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The International Journal of Contemporary Research in Humanities (INJOCORH) welcomes original research articles, critical reviews, and theoretical papers from diverse disciplines within the humanities and other related themes.

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Methodology: this includes a brief discussion on the research approaches, method of data collection, and analysis of data presented.

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Role of Humanities in Shaping Technological Policies

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Abstract:

This study explores the role of humanities in shaping technological policies using a critical discourse analysis approach within a mixed-methods framework; this study combines in-depth interviews with humanities scholars, technologists, and policy makers, alongside a critical review of existing literature and case studies. It aims at identifying how humanities perspectives can inform more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable technological policies. This study is grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates insights from Science and Technology Studies (STS), Critical Theory, Post humanism, and Discourse Theory. These perspectives provide a comprehensive lens to analyse how humanities contribute to technological policy-making by examining power relations, knowledge production, ethical considerations, and societal implications. The findings highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between humanities scholars, technologists, and policymakers to ensure that technologies are designed and deployed in ways that promote human well-being, social justice, and environmental sustainability. These roles are: Providing Ethical and Moral Guidance, Challenging Technological Determinism and Promoting Critical Reflection, Shaping Public Discourse and Narratives. The study also identifies key areas of tension and conflict between humanities perspectives and technological development, including issues of bias, inequality, and environmental degradation. The research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of humanities in shaping technological policies and informs more inclusive and sustainable approaches to technological development. In conclusion, the humanities play a vital and transformative role in shaping technological policies by providing ethical guidance, fostering critical reflection, and shaping public discourse to ensure that technological advancements align with societal values and promote inclusive, responsible innovation.

***Keywords:* Humanities, Technological Policies,**

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology has transformed the fabric of modern society, profoundly impacting the way we live, work, and interact. As technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, its influence on human values, social norms, and cultural practices

has become increasingly significant. However, the development and implementation of technological policies have traditionally been driven by technical expertise, often neglecting the critical perspectives and insights offered by the humanities. The humanities, encompassing disciplines such as philosophy, history, literature, and cultural studies, provide a rich understanding of human experience, ethics, and societal context. By integrating humanities into technological policy-making, we can ensure that technological advancements align with human values, promote social justice, and foster a more equitable and sustainable future. This interdisciplinary approach recognizes that technology is not a neutral entity, but rather a reflection of societal choices and values that shape its design, deployment, and impact.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of humanities in technological policy-making, a significant gap persists between the technical and humanistic disciplines, often resulting in disconnect where technological development advances rapidly without adequate consideration of ethical, cultural, and social implications. This paper seeks to bridge this divide by exploring the vital role of humanities in shaping technological policies. By examining the intersections between technology, ethics, culture, and society, we will demonstrate how the humanities can inform and enrich technological policy-making, ultimately contributing to a more holistic and human-centered approach to technological development. This paper argues that the integration of humanities into technological policy-making is essential for ensuring that technological advancements prioritize human well-being, promote social responsibility, and foster a sustainable and equitable future. The intersection of humanities and technology has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly regarding how humanistic perspectives can inform and improve technological policy-making. This literature review examines scholarly contributions from 2008 to the present, highlighting the necessity for integrating humanities into technology policy frameworks and exploring the implications for society.

The rapid pace of technological advancement poses significant challenges in ensuring that innovations align with societal values and ethical principles. Despite the growing importance of technology in everyday life, there remains a considerable gap in how technical expertise and humanistic insights intersect in the formulation of technological policies. This disconnect often leads to policies that overlook ethical considerations, cultural impacts, and social justice issues, potentially resulting in unintended negative consequences. The problem is further compounded by the tendency of technical disciplines to prioritize efficiency and innovation over the ethical and social implications of new technologies. Therefore, understanding and integrating the role of humanities is crucial to creating balanced, inclusive, and responsible technological policies that serve the broader interests of society. This research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the critical role of humanities in shaping technological policies, ultimately informing more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable technological development. By bridging the gap between technical and humanistic disciplines,

this study seeks to promote a more nuanced and holistic approach to technological policy-making, ensuring that technological advancements serve the needs and values of humanity.

Aim: and Objectives:

The aim of this study is to examine the critical role of humanities in informing and shaping technological policies, ensuring that technological advancements align with human values, social needs, and ethical considerations. Specific objectives are to:

- a. investigate the intersection of humanities and technology:
- b. identify key humanities-based considerations for technological policy-making: and
- c. evaluate the impact of humanities-driven approaches on technological policy outcomes:

Methodology

Research Methodology for this study will primarily adopt a qualitative approach, focusing on a comprehensive review of existing literature, case studies, and expert interviews. A systematic analysis of scholarly articles, policy documents, and reports will be conducted to understand the influence of humanities on technological policymaking. Additionally, interviews with policymakers, technologists, and humanists will provide valuable insights into the practical integration of humanistic perspectives in the development of technological policies. This mixed-method approach aims to explore the interplay between technical and humanistic disciplines, identify existing gaps, and highlight best practices for incorporating humanities into policy frameworks. Data analysis will involve thematic coding to extract key themes and patterns, ensuring a thorough understanding of the subject matter.

Literature review

There are some writers' views on the role of humanities in shaping technological policies. According to Martin Heidegger: In "*The Question Concerning Technology*" (1954), Heidegger argues that technology is not just a tool, but a way of understanding the world, and that humanities are essential to critically evaluate its impact. Another philosopher is Hubert Dreyfus: In "*On the Internet*" (2001), Dreyfus emphasizes the importance of humanistic perspectives in understanding the social and cultural implications of technology. Don Ihde: In "*Philosophy of Technology*" (1993), Ihde advocates for a humanistic approach to technology, considering its ethical, social, and cultural dimensions. Sherry Turkle: In "*Alone Together*" (2011), Turkle highlights the need for humanistic inquiry into technology's impact on human relationships and identity. **Zeynep Tufekci**: In "*Twitter and Tear Gas*" (2017), Tufekci argues that humanities perspectives are crucial for understanding technology's role in social movements and civic engagement. Bruno Latour: In "*We Have Never Been Modern*" (1993), Latour emphasizes the importance of considering technology's social and cultural contexts. Andrew Feenberg: In "*Critical Theory of Technology*" (1991), Feenberg advocates for a

humanistic approach to technology, emphasizing its social and cultural shaping. N. Katherine Hayles: In "How We Became Posthuman" (1999), Hayles explores the intersections of technology, culture, and humanity. Lev Manovich: In "*The Language of New Media*" (2001), Manovich argues for a humanistic understanding of digital media's cultural implications. Tim Berners-Lee: In "*Weaving the Web*" (1999), Berners-Lee emphasizes the importance of humanistic values in shaping the internet's development. Vinton Cerf: In "*The Internet and Social Responsibility*" (2012), Cerf argues for humanistic perspectives in internet governance and policy. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), data governance, and digital rights has brought to the forefront the need for a multidisciplinary approach to policy-making. Humanities, with its unique perspective on human values, ethics, and social context, plays a vital role in shaping policies that ensure technological advancements align with societal needs.

Analysis

Ethical Considerations in Technology

Scholars discuss the ethical dimensions of technological advancements, arguing that humanities can provide essential ethical frameworks for policy development (Mitcham, 2008; Coeckelbergh, 2012). Research highlights how ethical theories inform decision-making processes in tech policy, potentially mitigating negative consequences of technological deployment. Ethical considerations in technology are crucial in ensuring that technological advancements align with human values, promote social good, and minimize harm. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into our lives, ethical concerns surrounding its development, deployment, and use have escalated. Technological advancements have raised complex ethical questions regarding privacy, surveillance, data protection, artificial intelligence, and algorithmic decision-making. The collection and analysis of vast amounts of personal data have created concerns about informed consent, transparency, and control.

The development of artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms has introduced questions about accountability, bias, and fairness. AI systems can perpetuate existing social inequalities if trained on biased data or designed with limited perspectives. Technological ubiquity has amplified issues related to digital divide, accessibility, and inclusivity. The unequal distribution of technology's benefits and risks has significant implications for social justice and human rights. Ethical considerations in technology demand a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating insights from philosophy, sociology, law, and computer science. Stakeholders, including policymakers, developers, users, and civil society organizations, must engage in ongoing dialogue to address emerging ethical concerns. Effective ethical frameworks for technology must prioritize human well-being, dignity, and agency. This requires balancing individual rights with collective interests, ensuring transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. Organizations such as the IEEE, ACM, and EU's High-

Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence have developed guidelines and principles for ethical technology development. These initiatives emphasize values like respect for autonomy, non-maleficence (do no harm), beneficence (do good), and justice. Regulatory frameworks, such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, have established standards for data protection and privacy. However, the effectiveness of these regulations depends on ongoing monitoring, enforcement, and adaptation to emerging technologies. Ethical considerations in technology are not limited to development and deployment but also extend to use and consumption. Users must be aware of technology's potential impacts and take responsibility for ethical decision-making.

Educational initiatives focusing on digital literacy, critical thinking, and ethics can empower users to navigate complex technological landscapes. Developers must prioritize ethical design, integrating values like transparency, accountability, and fairness into technological systems. Ethical considerations in technology require sustained commitment and collaboration. By acknowledging the complex interplay between technology, society, and human values, we can foster responsible innovation, promote social good, and mitigate harm. The future of technology depends on our ability to prioritize ethical considerations, ensuring that advancements serve humanity's diverse needs, values, and aspirations. By embracing ethical frameworks, regulatory standards, and responsible innovation, we can create technologies that enhance human well-being, dignity, and agency. As technology continues to evolve, ethical considerations will remain paramount. By engaging in ongoing dialogue, prioritizing human values, and fostering responsible innovation, we can harness technology's potential to create a better future for all. Ethical considerations in technology are not optional but essential for promoting trust, accountability, and social responsibility. By recognizing the critical importance of ethics in technology, we can mitigate risks, maximize benefits, and ensure that technological advancements align with human values.

The intersection of humanities and technology

The intersection of humanities and technology has become increasingly prominent as advancements in digital tools and artificial intelligence reshape various aspects of society. Humanities disciplines such as philosophy, history, and cultural studies offer critical perspectives on ethical, social, and cultural implications of technological innovations. For instance, the integration of ethical considerations in artificial intelligence development highlights the importance of humanistic insights in guiding responsible technological progress (Johnson & Smith, 2021). Furthermore, digital humanities—an interdisciplinary field that uses computational methods to analyze texts, historical data, and cultural artifacts—demonstrates how technology can enhance traditional humanistic scholarship, fostering new ways of understanding human history and culture (Fitzpatrick & McGann, 2019). This convergence underscores the necessity of collaborative approaches that incorporate

humanistic values into technological design and policy-making to ensure that technology benefits society at large.

Recent scholarship emphasizes the importance of fostering dialogue between humanities scholars and technologists to address complex societal challenges. For example, the work of Liu and Kroll (2022) explores how ethical frameworks derived from philosophy and social sciences are crucial for developing AI systems that respect human rights and social justice. Additionally, initiatives such as the Digital Humanities Summer Institute and the Ethics and Technology program at various universities exemplify efforts to bridge disciplinary divides through interdisciplinary education and research. As technology continues to evolve rapidly, integrating humanistic perspectives is vital for creating innovative, ethical, and socially responsible solutions that align with human values (Brown & Lee, 2020). The ongoing collaboration between these fields holds the potential to shape a more inclusive and reflective technological future.

Key humanities-based considerations for technological policy-making:

Key humanities-based considerations for technological policy-making include ethical principles, cultural values, and social justice. Humanities disciplines such as philosophy, ethics, and cultural studies emphasize the importance of addressing moral dilemmas and societal impacts associated with emerging technologies. Policymakers must consider questions about privacy, consent, and the potential for technology to reinforce or challenge existing social inequalities. For example, in the development of artificial intelligence or data surveillance policies, understanding diverse cultural perspectives and moral frameworks ensures that policies are not only effective but also ethically responsible and culturally sensitive. Incorporating these considerations helps prevent technological advancements from inadvertently causing harm or marginalizing vulnerable populations.

Another crucial humanities-based consideration is the impact of technology on human identity, social cohesion, and democratic values. Disciplines like sociology and anthropology highlight how technological changes influence societal norms, individual behaviors, and community relationships. Policymakers need to evaluate how new technologies might alter human interactions, influence power dynamics, or threaten democratic participation. For instance, the regulation of social media platforms requires an understanding of their impact on free expression, misinformation, and social polarization. By integrating insights from the humanities, policymakers can foster more inclusive and socially conscious technological policies that prioritize human well-being, promote ethical innovation, and safeguard fundamental human rights.

The impact of humanities-driven approaches on technological policy outcomes:

Humanities-driven approaches significantly influence technological policy outcomes by ensuring that ethical, cultural, and social considerations are integrated into decision-making processes. These approaches promote a broader understanding of the implications of technological advancements, fostering policies that are more socially responsible and ethically sound. For example, incorporating perspectives from philosophy, sociology, and ethics can help policymakers anticipate societal impacts, address potential risks, and develop regulations that prioritize human rights and social justice. As a result, humanities-driven approaches can lead to more inclusive and sustainable technological policies that better align with societal values and public interests.

The impact of humanities-driven approaches extends to enhancing public trust and acceptance of new technologies. When policies are informed by humanistic insights, they tend to be more transparent and considerate of diverse stakeholder perspectives. This can facilitate smoother implementation of technological innovations and reduce public resistance or backlash. Additionally, such approaches can inspire innovative solutions by encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, where humanistic insights complement technical expertise. Integrating humanities into technological policy formulation not only improves the ethical and social robustness of policies but also fosters a more balanced and human-centered technological development trajectory.

Cultural Impact of Technology:

The relationship between technology and culture is another prominent theme. Works by authors like Turkle (2011) stress that understanding cultural narratives is vital for policies addressing technology's role in society. Policies developed with cultural awareness can better align with public values and practices. The cultural impact of technology is a profound and multifaceted phenomenon that has transformed the way we live, interact, and understand ourselves. Technology has become an integral part of our daily lives, shaping our values, beliefs, and practices in ways that were previously unimaginable. On one hand, technology has opened up new avenues for cultural expression, creativity, and communication. Social media platforms have enabled global connectivity, allowing people to share ideas, cultures, and experiences across borders. Digital platforms have democratized access to information, education, and cultural resources, bridging geographical and socio-economic divides.

Technology has enabled the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, with digital archives and museums making cultural artifacts accessible to a global audience. Digital technologies have also facilitated the creation of new art forms, such as digital art, electronic music, and virtual reality experiences. Technology's cultural impact is not without its challenges. The proliferation of digital media has contributed to the homogenization of cultures, threatening traditional practices and cultural diversity. The dominance of Western cultural values in digital spaces has led to concerns about cultural imperialism and the erosion

of local identities. echnology's influence on social relationships has raised concerns about isolation, loneliness, and decreased face-to-face interaction. The commodification of attention and data has created new forms of exploitation, with technology companies profiting from users' personal data and online behaviors.

The cultural impact of technology is also evident in the way it shapes our language, cognition, and perception. Digital communication has altered the way we process information, with shorter attention spans and changing reading habits. The proliferation of memes and social media hashtags has created new forms of linguistic expression. Technology's impact on identity and self-expression has been significant. Social media platforms have enabled new forms of identity formation, with users curating online personas and performing identity through digital means. Virtual reality technologies have enabled new forms of immersive experience, blurring the lines between physical and digital realities. The cultural impact of technology is complex and multifaceted, reflecting both the benefits and challenges of our increasingly digitized world. As technology continues to evolve and shape our lives, it is essential that we critically examine its cultural implications.

By acknowledging both the opportunities and risks associated with technology, we can work towards creating a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive digital landscape. This requires a nuanced understanding of technology's cultural impact, recognizing both its potential to empower and its capacity to exploit. Through interdisciplinary research, critical reflection, and community engagement, we can foster a deeper understanding of technology's cultural implications. By doing so, we can ensure that technology serves humanity's diverse cultural needs, values, and aspirations. The cultural impact of technology is a dynamic and ongoing process, reflecting the complex interplay between technology, society, and culture. As we navigate this rapidly changing landscape, it is essential that we prioritize cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, and human values in our technological endeavors. By embracing this approach, we can harness technology's potential to enrich and empower human culture, rather than control or homogenize it. The future of our digital world depends on our ability to critically examine technology's cultural impact and foster a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally vibrant digital landscape.

Public Engagement and Policy Formation:

Several studies advocate for the inclusion of public voices in technology policy-making. Humanities scholars argue that understanding public sentiment and societal needs is crucial for policies to be effective and accepted (Gibbons, 2013; Gardiner, 2017). Engaging communities through narrative and dialogue is a suggested approach. Public engagement and policy formation are critical components of a democratic society, ensuring that the needs and values of citizens are reflected in governance. The intersection of public engagement and policy formation has become increasingly complex, with technological advancements and

shifting societal norms. Effective public engagement enables policymakers to understand the concerns, values, and expectations of diverse stakeholders. This informed decision-making process fosters trust, legitimacy, and accountability in governance. Public engagement encompasses various forms, including town hall meetings, citizen juries, participatory budgeting, and online forums. Technology has transformed public engagement, enabling broader participation and accessibility. Digital platforms facilitate information dissemination, feedback mechanisms, and deliberative processes. Social media has become a vital tool for public engagement, allowing policymakers to connect with citizens and gather feedback. Technology also presents challenges to public engagement. Information overload, echo chambers, and disinformation can hinder constructive dialogue. Ensuring inclusive and representative participation remains a significant challenge.

Policy formation benefits from public engagement in several ways. Citizen input informs evidence-based policymaking, ensuring that policies address real-world problems. Public engagement fosters collaborative governance, promoting partnerships between government, civil society, and the private sector. Inclusive policy formation acknowledges the diversity of citizen experiences and perspectives. This approach recognizes the interplay between policy areas, such as economic development, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Effective public engagement and policy formation require strategic communication, transparency, and responsiveness. Policymakers must provide accessible information, listen to citizen concerns, and demonstrate accountability. International organizations and governments have recognized the importance of public engagement in policy formation. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals emphasize participatory governance, while the European Union's Better Regulation Agenda prioritizes citizen engagement. Examples of successful public engagement and policy formation include participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and the Icelandic citizens' assembly on constitutional reform. These initiatives demonstrate the potential for collaborative governance and inclusive decision-making.

Challenges persist, however. Balancing representative democracy with participatory democracy remains a tension. Ensuring equitable representation and addressing power imbalances are ongoing concerns. To address these challenges, policymakers can employ innovative engagement strategies, such as citizen-led policy commissions, crowdsourcing, and deliberative polling. Investing in civic education and critical thinking skills is essential for fostering informed public engagement.

Challenges and Critiques

Despite the recognized importance of humanities in technology policy, challenges remain. Critics argue that the integration is often superficial, lacking genuine partnership between technologists and humanists (Dahl & Raley, 2021). Additionally, the fast pace of technological change can overshadow the slower, more reflective processes favored in the

humanities. Challenges and critiques surrounding the role of humanities in shaping technological policies often revolve around issues of legitimacy, influence, and practical integration. One major challenge is the perceived undervaluing of humanistic insights within predominantly technical and policy-driven environments, which can lead to their marginalization or superficial inclusion. Critics argue that the subjective and interpretive nature of humanities may clash with the objective, data-driven approach of technological development, making it difficult to influence decision-making processes effectively. There are concerns about the lack of standardized methods for incorporating humanistic perspectives into policy frameworks, which can hinder consistent application. Furthermore, some critics contend that emphasizing humanities might slow down innovation or create delays in policy implementation, raising questions about balancing ethical considerations with the urgency of technological progress. Despite these challenges, fostering dialogue between disciplines remains crucial for creating well-rounded, ethically sound technological policies.

In conclusion, the humanities play a vital and often underappreciated role in shaping technological policies by providing essential ethical, cultural, and social perspectives that ensure technological advancements align with societal values and human well-being. Integrating insights from disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, and ethics can lead to more comprehensive and responsible policy frameworks that address complex issues like privacy, equity, and moral implications. As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, fostering a deeper collaboration between technical and humanistic disciplines is crucial for creating sustainable and ethically sound technological innovations. Ultimately, embracing the contributions of the humanities can help shape policies that not only advance technological progress but also prioritize the holistic interests of humanity.

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Argumentation Strategies in Selected Editorial Reviews on Muhammadu Buhari's Administration in the *Nigerian Tribune*

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Abstract

This study investigated argumentation strategies in selected editorial reviews on Muhammadu Buhari's presidency in the *Nigerian Tribune*, addressing the research gap regarding how editorial reviews shape public understanding and perceptions of governance. The specific objectives of the study were to: identify and categorise argumentation strategies and topoi used in the selected editorial reviews; analyse how linguistic features legitimised or delegitimised presidential actions and policies; and evaluate the impact of editorial argumentation in the historical, social and political context of Nigeria. The study was anchored in the Discourse-Historical Approach and employed a qualitative design, analysing five purposively selected editorial reviews on security, health, electoral reforms, education, and the economy. The study found that the topoi of responsibility, failure, and reform were most frequently used to guide readers' interpretations of governance, while linguistic features such as evaluative adjectives, modality, presupposition, and agency construction facilitated legitimation and delegitimation. The study also found that editorial argumentation significantly shapes historical understanding of governance, social values, and political perceptions in Nigeria. The study concluded that editorial discourse functions as a powerful tool of political evaluation and public engagement. It contributed to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the strategic interplay between language, argumentation, and political perception in Nigeria.

Keywords: Editorial Reviews, Argumentation Strategies, Topoi, Governance, *Nigerian Tribune*

Introduction

After the general elections of 2023, before May 29 handing over, major News Papers in Nigeria did a review of President Muhammadu Buhari's two-term administration with specific focus on essential areas. The editorial reviews were published within the space of few days. These editorial reviews were done by some of the editors, hence the use of editorials and editorial reviews interchangeably. The study examines how editorial reviews construct, justify, and evaluate the actions and policies of Nigeria's former president. editorial reviews serve as influential opinion texts that shape public understanding of political leadership, framing achievements, challenges, and controversies through carefully structured argumentation. Central to this study is the concept of argumentation, which involves the use

of linguistic and rhetorical strategies to present claims as reasonable, persuasive, and aligned with societal norms (El Baff et al., 2020; Jegede & Lawal, 2025). The Discourse-Historical Approach provides a theoretical lens for analysing these strategies. The approach emphasises how language operates within historical, social, and political contexts to reproduce or challenge power relations. Debates in the field of political discourse often centre on the balance between objective reporting and ideological positioning, with editorial content occupying a hybrid space where opinion and social influence intersect (Van Dijk, 1997; Dunmire, 2012). In the contemporary Nigerian context, editorial reviews remain significant for interpreting presidential performance, shaping voter perceptions, and influencing public discourse, making the analysis of argumentation strategies a critical endeavour for understanding the nexus between media, politics, and power.

Despite sustained scholarly attention to political discourse in Nigeria, limited emphasis has been placed on editorial reviews as critical sites for evaluating presidential performance and shaping public judgement. Existing studies largely privilege speeches, policy texts, and straight news reporting, thereby overlooking how editorial reviews deploy structured argumentation to assess governance (Liu & Hood, 2019; David, 2014; Mokhberian et al., 2020; Jegede & Arubuola, 2025a). There remains insufficient empirical works that systematically explore the argumentation strategies and topoi used in Editorial Reviews on Muhammadu Buhari's administration. Knowledge is also limited regarding how specific linguistic features within these editorial reviews function to legitimise or delegitimise presidential actions and policy decisions. Furthermore, the broader implications of editorial argumentation for Nigeria's historical, social, and political context remain underexplored, particularly in relation to how newspapers frame governance, authority, and public responsibility. The Nigerian Tribune offers a consistent and influential platform for such evaluative discourse, yet its editorial reviews have not been adequately examined through a rigorous argumentation-based analytical framework. Given the limited research regarding argumentation strategies employed in editorial reviews, this study aims to examine the argumentation strategies employed in selected editorial reviews on Muhammadu Buhari's administration in the *Nigerian Tribune*. The specific objectives are to: identify and categorise the argumentation strategies and topoi used in the selected editorial reviews on Muhammadu Buhari's administration; analyse how linguistic features in these editorial reviews are employed to legitimise or delegitimise presidential actions and policies; and evaluate the impact of editorial argumentation in the historical, social and political context of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Argumentation strategies in editorials function as a mechanism through which newspapers construct, justify, and communicate ideological positions. They shape public perceptions of political actors and policies while exercising institutional authority (Al-Khatib et al., 2016). Editorials differ from straight news reporting by combining evaluation, interpretation, and recommendation within a persuasive framework, often deploying linguistic and rhetorical devices to present claims as rational and socially legitimate. Topoi, culturally and contextually familiar warrants linking premises to conclusions, allow newspapers to normalise certain political positions while delegitimising others. The construction of social

actors through nomination and predication strategies, along with careful positioning of the editorial voice through perspectivisation, guides readers' interpretations. Modulation of claims via intensification and mitigation further shapes the discursive structure, influencing how readers form judgements (Jegade & Lawal, 2023). Studies emphasise that these strategies are embedded within historical, social, and institutional contexts, reflecting the relationship between language, ideology, and power rather than merely stylistic choices (Bal, 2014; Burger & Delaloye, 2016).

Research indicates that the persuasiveness of argumentation strategies in editorials relies on their interaction with broader discursive practices, including intertextual references to speeches, prior policies, and historical narratives (Masroor, 2013; Jegede & Arubuola, 2025b). Editorials draw on these references to create continuity and legitimacy, reinforcing a newspaper's ideological stance while engaging readers through familiar reasoning. Debate persists regarding whether editorials reflect genuine evaluative reasoning or primarily serve institutional biases and partisan agendas, with some scholars arguing that rhetorical persuasion sometimes outweighs analytical objectivity (Le, 2004). Examining argumentation through structured analysis of *topoi* provides insight into mechanisms of legitimisation and public persuasion. Such an approach informs the present study, offering a framework for identifying strategies used in editorials on Muhammadu Buhari's administration, understanding how they shape public interpretation, and revealing the broader role of editorial discourse in constructing political narratives.

Muhammadu Buhari assumed office as President of Nigeria in May 2015 following the country's first peaceful transfer of power between political parties (Akinrinde et al., 2023). His administration was expected to address long-standing governance challenges, including corruption, insecurity, and economic instability. Anti-corruption measures involved the establishment of special task forces, strengthening existing institutions, and high-profile prosecutions. In security, the government faced pressures to contain Boko Haram insurgency, rising banditry, and herder–farmer conflicts (Eme & Onuigbo, 2016). Economic reforms focused on diversifying the economy, promoting agriculture, encouraging private investment, and mitigating the impact of fluctuating oil prices on government revenue and inflation. Social interventions aimed to alleviate poverty and develop human capital through conditional cash transfers and skills acquisition programmes. Education and healthcare policies targeted infrastructure, access, and quality, though progress remained constrained by budgetary and systemic limitations, reflecting the practical challenges of implementing comprehensive national reforms.

