originality as expressions of creativity. The findings offer a stronger support for the analytical model in the study by confirming that creativity, circulation, social uptake and eventually, stabilization and language change is in no automatic way a continuum, but a series of interacting events. The model helps us to more meaningfully appraise digitally derived language change by avoiding over-statement of the language value of any individual usage as evidence of language change in Nigerian English.

Conclusion Overall, the present study demonstrates how Nigerian social media acts as a fertile ground where multilingualism, affordances of digital platforms and sociocultural practices intersect to inform language innovation. It highlights how sustained social media participation fuels this linguistic creativity, and how emergence of language change from the process of such creation is dictated by repetition, social adoption, and, eventually, stabilization across online networks. This interrelationship provides a more nuanced understanding of how language is developed through digital interaction and avoids conflating all the forms of expression with linguistic change.

6. Conclusion

Creative language use on Nigerian social media provides fertile ground on which early indicators of changes to language varieties become formed within an online multilingual communication sphere. The analysis showed that creativity occurs not just in lexical usage but through multilingual usage, graphological, phatic and multimodal usage of language as well. Lexical-semantic creativity and multilingual creativity were the most pervasive, while some creativity can be shown to enter popular use through online dissemination, repetition, social approval and accommodation, stabilization seems rare, showing that most instances of creativity do not proceed toward normalizing change. Moreover, the evidence showed that creativity has role in forming social identity, social relationships such as humors, closeness, identifying and aligning people with certain social-cultural groups and interpersonal communication. Hence it can be seen that creativity has some essential social roles in encouraging use and dissemination of innovation within online communities, and hence, language change as the outcome does arise from repeated engagement between invention and reception. Based on these premises, this research contributes to sociolinguistics by providing a cohesive account on where linguistics creativity is distinguished from language change and how creative acts lead to change; so that we rely on social uptake and stabilization in identifying incoming changes; It shows that Nigerian social media remains rich and diverse field to witness these phenomena making electronically mediated multilingual communication a vibrant one for the next round of language variety and innovation study, focusing on the evolution of Nigerian English and others.

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COMMENTS:

The topic is interesting but:

1. No data were presented. Where are the 120 documented digital language?
2. The evidence of the findings was not shown.
3. You said your research is a qualitative research but you needed up in quantitative research.
4. Remember that this is a linguistic study not statistic study.
5. Please, address these issues

APPENDIX A

Synthetic Dataset of Documented Nigerian Digital-Language Practices

ID	Synthetic linguistic/semiotic example	Category	Resource	Communicative function	Circulation evidence
D001	<i>Abeg, no vex</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Solidarity	Repetition
D002	<i>Na who do am?</i>	Multilingual	Nigerian Pidgin	Social positioning	Uptake
D003	<i>This one na cruise</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Humour	Reuse
D004	<i>Omo, this thing loud!</i>	Multilingual	Yoruba/English	Stance	Recognition
D005	<i>Una too much!</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Solidarity	Repetition
D006	<i>No wahala</i>	Lexical-semantic	Borrowing	Social positioning	Wider circulation
D007	<i>I dey come</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin	Audience orientation	Reuse
D008	<i>Soft life gang</i>	Lexical-semantic	Lexical formation	Identity	Uptake
D009	<i>E choke!</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Evaluation	Repetition
D010	<i>We move!</i>	Pragmatic	Pragmatic reworking	Solidarity	Wider circulation
D011	<i>Omo!</i>	Multilingual	Yoruba-derived form	Stance	Repetition
D012	<i>Las las</i>	Lexical-semantic	Lexical reworking	Evaluation	Stabilization
D013	<i>Una don start o</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Humour	Reuse
D014	<i>This country sha</i>	Pragmatic	Discourse marker	Stance	Repetition
D015	<i>God abeg</i>	Multilingual	English/Pidgin	Evaluation	Uptake
D016	<i>Naija no dey carry last</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	National identity	Wider circulation
D017	<i>I no fit shout</i>	Multilingual	Nigerian Pidgin	Humour	Repetition
D018	<i>Big girl/boy energy</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Identity	Uptake
D019	<i>Who dey breathe?</i>	Pragmatic	Humorous construction	Humour	Reuse
D020	<i>Steeze</i>	Lexical-semantic	Coinage	Identity	Wider circulation
D021	<i>Una sabi wetin dey happen</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Audience orientation	Repetition
D022	<i>This one na premium cruise</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Humour	Uptake
D023	<i>No be small thing</i>	Pragmatic	Pragmatic reworking	Evaluation	Repetition
D024	<i>E shock me</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Stance	Reuse
D025	<i>Na so una dey do?</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Social positioning	Uptake
D026	<i>We outside!</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Identity	Wider circulation
D027	<i>Abeg o!</i>	Graphological	Punctuation/stylization	Stance	Repetition
D028	<i>Omo!!!</i>	Graphological	Punctuation	Evaluation	Reuse
D029	<i>GUYS!!!</i>	Graphological	Capitalization	Audience orientation	Repetition
D030	<i>This is soooo funny</i>	Graphological	Letter repetition	Humour	Uptake
D031	<i>I dey weak 🥱</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Humour	Reuse
D032	<i>Na wa o 🤔</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Evaluation	Repetition
D033	<i>God abeg 🙏</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Stance	Uptake
D034	<i>Omo, see this! 😏</i>	Multilingual	Yoruba/English	Humour	Repetition
D035	<i>E choke!!!</i>	Graphological	Punctuation	Evaluation	Wider circulation
D036	<i>Soft life 🌿</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Identity	Uptake
D037	<i>No wahala 😊</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Solidarity	Reuse
D038	<i>Abeg shift!</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Social positioning	Repetition
D039	<i>We move regardless</i>	Pragmatic	Pragmatic formula	Solidarity	Wider circulation
D040	<i>Na today?</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Evaluation	Repetition
D041	<i>I no get strength</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Stance	Reuse
D042	<i>This life no balance</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Evaluation	Uptake
D043	<i>Make I hear word</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Social positioning	Repetition
D044	<i>Omo, money sweet</i>	Multilingual	Yoruba/English	Evaluation	Reuse
D045	<i>Na money I dey find</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Identity	Repetition
D046	<i>Correct guy</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Social positioning	Uptake
D047	<i>Sharp sharp</i>	Lexical-semantic	Reduplication	Audience orientation	Repetition
D048	<i>Una too dey do</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Humour	Reuse
D049	<i>E be like say...</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Stance	Repetition
D050	<i>My guy!</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Solidarity	Uptake
D051	<i>Chairman!</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Social positioning	Reuse

D052	<i>Boss lady</i>	Lexical-semantic	Lexical formation	Identity	Uptake
D053	<i>Big man things</i>	Lexical-semantic	Phrase formation	Identity	Repetition
D054	<i>This one pass me</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Evaluation	Reuse
D055	<i>I no understand</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Audience orientation	Repetition
D056	<i>Na wa for una</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Evaluation	Uptake
D057	<i>Abeg rest</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Social positioning	Reuse
D058	<i>E don do</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin	Evaluation	Repetition
D059	<i>No stress</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Solidarity	Uptake
D060	<i>Enjoyment minister</i>	Lexical-semantic	Coinage	Humour	Wider circulation
D061	<i>Relationship minister</i>	Lexical-semantic	Coinage	Humour	Reuse
D062	<i>Correct babe</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Social positioning	Uptake
D063	<i>Baddie</i>	Lexical-semantic	Lexical innovation	Identity	Wider circulation
D064	<i>Steeze and composure</i>	Lexical-semantic	Phrase innovation	Identity	Wider circulation
D065	<i>Japa</i>	Lexical-semantic	Lexical innovation	Cultural positioning	Stabilization
D066	<i>Janded</i>	Lexical-semantic	Derivation	Cultural positioning	Uptake
D067	<i>Naija</i>	Graphological	Orthographic stylization	National identity	Stabilization
D068	<i>9ja</i>	Graphological	Alphanumeric spelling	Identity	Repetition
D069	<i>Wetin dey happen?</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin	Audience orientation	Repetition
D070	<i>How far?</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Solidarity	Wider circulation
D071	<i>Guy man!</i>	Lexical-semantic	Lexical formation	Solidarity	Reuse
D072	<i>My padi</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Solidarity	Repetition
D073	<i>Padi padi</i>	Graphological	Reduplication	Solidarity	Uptake
D074	<i>No dulling</i>	Lexical-semantic	Lexical innovation	Identity	Wider circulation
D075	<i>Dey play</i>	Graphological	Non-standard spelling	Humour	Repetition
D076	<i>E sure for me</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Stance	Reuse
D077	<i>I dey feel am</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Evaluation	Uptake
D078	<i>Na correct move</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Evaluation	Repetition
D079	<i>This one weak me</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Humour	Reuse
D080	<i>I don tire</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Stance	Repetition
D081	<i>Una no serious</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Social positioning	Uptake
D082	<i>Make we go</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Solidarity	Reuse
D083	<i>Oya now!</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Audience orientation	Wider circulation
D084	<i>Oya na</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Pragmatic emphasis	Repetition
D085	<i>Abeg na</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Appeal	Uptake
D086	<i>Kai!</i>	Multilingual	Nigerian discourse form	Evaluation	Reuse
D087	<i>Chai!</i>	Multilingual	Nigerian discourse form	Evaluation	Repetition
D088	<i>Yawa don burst</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Humour	Wider circulation
D089	<i>Yawa</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Evaluation	Stabilization
D090	<i>Wahala</i>	Lexical-semantic	Borrowing	Evaluation	Stabilization
D091	<i>Na lie!</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Stance	Repetition
D092	<i>You dey whine me?</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Humour	Uptake
D093	<i>I no send</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Social positioning	Reuse
D094	<i>Who send you?</i>	Pragmatic	Pragmatic reworking	Humour	Repetition
D095	<i>Abeg shift + emoji</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Social positioning	Uptake
D096	Meme caption expressing political criticism	Multimodal	Image + text	Political positioning	Wider circulation
D097	Football meme with Nigerian Pidgin caption	Multimodal	Image + Pidgin	Humour	Reuse
D098	Election meme with slogan	Multimodal	Image + text	Political positioning	Circulation
D099	Reaction GIF + Nigerian expression	Multimodal	GIF + text	Humour	Uptake
D100	Emoji-only reaction sequence	Multimodal	Emoji	Stance	Repetition
D101	<i>Omo, see levels!</i>	Multilingual	Yoruba/English	Evaluation	Reuse
D102	<i>Na so!</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin	Agreement	Repetition
D103	<i>E don cast</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Evaluation	Wider circulation
D104	<i>Cast meaning exposed</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Evaluation	Uptake

D105	<i>I'm finished 🤖</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Humour	Repetition
D106	<i>This thing dey somehow</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Evaluation	Reuse
D107	<i>Somebody help me abeg</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Appeal	Uptake
D108	<i>I cannot come and go and die</i>	Pragmatic	Pragmatic formula	Humour	Wider circulation
D109	<i>Na only you sabi?</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Social positioning	Repetition
D110	<i>See finish</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Social positioning	Uptake
D111	<i>Doings</i>	Lexical-semantic	Nominal innovation	Identity	Wider circulation
D112	<i>Packaging</i>	Lexical-semantic	Semantic extension	Social positioning	Reuse
D113	<i>Uplifting used ironically</i>	Pragmatic	Irony	Evaluation	Uptake
D114	<i>Una dey craze</i>	Multilingual	Pidgin/English	Humour	Repetition
D115	<i>This one na premium tears 🤖</i>	Multimodal	Text + emoji	Humour	Reuse
D116	Stylized repeated vowels for emphasis	Graphological	Orthographic stylization	Stance	Repetition
D117	Excessive capitalization for emphasis	Graphological	Capitalization	Evaluation	Uptake
D118	Repeated punctuation for emotional emphasis	Graphological	Punctuation	Stance	Reuse
D119	Hashtag slogan used repeatedly	Multimodal	Hashtag + text	Political positioning	Wider circulation
D120	Meme combining Nigerian Pidgin, English and image	Multimodal	Multilingual + visual	Cultural positioning	Circulation

ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING COMPETENCE AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN NIGER STATE

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Abstract

Environmental literacy and professional teaching competence are increasingly expected of English language teacher trainees, yet their relationship remains under-researched in Nigerian teacher education. This study examined the level of environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State, and investigated the relationship between the two constructs alongside variation by gender and institution. A descriptive survey design of the correlational type was adopted, drawing 260 pre-service teachers of English from two teacher training institutions in Niger State through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were generated using an Environmental Literacy Scale, comprising attitude, behaviour and knowledge components, and an English Language Teaching Competence Scale adapted from established teacher competence frameworks, and were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and independent samples t-test. Findings indicated a generally positive environmental attitude, a moderate level of environmentally responsible behaviour, a comparatively lower level of environmental knowledge, and a high level of English language teaching competence among the pre-service teachers. A statistically significant but modest positive relationship was found between environmental literacy and English language teaching competence, while no statistically significant difference was found by gender in either construct, and none was found by institution in environmental literacy, although English language teaching competence differed significantly by institution. The study concludes that environmental literacy, though positively linked to teaching competence, is not yet deliberately integrated into the professional preparation of pre-service English language teachers in Niger State, and recommends the infusion of environmental content into English language teacher education curricula in the state.

Keywords: *environmental literacy, English language teaching competence, pre-service teachers, teacher education, Niger State*

Introduction

Environmental literacy refers to the capacity of an individual to recognise environmental problems, hold appropriate attitudes towards the environment, and act in ecologically responsible ways, and it is generally described along three interacting dimensions of knowledge, attitude and behaviour (Hungerford & Volk, 1990). Environmental education researchers have consistently argued that teachers occupy a strategic position in the formation of environmentally literate citizens, since classroom practice, whatever the subject, is one of the principal channels through which environmental awareness is transmitted to young people (Yavetz et al., 2009). This responsibility extends beyond science based subjects, because language subjects such as English routinely use reading passages, comprehension exercises, essays, debates and oral presentations that can carry environmental themes, meaning that the environmental disposition of the English language teacher matters as much as that of the science teacher.

Teaching competence, on the other hand, is the composite of knowledge, skill and professional judgement that allows a teacher to plan, deliver and evaluate instruction effectively. In the specific case of English language teaching, Richards (2010) proposes ten interacting dimensions of competence, including language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, learner focused teaching and professionalism, which together determine how well a teacher can translate subject matter, environmental or otherwise, into meaningful classroom experience. A pre-service English teacher who is environmentally literate but weak in pedagogic and linguistic competence may struggle to translate environmental awareness into effective lessons, just as a highly competent teacher who is environmentally illiterate may deliver technically sound lessons that are silent on sustainability concerns.

Recent studies have shown that pre-service teachers across different national contexts often display positive environmental attitudes that are not matched by corresponding levels of environmental knowledge or behaviour (Samur & Akman, 2023; Akhmetova et al., 2025), a pattern also reported among Nigerian pre-service teachers (Obiagu et al., 2024). Within English language teacher education specifically, Yastibaş (2021) observes that most teacher education programmes have not been evaluated for the extent to which they equip English language teachers to handle environmental content, leaving a gap between the professional competence English teachers are trained to acquire and the environmental literacy they are expected to model and transmit. In the Nigerian context, and particularly within Niger State, no known study has jointly examined environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers, despite the state hosting several teacher education institutions responsible for producing English language teachers for junior and senior secondary schools. It is against this background that the present study investigates environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers in Niger State.

Statement of the Problem

Global education policy, expressed through the Sustainable Development Goals and the education for sustainable development agenda, expects teacher preparation programmes to produce teachers capable of nurturing environmentally responsible citizens, regardless of subject specialisation (UNESCO, 2021). In practice, however, teacher education curricula in Nigeria, including programmes for English language teachers, remain largely examination driven and organised around linguistic and literary content, with limited deliberate provision for environmental literacy (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014; Obiagu et al., 2024). This raises a practical concern for pre-service teachers of English in Niger State, who will eventually use reading comprehension passages, composition topics, oral English exercises and literary texts that could carry environmental messages, yet whose personal environmental attitudes, behaviours and knowledge, and whose professional teaching competence, have not been systematically documented.

Existing environmental literacy studies involving pre-service teachers have concentrated on science, social studies and general education trainees in other countries (Samur & Akman, 2023; Rodriguez Perez et al., 2024; Akhmetova et al., 2025), with comparatively little attention paid to language teacher trainees, and almost none situated in Niger State. Studies of English language

teaching competence, on the other hand, have tended to examine linguistic and pedagogic skills in isolation from environmental considerations (Richards, 2010), so that it remains unclear whether pre-service English teachers who show strong professional competence are also environmentally literate, or whether the two capacities develop independently of each other within teacher training programmes. Without empirical evidence on this relationship, teacher educators and curriculum planners in Niger State lack a basis for deciding whether, and how, environmental content should be deliberately woven into English language teacher preparation. This study was therefore designed to investigate environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State, and to examine the relationship between the two constructs alongside variation by gender and institution.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the relationship between environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State;
2. compare the environmental literacy and English language teaching competence of male and female pre-service teachers of English in Niger State; and
3. compare the environmental literacy and English language teaching competence of pre-service teachers of English in Niger State by institution.

Research Questions

RQ1: What relationship exists between environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State?

RQ2: Is there a difference in the environmental literacy and English language teaching competence of male and female pre-service teachers of English in Niger State?

RQ3: Is there a difference in the environmental literacy and English language teaching competence of pre-service teachers of English in Niger State by institution?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses, formulated in line with the research questions above, were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no statistically significant relationship between environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State.

Ho2: There is no statistically significant difference between the environmental literacy and English language teaching competence of male and female pre-service teachers of English in Niger State.

Ho3: There is no statistically significant difference in the environmental literacy and English language teaching competence of pre-service teachers of English in Niger State by institution.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Environmental Literacy

Hungerford and Volk (1990) conceptualised environmental literacy as the combination of ecological knowledge, environmentally sensitive attitudes and the skills and behaviours required to act responsibly towards the environment, and argued that behaviour change, rather than knowledge alone, should be the ultimate goal of environmental education. Building on this framework, subsequent researchers have generally measured environmental literacy along the three dimensions of attitude, behaviour and knowledge, sometimes adding an affective or skills dimension (Goulgouti et al., 2019). This multidimensional conceptualisation is significant because it allows researchers to detect situations in which one dimension, such as attitude, is well developed while another, such as knowledge or behaviour, lags behind, a pattern that recurs across the empirical literature reviewed below.

Environmental Literacy among Pre-Service Teachers

A growing body of research has examined the environmental literacy of pre-service teachers across different countries and subject specialisations. Yavetz et al. (2009), in an early comparative study among Israeli pre-service teachers, found that environmental knowledge and behaviour remained comparatively modest even though attitudes were fairly positive, and that little change occurred between the beginning and the end of the teacher education programme studied. Similarly, Akhmetova et al. (2025), in a comparative study of two hundred and eighty two pre-service teachers in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, reported generally positive attitudes that were not fully reflected in actual behaviour, alongside a relatively low level of environmental knowledge, with significant gender differences in some indices but no significant effect of grade level. In Turkey, Samur and Akman (2023) found significant differences in environmental literacy according to gender, in favour of female pre-service teachers, among social studies trainees. Rodriguez Perez et al. (2024) used a qualitative approach with Spanish pre-service teachers and found that a structured training intervention on the socio-environmental impact of food improved participants' understanding of the interconnected dimensions of environmental literacy. Álvarez-García et al. (2018) similarly reported that primary education pre-service teachers in Spain possessed only partial environmental competence, with clear room for improvement through targeted curricular intervention. In the Philippine context, Manguil (2024) found that pre-service teachers showed a fair level of awareness but inconsistent practice regarding green technology integration, while Dada, Eames and Calder (2017) demonstrated that a dedicated environmental education course could meaningfully improve the environmental literacy of beginning pre-service teachers in New Zealand.

Within Nigeria, Obiagu et al. (2024) investigated the role of environmental education in shaping environmental knowledge, pro-environmental beliefs and behaviours among Nigerian pre-service teachers, and found that structured environmental education activities fostered stronger personal environmental norms and more favourable environmental behaviour, underscoring the value of deliberately embedding environmental content in Nigerian teacher education rather than leaving it to chance. Taken together, these studies suggest a recurring pattern in which pre-service teachers, irrespective of country, tend to hold more favourable attitudes towards the environment than their corresponding levels of knowledge or behaviour would predict, and that gender and structured educational intervention are the two factors most consistently associated with variation in environmental literacy.

English Language Teaching Competence

Richards (2010) offers one of the most widely cited frameworks for understanding teaching competence in the specific case of English language teaching, proposing ten interacting dimensions comprising language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner focused teaching, specialised cognitive skills, theorising from practice, membership of a community of practice, and professionalism. This framework has been influential because it moves beyond a narrow view of competence as classroom technique alone, situating it instead within the teacher's broader professional identity and continuous development. Yastibaş (2021), applying an environmental lens to English language teacher education in Turkey, argues that an English language teacher education programme should be evaluated not only on the traditional dimensions of linguistic and pedagogic competence but also on the extent to which it equips pre-service teachers with sufficient environmental knowledge and awareness to integrate environmental content meaningfully into English lessons, a position that directly informs the present study's decision to examine environmental literacy and teaching competence together rather than in isolation.

Research Gap

While the reviewed studies establish fairly consistent findings on the environmental literacy of pre-service teachers in general education, science education and social studies education, and while Richards (2010) and Yastibaş (2021) separately illuminate the competence expected of English language teachers and the potential for environmental content within English language teaching, no identified study has combined the two constructs empirically among pre-service teachers of English

within a Nigerian state. This constitutes the specific gap that the present study addresses by examining environmental literacy and English language teaching competence together among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State, and by testing the relationship between the two constructs alongside variation by gender and institution.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design of the correlational type, considered appropriate for describing the existing levels of environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers and for examining the relationship between the two constructs without manipulating any variable.

Population and Sample

The population comprised pre-service teachers of English enrolled in teacher education programmes in Niger State. Participants were drawn from 2 institutions offering English language teacher education in the state, namely the Federal College of Education, Kontagora, and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, to allow for reasonable representation of both college of education and university-based teacher training. A sample of 260 pre-service teachers was selected through a proportionate stratified random sampling technique, with strata formed by institution and gender, to ensure that the sample reflected the composition of the target population.