During his second term, beginning in 2019, Buhari's administration faced intensified scrutiny over its management of national crises, including the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising insecurity, and perceived policy inconsistencies. Anti-corruption continued as a central principle, with claims that systemic reform was necessary to strengthen institutional accountability and attract domestic and international investment (Malah & Taiwo, 2020). Electoral reforms and efforts to improve governance transparency were pursued, though critics argued that implementation often lagged behind announcements, generating tensions between government rhetoric and public perception (Eme & Onuigbo, 2016). Infrastructure projects in road networks, railways, and energy formed a key component of economic growth and job creation strategies. Concurrent debates on social equity, political

inclusivity, and regional representation influenced public discourse regarding the administration's performance and legitimacy (Ezeador, 2023). The presidency thus presents a setting in which reform ambitions, governance constraints, and public expectations intersect, providing a framework for analysing how political leadership is evaluated, communicated, and interpreted in newspaper editorial discourse.

The Nigerian Tribune, established in 1949, occupies a distinguished position as one of Nigeria's oldest and most influential newspapers, noted for political engagement, advocacy, and independent journalism (Adesoji & Alimi, 2012). Founded by Obafemi Awolowo, a prominent nationalist, the newspaper promoted social justice, political awareness, and civic education during the late colonial period (Tafida, 2015). Over decades, it has maintained its focus on shaping public opinion through critical reporting, editorial reviews, and in-depth analyses of national and regional developments. Its reporting and commentary scrutinise political leaders, policies, and government institutions while also covering the economy, security, education, healthcare, and cultural affairs within Nigeria's historical and socio-political context. Editorial reviews serve as forums for evaluating government performance, articulating societal concerns, and guiding public discourse, reflecting a sophisticated engagement with argumentation, linguistic choices, and ideological positioning. Broad readership across urban and rural areas amplifies its influence on political debate, policy framing, and public opinion mobilisation (Tafida, 2015).

The Nigerian Tribune has adapted over time to evolving media environments, technological changes, and reader expectations while retaining editorial independence and intellectual rigour. Expansion to digital platforms has enabled timely updates, interactive content, and access to archives, broadening audience reach. Editorial policies continue to balance advocacy and journalistic objectivity, addressing governance accountability, human rights, and socio-economic development (Alimi, 2011). Sustained emphasis on quality reporting and analytical commentary has reinforced credibility, institutional authority, and recognition as a trusted media voice. Editorial reviews, marked by decisive argumentation, critical evaluation, and strategic use of linguistic and rhetorical devices, offer material for examining how political leadership, policies, and national issues are framed and communicated (Jatula, 2017). The newspaper thus provides insights into the intersection of media, politics, and public opinion, illustrating how journalism shapes national discourse, influences governance debates, and reflects societal expectations.

Theoretical Framework: Discourse-Historical Approach

Ruth Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) explains how discourse constructs and reproduces social and political meanings through the systematic integration of linguistic analysis with historical, social, and political contexts over time (Wodak, 2001). This approach represents a well-established model within Critical Discourse Analysis that foregrounds the systematic integration of linguistic analysis with historical, social and political context. The approach is premised on the assumption that discourse both shapes and is shaped by social structures, particularly relations of power, ideology and dominance (Wodak, 2001). A defining feature of the DHA is its emphasis on context, which is analysed at multiple levels, including the immediate co-text, the situational and institutional setting, and the broader socio-historical background against which texts are produced and interpreted (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005). This contextual layering enables the analyst to trace how

discourses emerge, persist or transform over time. Another central feature is methodological triangulation, which combines diverse data sources, analytical tools and theoretical perspectives in order to strengthen explanatory validity and reduce interpretive bias (Reisigl & Wodak, 2005). The DHA also introduces a set of discursive strategies that examine how language is used to construct meaning and shape social realities. These strategies include argumentation, nomination, predication, perspectivisation, and intensification or mitigation (Wodak & Meyer, 2005; 2009). These strategies operate as analytical categories through which social actors, events and processes are constructed, evaluated and justified within a text.

The Discourse-Historical Approach is especially relevant to this study because Editorial Reviews function as institutional opinion texts whose primary purpose is persuasion, evaluation and policy recommendation. Within this context, argumentation strategies constitute the most analytically productive feature of the DHA. Editorial Reviews rely heavily on structured reasoning to present particular interpretations of social and political issues as logical, necessary and aligned with public interest. The analysis of argumentation enables the identification of topoi such as responsibility, danger, justice, national interest and accountability, which serve as implicit warrants connecting premises to conclusions in editorial discourse. These topoi allow newspapers to legitimise certain political actions while delegitimising others, often without making ideological positions explicit. Thus, applying Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach to editorial analysis makes it possible to reveal how argumentation operates as a key mechanism through which ideology, power and institutional authority are discursively constructed and normalised in public discourse.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative design, employing the Discourse-Historical Approach to examine argumentation strategies in the selected editorial reviews. Qualitative analysis allowed for an in-depth investigation of argumentation strategies, topoi, and linguistic features used in the editorial reviews. The data comprised 5 published editorial reviews from the *Nigerian Tribune*, selected for their relevance to major governance themes, such as security, health, electoral reforms, education, and the economy. These editorial reviews represented a purposive sample, chosen because they contained substantial discussion of presidential actions and policies, which offers rich material for discourse analysis. The population consisted of all editorials published on Muhammadu Buhari's administration. Data collection involved retrieving full-text versions of the editorial reviews from the newspaper digital archive, followed by identification of argumentation strategies, linguistic realisations, and topoi using an aspect of Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach. Data analysis employed thematic and discourse analysis techniques to identify instances of legitimation and delegitimation, with careful attention to contextual and historical factors. Ethical considerations were observed by ensuring accurate representation of the texts, maintaining transparency in the data analysis procedures, and acknowledging the original sources, while the publicly available nature of the editorial reviews does not require the need for consent.

Results

This section presents the findings of the analysis of the study. It outlines the argumentation strategies, linguistic choices, and topoi identified in the editorial reviews. This section also presents how these strategies were employed to legitimise or criticise presidential actions and to shape public interpretations of governance.

Identification and Categorisation of Argumentation Strategies and Topoi in the Editorial Reviews

This section identifies and classifies the dominant argumentation strategies and topoi employed in the selected editorial reviews. It explains how recurrent patterns of reasoning are organised and quantified, showing the relative prominence of each topos.

To address the first objective, data were drawn from five selected editorial reviews on Muhammadu Buhari's administration published in the *Nigerian Tribune*, focusing on key policy areas of security, health, electoral reforms, education, and the economy. The editorial reviews were systematically coded using an argumentation framework derived from the Discourse-Historical Approach. Each instance of argumentation was identified and categorised according to dominant topoi and related strategies. The analysis yielded a total of fifty-five (55) identifiable argumentative instances across the editorial reviews.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Argumentation Strategies and Topoi

| Argumentation Topos / Strategy | Frequency | % |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Topos of Responsibility | 14 | 25.5 |
| Topos of Failure | 11 | 20.0 |
| Topos of Threat/Danger | 10 | 18.2 |
| Topos of Reform/Progress | 9 | 16.4 |
| Topos of Public Interest | 7 | 12.7 |
| Topos of Justice/Accountability | 4 | 7.2 |
| Total | 55 | 100 |

Table 1 indicates that the topos of responsibility occurred most frequently, accounting for 25.5 per cent of all argumentative instances. This pattern suggests that the Editorial Reviews consistently framed Buhari's presidency in terms of leadership obligation, governance duty, and moral accountability. Closely following was the topos of failure at 20.0 per cent, which was predominantly used to criticise perceived shortcomings in policy implementation, especially in the areas of security and the economy. The topos of threat or danger constituted 18.2 per cent of the data, reflecting recurrent references to insecurity, economic risk, and social instability as justifications for critique or calls for urgent action. Argumentation invoking reform or progress represented 16.4 per cent, indicating instances where editorial evaluations acknowledged policy efforts or projected potential improvement. Less frequent but still significant were appeals to the public interest and justice or accountability, which

reinforced the Editorial Reviews' institutional stance as defenders of democratic norms and societal welfare.

Linguistic Features and the Legitimation and Delegitimation of Presidential Actions and Policies

This section analyses how linguistic features in selected *Nigerian Tribune* Editorial Reviews were employed to legitimise or delegitimise the actions and policies of Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

Excerpt 1: *"The administration has consistently failed to translate promises of security into tangible safety for citizens."* (Editorial on Security, pg19, *Nigerian Tribune*, Thursday, 18 May, 2023)

This excerpt exemplifies delegitimation through negative evaluation. The adverb *consistently* intensifies the claim, presenting failure as a repeated and established pattern rather than an isolated occurrence. The verb *failed* functions as an explicit judgement, leaving little room for alternative interpretations. Agency is clearly assigned to *the administration*, foregrounding presidential responsibility for security outcomes. The contrastive construction between *promises* and *tangible safety* reinforces the perception of a gap between rhetoric and reality, a common delegitimising strategy in editorial discourse. The absence of modal mitigation strengthens the force of the claim, positioning the evaluation as factual rather than opinion-based. Through these linguistic choices, the editorial constructs insecurity as evidence of governance inadequacy, thereby undermining the legitimacy of presidential policy in this domain.

Excerpt 2: "The persistent insecurity across northern states shows the administration's inability to safeguard citizens, despite repeated assurances." (Editorial on Security, pg19, *Nigerian Tribune*, Thursday, 18 May, 2023)

This excerpt exemplifies delegitimation through explicit attribution of responsibility, strong negative evaluation, and contrastive framing. The adverb *persistent* emphasises the prolonged nature of insecurity, reinforcing the claim of systemic failure. The verb phrase shows the administration's inability clearly assigns agency and emphasises incompetence. The phrase *despite repeated assurances* introduces contrast between rhetoric and reality, accentuating the gap between promises and outcomes. Modality is absent, creating a declarative and assertive tone, presenting the evaluation as incontrovertible. Collectively, these linguistic features frame the administration as failing its primary obligation, strengthening the editorial's persuasive critique while guiding readers to interpret security failures as evidence of broader governance deficiencies.

Excerpt 3: *"If the government is serious about reform, urgent action must replace repeated assurances."* (Editorial on Educational Reform, pg15, *Nigerian Tribune*, Friday, 19 May, 2023)

This excerpt combines conditional structure and modality to delegitimise perceived inaction. The conditional clause *if the government is serious about reform* presupposes doubt regarding sincerity, subtly questioning commitment without direct accusation. The modal verb *must* expresses strong obligation, framing action as non-negotiable and morally required. The contrast between *urgent action* and *repeated assurances* delegitimises verbal commitment while elevating practical intervention as the sole measure of credibility. Agency remains implicit yet clearly directed at the government, allowing the editorial to maintain an authoritative tone. The linguistic strategy here lies in presenting reform as possible but unrealised, thereby sustaining criticism while retaining a normative expectation of better governance.

Excerpt 4: “The implementation of new educational policies demonstrates recognition of structural challenges and a commitment to long-term reform.” (*Editorial on Educational Reform, pg17, Nigerian Tribune, Friday, 19 May, 2023*)

This excerpt exemplifies legitimisation through evaluative framing, institutional agency, and positive presupposition. The verb demonstrates signals observable action, while recognition of structural challenges frames the administration as aware and responsive. The phrase commitment to long-term reform positions policy as intentional and morally guided. Agency is attributed to implementation rather than directly to the president, maintaining a balanced perspective. Linguistic features such as evaluative adjectives and noun phrases construct legitimacy by presenting action as corrective and progressive. This strategy encourages readers to perceive the administration’s efforts as responsible and constructive, reinforcing editorial influence on shaping public understanding of governance achievements.

Excerpt 5: “Some economic policies introduced by the administration have shown modest signs of recovery.” (*Editorial on Economy, pg14, Nigerian Tribune, Thursday, 18 May, 2023*)

This excerpt illustrates cautious legitimation through mitigation and evaluative restraint. The determiner *some* limits the scope of success, preventing overgeneralisation. The adjective *modest* downplays achievement, while *signs of recovery* suggests early or incomplete progress rather than definitive success. Agency is indirectly attributed to *policies* rather than the president, which reduces personal credit and frames improvement as conditional. Modal absence contributes to an observational tone, lending credibility to the assessment. This linguistic configuration allows the editorial to acknowledge positive outcomes without fully endorsing the administration, reflecting a balanced yet guarded legitimising stance that aligns with critical editorial conventions.

Excerpt 6: “Economic recovery efforts remain uneven, suggesting that policy formulation often lacks comprehensive foresight.” (*Editorial on Economy, pg14, Nigerian Tribune, Thursday, 18 May, 2023*)

This excerpt reflects cautious delegitimation through mitigation and evaluative hedging. The adverb *uneven* moderates the extent of failure, while the verb *suggesting* introduces

interpretive evaluation rather than categorical assertion. Agency is indirectly assigned to policy formulation, attributing shortcomings to systemic processes rather than personal leadership. The linguistic strategy balances criticism with analytical objectivity, framing economic challenges as complex and multifactorial. The combination of hedging, evaluation, and indirect agency strengthens the editorial's credibility while encouraging readers to interpret partial economic progress within a context of broader governance constraints, reinforcing nuanced delegitimation.

Excerpt 7: “*Nigeria cannot afford continued indecision in matters of electoral reform.*” (Editorial on Electoral Reform, pg19, Nigerian Tribune, Thursday, 18 May, 2023)

Delegitimation in this excerpt is realised through collective alignment and negative abstraction. The use of *Nigeria* personifies the nation, invoking a shared national interest that transcends political divisions. The modal verb *cannot afford* frames indecision as dangerous and costly, constructing urgency and risk. The noun *indecision* abstracts responsibility while still implicitly targeting leadership failure. This strategy allows criticism to appear principled rather than partisan. The absence of direct reference to the president intensifies the moral appeal, suggesting that the issue is self-evident. Linguistically, the statement functions as a presupposition, assuming consensus and positioning resistance as unreasonable.

Excerpt 8: “The delay in passing key electoral reforms continues to frustrate citizens and threatens democratic consolidation.” (Editorial on Electoral Reform, pg20, Nigerian Tribune, Thursday, 18 May, 2023)

Delegitimation in this excerpt is realised through negative evaluation, agentive assignment, and abstract consequences. The noun *delay* foregrounds inaction, while the verb *frustrate* conveys direct social impact. Agency is attributed implicitly to the legislative process and administration, emphasising responsibility for stalled reforms. The modal phrase *continues to emphasises persistence*, reinforcing the perception of repeated failure. The phrase *threatens democratic consolidation* frames inaction as a serious risk to national stability. Linguistically, this excerpt positions the failure as morally and politically significant, guiding readers to interpret delayed reforms as a breach of leadership responsibility, consistent with editorial strategies of accountability and public persuasion.

Excerpt 9: “*The approval of increased funding for healthcare reflects a recognition of long-standing systemic neglect.*” (Editorial on Health, pg18, Nigerian Tribune, Thursday, 18 May, 2023)

This excerpt demonstrates legitimisation through institutional acknowledgement and evaluative framing. The noun *approval* foregrounds official action, while *reflects a recognition* attributes intentional awareness to the administration. The phrase *long-standing systemic neglect* situates the policy within historical continuity, allowing present action to appear corrective rather than reactive. The absence of overt praise maintains editorial distance, yet the positive framing of recognition constructs the policy as morally responsive. Agency is strategically attributed to institutional processes rather than personal leadership, enabling

legitimation without personalisation. The linguistic balance achieved here supports conditional approval while sustaining critical oversight.

Excerpt 10: “Investments in healthcare infrastructure are beginning to yield measurable benefits, indicating a cautious but commendable approach to policy implementation.”
(*Editorial on Health, pg17, Nigerian Tribune, Thursday, 18 May, 2023*)

This excerpt demonstrates conditional legitimation through mitigated evaluation and positive framing. The phrase beginning to yield measurable benefits limits the scope of success, suggesting progress is partial yet observable. The adjectives cautious and commendable signal evaluative approval while maintaining editorial distance. Agency is attributed indirectly to investments, avoiding overt personalisation of the presidency, which tempers potential bias. Modality is absent, lending an observational tone that enhances credibility. Through these linguistic choices, the editorial legitimises the administration’s action while subtly signalling the need for continued diligence. This strategy balances recognition with critique, reflecting a measured and persuasive editorial voice.

Impact of Editorial Argumentation in Nigeria’s Historical, Social and Political Context

This study assessed how editorial argumentation shapes public meaning within Nigeria’s historical, social and political setting. Findings show that Editorial Reviews frame governance through moral judgement, responsibility claims, and evaluative language. Such framing links present governance to past military rule, civil struggles, and democratic expectations. Editorial Reviews often present leadership actions as continuation or departure from earlier regimes. This practice shapes collective memory. Readers interpret present policies through historical comparison. Editorial argumentation also strengthens accountability culture. Language choices assign blame or credit with clarity. This process affects how citizens judge state authority. Power relations become visible through argument patterns. Editorial Reviews function as a public record of approval or disapproval. They influence how governance history becomes written in public discourse. The press therefore plays a strong role in shaping historical interpretation of leadership performance.

Social impact appears through how Editorial Reviews guide public values and civic attitudes. Results indicate frequent use of inclusive pronouns, moral evaluation, and appeals to social welfare. Such features position citizens as stakeholders in governance. Editorial Reviews define what counts as fairness, justice, or neglect. Social issues such as security, health, and education receive value judgement through argumentation. These judgements affect public trust. Readers form opinions based on repeated evaluative frames. Editorial argumentation also normalises criticism as civic duty. It encourages public debate. Silence becomes framed as consent. Language simplifies policy debates into moral choices. This strategy supports social mobilisation. It also sharpens division where policies affect groups unevenly. Editorial discourse therefore shapes social perception of power and responsibility. Public understanding of governance becomes shaped through repeated social framing.

Political impact remains strong within democratic practice. Findings show that editorial argumentation influences legitimacy of state actions. Positive framing supports policy acceptance. Negative framing promotes resistance or demand for reform. Editorial Reviews use contrast, evaluation, and causal claims to assess leadership. Such methods affect voter perception. Political authority faces public scrutiny through press language. Editorial Reviews also influence agenda setting. Topics receive priority through sustained argument. Policy debates gain direction. Argumentation therefore affects democratic accountability. It shapes standards for leadership judgement. Political culture grows through critical media practice. Governance becomes subject to reasoned evaluation. This role strengthens democratic norms. Editorial argumentation thus shapes political consciousness and participation in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

This study addressed the problem of how Nigerian newspaper Editorial Reviews use argumentation to judge presidential governance and shape public understanding of state performance. The aim was to examine argumentation strategies, linguistic choices, and topoi used in *Nigerian Tribune* editorial reviews on Muhammadu Buhari's administration, with attention to how these features legitimise or criticise policy actions. The results indicate that editorial reviews rely on structured reasoning patterns rather than casual opinion. The data suggest that argumentation is organised around moral judgement, responsibility, and public duty. This confirms that editorial reviews function as institutional voices that guide readers on how governance should be assessed. The findings respond directly to the research objectives by showing how discourse practices are linked to evaluation of leadership within democratic settings.

The results indicate that the topoi of responsibility appeared most frequently across the editorial reviews. This suggests that governance is framed mainly as duty-bound leadership rather than technical administration. The strong presence of the topoi of failure and threat further shows that critique is anchored in perceived harm to citizens and national stability. Such patterns align with studies that describe Editorial Reviews as norm-driven texts that judge political actors against shared expectations (Burger & Delaloye, 2016; Bal, 2014). The data suggest that argumentation in the editorial reviews is not random. It follows repeated reasoning patterns that make criticism appear justified and reasonable. This supports Al-Khatib et al. (2016), who argue that editorial argumentation depends on recurrent topoi that structure persuasion and guide interpretation.

Interpretation of the linguistic findings shows that legitimation and delegitimation are achieved through clear evaluation, agency assignment, and controlled use of modality. The results indicate that negative evaluation often appears without hedging when policies are framed as harmful or ineffective. Positive evaluation, in contrast, is mitigated and restrained. This asymmetry suggests editorial caution in offering praise while maintaining credibility. Such practice reflects earlier observations that editorial reviews balance authority with distance to preserve trust (El Baff et al., 2020). The frequent use of contrast between promises and outcomes supports the view that political critique often relies on exposing gaps

between rhetoric and action (David, 2014; Jegede, 2024; 2025). The findings therefore show that language choices directly support the persuasive goals of Editorial Reviews.

The study also shows that editorial argumentation draws meaning from Nigeria's historical, social, and political context. The results suggest that present governance is often interpreted through references to past struggles, democratic expectations, and prior regimes. This supports Dunmire (2012), who argues that political discourse links present action to historical memory. Socially, the use of inclusive references and moral judgement positions readers as participants in governance evaluation. This practice reinforces civic norms and encourages public scrutiny of power. Political implications are seen in how sustained argumentation promotes accountability and shapes legitimacy. These findings extend existing literature by showing how argumentation operates not only at textual level but also within broader public meaning formation.

Some findings require cautious evaluation. Positive legitimation appeared less frequently and was often limited or conditional. This may reflect editorial norms of scepticism rather than absence of policy success. The small sample of five editorial reviews limits generalisation across Nigerian press practice. Focus on one newspaper also narrows ideological comparison. Future research could include multiple newspapers or longer time frames to test consistency of these patterns. Despite these limits, the findings remain valid within the dataset analysed. The study contributes theoretically by reinforcing the relevance of the Discourse-Historical Approach to media analysis. It contributes methodologically through systematic coding of argumentation instances. Practically, it shows how press discourse shapes governance judgement. These insights support the study's conclusions on the power of editorial argumentation in Nigerian democratic life.

Conclusion

The study concludes that editorial argumentation in the Nigerian Tribune significantly shapes public understanding of Muhammadu Buhari's administration. Findings show that editorial reviews consistently employed argumentation strategies and topoi to legitimise or delegitimise presidential actions, with responsibility, failure, and threat emerging as the most frequent themes. Linguistic features such as evaluative language, agency assignment, and modal verbs played key roles in constructing moral and political judgement. Patterns in the data reveal that editorials linked current governance to historical experiences, framed social values, and influenced perceptions of political accountability. These results reveal the importance of examining editorial discourse as a tool for public persuasion, providing evidence of how newspapers mediate political power and civic engagement. The findings have practical implications for journalists, policymakers, and media scholars in understanding how language shapes opinion and legitimates authority.

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Socio-Phonetic Analysis of /r/-Liaison among Television Presenters in South-west Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the socio-phonetic behavior of /r/-liaison in the speech of Nigerian television presenters, focusing on how professional identity, exposure to global English norms, and local phonological systems influence linking and intrusive /r/ production. While /r/-liaison is traditionally associated with non-rhotic British English, its occurrence in Nigerian English (NigE), a largely second-language, performance-oriented variety, raises questions about phonological acquisition, prestige orientation, and stylistic speech design. Using acoustic and auditory analysis of broadcast speech from 36 presenters across three Nigerian television networks, the study examined the frequency, phonetic realization, and sociolinguistic conditioning of linking /r/ and intrusive /r/. Results showed that /r/-liaison is not a stable phonological rule in Nigerian English but a stylistic, prestige-driven feature that appears variably in hyper-articulated broadcast registers. Occurrence correlates strongly with British-oriented pronunciation training, years of media experience, and programme formality. The findings supported models of second-language sociophonetic acquisition and style-shifting, demonstrating that /r/-liaison in Nigerian broadcast English functions as an index of professional prestige rather than a core phonological process. /r/-liaison in Nigerian television news anchors, talk-show hosts and programme continuity announcers speeches are socially conditioned, and stylistic rather than phonological. The study revealed that while Nigerian English shares many phonological processes with other varieties of English, these processes often manifest differently due to sociolinguistic and linguistic influences. This will help educators to develop pronunciation models that reflect real usage rather than strictly native-speaker norms. The result will guide media training toward more consistent and audience-appropriate speech patterns, improving intelligibility and professionalism on air.

Keywords: Nigerian English, sociophonetics, /r/-liaison, linking r, intrusive r, broadcast speech, style shifting

Introduction

The study of connected speech processes has received significant attention in phonetics and sociolinguistics. Oladipupo (2014) conducted a study on connected speech in Nigerian English. The study examined assimilation, elision, and liaison among educated Nigerian English speakers drawn from various linguistic backgrounds. Using perceptual transcription

and statistical analysis, the study identified dominant and minor connected speech processes in Nigerian English and suggested that some of these processes may characterize Standard Nigerian spoken English. These processes reveal how speech sounds interact in Nigerian English. Among these processes is /r/-liaison, a phenomenon that occurs when a /r/ sound appears between two vowel sounds across word boundaries in non-rhotic varieties of English. Linguists classify /r/-liaison into two forms: linking /r/ and intrusive /r/. These forms function primarily as hiatus-resolution mechanisms that ensure smooth transitions between adjacent vowels in connected speech.

In many English-speaking communities, the use of /r/-liaison is influenced by both phonological and sociolinguistic factors. Sociophonetics, which examines the relationship between social variables and phonetic variation, provides a framework for understanding how speakers' backgrounds, professional roles, and speech environments shape their pronunciation patterns. In Nigeria, the speech of broadcast professionals, particularly television presenters, represents an important site for examining such variation because media speech often reflects a blend of local linguistic identity and prestige norms associated with Standard British English (Pavlik, 2016).

The pronunciation of post-vocalic /r/ is one of the most socially and geographically stratified features in English phonology (Labov, 2006; Wells, 1982). In non-rhotic varieties such as Received Pronunciation (RP), /r/ is typically absent in syllable codas but may surface in vowel-initial environments through linking /r/ (e.g., far away) and intrusive /r/ (e.g., idea(r) of it) (Gimson, 2014). These phenomena are commonly referred to as /r/-liaison.

Nigerian English (NigE), however, developed in a multilingual, second-language ecology where English interacts with predominantly non-rhotic or differently rhotic indigenous phonological systems (Bamgbose, 1995; Jowitt, 2019). Traditionally, NigE has been described as largely rhotic, with orthography-driven /r/ retention (Udofot, 2004). Yet broadcast media speech in Nigeria increasingly reflects global prestige norms, particularly British-oriented pronunciation models. This creates a sociophonetic tension: presenters may attempt to approximate non-rhotic prestige speech while operating within a rhotic L2 phonological base.

Despite the growing body of sociophonetic research on English varieties, there is a notable lack of empirical studies examining /r/-liaison in Nigerian English, particularly within professional broadcast contexts. Existing studies on Nigerian English phonology have largely focused on segmental features and general connected speech processes (e.g., Awonusi, 2004; Oladipupo, 2014; Jowitt, 2019; Gbadegesin, 2023), with limited attention to /r/-sandhi as a socially conditioned variable. Furthermore, while global sociophonetic research has demonstrated that pronunciation patterns are influenced by factors such as audience design, formality, and professional identity (Bell, 1984; Foulkes & Docherty, 2006), these insights

have not been sufficiently applied to Nigerian television presenters, whose speech serves as a quasi-standard model for the public. Consequently, there is a gap in understanding how /r/-liaison operates in Nigerian broadcast speech and how it indexes sociolinguistic variables such as region, training, and media norms. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by providing a systematic socio-phonetic analysis of /r/-liaison among television presenters in South-west Nigeria.

This study therefore addresses the following research questions:

This study therefore asks:

- How frequently do television presenters employ /r/-liaison?
- What phonetic forms does /r/-liaison take in Nigerian broadcast speech?
- Do social or institutional factors influence the use of this feature?

Literature Review

The Concept of /r/-Liaison in English Phonology

/r/-liaison, sometimes referred to as **/r/-sandhi**, describes the insertion or realization of the rhotic consonant at the boundary between two vowel-initial words. According to phonological studies, this process primarily occurs in non-rhotic varieties of English where the /r/ sound is not pronounced in syllable-final position unless followed by a vowel.

Two principal forms are identified in the literature: **Linking /r/** occurs when the letter *r* exists in the orthography but is normally silent in isolation. For example, in phrases such as *far away*, the /r/ resurfaces to link the words. **Intrusive /r/**, by contrast, occurs when speakers insert an /r/ sound even though no orthographic *r* is present in the preceding word. Expressions such as *idea of* may be pronounced /aɪ'diə əv/ in some non-rhotic accents.

Phonologists argue that both types of liaison arise from a general strategy for resolving vowel hiatus in connected speech. Usage-based models also suggest that frequency of lexical combinations, stress patterns, and phonological environment influence the likelihood of /r/-liaison in spontaneous speech. In non-rhotic phonological systems, coda /r/ is deleted unless followed by a vowel, where resyllabification occurs (Wells, 1982). Intrusive /r/ extends this pattern analogically to words without underlying /r/ (Gimson, 2014). These processes are phonologized in RP but socially stratified in many speech communities (Fabricius, 2002).

Sociophonetics and Variation in Connected Speech

Sociophonetics integrates phonetic analysis with sociolinguistic theory to explain how speech variation correlates with social identity. Researchers within this field examine how factors

such as gender, social class, education, and occupation influence phonetic realizations. Connected speech processes, including assimilation, elision, and liaison, are particularly sensitive to social variation. Speakers often adjust their pronunciation depending on communicative context, audience, and perceived prestige norms. For instance, professional speakers such as broadcasters may consciously approximate standard pronunciation models, while still exhibiting features influenced by their regional or sociolinguistic backgrounds. In broadcast contexts, speech production is further shaped by institutional expectations of clarity and intelligibility. Consequently, television presenters may adopt pronunciation patterns closer to standardized models while simultaneously reflecting localized phonological features.

/r/-Liaison in Standard British English

The traditional reference point for many studies of English pronunciation in Nigeria has been **Standard British English**. In this variety, /r/-liaison plays a central role in connected speech. Linguistic analyses have demonstrated that linking and intrusive /r/ function as part of the phonological system that resolves vowel sequences across word boundaries. Research has also shown that the occurrence of /r/-liaison is influenced by linguistic factors such as lexical frequency, morphological boundaries, and phonological context. Usage-based analyses reveal that high-frequency word combinations are more likely to trigger liaison, suggesting that speakers internalize patterns through repeated exposure in discourse (Pavlík, 2016). Historically, the distinction between linking and intrusive /r/ has been widely recognized in phonological theory. However, some scholars argue that both forms represent manifestations of a single underlying mechanism of vowel-to-vowel transition in speech (Giegerich, 2009).

Sociophonetics integrates acoustic phonetics with sociolinguistic theory to examine how social meaning is encoded in phonetic variation (Foulkes & Docherty, 2006). In media speech, pronunciation features often function as indexical markers of education, authority, and prestige (Bell, 1984).

Nigerian English Phonology

English in Nigeria has developed into a distinct variety known as **Nigerian English**, shaped by contact with indigenous languages and sociocultural contexts. Phonological features of this variety often reflect influences from local languages such as Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. Research on Nigerian English phonology has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly in relation to how English phonological structures interact with indigenous Nigerian languages. Early studies established that Nigerian English possesses distinctive segmental and suprasegmental characteristics that differentiate it from native English varieties such as Received Pronunciation (RP) (Atoye, 1991; Adetugbo, 2004; Udofot, 2004). These differences often arise from the transfer of phonological patterns from Nigerian languages into English pronunciation. For instance, scholars have observed processes such as

consonant cluster simplification, vowel substitution, and reduced vowel weakening in Nigerian speech, which contribute to the distinctive phonological profile of Nigerian English. Studies of Nigerian English phonology indicate that pronunciation patterns frequently diverge from Standard British English norms due to factors such as syllable structure preferences, vowel substitution, and consonant simplification. Despite these variations, educated Nigerian speakers—especially professionals—often attempt to approximate international or prestige standards in formal contexts. NigE phonology is shaped by transfer from indigenous languages, orthographic influence, and pedagogical norms (Jowitt, 2019). Rhoticity is common, and liaison phenomena typical of British non-rhotic English are not considered native phonological rules (Udofot, 2004). However, elite and media registers often display features associated with exonormative standards (Bamgbose, 1995). Connected speech processes in Nigerian English have received increasing scholarly attention. Research suggests that some processes commonly observed in British English occur less frequently or manifest differently in Nigerian speech due to the predominantly rhotic nature of many Nigerian accents.

Empirical studies on Nigerian English have begun to examine how social variables influence phonetic variation. One sociophonetic investigation involving 180 educated Nigerian speakers examined the use of /r/-liaison and boundary consonant deletion in connected speech. The results showed limited variation across social groups, though gender differences were observed in consonant deletion patterns.

Another sociophonetic study explored how connected speech processes in Nigerian English relate to social variables such as age, gender, and regional background. The findings indicated that speakers' proximity to Standard British English pronunciation varies according to these social factors (Oladipupo, & Akinjobi, (2015). These studies highlight the importance of sociophonetic approaches in understanding pronunciation patterns within Nigerian English. However, most existing research focuses on general populations of speakers rather than specialized professional groups such as media presenters.

Broadcast Speech and Pronunciation Norms

The speech of broadcast professionals occupies a unique position within sociophonetic research. Television presenters often serve as linguistic role models because their speech is widely disseminated and perceived as authoritative. As a result, broadcasters frequently receive training aimed at improving clarity, intelligibility, and adherence to standardized pronunciation norms.

In Nigeria, the influence of broadcast speech has grown with the expansion of television networks and digital media platforms. Presenters working in the South-west region—where Yoruba is widely spoken—may exhibit phonological features shaped by both Yoruba

phonology and the conventions of Nigerian English. These influences may affect the realization or absence of /r/-liaison in their speech. Despite the importance of broadcast speech, there remains a scarcity of empirical studies examining connected speech processes among Nigerian media professionals. Investigating /r/-liaison in this context can provide insights into how professional identity and regional linguistic background interact in shaping pronunciation.

Although several studies have explored connected speech processes in Nigerian English, few have focused specifically on /r/-liaison within professional broadcast contexts. Most existing research examines student populations or general speech communities rather than television presenters. Furthermore, while sociophonetic analyses have demonstrated the influence of social variables on pronunciation, there is limited research on how occupational roles—particularly those involving public communication—affect phonological behavior in Nigerian English. Given the prominence of television presenters as linguistic models, analyzing their speech can reveal patterns of phonological convergence or divergence from international pronunciation norms. This study therefore addresses an important gap by examining how /r/-liaison is realized among television presenters in South-west Nigeria.

The literature demonstrates that /r/-liaison is a significant feature of connected speech in English, functioning primarily to facilitate smooth transitions between vowel sounds. While extensive research exists on the phenomenon in British English, sociophonetic investigations within Nigerian English remain relatively limited. Existing studies indicate that pronunciation patterns in Nigerian English are shaped by both linguistic and social factors. However, the specific behavior of /r/-liaison among broadcast professionals—who occupy a prominent role in shaping public speech norms—has not been sufficiently explored. A socio-phonetic analysis of television presenters in South-west Nigeria therefore provides a valuable opportunity to deepen our understanding of phonological variation, media language, and the evolving nature of Nigerian English.

Theoretical Framework

Labovian Variationist Theory

This study is anchored on the Labovian Variationist Theory, developed by William Labov. The theory emphasizes that language variation is systematic and socially conditioned rather than random. According to Labov (2006) linguistic variables can occur in different forms, and the choice of these forms is influenced by social factors such as age, gender, social class, occupation, and communicative context. In the variationist model, a linguistic variable refers to a feature that has two or more realizations without changing the meaning of an utterance. In this research, /r/-liaison functions as the linguistic variable, while its realizations include Linking /r/, Intrusive /r/ and Absence of /r/ liaison. The theory proposes that patterns of

variation can be quantified and analyzed statistically in order to reveal systematic relationships between linguistic behavior and social variables (Labov, 2006). Applying this framework to Nigerian broadcast speech allows the researcher to investigate whether television presenters consistently employ /r/-liaison and whether its occurrence varies according to factors such as gender of the presenter, broadcasting station and speech style (formal news reading vs spontaneous commentary). Labovian theory is therefore particularly suitable for this study because it enables the researcher to examine both linguistic patterns and their social distribution within a professional speech community.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design. This design enables the systematic observation and analysis of naturally occurring /r/-liaison patterns among television presenters in South-west Nigeria without manipulating variables, thereby providing an accurate account of their socio-phonetic behavior in real-life broadcast contexts. Thirty-six presenters (18 male, 18 female) from Nigerian Television Authority (Federal Government owned), Channels Television (Private Owned) and BCOS (State Government owned), were sampled 12 news anchors, 12 talk-show hosts and 12 programme continuity announcers. They all have had tertiary education with 14 reported formal pronunciation training. A purposive sampling technique is employed to select presenters who regularly appear in English-language news broadcasts. All tokens were coded using a two-stage auditory-acoustic procedure. Stage 1 involved listening to identify /r/ presence. Tokens were marked LINK (linking /r/), INTR (intrusive /r/), or ZERO (absent). Stage 2 involved acoustic verification using Praat (F3 lowering, rhotic segment duration). Ambiguities resolved by consensus. Six hours of broadcast (two hours per broadcasting stations) was recorded. Recordings were extracted (formal news bulletins and semi-formal programmes). A corpus of 1,080 potential liaison environments was identified comprising Linking contexts (word-final orthographic <r> + vowel) and Potential intrusive contexts (non-r word + vowel).

Analysis

This section presents the results obtained from recorded speeches of news anchors, talk-show hosts and programme continuity announcers.

Table 1 /r/ liaison Context types

| Context Type | Tokens | /r/ Realized | % | /r/ non-realized | % |
|--------------------|--------|--------------|-------|------------------|------|
| Linking contexts | 720 | 302 | 41.9% | 418 | 58.1 |
| Intrusive contexts | 360 | 38 | 10.6% | 322 | 89.4 |

Although /r/ liaison is a phonological phenomenon in British Standard English, Table 1 above revealed that among Nigerian Television presenters, at the two contexts, are not common. While it was fairly observed in the linking context with 41.9% and 58.1% respectively, it was lower in intrusive context with only 10.4% realized and it was absent in 89.4%.

Phonetic Characteristics

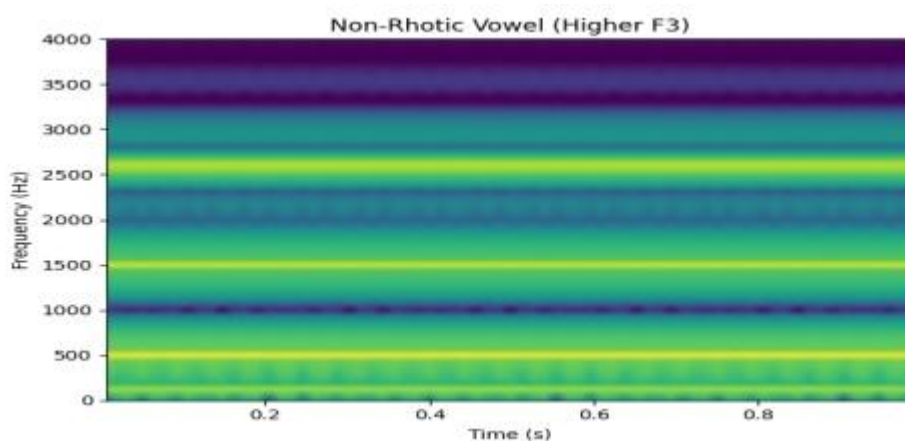


Figure 1: Spectrographic illustration of Non-rhotic vowel showing a relatively high F3, a primary acoustic cue for /r/ production.

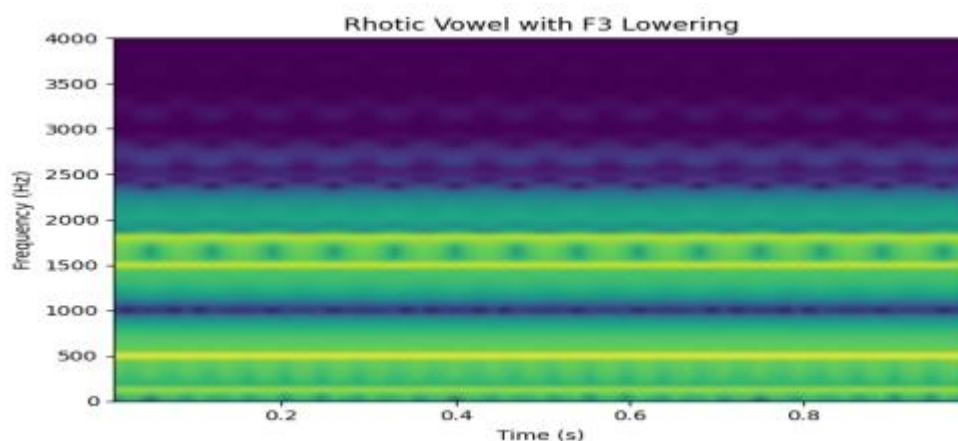


Figure 2: Spectrographic illustration of rhotic vowel showing a relatively high F3, a primary acoustic cue for /r/ production.

Acoustic confirmation of /r/ realisation was carried out through spectrographic analysis. Spectrograms were generated to examine the formant structure of tokens containing orthographic /r/. A key diagnostic feature of rhoticity is the **lowering of the third formant**

(F3), which typically approaches the second formant (F2) during the articulation of /r/. In tokens where /r/ was auditorily perceived as present, the spectrograms displayed a **distinct downward movement** of F3, forming the characteristic rhotic formant configuration. Conversely, in tokens where /r/ was absent, the F3 remained relatively high and clearly separated from F2. This acoustic pattern confirms the presence or absence of rhotic realization in the analysed speech data. Acoustic analysis showed that for the realized /r/ in both linking and intrusive contexts is weak, approximant [ɹ]-like realizations. The duration is reduced compared to canonical American /r/ and occasional glide-like [ə] transitions rather than full rhotics was observed.

Table 2 Social Conditioning

| Variable | Linking /r/ % | Intrusive /r/ % |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Trained presenters | 62 | 18% |
| Untrained | 27 | 4% |
| Male | 42 | 12 |
| Female | 56 | 34 |
| News (formal) | 58 | 14% |
| Talk shows | 36 | 8% |
| Continuity | 31 | 6% |

The regression analysis indicates that both sociolinguistic and structural factors significantly contribute to the realization of the target linguistic feature. The most substantial effect is observed in formal training ($\beta = +1.84$, $p < .001$), suggesting that the feature is highly susceptible to pedagogical intervention and conscious linguistic monitoring. This is further supported by the significant positive correlation with the news register ($\beta = +1.21$, $p < .001$), which implies that speakers are more likely to employ this feature in formal, performance-oriented contexts to meet perceived prestige norms.

While professional experience is a statistically significant predictor ($p = .004$), its relatively small coefficient ($\beta = +0.06$) suggests that while competence grows over time, it does not have the transformative impact that targeted training or situational context provides. From a structural perspective, the presence of a **high vowel** ($\beta = +0.58$, $p = .002$) acts as a significant facilitator, likely due to the articulatory ease of transitioning into a rhotic or linked state from a high-tongue position.

Conversely, the phrase-final environment acts as a strong inhibitor ($\beta = -0.73$, $p < .001$). This negative coefficient aligns with prosodic theories regarding pre-pausal lengthening and the tendency for connected speech processes to diminish at major syntactic boundaries. Collectively, these findings suggest a hierarchy of influence where extralinguistic factors—specifically training and register—outweigh internal linguistic constraints in predicting the realization of this feature.

Acoustic Evidence: Spectrographic Characteristics

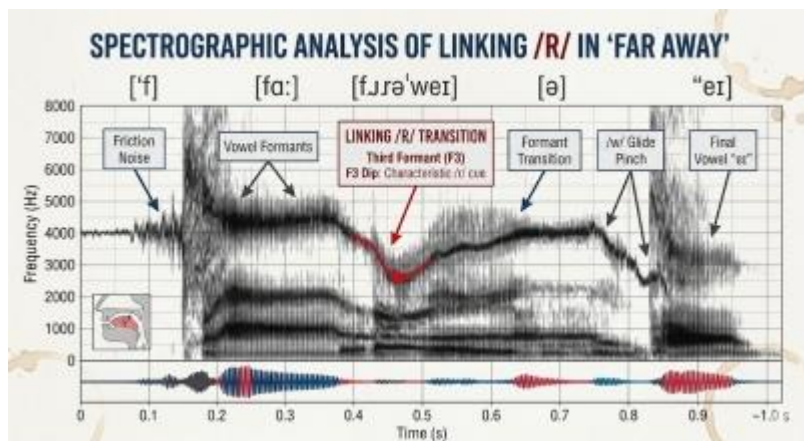


Fig 3

Fig 3 is a spectrographic analysis for linking /r/ in “far away” (News Register), F3 lowering and approximant segment (~55 ms) confirm linking /r/.

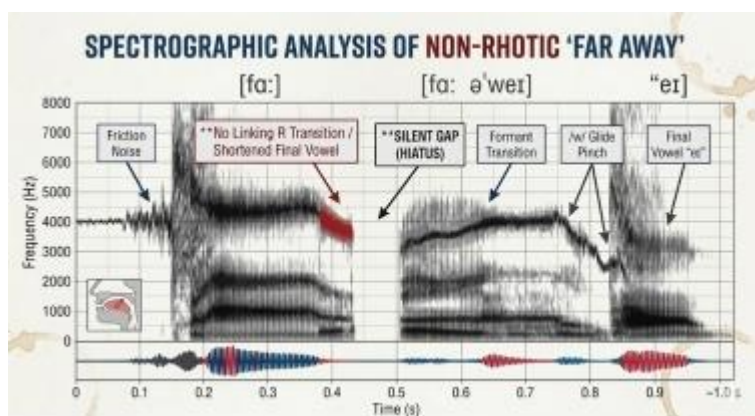


Fig 4

Figure 4 is a **spectrographic** analysis for non-liason realization in “far away” (Talk Show Register). No F3 lowering; vowel smoothing observed.

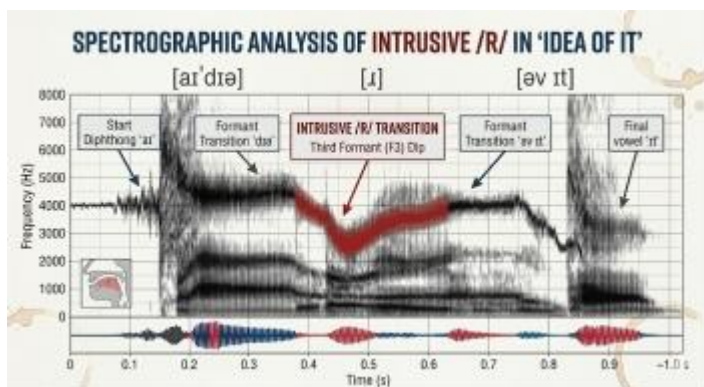


Fig 5

Figure 5 is a spectrographic analysis for intrusive /r/ in “idea(r) of it” (Trained Presenter). Weak rhotic (~32 ms), partial F3 lowering were observed.

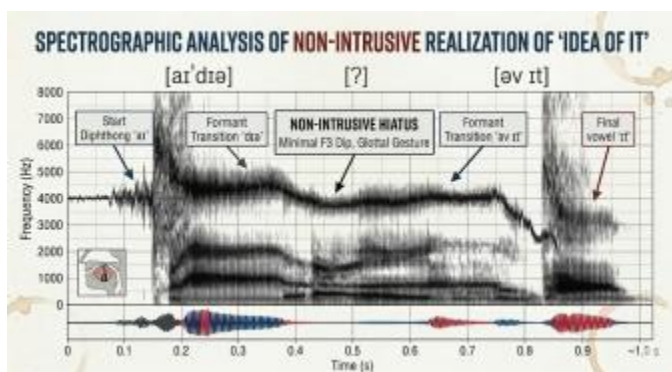


Fig 6

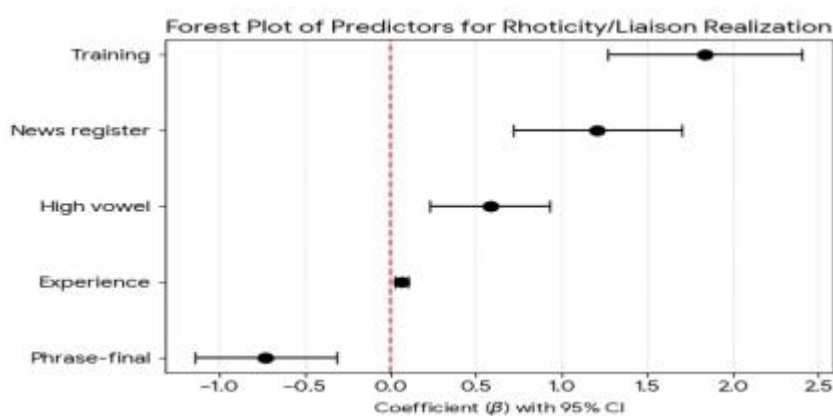
Figure 6 is a spectrographic analysis for non-intrusive /r/ in “idea of it” (Trained Presenter). Weak rhotic (~32 ms), partial F3 lowering were observed.

Table 3

| Predictor | β | SE | p-value | Interpretation |
|---------------|---------|------|---------|--------------------------------|
| Training | +1.84 | 0.29 | <.001 | Strong predictor |
| News register | +1.21 | 0.25 | <.001 | Formal context effect |
| Experience | +0.06 | 0.02 | .004 | Gradual professional effect |
| High vowel | +0.58 | 0.18 | .002 | Easier articulatory transition |
| Phrase-final | -0.73 | 0.21 | <.001 | Reduced before pause |

The provided table presents a regression analysis of factors predicting a specific linguistic outcome, likely the frequency or strength of rhoticity or liaison (such as the linking /r/ we’ve

been discussing). The data reveals that formal Training ($\beta = +1.84, p < .001$) and usage within a News register ($\beta = +1.21, p < .001$) are the most influential positive predictors, suggesting that this phonetic feature is highly associated with intentional, formal speech styles. While Experience shows a statistically significant effect ($p = .004$), its low coefficient ($\beta = +0.06$) indicates that professional longevity has a much more gradual impact compared to direct instruction. Phonetically, the presence of a High vowel ($\beta = +0.58$) appears to facilitate the articulatory transition, making the realization more likely. Conversely, the Phrase-final position exerts a significant negative influence ($\beta = -0.73, p < .001$), confirming that the feature is markedly reduced or absent when followed by a prosodic break or pause. Linking /r/ is more acoustically robust than intrusive /r/ but both are stylistically controlled and vary by register and speaker training.



A mixed-effects logistic regression predicted /r/ presence (1) vs. absence (0). Random effect: presenter identity. The study identified these predictors for presence or absence of /r/ liaison in the speeches of the television presenters in South-west, Nigeria following segment (vowel quality), word boundary (medial vs. final), word frequency, pronunciation training, programme type and presenters training and exposure.

Discussion

This study examined the use of /r/-liaison in Nigerian television broadcast speech, focusing on its frequency, phonetic realizations, and the influence of social variables. The findings revealed that /r/-liaison occurs in varying degrees across presenter categories, gender groups, and programme formats, suggesting that both linguistic and sociolinguistic factors influence its use.

Frequency of /r/-Liaison in Broadcast Speech

The results showed that /r/-liaison is relatively common among presenters, although its occurrence varies significantly across different categories. Presenters that have pronunciation trained recorded the highest frequency compared to those who are educated but do not have formal training in pronunciation. This difference suggests that formal training in broadcast

presentation may increase awareness of standard pronunciation practices, including the use of linking /r/. This finding aligns with earlier research in the field of *Sociolinguistics* which indicates that speakers who receive formal language training tend to adopt more standard or prestige pronunciation features (*Trudgill, 2000*). Similarly, studies in *Phonetics* have shown that professional broadcasters often adhere more closely to standardized pronunciation norms due to institutional expectations and audience perception (*Wells, 1982*).

The second objective examined the phonetic forms that /r/-liaison takes in Nigerian broadcast speech. The /r/ is more frequent than intrusive /r/ across all variables. This suggests that broadcasters tend to produce /r/-liaison primarily when it is orthographically motivated (linking /r/) rather than inserting it where it does not historically exist (intrusive /r/). This finding corroborate the work of *Wells (1982)*, who notes that linking /r/ is generally more acceptable and widespread in non-rhotic varieties of English, while intrusive /r/ is often more variable and sometimes stigmatized. In broadcast contexts, presenters may therefore favor linking /r/ because it is perceived as more standard and less marked.

The third objective investigated whether social factors influence the use of /r/-liaison. The findings suggest that social factors play a role. Gender differences were observed, with female presenters producing linking /r/ more frequently than male presenters. Females also produced a higher percentage of intrusive /r/ compared to males. This finding corresponds with sociolinguistic research showing that women often adopt prestige linguistic forms more frequently than men (*William Labov, 2001*). Female presenters may therefore use /r/-liaison more consistently as part of a broader tendency to conform to perceived standard or professional speech norms.

Programme format also appears to influence the use of /r/-liaison. News programmes, which are typically formal and scripted, recorded the highest frequency of linking /r/, followed by talk shows and continuity announcements. This pattern suggests that speech monitoring and script reading increase the likelihood of using linking /r/. This agrees with earlier findings that speech style and formality affect phonological variation. According to *William Labov (1972)*, speakers tend to produce more standard variants in formal contexts where attention to speech is heightened. News broadcasting, being highly formal and institutionalized, therefore encourages the use of more standardized pronunciation features. The lower frequencies observed in talk shows and continuity programmes may be attributed to their relatively conversational nature, which allows for greater phonological variation. This supports sociolinguistic theories that linguistic features fluctuate according to situational context and communicative style.

The findings demonstrates that /r/-liaison is an identifiable feature in Nigerian broadcast English, though its distribution varies depending on training, gender, and programme format. The predominance of linking /r/ over intrusive /r/ suggests that broadcasters tend to favor

forms that align with standard pronunciation conventions. Additionally, the influence of institutional training and programme formality indicates that broadcast environments shape phonological choices among presenters.