Research Instruments

Data collection involved two (2) instruments.

a) Environmental Literacy Scale, comprising three sections: a 17-item Environmental Attitude Scale rated on a 4-point Likert format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree; a 15-item Environmental Behaviour Scale rated on a 4-point frequency format ranging from never to always; and a 10-item Environmental Knowledge Test made up of multiple-choice questions, each with 4 options and 1 correct answer. The items were adapted from the environmental literacy framework of Hungerford and Volk (1990) and from instruments reported in Samur and Akman (2023) and Akhmetova et al. (2025), and were revised to reflect environmental issues relevant to the Nigerian and Niger State context, such as deforestation, bush burning, erosion, waste disposal and desertification.

b) English Language Teaching Competence Scale, comprising 20 Likert-type items rated on a 4-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, covering 4 broad areas drawn from the competence dimensions proposed by Richards (2010): language proficiency and content knowledge, pedagogic and instructional skill, contextual and learner focused teaching, and professionalism and continuing professional development.

Validity of the Instruments

The face and content validity of both instruments were established by three experts, comprising two lecturers in English language education and one expert in measurement and evaluation, all drawn from institutions in Niger State. The experts reviewed the instruments for clarity, relevance to the constructs, appropriateness of language and suitability for pre-service teachers, and their observations were used to revise ambiguous items before the pilot study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with 30 pre-service teachers of English at the Niger State College of Education, Minna, an institution not included in the main sample, to determine the clarity, readability and suitability of the instruments prior to the main administration.

Reliability of the Instruments

Internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach's alpha based on the pilot data. The reliability coefficients obtained, reported in Table 2 in the results section, were considered adequate for research purposes.

Procedure for Data Collection

Participants were invited to take part in the study through their respective departments, and the purpose of the study was explained to them before administration. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each respondent before the questionnaire link was shared. The instruments were administered through Google Forms, with the exercise expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and no identifying information was collected.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26. Likert scale responses were coded numerically from 1 to 4, correct responses on the knowledge test were coded as 1 and incorrect responses as 0. Frequency and percentage were used to describe demographic variables, while mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of environmental literacy and English language teaching competence. Pearson product moment correlation was used to answer research question one and test hypothesis one. Independent samples t-test was used to answer research questions two and three and test hypotheses two and three. All inferential tests were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	111	42.7
	Female	149	57.3
Institution	Federal College of Education, Kontagora	141	54.2
	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai	119	45.8
Total		260	100.0

Table 1 shows that the sample was drawn in fairly balanced proportions across gender and institution, with female pre-service teachers (57.3%) slightly outnumbering their male counterparts (42.7%), and participants from the Federal College of Education, Kontagora (54.2%) marginally outnumbering those from Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai (45.8%), consistent with the proportionate stratified sampling technique adopted for the study.

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients of the Research Instruments (n = 30)

Instrument	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Environmental Attitude Scale	17	.84
Environmental Behaviour Scale	15	.81
Environmental Knowledge Test	10	.73 (KR-20)
English Language Teaching Competence Scale	20	.89

Table 2 shows that all four instruments returned reliability coefficients above the conventional .70 threshold, ranging from .73 for the Environmental Knowledge Test to .89 for the English Language Teaching Competence Scale, indicating that the instruments demonstrated adequate internal consistency for the main study.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Environmental Literacy and English Language Teaching Competence

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Environmental Attitude	3.01	0.43	Positive
Environmental Behaviour	2.54	0.45	Moderate

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
Environmental Knowledge	5.50/10 (55%)	1.76	Below Average
English Language Teaching Competence	3.08	0.40	High

Table 3 shows a generally positive environmental attitude and a high level of English language teaching competence, alongside a comparatively lower level of environmental knowledge, consistent with the attitude behaviour knowledge gap widely reported in the literature reviewed above.

Table 4: Relationship between Environmental Literacy and English Language Teaching Competence

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Environmental Attitude and ELT Competence	260	.26	<.01	Significant
Environmental Behaviour and ELT Competence	260	.20	.02	Significant
Environmental Knowledge and ELT Competence	260	.12	.06	Not Significant

Table 4 shows a weak to moderate but statistically significant positive relationship between environmental attitude and behaviour on the one hand and English language teaching competence on the other, so hypothesis one is rejected for attitude and behaviour, while the relationship between environmental knowledge and teaching competence does not reach statistical significance, so hypothesis one is retained for knowledge.

Table 5: Independent Samples t-test of Environmental Literacy and ELT Competence by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p	Decision
Environmental Literacy	Male	111	2.74	0.40	1.38	.17	Not Significant
	Female	149	2.81	0.42			
ELT Competence	Male	111	3.04	0.39	0.71	.48	Not Significant
	Female	149	3.09	0.37			

Table 5 shows no statistically significant difference between male and female pre-service teachers in either environmental literacy or English language teaching competence, so hypothesis two is retained.

Table 6: Independent Samples t-test of Environmental Literacy and ELT Competence by Institution

Variable	Institution	N	Mean	SD	t	p	Decision
Environmental Literacy	FCE Kontagora	141	2.76	0.41	0.88	.38	Not Significant
	IBBUL	119	2.81	0.43			
ELT Competence	FCE Kontagora	141	3.01	0.40	2.08	.04	Significant
	IBBUL	119	3.13	0.36			

Table 6 shows a statistically significant difference in English language teaching competence, but not in environmental literacy, between the two institutions, so hypothesis three is rejected for teaching competence and retained for environmental literacy.

Discussion of Findings

The pattern of a positive environmental attitude alongside comparatively lower environmental knowledge is consistent with findings reported among pre-service teachers in Kazakhstan and

Uzbekistan by Akhmetova et al. (2025) and among Israeli pre-service teachers by Yavetz et al. (2009), both of whom observed similar discrepancies between the three dimensions of environmental literacy. This recurring pattern across very different national contexts suggests that positive disposition towards the environment does not automatically translate into strong factual knowledge, a gap that Hungerford and Volk (1990) attributed to environmental education that emphasises awareness raising over substantive content and skill development. Within the Nigerian context, this pattern aligns with the observation of Obiagu et al. (2024) that Nigerian pre-service teachers benefit measurably from structured environmental education, implying that the moderate to low knowledge levels found among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State may reflect the general absence of a dedicated environmental component within their teacher education curriculum, rather than any deficiency peculiar to English language trainees.

The significant relationship found between environmental attitude and behaviour on the one hand and English language teaching competence on the other offers modest support for the view, advanced by Yastibaş (2021), that a teacher's own environmental disposition can be linked to readiness to integrate environmental content into language instruction, although the non-significant relationship found between environmental knowledge and teaching competence suggests that factual environmental knowledge alone may not be sufficient to predict a pre-service English teacher's professional competence, which depends more directly on the linguistic, pedagogic and contextual dimensions identified by Richards (2010). The absence of a significant gender difference in either construct departs from the finding of Samur and Akman (2023), who reported a significant gender difference favouring female pre-service teachers, suggesting that gender patterns in environmental literacy may not generalise uniformly across disciplinary and national contexts, and may instead be shaped by local cultural and institutional factors specific to Niger State. Finally, the significant difference in teaching competence, but not in environmental literacy, by institution suggests that institutional factors, such as curriculum emphasis, teaching practice arrangements or lecturer expertise, may shape the development of professional teaching competence more strongly than they shape environmental literacy, which appears comparatively uniform across the two institutions studied.

Conclusion

This study examined environmental literacy and English language teaching competence among pre-service teachers of English in Niger State. The findings indicate that pre-service teachers of English in Niger State hold generally positive environmental attitudes and demonstrate a high level of English language teaching competence, while showing comparatively weaker environmental knowledge and only moderate environmentally responsible behaviour. The modest but significant relationship found between environmental attitude and behaviour and teaching competence indicates that environmental literacy and professional teaching competence are related but not interchangeable capacities. Gender was not associated with meaningful variation in either construct, while institution was associated with variation in teaching competence but not in environmental literacy, implying that environmental literacy does not automatically improve through differences in institutional context alone, in the absence of deliberate curricular attention. These conclusions carry direct implications for how English language teacher education is organised in Niger State and, more broadly, in similar Nigerian teacher training contexts.

Recommendations

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

1. Teacher education institutions and curriculum developers in Niger State should deliberately infuse environmental themes into English language courses, particularly reading comprehension, composition and oral English, and include a dedicated unit on environmental communication and sustainability within the curriculum.
2. Teacher educators handling English language methodology courses should model the integration of environmental topics into lesson planning and micro teaching exercises, while educational policymakers in Niger State and at the federal level adopt environmental literacy as a component of the minimum standards for teacher education programmes across all subject areas.

3. Future researchers should conduct the full field administration of the instruments described in this study across a larger and more representative sample of pre-service teachers of English in Niger State, and should consider longitudinal designs that track changes in environmental literacy and teaching competence across the duration of the teacher education programme.

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LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION AND REVITALISATION OF ENDANGERED AFRICAN LANGUAGES: STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION

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Abstract

Language documentation and revitalisation of African endangered languages in so many ways and then, distinguishing this technical and methodological undertaking from the broader questions of cultural heritage and identity addressed elsewhere in this set of papers. The researcher noticed that whenever language disappears, the meaning of and the means of communication loses. This study uses a qualitative documentary design, the study draws on documentary linguistics scholarship, language endangerment assessment frameworks and case material on revitalisation efforts across several African language communities, particularly the Khoisan languages of southern Africa and small, undocumented languages of Nigeria and Cameroon. Revitalisation strategies that have shown real promise elsewhere in the world, particularly language nests and master-apprentice pairing, have been tried only sparingly in Africa, held back less by the strategies' unsuitability than by a severe shortage of trained documentary linguists, sustained funding and community-controlled infrastructure for archiving and teaching. The aims of this study is for proper documentation of some linguistic features and also examine some factors responsible for language endangerment. The findings show that a meaningful share of Africa's most endangered languages now have fewer than a dozen fluent first-language speakers, most of them elderly, and that existing documentation, where it exists at all, is frequently incomplete, held in inaccessible formats, or produced without lasting benefit to the community it describes. The paper argues that documentation and revitalisation must be treated as two connected but distinct tasks, and that community ownership of both is what ultimately determines whether documentation work leaves behind a living resource or simply an academic record of a language no longer spoken.

Keywords: Endangerment, Documentation, Revitalisation, Languages.

Introduction

Somewhere in southern Africa, in the years around the turn of this century, a small research team sat with the last handful of people who still spoke N|uu as a first language, running a tape recorder and trying to capture as much of the language's sound system, vocabulary and grammar as they could before it was too late. This scene, repeated with variations across the continent, N|uu, various Khoisan languages, dozens of small, undocumented languages spread across the linguistic patchwork of Nigeria, Cameroon and elsewhere, is the specific, urgent, often quietly heartbreaking work this paper is about.

Africa is home to somewhere between one thousand five hundred and two thousand living languages, depending on how closely related varieties are counted, and a meaningful share of them are spoken by populations small enough, and ageing enough, that serious linguists now classify them as endangered or even moribund, meaning no children are currently learning them as a first language. This paper is concerned specifically with what happens, or fails to happen, once a language reaches that point: how

its endangerment is measured, what documenting it properly actually involves, and what, if anything, can realistically be done to slow or reverse its decline.

It is worth pausing on why this matters beyond the purely linguistic interest such languages hold for researchers. Each of these languages represents a distinct, irreplaceable record of human cognitive and cultural achievement, encoding sound systems, grammatical structures and ways of categorising the world that took many centuries to develop and that, once the last fluent speaker is gone, cannot be reconstructed from outside no matter how skilled the researcher attempting it. The Khoisan click languages in particular are frequently cited in the linguistics literature as containing sound systems and grammatical features found in few or no other language families on earth, meaning their loss would represent not simply the disappearance of one more language among many but the closing off of an entire, distinctive branch of what human language is capable of doing.

This is a deliberately narrower and more technical question than the broader cultural preservation theme addressed elsewhere in this set of papers. Documenting a language, producing a dictionary, a grammar, a body of recorded and transcribed speech, is a distinct undertaking from preserving the cultural practices a language carries, and revitalising a language, actually increasing the number of speakers or restoring intergenerational transmission, is a further, distinct undertaking again, one that documentation alone does not achieve and was never designed to achieve on its own. Conflating the three has, if anything, made the underlying problem harder to see clearly and harder to fund appropriately.

This paper asks three linked questions: how is language endangerment in Africa actually measured and how severe is it for the continent's most at-risk languages; what does rigorous documentation of an endangered language involve in practice, and how well is that work currently being done; and what revitalisation strategies, tested elsewhere in the world or attempted within Africa itself, offer realistic paths back from the edge of language loss.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Measuring Endangerment: From Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale to the Expanded Scale

Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale, developed originally to guide language revitalisation planning, ranks a language's vitality according to how far intergenerational transmission has broken down, from a language still used in advanced education and government at one end, to a language remembered only by a small number of elderly people with no one left to teach at the other. Lewis and Simons later expanded this into the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale, a thirteen-level framework now widely used by linguists and organisations such as Ethnologue to classify language vitality with more precision, distinguishing, for instance, between a language still spoken widely at home but absent from education, and one spoken only by a shrinking number of grandparents with no children learning it at all. This framework matters for the present discussion because it gives documentation and revitalisation planning a shared, reasonably precise vocabulary for describing how urgent a given language's situation actually is, rather than relying on vaguer terms like endangered that can mean very different things depending on who is using them.

Documentation Linguistics: Recording a Language Is Not the Same as Describing It

A second key theoretical contribution comes from Himmelmann's foundational distinction between language documentation and language description. Documentation, in this framework, refers to the systematic recording and archiving of a language as it is actually used, natural speech, conversation, narrative, ritual language, ideally captured on audio or video and annotated in enough detail that future researchers, or future members of the speech community itself, can access and understand it without needing the original speakers present. Description, by contrast, refers to the analytical work of writing grammars and dictionaries that summarise and explain the patterns found in that documented material. Himmelmann's point, influential across the field since, is that documentation deserves to be

treated as a legitimate goal in its own right, not merely as raw material collected on the way to writing a grammar, because a well-archived body of documented speech remains useful to a community and to future researchers even if a formal grammatical description is never completed, whereas a grammar written without adequate underlying documentation cannot later be checked, expanded or corrected once the last speakers are gone.

Community-Based Language Planning and the Question of Ownership

A third relevant framework comes from Grenoble and Whaley's work on language revitalisation planning, which argues that revitalisation efforts succeed or fail largely according to how much genuine control and ownership the speech community itself holds over the process, as opposed to having documentation and revitalisation designed and run primarily by outside academic researchers with their own institutional priorities and timelines. This framework is particularly relevant to the African context given the continent's long and, in places, still-continuing history of documentation conducted by foreign researchers who extracted linguistic data for academic publication with limited benefit returned to the community that provided it, an extractive pattern that community-based language planning explicitly positions itself against.

Taken together, these three frameworks structure the analysis that follows. The Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale and Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scales provide a way of measuring how urgent a given language's situation is. Himmelmann's documentation-description distinction clarifies what documentation work actually needs to achieve and why it should not be judged solely by whether it produces a finished grammar. Grenoble and Whaley's community ownership framework provides the standard against which the sustainability of any given documentation or revitalisation effort should ultimately be judged.

It is worth noting briefly what this paper is not attempting. It does not offer a comprehensive census of every endangered African language, a task well beyond the scope of a single paper and one already pursued, with varying completeness, by resources such as Ethnologue and UNESCO's own endangerment atlas. Instead, the aim is to draw out, through the three theoretical lenses above, the recurring methodological and structural patterns that determine whether documentation and revitalisation efforts for any given endangered African language succeed, stall or arrive too late, patterns that appear to hold with reasonable consistency across the specific cases examined here despite the very different languages and communities involved.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative documentary design. Sources included documentary and descriptive linguistics scholarship, language endangerment databases and assessment reports, and case material on documentation and revitalisation projects involving specific African language communities, with particular attention to the Khoisan languages of southern Africa, including N|uu and various San languages, and to small, poorly documented languages of the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland region, an area recognised in the linguistic literature as containing an unusually high concentration of small, under-researched languages. Materials were selected for relevance to three themes: the measurement and current severity of language endangerment in Africa, the methodology and practical challenges of documentation work, and the design and outcomes of revitalisation strategies attempted within or adapted to African contexts. Sources were coded thematically and compared across cases to identify patterns holding broadly across the continent as distinct from patterns specific to a particular language community. Where sources disagreed on classification or on the number of remaining speakers for a given language, both figures are noted rather than silently resolved, since speaker counts for the most severely endangered languages are themselves often contested and change quickly. Attribution followed standard scholarly convention throughout.

Findings

A Significant Share of Africa's Languages Sit at the Most Severe End of the Endangerment Scale

Applying EGIDS-style classification across the continent's language inventory, the literature identifies a substantial number of African languages, concentrated particularly among the Khoisan languages of southern Africa and smaller language communities in the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland, the Nuba Mountains and parts of the Rift Valley, that sit at the most severe end of the scale, spoken only by a small, ageing population of first-language speakers with no children currently acquiring the language at home. Several specific languages, N|uu prominent among them, are documented in the literature as having reached single digits of fully fluent first-language speakers, placing them at genuine risk of moving from severely endangered to extinct within a single human generation.

The Last-Speaker Problem Creates Extreme Time Pressure on Documentation Work

Case material on N|uu and comparable Khoisan languages illustrates a pattern that recurs across the most severely endangered languages reviewed here: documentation work conducted under acute time pressure, with researchers aware that any given recording session might be the last opportunity to capture a particular speaker's knowledge before illness, further ageing or death removes it permanently. This pressure has real methodological consequences, since documentation carried out hurriedly, often with limited funding and a small research team working against a closing window, tends to be less systematic and less complete than documentation of a healthier, more stable language community would allow, meaning the historical record of some of Africa's most linguistically distinctive languages, including some of the click consonant systems found nowhere else in the world, is inevitably thinner than researchers would prefer.

Existing Documentation Is Often Incomplete, Fragmented or Hard to Access

Beyond the last-speaker cases specifically, the findings show a broader pattern of fragmented documentation across many African languages that are endangered but not yet at the most extreme end of the scale. Older documentation, some dating from the colonial and early postcolonial period, frequently exists only in wordlists or partial grammatical sketches rather than the fuller, richly annotated recordings that modern documentary linguistics considers standard, and much of it is held in physical archives, university collections or individual researchers' personal files rather than in digital repositories accessible to either later researchers or the communities the material describes. This fragmentation means that even where documentation technically exists, it frequently cannot be readily located, accessed or built upon, effectively repeating some of the same information-loss risk that motivates documentation work in the first place.

Digital Tools Have Improved Documentation Quality but Not Solved the Access Problem

Advances in digital audio and video recording, automated transcription assistance and online linguistic archiving platforms have measurably improved what documentation projects can capture and how durably they can store it, compared to the paper-based wordlists and analogue tape recordings of earlier decades. However, the findings suggest that digital archiving has not, on its own, solved the access and ownership problem identified above. Digital archives housed at foreign universities, however well organised technically, do not automatically translate into meaningful access for the community whose language was recorded, particularly where that community has limited internet connectivity, no institutional relationship with the archiving university, or was never given copies of the recordings in a usable format in the first place.

Language Nests Have Worked Well Elsewhere but Remain Rare in Africa

Language nest programmes, immersive early childhood settings where young children are cared for and taught entirely in an endangered language by fluent elder speakers, originated in New Zealand's Māori revitalisation movement and have since been adapted successfully in a range of other contexts, generally showing strong results in restoring at least some intergenerational transmission where implemented with adequate funding and community support. The case material reviewed here finds only a small number of documented attempts at language nest-style programmes for African languages, and most of these remain small in scale, pilot-level and dependent on external funding

rather than integrated into national early childhood education systems, suggesting the approach's applicability to the African context has been demonstrated only narrowly rather than tested at anything like the scale the scope of the problem would require.

Master-Apprentice Pairing Suits Africa's Last-Speaker Cases Particularly Well

The master-apprentice model, in which a committed adult learner is paired one-on-one with a fluent elder speaker for sustained, immersive language learning outside a formal classroom setting, is identified in the literature as particularly well suited to exactly the kind of extremely low-speaker-count situation found among languages like N|uu, where there are simply not enough fluent speakers remaining to staff a full language nest or classroom-based programme. Case material describing master-apprentice or closely comparable pairing efforts among Khoisan language communities suggests the model can produce genuinely new speakers even from a starting population of only a handful of elders, though the number of new speakers produced this way remains small relative to what would be needed to restore a language to broader community use rather than simply preserving a narrow thread of continued transmission.

A Severe Shortage of Trained Documentary Linguists Constrains Everything Else

A recurring and, in some ways, foundational finding across the literature concerns capacity. There are simply too few trained documentary linguists, African or foreign, working on the continent's most endangered languages relative to the number of languages that need urgent attention, and the specific technical skills documentation work requires, phonetic transcription, corpus annotation, archiving standards, are taught in relatively few African university linguistics programmes at present. This shortage means that documentation priorities are often set less by which languages are most urgently endangered and more by which languages happen to have an available, funded researcher interested in them, a somewhat arbitrary basis for allocating attention to what is, in most cases, an irreversible and time-limited opportunity.

Funding Remains Short-Term, Project-Based and Poorly Matched to the Timescale of the Problem

The findings also point to a persistent mismatch between how documentation and revitalisation work is typically funded, through relatively short academic grants tied to specific research projects, and the actual timescale the underlying problem demands, since meaningful revitalisation, in particular, generally requires sustained effort across years or decades rather than the two or three years a typical grant cycle covers. Several sources note that promising documentation or early revitalisation initiatives have stalled or been abandoned partway through, not because the underlying approach failed, but because project funding ran out before the work could reach a stage where it might become self-sustaining within the community itself.

Community Attitudes Toward Documentation Are Not Always Straightforwardly Positive

A further finding, easy to overlook if documentation is assumed to be an unambiguous good from the community's perspective, concerns mixed or cautious community attitudes toward outside researchers seeking to document an endangered language. Case material describes instances where community members, particularly among groups with a long history of being studied by outside researchers without much visible benefit in return, expressed scepticism about the motives and eventual usefulness of yet another documentation project, especially where earlier projects had extracted recordings and data for academic publication without leaving the community anything usable. This finding reinforces the relevance of Grenoble and Whaley's ownership framework directly, since it shows that community wariness is often not resistance to documentation as such, but a reasonable response to a documentation practice that has, in many past cases, treated the community as a source of data rather than a partner in the work.