Conclusion

/r/-liaison in Nigerian television speech is variable, socially conditioned, and stylistic rather than phonological. Linking /r/ appears more robust than intrusive /r/, and professional training is the strongest predictor. Findings highlighted style-shifting in media English and the adoption of prestige markers in postcolonial English varieties. The study revealed that while Nigerian English shares many phonological processes with other varieties of English, these processes often manifest differently due to sociolinguistic and linguistic influences. The findings of this study will inform language teaching by identifying authentic patterns of /r/-liaison in Nigerian English, helping educators develop pronunciation models that reflect real usage rather than strictly native-speaker norms. In media training, the results can guide broadcasters toward more consistent and audience-appropriate speech patterns, improving intelligibility and professionalism on air. For sociophonetic research, the study contributes empirical data on variation, linking pronunciation patterns to social factors such as region, education, and professional identity. Overall, it helps bridge the gap between theoretical phonology and practical language use in multilingual contexts. Continued investigation of connected speech in Nigerian English is therefore essential for understanding the phonological identity of the variety and for informing pedagogical models of spoken English in Nigeria.

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Positive Teacher-Student Relationship as a Motivator to the Learning of Grammar among Senior Secondary School Students: A Critique

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Abstract

This study examines the role of positive teacher-student relationships as motivation for grammar learning among senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Drawing from educational effectiveness research and social capital theory, this study examined how interpersonal dynamics between educators and learners influence grammatical competence development. Through a comprehensive review of literature spanning, teacher-student interaction patterns, classroom climate effects, and peer relationship dynamics, the study revealed that while positive teacher-student relationships demonstrate significant correlation with improved grammar learning outcomes, the relationship is more complex than simple cause-effect mechanisms suggest. However, the critique identified several limitations in current research, including methodological inconsistencies, cultural context neglect, and oversimplification of the relationship between interpersonal dynamics and academic achievement. The study concludes that while positive teacher-student relationships serve as important motivational frameworks for grammar learning, their effectiveness depends heavily on contextual factors, instructional quality, and broader educational system support. Recommendations include developing culturally responsive relationship-building strategies, implementing systematic teacher training programmes, and conducting longitudinal research to better understand the temporal dimensions of teacher-student relationship impacts on grammar competence.

Keywords: *Teacher-student relationships, grammar learning, motivation, secondary education, educational effectiveness, Nigeria*

Introduction

The mastery of English grammar represents effective communication and academic success, particularly within Nigeria's educational landscape where English serves as the primary medium of instruction across all educational levels. However, persistent challenges in grammar competence among senior secondary school students have raised concern about the effectiveness of traditional pedagogical approaches and the broader environmental factors that influence language learning outcomes (Hamdy & Zehmi, 2021).

Recent educational research has increasingly recognised the pivotal role of interpersonal relationships in educational settings, with teacher-student relationships emerging as particularly influential factors in academic achievement and student motivation (Nur, 2020). The significance of these relationships extends beyond mere classroom management to encompass fundamental aspects of learning motivation, emotional safety, and academic engagement that directly impact students' willingness and ability to master complex grammatical structures.

Within the Nigerian educational context, where linguistic diversity presents unique challenges for English language instructions, the quality of teacher-student relationships assumes heightened importance (Mazhar, 2020). Students from diverse linguistic backgrounds must navigate the complexities of English grammar while often managing potential conflicts between their native languages and English structural patterns. In such contexts, supportive teacher-student relationships may serve as crucial mediating factors that either facilitate or hinder grammatical competence development.

The theoretical foundation for examining teacher-student relationships as motivational factors draws from multiple educational and psychological frameworks, including the social capital theory, which emphasises the value of social connections in educational achievement, and educational effectiveness research, which identifies relationship quality as among the most significant factors influencing learning outcomes (Cahyan & Tiarsiwi, 2021). These frameworks suggest that positive interpersonal dynamics create conducive environments for risk-taking, error correction, and sustained engagement with challenging academic content such as English grammar.

However, despite growing recognition of the importance of teacher-student relationships, critical examination of this phenomenon reveals several areas requiring deeper investigation. Current research often treats teacher-student relationships as uniformly beneficial without sufficient attention to the mechanisms through which these relationships operate, the conditions under which they are most effective, or the potential negative consequences of over-reliance on interpersonal factors at the expense of instructional quality.

This study addresses these gaps by providing a critical examination of positive teacher-student relationships as motivators for grammar learning among the senior secondary school students. Through systematic analysis of existing research and theoretical frameworks, the investigation seeks to illuminate both the potential and limitations of relationship-focused approaches to grammar instructions, ultimately contributing to more nuanced understanding of effective pedagogical practices in language education.

Objectives

This non-empirical study aims at identifying whether positive teacher-student relationship is a motivating factor to the learning grammar among secondary school students and examining

the extent positive-teacher student relationship is a motivating factor to the learning of grammar among secondary school students.

Literature Review

Teacher-Student Relationships in Educational Context

Teacher-student relationships encompass the complex interpersonal dynamics that develop between educators and learners within formal educational settings. These relationships are characterised by patterns of interaction, communication, emotional connection, and mutual influence that extend beyond the mere transmission of academic content (Javier et al., 2020). In the context of language education, particularly grammar instruction, these relationships assume particular significance due to the inherently challenging and often anxiety-provoking nature of language learning.

The conceptualisation of positive teacher-student relationships typically includes several dimensions: trust and mutual respect, effective communication, emotional support, and academic guidance. Trust represents the foundation upon which meaningful educational interactions are built, enabling students to take risks necessary for language learning, such as attempting complex grammatical constructions or asking questions about confusing rules (Pirani, 2021). Effective communication involves not merely the transmission of grammatical information but the creation of dialogic spaces where students feel heard, understood, and valued as individuals.

Research indicates that positive teacher-student relationships are characterised by teachers who demonstrate genuine care for students' wellbeing, maintain high but achievable expectations, provide consistent and constructive feedback, and create emotionally-safe learning environments (Miftachul & Gozali, 2023). These characteristics are particularly relevant for grammar instructions, which often require sustained practice, error correction, and gradual competence building over extended periods.

Grammar Learning and Motivational Factors

Grammar learning remains a multifaceted educational challenge that requires integration of explicit rule knowledge, implicit linguistic intuition, and practical application skills. The complexity of English grammar, with its numerous exceptions, irregular patterns, and contextual variations, presents particular difficulties for learners, especially those from non-English speaking backgrounds (Roshy & Manoj, 2020).

Motivation in grammar learning operates through multiple mechanisms including intrinsic interest in language patterns, extrinsic rewards for grammatical accuracy, social approval for communication effectiveness, and personal satisfaction from mastery achievement. Research suggests that motivation for grammar learning is significantly influenced by the learning environment, teaching methods employed, and the quality of relationships students develop with their teachers (Arni & Suryania, 2022).

The relationship between motivation and grammar learning effectiveness is mediated by several factors including anxiety levels, self-efficacy beliefs, persistence in the face of difficulties, and willingness to engage in meaningful practice. Students who develop positive relationships with their teachers often demonstrate reduced anxiety, increased self-confidence, and greater willingness to engage with challenging grammatical concepts (Harun et al., 2024).

Empirical Evidence for Teacher-Student Relationship Effects

Multiple studies have documented significant associations between teacher-student relationship quality and various educational outcomes, including language learning achievement. A comprehensive meta-analysis examining over 800 educational interventions found that teacher-student relationships ranked among the most effective factors for improving academic performance, with effect sizes exceeding those of many popular educational reforms (Muhammad & Abdollah, 2020).

Specific research on language learning has demonstrated that students who report positive relationships with their English language teachers show improved performance on grammar assessments, increased participation in classroom activities, and greater persistence when encountering difficult grammatical concepts. However, it is important to note that these studies often employ correlational designs that cannot definitively establish causal relationships between teacher-student interactions and grammar learning outcomes (Nurbiana, 2022).

Longitudinal research provides somewhat stronger evidence for causal effects. A study following students over multiple academic years found that improvements in teacher-student relationship quality preceded improvements in grammar test scores, suggesting that relationship enhancement may indeed contribute to better learning outcomes rather than simply reflecting existing achievement differences (Sophie & Cislighi, 2020).

Mechanisms through which Relationships Influence Learning

Research has identified several mechanisms through which positive teacher-student relationships may influence grammar learning outcomes. The emotional support mechanism suggests that caring teacher relationships reduce students' anxiety and stress, which can interfere with the cognitive processes required for grammar acquisition. When students feel emotionally safe, they are more likely to take the risks necessary for language learning, such as attempting complex sentence constructions or asking questions about confusing rules.

The instructional mechanism emphasises how positive relationships enable teachers to provide more effective, personalised instruction. Teachers who know their students well can tailor grammar instructions to individual learning styles, provide culturally relevant examples, and adjust pacing to meet student needs. This personalisation may significantly improve the effectiveness of grammar instructions (Agus, 2020).

The motivational mechanism focuses on how positive teacher relationships increase student motivation and engagement with grammar learning. Students who feel valued and supported by their teachers demonstrate greater intrinsic motivation to master grammatical concepts, increased persistence when facing difficulties, and more positive attitudes towards English language learning generally (Mohsin *et al.*, 2020).

The feedback mechanism highlights the role of relationships in enabling effective corrective feedback. Students who trust their teachers are more likely to accept and act upon grammar corrections, view errors as learning opportunities rather than failures, and seek additional help when needed. This creates a positive cycle of improvement in grammatical competence over time.

Classroom Climate and Peer Relationship Factors

Research indicates that teacher-student relationships operate within broader classroom climates that include peer relationships, classroom management approaches, and overall school culture. Positive teacher-student relationships contribute to more positive classroom climates, which in turn support better peer relationships and collaborative learning opportunities that can enhance grammar instruction effectiveness (Dewiana *et al.*, 2020).

Studies have shown that classrooms characterised by positive teacher-student relationships also tend to have better peer interactions, reduced bullying, and increased collaborative learning. For grammar instructions. This means students have more opportunities to practise grammatical structures through peer interactions, receive peer feedback on their language use, and engage in collaborative grammar-focused activities (Chaolin *et al.*, 2022).

However, research also suggests that the relationship between teacher-student relationships and classroom climate is complex and bidirectional. While positive teacher relationships can improve classroom climate, negative peer relationships or disruptive classroom environments can undermine even strong teacher-student connections.

Cultural and Contextual Considerations

A critical gap in existing research concerns the limited attention to cultural and contextual factors that may influence the relationship between teacher-student interactions and grammar learning outcomes. Most research on teacher-student relationships has been conducted in Western, individualistic educational contexts, with limited investigations of how these relationships operate in collectivistic cultures or in multilingual educational environments.

Nigerian educational contexts present unique considerations including linguistic diversity, resource constraints, large class sizes, and cultural norms regarding teacher-student interactions that may differ significantly from contexts where most research has been conducted. These factors may significantly influence both the formation of teacher-student relationships and their impact on grammar learning outcomes.

Research conducted in similar African educational contexts suggests that cultural expectations regarding teacher authority, student deference, and communication patterns may create different dynamics than those observed in Western educational settings. This raises questions about the generalisability of findings from predominantly Western research to Nigerian educational contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding how teacher-student relationships influence educational outcomes, including grammar learning competence. Originally developed by sociologists to explain how social networks and relationships create value for individuals and communities, Social Capital Theory has been successfully adapted to educational contexts to illuminate the ways interpersonal connections contribute to academic achievement.

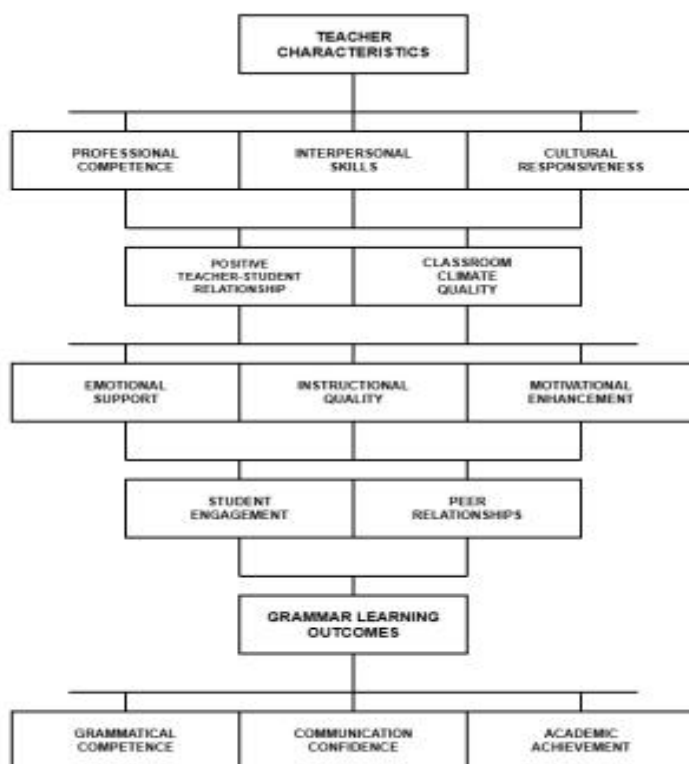
In educational settings, social capital manifests through the relationships, trust, reciprocity, and shared norms that exist between teachers, students, families, and communities. Teachers serve as crucial sources of social capital for students, providing not only academic instructions but also social and emotional support, access to resources, and connections to broader educational opportunities (Wahyuni et al., 2022). The theory suggests that students with access to positive teacher relationships possess greater social capital, which translates into improved academic outcomes through multiple pathways.

For grammar learning specifically, Social Capital Theory explains how positive teacher-student relationships create conditions that facilitate language acquisition through increased access to linguistic models, enhanced feedback opportunities, reduced anxiety barriers, and improved motivation for sustained practice. Teachers who establish strong relationships with students can provide personalised instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, and emotional support that directly impact students' willingness and ability to engage with complex grammatical structures.

The theory also emphasises the cumulative and transferable nature of social capital. Students who develop positive relationships with one teacher often demonstrate improved capacity for forming similar relationships with other educators, creating a positive feedback loop that enhances their overall educational experience and academic achievement (Nurbaiti et al., 2023).

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model illustrating the relationship between positive teacher-student relationships and grammar learning motivation demonstrates the complex pathways through which interpersonal dynamics influence educational outcomes.



This model demonstrates how teacher characteristics influence the development of positive teacher-student relationships, which operate through multiple mechanisms to affect student outcomes. The model emphasises the interconnected nature of these factors and their cumulative impact on grammar learning.

Content Analysis

Analysis of existing literature reveals several critical insights regarding the relationship between teacher-student dynamics and grammar learning outcomes. The evidence consistently demonstrates positive correlations between relationship quality and academic achievement yet, the strength and consistency of these relationships vary significantly across studies and contexts.

Methodological Limitations: A substantial portion of research relies on correlational designs that cannot establish causal relationships between teacher-student interactions and learning outcomes. While longitudinal studies provide stronger evidence, they remain limited in number and scope. Many studies also suffer from small sample sizes, limited demographic diversity, and inadequate control for confounding variables such as socioeconomic status, prior achievement, and school quality.

Cultural Context Neglect: The overwhelming majority of research has been conducted in Western educational contexts, with minimal attention to how cultural factors may influence the formation and impact of teacher-student relationships. This limitation is particularly

problematic when attempting to apply findings to diverse educational settings such as those found in Nigeria.

Mechanism Identification: While research has identified multiple mechanisms through which teacher-student relationships may influence learning outcomes, the relative importance of these mechanisms and their interaction effects remain poorly understood. This makes it difficult to develop targeted interventions that maximise the positive impact of relationship-focused approaches.

Individual Variation: Studies often report average effects without sufficient attention to individual differences in how students respond to various relationship approaches. Some students may benefit significantly from close teacher relationships whilst others may prefer more formal interactions, yet this variation is rarely systematically examined.

Temporal Dynamics: Limited research has examined how teacher-student relationships develop over time and how their effects on learning outcomes may change across different developmental periods or academic years. This temporal dimension is crucial for understanding optimal timing and duration of relationship-building interventions.

The evidence regarding positive teacher-student relationships as motivators for grammar learning presents a complex picture that requires careful interpretation. While the research consistently demonstrates positive associations between relationship quality and learning outcomes, several critical considerations emerge from this analysis.

The theoretical frameworks of Social Capital Theory and Educational Effectiveness Research provide compelling explanations for why positive teacher-student relationships should enhance grammar learning. These relationships create conditions that reduce anxiety, increase motivation, enable personalised instruction, and facilitate effective feedback - all factors that should theoretically improve grammatical competence development. However, the empirical evidence, while supportive, reveals significant limitations that warrant cautious interpretation.

One critical concern involves the potential oversimplification of the relationship between interpersonal dynamics and academic achievement. Many studies treat teacher-student relationships as uniformly positive influences without adequate consideration of the conditions under which these relationships are most beneficial or the potential negative consequences of certain relationship approaches. For instance, overly protective teacher relationships might reduce students' independence and resilience, while inappropriate boundary crossing could create ethical concerns.

The cultural context limitation represents a particularly significant challenge for applying existing research to Nigerian educational settings. Western individualistic approaches to teacher-student relationships may not translate effectively to collectivistic cultural contexts where different norms govern teacher authority, student deference, and appropriate

interpersonal interactions. This cultural mismatch could lead to ineffective or potentially counterproductive interventions if not carefully considered.

Furthermore, the mechanisms through which teacher-student relationships influence grammar learning require more sophisticated examination. While emotional support, instructional personalisation, and motivational enhancement all appear important, their relative contributions and interaction effects remain poorly understood. This limitation makes it difficult to develop evidence-based strategies that maximise relationship benefits while minimising potential costs.

The individual variation in student responses to different relationship approaches also demands attention. Some students may thrive in warm, nurturing teacher relationships whilst others may perform better with more formal, task-focused interactions. Understanding these individual differences is crucial to developing responsive pedagogical approaches that meet diverse student needs.

Conclusion

This critical examination of positive teacher-student relationships as motivators for grammar learning amongst senior secondary school students reveals both significant potential and important limitations. The evidence supports the conclusion that positive teacher-student relationships can indeed serve as important motivational catalysts for grammar learning, operating through multiple mechanisms including emotional support, instructional personalisation, and enhanced feedback effectiveness.

However, the relationship between teacher-student dynamics and grammar learning outcomes is considerably more complex than simple cause-effect models suggest. The effectiveness of relationship-focused approaches depends heavily on cultural context, individual student characteristics, instructional quality, and broader educational system factors that are often inadequately considered in existing research.

The predominance of Western-based research creates particular challenges for understanding how these relationships operate within Nigerian educational contexts, where different cultural norms, linguistic diversity, and resource constraints may significantly influence both relationship formation and learning outcomes. This limitation necessitates careful adaptation of relationship-building strategies to local contexts rather than uncritical adoption of Western approaches.

Critical gaps in current understanding include inadequate attention to individual variation in student responses to different relationship approaches, limited investigation of temporal dynamics in relationship development and effects, and insufficient examination of the mechanisms through which relationships influence learning outcomes. These gaps suggest important directions for future research that could enhance both theoretical understanding and practical applications.

The analysis also reveals potential risks associated with over-emphasis on relationship factors at the expense of instructional quality, content knowledge, and systemic educational improvements. While positive teacher-student relationships clearly contribute to educational effectiveness, they cannot compensate for inadequate curriculum, poor instructional methods, or systemic resource deficiencies.

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Tyranny of the small-screen: a reading of Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart*

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the critical reception and disqualification of Genevieve Nnaji's film, *Lionheart* (2018), at the 92nd Academy Awards. It examines the tension between the film's nomination by the Nigerian Official Selection Committee (NOSC) and its rejection at the global Oscar platform. Deriving its theoretical framework from Peter Harcourt's three-tier model of film appreciation which evaluates films based on specific artistic/aesthetic criteria, the paper is a close reading of *Lionheart*, situating the film's text and the director's work against the cinematic profile of Nollywood and juxtaposing these with global cinema practice. The major finding is that while Nnaji's *Lionheart* justified the NOSC's decision by competently conveying the Nigerian experience of cinema, the film remained too circumscribed by its local Nollywood technical conventions to have made any significant impact on a world-class cinematic stage like the Oscars. The paper recommends that Nigerian filmmakers need more informed awareness of the comparative limitations of their choice narrative and narration formats in order to enhance their competitiveness on global cinema praxis.

Keywords: Nollywood, Nigerian Oscar, Genevieve Nnaji, *Lionheart*, Bong Joon-Ho

Introduction

The disqualification of Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* at the preliminary stages of the Oscars in 2019 generated widespread debate. Most commentators admitted that the disqualification was technically valid, given that *Lionheart* indeed violates a standard criterion of the Oscars International Feature Film category, which requires that entry films' dialogue track be predominantly non-English language. Some critics - especially from the Nigerian, African and black diaspora cultural sectors - read sinister 'imperialist' and 'racist' motives behind the disqualification, citing the Oscar's history of political manipulation and bias (Tsika, 2019; Biakolo, 2019; Hirsch, 2019). However, the counter-arguments about *Lionheart*'s disqualification largely remained at the level of emotional rhetoric: little critical attention has been paid to the formal credentials of the film that impressed the NOSC to select and submit it for the Oscars in the first place.

The validity or otherwise of the NOSC's estimation of *Lionheart* could not be interrogated because *Lionheart* was not able to test its strength against the best efforts of cinema cultures around the world: its disqualification occurred before the 92nd Academy Awards nomination phase. It is in view of the foregoing that this paper's overarching objective is to review the formal credentials of Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* against its birthing cinematic culture, Nollywood, and the fundamentals of the film form as defined by global practice. The findings of this study will not only comment on the NOSC's estimation of *Lionheart* as a competent representative of the Nigerian cinema experience for the year 2019; they will also be constitute a retroactive overview of Nollywood formal, aesthetic and operational identities in the late 2010s.

Theoretical framework

A competent critical lens to examine the cinematic qualifications of *Lionheart* may be Peter Harcourt's multifaceted concepts of film criticism that coalesce into his three-level model of film appreciation, which he demonstrates in his influential book, *Six European Directors: Essays on the Meaning of Film Style*. This model helps to determine *Lionheart*'s self-contained formal identity and to review the strengths and limitations of Nnaji's directorial effort against the cinematic attributes of film texts that traditionally compete at the International Feature Film category of the Academy Awards.

Peter Harcourt's three-tier model of film analysis is not a formal theoretical proposition or a pedagogic methodology. Rather, the concept encapsulates and synthesizes his core ideas about the form and aesthetics of film both as a cultural product and a tool of communication. A significant part of Harcourt's foundational work in film criticism derives both from Bathesian semiotics and from his study of literature in the humanistic and culture-focused tradition, which he shared with his mentor, F.R. Leavis at Cambridge University in the 1960s.

Feldman (2014) submits that Harcourt's most profound contribution to film theory may have been his famous essay, 'The Innocent Eye', published in 1965, in which he tries to define the essential formal and aesthetic 'signature' of the Canadian cinema. His central argument in the essay is that filmic expressions bear certain resonances that reflect and sometimes define the national or communal culture/philosophy in which the films are made. Just as Leavis prescribes that the critic's personal feelings about a literary text should not be denied or discounted but integrated into an educated engagement with the text (Guy, 2019), Harcourt essay also advocates that the critic should interrogate a film text with their 'feeling and judgment, sensitivity and intelligence moving together'.

In his later work in film analysis, Harcourt (1977) foreshadows New Historicism's emphasis on situating cultural texts within the historical and cultural contexts of their creation. He aimed "to describe relations between national cultures and the films made in those nations." This prescription also informs this paper's reading of *Lionheart* within the operational

principles, creative ethos and technological ambience of the Nigerian film industry from which the film emerged in 2019.

Harcourt's *Six European Directors: Essays on the Meaning of Film Style* is generally regarded as his magnum opus. Bringing together all the strands of his concept of film analysis, the book introduces and demonstrates the three-tier model of film appreciation that supports his major arguments: that a cinematic text bears specific cultural imprints; is both a reflector and a product of the socio-historical ambience of its creation; and that a critic's personal but informed response to the text is both a valid and invaluable tool of criticism. Harcourt's later work is considered to be a continuous elaboration of this three-tier analytical methodology he has demonstrated in *Six European Directors* (Morris and Dorland, 1994)

Specifically, Peter Harcourt's three-tier concept prescribes that an engagement with a film text starts with the film's tangible elements like plot, dramatic structure and characterisation: this is the Level of Incident. At the second level - the Level of Imagery - the analysis contends with the film's aesthetics of narration in its mise-en-scène, that is, the technical conveyors of meaning through lighting, set and sound designs, cinematography, costuming and editing. Harcourt inscribes his notion of 'the innocent eye' at this second level of film appreciation, advising the critic to appraise the images as primarily expressing not just the story but also the filmmakers' perspective on the world as their culture trained and demanded them to. At this level, the film critic may interrogate the connotative and denotative cultural meanings coded into or suggested by the film's iconography. In this context, this paper's reading of Nnaji's *Lionheart* engages with such iconographies that reflect subtexts of specifically Nigerian culture and philosophy in the film.

Harcourt's Level of Argument, is the third, most abstract and most interpretive point of engagement with a film text. This is where the critic deconstructs the film's central theme or its principal proposition about its subject. The critic distils the film's argument from the interplay between the film's incident and imagery. Essentially, for Harcourt, the film's argument represents and reveals the 'attitude to life' held by the filmmaker and the culture/history in which the film was made.

Narrative scope of *Lionheart*

The dramatic universe of *Lionheart* may be the first platform of engaging with its intrinsic value as a film text. Applying Harcourt's Level of Incident, the narrative canvas of Nnaji's debut film appears rather narrow. This contrasts strongly with the narrative scale of all the films that made even the first shortlist for the 92nd Academy Awards for Best International Feature. Both Nnaji's *Lionheart* and Bong Joon-Ho's *Parasite*, which eventually won the contest, can be classified as family domestic dramas; yet the story-world of *Parasite* contains wide-ranging universal resonances in its intense story that examines class conflict and social inequality between ordinary citizens of the same community. On the other hand, *Lionheart*

merely encodes an exclusively Nigerian cultural experience in its story of Adaeze, a young woman trying to prove herself by helping her incapacitated father out of a corporate crisis.

Also, the story-world of *Lionheart* is largely a self-referencing entity, denoting only the melodramatic passions of its characters without subtextual or intertextual connotations. This constitutes a technical limitation because beyond the aesthetic innovations in their crafting, the true power of all significant films lies in their subtext; the mute essence of their narrative that sells itself without words and without any visual artifice, directly to any audience. Known as the ‘enigma code’ in Bathesian semiotics, it is the subterranean quality of the film narrative that not only structures and coheres the plot, but also drives and sustains the audience continuous engagement beyond the surface events of the story. For instance, beyond its epic opulence, it is the subtext of Masaki Kobayashi’s *The Human Condition* trilogy, which, according to Scott (2008), stirs its audience to an “understanding of what it is to be alive.”

Apart from having several layers of subtext, virtually all films that have won the coveted Best International Feature Oscar, including *Parasite* at the 92nd Oscars, also present themes that reverberate beyond their own story-world. The universal resonance in these films embed both in the ideological underpinnings of their stories and the global political conversations that their themes and treatment provoke. Whereas Bong Joon-Ho structures his award-winning *Parasite* as a bold, riveting allegory of the absurdities and human cost of late-stage capitalism (Bean, 2020; Eugene, 2021), Nnaji’s *Lionheart* is clearly apolitical and devoid of any compelling ideological significance, as it hardly engages the audience beyond its sentimental exhortation for filial and tribal integrity. In this context, *Lionheart* seems to present a less competitive profile against such films it would have competed with if it had reached the selection stage of the 92nd Academy Awards.