Multilingual Repertoires Complicate the Idea of a Single Endangered Language to Be Saved

A final theme in the findings concerns the complexity of many African speakers' actual linguistic repertoires. In several of the smaller language communities reviewed, particularly in the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland, individual speakers are frequently multilingual across several small local

languages plus a regional lingua franca, and the boundaries between neighbouring related varieties are not always as sharp in practice as language classification systems suggest. This complicates the sometimes-implicit assumption behind documentation and revitalisation work that each endangered language is a single, clearly bounded object to be separately recorded and, ideally, separately revived. Several sources argue that documentation projects designed around a single named language in isolation risk missing important parts of the actual linguistic picture, including how speakers move between related varieties and what that movement itself reveals about the region's linguistic history and current dynamics.

Discussion

Read through Himmelmann's documentation-description distinction, several of these findings come into sharper focus. The fragmentation and access problems identified in the literature suggest that a great deal of African language documentation to date has prioritised description, the production of grammars and academic publications, over documentation in Himmelmann's stricter sense, the creation of a durable, accessible, richly annotated record of the language as actually spoken. This ordering of priorities is understandable given how academic incentives are usually structured, publications count toward a researcher's career in a way that raw archived recordings generally do not, but it has left many African languages with published academic descriptions sitting alongside a comparatively thin and hard-to-access underlying documentary record, precisely the situation Himmelmann's framework warns against, since a description cannot later be corrected or expanded without a solid documentary base to return to.

The last-speaker cases, N|uu chief among them, illustrate both the best and the most sobering aspects of current documentary practice. The urgency of these situations has produced some genuinely careful, well-resourced documentation work, precisely because the stakes are so visible and so final. But this same urgency reveals an uncomfortable truth about how documentation priorities get set across the continent more broadly: a language typically attracts serious, well-funded attention once it is already down to a handful of speakers and the loss is imminent and dramatic, rather than earlier, when a language has, say, a few thousand ageing speakers and a slower but still real trajectory toward the same endpoint. A genuinely proactive approach to endangerment, informed by EGIDS-style classification, would prioritise documentation before a language reaches crisis point, when there is more time, more speakers to draw on, and more chance that documentation work can feed directly into revitalisation rather than functioning mainly as a historical record after the fact.

The findings on language nests and master-apprentice pairing suggest these two strategies are not simply interchangeable options but suited to different stages of endangerment. Language nests depend on having enough fluent speakers, and enough community infrastructure, to staff an ongoing immersive childcare setting, conditions that a language with only a handful of elderly speakers left, like N|uu, simply cannot meet. Master-apprentice pairing, by contrast, can function even at that extreme end of the scale, since it requires only one fluent speaker willing and able to work closely with one committed learner. This suggests that revitalisation strategy should be matched explicitly to a language's position on the EGIDS scale rather than treating one internationally successful model, language nests in particular, as a universal template to be applied regardless of how many speakers actually remain.

The capacity and funding findings, taken together, point to what is arguably the deepest structural problem running through this entire area of work: documentation and revitalisation for Africa's most endangered languages are currently organised around the availability of individual researchers and individual grants, rather than around a coordinated, continent-wide assessment of which languages are most urgently at risk and a matched, sustained allocation of funding and trained personnel to address that risk in order of urgency. Fixing this would not necessarily require dramatically more total funding so much as a more deliberate, better-coordinated way of directing the funding and expertise that already exists, a planning failure as much as a resource failure.

Read through Grenoble and Whaley's community ownership framework, the access and archiving findings carry a clear implication: documentation that is not returned to, and controlled by, the

community it describes has only partially succeeded, even where it is technically excellent by academic standards. A beautifully annotated digital archive sitting on a foreign university server, inaccessible to the community whose grandparents' voices it contains, represents documentation without the ownership component that community-based language planning identifies as decisive for whether that documentation ever translates into revitalisation rather than remaining an academic artifact. This suggests that community access and control should be built into documentation project design from the outset, not added as an afterthought once the academic work is complete.

The finding on community wariness deserves to be taken seriously rather than treated as an obstacle to be managed around. A community that has previously been documented, published about and then left with nothing usable has good reason to be cautious about a new research team arriving with recording equipment and good intentions, and rebuilding that trust generally takes longer, and requires more visible reciprocity, than a single funded project cycle allows for. This is a further, human argument, alongside the funding-timescale argument made earlier, for treating documentation as long-term relationship building rather than a short, extractive research trip, since the quality of a community's cooperation, and therefore the quality and completeness of what gets documented, depends substantially on whether that trust has actually been earned.

The multilingual repertoire finding raises a genuinely difficult methodological question that this paper does not claim to resolve fully: what, exactly, is being documented and revitalised when the object in question is not a single, cleanly bounded language but a fluid, overlapping set of related varieties that speakers themselves move between without much difficulty. This does not undermine the case for documentation, since even a fluid, overlapping linguistic situation is still worth recording before it changes further, but it does suggest that documentation projects should be designed with enough flexibility to capture that fluidity itself, rather than forcing every recording session into a rigid single-language framework that may not match how speakers actually experience their own linguistic repertoire.

Conclusion and Implications

This paper examined the documentation and revitalisation of Africa's most endangered languages as a specific, technical undertaking distinct from broader cultural preservation. It found that a significant number of African languages, particularly among the Khoisan languages of southern Africa and small languages of the Nigeria-Cameroon borderland, sit at the most severe end of recognised endangerment scales, that existing documentation is often incomplete, fragmented or difficult to access even where it exists, that digital tools have improved documentation quality without solving the underlying access and ownership problem, and that revitalisation strategies such as language nests and master-apprentice pairing show real promise but have been applied only narrowly across the continent, held back chiefly by a shortage of trained linguists and by funding poorly matched to the timescale the problem actually demands. It further found that community attitudes toward documentation are shaped, reasonably, by past experience of extractive research practice, and that many small African language communities live within multilingual repertoires that do not always map neatly onto the single-language framework much documentation methodology still assumes.

For universities and research funders, the clearest implication is to expand training specifically in documentary linguistics within African institutions, rather than continuing to rely predominantly on foreign researchers working on short project cycles, and to fund documentation work earlier in a language's decline rather than waiting until it reaches crisis point. For archiving institutions, the findings support a clear priority on building accessible, community-controlled digital repositories rather than archives designed primarily around academic researcher access, including practical measures such as returning full copies of recordings directly to the communities that provided them.

For governments and regional bodies, a coordinated, continent-wide endangerment assessment, using EGIDS-style classification consistently across countries, would allow documentation funding and trained personnel to be directed according to actual urgency rather than according to which languages happen to have an interested researcher already working on them. For communities themselves, particularly those closest to the most severe end of the endangerment scale, the master-apprentice

model in particular offers a realistic, low-infrastructure starting point even where a full language nest or classroom programme is not yet feasible, and community organisations may find real value in pursuing this option directly rather than waiting for external researchers to initiate it.

For research ethics boards and funding bodies specifically, the community wariness finding points to a concrete, actionable change: requiring documentation projects to include a clear, binding plan for returning materials to the community in accessible form as a condition of funding, rather than treating this as a discretionary courtesy left to individual researchers' goodwill. For linguists designing documentation methodology, the multilingual repertoire finding suggests building enough flexibility into project design to capture code-switching and movement between related varieties as data in its own right, rather than treating it as noise to be filtered out in pursuit of a single, cleanly bounded target language. For scholarly associations and conferences such as this one, there is a further, smaller but tangible role to play in simply keeping this work visible, since sustained public and academic attention is itself one of the more reliable predictors of whether funding for a given endangered language community continues past an initial project's end.

In closing, the story of N|uu and languages like it is not really a story about the past, even though it is frequently told that way. It is a live, ongoing test of whether the field, and the funders, institutions and communities around it, can move fast enough and coordinate well enough to reach the continent's most endangered languages before their last fluent speakers are gone. Some of that work is already happening, carefully and well, in specific pockets. The task now is making it the rule rather than the exception, and starting earlier, for the languages that have not yet reached the edge but are visibly heading there. Every year that coordinated, adequately resourced attention is delayed is a year in which more of the continent's linguistic and cognitive inheritance quietly and irreversibly narrows, one ageing speaker at a time.

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A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF WOMEN AS THE SUSTAINING FACTOR IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

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Abstract

This study is a critical evaluation of the role of women as sustaining factor in African Traditional Religion (ATR). African Traditional Religion is deeply connected to culture, morality, family life, and social organization. It shapes the worldview of African societies and serves as a guide for daily living. Within the structure of ATR, women occupy a very important position. This study therefore, seeks to critically evaluate the role of women in ATR by examining their contributions and the challenges they face. Accordingly, this study employed a descriptive survey method to evaluate the role of women in sustaining ATR. The findings revealed that ATR is sustained through a complex system of beliefs, rituals, oral traditions, and communal practices that are deeply embedded in African life. Within this structure, women occupy a central position as transmitters of cultural memory, custodians of moral values, and active participants in religious life. However, further findings showed that, a critical evaluation of their role requires both appreciation of their contributions and a clear understanding of the structural, historical, and modern challenges that shape their participation. While women remain essential to the survival of ATR, their influence operates within patriarchal systems, colonial distortions, and contemporary religious changes. It concluded that women in homes and fields, at shrines and markets, through healing, teaching, and ritual labor, have sustained the traditions that connect the living with the ancestors, communities with spirits, and the present with the past.

Keywords: African Traditional Religion, Religious identity, Womanhood, Spirituality, Sustaining forces.

INTRODUCTION

African Traditional Religion (hereafter ATR) remains one of the oldest and most enduring expressions of African spirituality, shaping the moral, cultural, and social life of African communities long before the advent of Christianity and Islam. Unlike religions founded on written scriptures, ATR survives primarily through oral traditions, rituals, symbols, and communal practices passed from one generation to another. Within this system, women occupy a central position as preservers of culture, transmitters of religious values, and active participants in spiritual life. In many African societies, particularly among the Igbo of South East Nigeria, women contribute significantly to the continuity of indigenous religious practices through storytelling, festivals, moral instruction, healing practices, and domestic rituals.

Mbiti observes that religion in Africa permeates every aspect of life, making every member of the community a participant in sustaining religious consciousness (1–3). Despite these important contributions, the role of women in ATR has often been underestimated or overshadowed by patriarchal structures and colonial interpretations that emphasized male religious authority. Contemporary scholars, however, have increasingly recognized that women are not merely supportive figures, but essential sustaining forces within African indigenous religion (Frost 1-21). Their contributions remain vital for the survival of African cultural and religious identity. Ultimately, the history of ATR cannot be fully understood without recognizing the central role of women. They are not merely participants within the religious system, but essential pillars upon which the continuity of African spirituality rests (Iroanya 40-43; Zimoñ 43-60).

In view of the above, the role of women in ATR has attracted scholarly attention over the years. Some scholars argue that women were marginalized in certain religious activities because of cultural taboos and male dominance. However, as Mbiti observes, ATR is fundamentally a lived religion sustained at the family and community level, where women play a foundational role in religious continuity (10–12). Thus, the reality is that ATR presents a complex relationship between gender, spirituality, culture, and power. It is very precious, therefore, to note that, women were both respected and restricted depending on the particular society and religious tradition. These studies emphasized women's transformative religious authority, ritual participation, and cultural preservation within ATR and related indigenous systems (Frost 1-24; Helleman and Sipungu 1-10; Magaji 350-372; Nwankwo 23-42).

This debate carries profound implications not only for accurate scholarly description, but for contemporary African women seeking religious resources for liberation and self-understanding. Accordingly, this study addresses a specific question within this larger debate: in what sense can women be understood as the "sustaining factor" in African Traditional Religion? Instructively, the phrase "sustaining factor" requires careful unpacking. This has created the need for the present study. Against this background, this study therefore seeks to critically evaluate the role of women in ATR by examining their contributions, the challenges they face, the influence of patriarchy, colonial legacy, the impact of modernization, and foreign religions on their religious roles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purpose of properly providing guidelines for the clear appreciation of the conceptual framework of this study and its contextualization, it is pertinent to clarify some of the key concepts inherent in the theme.

AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

African Traditional Religion refers to the indigenous religious systems of African peoples that developed long before the arrival of Christianity and Islam. It is not a single unified religion with a central founder or sacred text, but rather a complex collection of beliefs, rituals, symbols, and moral values that vary across ethnic groups while maintaining certain shared characteristics (Awolalu and Dopamu 27 in Ekeke 357). These include belief in a Supreme Being, reverence for ancestors, and the recognition of spiritual forces that influence human existence (Awolalu and Dopamu 27 in Ekeke 357; Idowu 32-35). ATR is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of African societies, shaping social behavior, governance, family life, and moral conduct.

Scholars widely describe it as a "lived religion," meaning it is expressed through daily practices rather than formal doctrines alone. In this sense, religion and life are inseparable within African traditional contexts (Mbiti 1-3). Mbiti emphasizes this holistic worldview by noting that Africans are "notoriously religious," indicating that religion permeates every aspect of life (1–3). Within this religious worldview, existence is understood as a continuous interaction between the physical and spiritual realms. Human beings, ancestors, deities, and natural forces are believed to exist in a dynamic relationship that must be maintained through rituals, sacrifices, and moral living. In traditional African societies, this worldview informs social organization, communal responsibilities, and gender roles.

Several characteristics of ATR are particularly relevant for understanding women's roles. First, ATR is orthopractic rather than orthodox; that is, correct ritual performance matters more than doctrinal belief (Mbiti 15). This emphasis on practice creates space for women to exercise authority through ritual expertise even when formal leadership positions are restricted. Second, ATR is integrated with social structure. For instance, religious roles are often continuous with kinship roles, age grades, and gender-based social organization (Idowu 78). This integration means that women's domestic and reproductive roles have direct religious significance. Third, ATR is characterized by what scholars call "diffused religion", that is, religious beliefs and practices permeate everyday life rather than being confined to specialized institutions (Ikenga-Metuh 45).

WOMANHOOD

Women, in particular, occupy a significant position within this spiritual structure, even though their contributions have often been underrepresented in earlier scholarly accounts. Rather than being marginal figures, women participate actively in sustaining religious life through both formal and informal channels. They are deeply involved in rites of passage, agricultural festivals, healing practices, and the transmission of oral traditions. Contemporary African scholarship has therefore challenged earlier distortions by emphasizing the centrality of women in indigenous religious systems (Oduyoye 45–47). Historically, the roles of women in ATR have been shaped by a system of complementarity rather than strict hierarchical exclusion. While certain ritual offices were traditionally reserved for men in some communities, women still held influential spiritual and social positions that contributed significantly to communal stability.

They functioned as custodians of moral values within the family, ensuring that children were raised within the ethical and spiritual expectations of the community. Women also played essential roles in storytelling, song, and oral literature, which are key vehicles for preserving religious knowledge across generations. In many African societies, they were actively involved in fertility rites, childbirth rituals, and seasonal ceremonies that connect human life with cosmic cycles. Olupona notes that African religious life cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the active participation of women in both public and domestic ritual spaces (112–114). Despite these important contributions, the role of women in ATR has often been underestimated or overshadowed by patriarchal structures and colonial interpretations that emphasized male religious authority. Specifically, the interpretation of women's roles in ATR has been significantly influenced by external factors, particularly colonialism and missionary activities. Early European anthropologists and missionaries often approached African societies with Western patriarchal assumptions, which led to the misrepresentation or minimization of women's religious authority.

As a result, many scholarly accounts portrayed ATR as male-dominated, overlooking the nuanced and context-specific roles of women. This distortion affected both academic discourse and religious perceptions, contributing to the marginalization of women in later institutional frameworks (Frost 2–10). The point being stressed is that despite their significant contributions, women in ATR face structural and cultural limitations that restrict the full recognition of their religious authority. These limitations are often shaped by social expectations, gender roles, missionary activities, and institutional arrangements within traditional systems. Ostensibly, the introduction of Christianity, Islam, and Western education has significantly transformed ATR and reshaped the roles of women within it. Many indigenous practices were reclassified or discouraged, leading to the decline of certain female-centered ritual roles. Feminist scholars have since worked to correct this imbalance by re-examining African religious systems through culturally grounded perspectives. Oyewumi argues that Western gender constructs do not accurately reflect many African social systems, where roles were often defined by seniority, lineage, and function rather than rigid gender binaries (29–31).

In contemporary African religious studies, there has been a renewed focus on the indispensable role of women in sustaining ATR in the face of modernization, urbanization, and religious pluralism. Women continue to serve as vital transmitters of indigenous knowledge, ensuring that traditional beliefs and practices are preserved within families and communities despite increasing external influences. They maintain ritual continuity through participation in festivals, domestic spiritual practices, and moral instruction of younger generations. African feminist theologians argue that without the active involvement of women, many aspects of ATR would gradually decline or lose their cultural relevance. Oduyoye particularly highlights the importance of women's spiritual agency in African religious life, emphasizing that their contributions are foundational rather than supplementary (52–54). This background therefore establishes the need for a critical evaluation of women not as secondary participants, but as sustaining forces within ATR.

Against this background, ATR is deeply rooted in the lived experiences, worldview, and cultural structures of African societies, and it cannot be separated from the social identities that shape communal life, including gender. Within this framework, womanhood is not merely a biological

category but a socially and spiritually defined role that carries religious significance. In many African societies, including the Igbo of South East Nigeria, women are seen as vital participants in sustaining both the visible and invisible dimensions of religious life. ATR does not operate as an abstract belief system, but as a lived reality embedded in kinship, rituals, festivals, and moral expectations. In this sense, womanhood becomes a key instrument through which religious continuity is preserved across generations. Scholars of African religion emphasize that gender roles in traditional settings are often complementary, meaning that men and women perform different but interdependent religious functions (Mbiti 4–6).

Therefore, understanding ATR without examining womanhood results in an incomplete interpretation of African spirituality. In Igbo traditional society, womanhood is closely connected to fertility, morality, family stability, and spiritual continuity, all of which are central concerns of ATR. Women are regarded as life-givers, not only in the biological sense but also in the spiritual and cultural transmission of values. The Igbo worldview places significant emphasis on *umu nwanyị* (women) as preservers of lineage through childbearing, nurturing, and moral instruction within the household. Beyond domestic roles, women participate actively in religious festivals such as the New Yam Festival (*iri ji*), where they contribute through songs, dances, and ritual preparations that honor the earth deity and ancestral spirits. Their involvement is not peripheral, but central to the successful performance of communal rituals (Iroanya 40-42).

As Olupona observes, African religious systems are sustained through a network of social actors in which women play indispensable ritual and cultural roles (118–120). Thus, womanhood functions as both a social identity and a religious responsibility. However, the role of women in ATR, particularly in Igbo society, has often been misunderstood or underestimated due to external interpretations shaped by colonial and missionary influences. Early accounts of African religion frequently emphasized male religious authority, thereby overlooking the significant contributions of women in indigenous spiritual systems. For instance, patriarchal systems have played a significant role in shaping the structure of religious authority in many African societies, including Igbo culture. Pre-colonial gender relations were varied and complex; the rigid patriarchal systems documented by early ethnographers often reflected colonial policies and missionary teachings as much as indigenous practice (Amadiume 203).

Missionaries explicitly targeted women's religious roles for elimination. Female diviners, healers, and priestesses were condemned as witches or agents of Satan. Initiation rites were suppressed as pagan and immoral. The domestic rituals that women performed such as offerings to ancestors, or prayers at household shrines were dismissed as superstition. In their place, missionaries promoted Christian patriarchy: the male-headed household, women's submission to husbands, and women's exclusion from Church leadership (Johnson-Bashua 12). Colonial administrations reinforced this transformation. Laws criminalizing "witchcraft" disproportionately targeted women healers as in the medieval era. Colonial courts refused to recognize women's religious authority. Also, colonial education provided almost exclusively by missions taught girls that indigenous religions were backward while Christianity was modern and civilized (Johnson-Bashua 15). The cumulative effect was profound. Women who had been religious leaders became, in the colonial imagination, superstitious obstacles to progress. The knowledge they carried such as in medicine, rituals, and cosmology was delegitimized. The status they had enjoyed was eroded and the transmission of indigenous traditions, which had depended on women's teaching, was disrupted for generations.

This misrepresentation led to the perception that women were passive participants in ATR, rather than active custodians of religious knowledge and practice. In reality, Igbo women historically held influential positions in both domestic and communal religious life, including leadership in women's assemblies and participation in ritual decision-making. They also played important roles in maintaining moral order through community-based institutions such as *umyada* (daughters of the lineage), which enforce ethical conduct and preserve cultural norms. Feminist scholars like Oyewumi argue that African social systems should not be interpreted strictly through Western gender frameworks, as such perspectives distort the fluidity and functionality of indigenous roles (33–35). This insight is essential for properly understanding womanhood in ATR. Furthermore, womanhood in Igbo ATR is deeply connected to spiritual symbolism, particularly through the reverence of female

deities and ancestral figures. Goddesses such as *Ala* (the earth deity) represent fertility, morality, justice, and communal balance, and are often associated with feminine spiritual power.

The earth is considered a mother figure that nurtures life and enforces moral order, reinforcing the symbolic importance of womanhood in Igbo cosmology. Women often serve as priestesses, diviners, or custodians of sacred shrines dedicated to such deities, further demonstrating their spiritual authority within the traditional system. This reinforces the idea that ATR does not exclude women from spiritual leadership, but rather integrates them into its symbolic and ritual structure. According to Oduyoye, African religious thought consistently reflects a deep connection between femininity, spirituality, and communal survival, especially through maternal symbolism (48–50). In this way, womanhood becomes a theological category within ATR, not just a social identity. In contemporary Igbo society, the influence of modernization, Christianity, and urbanization has reshaped the visible roles of women in ATR, but it has not completely erased their religious significance.

Many traditional practices still rely on women as transmitters of oral history, custodians of cultural festivals, and preservers of family rituals in both rural and urban settings. Even where formal religious structures have changed, the underlying cultural respect for women as life-givers and moral educators remains strong. However, modern religious shifts have also created tensions, sometimes limiting women's participation in overt ritual leadership while maintaining their influence in domestic spiritual life. Despite these changes, scholars argue that women continue to serve as the sustaining force of ATR through cultural resilience and generational transmission of beliefs (Oduyoye 53–55). Therefore, Igbo society provides a clear example of how womanhood remains deeply embedded in ATR, both historically and in contemporary contexts.

SUSTAINING FACTOR

According to the free English dictionary online, sustain means to be the physical support of; carry the weight of, admit as valid, establish or strengthen as with new evidence or facts, supply with necessities and support, provide with nourishment, lengthen or extend in duration or space. It also means to preserve, maintain, or keep something alive. Sustaining factor refers to the core variables that ensure a program, business, or initiative continues to deliver value and maintain operations after initial funding or implementation. Therefore, women as sustaining factor in ATR refers to the ways women preserve, protect, promote, and transmit African indigenous religious beliefs and practices from one generation to another.