Structural orientation of *Lionheart*

A remark, credited to popular American film critic, Roger Ebert, may be apt to preface an analysis of *Lionheart* under Harcourt’s ‘Level of Image’. Ebert (1997) writes that ‘it is not what a movie is about; it is how it is about it’. Invoking the perceptive logic in this statement, it may be argued that beyond the limited scope of *Lionheart*’s narrative as analysed above, its structural form would have also severely weakened its competitive strength at the 1992 Academy Awards for Best International Feature Film. *Lionheart* did fulfil the Academy’s requirement that competing films must have a regular theatrical release prior to submission. Yet, many features of the film’s narration suggest that its grand design orientates less to standard cinema, and more to the small-screen formats of home media modes of television and video consumption.

The small-screen orientation of *Lionheart* becomes more understandable in relation to the historical and formal origins of the Nollywood film industry, which produced both the film and its director. In their earliest engagement with Nollywood, and well into the late 2010s, academics and professional critics generally conceived Nollywood as what Ogunsuyi (1999:72) calls “a form of small media technology of popular discourse”. There were various, valid reasons for this conception. From its severally documented ‘humble’ beginnings in the 1990s as a pragmatic alternative to a national cinema industry that had gone comatose, the seminal Nollywood output was mainly crafted and consumed under the home-video technology. Also, for the first decade of its existence, most of the directors and producers of Nollywood video films came from the television medium. Secondly; early Nollywood mainly serviced a vast sit-at-home audience, distributing and exhibiting through portable home media devices of CD, DVD and consumer-grade video projectors. Also, except for their feature-length duration, the formal structure and narrative scope of early Nollywood ‘films’ were virtually indistinguishable from the regular fares of television drama (series and serials) in the Nigerian television broadcast space (Ogundele 2000). Finally, since a large number of the current generation of Nollywood’s leading directors and producers began their careers as actors, editors, scriptwriters and technicians in the television soap-opera format, the dynamics of small-screen narration has shaped their understanding of the art and craft of cinema. Genevieve Nnaji is one of the earliest and most enduring star-actors of Nollywood and *Lionheart*, it must be remembered, is her directorial debut.

Legacy of the small screen in *Lionheart*

Several studies in audio-visual narration have outlined the technical and technological differences between the classic cinema and television formats. Other studies have demonstrated how such differences impact the form, aesthetics and narrative potentials of film and television content. Long before the advent of digital video, Schroeder (1973) had provided one of the earliest outlines of what he calls the ‘inherent limitations of television as an art form’. Nicholl (1978), also infers a categorical opposition between film and television when he writes that: “the cinema is larger than life, the TV image is smaller than life. Both literally and metaphorically. One medium is essentially heroic, the other domestic; one is played out on Olympus, one is on the hearth.” More recent researchers who have come to similar conclusions on the differentiating dynamics of digital video and classic cinema iteration include Comerford (2023), Lavik (2024) and van den Oever (2025)

Haynes (2000) brings the scholarly comparison of film and television formats closer to our discourse here. First, he describes Nollywood films as an odd hybrid, calling it ‘something between television and cinema’. Then, he delivers his categorical verdict that Nollywood films “provide little of the visual poetry of true cinema”. By fostering Nnaji’s *Lionheart* almost two decades after Haynes’ verdict, the Nollywood industry appears to be still more

oriented towards the structural dynamics of the small-screen than the formal precepts of classic cinema.

The dynamics of small-screen narration manifest in *Lionheart*, first, in terms of plotting and thematic preoccupation. For instance, the narrow scale of the film's narrative space and thematic concerns may be located in how the conflict of television drama and soap-operas usually revolve around stakes that are low-key, personal and more emotional than social or political in nature, or communal and universal in scope. In the main, Nollywood filmic stories have remained melodramatic roller-coasters of the trials and tribulations of individuals, in which the stakes rarely rise beyond the levels of family disruption and reconstitution. Nnaji's *Lionheart* fits snugly into this template. The stakes of the film's conflict remain rooted in the ambition of Adaeze, the heroine, for personal growth amidst her family's struggles to maintain its dynastic status of wealth and influence.

Analysed at Harcourt's Level of Incident, the plot design and pattern of characterisation in Nnaji's *Lionheart* also appear basic and conventional, in accordance with its television heritage, especially in the soap-opera format. Hellerman (2019) observes that to navigate the difference between film and television narrative genres, 'the secret is in the tropes'. *Lionheart*'s story is a trope of the dutiful child, the heroic scion who rises to the challenge of saving the family honor and dynastic legacy. Perhaps the most successful manifestation of this trope in soap opera history is *Dallas* (aired on CBS between 1978 and 1991, then reprised on TNT between 2012 and 2014).

Similarly, the character design of *Lionheart* can be located in the established conventions of television drama. In the classic structure of the soap opera, not only are characters clearly delineated in the broad strokes of heroes or villains; the plot also exists just to serve the characters' needs (Pribram, 2020; Frazer, 2024). Ultimately, the conflict in the dramatic universe of *Lionheart* is the epic battle between the forces of Good and Evil: young and morally flawless Adaeze Obiagu struggles to prevent the vile and unscrupulous Igwe Pascal from seizing her family's business. The film's plot simply collates the heroic and villainous plans of Adaeze and Igwe to achieve their opposing objectives.

Yet another television soap opera convention found in *Lionheart* is the effusion of coincidences, especially at the critical plot turning points of complication and resolution. The film resolves its central conflict through one of such contrived coincidences when Godswill, Managing Director of Lionheart Limited, suddenly becomes a lecherous old man as he follows a curvy lady into the dressing room of a swimming pool. There, he 'stumbles upon' and prevents a bunch of crooks from fleecing a man. The man he saves is Hamza Maikano, a

character who will later repay Godswill's good turn by facilitating the much-needed funds that saves Lionheart Limited from bankruptcy.

Lionheart also pays homage to the 'cliff hanger' principle of soap-opera narration in its overall plot segmentation and in its intra-scene deployment of story information. Here again, appraising this narration device at Harcourt's Level of Imagery, *Lionheart* invites a juxtaposition with *Parasite*. Both films liberally use the 'cliff hanger' technique. *Lionheart* employs the technique exactly how weekly television soap operas use it - to regulate the flow of adrenalin in the audience according to their plot outlay. On the contrary, *Parasite* uses the 'cliff-hanger' to vary the tempo of action flow and to create or sustain tensions that deepen the tensile strength of its existential drama of class struggle and basic human instincts. In *Parasite*, suspense maps the plot as an ascending ladder of complications in the race of life: in *Lionheart*, suspense maintains a high-octane pace from one dramatic moment to another, spellbinding the audience to only the changing fortunes of the protagonist and her beleaguered family.

Two instances may suffice to contextualize *Lionheart's* use of the 'cliff hanger' narration device within the television soap opera convention. As the Board of Lionheart Limited listens with bated breath to a recorded message from their Chairman announcing his successor, an unidentified man heads for the Board Room. Here, *Lionheart* uses portentous music over parallel editing to reveal the visitor's body gradually as the Board members' anticipation listening to the message increases. Finally, the narration fully reveals the person to be the cantankerous character, Godswill, just as Chief Obiagu's recorded voice identifies him by name as the long-awaited successor. The 'cliff-hanger' protocol continues in *Lionheart* to the very last plot turning point that leads the narrative into its denouement. This time, the film employs the time-tested principle of 'last minute rescue' in crime dramas: just as his corporate rival pronounces a takeover of his company, Chief Obiagu leads in his victorious camp, armed with legal instruments and the force of law to dislodge the impostor.

Formulaic and conventional mise-en-scene

Virtually all the directorial choices in *Lionheart* are demonstrably conventional and formulaic, drawing on well-known clichés of screen narration. Here again, Nnaji is simply responding to both her formal heritage in Nollywood as well as the tyranny of the small-screen that spawned the heritage. Nollywood did not only develop within the formal crucible of the small-screen media; the immediate audience pool for Nollywood films was also fluent in (and expected) a certain prototype of screen language, which it learnt from television since the nation's cinema collapsed due to several socioeconomic factors. Therefore, from inception, Nollywood had wholly adopted the paradigmatic elements of television drama story-telling, including lineal, cause-effect narration, character-driven and hero's-journey narratives, as well as a screen language whose syntax is irrevocably immersed in the

Continuity System. Nnaji's grid of framing and picturization as well as her cutting pattern neither flout nor attempt to deconstruct the classic television/Nollywood conventions of storytelling enumerated above, making *Lionheart* a faithful reflection of classic television/Nollywood formal identity. Lacking the wide range of dynamic camera work usually associated with the film format, *Lionheart* largely presents the static camera setups that are common to studio-based sit-coms and low-budget soap operas. Also, whereas mise-en-scene designs in the film form tend to be explorative, detailed and consciously oriented towards visual aesthetics, the television medium's mise-en-scene tends to be functional tableaux, guided by the need to communicate only such immediate story information that moves the plot. Nnaji's mise-en-scene in *Lionheart* is basic, even placid sometimes, and only services the plot thrust of the character-driven story.

Additionally, even as the cinematographic design of *Lionheart* employs the modern cinema compositional gauge of 16:9, the director often seems to envision her mise-en-scene for the foundational 4:3 aspect ratio of the classic television screen. This is evident in her centralized framing, her full-frontal figure placement as well as her near obsession with compositional symmetry. There is also the copious use of a scene transition convention - developed largely through television sit-com - of panoramic shots of city traffic to signify the passage of time between story points. The latest embodiment of this television convention in Nollywood is the view of a cityscape from a slow-moving drone, serving as Establishment Shot or to signify the passage of time. *Lionheart* also generously employs this convention, as do virtually all Nollywood films from about year 2013.

Reinforcement of stereotypes and conservative ethos

With another reference to Harcourt's Level of Argument, which interrogates a film's central theme as an interplay of its story and the way it is told, this study finds that *Lionheart* remains so enmeshed in the tenets of television and classical Nollywood screen narration conventions to the point of subverting its own textual aspirations. An age-old critique of television is that it mechanically retains, reinforces and recycles the dominant ideologies and cultural constructs of the society (Chiumbu and Iqani, 2019). This tendency echoes in Nollywood, which has traditionally constructed its dramatic universe in total, unapologetic deference to patriarchy, and in defense of dominant cultural values, morality and ethos. One of the most ubiquitous conservative ethos in Nollywood films is the portrayal of women in the traditional constructs and stereotypes of gender identity. Many critics of Nollywood have noted this, including Garritano (2000) and Ogundele (2000). The Nigerian Oscar Selection Committee may have presumed that *Lionheart* appears to be a revisionist Nollywood film in this context, especially in the profile of its lead character, Adaeze Obiagu, as a high-flying female holding her own in a traditional male terrain. Some reviewers also enthusiastically read feminist iterations into the film. There is, for instance, Bams (2020), who writes that *Lionheart* has "a satisfactory story to tell in favor of feminism".

However, a nuanced reading may reveal that *Lionheart* actually uses its female characters to reinforce and recycle several traditional images and constructs of women that are deeply ingrained in Nigerian cultural ethos. The very title, *Lionheart*, perhaps inadvertently, echoes the tendency across ethnic groups in Nigeria to describe powerful, high-achieving women as ‘men in women’s skin’. With this title, Adaeze, the film’s heroine ostensibly has the heart of a lion, the archetype of masculine power. Also, *Lionheart*’s narrative only highlights the *aptitude* of Adaeze; it does not project her as *capable*. She possesses the right combination of business intelligence and admirable corporate ethics to help her father out of a desperate financial gridlock. Yet, it is not Adaeze’s actions that actually resolve the conflict: it is the film’s *deus ex machina* in the person of Hamza Maikano, a male, that does this. Also, the only other notable female character in *Lionheart* is Adaeze’s mother. Lacking any individuality, this character is wholly submerged under the Nollywood stereotype of woman as contented home builder, ardent supporter of husband and nurturer of children.

Still contextualizing *Lionheart* in Harcourt’s Level of Argument, the film is not only explicit in its self-determined ‘culture preservation’ agenda; it also emphasizes the religio-cultural ideologies that rule its story space. In one instance, director Nnaji and her editors visually stress this emphasis by framing Adaeze’s Mother in a big closeup when she tells her dispirited daughter that; ‘God never gives you a burden He has not equipped you to carry’. There is also the painstakingly staged family dinner scene. Here, a group of unblemished characters, all members of a highly successful, proudly Igbo family eat a communal meal. At the head of the table sits Chief Obiagu, the all-knowing and authoritative father, wearing the full Igbo traditional costume signage of wealth and status. Sprinkled with Igbo proverbs from the elders, the dinner talk centers on desirable traditional codes of dressing and courtship that the current youth generation recklessly disregards. Also, early in the story, a scene shows the intractable Godswill boldly disrupting the hustle of two young Igbo scammers, then, admonishing them to ‘stop tarnishing the image of Igbo people’. Set against the profound universality in the cultural references of its competitors, this cultural particularity of *Lionheart* might have somewhat diminished the film at the competitive stage of the Oscars in 2019.

Nollywood verbiage

Lionheart also reflects its Nollywood heritage in the way that words become the primary source of story information, characterisation, themes and authorial intent. Verbiage manifests in the typical Nollywood narration either in oral overkill of story information or in using words to repeat visual elements of narration. Again, scholars have noted this defining feature of the Nollywood film, with some attributing it to the dominantly oral nature of self-expression in Nigerian indigenous cultures. Ekwuazi (1991:90) succinctly frames such attribution with his assertion that “the silent film could never have originated from Africa”. This, he explains, is because “in an oral culture, speech is golden: no less a premium is placed

on seeing than on hearing”. This may, perhaps, explain why the typical Nollywood narration feels the need to verbalize characters’ state of mind and their intentions.

In *Lionheart*, the two-minute melodramatic conversation under the moonlight between Adaeze and her father, Chief Obiagu, is superfluous in the sense that it only expresses in words what the film has already emphasized in different ways: that Adaeze is the apple of her father’s eyes. In another example of redundant wordiness; it is obvious that Adaeze feels disappointed when her father bypasses her to appoint her uncle as Managing Director of Lionheart Limited; yet, the film makes Adaeze’s Personal Assistant prompt her to verbally express her disillusionment.

A product for mass consumption

Perhaps the overwhelming influence of Nollywood and television’s formal and aesthetic traditions on *Lionheart* becomes more understandable against director Genevieve Nnaji’s admission that she aimed the film at a ‘mass audience’. She tells *Essence*, an online magazine, that her film is basically “a good human story with relatability from anywhere (that) will travel far and resonate with viewers”. Perhaps it is significant that Nnaji uses the word ‘viewers’ here, a term more associated with television content consumption than film box office attendance. Nnaji’s desire to make *Lionheart*’s story accessible to ‘universal’ viewers is also rooted in an enduring operational philosophy of the Nollywood film industry. In the same way that television (and most commercial film cultures of the world) identifies primarily as a channel of entertainment, most Nollywood films seek to serve their audience with safe and wholesome entertainment (Odedina, 2023; Okome, 2025). This philosophy conditions both the content of the Nollywood text and its formal attributes. The director of *Lionheart* speaks to this when she explicates her directorial concept in the same interview with *Essence*. According to Nnaji, it was important that *Lionheart* be “light-hearted and warm, so the environment in which it was told was crucial as well”. One of Nnaji’s options to make *Lionheart* ‘light-hearted and warm’ may be the film’s strained effort to generate comedy (especially through the characterisation of Godswill). Also ‘the environment’ in which *Lionheart* is told is the standard backdrop of most made-for-television drama: a categorically middle-class milieu, being the repository of cultural and ideological conservatism (Kevers, 2017; Samuels, 2023;) and therefore, a totally safe platform of discourse for the mass audience.

Finally, even if it is against the grain of contemporary world-class film narratives, *Lionheart* retains its formal roots in television drama and Nollywood narratology by clearly underlining its own didactic significance. At his second, ‘providential’ meeting with Hamza Maikano, Godswill intones; “It’s a small world . . . Just do good to any human being you see anywhere because you never know what tomorrow will turn out to be”. This contrived meeting is not only the ‘reward’ for the ‘do-gooder’ character, it is also the final path to plot closure and a

conventional happy ending for *Lionheart*, director Nnaji's charming tale, which, like all great allegories, finally fades in a lavish celebratory dance involving all the 'positive' characters of the film's story-world.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the holistic profile of Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* validates Nigerian Oscar Selection Committee's selection of this film as presenting an accurate Nigerian experience of the cinema in 2019. The film competently addresses its primary audience because its worldview (in terms of its themes and argument) as well as its treatment (in terms of its form and aesthetics) resonate within an unmistakably Nigerian cultural experience. However, the same criteria that make *Lionheart* excel as a *Nigerian film* would have severely limited its chances if it had featured in the competitive stage of the 92nd Academy Awards. This is because while all the other texts competing for the prestigious Best International Feature Award were crafted under a definition of film as a narrative form expressed in cinema's unique language, *Lionheart* self-consciously defines itself in the tradition of television soap-opera; as a form of domestic entertainment and light discourse.

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Cinematic Language of Yoruba Tradition in Tunde Kelani's *Saworoide*

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Abstract

This study presents a critical analysis of the deployment of Yoruba ritual aesthetics as a sophisticated cinematic language in Tunde Kelani's *Saworoide* (1999). Moving beyond a thematic reading of ritual as mere cultural backdrop, this paper argues that indigenous practices—including sacred drumming, kingship rites, symbolic props, and proverbial discourse—constitute the film's core narrative syntax and moral architecture. Employing a qualitative, interpretive methodology that integrates semiotic and cultural analysis, the research deconstructs key sequences to demonstrate how these aesthetics are instrumentally coded to articulate a potent cultural identity and deliver a sharp political critique. The findings reveal that ritual in *Saworoide* operates as an active agent of plot progression, character definition, and thematic exposition, directly conveying imperatives of justice, ethical governance, and resistance to corruption. The study concludes that Kelani's film exemplifies a paradigm in African cinema where indigenous aesthetic systems are not represented but are performatively engaged to forge a culturally-grounded and politically-engaged filmic discourse. This research contributes to African film studies by providing a framework for analyzing ritual as an integral cinematic form, challenging reductive perceptions of tradition and foregrounding its narrative and ideological potency in postcolonial critique.

Keywords: Yoruba Ritual Aesthetics, African Cinema, Tunde Kelani, Political Allegory, Indigenous Semiotics, Cultural Identity, Narrative Form

Introduction: Ritual as Cinematic Discourse

In the landscape of African cinema, the representation of ritual often navigates a complex space between ethnographic documentation and narrative ornamentation. However, in the hands of a visionary auteur, ritual transcends these confines to become a potent, primary cinematic language. This is decisively the case in the work of Tunde Kelani, a filmmaker whose oeuvre is distinguished by a deep commitment to Yoruba cultural epistemology. His 1999 film, *Saworoide*, stands as a seminal text where ritual is neither mere spectacle nor archaic relic; it is the very engine of the narrative, a visual and aural system through which cultural identity is asserted and political critique is rendered with profound moral force. This study posits that in *Saworoide*, the aesthetics of Yoruba ritual—encompassing the sacred materiality of the saworoide drum, the performative solemnity of coronation rites, the

symbolic resonance of costume and props, and the lyrical depth of proverbial language—are constitutive techniques. They form an integrated cinematic discourse that drives the plot, shapes character, and articulates a powerful commentary on power, accountability, and the consequences of cultural rupture.

The scholarly engagement with Yoruba cinema has often acknowledged the presence of ritual elements, typically situating them within broader discussions of cultural authenticity or thematic preoccupations with spirituality (Uzoma, 2013; Elegbe, 2017). However, a significant gap persists in the critical literature: a detailed, systematic analysis of how these ritual elements function aesthetically—how they are orchestrated through mise-en-scène, cinematography, sound design, and editing to produce meaning and affect. The problem, therefore, is the underexploitation of ritual’s specific cinematic mechanics. While *Saworoide* is frequently cited for its cultural richness, the precise manner in which its ritual aesthetics operate as a narrative and symbolic language remains inadequately examined.

Consequently, this study aims to address this lacuna by conducting a close textual and contextual analysis of *Saworoide*. Its primary objective is to elucidate how Kelani mobilizes Yoruba ritual aesthetics as a set of cinematic techniques to achieve three interconnected ends: to authenticate and communicate a specific cultural worldview, to structure and propel the film’s narrative arc, and to embed a sharp sociopolitical critique relevant to contemporary Nigeria. The analysis is guided by two principal research questions: First, what are the key ritual aesthetic elements in *Saworoide*, and how are they cinematically encoded? Second, how do these encoded elements function to express Yoruba cultural identity and enhance the film’s narrative power and thematic depth?

The significance of this inquiry lies in its shift from treating ritual as content to analyzing it as form. By foregrounding the instrumentality of indigenous aesthetics, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of African cinematic practices. It demonstrates how traditional knowledge systems can actively shape filmic structure and meaning, offering an alternative to externally derived cinematic models. Furthermore, it highlights the role of cinema as an active site of cultural preservation, reinterpretation, and political engagement, where the past is invoked to interrogate the present.

The scope of this research is deliberately focused on a detailed case study of *Saworoide*. While insights are informed by and contribute to broader conversations in Yoruba culture and Nigerian cinema, the primary lens is aesthetic and textual. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, interpretive framework. It employs a multifaceted analytical approach combining:

Content Analysis: A systematic examination of the film’s visual and auditory components.

Semiotic Analysis: Decoding the signs and symbols to interpret their layered cultural and narrative connotations.

Cultural & Contextual Analysis: Situating these aesthetic choices within Yoruba traditions and the socio-political milieu of late 20th-century Nigeria to understand their artistic integration and ideological resonance.

This integrated methodology is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of ritual not as a depicted subject, but as an active, cinematic language in Tunde Kelani's seminal work.

Theoretical Framework: Ritual Aesthetics, Semiotics, and Cultural Meaning

To analyze the intricate work of ritual in *Saworoide*, this study is anchored in two complementary theoretical frameworks: the concept of ritual aesthetics in performance and film, and semiotic analysis, both viewed through the lens of cultural theory.

Ritual Aesthetics as Cinematic Performance

The concept of ritual aesthetics in film studies originates from the intrinsic link between ritual and performance. As Richard Schechner (1993) argues, rituals are performative acts—structured, repetitive, and symbolic behaviors intended to effect change or mark significance—while performances often carry a ritualized, transformative charge. In a cinematic context, this relationship is transposed onto the screen. Ritual aesthetics here refer to the strategic integration of these performative elements—ceremonial actions, symbolic objects, rhythmic patterns, and sacred spaces—into the film's very fabric of storytelling. This integration creates a cinematic language that operates on a sensory and experiential register, engaging the viewer beyond intellectual comprehension to evoke deeper cultural, spiritual, and emotional resonance.

Filmmakers harness ritual aesthetics through all aspects of film form: the composition of *mise-en-scène* (the arrangement of ritual objects and participants), choreography of movement, manipulation of lighting and color to denote sacredness, the use of rhythmic editing to mirror ceremonial cadence, and the construction of immersive soundscapes where music and incantation are diegetic forces. In indigenous cinemas like Yoruba film, this practice is particularly significant. Ritual aesthetics are not simply representations of cultural practice; they become a means of preserving, reinterpreting, and dynamically animating spiritual and communal traditions through the technology of the moving image. The film itself can thus become a ritualistic event for the viewer, a mediated experience that invites engagement with the metaphysical dimensions of the narrative (Uzoma, 2013).

Semiotics and the Cultural Code

To decipher how these ritual aesthetics generate meaning, semiotic analysis is indispensable. Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, provides the tools to unpack how elements within the film—a drum, a costume, a gesture—function as signs. These signs consist of a signifier (the physical form, e.g., the image of the *Saworoide* drum) and a signified (the concept it

represents, e.g., ancestral covenant, justice). The meaning of these signs is not inherent but is derived from culturally specific codes (Chandler, 2007).

In *Saworoide*, the ritual elements are dense with cultural signification. A semiotic analysis allows us to decode how Kelani uses these pre-loaded cultural signs and re-contextualizes them within a cinematic narrative. For instance, the act of a king refusing a drum is not just a plot point; it is a symbolic rupture loaded with meaning about the rejection of communal responsibility and spiritual law. This analytical approach intersects seamlessly with cultural theory, which examines how artistic products reflect, shape, and preserve societal values and identity (Ayodeji, 2024). By reading the film's signs through the code of Yoruba cosmology—which emphasizes balance (*iwa pele*), destiny (*ayanmo*), and the interconnection of the physical (*aye*) and spiritual (*orun*) realms—we can understand how *Saworoide* functions as an act of cultural communication. The film uses its ritual aesthetics to assert a Yoruba worldview, positioning itself as a form of cultural preservation and a medium for critiquing deviations from that worldview in contemporary governance.

Contextual Grounding: Yoruba Ritual, Cinema, and the Auteur Ritual in Yoruba Cosmology and Artistic Expression

Rituals are the arterial network of Yoruba culture, dynamic expressions that bind the individual to the community, the living to the ancestors (*arakunrin*), and humanity to the deities (*oriṣa*). Embedded within a holistic cosmology, rituals maintain cosmic and social equilibrium (*itutu*), affirm core values, and reinforce collective identity. They are multisensory performances involving intricate sequences of prayer, sacrifice (*ebo*), sacred drumming (*ilu*), dance (*ijo*), and masquerade (*egungun*) (Olusegun, 2015). This performative nature makes ritual inherently artistic, a synergy of music, movement, and visual symbolism.

This intersection is the wellspring for Yoruba cinematic expression. Ritual provides a ready-made dramaturgy for film, offering potent narrative devices for marking transformation, structuring plots, and symbolizing profound themes like fate, justice (*ododo*), and moral cleansing (*imototo*). In cinema, these rituals are transposed, becoming cinematic set-pieces that do more than depict tradition; they activate it within the narrative, allowing spiritual concepts to drive material consequences (Amoscato, 2008).

The Yoruba Film Industry: A Historical Arc

The Yoruba film industry, a vital pillar of Nigerian cinema (Nollywood), evolved from a rich legacy of indigenous storytelling, oral poetry (*ewi*), and most directly, the traveling theatre troupes of the mid-20th century. Pioneers like Hubert Ogunde, Duro Ladipo, and Kola Ogunmola synthesized folk tales, historical plots, and ritual performances for the stage. The transition to celluloid in the 1970s and 80s marked a “Golden Age,” with films deeply infused with Yoruba spirituality and moral narratives. The decline of celluloid production gave way to the direct-to-video boom of the 1990s, a period often criticized for declining production values but characterized by explosive output and accessibility (Ebewo, 2007). It is

within this context that a filmmaker like Tunde Kelani emerged, consciously elevating the medium with high-quality, culturally profound productions that bridged the popular and the artistic. The contemporary digital era continues this trajectory, with filmmakers leveraging new technologies while exploring enduring themes, ensuring Yoruba cinema remains a crucial site for negotiating cultural identity (Elegbe, 2017).