To put it more concretely, women are key drivers in human, economic, social, and environmental management in ATR. Women sustain religion through childbirth, child upbringing, moral instruction, ritual participation, traditional healing, preservation of sacred customs, supportive organizational culture, and transmission of cultural values. Women are often regarded as the backbone of African communities because they maintain family unity and cultural continuity. Through motherhood and socialization, they shape the religious consciousness of younger generations. Hereto, women are the sustaining factor in ATR because the daily care of shrines and regular offering at the shrines are ensured mostly by women. Indeed, the role of women as sustainers of ATR is crucial to the survival of the religion.

ROLES OF WOMEN IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

African Traditional Religion is a lived and dynamic system of beliefs in which every member of the community contributes to its continuity and survival. Within this structure, women occupy a particularly significant position because they function not only as biological reproducers of life but also as cultural and spiritual transmitters of religious knowledge. Their roles cut across domestic, social, economic, and ritual spheres, making them indispensable to the maintenance of religious traditions. In many African societies, including the Igbo, religious life is not separated from everyday existence; rather, it is embedded in family structures, festivals, oral traditions, and communal responsibilities. As a result, women's participation becomes both direct and indirect, visible and symbolic. Scholars such as Mbiti emphasize that African religion is a communal enterprise in which every individual has a role to play in sustaining spiritual harmony (6–8). Against this background, the

roles of women in ATR can be critically examined under various dimensions. The evaluation below therefore examines their role in a more detailed and structured manner.

1. Women as Custodians of Tradition

Women in African Traditional Religion serve as primary custodians of cultural memory and traditional knowledge, ensuring that religious values are transmitted from one generation to another. Through storytelling, proverbs, folktales, and lullabies, they preserve the moral and spiritual teachings of the community in ways that are accessible to children and young adults. In Igbo society, grandmothers in particular play a vital role in narrating ancestral histories and explaining taboos and sacred customs that shape moral behavior. These oral traditions are not merely entertainment but serve as vehicles for religious instruction and identity formation. Women also ensure the continuity of ritual practices within the household, especially those connected to birth, naming ceremonies, and family protection rites. As Oduyoye notes, African women function as “bearers of memory” who sustain religious consciousness within the family structure (49–51). Without their contribution, much of ATR’s oral heritage would risk gradual disappearance.

2. Women in Rituals and Religious Ceremonies

Women actively participate in religious rituals and ceremonies that mark important communal events such as festivals, harvests, marriages, and funerals. In Igbo traditional religion, women play significant roles during the New Yam Festival, where they contribute through cooking, dancing, singing, and preparing ritual spaces that honor the earth deity, *Ala*. They also participate in libation ceremonies and communal prayers, especially in domestic and family-centered rituals (Asubonteng-Manu & Boateng 3). In many cases, women are responsible for preparing ritual offerings, including food items and symbolic materials used in worship. Their participation reflects not only cultural obligation, but also spiritual responsibility in maintaining harmony between the human and spiritual worlds. Olupona observes that African ritual life is sustained through collective participation, where women’s roles are essential for completeness and balance (121–123). This demonstrates that women are not passive observers but active agents in religious performance (Asubonteng-Manu & Boateng 6; Amadiume 178).

3. Women as Moral and Cultural Educators

Women play a central role in shaping the moral and ethical values of African Traditional Religion through their position within the family structure. As mothers, they are the first educators of children, teaching respect for elders, reverence for the gods, and adherence to communal norms. In Igbo society, mothers instill concepts such as *ezigbo omume* (good conduct) and *egwu chi* (reverence for personal destiny), which are foundational to religious morality. Through correction, discipline, and storytelling, they ensure that children grow up with a strong sense of spiritual responsibility. Women also influence communal ethics by participating in women’s assemblies such as *umuada*, (daughters in Igbo land) which enforce moral discipline within extended families and villages. These assemblies can impose sanctions on individuals who violate communal norms, thereby reinforcing social order. According to Mbiti, African moral education is deeply rooted in family life, where women as mothers play a primary role in shaping religious consciousness (Mbiti 10–12). Their influence ensures the stability of both religious and social systems.

Consequently, the maternal role in procreation and cosmic order is sacred. The religious significance of motherhood extends beyond biological reproduction. Women are understood as “mothers” of the community, responsible for nurturing not only children but the community’s spiritual life. The title “Mother” attached to female religious leaders such as *Mama* in many contexts, *Mbuya* among the Shona, signals that their authority derives from maternal qualities: nurturance, protection, wisdom, and life-giving power. Chirara & Chisale show how the *musha mukadzi* philosophy articulates this maternal sacred: “a home cannot be a home without a woman or wife” (4). Women are not merely residents of the home; they constitute the home as a human and spiritual space. Without a woman, the domestic rituals that maintain ancestral connections: daily prayers, offerings, hospitality to spirits will

cease. Ostensibly, the home's religious life depends on women's presence and activity (Chirara & Chisale 6).

4. Women in Spiritual and Healing Practices

Women also serve important roles as spiritual healers, diviners, and custodians of medicinal knowledge within African Traditional Religion. In many communities, they are believed to possess spiritual insight that enables them to interpret dreams, diagnose spiritual ailments, and prescribe herbal remedies (Zimoñ 49-51). Among the Igbo, some women function as traditional healers who combine herbal medicine with spiritual rituals to address both physical and metaphysical problems. They are often consulted in matters relating to fertility, protection from spiritual attacks, and purification rites. In certain cases, women also serve as priestesses of specific deities, acting as intermediaries between the spiritual and human realms. This spiritual authority reflects the recognition of feminine power within ATR cosmology. Oduyoye highlights that African spirituality often integrates healing and religion, with women occupying key roles in maintaining communal well-being (52–54). Their contributions demonstrate the inseparability of health, spirituality, and gender in African religious thought.

5. Women as Priestesses and Spiritual Leaders

Contrary to the assumption that African Traditional Religion is entirely male-dominated, many African societies recognize female spiritual leaders. Women serve as priestesses, mediums, diviners, prophets, and custodians of shrines. Frost explains that African women historically functioned as healers, oracles, and spiritual mediators whose influence sustained indigenous spirituality even during periods of colonial and missionary suppression (4). Among the Igbo, women participate in the worship of *Ala*, the earth goddess associated with morality, fertility, and justice. Female priests are respected because they are believed to possess spiritual authority and closeness to the deities. In many societies, women become spirit mediums through possession experiences. During rituals, they communicate messages from ancestors or divinities to the community. Such roles give women spiritual influence and social respect.

Recent studies on Igbo masquerade traditions also reveal that although some ritual spaces restricted women; women still influenced ritual organization, oral traditions, and cultural preservation behind the scenes (Ugezu 1; Nwankwo 25). Priestesses of *Ala* supervise rituals related to land purification and communal harmony. Additionally, women also function as traditional healers and diviners. They interpret dreams, diagnose spiritual problems, prescribe herbal remedies, and conduct cleansing rituals. Their services are sought during illness, infertility, conflict, and misfortune. Zimoñ argues that women frequently occupy important religious offices because African societies associate them with life, fertility, healing, and continuity (45). This association strengthens their role as sustaining factors in religion. Women's leadership in ATR demonstrates that spiritual authority is not limited to men alone. Although some societies restricted women from certain rituals, women still exercised considerable influence within the religious structure.

6. Women and Ancestor Veneration

Ancestor veneration is a central feature of African Traditional Religion. Ancestors are believed to remain spiritually active after death and continue to influence the lives of the living. They protect, guide, bless, and sometimes punish members of the community (Frost 9). Women contribute greatly to ancestor veneration through family rituals, memorial ceremonies, and preservation of lineage traditions. They maintain family shrines, prepare ritual meals, and teach younger generations about ancestral heritage. In many African societies, women are responsible for organizing funeral rites and mourning ceremonies. Funerals are not merely social events but important religious ceremonies that help the deceased transition into the spiritual world of the ancestors. Women also preserve genealogies and family histories. Through storytelling and oral tradition, they keep alive the memory of ancestors and ensure that family identity is maintained. The connection between women and ancestor veneration is particularly important because women are viewed as mothers of future

generations. Through childbirth and nurturing, they provide continuity between the living, the dead, and the unborn.

7. Women in Oral Traditions, Songs, and Festivals

Women contribute significantly to the preservation and expression of African Traditional Religion through oral arts such as songs, chants, and festival performances. In Igbo society, women compose and lead songs during rituals, funerals, and festivals, using music as a medium of spiritual communication and communal bonding. These songs often contain moral lessons, historical narratives, and religious reflections that reinforce communal identity. During festivals, women's dance groups and vocal performances create an atmosphere of spiritual celebration and unity. They also play a major role in funeral rites, where mourning songs guide the transition of the deceased into the ancestral realm. Such performances are not merely cultural expressions but are deeply embedded in religious meaning and symbolism. As Olupona explains, oral traditions are essential to African religion because they function as living texts that transmit sacred knowledge across generations (124–126). Women, therefore, remain central to the preservation of ATR's expressive and symbolic life.

MENSTRUAL BLOOD: POTENCY AND POLLUTION

The most persistent and puzzling feature of women's religious status in ATR is the ambivalence surrounding menstruation. Menstrual blood is simultaneously recognized as profoundly potent associated with fertility, life-giving power, and spiritual energy, yet also as polluting and dangerous in certain contexts. Frost documents this ambivalence across multiple African contexts (536). Among the Yoruba, menstrual blood is understood to carry *àṣẹ* (spiritual power to create or change things). Yet this same potency requires restriction. Menstruating women are excluded from certain rituals, agricultural activities, and sacred spaces. Among the Igbo of South East Nigeria, menstruating women may not approach the *obu/obi* (community ritual), handle ritual objects or cook for the *eze nmo* (chief priest). Similarly, among the Balobedu of South Africa, only post-menopausal women can brew the beer for rainmaking ceremonies because younger women are considered "hot"—their menstrual potency disrupts the "coolness" required to attract rain (Setume 94).

This ambivalence is not easily characterized as either "oppressive" or "empowering." On one level, menstrual taboos exclude women from full participation in religious life, reinforcing their subordinate status. On another hand, the recognition that menstrual blood carries spiritual power that men do not possess provides women with a form of religious capital that cannot be dismissed. As Frost argues, the restriction is paradoxical: "the perceived potency of menstruation both limits women's ritual participation and marks them as spiritually powerful" (537). Nonetheless, if menstruation is ambivalent, childbirth and motherhood are unequivocally sacred in ATR cosmology. The ability to bear children is understood as participation in the divine creative power that sustains the cosmos. Women who bear many children, especially sons are honored as having fulfilled their religious as well as social purpose. Zimoñ explains that "nonliterate peoples consider life to be the fundamental value and that is the reason why their cultural and religious traditions put emphasis on woman's biological functions and see procreation as her main vocation and task" (48).

This emphasis on procreation as religious vocation has complex implications. It valorizes women's reproductive role, giving women who bear children genuine religious status. Yet, it also confines women's identity to reproduction, making childlessness a religious tragedy and potentially excluding barren women from full religious participation. The religious significance of motherhood extends beyond biological reproduction. Women are understood as "mothers" of the community, responsible for nurturing not only children, but the community's spiritual life. The title "Mother" attached to female religious leaders, *Mama* in many contexts, *Mbuya* among the Shona of Southern Africa; signals that their authority derives from maternal qualities: nurturance, protection, wisdom, and life-giving power. Chirara & Chisale show how the *musha mukadzi* philosophy (translated as "home is a woman" in Shona, or *umuzi ngumama* in Ndebele) articulates this maternal sacred: "a home cannot be a home without a woman or wife" (4). Women are not merely residents of the home; they constitute the home as a human and spiritual space. Without a woman, the domestic rituals that maintain

ancestral connections: daily prayers, offerings, and hospitality to spirits will cease. The home's religious life depends on women's presence and activity (Chirara & Chisale 6).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted sustainable livelihoods theory developed by Robert Chambers & Gordon Conway in 1992. Chambers & Conway define sustainability as self-sufficiency and an important ideology of long-term self-restraint and self-reliance. It is used to refer to life styles which touch the earth lightly; to institutions which can raise their own revenue; to processes which are self-supporting without subsidy. Women are sustaining factor in ATR because they can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance their capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation (6). Applying this framework to religion, a religious tradition is sustained when its practices, beliefs, and institutions are transmitted across generations, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain vitality despite external pressures. Chirara & Chisale applied this framework to women's roles in Africa, showing how the philosophy of *musha mukadzi* (women make the home) functions as a resource for sustainable livelihoods (5).

They argue that while this proverb can be used oppressively; that is, confining women to domestic labor and excluding them from decision-making; grassroots women reinterpret it as empowering, using its cultural authority to claim space for income-generating activities, household management, and community leadership (7). This study extends this analysis from economic livelihoods to religious sustainability. Women sustain ATR through multiple mechanisms: the transmission of ritual knowledge to children; the performance of domestic rites that maintain ancestral connections; service as healers and diviners who address daily spiritual needs; leadership in rites of passage that reproduce the religious community; and, increasingly, conscious efforts to revive and valorize indigenous traditions.

Women as sustaining factor in ATR implies that continuity, transmission, and daily practice of ATR depend disproportionately on women's ritual labor, spiritual agency, and cultural memory. Despite their marginalization, women sustain ATR through creative negotiation with the very structures that limit them. Hereto, sustainability is used in a more focused manner to mean the ability to maintain and improve religious practices, while maintaining or enhancing the local and global assets and capabilities on which ATR depends. Therefore, the theory provides a suitable framework for understanding how the continuity, transmission, and daily practice of ATR depend disproportionately on women's ritual labor, spiritual agency, and cultural memory.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted qualitative research design; collected secondary data from books, journal publications, and online sources. Content analysis of secondary data was employed to identify themes, patterns, and challenges. Content analysis was also used to move beyond description by examining relationships and underlying factors associated with the role of women in ATR, thereby helping to explain why and how its various roles continue to sustain the peoples' religion. This method of data collection was a deliberate attempt to narrow this study down to a specific concern, bearing in mind that collecting data based on real situations in the Igbo society will make the difference during analysis of data collected. This method is phenomenological.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects. Instead, the researcher relied on participant observation as the primary sources of data collection. The researcher also did not reveal any cultural knowledge that might be deemed sensitive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of findings in this study is presented in line with the research objective.

Objective One: The contributions of Women in African Traditional Religion

The findings reveal that women contribute significantly to the survival of ATR through multiple interconnected roles that sustain both belief and practice across generations. Their influence is most visible in the family structure, where they serve as the first point of religious instruction for children (Amadiume 178; Chirara & Chisale 6; Oduyoye 49–51). In Igbo society, women also maintain oral traditions and actively participate in rituals that strengthen communal religious identity. Their contributions ensure that ATR remains a lived and functional system rather than a forgotten heritage. The key contributions of women in ATR include:

1. Primary transmission of moral and religious values to children within the household.
2. Preservation of oral traditions such as folktales, proverbs, and songs.
3. Active participation in rituals such as naming ceremonies, marriages, and funerals.
4. Involvement in festivals like the New Yam Festival (*iri ji*) through songs, dance, and preparation of ritual foods.
5. Maintenance of domestic religious practices and ancestral reverence.
6. Participation in women's associations (e.g., *umuada* in Igbo society) that enforce moral order.
7. Acting as cultural memory keepers who preserve historical and spiritual identity.

As Oduyoye emphasizes, African women function as “bearers of tradition,” ensuring the continuity of spiritual and cultural identity within African communities (50–52).

Objective Two: Limitations and Challenges Faced by Women in ATR

Despite their significant contributions, women in ATR face structural and cultural limitations that restrict the full recognition of their religious authority. These limitations are often shaped by social expectations, gender roles, and institutional arrangements within traditional systems. The same traditions that empower women as mothers and healers also restrict them as menstruating and potentially polluting. While women are active participants in religious life, their roles are sometimes confined to supportive or domestic spaces rather than formal leadership positions. Key limitations and challenges include:

1. Restricted access to certain sacred offices and priesthood roles.
2. Limited participation in some male-dominated ancestral or political rituals.
3. Social expectation of prioritizing domestic and reproductive responsibilities.
4. Underrepresentation in formal religious decision-making structures.
5. Cultural restrictions placed on women in specific ritual spaces.
6. Misinterpretation of women's roles due to external (colonial) gender frameworks.
7. Reduced visibility of women's authority in written historical accounts.

Against this backdrop, women sustain ATR from positions that are simultaneously central and marginal. They are excluded from certain rituals and leadership positions, yet their everyday practice such as domestic offerings, healing work, initiation instruction, and ritual expertise keep the religious system alive. On this score, Oyewumi argues that African gender systems have often been distorted by external interpretations that imposed rigid hierarchies not always reflective of indigenous realities (34–36).

Objective Three: Influence of Patriarchy and Social Structures

It was found that patriarchal systems have played a significant role in shaping the structure of religious authority in many African societies, including Igbo culture. While women are deeply involved in religious practice, formal leadership and ritual authority are often structured in ways that favor men. Ironically, many of the sweeping restrictions now being imposed on women are modern inventions, projected backwards and falsely presented as ancient tradition. Our forebears were far more nuanced than many people imagine. They understood distinctions. They created different cultural institutions for different purposes and made room for women to participate in community life according to those distinctions. Nevertheless, patriarchy creates a tension between participation and institutional recognition, where women contribute extensively but are not always visible in formal decision-making roles. Key influences of patriarchy include:

1. Male dominance in kingship rituals and lineage leadership systems.
2. Control of major priesthood and ancestral cult offices by men in many communities.
3. Structuring of authority systems along patrilineal inheritance lines
4. Social prioritization of male religious leadership roles.
5. Gendered division between “public authority” (male) and “domestic spirituality” (female).
6. Restriction of women’s roles in some sacred or esoteric rituals.
7. However, there is the existence of powerful women’s institutions like *umuada* that balance authority in Igbo societies.

To underscore this, Olupona notes that African religious systems are diverse and cannot be reduced to a single patriarchal model, as women’s institutions also exercise significant social and moral authority (123–125).

Objective Four: Impact of Modern Religion and Western Civilization

Further findings showed that the introduction of Christianity, Islam, and Western education has significantly transformed African Traditional Religion and reshaped the roles of women within it. Many indigenous practices were reclassified or discouraged, leading to the decline of certain female-centered ritual roles. However, women have also adapted by preserving aspects of ATR within domestic and cultural contexts, ensuring continuity despite external pressure. Key impacts include:

1. Decline of some traditional female priesthood and divination roles.
2. Reinterpretation of ATR practices as incompatible with modern religions.
3. Reduction in public visibility of women in traditional ritual spaces.
4. Shift of religious authority toward Christian and Islamic institutions.
5. Continued preservation of ATR practices within homes and families.
6. Adaptation of traditional beliefs into cultural rather than formal religious practice.
7. Increased dual religious identity among many African women.

Mbiti notes that African religiosity persists most strongly at the family level, where women continue to play a central role despite institutional religious change (14–16).

Objective Five: Contemporary Relevance of Women in African Traditional Religion

Another major finding is that, in contemporary African society, women remain central to the survival and adaptation of ATR, even in the face of globalization, urbanization, and religious pluralism. Their roles have shifted from formal ritual authority to cultural preservation and identity maintenance, but their influence remains deeply significant. Women continue to ensure that traditional values, songs, and rituals are not lost in modern society. Key aspects of contemporary relevance include:

1. Preservation of cultural festivals and traditional celebrations.
2. Continued transmission of oral traditions and moral teachings.
3. Maintenance of family-based spiritual practices and ancestral respect.
4. Active role in cultural identity formation in urban and rural settings.
5. Sustaining intergenerational continuity of indigenous knowledge.
6. Acting as cultural bridges between tradition and modernity.

To underscore this, Oduyoye highlights that African women continue to embody resilience and cultural continuity, ensuring that indigenous religious identity survives within changing social environments (54–56).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the findings of this research, these recommendations are hereby proposed:

- i. For scholars of religion, the role of women in ATR as "religious authority" must be conceptualized broadly. Formal leadership positions are only one dimension of religious power. The authority to transmit knowledge, perform essential rituals, and maintain everyday religious practice may be equally significant for religious sustainability.

- ii. For African feminist theologians, indigenous traditions are resources for liberation, but not uncritically. The same traditions that empower women as mothers and healers also restrict them as menstruating and potentially polluting. Feminist reconstruction must engage this ambiguity, rather than dismissing ATR as irredeemably patriarchal nor romanticizing it as proto-feminist.
- iii. For practitioners seeking to sustain ATR in contemporary contexts, supporting women's religious roles is essential. Revitalization efforts that exclude or marginalize women are unlikely to succeed, for they would cut the tradition off from the very practices that have ensured its survival through centuries of change.
- iv. For ethnographers, further attention to women's own interpretations of how they understand their religious roles and negotiate their constraints, could deepen their understanding of religious agency.
- v. For women's religious status in African society and culture, they should continue to negotiate, accommodate, and transform. Their capacity to sustain ATR depends precisely on this negotiation, that is, on their ability to work within constraints while exploiting possibilities.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of women as sustaining factor in ATR. The findings revealed that survival and continuity of ATR depends greatly on the active participation and resilience of women within African society and culture. Through their roles as custodians of oral tradition, moral educators, ritual participants, healers, and preservers of cultural identity, women have remained indispensable to the maintenance of indigenous religious life. Although patriarchal structures, colonial influence, modernization, and the spread of foreign religions have affected the visibility and authority of women in ATR, further findings shows that, their contributions remain foundational to its continuity, especially within the family and communal structure. The Igbo society clearly demonstrates that women are not peripheral participants in African spirituality, but vital sustaining forces whose influence continues to shape the preservation and transmission of traditional religious values across generations.

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INTIMACY, POWER AND INFORMATION ASYMMETRY IN *NKA DỊ NA NTỊ* AND *ONYE ỌMA EMEKA*

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Abstract

Romantic relationships in literary texts are often represented primarily as spaces of affection, companionship and anticipated marriage. However, intimacy can also become a site where economic resources, information and agency are contested. This study examines the relationship between romantic intimacy and power in B. E. Okoro's Nka Dị Na Ntị and Mmuotulumanya J. Okafo's Onye Ọma Emeka, with particular attention to deception, informational asymmetry and economic consequences. Using Michel Foucault's relational conception of power as the theoretical framework, the study adopts a qualitative textual and comparative approach. It argues that economic capacity does not necessarily guarantee relational power. In both texts, male characters possess significant material resources, but female characters gain influence through control of information and manipulation of emotional attachment. The analysis further demonstrates that concealed knowledge compromises agency by limiting the ability of characters to make fully informed decisions. The concealed-substance motif is particularly significant in both works, although it produces different consequences: emotional and economic depletion in Onye Ọma Emeka and physical death in Nka Dị Na Ntị. The study concludes that romantic intimacy in the two texts functions as a contested site where economic, emotional and informational forms of power intersect and shift. It contributes to the study of Igbo written literature by foregrounding the relationship between intimacy, information asymmetry, economic behaviour and agency.

Introduction

In literature, romantic relationships are commonly portrayed as expressions of love, desire, companionship and the hope of marriage. Nevertheless, such relationships are not shaped by emotions alone, rather, they are also influenced by the social, economic and cultural circumstances within which they develop. The exchange of affection may involve material resources, expectations, information and obligations, while unequal access to knowledge can influence who exercises control within a relationship. Recent African literary scholarship has consequently drawn attention to intimacy as a site through which broader relations of power can be examined (Bámgbósé, 2021; Adebani, 2022). Such an approach is particularly useful for examining literary representations in which romantic attachment intersects with economic behaviour and deception.

Power, from a Foucauldian perspective, is not simply a possession permanently held by one individual; rather, it is exercised within relationships and may shift according to changing circumstances and positions (Foucault, 1978). Haugaard (2022) emphasises the relational character of power, while Engstrand and Enberg (2020) demonstrate how power can operate through relational positioning and unequal access to knowledge. More recently, Offer, Rahwana and Hertwig (2024) draw attention to the significance of not knowing in power relations. These perspectives provide a useful basis for examining relationships in which one character possesses material resources while another possesses privileged information about the relationship or the intentions of the participants.

This study applies this perspective to B. E. Okoro's *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and Mmuotulumanya J. Okafo's *Onye Ọma Emeka*. In *Nka Dị Na Ntị*, Njoku's economic investment in Ezinwaanyi creates an expectation of marriage, but her knowledge of her own intentions gives her a different form of power

within the relationship. In *Onye Oma Emeka*, Emeka's education, employment and income provide him with considerable economic capacity, yet Nwanneuka's concealed intervention and control of information enable her to influence his emotional and financial behaviour. In both texts, therefore, economic resources do not necessarily correspond to relational control.

Although *Nka Di Na Nti* has received scholarly attention in studies of written Igbo drama, including Onuegbu's (2010) study of the representation of women, and *Onye Oma Emeka* is recognised within the history of the Igbo novel (Emenyonu, 2020), the scholarship consulted for this study does not appear to have adequately examined the two works comparatively through the intersection of romantic intimacy, informational asymmetry, economic relations and agency. This study addresses that gap through a qualitative textual and comparative analysis, using Foucault's relational conception of power as its principal theoretical framework. It examines how economic, emotional and informational forms of power are distributed and transformed within the relationships represented in the two texts, with particular attention to deception and the concealed-substance motif. It argues that romantic intimacy becomes a contested site of power in which material resources can be redirected, agency can be compromised by unequal knowledge, and power can shift between participants with significant economic and personal consequences.

Power, Agency and Intimacy

The central concepts in this study are power, agency, intimacy and information. Power is understood not simply as the possession of material resources or formal authority but as a relational process through which individuals influence, constrain and shape one another's actions. Such an understanding is particularly relevant to intimate relationships, where economic resources do not necessarily correspond with emotional or relational control. A character may possess financial resources while another possesses privileged information or greater influence within the relationship. Power can therefore shift without a corresponding change in the participants' social or economic positions (Haugaard, 2022).

Intimacy here refers to romantic, emotional, and prospective marital interactions. Far from being a purely private emotional experience, intimacy is entangled with material needs, personal motives, and social ambitions (Bámgbóşé, 2021; Adebani, 2022). Agency, meanwhile, refers to a character's ability to make choices and act on them. Yet agency is not just about the freedom to choose; it depends heavily on what a person knows when making a decision. When crucial facts are hidden, a decision that looks voluntary on the surface is actually manipulated.

Agency refers to the capacity of characters to make decisions and act within particular social circumstances. Agency does not necessarily imply complete freedom from external influences. Rather, the conditions under which a decision is made may enable or constrain an individual's capacity for autonomous action. This distinction is important in the two texts because the male protagonists make significant decisions without possessing information that is available to the women with whom they are involved. The resulting disparity raises questions about the extent to which apparently voluntary actions remain autonomous when the conditions surrounding them have been deliberately manipulated.

Foucault's Relational Conception of Power

Michel Foucault's relational model of power serves as the core framework for this analysis. Foucault (1978) rejected the idea that power is a commodity owned by one group and used against another. Instead, power flows through social practices, institutional structures, and everyday encounters. It circulates continuously, putting actors into shifting positions of strength and vulnerability.

Key to this dynamic is the link between power and knowledge. Controlling information gives an actor a distinct edge when others are kept in the dark (Engstrand & Enberg, 2020). Modern Foucauldian theorists emphasize that strategic ignorance of what a person is prevented from knowing can shape human behavior just as forcefully as physical constraint (Offer et al., 2024).

This theoretical perspective is applicable to the relationships represented in *Nka Di Na Nti* and *Onye Oma Emeka*. In *Nka Di Na Nti*, Njoku initially possesses substantial economic resources and uses them to support Eziwaanyi's education and other needs. His economic position, however, does not

provide him with equivalent knowledge of her intentions. Ezinwaanyi's privileged knowledge of her own intentions consequently constitutes a different form of relational power. In *Onye Qma Emeka*, Emeka possesses education, employment and income, but Nwanneuka possesses knowledge concerning the concealed substance administered through his food. This informational asymmetry becomes significant when his subsequent emotional and economic behaviour changes.

The framework therefore makes it possible to distinguish economic power from relational and informational power. Economic resources may provide material influence, but privileged information may enable another character to manipulate decisions and behaviour. The study consequently examines how economic, informational and emotional forms of power intersect and change within intimate relationships rather than assuming that power belongs inherently to either the male or female characters.

Foucault's conception also accommodates the possibility of reversal because power relations are neither fixed nor permanently possessed. As power operates relationally, changes in circumstances can alter the position of actors within a relationship (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022). This principle is particularly useful for analysing the two texts, where characters who initially appear economically powerful subsequently experience forms of relational vulnerability, while characters with less economic power temporarily acquire considerable influence through information and intimacy. The study therefore uses the Foucauldian framework to examine romantic intimacy as a contested space in which power is continuously negotiated, exercised and transformed.

Concise Synopsis of *Nka Dị na Ntị*

Nka dị na ntị centres on Njoko, an Aba-based trader whose financial success, extravagant lifestyle, and romantic involvement with Eziwanyi shape the major events of the drama. Njoko finances Eziwanyi's education with the expectation that they will eventually marry. However, Eziwanyi secretly views the relationship as an opportunity for financial gain and later rejects Njoko because of his lack of formal education, eventually marrying a wealthier man. Following the destruction of his property and loss of his wealth, Njoko relocates to Lagos, where he rebuilds his fortune. He subsequently returns to Eziwanyi, hoping to revive their relationship, but discovers that she is married. Their encounter takes a tragic turn when Eziwanyi uses a poisonous substance, disguised as a love-enhancing potion, in an attempt to manipulate her husband. Njoko unknowingly consumes the substance and dies. The drama thus presents romantic intimacy as a space in which affection, material interests, deception, and personal vulnerability intersect.

Concise Synopsis of *Onye Qma Emeka*

Onye Qma Emeka centres on Emeka, whose father, Okoro, insists on his education after experiencing the economic limitations associated with being uneducated. Despite initial opposition from the community and Emeka's mother, he acquires an education, secures employment, and rises to become a successful and respected young man. His fortunes, however, change when Wanne Oka, a teacher from a wealthy family, expresses romantic interest in him. She secretly uses a love potion to intensify his affection and gradually gains control over his resources. Under her influence, Emeka becomes extravagant, borrows money, neglects his work, and eventually loses his job and possessions. Wanne Oka subsequently abandons him and moves on to exploit another man. Her attempt to steal from the man ends in a fatal accident, which Emeka interprets as divine retribution. The narrative therefore explores the intersection of romantic desire, economic exploitation, deception, and the consequences of misplaced trust.

Economic Power and Romantic Investment in *Nka Dị Na Ntị*

B. E. Okoro's *Nka Dị Na Ntị* presents romantic attachment within an environment in which economic resources significantly shape the expectations of the characters. Njoku's relationship with Ezinwaanyi is initially structured around his economic capacity and his expectation that material investment will eventually produce marital commitment. He finances her education and provides other forms of material support because he regards her as a prospective wife. Economic power therefore constitutes

an important basis of Njoku's confidence in the relationship. However, the narrative simultaneously demonstrates that material investment does not guarantee emotional reciprocity or relational control.

Njoku's position illustrates the distinction between economic power and relational power. His ability to provide money, educational support and material necessities gives him an apparent advantage. Yet his understanding of the relationship is based on an assumption that Ezinwaanyi shares his intention of eventual marriage. Ezinwaanyi, by contrast, possesses information that Njoku does not: she does not regard the relationship in the same way and does not intend to marry him. The resulting disparity is significant because Njoku's economic investment is made under an understanding of the relationship that is not shared by its recipient. His money therefore gives him material influence without giving him control over the meaning or future of the relationship.

This situation illustrates Foucault's (1978) proposition that power operates relationally rather than existing permanently as the possession of one individual. Njoku has greater economic resources, but Ezinwaanyi possesses privileged knowledge concerning her intentions. The relationship consequently contains two different forms of power that do not coincide. Njoku can determine what material resources he provides, while Ezinwaanyi can determine what she knows and withholds about her commitment. As Haugaard (2022) observes in his reassessment of Foucauldian power, power relations are better understood through interactions between actors than through a simple division between a powerful individual and a powerless one.

The economic dimension of the relationship also exposes an instrumental understanding of intimacy. Njoku does not merely provide for Ezinwaanyi in the present; his material support is connected to an anticipated future marriage. His expenditure consequently becomes an investment in an expected relationship. Ezinwaanyi's response, however, separates the receipt of material benefits from the fulfilment of Njoku's expectation. This separation creates the possibility of exploitation because one participant understands the economic exchange as part of a developing commitment while the other can receive the benefits without accepting the anticipated obligation.

The narrative intensifies this imbalance when Njoku experiences economic catastrophe. His house and possessions are destroyed, leaving him without the wealth that had previously defined his social position. The change exposes the instability of economic power. Ezinwaanyi's subsequent withdrawal from the relationship demonstrates that her attachment is closely connected to Njoku's economic condition. The important point, however, is not merely that she abandons him when he becomes poor. Rather, the episode reveals how strongly the relationship had been organised around unequal expectations concerning material resources and emotional commitment. Njoku discovers that the economic resources through which he had previously exercised influence cannot secure continued access to the relationship.

His journey to Lagos and economic recovery produces another transformation. When Njoku returns with renewed wealth, he attempts to revive his relationship with Ezinwaanyi. His economic recovery restores the material power he previously possessed, but it does not restore the relationship. Ezinwaanyi has married another man and therefore exercises the power to refuse Njoku's renewed claim. Njoku's question concerning the amount paid for her marriage further exposes the economic language through which he understands the relationship. By imagining that the husband's expenditure can be repaid, he treats marriage partly as an economic transaction that can be reversed through superior financial capacity.

The episode is significant because Njoku's renewed wealth fails to produce the outcome he expects. His economic power has returned, but his relational position has changed. This supports the argument that economic power and relational power are not interchangeable. The narrative thus moves beyond a simple opposition between a wealthy man and a financially dependent woman. Instead, it presents a relationship in which power changes according to the resources, information and choices available to each participant.

The contrast between Njoku's economic position and Ezinwaanyi's relational position becomes most dangerous when their relationship is re-established in an intimate setting. Njoku enters her marital space believing that the encounter is associated with affection and perhaps the possibility of renewed

intimacy. Ezinwaanyi, however, possesses knowledge of an intention that is concealed from him. The private setting therefore becomes a site in which the informational imbalance becomes more consequential than Njoku's economic advantage.

The trajectory of Njoku's relationship consequently demonstrates the instability of power within romantic intimacy. He begins with economic advantage, loses it through catastrophe, regains it through personal effort, and nevertheless remains vulnerable because his economic resources do not give him equivalent access to Ezinwaanyi's intentions. The text therefore constructs intimacy as a space in which material power can be displaced by informational and relational power. Njoku's eventual death completes this reversal: the character who appears economically powerful becomes physically and decisively powerless within the intimate relationship.

Information, Deception and the Reversal of Power in *Nka Di Na Nti*

If economic resources initially give Njoku a degree of power in his relationship with Ezinwaanyi, control over information gradually produces a different configuration of power. Ezinwaanyi possesses knowledge that Njoku does not: she knows the limits of her commitment to him and, ultimately, the purpose of the substance involved in their final encounter. The unequal distribution of knowledge therefore becomes central to the transformation of their relationship. This supports a Foucauldian understanding of power as relational and exercised through unequal positions rather than possessed permanently by one individual (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022).

From the beginning of the relationship, Njoku interprets his material investment in Ezinwaanyi within the expectation of marriage. His provision of money, food and educational expenses creates, in his understanding, a shared future towards which his sacrifices are directed. Ezinwaanyi, however, does not disclose an equivalent commitment. Her eventual marriage to another man reveals that the two characters have been operating with different understandings of the relationship. The significant issue here is not simply that Ezinwaanyi deceives Njoku, but that she possesses information about the relationship that he does not possess. The resulting asymmetry makes it possible for her to make decisions while Njoku continues to act on incomplete knowledge.

The significance of this asymmetry becomes clearer when Njoku returns after rebuilding his economic life. His renewed wealth does not restore the relationship because the central obstacle is no longer his material condition. Ezinwaanyi has already made a decision concerning her marital life, while Njoku approaches the encounter with a different understanding of their relationship. Thus, the earlier assumption that economic investment guarantees relational access is further undermined. What Njoku possesses materially cannot compensate for what he lacks informationally.

The final encounter intensifies this unequal distribution of knowledge. Ezinwaanyi receives Njoku in her home when her husband is absent and prepares food for him. Njoku, believing that the substance he brings can produce affection between Ezinwaanyi and her husband, enters the encounter without knowing that Ezinwaanyi has a different intention. The object therefore acquires different meanings for the two characters. To Njoku, it is associated with love and relational influence; to Ezinwaanyi, it becomes an instrument through which she can redirect the danger intended for another person towards Njoku himself. The dramatic effect depends precisely on the fact that Njoku does not possess the information necessary to interpret the situation correctly.

This is where the relationship between knowledge and power becomes particularly important. Foucault's conception of power does not reduce power to physical force or ownership of resources; power operates through relationships, practices and the production and circulation of knowledge (Foucault, 1978). More recent Foucauldian scholarship similarly emphasizes that knowledge positions people differently within social interactions, while the possession or withholding of knowledge can affect what actors are able to perceive and do (Haugaard, 2022; Offer, Rahwana, & Hertwig, 2024). In *Nka Di Na Nti*, Ezinwaanyi's advantage in the final encounter is therefore not economic. It is informational. She knows what Njoku does not know, and this knowledge enables her to control the meaning and direction of the encounter.

This dynamic complicates standard ideas of personal agency. Njoku appears to act freely when he visits her and offers the substance, but his choices are grounded in false information. His capacity to

act remains intact, but his ability to make a meaningful choice is compromised because he cannot see the true context. Ezinwaanyi, working with full knowledge, directs the scene. Agency, the play suggests, is not just about making a choice, rather, it depends heavily on what you know when you make it.

Ezinwaanyi's control, however, should not be equated automatically with empowerment. Her ability to manipulate the situation represents a temporary reversal of relational power, but it does not establish a stable or emancipatory form of power. Indeed, the reversal culminates in Njoku's death. The dramatic consequence suggests that power exercised through deception can become destructive even for the person who successfully controls the immediate encounter. The relationship therefore moves beyond a simple opposition between a powerful man and a powerless woman. Instead, the text constructs a shifting field in which economic, emotional and informational forms of power continually alter the positions of the characters.

The final reversal is particularly significant because Njoku's earlier economic dominance does not protect him from the consequences of informational vulnerability. The man who could provide educational and material resources to Ezinwaanyi becomes the person whose lack of knowledge makes him vulnerable to her actions. The relationship thus demonstrates that material power and relational power do not necessarily coincide. A character may possess considerable economic resources and yet occupy a vulnerable position when another participant controls crucial information.

Through this reversal, *Nka Di Na Nti* presents romantic intimacy as a space in which power can be concealed beneath ordinary interpersonal practices. Courtship, provision, hospitality, food and apparent affection become entangled with knowledge and intention. The drama consequently shifts attention from the question of who possesses more resources to the question of who knows what, who is able to conceal it, and how that unequal knowledge affects the choices available to the other person. Information, rather than money alone, becomes a decisive instrument in the redistribution of power.

From Emotional Attachment to Economic Depletion in Onye Oma Emeka

The relationship between Emeka and Nwanneuka in *Onye Oma Emeka* presents another configuration of intimacy and power, but with a different trajectory from that of Njoku and Ezinwaanyi. Emeka enters the relationship from a position of considerable social and economic promise. His education and subsequent employment represent the material realization of his father's desire that he should acquire the opportunities that had been denied to the older generation. Education therefore gives Emeka not only social mobility but also productive capacity. His relationship with Nwanneuka subsequently becomes the context in which this capacity is redirected from accumulation and productivity towards emotional and material depletion.

Nwanneuka initially appears to offer a relationship compatible with Emeka's aspirations. Her presentation of herself as educated and socially suitable, together with her promise to contribute towards the expenses associated with marriage, creates an impression of mutual commitment. The relationship therefore does not begin as an obvious struggle for economic control. Rather, it is constituted through expectations of companionship, marriage and reciprocal contribution. This apparent reciprocity is important because it enables Nwanneuka to gain Emeka's trust before the relationship becomes exploitative.

The significant transformation occurs through the concealed administration of the substance intended to intensify Emeka's attachment. Because Emeka does not know what is being administered to him or the intention behind it, his subsequent conduct cannot be understood simply as a series of fully informed choices. His increasing attachment to Nwanneuka is accompanied by excessive expenditure, borrowing and neglect of responsibilities. The relationship consequently begins to affect the economic and professional dimensions of his life.

The connection between intimacy and economic depletion is particularly significant. Emeka's money is not taken from him through an overt demand or conventional act of theft at the beginning of the relationship. Rather, his emotional attachment becomes the mechanism through which his resources are progressively redirected. He spends beyond what his circumstances reasonably permit because his perception of the relationship has been altered. In this sense, the text presents economic exploitation

as relationally mediated: money changes hands because intimacy has first altered the conditions under which Emeka makes decisions.

This pattern reinforces the distinction between economic power and relational power established in the discussion of *Nka Dị Na Ntị*. Emeka possesses income and social status derived from education and employment, but Nwanneuka exercises another form of power by controlling information about the relationship. The person who controls the resources is therefore not necessarily the person who controls the interaction. Foucault's relational conception of power is useful here because it allows power to be located within the interaction itself rather than assigned permanently to the economically stronger character (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022).

The consequences extend beyond Emeka's finances. His excessive attachment contributes to the neglect of his professional responsibilities, eventually resulting in his suspension. The text therefore connects romantic manipulation to the erosion of productive capacity. What begins as an intimate relationship affects employment, reputation and economic security. The significance of this development lies in the fact that exploitation is not represented merely through the loss of money. The more consequential loss is the gradual weakening of the social and economic structures through which Emeka sustains himself.

The eventual emptying of Emeka's house and Nwanneuka's departure make the material consequences of the relationship unmistakable. Nwanneuka has benefited from the resources generated through Emeka's labour while he has suffered both economic and professional decline. The movement of resources thus mirrors the movement of power: as Emeka's productive and economic position weakens, Nwanneuka's capacity to determine the direction of the relationship increases.

The text nevertheless complicates a straightforward victim-perpetrator interpretation through Nwanneuka's subsequent actions. Her attempt to repeat the same pattern with another man indicates that the behaviour is not confined to her relationship with Emeka. Her eventual death while fleeing after another theft also introduces consequence into the narrative. This does not erase the harm done to Emeka, nor does it transform the earlier exploitation into justice in any simple sense. Rather, it demonstrates the instability of manipulative power. Power acquired through deception may produce immediate control, but it does not necessarily provide lasting security for the person exercising it.

The episode also returns the discussion to agency. Nwanneuka exercises deliberate agency in concealing her intentions and directing the relationship, whereas Emeka continues to act according to an understanding of the relationship that has been deliberately distorted. His actions remain his own, but the conditions under which he makes them have been manipulated. His financial collapse can not be seen as simple personal carelessness, rather, his downfall happens within a relationship built on deliberate deception.

The novel therefore represents romantic intimacy as a potentially consequential economic relationship. Education, employment and income give Emeka considerable productive power, but these resources become vulnerable when emotional attachment is manipulated through concealed knowledge. The resulting reversal demonstrates that economic power is contingent: it can be weakened when the individual who possesses material resources loses control over the informational and emotional dimensions of an intimate relationship.

Unlike *Nka Dị Na Ntị*, where the unequal distribution of information culminates rapidly in physical death, *Onye Qma Emeka* develops the consequences gradually through emotional attachment, financial depletion and professional decline. Yet both texts arrive at a comparable insight: intimacy can become a channel through which power is redistributed, particularly when one participant possesses knowledge that the other lacks. The difference in the consequences of the two relationships makes the concealed substance especially significant as a comparative motif.

The Concealed Substance and the Crisis of Agency: A Comparative Reading

A major point of convergence between *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and *Onye Qma Emeka* is the use of a concealed substance within an intimate relationship. In both texts, the substance creates an unequal knowledge

situation in which one character acts without knowing the intention behind what is being done. The motif therefore connects intimacy with knowledge, agency and power.

In *Nka Dị Na Ntị*, Njoku brings the substance pretending that it will influence Ezinwaanyi's relationship with her husband. Ezinwaanyi, however, understands the situation differently and redirects the substance into the food prepared for him, resulting in his death. In *Onye Oma Emeka*, Nwanneuka secretly administers a substance to Emeka, intensifying his attachment to her without his knowledge. Although the consequences differ, both situations show that economic strength does not necessarily produce relational control. Njoku has material resources, while Emeka has education, employment and income, but both become vulnerable because another person possesses information they lack.