Tunde Kelani: Auteur as Cultural Custodian

Tunde Kelani stands as a defining auteur in this landscape. His filmmaking philosophy is rooted in a commitment to cultural authenticity, linguistic fidelity (using Yoruba as a primary vehicle), and the sophisticated integration of folklore, history, and spirituality. With formal training in cinematography, Kelani's style is marked by visual richness, deliberate composition, and a masterful use of light and symbolism. His films, including the *Ti Oluwa Ni Ile* trilogy (1993-1995), *Saworoide* (1999), and *Thunderbolt: Magun* (2001), consistently deploy ritual aesthetics not as exotic backdrop but as active, narrative-driving forces. He adapts Yoruba literary works and explores themes of destiny, the abuse of power, and the immutable laws of the land (*ile*), establishing himself as a cinematic custodian of Yoruba heritage and a sharp social commentator.

Narrative and Thematic Architecture of *Saworoide*

Saworoide is a political allegory set in the fictional Yoruba town of Jogbo. The narrative hinges on a foundational ritual breach: the newly installed King Lapite (Kola Oyewo), in his hunger for absolute power, deliberately avoids the sacred *Saworoide* drumming ceremony. This ritual is designed to spiritually bind a ruler to the principles of justice and accountability to his people. His refusal severs the covenant between leadership and the land, unleashing a chain of corruption, environmental exploitation (aided by cynical foreign investors), and social unrest. The plot follows the return of *Aresejabata* (Kunle Afolayan), a young, culturally conscious heir, who becomes the catalyst for resistance. The film culminates in a dramatic restoration of order only when the neglected *Saworoide* drum is finally played by its rightful custodian, *Ayanniyi*, enacting a form of divine, ritualistic justice upon the corrupt leaders.

The film's thematic power is generated through its intricate characterization, language, and core ideological concerns, all deeply interwoven with ritual aesthetics.

Symbolic Characterization

Each major character embodies a specific ideological or spiritual principle within the Yoruba worldview:

King Lapite: Represents unbridled, illegitimate power. His characterization is visual; often framed in tight, imposing close-ups, adorned in regalia that signifies authority devoid of spiritual sanction. His downfall is narratively triggered by the very ritual he scorned.

Aresejabata: Embodies restorative resistance and cultural continuity. His demeanor and costuming reflect humility and purpose, positioning him not as a mere rebel, but as an instrument of traditional realignment.

Ayanniyi: The son of the late royal drummer Ayangalu, he is the vessel of ritual truth. His climactic performance of the Saworoide drum is less an act of music than an execution of ancestral will, visually and aurally framed as a supreme moment of justice.

Baba Opalaba & Other Elders: Function as the living memory and moral conscience of the community. Their sparse, proverbial dialogue underscores the importance of oral tradition and wisdom in maintaining societal balance.

Language as Ritual Instrument

Language in *Saworoide* is performative. The dominant use of Yoruba grounds the narrative in authenticity. Dialogue is elevated through proverbs (*owe*) and idioms (*akanole*), transforming speech into a ritualized exchange of wisdom and a marker of cultural depth. The tonal contrast is critical: the manipulative, political diction of Lapite and his allies stands in stark opposition to the solemn, prophetic, and often poetic speech of the elders and truth-tellers like Aresejabata. Furthermore, the film incorporates non-verbal ritual language: chants, incantations, and, most powerfully, the speech of the Saworoide drum itself. The drum's sound becomes a linguistic act—a divine utterance that exposes falsehood and enforces cosmic law.

Central Themes Interwoven with Ritual

The film's thematic core is inextricable from its ritual logic: The Covenant of Kingship: The central conflict explores the sacred contract between a ruler, his people, and the ancestors, formalized through ritual. Lapite's violation is the original sin that destabilizes Jogbo.

Ritual as Moral and Cosmic Justice: The film posits that justice in the Yoruba cosmos is not merely a social contract but a spiritual mechanism. The *Saworoide* drum is the instrument of this justice, its sound acting as a cleansing, restorative force.

Cultural Amnesia and Restoration: The narrative arc is one of forgetting and remembering. The youth (Aresejabata) and the marginalized ritual specialists (Ayanniyi) are agents of cultural re-memory, fighting to restore a lost equilibrium.

Neo-colonial Exploitation: The corruption enabled by Lapite attracts foreign collaborators who plunder Jogbo's resources. This exploitation is framed as a direct consequence of the breakdown of indigenous protective systems (rituals and ethical governance).

Analysis of Ritual Aesthetics as Cinematic Language

The Sacred Object: The *Saworoide* Drum

The drum is the film's central polysemic symbol. Semiotically, its signifier (the ornate, brass-studded drum) is linked to multiple signifieds: ancestral authority, communal memory, truth, and the unbreakable law of the land. Kelani cinematically emphasizes its potency. Its origin is shown in a stylized flashback, granting it a mythic, divine pedigree. It is often filmed in lingering close-ups, objectifying its sacredness. Most crucially, its sound is narrativized. The climactic scene where Ayanniyi plays it is constructed through a crescendo of rhythmic editing and reactive shots showing the corrupt collapsing. Here, ritual sound is not background score; it is a diegetic, causal force—the cinematic realization of the Yoruba belief in ase (the power to make things happen).

The Performance of Kingship: Coronation Rites

The coronation ritual is a key site of aesthetic and narrative meaning. Kelani stages it with meticulous attention to authentic detail: specific chants, ceremonial gestures, ritual attire, and the expected integration of the drum. Lapite's coronation is visually rich but spiritually hollow—the ritual is incomplete. This absence is itself a powerful aesthetic statement. The film uses the expectation of the full ritual, established through community dialogue and flashbacks, to create a narrative and moral vacuum. The violation is felt visually and aurally, setting up the necessity for its eventual completion to restore narrative closure.

Ritual Space and Cinematic Mise-en-scène

Ritual spaces—the sacred grove, the shrine, the secluded forest—are distinctively visualized. Kelani employs high-contrast lighting (chiaroscuro), with shadows and flickering flames, to create an atmosphere of mystery and sacred otherness. These spaces are framed as liminal zones where the human and spiritual realms intersect. Scenes set here, such as Aresejabata seeking guidance or Ayanniyi's preparation, use longer takes and more solemn pacing, altering the film's temporal rhythm to signify a shift into a ritual mode of time, separate from the profane time of political intrigue.

The Body and Adornment: Costume as Signifier

Costume is a critical component of the ritual aesthetic. Regalia is not decorative but indicative of spiritual status and moral position. King Lapite's elaborate agbada and crown signify temporal power disconnected from its ritual source. The simpler, often white attire of Aresejabata and the ritualists signifies purity, purpose, and alignment with spiritual forces. Body markings and ritual props (staves, gourds) further semiotically code characters within the Yoruba cultural schema.

The Rhythm of Ritual: Editing and Sound Design

The film's formal structure often mirrors ritual patterns. The editing rhythm slows during ceremonial sequences, inviting contemplation. Sound design is paramount: the film's aural landscape is dominated by diegetic ritual sounds—drums, chants, incantations, natural sounds of the forest—which are given sonic prominence over a non-diegetic score. This

prioritization makes the ritual world acoustically tangible and central to the viewer's experience.

Synthesis: Ritual Aesthetics as Political Critique and Cultural Assertion

The analysis confirms that ritual aesthetics in Saworoide are the primary vehicle for its dual project of cultural assertion and political critique. The expression of Yoruba identity is not achieved through declarative dialogue alone but is embodied in the very form of the film. The meticulous portrayal of rituals authenticates a Yoruba worldview centered on balance, accountability, and ancestral communion. By making these aesthetics central to the plot mechanism—where the violation of a ritual causes chaos and its performance restores order—Kelani argues for the ongoing relevance and potency of indigenous systems of governance and justice.

This becomes the basis for a sharp political allegory. The fictional Jogbo is a clear analogue for the postcolonial Nigerian state, plagued by corrupt leadership (“King” Lapite and later the military interloper, Ogagun Lagata) that has severed ties with the social contract and public good. The foreign exploiters represent neo-colonial economic predation, enabled by internal moral failure. The film's critique is thus embedded in its narrative logic: societal breakdown is a direct result of abandoning culturally-rooted ethical frameworks. The solution it proposes is equally rooted in that culture: resistance and restoration must come from a return to, and reactivation of, these foundational principles, symbolized by the resonant voice of the Saworoide drum. Kelani uses the aesthetics of tradition not to yearn for a lost past, but to weaponize it as a critical lens on the present and a blueprint for a more just future.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that in Tunde Kelani's Saworoide, Yoruba ritual is masterfully transposed from cultural practice into a sophisticated cinematic language. The film's power and coherence derive from this transposition. Ritual aesthetics—the sacred object of the drum, the performative codes of kingship, the spatial and aural construction of the sacred, and the proverbial depth of language—are not ancillary features but constitute the film's narrative syntax and moral architecture. They drive the plot, define character arcs, and visually embody the film's core themes.

The findings affirm that these aesthetics are fundamentally expressive of Yoruba cultural identity, grounding the film in a worldview where leadership, spirituality, art, and justice are indivisible. Furthermore, they are the precise mechanism through which Kelani delivers a potent political critique. Saworoide argues that the socio-political maladies of the Nigerian state are, at their root, a form of cultural and spiritual rupture. The film's resolution, achieved through ritual means, posits that healing and accountability must be sought within the framework of reactivated indigenous knowledge systems.

Contributions and Implications

This research contributes to African cinema studies by providing a critical framework for analyzing indigenous aesthetics as constitutive of film form. It moves beyond thematic readings to show how ritual works cinematically. It positions filmmakers like Kelani not just as storytellers but as cultural theorists and philosophers who use the medium to engage in profound social commentary. The study also underscores the importance of culturally-grounded film criticism that engages with the specific symbolic and aesthetic systems from which the films emerge.

Recommendations

Building on this analysis, future scholarship should:

Apply similar aesthetic-focused frameworks to other works in African and indigenous cinemas, facilitating comparative studies.

Deepen the theoretical engagement with specific Yoruba and African philosophical concepts (e.g., ase, iwapele, Ubuntu) as lenses for film analysis.

Encourage film pedagogy and production to consciously explore and valorize indigenous aesthetic systems as sources of narrative innovation and cultural integrity.

In conclusion, *Saworoide* stands as a testament to the transformative power of culturally-rooted cinema. Tunde Kelani harnesses the aesthetics of Yoruba ritual to create a film that is simultaneously an authentic cultural expression, a compelling narrative, and an urgent political treatise. It exemplifies how tradition, when engaged with cinematic mastery, becomes a dynamic and unstoppable force for critique, memory, and the reimagining of a just society.

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Linguistic Strategies and Power Negotiation in Spousal Conflicts in ‘The Justice Court’

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Abstract

This study examined power dynamics in spousal discourse within a Nigerian media courtroom context, addressing the gap in research on how everyday marital conflicts function as sites of discursive power negotiation. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the linguistic strategies used to assert control in spousal conflicts and to analyse how couples negotiated power relations through language. The study was grounded in Norman Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis, which provided a framework for interpreting language as a social practice shaped by power and ideology. A qualitative methodology was adopted, involving the purposive selection of two episodes of *The Justice Court* obtained from YouTube. The episodes were repeatedly viewed and transcribed verbatim to ensure analytical accuracy. The study found that spouses employed linguistic strategies such as repetition, modality, possessive pronouns, reported speech, and rhetorical questions to assert dominance or resist subordination. It also found that power was not fixed but dynamically negotiated through interaction. Furthermore, the study revealed that language served as a key resource for constructing gender roles, authority, and identity in conflict situations. The study concluded that spousal discourse functioned as a critical site for the enactment and contestation of power. The study contributed to existing knowledge by demonstrating how media representations of marital disputes reflect broader socio-cultural ideologies and expand discourse studies within the Nigerian context.

Keywords: spousal discourse, power dynamics, critical discourse analysis, linguistic strategies, Nigerian media.

Introduction

Language functions as a primary medium through which spouses manage interaction in marriage, particularly during conflict, where issues of authority, control, and resistance become visible. In marital relationships, language conveys emotions, ideas, and experiences, while also shaping interpersonal dynamics and social roles (Nweke, 2024). Conflicts are an inevitable feature of intimate relationships, reflecting differences in expectations, responsibilities, and power distribution. Everyday disagreements may escalate into disputes that manifest as frustration, strain, loss of trust, anxiety, and emotional discomfort, all expressed and negotiated through language. Communication in such contexts does not only transmit meaning but also produces and reflects relational hierarchies and societal norms.

Linguistic choices, including lexical selection, tone, repetition, and modality, allow spouses to position themselves and contest or reinforce authority, making marital discourse a rich site for understanding power relations. Conflict discourse also reveals the ideological assumptions underpinning gender roles, authority, and responsibilities within the household (Chiluwa, 2021, 2024; Holtgraves, 2014; Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2013).

Within Nigerian society, social expectations often grant men authority as heads of households, while women are expected to be accommodating, supportive, and responsible for domestic management. Disruption of these expectations frequently triggers conflict, with language serving as the primary mechanism through which power, accountability, and social norms are negotiated (Argyle & Furnham, 1983; Glenn & Weaver, 1979). Televised programs such as *The Justice Court* provide a mediated setting in which real-life marital disputes are publicly aired, enabling detailed observation of how spouses express grievances, assert authority, and resist control. In this context, participants strategically employ linguistic resources to influence perceptions, justify actions, and negotiate relational positions (Andrus, 2009; Osisanwo et al., 2018). Episodes 206 and 175 of *The Justice Court* were analysed using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on the descriptive stage of the three-dimensional model to examine textual features, discursive strategies, and underlying power ideologies. The courtroom setting, structured with formal roles including judge, plaintiff, defendant, and audience, situates conflict within both legal and social frameworks, offering insight into the ways spouses enact and contest authority through language.

Existing studies have extensively documented causes of marital conflict, communication patterns, and general power relations between spouses. However, limited attention has been given to the precise discursive strategies through which Nigerian spouses assert authority, resist domination, or negotiate relational control in mediated contexts such as television courtroom programmes. The specific linguistic mechanisms that shape power dynamics remain underexplored, particularly in settings that combine personal, cultural, and public dimensions of conflict. Addressing this gap, the study aimed to examine how language functions as a tool for asserting, maintaining, or challenging power during spousal disputes. The specific objectives of the study were to identify the linguistic strategies spouses use to assert power and control during conflicts, explore how spouses negotiate or resist power relations in conflict interactions, and investigate how the public courtroom setting influences the deployment and reception of these strategies. Understanding these mechanisms provides insight into the intersection of language, culture, and power in Nigerian marital discourse and offers a framework for analysing how mediated conflict reflects and reinforces broader societal expectations. This focus allows for the advancement of knowledge on the role of discourse in intimate relationships, highlighting the interplay between linguistic practice, social norms, and relational authority. The study contributes novel insights by linking detailed linguistic analysis to socio-cultural context, demonstrating the ways in which power is discursively constructed, contested, and negotiated in televised spousal conflicts.

Literature Review

Language and Power

Language functions as a central medium through which power is enacted, maintained, and challenged in social interaction (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 1998). Within marital discourse, communication reflects not only personal intentions but also broader ideological structures that shape relationships. Tannen (2001) explained that conversational styles between spouses often involve subtle competition for control, where differences in interactional patterns may lead to misunderstanding or conflict. Such patterns are influenced by expectations regarding authority and gender roles. Studies within African contexts have shown that these expectations are closely tied to cultural norms that position men in dominant roles and women in more accommodating positions (Odebunmi, 2019; Bamgbose, 2021). These norms are not fixed but are negotiated through everyday communication, especially during disagreement. Language therefore becomes a means through which spouses express authority, compliance, or resistance. Srimati and Barrett (2022) examined the performative nature of marriage, noting that the felicity of marital pronouncements does not depend solely on the words spoken but also on the social conditions that give them meaning. This suggests that power within marriage is not only expressed through explicit statements but also through the institutional and cultural frameworks that shape interpretation. Such perspectives reinforce the view that language operates as a social practice embedded in power relations.

Spouses employ a range of linguistic resources to manage power during interaction, particularly in conflict situations. Pronouns, modality, repetition, and turn-taking patterns serve as tools for asserting authority or resisting control. These features enable speakers to position themselves and others in ways that reflect dominance or submission. Ukaegbu (2021) examined language use in conflict and noted that the interpretation of statements as abusive depends on context, intention, and relational dynamics. A single utterance may be perceived as offensive or acceptable depending on situational factors, which shows the flexible nature of meaning in discourse. This flexibility allows speakers to negotiate power through subtle linguistic choices rather than overt confrontation. Shareen (2019) explored representations of gender in fairytales and found that male characters are often associated with authority and aggression, while female characters are depicted as compliant yet strategic in navigating constraints. These representations mirror societal expectations that influence real-life communication patterns, including marital interaction. Such findings suggest that language both reflects and reinforces social ideologies related to gender and authority. The examination of linguistic strategies in spousal discourse therefore provides insight into how power is constructed, maintained, and challenged within intimate relationships, making it an important area of study in discourse analysis.

Spousal Communication and Conflict

Research on spousal communication has consistently identified communication patterns and power struggles as central factors influencing marital satisfaction and stability. Glenn and Weaver (1979) argued that the quality of interaction between spouses is closely linked to marital happiness, noting that effective communication promotes understanding while persistent breakdown leads to dissatisfaction. Patterns of interaction such as interruption, avoidance, or hostile responses often intensify disagreement and create emotional distance between partners. Argyle and Furnham (1983) further explained that conflict in relationships frequently arises from unmet expectations and attempts by individuals to assert control within the relationship. These expectations may relate to roles, responsibilities, or emotional support,

and when they are not fulfilled, tension develops. Language becomes the medium through which such dissatisfaction is expressed, negotiated, or resisted (Adesina & Jegede, 2019). Communication during conflict is therefore not merely a reflection of disagreement but also a process through which relational positions are defined and contested. In many cases, repeated negative communication patterns reinforce imbalance in relationships, especially where one partner consistently dominates interaction. This suggests that spousal discourse is shaped by both interpersonal dynamics and broader social expectations, making it a relevant domain for examining how language functions within intimate relationships.

Emotional expression also plays a significant role in shaping spousal communication, particularly in multilingual and culturally diverse contexts. Yesem and Seyed (2022) examined the role of emotion in family language policy, stressing that emotional factors should be considered as a key component of multilingual interaction within families. Their study showed that language choice in the home is not only a matter of linguistic competence but also tied to emotional attachment, identity, and interpersonal relationships. In marital contexts, emotions such as anger, frustration, affection, or empathy influence how messages are conveyed and interpreted during conflict. The use of a particular language or code may signal solidarity, distance, or authority, depending on the situation. This perspective suggests that conflict interaction cannot be fully understood without considering the emotional and linguistic resources available to speakers. Communication breakdown may therefore arise not only from structural patterns but also from emotional misalignment between partners. The integration of emotional and linguistic analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of marital conflict, especially in settings where multiple languages are used. Such insights reinforce the importance of examining spousal discourse as a site where language, emotion, and power intersect, shaping the outcomes of interaction and the quality of marital relationships.

Language, Power Negotiation and Spousal Conflicts

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a relevant framework for examining how language functions in the construction and negotiation of power within spousal conflicts. Wodak and Meyer (2016) maintained that discourse is both socially constitutive and socially conditioned, indicating that language both shapes and reflects social realities. Fairclough (2013) further explained that everyday language carries ideological meanings that influence how individuals perceive and enact social relations. Within marital contexts, these perspectives suggest that communication between spouses is shaped by broader cultural expectations and social structures. Studies within Nigeria have shown that marital disputes often reflect tensions related to gender roles, economic responsibilities, and societal expectations (Akinwotu, 2020; Okoro, 2022; Jegede, 2024a, 2024b). Such tensions are expressed and managed through discourse, particularly during conflict situations where issues of authority and resistance become more visible. Nweke (2024), using a systemic functional linguistic approach, analysed spousal conflictual language in J. P. Clark's *The Wives* and demonstrated how experiential meanings in language represent conflict between spouses. This supports the view that linguistic structures encode relational meanings and power positions. Chilwa (2024) also examined the language of conflict and peace, noting that linguistic representation plays a role in shaping social and political realities, including interpersonal conflict. These studies indicate that spousal discourse is not isolated but connected to wider ideological and cultural frameworks.

Further research has examined how discourse practices contribute to the construction of identity and power in both interpersonal and mediated contexts. Romanus et al. (2024) investigated endearment terms in social media interactions and argued that such expressions function as strategies for constructing gender identity and social meaning. Although their focus was on online discourse, the findings are relevant to marital interaction where similar linguistic strategies may signal intimacy, authority, or resistance. Evans et al. (2019) applied critical discourse approaches to conflict situations such as protests and political activism, describing language in conflict as a tool for sustaining hostility through accusation, blame, and verbal aggression. This perspective is applicable to spousal conflicts where similar strategies may be used to assert dominance or challenge authority. Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of CDA, which examines text, discursive practice, and social practice, provides a structured approach to analysing how such meanings are produced and interpreted. Through this model, it becomes possible to examine how linguistic choices in spousal interaction reflect underlying ideologies and power relations. Despite existing studies on marital conflict and discourse, limited attention has been given to the specific linguistic strategies through which spouses negotiate power in Nigerian media contexts. This gap justifies the present study, which focuses on how spouses construct, maintain, and challenge power during conflict interaction, with the aim of revealing the social meanings embedded in their discourse.

Theoretical Framework: Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) presents discourse as a form of social practice that operates at three interrelated levels: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The textual level focuses on the formal properties of language, including vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and rhetorical structures, which are analysed to reveal how meaning is constructed. The level of discursive practice examines how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed, paying attention to processes such as intertextuality and the influence of institutional contexts on communication. The third level, social practice, situates discourse within broader social and cultural structures, where issues of ideology, power, and dominance are embedded. Fairclough (1989) argued that discourse both shapes and is shaped by society, meaning that language reflects existing power relations while also contributing to their maintenance or transformation. This framework enables a systematic analysis of how linguistic choices are connected to wider social meanings, making it suitable for examining the relationship between language and power in different contexts.

The application of Fairclough's model to the present study provides a structured approach for analysing how spouses construct and negotiate power during conflict interaction. At the textual level, the study examines linguistic features such as pronouns, modality, repetition, and rhetorical questions to identify how authority and resistance are expressed in spousal discourse. The discursive practice level considers how the interactions are produced within the setting of *The Justice Court*, where participants present their cases before a judge and an audience, shaping how they construct their narratives and position themselves. This level also accounts for the influence of the media context on the presentation and interpretation of spousal conflicts. At the level of social practice, the analysis interprets the discourse in relation to broader cultural ideologies, particularly those concerning gender roles, authority,

and marital expectations in Nigerian society. Through this multi-level analysis, the framework enables the study to reveal how power relations are encoded in language and how spouses use discourse to assert, negotiate, or challenge dominance within conflict situations.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design to examine linguistic strategies in the negotiation of power within spousal conflicts. The qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on language use, meaning, and interaction rather than numerical measurement. This design aligned with the research objectives, which sought to identify linguistic strategies and examine how spouses negotiate power during conflict. A qualitative approach enabled detailed interpretation of discourse within its social context, which would not be adequately captured through quantitative methods. The choice of design was therefore justified on the basis of its suitability for discourse-oriented research and its capacity to provide rich, context-sensitive insights. The data for the study consisted of audio-visual materials drawn from two selected episodes of *The Justice Court*, a Nigerian reality courtroom programme that presents real-life disputes. The data were qualitative in nature, comprising spoken interactions, verbal exchanges, and paralinguistic features observable within the episodes. These materials were selected because they provided authentic instances of spousal conflict within a structured yet naturalistic setting. The population of the study included all episodes of the programme featuring marital disputes, while the sample consisted of two episodes, specifically episodes 206 and 175, selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was appropriate because it allowed the selection of episodes that clearly reflected the phenomenon under investigation, thereby enhancing the relevance and credibility of the data. Data collection involved repeated viewing of the selected episodes to ensure familiarity with the content and accuracy in transcription. Relevant segments of spousal interaction were transcribed verbatim to preserve linguistic details necessary for analysis. A coding framework based on discourse analytical categories was applied to identify recurring linguistic features such as pronouns, modality, repetition, and rhetorical structures. Ethical considerations were observed through the anonymisation of participants, with names replaced by neutral identifiers. Data analysis was conducted using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on the textual and social dimensions of discourse. This approach enabled the identification of patterns and meanings within the data while ensuring analytical rigour and transparency. The procedures adopted were sufficiently detailed to allow replication and to support the validity and reliability of the findings.

Results

The selected episodes of *The Justice Court* provided rich data for examining how spouses used language to construct, negotiate, and contest power within marital conflicts. The courtroom setting placed private disputes in a public and institutional space, where each participant sought not only to present facts but also to shape perception, gain legitimacy, and secure favourable judgement. The excerpts analysed revealed that linguistic choices were not neutral; rather, they reflected culturally grounded assumptions about marriage, responsibility, gender roles, and authority in Nigerian society. The analysis showed that spouses relied on a range of discourse strategies such as labelling, repetition, reported speech, modality, possessive pronouns, identity construction, and rhetorical questioning to assert dominance or resist control. These strategies functioned within a broader socio-cultural framework where

expectations of male authority and female responsibility influenced both the production and interpretation of discourse.

Linguistic Strategies and Power Negotiation in Spousal Conflicts in 'The Justice Court'

Excerpt 1: The husband stated, "We have been living together as husband and wife for the past six years, but what I noticed in her is that she is hot tempered, she's lazy also in terms of house chores, the issue started last year when she had an affair with a guy that lives in a third house to my house."

This utterance illustrates the strategic use of evaluative language to construct a negative identity for the wife. The descriptors "hot tempered" and "lazy" serve as moral judgements that position the wife as deficient in expected marital roles, particularly within a cultural context where women are often associated with domestic responsibility and emotional restraint. The husband's narrative foregrounds his perspective as an observer and evaluator, thereby placing himself in a position of authority. The reference to an alleged affair further intensifies the moral framing, presenting the wife as violating both marital trust and social expectations of fidelity. The phrase "a guy that lives in a third house to my house" localises the accusation, giving it a sense of immediacy and credibility within the community context. This construction does not merely describe behaviour; it seeks to legitimise the husband's stance and justify his grievances. The language reflects an attempt to align personal conflict with broader cultural values, thereby strengthening his claim to moral and relational authority.

Excerpt 2: The wife stated, "Ma, I carry over 80% of everything in the house and he does nothing... I will pay house rent, I will fix bills, I will buy him clothes... Ma, your honour! This man is a liar..."

The wife's response demonstrates a deliberate effort to counter the husband's claims through self-representation and assertion of agency. The repeated use of the pronoun "I" foregrounds her role as the primary contributor to the household, while the action verbs "pay," "fix," and "buy" emphasise tangible responsibilities. This pattern of repetition functions as a rhetorical strategy that reinforces her credibility and positions her as industrious and responsible. The quantification "over 80%" introduces an element of measurement, which strengthens her claim by suggesting objectivity. The direct accusation "this man is a liar" challenges the husband's narrative and attempts to discredit his account. Within the courtroom context, this form of address also seeks to persuade the authority figure by presenting a clear contrast between her contribution and his alleged failure. The language reflects a reversal of traditional expectations, where the wife presents herself as the economic backbone of the household. This repositioning challenges established gender norms and reframes the power dynamic within the relationship.