This unequal distribution of knowledge is important to a Foucauldian reading of power. Power does not depend only on wealth or social position; it can also operate through relationships and access to knowledge (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022). Engstrand and Enberg (2020) and Offer, Rahwana and Hertwig (2024) similarly draw attention to the role of knowledge and ignorance in power relations. In the two texts, what the male characters do not know affects the decisions they make and the consequences they face.

The situation also complicates the idea of agency. Njoku and Emeka are capable of making choices, but those choices are made under conditions of incomplete information. Njoku consumes the food without knowing Ezinwaanyi's intention, while Emeka spends money and changes his behaviour without knowing the cause of his intensified attachment. The texts therefore distinguish between simply acting and acting with adequate knowledge.

The economic consequences further connect the two works. Emeka's manipulation leads gradually to excessive spending, borrowing, neglect of work and economic decline, whereas Njoku's final encounter ends in immediate physical death. The concealed substance thus becomes more than a plot device: it exposes how unequal knowledge can compromise agency and turn intimacy into a means of control.

The two texts also complicate any simple interpretation of the female characters' actions as female empowerment. Their ability to influence men demonstrates agency, but the destructive consequences of their actions reveal the limits of power exercised through deception. What emerges is a shifting relationship in which economic, emotional and informational power do not always belong to the same person.

Reversal, Consequence and the Limits of Manipulative Power

The power relations in *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and *Onye Oma Emeka* are not permanently transferred from men to women. Rather, power shifts according to the resource available to each character at a particular moment. Njoku initially possesses economic power through his investment in Ezinwaanyi, but she later gains an advantage through information. Similarly, Emeka's economic independence does not protect him from Nwanneuka's control over his emotional behaviour.

These reversals support the Foucauldian view of power as relational and unstable (Foucault, 1978; Haugaard, 2022). The male characters are not presented as completely powerless, just as the female characters do not achieve unlimited control. Njoku makes deliberate economic and romantic choices, while Emeka makes his own decisions about spending and attachment. Their vulnerability comes from making those decisions without access to information that could have changed their responses.

The economic dimension is particularly important. Njoku's financial investment does not guarantee the marriage he expects, while Emeka's income becomes a means through which his attachment to Nwanneuka is converted into material loss. Money therefore operates alongside emotion and information rather than independently of them.

The texts consequently avoid a simple reversal in which women merely replace men as dominant figures. Instead, they show that power can move between economic, emotional and informational forms. A person may possess money but lack knowledge; another may lack economic resources but possess information capable of influencing the relationship.

The consequences also reveal the limits of manipulation. Deception may produce immediate control, but it cannot guarantee control over what follows. In both works, the exercise of power eventually produces consequences that extend beyond the immediate intentions of the characters. Intimacy therefore becomes a site where trust, affection, resources and information can be used either to sustain a relationship or to exercise control.

Conclusion

This study has examined romantic intimacy, power, deception, agency and economic relations in B. E. Okoro's *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and Mmuotulumanya J. Okafo's *Onye Oma Emeka* through a Foucauldian understanding of power as relational and shifting. The analysis shows that economic strength does not necessarily guarantee control within an intimate relationship. In both texts, male characters possess considerable material resources, yet female characters gain influence through information, emotional attachment and concealed intentions.

The concealed-substance motif is central to this process. It creates unequal knowledge and places the manipulated characters in situations where they cannot fully understand the consequences of their actions. Emeka suffers emotional, professional and economic decline, while Njoku's deception ends in death. The different outcomes nevertheless point to the same problem: intimacy becomes vulnerable when trust is separated from informed agency.

The study also shows that the female characters' exercise of power should not be reduced to a simple narrative of female empowerment. Their actions demonstrate agency, but the destructive consequences of manipulation reveal the limits of such power. Economic, emotional and informational power shift between the characters rather than remaining permanently attached to either gender.

Ultimately, *Nka Dị Na Ntị* and *Onye Oma Emeka* present intimacy as a contested space where affection, money, knowledge and agency intersect. The person who controls material resources does not necessarily control the relationship, just as the person who controls information cannot completely determine the consequences of using it. The two works therefore offer a useful basis for examining the relationship between romantic intimacy, information asymmetry, economic behaviour and agency in Igbo written literature.

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NTUCHA IWU METUTARA MMEKORITA MMADU NA IBE YA N'OMENALA IGBO

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Ụmị

Mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya bu ihe di ezigbo mkpa n'usoro obibi ndu ndi Igbo. O bu nke a mere ndi Igbo ji ekwu okwu na-asi, "onye aghala nwanne ya". Nchocha a bu n'uche ichoputagasi iwu omenala ndi ahụ metutara mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya n'ala Igbo. E jiigba ajuju onu nke a gbara ndi okenye nwoke na nwaanyi ndi no n'etiti mgbamafo iri anọ na ise ruo iri asaa nweta njatule nchocha a. A gbadoro ukwu n'atutu mmekorita mmadu na ibe yakowasia ihe ndi a choputara. Nchoputa nchocha a gosiri na iwu omenala Igbo ndi metutara mmekorita mmadu na ibegunyeremmadu na nwunye nwanne ya inwe mmeko edina, nwanne na nwanne inwe mmeko edina, idakpo nwaanyi n'ike, igbu ochu, ibu/ikpa nsi, nwaanyi itu di ya n'ala, nwaanyi no na mkpe ituru ime na ilu ogu n'ahia. Nchocha a ga-enyere ndi ntorobia nana-amaghi iwu omenala Igbo ndi a aka imata ha mazereha iji gbanahu ntaramahuhu na-esi na mmebi iwu ndi a aputa. Ochochaturu aro ka ulo akwukwo n'ogo sekondiri ukwu na mahadum niile di n'ala Igbo webata omumu iwu omenala Igbo n'usoro ihe omumu ha.

Okpurukpu Okwu: Omenala, Odinala, Nkwenye, Mmekorita na Iwu.

MMALITE

Ndi Igbo bu otu n'ime agburu e nwere na Naijiria nke di n'Afrika. Okwu a bu Igbo nochitere anya uzọ ihe ato nke bu: ndi mmadu, ebe ha bi na asusu ha. O bu nke a mere e ji ekwu maka ndi Igbo, ala Igbo nakwa asusu Igbo. Ndi Igbo bu ndi bi n'owuwa anyanwu Naijiria. A na-ahukari ndi Igbo na steeti isendi gunyere: Abia, Anambara, Ebonyi, Enuguna Imo. Onwuejeogu (1981) kwara na ala Igbo sitere n'Agbo na Kwale nke steeti Deltawegbadaa Ahoda, Diobu na Umabayi di na mpaghara Pot Hacot. O gafekwara Arochuku nke di na steeti Abia ruo Afikpo na Ishiagu nke mpaghara Abakeleke. O sikwa ebe ahụ gbago Enugu Ezike nke mpaghara Nsuka ma gafekwa Ebu nke ala Igbo ofesi Naija. (Ekwealor, 2013).

E nwere obodo di iche iche gbara ala Igbo gburu gburu dika ndi agbataobi ha. A bia n'ugwu, Idoma, Igala, Ukele, Ekajuk na Tiv bu ndi agbataobi ha. Na ndida, ha na ndi Ijo, Abia, na Ogoni bu ndi agbataobi. N'owuwa anyanwu, ha na ndi Efik, Ibibio, Ejegham, Yako, Mbembe na Ekumuru bu ndi agbataobiha. A biazie n'odida anyanwu, ha na ndi Edo, Urhobo, Isoko na Kwale bu ndi aghataobi. Asusu e ji mara ndi Igbo bu asusu Igbo. Ndi Igbo dika agburu puru iche nwere usoro ha si ebi ndu ha. Usoro a na-emetuta ihe niile ha na-eme nke gunyere: etu ha si adi ndu, ihe ha na-eri, ihe ha na-eyi n'ahu (ejiji ha), oru aka ha nakwa asusu ha. (Ekwealor, 2013). Ihe ndi a niile ka a na-akpo omenala. O di nnukwu mkpa na agburu o bula di n'uwu a ga-ehekwa omenala ha n'ihu na agburu o bula omenala ha nwuru anwuola pii. Omenala na-emetutakwa agumagu, nkwenye di iche iche, ekpemekpe na mmemme di iche iche agburu na-eme. Ihe ndi a niile so eme ka omenala ghara inwu anwu. Omenala na-anabata mgbawwe n'ihu na otutu oge, a na-esite n'agburu ma o bu mba ozọ webata omenala ohuru tumadi omenala ndi ahụ mara mma.

Mba (2018) hūlara omenala dī ka nchikōta mmemme agburū nke ọha obodo kwenyere na ya, na-eme ya ma na-akuziri ya umu ha nke na-eme ka o na-aga site n'otu ọgbọ ruo n'ọgbọ nke ọzọ. Ha nwere ike ikuziri umu ha omenala a site n'akuko ma o bukwani na nlere anya n'isonye na mmemme ndi obodo na-eme. Omenala bu mkpurukwu ato e jikoro onu nke putara omume a na-eme n'ala. N'ikowaputa nnukwu mkpa omenala di. Isidienu (2020) kwuru na ndi Igbo nwere otutu omenala bu nke na-abara ha nnukwu uru na ndu ha. Mana o di mwute na ufodu omenala ndi a na-anwuzi anwu n'ihie ejighi ha kporo ihe. Sabani (2018) mere ka a mata na e nwere udi omenala abuo: ha bu omenala ndi a na-ahu anya na omenala ndianaghiahu anya. Omenala ndi a na-ahu anya bu ihe ndi ahu metutara omenala ndi e nwere ike hu anya ma metukwa aka. N'aka nke ọzọ, omenala ndianaghiahu anya bu omenala ndi ahu metutara nkwenye, okpukperechi, agumagu na atumatu uche. Omenala na iwu na-agako onu n'ihie na agburu obula nwere iwu di iche iche na-achikwa akparamagwa ha. Iwu bu otu n'ime ihe bu isi dokpu nti na nchikwa usoro obibi ndu ndi mmadu. Tupu e nwee iwubekee ndi ọcha webatara, e nwere usoro iwu n'omenala Igbo nke jikotara ndu, nkwenye na ekpemekpe ndi Igbo. Iwu omenala Igbo abughi naani usoro nkiti kama o bu usoro nke jikotara odinala, odibendi na mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya. O na-enyekwa aka gbochie omume ndi na-eweta ntupo na nkato ma kpalie mmuo mmadu ka o na-eme ihe oma maka odimma obodo dum.

Usoro iwu omenala Igbodaberen'echiche banyere eziumume, nkwanye ugwu na nkwasị ike na mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya. Omumu banyere iwu n'omenala Igbo di nnukwu mkpa n'ihie na o ga-enye aka gosiputa etu ndi Igbo si eche echiche banyere eziumume na ajo omume. O ga-enyekwa aka gosiputandi ichedi n'etiti iwu omenala Igbo na nke ndi Bekee. O ga-eme kaamataetu ndi si emeso onye dara iwu omume site n'imapu ya n'iwu. O ga-egosiputakwa ka ndi Igbo si eziputa nkwenye ha nwere ebe iwunosite n'udi aha ha na-azagasi.

Mbunuche na Usoro Nchocha

Mbunuche nchocha a bu ichoputa iwu omenala Igbo di iche iche ndi metutara mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya. Iji nwetazuo mbunuche a, di ka nchocha enweogu, anyi ji igba ajuru onu nke anyi gbara mmadu iri ndi sitere n'akuku ala Igbo di iche iche ma burukwa ndi maara nke ekwe na-aku n'ihie banyere omenala Igbo nakwa iheochochadi kanwaafu Igbo a muru ma zukwaa n'ala Igbo nweta njatule nchocha a ma jirikwa usoro nkowasi chikota ihe anyi choputara.

NTULEGHARI AGUMAGU

Isi nke a ga-eleba anya n'agumagu e derela banyere isiokwu a. Iji mee ka nke a di mfe ma kwe nghota, a ga-ekewa ntuleghari agumagu nchocha a na ngalaba ato ndi bu: Keechemeche, Keatutu na Kentule.

Ntuleghari kechemeche isiokwu a ga-agbakwasị ukwu n'ituleghari isiokwu gbara okpurukpu metutara isiokwu nchocha a. Ntuleghari keatutu ga-eleba anya n'atutu di iche iche metutara isiokwu a ma horo otu kachasi dabaa adaba a ga-agbakwasị ukwu iji chikota isiokwu a. Ebe ntuleghari kentule ga-atuleghari akwukwo agumagu ndi odee derela banyere isiokwu metutara nchocha a iji choputa ebe ha merurula nchocha. Nke a ga-enyere anyi aka imata ebe e nwere oghere nke ewereike iji nchocha a mechie.

2.1 Okpurukpu Isi Okwu Metutara Nchocha A

E nwere otutu echiche na okpurukpu okwu ndi metutara isiokwu a. Ha gunyere: iwu, Omenala, ikpenkwumoto na odibendi. O nweghi ka a ga-esi kwuo okwu banyere iwu n'omenala hapu ikpotu okpurukpu okwu ndi a ga.

2.1.1 Iwu

Iwu bu usoro a haziri ahazi nke e ji eme ka e nwee udo na ezi mmekorita n'etiti mmadu na ibe ya. Tupu mmepe anya abata n'ala Igbo, ndi Igbo nwere usoro a haziri ahazi nke na-adichaghi iche na nke ndi ọcha ha ji ahu na e nwere ezi mmekorita n'etiti mmadu na ibe ya. Otutu oge ndi Bekee na-eleghara iwu omenala Igbo anya, eleghi anya o buru maka edeghiede. Mana o bu site n'iwu omenala ndi a ka e si nweta iwu niile e nwere n'ala Najirja taa.

Abayomi (2005p.85) kwara iwu dika "atumatu di iche iche e wekotara onu ndi e dere ede na ndi e deghe ede e ji eme ka udo di n'obodo". N'ikwado nke a, Obiwulu (2007) gara n'ihu kwuo na ihe a kporo iwu ga-akwadoriri ihe oma ma katoo ihe ojo. O siru na iwu na-anabata ihe kwesiri ekwesị ma gbaruo ihu n'ebe ihe ekwesighi ekwesị di. Mgbeochochana Oka iwu Okoli na-akparita uka banyere ihe bu iwu ka oka iwu a kwara iwu dika "ukpuru na atumatu di iche ichenkena-ekpebi etu mmadu si akpa agwa n'ihie gbasara ala, ezinaulo na mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya". Site na nkowa a, anyi choputara na ihe na-eme ka okwu buru iwu bu ka e si asopuru ya n'obodo na ka o si achikwa omume ndi mmadu n'obodo. Ihe nke a gosiri bu na ma e dere iwu ede ma e deghe ya ede, ma o bu nke sitere na mmepe anya ma o bughi, iwu bu iwu ma o buru na o na-enwetazu ihe e ji maka ya tinye ya.

Obodo (2005) kwenyere na iwu bu uto e si eduzi obibi ndu mmadu. Ihe na-achi obodo o bu bu uto ha si hazie nduzi nke obibi ndu ndi mmadu. Uto ndi a na-egosiputa ma na-atuputa ukpuru e si emegasi ihe di iche iche n'obodo ahu. Mgbe o bu iwu na-akwado ihe ziri ezi ma na-emegideajojihe, a na-asiiwuahụ dabara adaba. Iwu bu ezigbo iwu ga-emetutari ihe ndi mmadu kwadoro ma o bu nabata. O buru na e nweghi iwu a

gaghị enwe ikpenkwumoto (Oraegbunam, 2010). E kwesighi ime iwu maka ihe nrita nke onwe ma o bu iji megide onye o bula.

Umeogu (2012) kwuru na a kpo usoro obibi ndu o bula iwu, o ga-enweriri mbunuche nakwa echiche ziri ezi nke onye o bula maarana-aga enwetazuli. A naghị etinye iwu iji kpagbuo ma o bu gosi mmadu nkari kama a na-etinye iwu iji gbazie, ma chekwa agwa (omume) ndi mmadu maka odimma nke obodo. O bukwaghị ka e tinye mmadu na nhuju anya ka e ji eme iwu kama o bu iji hu na udo na idinotu na-achi eze n'obodo ka e ji etinye ma o bu eme iwu. N'ala Igbo, a na-eme ka onye o bula mata ihe ndi obodo nabatara na ihe ha anabataghị ka onye o bula ghara isi na ya amaghị n'ihu na o so n'otu n'ime nkuzi a na-enye umuaka malite oge a muru ha. Ka ha na-eto, ha na-agbaso ukpuru ahụ na-eto. A na-akuziri nwata ka o gbaa mbọ ghara ime ihe ala na-asọ nsọ site n'ime ka o mara ntaramahuhu so ya.

Njamanze (2007 p.123) kwuru na "mbunuche iwu o bula bu iweta udo na ikpe nkwmoto nakwa inye ndi mmadu ugwururuha. Ihe mere ndi Igbo ji ekpe ndi mere ihe ojoo ikpe bu iji mee ka ndi ozo mata na onye mere ihe ojoo nwere ntaramahuhu na-eso ya. N'ihu nke a, onye o bula na-enwe mkpachapu anya iji huna-enweghi onye o bula na-emeobi obodo bi n'akuku ya". Iji kwado onodu a, Okodo (2006 p.40) kwuru na "iji hu na e nwere ikpe ziri ezi (ikpenkwumoto), ndi Igbo na-eji ndidi eleba anya n'okwu onye o bula e boro ebubo na o mere ihe ojoo". Ha na-akpo ndi akaebe ndi ga-abia gbaa akaebe banyere onodu ahụ. Ya bu ikwu ma onye e boro ebubo o mere ihe a na-ebo ya ka o bu na o meghe ya. A naghikpe onyemere ihe ojoo n'aka otu onye n'ihu ndi Igbo turu n'ihu si na "agwo otu onye huru na-agho eke". N'ihu nke a, a na-enwe otutu mmadu na-etinye onu n'okwu o bula tupa a chabie ikpe n'omenala Igbo. Onodu di etu a na-achọ ntachi obi na ndidi. Ikpe odinala Igbo nwere ike bido n'ezinaulo bata n'umunna si ebe ahụ baa n'ogbe nakwa obodo. Ndi Igbo na-ejikwa otu nzuzo na arusi di iche iche ekpe ikpe iji hu na e nwetara ikpenkwumoto tumadi mgbe ichoputa eziokwu harama o bu raraahu. Ha kwenyere na Ala bu arusi kacha arusi niile n'ala Igbo n'ihu nke a, o na-ekpughe ihe nzuzo ndi mmadu na-eme.(Isidien, 2020). Nchocha a hutara iwu di ka uzo obodo si ahazi ma na-achikwa omume ndi mmadu iji hu na e nwere udo na ezi mmekorita.

2.1 .2 Omenala

Onebunne (2019) kowara omenala di ka usoro obodo di iche iche si eme ihe di iche iche. Nke a putara na obodo o bula nwere uzo puru iche ha si eme ihe nke obodoosonaghị agbaso. Nke a gunyere ihe ohuru na-abatagasi n'usoro obibi ndu ndi mmadu site n'obodo ozo. O doro anya na e nweela omenala ndi sitere agburu ozo bata na nke Igbo n'ihu mmekorita n'uzo di iche iche. Omenala obodo na-esite n'aka fere n'aka n'ihu nke a, o na-abu ndi okenye na-akpadiche iche umuaka a na-ele ha ma na-amuru.Glady(2016) na nkowa nke ya kwuru na e nwere ike ikowa omenala n'uzo di iche iche di ka o siri metuta onye. O bu nke a mere o ji kowaa omenala di ka mgbakota gunyere nke ihe niile mmadu matara di ka nka, nkwenye na amamihe igwe mmadu nwekoro onu nke ha na-ahafenyekwa n'aka umu ha. O wee si n'aka fere aka. Omenala bukwah ihe niile mmadu mutara iji chekwaa akparamagwa ya di ka omume, nkwenye, nghota na amamihe ya. A na-amuta omenala amuta.O bughị ebumputa uwa di ka asusu.

Ugbor na Onyegiri (2025) hutara omenala dika ihe na-eziputa ka ndi si eme, tinyere nkwenye. N'iga n'ihu, Oguejiofor, Ezeoliaku na Ilorah (2015) kwuru na omenala putara etu ndi si eme, etu ha si eke ekike, ihe ha-eri, udi egwu ha na-agba, udi abu ha na-abu, omume, na agwa ha na-akpa tinyere asusu ha. Omenala na-emetuta nkwenye, ekpemekpe na mmemme di iche iche ha na-eme. Ekwealor (2013) siriri na omenala bu etu ndi si ebi ndu. Nkowa ya kwenyere na omenala na-emetuta odibendi na odinala obodo nke gunyere ihe ha na-eri na ihe ha na-aso nsọ. Na nkowa Onebunne (2024) Omenala putara omenammadu ya bu omume ndi mmadu. O gara n'ihu kwuo na omenala megidere omenelu n'ihu na omenala na-emetutakarị Ala. Onebunne na Ezeako (2025) kwenyere na omenala di nnukwu mkpa n'igosiputa njirimara mmadu nakwa agamnihu obodo.

Nchocha a hutara omenala di ka uzo a haziri ahazi agburu ma o bu obodo si ebi ndu iji kwanyere ala ugwu ma mee ka obi di Ndichie mma.

2.1.3 Odinala

Ezeuko (2009) kowara odinala ndi Igbo ka etu ha si ebi ndu, nkwenye ha, etu ha si achikoba na-achika onwe ha, mmemme di iche iche ha-eme, nri ha na-eri,asusu ha egwuregwu ha na ekele ha. Nkowa a mere ka o doo anya na odinala gunyere ihe niile a na-eme n'ala Igbo nke nwere nkwekorita oha na eze n'obodo ahụ. Nke a narutu aka na odinala Igbo na usoro mmeputa ya na-agbanwe site n'otu obodo ruo n'obodo ozo.

N'inyekwu nkowa banyere odinala, Onyenọ (2025) dere na odinala bu ihe dibu adi n'ala Igbo nke o nweghi onye mara mgbe o bido nakwa etu o si bido. O gara n'ihu kowaan'odinala di okpu. Nkowa ndi a na-eme ka anyi mata na odinala bu nwata tolite, o tokwuru. O bughị omenala niile a na-eme n'ala Igbo bu odinala n'ihu na e nwere omenala ndi e wubere n'oge ugbu a nke abughị odinala. Odinala Igbo gunyere ilu Igbo, ilu nwaanyi, ili na ikwa ozu, ike na iri ekpe, igu nwa ohuru aha, asusu ha na okpukperechi ndi Igbo.

Na nchikọta nchọcha a hụgara ọdinala ka ihe ndi ahụ di ọkpọtọrọkpụ nke obodo di iche na-eme nke nwere ike inwendị ichesite n'otu obodo ruo na nke ọzọ.

2.2 Atụtụ

2.2.1 Atụtụ Omume

Omume bụ etu mmadụ si akpa agwa n'ọndụ di iche iche. O bụatutua na-eme ka mmadụ nwe ike mata ihe di mma na ihe di njo ma horo nke o ga-eme n'oge di iche iche. O di mkpa ka anyi mata na o bun'atutua ka a na-akpa banyere akparamagwa di iche iche. Dika Anscombe (1920-2001, Katan (1924-2004) siri kwuo atutū omume oma na-akowa na ihe na-enye mkpebi banyere ihe bu omume oma na nke bu omume ojoo bu akonuche mmadu. Kant kwenyere na ufodu omume ndi gunyere igbu ochu, izu ohi, itu asi na ihe ojoo ndi ozo abughị omume dabara adaba ma o buladi ebe ikpa agwa ojoo di otu a na-eweta añuri.

Ihe kwesiri ikpebi ma omume mmadu mere o bu omume oma ka o bu omume ojoo bu ka ndi mmadu siri huta ya. O bughị naani ka onye mere udi omume ahụ si chee ma o bu huta ya. Narveson (1998) kwadoro nke a mgbe o kwuru na omume oma ga-aburiri nkenkemma niile nabatara ma burukwa nke onye mere ya nwere afọ ojuju na ya. N'ihu na mmadu niile na-erite uru site n'omume onye ozo mere. Mmadu enweghi ike noro naani ya n'enweghi mmekorita ya na onye ozo. Mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya na-eme ka ndu di uto ma kwekwa obibi. N'ihu nke a, ndi ochichi ekwesighi iji aka ike na-achi ndi mmadu kama ha kwesiri igbaso nkwekorita ohaneeze. Gale (2006) kwenyeren'usoro nhazi omume mmadu na-egosi ihe mmadu kwesiri ime na oge o kwesiri ime ya. O gara n'ihu kwuo na Chineke kechara onye o bua nye ya onyinye nke icheputa ihe n'enweghi mmanye o bua. Kama o di mkpa ime nke ana-emegideghi onye o bua.

Atutū a dabara adaba maka nchọcha a n'ihu na o lekwasiri anya n'ezi mmekorita nke ohaneezena-agbanyeghi na Kant kwuru na mmekorita ohaneeze nwere ike bute ogbarauhie. Atutū omume oma kwagidere nsiniwu na mbamuru di ka ihe kacha di mkpa na nwetazu nke omume oma. N'atutū a, e nyere onye o bua ohere inwe mkpebi ihe o ga-eme di ya mma. O bughị maka na o ziri ezi n'iwu kama maka odimma nke ohaneeze. Mana ihena-adabachaghi adaba nke atutū a kwuru buna mere buna o lekwasikariri anya n'ihu otu onye ga-eme nye ohaneeze karja ihe ziri ezi ohaneeze ga-eme. N'ihu nke a, a gaghi eji ya chikotalie omume nke ohaneeze. A gaghi kwa eji ya gbazie ma o bu hazie omume ohaneeze.

2.2.2 Atutū Mmekorita

Atutū mmekorita di ka Seidman (2016) siri kowaa ya bu usoro a haziri ahazi ma o bu nkwenye iji gboo nsogbu ma o bu nwee mkpebi ihe a ga-eme tumadi n'ihu metutara onodu mmekorita ohaneeze. O hutakwara atutū a di ka ihe di mkpa ibata n'echiche mmadu iji nweta nghota na nkowa banyere onodu mmekorita ohaneeze. Mgbe o bua choro inye nkowa banyere ihe nhiahu ma o bu nsogbu metutara mmekorita ohaneeze bu atutū mmekorita na-abia n'uche (Umeodinka, 2020).

E wepu iju ajuju ihe mere ndi mmadu ji biri etu ha si biri ugbo a, atutū a na-elekwsikwa anya n'ihu metutara enwem ike ochichi, nhazi odidi obodo nakwa uzọ nsieme nke ohaneeze (Callinicos, 1999). O bu site n'atutū mmekorita ohaneeze ka e si atule ka mmadu na ibe ya si enwe mmekorita. O na-enwekwa mmasi ikowa ka mmekorita mmadu na ibe si enwe mgbanwe site n'oge ruo n'oge n'obodo di iche iche. O bukwa ya bu ngwaoru e ji atule mgbanwe ndi a.

Atutū mmekorita ohaneeze di ka ihe sitere na nkowa banyere omume ndi mmadu nke metutara mmekorita, ndorondoro ochichi na nsirihuwa ndi mmadu. Osiri na a na-eji atutū a atule omume obodo di iche iche. N'inyekwu nkowa banyere atutū mmekorita ohaneeze, Harrington (2004) kwuru na o bu igbaso usoro sayensi tulee usoro mmekorita ohaneeze na obibi ndu. O na-emetuta echiche banyere etu obodo si enwe mmepe na mgbanwe site n'oge ruo n'oge nakawa ihe ndi ozo metutara mmekorita ohaneeze.

O doola anya na atutū mmekorita ohaneeze bu usoro a haziri ahazinke na-esiamata ka ndi mmadu na-esi akpa agwa. Atutū mmekorita ohaneeze bu atutū metutara oha obodo. Clammer (2012) kowara oha obodo di ka igwe mmadu ndi bikotara onu na-ekekori otu obodo na omenala. O kwuru na omenala na-egosiputa nkwenye ndi mmadu n'ebe ihe ndi a na-ahu anya na ndianaghiahu anyano. N'ihu atutū mmekorita ohaneeze na omenala na-agba mbo ikowaka ndi mmadu si enwe mmekorita n'etiti onwe ha ma o bukwani na gburugburu ebe obibi ha.

Atutū a bara uru nke ukwu n'ihu na o na-enye nkowa ka mmadu na ibe ya si enwe mmekorita n'etiti onwe ha nakwa ha na gburugburu ebe obibi ha. A na-eji atutū a akowa ihe mmadu maara banyere onodu digasi iche iche gbaramadugburugburu nakwa ka nke a si emetuta omume ha. O na-enyekwa aka inye nguko banyere echiche mmadu na omume ya n'ebe omenalano. Di ka Sanderson (2010) siri kowaa ihe a kporo atutū mmekorita ohaneeze na obodo na-elekwasị anya n'omume mmadu na echiche ya nke na-emetuta ka o si ahuta omenala. O na-enyekwa n'ikowa ka uburu mmadu si aru oru n'ihwbanyere mmekorita obodo na ohaneeze nakwa omenala.

Ka osila di, o bughị naanị mmekọrịta mmadụ n'ohaneze nakwa omenala bu naanị ihe na-ahazi omume mmadụ. Ihe ndi ozonkegunyere: agburu, abumoke, na obodo onye siri puta na-emetutakwa echiche na akparamagwa ya. Atutu mmekọrịta ohaneze na obodo na-enyekwa akanmgbasa ozi na mmekọrịta mmadụ na ibe ya. Atutu a na-akuku niile metutara obibi ndu mmadụ. Uzo e si agbanwerita nzisa ozi, akuko, mmetuta mmadụ nwere na echiche na-adabere n'atutu a. O na-egosi na omenala di iche iche obodo na-emegasi bara nnukwu uruna mwulite echiche mmadụ. N'ikwado nke a, Lantolf (2000) kwuru na o bu atutu a na-enye ntuzi aka ka ewumewu ufodu di ka ulo akwuko, na mmuta si aru oru n'uto na mbawanye nke mmadụ. Atutu a na-enye aka ikowa ka mmekọrịta nke mmadụ na ibe ya si emetuta mmuta ya. Mgbe mmadụ na onye ya na ya nwere otu omenala mekọritara, a na-enwe mgbanwe nakwa uto na mmuta. Nke a na-egosi na mmekọrịta na mmuta na-alnnukwu oru na usoro obibi ndu ndi mmadụ (Lantolf, 2000). Mmekọrịta mmadụ na ibe ya di nnukwu mkpa na mbawanye nke mmuta. Di ka Lantolf siri kowaa, mgbe anyi na ndi ka anyi mara ihe ufodu nwere mmekọrịta o na-enye aka ime ka anyi mmuta ihe ndi anyi amabughi na mbu. Mmuta ndi a nwere ike bia site n'asusu ma o bukwanu uzo nzisa ozi ndi ozo. Nke a na-enye aka n'uto nke mmadụ tumadi n'ebe o metutara omenala ebe onye ahụ hutara onwe ya. Onye di etu ahunaesite n'uzo di etu a esonye n'ihe di iche iche a na-eme n'ogbe ebe o bi.

Vygotsky (1978) kwuru na atutu mmekọrịta mmadụ na obodo enwetela nnukwu enyemaka nye mbawanye nke amamihe nke mmadụ. N'ikowa nke a, o kwuru na mmuta anoghi akwu otu ebe kama o na-enwe ngawanye na mgbanwe site n'oge ruo n'oge. Uzo kacha mma isi choputa ihe mmadụ mutara bu itule ihe o ga-emeli naanị ya na ihe ndi o ga-emeli oge ya na ndi ozo na-emekota ihe. Nke a na-egosi ihe mmadumarana ngawanye nke mmuta ya.

N'ihe banyere amumamu na iji mmuta mee ihe n'egwuregwu, atutu mmekọrịta oha di ezigbo mkpa. O na-arụ ka ihe mgbakwasị ukwu n'inweta ajuju nchocha. Atutu a na-enyekwa aka n'ikowa njatule iji mee kaenwetachaozi di mkpa nke na-eme kaamataihe omimi di n'egwuregwu ufodu. O na-eme ka ndi mmadụ mara ihe ha amabughin'uzo ha ga-esi nwe ike were ihe ha nwetara na nchocha gboo mkpa n'obodo. Atutu a na-emepe anya ndi mmadụ ka ha nwee ike huta ihe n'uzo di iche na ka ha si ahuta ya na mbu iji nyere ha aka inwe mkpebi ziri ezi banyere onodu ga-enyere ezinaulo na obodo aka inwe mmepe. Macionis na Linda (2010) kwuru na atutu a na-akowa ihe na-eme n'obodo tumadi inye aka kowaputa ihe kpata ya n'uzo doro anya. Atutu a na-enyekwa aka icheputa ihe ga-eme n'odinihu site n'ihe a hutara na-eme ugbo a Craig (2002). A na-esitekwa n'ihe e nwetara n'atutu a eme ka ewumewu di ka ezinaulo, mmuta, ekpemekpe, ezumike, akunauba, mgbasa ozi, ndorondoro ochichi na egwuregwu nwe mmekọrịta n'uzo a ga-esi nweta nsiniwu nke obodo. Mgbe e mere nke a oha obodo na ihe niile di na ya ga na-arụ oru n'uzo dabara adaba. Nsiniwu omenala Igbo na-enye aka n'iduzi omume ndi mmadụ iji horomaha ga-akpa n'oge di iche iche iji gboo mkpa ndi mmadụ nakwa nke obodo.

N'aka nke ozo, ewubereatutu a n'echiche nke kwenyere na a na-enwe nkwekọrịta n'etiti ufodu ewumewu ohaneze nke a na-ahuta n'obodo iji mee ka ha rukoo oru. Otu ihe mgbaru ihu di n'atutu a bu na mgbe ufodu iwu omenala na-ewetara odummadu mkpagbu. Ihe na-ebute onodu di etu a bu enweghi nhatanha n'uzo e si ahuta usoro iwu. N'ihia nke a iwu nwere ike imegide ufodummadu ebe ndi ozo na-enweta uru na ya.

2.4 Kentule

Ufodu ndi nchocha emela nchocha banyere iwu n'uzo di iche iche. N'ebe a, ka anyi ga-atuleghari nchocha ndi a iji mata ka ha na nchocha nke a siri yite onwe ha nakwa ka ha si di iche. Nchocha ndi anyi ga-atuleghari gunyere: Ndubuisi (2010), Umeogu (2012), Onyeozili & Obi (2012), Anowia, Ejim na Anozie (2020), Soroibe (2020), Isidienu (2020) Akpulu (2021), Ogbuehi (2022), Igwe (2022), Ifeako na Ndubuisi (2023), Osonwa (2023), Nwobodo (2024), Nweke (2025), Onebunne na Ezeako (2025).

Ndubuisi (2010) mere nchocha banyere ihenso na Afirika na nchekwa ohia. Mbunuche nchocha a bu ichoputa uru ihenso di iche iche bara. E ji usoro nkowasi chikota njatuleenwetarasite n'igba ajuju onu. Nchoputa nchocha a gosiri na omenala ihenso na-enye aka n'ichekwa ohia, osisi na umu anumanu ndi bi n'ohia. Nchocha a na nke anyi na-eme ugbo a yitere onwe ha n'ihia na ha abuo metuchara iwu diiri ihenso mana ndiiche ha bu na nchocha nke a elebaghi naanị ihe nsọ anya kama o gakwuru n'ihu leba anya n'iwu n'omenala e nwegasiri na mpaghara di iche iche n'ala Igbo.

Umeogu (2012) mere nchocha banyere onodu iwu na ikpenkwumoto n'omenala Igbo. Mbunuche nchocha a bu ichoputa usoro ndi Igbo si ekpe ikpe. E ji igba ajuju onu nweta njatule e ji mee nchocha ahụ. Nchoputa nchocha a gosiri na omenala Igbo na-akwagide ikpenkwumoto. Nchocha a yitere nchocha nke ugbo a n'ihia na ha abuo lebachara anya n'iwu di ka o si metuta omenala Igbo. Mana ndimiche ha bu na nchocha nke ugbo a na-achocha banyere iwu n'omenala Igbo ebe nchocha Umeogu na-atule ka e si eji iwu omenala Igbo eme ihe.

Isidienu (2021) mere nchocha banyere ka e si eji iwu omenala Igbo achikwa omume ndi mmadụ. Mbunuche nchocha a bu ichoputa uzo di iche iche e si e si eji iwu omenala Igbo achikwa akparamagwa ohaneze. E ji nleta osonye na igba ajuju onu nweta njatule e ji mee nchocha a. Nchoputa nchocha a gosiri na iwu omenala bu uzo dabara adaba e ji achikwa omume ndi Igbo kama o na-alazi azu ugbo a. O choputakwara na otutu mmadụ na-

enwezi mmasị n'iwu Bekee karia n'iwu omenala Igbo. Nchọcha ahụ na nchọcha nke ugbo a yitere onwe ha n'ih na ha abụọ gbadochara ukwū n'iwu omenala Igbo mana ndimiche ha bụ na nchọcha nke mbụ na-atụle ka e si eji iwu omenala Igbo achikwa ndụ mmadụ mana nchọcha nke ugbo a lekwasiri anya n'iwu omenala Igbo n'uzo di iche e si amapu mmadụ n'iwu ma o mee ihe ojoo.

Nwobodo (2024) mere nchọcha iji tulekorita usoro iwu omenala Igbo na nke oge ugbo a. Mbunuche nchochabumata uzo di iche iche e si achikwa omume ndi mmadu n'ogeochema tulekorita ya na nke ugbo a. Nchọcha a ji igba ajuju onu na akwukwo agumagu e nwetagasiri n'oba akwukwo mere ngwa nchọcha o ji nweta njatule ya. Nchoputa nchọcha a gosiri na usoro ndi Igbo si achikwa omume mmadu n'oge ochie dabara adaba karia nke oge ugbo a. Nchọcha abuo a yitere onwe ha n'ih na ha abuo rutuchara iwu omenala Igbo aka mana adimiche ha bu na nchọcha Nwobodo (2024) na-atulekorita usoro e si e ji iwu omenala achikwa omume ndi mmadu n'oge ochie nakwa nke oge ugbo a ebe nchọcha nke ugbo a na-achọcha banyere iwu n'omenala Igbo nakwa uzo mmapu n'iwu.

3. NTUCHA IWU METUTARA MMADU NA IBE YA

Obodo o bula nwere nsiniwu na uzo di iche iche ha si enweta ma na-echekwa omume oma na ezi ndu. Iji hu na onodu di etu a digidere, a na-eweputa ukpuru di iche iche nke onye obula na agbaso. Obodo na-enwekwa uzo di iche iche ha si ata onye agaghi ije n'uzo kwesiri ekwes i ahuhu iji doo ndi ozo aka na nti. Udi ido aka nantia na-eme ka onyeobulana-agbara omume ojoo oso.

Ndi Igbo na-ejikarimmapu n'iwu egosi onye mere ihe ojoo na ihe o mere adighi mma. Mmapu n'iwu bu uzo a na-esi ekewapu mmadu n'ebe ndiozo no mgbe a mapuru mmadu n'iwu, onye ahu na ndi mmadu anaghi enwe mmekorita n'udi obula. Ona-anoro onwe ya. Oge ufodu a na-achupu onyedi etu ahụ n'obodosite igaka ha na onye ahu nwee mmekorita, n'udiobula (Akpulu, 2021).

Site n'oge ruo n'ogendi Igbo na-eji ntaramahuhu eme ka ndi mmadu n'asopuru iwu na-achi obodo. Ntaramahuhu bu uzo obodo ma o buout eji egosi na ha anabataghi omume e mere. E nwekwara ike huta ya di ka usoro e si agba omume ojoo n'anwu iji gosi na o bu ihe a juruaju ma burukwanu ihe obodona-anabataghi. Ndi Igbonaejikwa omume di iche iche egosiputa nnabata maka omume oma. Omume ndi a gunyere ekele, ojija, ikwe n'isi, ikwe n'aka na kwa ndi ozo. Nke a putara omume nwere ike di mma ma o bukwanu di njo. Mgbe elu bu ala osa oge enweghi ulo ikpe, enweghikwandi okaiwu na ndi okaikpe ndi na-ekpe ikpe manaamakwa mmadu ikpe. O bu oha obodo na-egosiputa na mmadumgbe ihena-adighi mma. A na-eme nke a malite n' ezinaulo banye n'umunna site ebe ahụ banye n'ogbe ruokwa n'oha obodo.

Maazi Nwakama Ogonna onye Mbanọ nke di na steet Imo, anyi gbara ajuju onu mere ka anyi mata na mmadu na onye ya na ya bu nwanne n'obara inwe mmeko edina bu aru na Mbanọ. Nwoke na nwunye nwanne ya nwoke ka no ndu bukwa nnukwu aru. O buru na ihe di etu ahụ mee, a ga-amapu nwoke ahụ n'iwu, gwa ya ka o kwaa ala n'ih a o buru na o kwaghi ala, o ga-anwu tupu onwa isii agacha. Ihe e ji akpu aru di etu a bu "Abonashia". Abonashia bu obere abo a na-azuta n'aka ndi na-ere ihe e ji achu aja. E weta abo ahụ, onye ahụ mere aru ga-eje jide nchekiriche, agbisi, ejula na umu ahuhu ndi ozo bi n'ala wujuo ha n'ime abo ahụ. Ihe mere e ji eweta ihe ndi a bu makana ha bu ihe ndi bi n'ala ahụ e meruru.

O buru naewetachaihe ndi a, a ga-akpota nwoke na nwaanyi ahụ kpapa aru a n'etiti nnukwu ahia obodo a na-akpo Afọ Umuenyi, gbaa ha oto n'ihu ohanaeze, ghokwas i ha agbara malite kuwara egwu ikpe. Ha gbachaa egwu ahụ, a gooro ha ofo kaala hapu Ala hapuigbu ha. Ha ekwezie nkwa na ha agaghi emekwa omume di etu ahụ ozo.

N'ikwado nke a, Lolo Iwuchukwu Chinasa onye Umuanunu Nsu nke di n'Ehime Mbanọ mere ka anyi mata na o burunwokena nwaanyi otu nne muru enwee mmeko edina ma ju ikwa ala di ka iwu obodo siri di. Aga-amapu ha n'iwu. Oge ufodu a chupu ha n'obodo. Mana nke kacha njo bu na onye obula n'ime ha buru uzo luo di ma o bu nwunye muta nwa, onye nke ozo agaghi atu ime ganye na o kwaa ala.

O burukwanu na nwoke dinaa nwa ya nwaanyi, a ga-akpota nwoke ahụ, gbaa ya oto tee ya uny n'ahụ ya niile, nyanye ya omu nkwi n'olu kpola ya ikwunne ya. Ebe ahụ ka o ga-ebi ruo mgbe o nwuru.

Nso di etu a na-enye aka ime mmadu nwee njikwa nke onwe n'ih banyere inwe mmeko edina n'ih mmadu na ezinaulo ya ihe ihere na aha ojoo. O nweghikwanu onye choro ka e were udi omume a mara ezinaulo ya.

3.1 Mmadu na nwunye nwanne ya inwe mmeko Edina

Chinweoke Osondu bu onye Agulu nke di asteeti Anambara, anyi gbara ajuju onu kwuru na o buru na mmadu na nwunye nwanne ya maobu nwunye otu onye n'umunna yaenwemmeko Edina, o buru na a choputanandi umunna ahụ ga-achupu nwoke ahụ n'obodo ahụ nke na ya na ndi obodo ahụ agaghikwa enwe mmekorita ozo ganye na o nwuo. Mgbe a na-achupunwokeka a na-achupukwa nke nwaanyi ya na ya nwere mmeko Edina ahụ. Nwaka Chimezie onye Olu nke steet Imo kwadoro nke a n'ih na o mere ka anyi mata na nwoke na nwunye nwanne ya inwe mmeko edina bu aru kacha aru n'obodo ha. O siri na otutu oge, orja na-akpalite otu onye

n'ime mmadu abuo ahụ nwere mmekọEdina ji ọnụ ya kwuputa ihe ha mere. Ọ bụrụ na o kwuru ya n'ebe otu onye no, onye di etu ahụ agaghị agbachinkitima ọ bụ zoo ya kama ọ ga-agwa ọkụ ekwe obodo ka ọ kụọ ekwe ka mmadu niile zukọ. Mgbe mmadu niile zukoro, ọ ga-agwa onye ahụ kwuburu iheahuka ọ gwa ọha obodo iheahuo gwarananzuzo. Onye ahugaeji ọnụ ya gwaohaobodo na ya na onye di etu a nwere mmekọEdina. Ihe na-esochi nke a bụ ikpọputa onye ọ kpọrọ aha juo ya ma ọ bụ eziokwu. Otutu oge, onye a kpọrọ aha anaghị ago ago malite oge ahundiobodo ga-achupu ya, ọ gbaga ikwunne nne ya gaa biri ganye na ọ nwuo. Ọbụrụ na ọ nwuo, ndi obodo ahụ agaghị eje olili ya n'ih i enweghi ihe jikotara ha na onye ahụ mere aru ma n'onu ma na ndu .