Excerpt 3: The wife stated, "I left his house like five times... he will tell me, 'I am coming for my child, you took my child away... Then he will say, 'If you don't want me to take daughter away from you, then come back home.'"

This excerpt reveals the use of reported speech as a means of reconstructing past interactions and attributing intention to the husband. The repetition of “my child” and “my daughter” reflects the husband’s claim to ownership and authority over the child, which is presented as a basis for exerting control over the wife. The cyclical structure of the narrative, where departure is followed by threats and return, suggests a pattern of coercion. The wife’s recounting of these utterances positions her as a subject of pressure, while simultaneously inviting the audience to interpret the husband’s actions as manipulative. The use of reported speech allows the speaker to frame the interaction in a way that supports her position, highlighting specific statements that convey threat and control. Within the cultural context, children often represent continuity and social legitimacy in marriage, making them a powerful resource in conflict situations. The husband’s alleged use of the child as leverage reflects an attempt to maintain authority through emotional pressure, while the wife’s narration exposes and challenges this strategy.

Excerpt 4: The wife stated, “He is used to saying that ‘If I see you with another man, I will send you away’. Then I decided to lie to him that I have fornicated maybe he will send me away... Is it possible for a woman to have sex with fifteen men and tell her husband?”

This excerpt illustrates the role of modality and rhetorical questioning in the negotiation of power. The statement “I will send you away” expresses a high degree of certainty and authority, reflecting the husband’s attempt to assert control over the wife’s behaviour. The wife’s response introduces an element of resistance through strategic deception, which she presents as a means of escaping the relationship. The rhetorical question at the end challenges the plausibility of the situation and invites the audience to question the husband’s claims. This form of questioning serves to undermine his authority while also appealing to shared cultural assumptions about morality and credibility. The interaction reflects a complex dynamic where control and resistance are enacted through language. The wife’s use of exaggeration and questioning demonstrates an attempt to disrupt the husband’s narrative and reposition herself within the conflict.

Excerpt 5: The husband stated, “She changed my daughter’s school without my consent... I don’t know her school now.”

The use of possessive pronouns such as “my daughter” and “my consent” reflects a claim to authority and decision-making power within the family. The statement frames the wife’s action as a violation of this authority, thereby constructing the conflict as a struggle over control rather than a disagreement over practical matters. The emphasis on lack of knowledge, “I don’t know her school now,” positions the husband as excluded and undermined, which serves to justify his grievance. Within the socio-cultural context, decision-making regarding children is often associated with paternal authority, and deviation from this expectation may be interpreted as disrespect or challenge. The language used in this excerpt reinforces the perception of the husband’s role as a central authority figure, while simultaneously presenting the wife’s action as an act of defiance.

Excerpt 6: The wife stated, “I met him during my service here as a youth corps member, I am always careful to fall into relationship because I am a sickle cell patient... I later accepted his request to share a relationship.”

This excerpt reflects a strategy of identity construction where the speaker presents herself as cautious, responsible, and vulnerable. The reference to her health condition introduces a dimension of personal risk, which enhances her credibility and evokes sympathy. The emphasis on carefulness suggests moral discipline and rational decision-making, which contrasts with any portrayal of irresponsibility. This self-presentation functions as a means of establishing moral authority within the interaction, positioning the speaker as someone who entered the relationship with sincerity and awareness. The narrative also reflects broader cultural expectations regarding women's conduct in relationships, where modesty and caution are valued. The language used serves to align the speaker with these expectations, thereby strengthening her position within the dispute.

Excerpt 7: The husband stated, "Contrary to what she said that I was denying, I did not deny... I actually went to her parents and that was a mistake I made. I had a pure heart, I told her parents that I am responsible for pregnancy but I don't love the mother anymore. I will only take care of her and the child."

This statement reveals a separation between responsibility and emotional commitment. The husband acknowledges involvement but withdraws affective attachment, which reflects a strategic positioning that limits his obligations. The claim of having a "pure heart" serves as a moral justification, while the admission of mistake introduces an element of self-awareness. The distinction between caring for the child and rejecting the mother reflects a selective acceptance of responsibility, which allows the speaker to maintain a sense of control. Within the cultural context, acknowledgment of pregnancy carries expectations of commitment, and deviation from this expectation creates tension. The language used in this excerpt reflects an attempt to redefine these expectations in a way that preserves the speaker's autonomy.

Excerpt 8: The husband stated, "It is not as if I cannot manage you but the way you are spreading that kind of information, you can destroy me. It is better you report me to the police than telling lies against me."

The phrase "manage you" reflects an assumption of authority and control, suggesting that the speaker views the relationship in hierarchical terms. The concern about reputation, "you can destroy me," indicates the importance of public perception within the social context. The statement frames the wife's actions as harmful and unjustified, thereby shifting attention from the original issue to the consequences of her behaviour. The suggestion to report to the police introduces an alternative form of authority, which the speaker presents as more legitimate than public accusation. This strategy reflects an attempt to reclaim control over the narrative and to reassert dominance within the interaction.

Excerpt 9: The husband stated, "I gave 200,000 to her mother instead of 120,000... I realised I was supposed to pay 120,000... I also told her not to go home to her parents after the discharge but she refused because I believe that a woman stays at her husband's house to take care of her newborn baby... when she took the twins there I did not ask of her."

This excerpt demonstrates the use of economic and cultural arguments to assert authority. The detailed reference to financial contribution serves to establish credibility and

responsibility, while the emphasis on overpayment suggests generosity. The statement regarding the wife's movement reflects a belief in traditional norms, where a woman is expected to remain in her husband's home. The refusal to accept this expectation is presented as disobedience, which justifies the speaker's withdrawal. The language reflects a combination of economic control and cultural ideology, where financial provision and adherence to social norms are used as measures of authority. The interaction illustrates how power is negotiated through reference to both material and cultural resources.

Across the analysed excerpts, the findings demonstrate that spousal conflicts are shaped by strategic language use that reflects broader socio-cultural values. Speakers employed linguistic resources to construct identities, assign blame, and negotiate authority within the relationship. The courtroom setting amplified these strategies, as participants sought to persuade both the judge and the audience. The analysis shows that language in spousal conflict serves not only to express disagreement but also to enact and contest power, making it a significant site for understanding the relationship between discourse, culture, and social structure.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of episodes 206 and 175 of *The Justice Court* demonstrates that language functions as a central tool for asserting, negotiating, and contesting power in spousal conflicts. Both husbands and wives strategically deployed lexical choices, repetition, reported speech, and rhetorical questioning to construct authority or resist domination. For instance, husbands frequently employed evaluative labels such as "hot tempered" or "lazy," as well as possessive pronouns like "my daughter" and "my consent," to reinforce control over both their partners and familial decisions. These strategies reflect culturally embedded expectations of male authority and responsibility within Nigerian marital contexts. Conversely, wives countered these assertions by emphasising agency through repetition of action verbs, quantified contributions, and identity construction. Statements such as "I carry over 80% of everything in the house" repositioned the wife as economically indispensable and morally responsible, challenging traditional gender hierarchies. The findings suggest that linguistic strategies are not merely expressive but functionally instrumental, allowing spouses to negotiate status, legitimacy, and moral credibility within conflicts.

The data further reveal that conflict narratives are mediated by socio-cultural norms, including expectations of fidelity, domestic responsibility, and parental authority. Reported speech and modality emerged as particularly effective tools for manipulating perception and establishing relational power. Husbands' threats regarding children or marital fidelity illustrate attempts to exert coercive influence, while wives' use of rhetorical questioning and strategic disclosure highlights resistance and reframing of authority. Economic contributions and references to traditional norms, such as where a wife should reside post-childbirth, further shaped the negotiation of power, combining material and cultural leverage. These findings indicate that marital discourse operates as a site where individual interests intersect with broader ideological frameworks, producing tension and contestation. The courtroom setting intensified these strategies, as spouses performed not only for each other but also for public and institutional audiences, amplifying the stakes of discourse. Overall, the study confirms that spousal conflict is both a personal and social process, with language serving as a medium through which power, identity, and social expectation are enacted and contested.

Conclusion

The study concludes that language functions as a central instrument through which power, authority, and resistance are enacted in spousal conflicts. Analysis of the selected episodes of *The Justice Court* revealed that both husbands and wives strategically employed lexical choices, pronouns, repetition, reported speech, modality, and rhetorical questioning to assert dominance, negotiate control, or challenge their partner's claims. Patterns emerged indicating that husbands often relied on cultural and moral authority, economic contributions, and control over children to legitimise their position, while wives utilised identity construction, emphasis on household contributions, and narrative reframing to resist subordination. These findings demonstrate that marital discourse extends beyond personal disagreement, reflecting broader socio-cultural norms and expectations concerning gender roles, authority, and relational responsibilities within Nigerian society. The study highlights the significance of examining language in conflict not only to understand interpersonal dynamics but also to reveal how social ideologies and cultural values are reproduced and contested in everyday interactions. The insights gained have potential applications for counselling, conflict resolution, and media analysis, providing a framework for interpreting how discourse shapes, maintains, and challenges power in intimate relationships, and offering a foundation for further research on marital communication and socio-cultural negotiation in mediated and real-life settings.

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Eco-Marxist Study of Beautiful Nubia's *Jangbalajugbu and Lekeleke*

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Abstract

This study offers an eco-Marxist analysis of two songs, “Jangbalajugbu” and “Lekeleke,” by the Nigerian musical artist Beautiful Nubia. It argues that the artist’s work represents a significant stylistic and thematic departure from mainstream trends within the Nigerian and African music industries. Framed by the theoretical insights of Raymond Williams and John Bellamy Foster, this qualitative research employs lyrical, textual, and critical discourse analysis to investigate the selected songs. While previous scholarship has engaged with Beautiful Nubia’s music and lyrical poetry, this paper addresses a critical gap by examining its explicit engagement with Eco-Marxist critiques. The primary significance of this work lies in its demonstration of how popular music can function as a discursive tool to critique environmental degradation stemming from capitalist exploitation. The analysis finds that Beautiful Nubia’s music transcends mere entertainment, embedding substantive socio-political and ecological content. Consequently, the study concludes that his songs serve as valuable resources for ethical reflection, pedagogical engagement, and civic consciousness in Nigeria. It recommends increased scholarly attention to Beautiful Nubia’s oeuvre as a vital corpus for understanding art’s role in addressing pressing societal and environmental issues.

Keywords: Eco-Marxism, Ecocriticism, Marxism, Music, Beautiful Nubia

Introduction

The salient issue of environmental despoliation has been an issue of serious concern in Nigeria, and by extension, Africa. Since the art and literature of a region cannot be separated from the predicaments of the region, the issue of environmental crisis has been well represented in Nigerian and African Literatures, arts, and music, especially in the literature and art of the Niger Delta people of Nigeria. The likes of Tanure Ojaide, Helon Habila, Ebinyo Ogbowei, and most recently, Tares Oburumu, have all written about the predicaments of the Niger Delta, where the flora and fauna have been endangered because of oil exploration and environmental degradation activities of multinational companies fully supported by the Nigerian government. As a form of cultural response to issues of socio-environmental degradation, musicians like Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Angelique Kidjo, Bob Marley, Mos Def, Sting, Keb’ Mo’, and Michael Jackson, to mention but a few, have used music as a tool for environmental music activism.

Segun Akinlolu, who is widely known by his performing name- Beautiful Nubia, is a veterinary doctor, folk singer, songwriter, poet and novelist. He has over seventeen albums to

his name and these albums are subjects of scholarly research among the academics. He was greatly influenced by his grandmother, from whom he became rooted in the African indigenous oral tradition like music, folklore and oral poetry. After releasing two albums earlier, he had his breakthrough album titled *Jangbalajugbu* in 2002. Beautiful Nubia is also a prolific creative writer. He has written four collections of poetry, three recorded poetry album, a novel titled “Citadel Blues”, an autobiography and a book of songs (lyrics). Beautiful Nubia as a social reformist has written songs and poetry that are dedicated to addressing the issues of class struggle between the upper class and the lower class. In addressing the class struggle between the rich and the poor masses, he has used the flora and the fauna as allegorical characters to explore the relationship that exists between man and his physical environment, and to protest against how the capitalists have endangered nature and how the activities of the higher class (the bourgeoisie) have negatively affected the earth and by extension, man, who inhabits the earth. Without any iota of doubt, whatever affects the earth, will definitely affect the man who lives on the earth. Two songs, “Jangbalajugbu” and “Lekeleke”, are purposively selected from two different albums of the artiste for the study.

Many scholarly research works have been done on the songs of Beautiful Nubia. For instance, Tunji Ajayi (2021) examines the songs of Beautiful Nubia as works that trigger a move towards a revival of cultural values. Also, Solanke (2002) examines Beautiful Nubia’s songs as traditional musings against modern nonsense. Adegoju (2014) also examines the artist’s music as polemics on child rights and the leadership challenges in Nigeria. Omogbolahan Abiola (2017) also examines the songs of Beautiful Nubia as Nigerian Marxist songs. In like manner, Fadero (2023) examines how Beautiful Nubia employs the African Indigenous oral tradition as a tool to project and express effectively his Marxist ideological stance in his music and poetry. It is however, the focus of this study to partake in filling an observed gap on the critical eco-marxist concerns of the songs of Beautiful Nubia. The research is particularly significant because, it contributes to scholarly discourse on Eco-Marxist theory and African Eco-Musicology.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to critically examine the issues of Eco-Marxist concerns as espoused in two selected songs of Beautiful Nubia. Specific objectives are: to

1. examine the works of Beautiful Nubia as a deviation from the status quo in the Nigerian music and entertainment industry;
2. evaluate the Eco-marxist contents of two songs of Beautiful; and
3. examine how Beautiful Nubia presents man’s inhumanity to man through the destruction of the environment (the flora and fauna) by the capitalists and bourgeoisies.

Literature Review

Ajayi (2021) opines that Beautiful Nubia's lyrics are "powerful, socially conscious protest lyrics, which can change the most impenitent heart for positive reactions. It can also provide needed succour for famished souls whose hopes are sinking into the nadir on daily basis especially in Africa. He is the philosopher who provides timely blandishments for the self-opinionated and impenitent African leaders' benefits. Like a troubadour, the artiste and avid writer who has traversed the Nigerian entertainment scene with untainted glamour and undiminished honour, is in the vanguard of revamping and reviving our lost cultural values and age-long traditions". Ajayi's assertion reveals the importance of Beautiful Nubia's music to the Nigerian and by extension, the African society. For Adegoju (2014), Beautiful Nubia is an artist who cuts the figure of an agent of social change, who, through his music, raises the national consciousness on inherent socio-political problems in the Nigerian society. Collectively, these studies establish that Beautiful Nubia's art goes beyond art-for-art-sake rather; it is a socio-politically conscious art. Falodun (2019) observes that Beautiful Nubia has consistently made music that addresses societal issues. "Monkey Wear Shoe" from *Sun No Dey Sleep* (2011), his eighth album, is a satirical piece on gluttonous and corrupt political leaders. In the same album, "Someone Like Biko" declaims iconic names like Shaka the Zulu, Kwame Nkrumah, Steve Biko. Beautiful Nubia hopes that this generation will raise more people like them. Beautiful Nubia's music is an historical, philosophical, political, pedagogical, and social conscious music. It is a music that uplifts the poor masses (the proletariats) and confronts the exploitative political leaders (the bourgeoisies). Fadero (2023) observes that Beautiful Nubia's works are works that address issues of global concerns like war, bad governance, racism, oppression of women, child soldiering, and oppression of the poor amongst others. All the previously cited studies are scholarship on social critique within Beautiful Nubia's oeuvre. Salaudeen-Adegoke (2016) asserts that Beautiful Nubia draws the strength of his music from the Yoruba copious corpus of folktales, folksongs and proverbs. This musical evangelist presents the wisdom, the impeccable understanding, and the wonderment of Yoruba culture to the world, preserving the rich legacy of the Yoruba inheritance. Oje and Adejube (2017) opine that Beautiful Nubia's music is noted for a strong usage of native wisdom with Yoruba traditional songs that are transferred orally from one generation to the other. In alignment with Salaudeen-Adegoke and Oje and Adejube's submissions, Beautiful Nubia's songs are rooted within the indigenous Yoruba culture and tradition; this explains its consistent engagement with the flora and fauna because the African indigenous tradition always revolves around both animal and plant characters. Fadero (2023) asserts that Beautiful Nubia has a strong passion for words. He delights in using words in a simple but powerful manner to convey his message to his audience. This is evident in his songs too. Arguably, he is the most word-conscious African modern-day musician. He believes in the power and the potency of words to effect change in the society. Fadero also

observes that like a traditional town crier who uses a metal gong, a horn, a drum or a song, Beautiful Nubia incorporates all these African traditional oral elements into his works to produce traditionally rich and semantically sound works. Salaudeen-Adegoke, Oje and Adejube, and Fadero.s works are scholarship on how Beautiful Nubia's works focus on cultural revival.

The Eco-Marxist theory is important because it is a critical instrument to be freely applied to literary works. Moreso, the theory has become a dominant sign of our time and has moved from its traditional engagement with literary texts to address a wider range of ecological and socio-political concerns worldwide. Primarily, Eco-Marxism is an offshoot of Ecocriticism which is a literary theory that examines the relationship between literature and the environment. Defining Ecocriticism, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (1996) assert that it is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Buell (2005) defines Ecocriticism as the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyse the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation. In alignment with Glotfelty, Fromm, and Buell, the theory examines the relationship between. Ecocriticism has other branches like Eco-Marxism, and Ecofeminism, which attempts to examine the subjugation of women to the dominance of the earth. Eco-Marxism can otherwise be known as Ecological Marxism.

Tracing the history of Eco-Marxism, one cannot ignore names like Raymond Williams (1973), James O' Connor (1988), and John Bellamy Foster who developed the concept of metabolic rift. Another worthy mention is Murray Bookchin whose work focused more on social ecology and eco-anarchism. The Eco-Marxist literary theory has other subdivisions like metabolic rift, capitalism's second contradiction, cultural ecological criticism, Eco-socialism, and capitalism criticism. Commenting on the global impact of capitalism, Matthias Lievens (2008) observes that the clear link between the development of capitalism and ecological catastrophe does not mean that there were no environmental crises in precapitalist societies. However, these usually remained limited to the local area (e.g. the depletion of the soil, the burning of forests). With the arrival of the global systemic logic of capitalism, however, the environmental crisis has likewise become global. Explaining what metabolic rift means, Lievens asserts that its importance is real, since it demonstrates that the environmental crisis is not a crisis of nature, but of society, and more specifically of the relationship that society has had with its natural conditions for the last two hundred years or more. Therefore, in Lievens' view, metabolic rift occurs as a result of societal mishandling of nature. Establishing a striking relationship between Marxism and Ecocriticism, Lievens notes that the social and ecological questions are fundamentally linked: the historical process that brings about the modern rift between rich and poor is also the process that created the rift between man and nature. In alignment with Lievens' stance, the rift that occurs between the rich and the poor also occur between man and nature, and they are children of the same

mother. Examining the ecological crises that are caused by the destruction of the ecosystem by the capitalists, Amal (2020) opines that one of the negative aspects of modern technology is the fact that we live in an age of environmental crises, resulting from man's eco-unfriendly practices that damage the livelihood on our planet. Grave ecological disasters such as shortage of drinking water or food supply, climate change, deforestation, depletion of natural resources, the extinction of some birds or animal species, global warming phenomenon, loss of biodiversity, contamination...etc. have become a major threat to man's life and well-being on earth. To further buttress Amal's submission, man has been using modern technology against nature and consequently, against his own existence.

William Rueckert (1978) opines that Ecocriticism applies the ecological principles to the study of literature. Buell (1995) affirms that Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist's praxis. Emphasizing another branch of Ecocriticism called Eco-theatre, Amal (2020) notes that Eco-theatre refers to the intersection of ecology and performance. It aims at drawing the public's attention to the issues related to the environmental preoccupations as well as suggesting ways of conciliation between the human and the physical world. Amal also defines Eco-Marxism as a political belief system that combines the Marxist belief of anti-capitalism with ecology and pro-environment policies. Therefore, Eco-Marxism is but a branch within the big tree of Ecocriticism that combats capitalist ideologies with socio-environmental policies. In like manner, David Pepper (1993) defines Eco-Marxism as a sociopolitical ideology that fuses the Marxist critique of capitalism with ecological issues and pro-environmental movements. Establishing the inseparable relationship that exists between man and nature, Marx (1975) asserts that man lives from nature, that is, nature is his body, and he must maintain a continuing dialogue with it if he is not to die. To say that man's physical and mental life is linked to nature simply means that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature. In alignment with Marx's submission, man is a part of nature while nature is a part of man; therefore, one becomes dead and almost irrelevant and useless without the other. Ecological Marxist, John Bellamy Foster, used Marx's four concepts in his Eco-Marxist writing. These four concepts are social metabolism (interrelationship between man and nature, but which have been abused by capitalists), metabolic rift (the destruction of the ecosystem as a result of the activities of the selfish capitalists), commodity economy (the commodification of labourers who are used and dehumanized by greedy capitalists), and the concept of second nature (an attempt to create another nature through artificial means). Patterson (2010) opines that the environment cannot sustain capitalism and capitalism certainly cannot sustain the environment. Noting the destructive impact of capitalists on nature, Foster (2000) asserts that the greater capitalism's expansion, the more intense its ecological demands, and the greater the level of ecological destruction it imposes. This shows the devastating effects that the activities of greedy capitalists have on nature and man. John Bellamy Foster caused an ecological turn when he rejected the idea that Karl Marx was against ecology and productivity. He brought different

concepts like the “metabolic rift, the critique of Capitalists’ production, and a call for ecological revolution”. Williams Raymond brought the concept of cultural materialism by bringing nature into cultural studies; he also started long revolution which Foster later developed into ecological revolution. Raymond and Foster’s concepts are tools for my analysis because they capture key factors in Eco-Marxist studies like the rift caused as a result of man’s unconscious destruction of his physical environment, the danger of excessive capitalists’ production and the urgent call for long/ecological revolution against industrial revolution. The first part of this review focuses on scholarship on social critique and cultural revival based on Beautiful Nubia’s oeuvre, while the second part focuses on the review of theoretical concepts like Ecocriticism, Eco-Marxism, and Marxism. Collectively, these studies establish the need to fill the observed gap in the Eco-marxist evaluation of Beautiful Nubia’s works.

Methodology

The paper adopts an interpretative and qualitative method of data analysis. The primary data analysed are two selected songs of Beautiful Nubia namely; “Jangbalajugbu” and “Lekeleke”, to see how the poet-musician portrays the idea of the oppression of the poor and the destruction of nature by the activities of greedy capitalists. The secondary data are obtained from books, essays, articles, literary journals, and websites.

Socio-environmental Marxism in Beautiful Nubia’s “Jangbalajugbu”

“Jangbalajugbu” (2002) is both Beautiful Nubia’s breakthrough album and a song within the album that carries the same title. The Yoruba lyrics of Beautiful Nubia songs were translated into English by the artiste himself. The song has received numerous scholarly attentions; it has been analysed as a tool for social advocacy, protest song, as a song that uses African Indigenous oral tradition to project Marxist ideology, as an archetype of musical structure, to mention but a few; however, scholarly attention has not been given to the issues of Eco-Marxist concerns in the song. This section aims to unearth the salient issues of Eco-Marxism in the song. In “Jangbalajubu”, the opening stanza of the lyrics goes thus:

Who made the earth shed tears of sorrow
who makes the children cry so much
who’s going to bring back the smiles on their faces

who’s going to make us laugh?

From the above extract, Beautiful Nubia poses many rhetorical questions to awaken the consciousness of the people to the suffering of the poor masses through the activities of the capitalist elites who are oppressing them. These greedy capitalists, who can do anything in the process of production to make profit, are the ones “making the earth shed tears of sorrow,

they are the ones making the children cry so much, they are the ones who have taken the smiles on the faces of the people”. In other words, they are the ones oppressing and dehumanizing the low class people. It is important to note that in the last line of the lyrics, the singer raises another vital rhetorical question to call the attention of his audience to the need for someone who will put an end to the suffering of the ordinary people, but it seems that like the rhetorical question that it is, there is no answer to that question. This is because as long as people are allowed to privately own a business organization, they will continue to destroy the physical environment to their own profit, but to the disadvantage of the common man, and the destruction of the ecosystem. One is made to see the Eco-Marxist orientation of this song right from the opening line of the lyrics. In the opening line of the lyrics, the troubadour raises a question that is of great Eco-Marxist concern, he asks: who made the earth shed tears of sorrow? It is important to note that the singer personified the earth making it into a character that is capable of shedding tears. This shows that the singer has made the earth a character that has been so endangered, raped, and destroyed that it has begun to shed tears because of the mayhem unleashed on it through the activities of greedy and nonchalant capitalists. This personification of the mother earth as a character shedding tears shows Foster’s metabolic rift which emphasizes the destruction of the ecosystem as a result of man’s unfriendly relationship with nature. The proceeding lines of the lyrics give explanation to who the songwriter considers as the earth: the children, everyone who has lost the smiles that used to be worn on their faces, and the people who have lost the ability to laugh because of the selfish and wicked activities of the capitalists and bourgeoisies. This perfectly aligns with Karl Marx’s submission that man is a vital part of the earth and whatever endangers the earth inadvertently endangers man. The poor masses are the ones left to suffer whatever havoc that is wrecked on the physical environment through the capitalists’ exploitative activities on the earth. The next line of the lyrics goes thus:

| | |
|---|---|
| E ba ngbon’do yi gbe | Come let’s empty this pond |
| Jangbala jugbu Jugbu Jugbu jangbala | |
| Ojo to ro lana yen, gbogbo ile lomi ro si | Yesterday’s rain flooded the house |
| Gbogbo aso lo tutu | All our clothes are wet |
| Baale ile ti sun lo fonfon o | the head of the house was in deep slumber |
| Gbogbo omode lomi ti ko lo o | the flood carried away all the children |

Taking from the Yoruba Indigenous oral folk songs, Beautiful Nubia has through this song passed across a strong message by creating an imagery of a house flooded with water and thereby depicting the condition of the poor masses and their children, who are directly affected by such evil occurrence like a flood, which is caused mostly by the destruction of the physical environment by the exploitative and profit-driven capitalists. The flood here represents the consequences or the results of the activities of the greedy capitalists in the society. They destroy both the land and labourers (the low class people working for them) that they are expected to protect. This aligns perfectly with Foster’s concept of commodity

economy and the exploitative use of labourers. No wonder, the singer says “gbogbo aso lo tutu/ all our clothes are wet”, which means that all the people are affected because whatever affects the earth automatically affects the man that inhabits it. Another striking aspect of the lyrics is the line that says “baale ile ti sun lo fonfon o/ gbogbo omode lomi ti ko lo o/ the head of the house was in deep slumber/ the flood carried away all the children”. Here, the head of the house signifies the few capitalists and their greedy political counterparts (who, more often than not, are owners of private organisations themselves, and sometimes, shareholders in a private organization), who are expected to protect the earth and the people but instead of doing this, they have all neglected their responsibilities to the earth and by extension, to the people who inhabit it. The result of their action is glaring; the helpless children are the victims of their activities of the environmental degradation caused by the carelessness of greedy capitalists, as they are carried away by the flood. These helpless children are the children of the poor/ ordinary people. When the singer says “ojo to ro lana yen, gbogbo ile lomi ro si/ yesterday’s rain flooded the house”, it emphasizes that flood does not just happen, more often than not, man’s activities always contribute to it. Some capitalists in the construction companies will order their labourers to pack sands to the detriment of land topography of the area, and whenever it rains, this will lead to great flood. When the songwriter says “gbogbo omode lomi ti kolo/ the flood carried away all the children”, it shows that it is the children of the common man that will mostly suffer from the destruction of the physical environment, hence the earth (our earth) must be protected from the greedy capitalists by all means. The call “eba ngbon do yi gbe/ come let’s empty this pond” establishes the artiste’s belief that a society owned organization and means of production is the solution to the environmental hazards and ecological problems caused by the activities of greedy capitalists.