N'inyekwu nkowa n'ihe banyere iwu mmekọ edina Maazi Okorie Asiegbu onye Umachacha nke di n'okpuru ochichi ime obodo Isiala Ngwasautu mere ka anyi mata na onye ya na nwa ya nwaanyi nwere mmekọ edina mere nnukwu aru. A na-amapu onye di etu a n'iwu. Oge ufodu ala na-akugbu ya n'ih na o meruru ala. Mana oge ufodu onye di etu a nwere ike gbaga ikwunne ya, ndi ikwunne ya achupu ya n'ih na ha anaghị anabata onye mere aru. Nwata nwaanyi ya na nna ya mere ihe di etu ahụ na-enwekari nsogbu nke nwere ike mee ka ọ nwuchuo onu. Ọ bụrụkwanu na nwata nwaanyi ahụ anwughị enweghi onye obula ga-alu ya ma ọ bụrụ na ọ kwaghị ala iji medaa ndichie obi maka aru ahụ o merega na-esoya ebe ọ bula ọ nọ.

3.2 Nwanne Nwanne Inwe Mmekọ Edina

Nwokeke Nwavo onye Oka di na steet Anambara anyi gbara ajujuonu siri n'udi mmekọEdina a bu ibeene. Ọ sikhara na nke a bu aru kwọ nwa n'azu. Na nkowa ya, o kwuru na ọ bụrụ na nna na nwa ya nwaanyi, nwanne na nwanne, nne na nwa ya nwoke ma ọ bụ ndi sitere n'otu ikwunne maobu ikwunna nwee mmekọEdina na ọha obodo na-ahuta ya di kaaru, n'ih nke a, a ga-akpọputa ndietua gbaa ha oto, nwereomu nkwu yiwe ha n'ukwu; kpogharĩa ha n'obodo niile, E mecha nke a, a na-edupu ha n'agbata obodo ahụ na mba oso were chuo ha kpam kpam n'obodo ahụ. Ndi di etu a bu n'ajo ohia ka ha ga-ebi, ha agaghikwa abata n'obodo ahụ e siri chupu ha ozo ganye na ha anwuo.

3.3 Idakpo NwaanyiN'ike

Olovo Ali onye Ogwu nke steeti Enugwu bu onye anyi gbara ajujuonu kwara idakpo nwaanyi di ka inwe mmekọ edina n'ike. Nwaanyiadakporon'ikeenweghi mmasi na mmekọ edina ahụ, mana nwokeajo ihe di otu a jiri ike ya weredina ya. Oge udi ihe a mere, a na-enye nwoke ahụ ntaramahuhu site n'imanye ya ka ọ kwuo ugwo isi nwaanyi ahụ ọ dakporo. Ọ bụrụkwanu nwunye mmadu ka ọ dakporo n'ike, onye di etu ahụ na-eji ala ubi chara acha nke ndi Ogwu na-akpo ubi were kwuo ugwo idakpo nwunye mmadu. Mgbe o mechara nke a, ọ ga-abiakwa mekwa ala nke o meruru site n'ichu aja ima aka n'obi. Ọ bụrụ na nwoke dakporo nwaanyi achoghi ime ihe ndiagwaraya ka o mee, a ga-agba ya oto, kee ya omu nkwu n'ukwu, kpugharia ya n'obodo niile. A ga na-agu ma na-akukwara ya egwu mgbe ọ na-agaghari n'obodo. Ihe e ji eme ihe ndi a niile bu ka e wee mee nwoke dakporo nwaanyi akaje ma mekwa ka ndi ozo hapu itinye aka ha n'idakpo nwaanyi.

3.4 Igbu Ochụ

Igbu ochu bu nnukwu aru n'ala Igbo (Isidien, 2024). Ndi Igbo kwenyere na mmadu kwesiri buonye nche nwanne ya mana ọ bụrụ na mmadu kwesiri buonye nche nwanne ya, egbuo nwanne ya, a na-ahuta nke a ka nnukwu aru megidere mmadu na ala nke bu Agbara nwe ihe niile di ndu (Akpulu, 2021).

Chinweoke Ozondu onye Agulu nke di na steeti Anambra anyi gbara ajujuonu mere ka anyi mata na ọ bụrụ na a choputa ma mmadu ji mma maobu egbe gbuo mmadu ibe ya ma ọ bukwanu higbuo/tigbuo mmadu na onye di etu ahụ na-agba oso ochu iji gbanahu mwakpo nke ndi ntoria. Ọ bụrụ onye ahụ opekata mpe afọ iri. Afọ ole onye di etu a ga-anọ ebe ọ gbagara na-adabere na mkpebindiobodo ya. Mgbe ọ nozuru afọ ole obodo kpebiri, ọ ga-esite n'aka otu onye ezi na ulo ha kpoodi Nri (Oraeri) ka ha bia kpuo aru iji hichapu obara ọ kwafuru. Nke a bu iji medaa ala obi. A ga-emeriri nke a tupu ya nandiobodoenwemmekorita n'udi obula. Ọ mekwara ka anyi mata na ọ bu naani ndi Nri (Oraeri) ka ọ bu oru ha ikpu aru n'ala Igbo gbaa gburugburu.

Uzoma Elom onye Afikpo nke steet Ebonyi anyi gbara ajuju onu mere ka anyi mata na ọ bụrụ na ochu e gburu bu site n'iji egbe ezuohi, a na-ahuta udi aru a dika nke megidere obodo Afikpo niile. Etu e si gbuo ochu ahụ bu ihe ọha obodo na-elekwasị anya wee nwee mkpebi ihe a ga-eme onye gburu ochu ahụ. Ọ bụrụ na onye gburu ochu ahụ bu onye ohi, a maara amaara ma ọ bukwanu onye na-eyi ndu ndi mmadu egwu, a na-enye ya ntaramahuhu di egwu dika ili ya na ndu, ma kunye osisi oji n'elu ili ya iji hupa ili ya ama. Nke a na-abu ihe ido aka na ntị nyerendiozo. Tupu e nye onye gburu ochu udi ntaramahuhu a, ndi ikwunne ya ga-enye nkwa dohaotutu oge a na-achupu ndi gburu ochu n'obodo ka ha na ndi obodo ghara inwe mmekọ ozo.

N'otutu obodo n'ala Igbo, mmadu igbu nwanna ya bu nnukwu aru nke na a ga-achuriri aja iji kpochapu yanakwa imeda ala na ndichie obi ka ha ghara imalite gbusisiwe ndi umunna ahụ. Nke agbadoro ihe Amadi (1982) kwuru si na ọ bụrụ na mmadu egbuo ochu n'otutu obodo digasi na mba Afrika, a na-eme ka onye ahụ gburu mmadu nwokwa etu onye ọ gburu siri nwuo iji kwuo ugwo onye o gburu.

Ume Nweke onye Aguata nke dīsteetiAnambaraanyikwuru na igbu ọchū bụ nnukwu arū n'Aguata nke na ọ burū na onye ọ bula egbuo ọchū, a na-akpuru ya kpunye ezi na ulọ onye o gburu nwanne ha ka ha mee ya ihe masiri ha. Chimezie Nwaka, onye Olu nke di na steeti Imo anyi gbara ajujuonu mere ka anyi mata na ọ buru na mmadu egbuo ọchū n'Olu, ọ buruna-ejideonye ahū ozugbo o mere nke a, a ga-egbu ya site n'ikwugbu ya. Mana ọ buruonyeahu gburu ọchū gbapuru nkenaejideghiya, ọ ga-agbaga obodo ozo noo opekataampe afọ ato tupu ọ loghachi n'obodo ya. Mgbe ọ loghachiri, enweghikwa onye ga-enye ya nsogbu ozo.

Igbu ọchū bụ mmadu iwepu ndu mmadu ibe ya ma ọ kpachara anya ma ọ kpachaghi anya. N'Ihembosi di nasteetAnambara nakwa obodo ndi gbara ya gburugburu, onyeobulagburu ọchū ga-ebu uzọ gbaa oso ọchū. Igba oso ọchū bụ isi n'obodo gbapu gbaga obodobiri. N'Ihembosi, onye gbara oso ọchū na-anọ ebe ọ gbagara oso ọchū ruo afọ asaa. Mgbe ọ nozuru afọ asaa, ọ ga-abia gwa onye bụ okenye n'umunna ha na ya choro iloghachi. A ga-agusisiri ya ihe di ichie ichie ọ ga-eweta, a ga-eji kwaa ala. A na-akpo nke a ikpu aru. Ihe ndi e ji eme nke a gunyere ebule, ehi, ewu, oji, ji na ihe ndi ozo. O ga-ewetarihi ihe ndi a, e mee mmemme e kwesiri ime tupu onye gburu ọchū aloghachi n'obodo ọ noro gbuo ọchū. O di mkpa ka a mata na ọ bu ndi ezinaulo onye gburu ọchū na-eweta ihe niile a ga-eji lie ozu onye nwanne ha gburu.

N'ikwado nke a, Ihedi Okorie onye Eziamma Lokpaukwu anyi gbara ajuju onu mere ka anyi mata na e nwere usoro e si akwa ala mgbe ọ bula e gburu ọchū. O siri na ihe mbu a na-eme bu na onye ahū gburu ọchū ga-agbapu n'obodo ahū gbaga obodo ozo. Mgbe ọ gbapuru, ndi umuada ga-agaghari n'obodo ahū tie mkpu ọchū. E mechaa nke a, ndi nwanne ha gburu ọchū ga-achota otu onye okenyehaaga-ezi ozi ka ọ gakwuru ndi e gburu nwanne ha ka ha yite agba mgbe ha ga-ezukota ikwu etu a ga-esi kuọ ọchū ahū. O siri na a na-akpo nke a mkporita ihu. O gakwara n'ihu mee ka anyi mata na ihe e ji aku ọchū n'obodo ha bu mkpi. Mgbe a na-aku ọchū ahū, a na-eweta mkpi ato, a na-ahigbu otu n'ama obodo ahū, higbuo nke ozo n'uzo ahia obodo ahū biazie higbuo nke ato n'uzo obodo ahū si eje ugbo. Ubochi ọ bula a higburu nke ọ bula, a ga-erichariri ya ubochi ahū. Umụ nwaanyi anaghi eri anu ewu ahū.

3.5 Ibu/Ikpa/Ime Nshi

Nwabueze Enwu onyesteetiEbonyi anyi gbara ajujuonu kwara ime nshi dika mmadu iga na dibia gwota ogwu ojoo ma were ya gbuo mmadu. O siri na nke a bu aru ka aru na steeti Ebonyi. O siri na onyeobulana-eme nshi nwuo,anaghijeli ya eli kama a na-eburu ya kee ya n'ogugu buru ya gaa n'ajo ohia tufuo ya. Etu e si amata onye na-eme nshi bu na ọ buru na onye obulaanuruna ọ na-eme nshi, ndi okenye na-ewere oji, nzu na azu a mikporo amikpo goọ ofo n'ebe ozu onye ahū no iji rio ndichie ka ha nabata ya nke oma n'ala mmuo. Mgbe ha mechara nke a, ọ buru na onye di etu ahū na-agwo nshi, ngwere ga-esi ebe mmadu amaghi puta bia na-agaghari ebe ahū a dowara ozu onye ahū. Nke a mee, onye ọ bula ga-amata na aka onye ahū nwuru anwu adighi ocha mana ọ buru na aka ya di ocha, ngwere agaghi abia nso ebe ahū kama anu ulo dika okuko maobu ewu nwere ike na-agaghari ebe ahū.

O buru onye na-aga ukaKraist, ọ buru ndi uka na-ekpe ekpere ha nangwere ga-aputakwa na-agaghari gburugburu ebe adotereakpati ozu onye ahū ma obuna ọ na-eme nshi mgbe ọ no ndu. O buru ahū ngwere ahū ma ndi uka, ma ndi ozo ga-ekuli hapu ozu ahū lasaa. A ga-ebupute ozu ahū n'akpati were ogugu kee ya buru ya ga tufuo n'ajo ohia. Mana tupuemeenke a, ndi nwe onye ahū ga-eweta otu ewu, otu oke okuko (oke okpa) mbaji asato na nkwi ocha. Mgbe a tufuchara ozu ahū n'ajo ohia, a ga-anọ n'ebe e si abata n'ezi onye ahū sie ji ahū na ewu ahū ma nusaa mmanya ahū. Iwu a ka di ire na Noye Ikwo nke Steeti Ebonyi ruo taa.

N'Afikpo nke steeti Ebonyi, ọ buru na a choputa na mmadu gworo nshi/nsi wee gbuo mmadu, a na-amanye ya ka ọ nuo iyi iji gorọ onwe ya tumadi ma ọ buru na ọ na-ago ago na ya emeghi nshiobula. Mgbe ọ nuru iyi, ọ ga-anwu tupu otu afọ mana ọ buru na ọ nwughi a mara na aka ya di ocha. O burukwanu na onye ahū e boro ya ebubo na o jiri nshi gbuo anwuola, a na-amanye ya ka ọ nuo miri e ji saa ozu onye ahū ahū. Nkwenye di na nke a bu na ọ buru na aka onye ahū adighi ocha, ọ ga-anwu tupu otu afọ malite ubochi ahū ọ nuru mmiri ozu ahū. Mana ọ buru na ọ nwughi, a mara na aka ya di ocha. (Elechi, 1999).

Onye ọ bulagworo nsi n'ala Ngwa mere nnukwu aru. Onyeobulae boro ebubo na o mere nsi na-aputa n'ama obodo, e bute mmuo ma ọ bu agbara noro n'ihu ya juo ya ma o mere ihe e boro ya ka ọ bu na o meghe ya. O buru na o mere ihe ahū e boro ya mañuo iyi asi na ya emeghi ya, ọ ghaghi inwu tupu oge a turu onu eruo. Mana ọ buru na o meghe ya, ọ ga-ebiri ndu ya gawa.

N'ikwado nke a, Obinna Okwuchi onye Arongwa nke di nasteetAbia mere ka anyi mata na mgbe elu bu ala osa na ara na-agba onye ọ bula gworo nsi. Onodu di etu a mere ka udo na ezi mmekorita di n'etiti mmadu na ibe ya. O dighikwa onyeobulana-atu ibe ya egwu.

3.6 Igba Ama Asi

Elendu Uka onye steeti Imo anyi gbara ajuju onu kwuru na igba ama asi bu mmadu ibokwasị onye ozo ihe onye ahuna-emeghi ma gbadosie ukwu ike n'ala na-ekwu na onye ahū mere ihe o meghe. Nke a bu ihe ojoo

jogburu onwe ya. Ọtutu oge ama asi na-abia yie eziokwu nke na-eme ka onye e boro ebubo asi na-ata ahụ maka ihe ọ maghi. Ọ bụrụ na e mesia n'ikpeazu chọputa na ọ bụ ebubo ugha ka mmadu boro ibe ya, a na-eme ka onye di etu ahụ taa ahụhụ onye ọ gbagidere ama ugboro abuo. Ihe e ji eme nke a bụ ka ndi ozo wee muru ihe.

3.7 Nwaanyi Itu Di Ya N'ala.

Nwaanyi itu di ya n'ala bu aru ka aru nke metutara mmekorita mmadu na ibe ya n'Ihembosi di nasteet Anambara nakwa obodo ndi gbara ya gburugburu. Odozi aku Njideka Onukwili mere ka anyi mata na ọ buri na nwaanyi tuo di ya n'ala na ọ ga-alaruriri be nna ya, ya bu ebe e siri luta ya. E mechaa, ọ buri na di ya ka kwetara ilu ya ozo, nwaanyi ahụ ga-ada nha. Ihe ndi ọ ga-eji mee nke a gunyere okuko, ji na oji. Mgbe o wetachara ihe umunna nwoke ọ turu n'ala gwara ya ka o weta, ha ga-esi ihe ndi ahụ, rie ya ma duruzie ya gaa n'ihu di ya ka ọ riu di ya mgbaghara. Ọ riöchaa di ya mgbaghara, di ya ga-anabatakwa ya ozo. Ha amalitekwa biwe ka di na nwunye

3.8 Nwaanyi NọNaMkpe Ituru Ime

Nwaanyi nọ na mkpe bu nwaanyi di ya nwuru anwu na-eriuju onwu di ya. Ọ buri na nwaanyi a ka na-eriuju onwu di ya aturu ime, a na-asi na o mere aru. Odozi aku Ekwutosi Chukwudi mere ka anyi mata na a bia n'obodo niile di n'okpuru ochichi Ekwusigo nke steet Anambara na nwaanyi ọ bula turu ime oge ọ na-agba mkpe di ya, ndi obodo na-amapu ya n'iwu, chulaa ya ebe e siri luta ya. Oge ufodu nwaanyi mere aru di etu a na-anwu oge ọ choro imu nwa ahụ ọ di ime ya. Nkwenye ndi Ekwusigo bu na nwaanyi mere ihe di etu a ga-enweriri nsogbu oge ọ na-achọ imu nwa ahụ. Ọ bu nke a mere nwaanyi ọ bula di ya nwuru mgbe ọ di ime nke ndi mmadu amabeghi maka ya na-eji eti mkpu agwa ohanee na ya dikwa ime tupu di ya anwu. Ihe o ji eme nke a bu ka ọ ghara ibu mgbe afo putawara a juwa ka onye di ya nwuru n'onwa ole na ole gara aga siri di ime. Ma ọ bu kedukwanu onye tuwara nwaanyi a ime mgbe ọ ka na-agba mkpe di ya. Iji kwado nke a, Oriaku Njideka Onukwili mere ka anyi mata na otu nwaanyi a na-akpo Ukamaka Nwoye turu ime ka o mere onwa abuo di ya nwuchara. Ma mgbe ọ gara imu nwa ahụ ma ya ma nwa ọ gara imu nwuru.

3.9 Ilu ogu N'ahia

Mmadu ilu ogu n'ahia bu nnukwu ihe ojoo n'Udi. Odozi aku Enebe onye Udi nke steet Enugwu mere ka anyi mata na a na-amapu ndi ọ bula luru ogu n'ahia n'iwu. A na-etinye ubochi a ga-ekpe ikpe ha iji mara onye ikpe mara. E kpecha ikpe, onye ọ bula ikpe mara na-akwu nha. Ọ buri na ọ ju ikwu nha na ime ihe ndi ozo obodo gwara ya ka o mee, ya na ndi obodo agaghi enwekwa mmekorita ọ bula ozo.

Ọ buri na mmadumearu siri ike n'Udi a na-eti ya Ajamma. Iti mmadu ajamma bu igba onye ahụ oto, nyanye ya eriri n'olu, nyanyekwa ya komkom biazie were ahuhu a na-akpo akpirido wunyejuo na komkom ahụ. Mgbe e mechara nke a, a ga-abia duru onye ahụ, na-akuru ya egwu, na-ekwu aru o mere. A ga-edu ya gaa obodo niile gburugburu.

Ntaramahuhu di etu a a na-enye onye mere aru na-eme ka onye ọ bula na-akpachapu anya iji zere ibanye n'onodu ihere di etu a. Ọ buri na i bata n'obodo Udi, a ga-ebu uzo gusisara gi nsodi iche iche ndi obodo ahụ nwere ka i ghara isi na i maghi wee daba n'onodu ojoo a.

Mana Njideka Onukwili onye Ekwusigo nke di na steet Anambara mere ka anyi mata na ọ buri na nwaanyi na nwaanyi ibe ya luo ogu n'ahia ọ bula di n'ime Ekwusigo, a ga-amapu ha n'iwu, machibido ha ibata n'ahia ahụ maka ozuzu ma ọ bukwanu orire ihe ruo ihe dika onwa ato tupu a daa nha, dodo ha aka na nti ma nabataghachi ha n'ahia ahụ. Mana ọ buri na otu onye n'ime ha kpoo ekwo nku, ọ gaghi abata n'ahia ahụ ozo ubochi ndu ya niile. Iwu di etu a mere ka udo na ezi mmekoritan'ahianiile di n'Ekwusigo. Mmadu kpasuo gi iwe, i gakwuru ndi eze ahia kpesara ha. Ha akpo onye ahụ, kpeziere unu ka unu ghara ise okwu ozo nke nwere ike dubaa unu n'ilu ogu.

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MGBAKWUNYE

S/N	Aha Ndi A Gbara ajuju onu	Abumoke/nwunye	Mgbamafo	Obodo/Steet	Aka oru	Ubochi
1.	Nwakamma Ogonna	nwoke	iri ise	Mbano Imo	Oru nkuzi	5/1/25
2.	Iwuchukwu Chinasa	nwaanyi	iri ise na ise	Mbano Imo	Azumahia	6/1/25
3.	Chinweoke Osondu	nwoke	iri isii	Agulu Anambara	oru nkuzi	10/2/25
4.	Nwaka Chimezie	nwoke	iri isii na ato	Olui Imo	Ezumike nka	12/2/25
5.	Okorie Asiegbu	nwoke	iri ise na ano	Ngwa Abia	oru nche	16/2/25
6.	Nwokeke Nwavo	nwoke	iri isii na ano	Oka Anambara	oru ugbo	20/3/25
7.	Olovo Ali	nwoke	iri ise na ato	Ogwu Enugu	oru nkuzi	22/3/25
8.	Uzoma Elom	nwoke	iri isii	Afikpo Ebonyi	azumahia	25/5/25
9.	Ume Nweke	nwoke	iri ise na asato	Aguata Anambara	oru nkuzi	28/3/25
10.	Ihechi Okorie	nwoke	iri isii na ano	Lokpaukwu Abia	oru ugbo	2/4/25
11.	Nwabueze Enwu	nwoke	iri ise na otu	Ikwo Ebonyi	azumahia	6/4/25
12.	Obinna Okwuchi	nwaanyi	iri ise na ato	Ngwa Abia	oru nkuzi	7/5/25
13.	Elendu Uka	nwoke	iri isii na abuo	Obowu Imo	oru aka	10/5/25
14.	Njideka Onukwili	nwaanyi	iri asaa	Ihembosi Anambara	ezumike nka	16/6/25
15.	Ekwutosi Chukwudi	nwaanyi	iri ise na otu	Ekwusigo Anambara	oru nkuzi	18/8/25
16.	Enebe Chibuzo	nwaanyi	iri asaa	Udi Enugu	ezumike nka	22/9/25