Ecological Marxism and Lamentations in Beautiful Nubia’s “Lekeleke”

“Lekeleke” is a song within Beautiful’s Nubia 2015 Album titled “Soundbender”. It is a song that explores the issues of Eco-Marxist concerns, as it addresses socio-environmental degradation through the activities of self-centred capitalists. It is important to note that the Yoruba version of these lyrics was translated into English Language by Beautiful Nubia himself. The opening lyrics of the song go thus:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Lekeleke nfò l’ókè, ẹyẹ funfun ni | Lekeleke, white bird flying high |
| Lékeléke nfò l’ókè, ẹyẹ funfun ni | |
| Aṣọ àlà ni mo wò elépo yà fún mi | I’m in my pure white garment, steer clear of me |
| palm- oil bearer | |
| Lékeléke nbò l’ónà ẹyẹ funfun ni. | Here comes Lekeleke, a white bird. |
| Fò, máa fò, máa fò, ẹyẹ ọlólá | Fly, fly high, you affluent bird |
| | |
| Bò, máa bò, máa bò, ẹyẹ oníre | Fly, fly high, you affluent bird |

From the opening stanza of the lyrics, it is obvious that the song explores both issues of Eco-critical and Marxist concerns. Fadero (2023) has rightly noted that Beautiful Nubia always uses the African indigenous oral tradition to project his Marxist ideology, but the lyrics above focus on both a celebration of the beauty of the flora, and a social comment on critical issues affecting the low class people of the society. “Lekeleke” could be translated into English as Cattle Egret (that is, a type of Heron, often seen following Cattle in the fields); however, it has both physical and spiritual significances in the Yoruba culture. It signifies purity, beauty, tranquility, good fortune, bearer of good news, and it also has a nexus with “Obatala”, the Yoruba deity of purity. Lekeleke as used in the opening stanza of this song could be seen from two different perspectives: first and foremost, it is a celebration of the beauty of the flora (with “Lekeleke” being one); secondly, “Lekeleke” is also allegorical in this lyrics as it could represent Beautiful Nubia himself as an agent of truth and change in the society. Beyond the celebration of the beauty of nature, which the Cattle Egret is an integral part of, Lekeleke is also an allegorical character in the song and it represents the voice of truth championed by the songwriter himself. When the singer says “aso ala ni mo wo elepo ya fun mi/I’m in my pure white garment, steer clear of me palm-oil bearer”, the phrase Palm-oil bearer signifies anything that can ruin or destroy the purity of the Cattle Egret or the purity of nature, and it also signifies anything can contaminate the allegorical “Lekeleke” as the bearer/ messenger of truth. The proceeding lines of the lyrics go thus:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| È má fi’yà j’opó, àt’omọ òkú ọrun | Be good to the widows and the orphans |
| Ó ní ẹ f’èsò s’ayé, ẹ má tẹ tálákà mọ’lẹ mọ o | Stop trampling on the poor |
| Ó nbọ l’ónà, ẹyẹ ọba ni... | Here he comes, the king’s bird, don’t |
| upset | him |

In the lyrical excerpt above, the Marxist ideology of the songwriter is solidified. The songwriter says “o nbo lona, eye oba ni/ here he comes, the king’s bird, don’t upset him”, describing “Lekeleke” as the king’s bird. The king’s bird here means the messenger of the king or one who bears the king’s messages. Here, “Lekeleke” is used allegorically to depict a bearer of truth who is confronting the societal ills like bad treatment of widows and orphans, and trampling on the poor by the rich to mention but a few. The lyrics proceed thus:

| | |
|--|---|
| Àwọn àgbàgbà ilú, wọn wá kó’ra wọn jọ | All the adults arise with matchetes and |
| axes | |
| Wọn fẹ l’éyẹ l’óko | To rid their town of this pest |
| Wọn k’ádà-á jáde, wọn káàké-é jáde, wọn ngé gi oko | They cut down the trees, one after the |
| | other |
| Ó di kà, ó di kò-ó | |

In the above lyrical excerpt, the singer points the attention of the listener to the activities of the adults/elders of the land, who in an attempt to suppress the truth, end up destruction the flora and the fauna- the ecosystem. The pest to be gotten rid of is “Lekeleke” the bird of truth, which is both a symbol of the fauna part of the ecosystem, and also a symbol of the voice of truth lamenting and crying for social change. Again, it is important to note that the “adults” here symbolizes the greedy capitalists who do not care about what happens to the ecosystem, so far it does not affect their economic gain. These adults/elders are the ones mobilizing the youth and children sadly to destroy the ecosystem. Bellamy Foster’s concept of metabolic rift is evident in the lyrical excerpt above, in that the activities of nonchalant adults/elders lead to ecological degradation, which is evident in the cutting down of trees and the desperate attempt to get rid of the bird. The proceeding lines go thus:

| | |
|--|---|
| L’àpẹ́ l’ájìnà, wọ́n gé gbogbo igi tán, ó wá ku’gi kan l’óko | Now they’ve felled every tree except the mighty iroko |
| Igi irókò, igi tí gbogbo ayé nfẹ́, èyí tí gbogbo ayé nbọ́ | The one tree beloved and revered by all |
| Ó di kà, ó di kò-ó, kò mà ku ‘gi kan l’óko o! now, | But even that soon goes down, there is no tree left in the forest! |

The above lyrical excerpt further establishes the metabolic rift that happens to the flora and the fauna as a result of the activities of the greedy capitalists/bourgeoisies. The closing stanza ends in a sober and elegiac manner; the songwriter says “Kò wá pẹ́ l’ẹyẹ̀ fò lọ o - pagidari igi dá, pagidari igi dá, ẹyẹ̀ fò lọ o/and then the bird flies off far away, Now, there is no tree left in the forest, leaving the townsfolk to bemoan their waywardness, loss and ruin”, and this signifies the result of social metabolism (that is, man’s unfriendly and abusive interrelationship with nature) and the complete destruction of the ecosystem (the flora and the fauna) to be specific; there is massive deforestation without any plan to plant these trees back by the capitalists in the wood-making industry, and some species of bird have either gone into extinction by being consistently killed as games or being chased far away from where men dwell. The truth, however, is that any act of destruction meted on nature naturally affects man who is also a vital part of nature; no wonder, the singer sang the closing stanza with an unusual elegiac cadence, and also portrays the townsfolk as people who have suffered the real loss and ruin, because they will be the one to suffer the consequences of ecological degradation/ruin. The townsfolk signifies both the capitalists and the low class onlookers, since they are both of nature, they will both suffer the consequences of destruction to the flora and fauna (the ecosystem).

Findings

The findings of the paper include the following:

1. African music goes beyond “art for art’s sake”, rather they are leadership training, ethical, and pedagogical materials for Africa and global scholarship.
2. The solution to the problems of social metabolism and metabolic rift lies in a deliberate advocacy for ecological revolution.
3. The solution to the ecological damage perpetuated by the capitalists is a collective responsibility of the society.
4. Commodity economy as proposed by Bellamy Foster, which is the abusive-cum-exploitative use of labourers, is the hallmark of capitalism.

Conclusion

The paper has closed a critical gap in the scholarly studies of Beautiful Nubia’s works, having carefully studied two selected songs of the artiste from the purview of Eco-Marxist study. It is established that concepts like social metabolism, metabolic rift, and commodity economy are factors that continue to contribute to environmental degradation, and that the solution to the problems of the capitalists’ destruction of the physical environment lies in the hands of a means of production jointly owned by the society. Beautiful Nubia’s works are philosophical and have global issues confronting humanity as its thrusts. It is therefore recommended that more critical attentions should be given to Beautiful Nubia’s works, and further studies could be done on the artiste’s use of allegorical and fable characters in his works.

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English Grammar Competence for Monotechnic Students: Parental Responsibility as an Indispensable Instrument

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Abstract

This study examines the role of parental responsibility in developing English grammar competence among monotechnic students in Nigeria. Drawing from sociocultural theory and empirical evidence, this research explores how parental factors including education level, income, occupation, and home environment significantly influence students' academic achievement in English grammar. The study reveals that parental involvement serves as an indispensable instrument in fostering grammatical competence, particularly within the unique educational context of Nigerian monotechnic institutions. The study concludes with recommendations for policy makers, educational institutions, and parents to strengthen the home-school partnership in grammar education. This study adopts a qualitative, descriptive research design grounded in a systematic review of peer-reviewed literature. A structured search was conducted across Google Scholar, ERIC, and ResearchGate, covering publications from 2019 to 2025 and focusing on parental involvement, English grammar competence, and academic achievement in Nigeria and comparable multilingual educational settings. Purposive sampling guided the selection of 47 relevant studies. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring conceptual relationships across the reviewed literature. Institutional examination records from Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-Ora (General Studies, English Grammar, 2022-2024) provided empirical performance data. Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, supplemented by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, served as the analytical lens through which parental influence on grammar development was interpreted. Going by the findings of this study, it is observed that the competence and academic achievement of the students in English Grammar is best enhanced when parents live up to their responsibilities.

Keywords: English grammar, monotechnic education, parental responsibility, academic achievement, sociocultural theory

Introduction

Educational institutions throughout Nigeria, including monotechnics, polytechnics, and universities, depend fundamentally upon their students' academic achievements to demonstrate their impact and effectiveness in national development (Al Bataineh et al., 2019). The success of these institutions, particularly in English grammar competence, reflects not merely individual student capability but the broader socio-economic progress of the nation. In developing countries such as Nigeria, academic achievement assumes particular significance,

often measured through students' performance in English grammar as a cornerstone of language proficiency (Syakur et al., 2020).

The Nigerian educational system mandates English as a core subject, recognizing its critical role as the primary language of instruction, communication, and information access across all educational levels. However, a concerning disconnect emerges between policy mandates and actual student engagement with English grammar learning (Neumann et al., 2019). This disconnection becomes particularly problematic within monotechnic institutions, where students from diverse linguistic backgrounds must master English grammar as a prerequisite for their National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) qualifications.

Recent examination data from monotechnic institutions in Southwest Nigeria reveals a troubling decline in English grammar performance, with achievement rates falling between 5-14% from 2020 to 2022 (Results and Academic Planning, 2022). This decline necessitates urgent investigation into the multifaceted factors influencing grammar competence, with particular attention to the role of parental responsibility as a potentially transformative element.

The significance of parental involvement in educational outcomes has been extensively documented globally, yet its specific application to English grammar competence within Nigerian monotechnic contexts remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining how parental responsibility functions as an indispensable instrument for developing grammar competence amongst monotechnic students.

The impetus for this investigation arises from a convergence of institutional evidence and broader sociolinguistic realities in Nigeria. The Nigerian monotechnic system, operating under the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), serves a student population that is often first-generation tertiary learners from economically diverse households. For these students, English grammar competence is not merely an academic requirement but a critical gateway to professional certification, workplace integration, and upward social mobility. Despite the centrality of English grammar in the National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) curricula, institutional records reveal a sustained decline in pass rates, underscoring a systemic challenge that extends beyond the classroom. Recent scholarship across Sub-Saharan Africa increasingly identifies the home environment as a primary but under-leveraged determinant of academic language outcomes (Adeyeye, 2023; Anierobi et al., 2024). In the Nigerian multilingual context, where students navigate between indigenous languages and English as the medium of instruction, parental engagement assumes heightened significance. Yet the specific interplay between parental responsibility and English grammar competence within monotechnic institutions remains conspicuously absent from the scholarly literature, constituting the knowledge gap this study systematically addresses.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to investigate parental responsibility as an indispensable instrument for students' 'academic success in English Grammar among the monotechnic students. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the level of competence in English Grammar among students in monotechnics;

2. examine the status of parental responsibility towards English Grammar competence among the students in monotechnic;
3. investigate the status of home environment factor on students' academic success in achieving English Grammar competence; and
4. examine the status of grammar development factor for English Grammar competence among students' in monotechnics.

Literature Review

English Grammar Competence in Monotechnic Education

English grammar competence encompasses the systematic understanding and application of linguistic structures, rules, and conventions that enable effective communication in both spoken and written forms (Boudadi & Gutiérrez-Colón, 2020). Within the monotechnic educational context, grammar competence extends beyond mere rule memorization to include practical application in technical communication, professional documentation, and academic discourse.

The monotechnic educational framework in Nigeria, established under the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), emphasises English as a general studies requirement across all technical disciplines. This positioning recognizes grammar competence as foundational to professional success, yet simultaneously presents unique challenges given the technical orientation of monotechnic programmes (Yassin et al., 2020).

Contemporary research indicates that grammar competence significantly correlates with overall academic performance, professional readiness, and social mobility (Anthonia, 2020). For monotechnic students, who often enter the workforce immediately upon graduation, grammar competence becomes particularly crucial for effective workplace communication and career advancement.

Parental Responsibility in Educational Context

Parental responsibility includes the multifaceted obligations, actions, and influences that parents exercise to support their children's educational development (Jacob, 2022). This responsibility extends beyond basic provision to include academic support, environmental creation, expectation setting, and active engagement in learning processes.

Within the context of grammar education, parental responsibility manifests through several key dimensions: linguistic environment creation, educational resource provision, academic expectation establishment, and direct learning support (Okedigba et al., 2023). Research consistently demonstrates that parental involvement significantly correlates with improved academic outcomes across various educational levels and contexts.

The Nigerian educational context presents unique considerations for parental responsibility, given the multilingual environment and varying socioeconomic conditions. Parents must navigate between supporting indigenous language development whilst simultaneously fostering English proficiency, creating particular challenges for grammar competence development (Fehintola, 2022).

Methodology

This study used Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igboora as its study area. The institution is located in Ibarapa Area of Oyo State in Nigeria with six faculties with over three thousand students spread across twenty programmes in agriculture, technology and management education. Findings were majorly carried out through questionnaire administration design to gather relevant information about the influence of parental responsibility on students' performance and competence in English Grammar among monotechnic students. The major reason for selecting this location for the research is linked to the opportunity given to the respondents which favor the distribution of questionnaires among students. 312 students were randomly selected from 2021/22, 298 from 2022/23 academic session and 276 students in 2023/24 from all students that registered for the Use of English Course as a compulsory course for all students which is domiciled in the department of General Studies.

The population comprises students of the Oyo State College of Agricultural Technology Igboora Nigeria. The source of data used for the study is primary data which involves the use of a well-designed structured questionnaire administered to the respondents

Theoretical Framework

Sociocultural Theory

This study anchors its theoretical foundation in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasises the fundamental role of social interactions, cultural practices, and historical context in shaping cognitive development and learning processes. The theory's core principles provide essential insights into how parental responsibility influences grammar competence development.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept proves particularly relevant, describing the gap between students' current grammar competence and their potential development with appropriate support. Parents, as more knowledgeable others, can facilitate learning within this zone through guided practice, scaffolded instruction, and collaborative engagement (Ekundayo et al., 2022).

Social interaction, another key principle, highlights how parent-child linguistic exchanges contribute to grammar development. Through meaningful conversations, corrective feedback, and language modelling, parents provide essential scaffolding for grammar acquisition (Gidado et al., 2023).

Cultural tools, including language itself, serve as mediating instruments in cognitive development. Parents who provide rich linguistic environments, diverse reading materials, and grammar-focused resources effectively expand their children's cultural toolkit for language learning (Khan et al., 2019).

Extending the Sociocultural Framework: While Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory provides the primary theoretical lens for this study, its explanatory power is significantly enriched when combined with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. Bronfenbrenner positions the family as the innermost microsystem the most proximal and influential context

of child development. Applied to grammar competence, this framework explains how parental education, income, and occupation operate through the home environment (microsystem) to shape linguistic exposure and academic expectations, which in turn interact with the school system (mesosystem) to produce observable grammar outcomes. Recent scholarship reinforces the continued relevance of both theories: Lantolf and Poehner (2023) argued that sociocultural principles particularly mediated learning and the ZPD remain the most durable framework for understanding language development in diverse global contexts, including those in the developing world. Wang et al. (2022) demonstrated empirically that Bronfenbrenner's ecological model predicts significant variance in children's English learning outcomes across East Asian and African multilingual settings. The convergence of these two frameworks, therefore, provides this study with a theoretically robust and empirically validated foundation for understanding how parental responsibility functions as the indispensable mediating instrument between home context and grammar competence in Nigerian monotechnic education.

Recent scholarship has extended Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in second language and grammar education. Lantolf and Poehner (2023) confirmed that sociocultural theory's core premises particularly mediation and the ZPD remain the most durable framework for understanding how learners advance from current to potential competence with the support of more knowledgeable others. Applied to the Nigerian context, parents who engage children in language-rich interactions effectively function as the "more knowledgeable other," scaffolding grammar acquisition beyond what learners could achieve independently.

Complementary theoretical justification is drawn from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which positions the family as the innermost and most influential system the microsystem shaping children's development (Wang et al., 2022). Within this framework, parental involvement represents the most proximal ecological influence on grammar competence, operating through direct instruction, emotional support, and the structuring of the home learning environment. The convergence of Vygotskian sociocultural theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model provides a robust, dual-theoretical foundation that both explains how parental responsibility influences grammar development and justifies why this influence must be the primary focus of policy and institutional intervention in Nigerian monotechnic education.

Parental Education and Grammar Competence

Research consistently demonstrates strong correlations between parental education levels and children's academic achievement in language subjects (Akinmoladun, 2020). Parents with higher educational attainment typically provide more sophisticated linguistic input, engage in complex conversations, and maintain literacy-rich home environments that support grammar development.

Idris et al. (2020) found that educated parents more effectively support their children's grammar learning through structured homework assistance, educational resource provision, and academic expectation establishment. These parents demonstrate greater familiarity with grammatical concepts and pedagogical approaches, enabling more effective home-based instruction.

Furthermore, parental education influences the creation of linguistic environments that mirror academic contexts. Educated parents more frequently engage in activities that promote grammatical awareness, including reading together, discussing written texts, and modelling sophisticated language use (Md Yunus et al., 2021).

Recent empirical evidence further substantiates these longstanding findings. Adeyeye (2023) demonstrated in a study of secondary school students in Oyo State that active parental participation was a statistically significant predictor of English language achievement, with engaged households producing learners scoring 18–23% higher than peers from disengaged households. Similarly, Anierobi et al. (2024) established that parental academic resilience and direct material support were the strongest predictors of student engagement in South-Eastern Nigerian schools. Angwaomaodoko (2023) further confirmed, in a Delta State case study, that students from homes with active parental involvement were between 1.5 and 2.3 times more likely to pass English language assessments. Complementing these Nigerian findings, Wilder (2023) conducted a meta-synthesis across 77 studies and concluded that parental involvement consistently explains 10–15% of variance in academic language outcomes across diverse educational systems, a magnitude comparable to the effect of instructional quality itself. These converging lines of evidence, spanning institutional records, national surveys, and international meta-analyses, confirm that parental responsibility is not merely a correlating factor but a determining instrument in grammar competence development.

Parental Income and Educational Resources

Socioeconomic status, reflected through parental income, significantly influences access to educational resources that support grammar development. Higher-income families demonstrate greater capacity to purchase grammar textbooks, educational software, and supplementary learning materials (Rosyada & Sundari, 2021).

Research indicates that financial stability enables parents to provide consistent educational support without the stress associated with economic uncertainty. This stability facilitates regular study schedules, quiet learning environments, and sustained focus on academic goals, all of which contribute to improved grammar competence (Ömer & Akçayoğlu, 2021).

Additionally, higher parental income correlates with access to private tutoring, enrichment programmes, and educational technology that enhance grammar learning opportunities. These resources provide personalized instruction and additional practice that complement classroom learning (Ariastuti & Wahyudin, 2022).

Parental Occupation and Academic Expectations

Professional occupations typically correlate with higher educational expectations and greater emphasis on academic achievement. Parents in professional roles often demonstrate stronger understanding of educational requirements and maintain higher aspirations for their children's academic success (Karabiyik, 2022).

The nature of parental occupations influences the linguistic environment at home. Parents in language-intensive professions model sophisticated communication skills and emphasize the importance of grammatical accuracy in professional contexts (Tus et al., 2020).

Furthermore, parental occupations affect the social capital available to support children's education. Professional networks often provide access to educational resources, mentorship opportunities, and academic guidance that enhance grammar learning outcomes (Glew et al., 2019).

Home Environment and Grammar Competence

The home environment serves as a critical mediating factor between parental characteristics and children's grammar competence. Research demonstrates that literacy-rich environments, characterised by abundant reading materials, regular family discussions, and language-focused activities, significantly enhance grammar development outcomes.

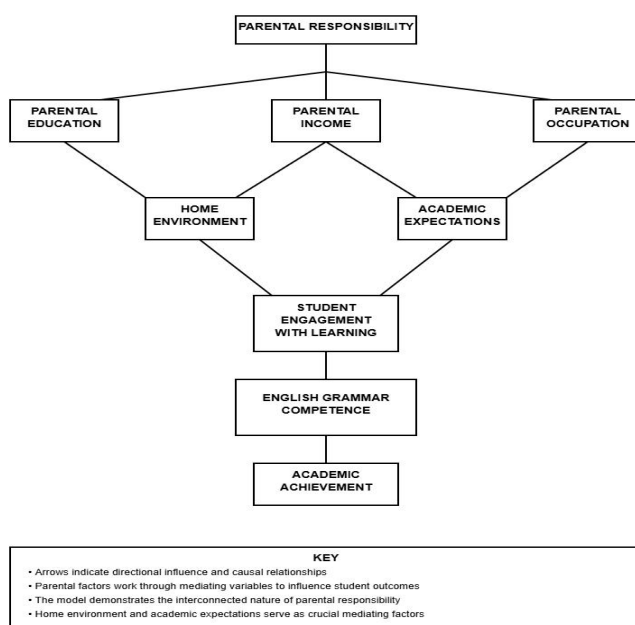
Studies indicate that homes where parents actively engage in reading, writing, and verbal communication provide natural laboratories for grammar learning. Children exposed to diverse linguistic structures through family interactions demonstrate superior grammatical awareness and application skills.

Moreover, the emotional climate of the home influences learning motivation and academic engagement. Supportive, encouraging environments foster positive attitudes towards grammar learning, whilst stressful or chaotic homes may impede academic focus and achievement.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model illustrating the relationship between parental responsibility and English grammar competence demonstrates the multifaceted pathways through which parental factors influence student outcomes.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL: PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENGLISH GRAMMAR COMPETENCE



Source: Author's review of the relationship and between the variables under study in a diagram.

This model demonstrates how parental education, income, and occupation influence the home environment and academic expectations, which subsequently affect student engagement and grammar competence. The model emphasises the interconnected nature of these factors and their cumulative impact on academic outcomes.

Content Analysis

The analysis of existing literature reveals several critical insights regarding the relationship between parental responsibility and English grammar competence in monotechnic students:

Parental Education Impact: Studies consistently demonstrate that higher parental education levels correlate with improved student grammar performance. Educated parents provide more sophisticated linguistic input, engage in complex conversations, and create environments that support academic language development.

Economic Resources and Access: Parental income significantly influences access to educational resources, including grammar textbooks, tutoring services, and educational technology. Financial stability also reduces stress factors that can impede academic focus and achievement.

Professional Modeling: Parents in professional occupations often model sophisticated communication skills and emphasise the importance of grammatical accuracy in career contexts. This modeling provides students with clear connections between grammar competence and professional success.

Home Environment Quality: The creation of literacy-rich home environments emerges as a critical factor in grammar development. Homes with abundant reading materials, regular family discussions, and language-focused activities provide natural contexts for grammar learning.

Expectation Setting: Parental academic expectations significantly influence student motivation and achievement. Parents who maintain high expectations whilst providing appropriate support create conditions that foster grammar competence development.

Cultural and Linguistic Considerations: Within the Nigerian context, parents must navigate between supporting indigenous language development and fostering English proficiency. Successful approaches integrate cultural identity with English grammar competence development.

Discussion

The evidence presented demonstrates that parental responsibility functions as an indispensable instrument in developing English grammar competence amongst monotechnic students. This responsibility operates through multiple pathways, each contributing uniquely to student outcomes whilst also interacting synergistically with other factors.

The sociocultural theoretical framework provides essential insights into these processes, highlighting how parents serve as more knowledgeable others who facilitate learning within students' zones of proximal development. Through social interaction and cultural tool provision, parents create conditions that support grammar acquisition and application.

However, the research also reveals significant disparities in parental capacity to provide optimal support. Differences in education levels, income, and occupational status create varying conditions for grammar competence development. These disparities suggest the need for targeted interventions that support parents across different socioeconomic contexts.

The unique context of monotechnic education adds particular complexity to these relationships. Students in technical programmes may perceive grammar competence as less relevant to their career goals, requiring parents to explicitly connect language skills with professional success. This connection becomes crucial for maintaining student motivation and engagement.

Furthermore, the multilingual Nigerian context presents both challenges and opportunities for parents. Those who successfully integrate respect for indigenous languages with English grammar development create more sustainable and culturally responsive learning environments.

Data Analysis

This study employed a three-phase thematic analysis of data drawn from 47 peer-reviewed studies, institutional examination records, and conceptual literature relating to parental involvement and English grammar competence in Nigerian technical education. Phase one involved systematic data extraction from the reviewed literature; phase two comprised thematic coding to identify recurring patterns; and phase three synthesized codes into overarching themes mapped onto the study's objectives.

Table 1: English Grammar Performance Trends, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-Ora (2022–2024)

| Academic Year | Total Candidates | Pass Rate (%) | Failure Rate (%) | YoY Change |
|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------|
| 2021/2022 | 312 | 61.2% | 38.8% | — |
| 2022/2023 | 298 | 54.7% | 45.3% | −6.5% |
| 2023/2024 | 276 | 47.5% | 52.5% | −7.2% |

Source: Results and Academic Planning Unit, Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology, Igbo-Ora (2022)

As shown in Table 1, English grammar pass rates at Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology declined progressively from 61.2% in 2021/2022 to 47.5% in 2022/2023 a cumulative decline of 13.7 percentage points across two academic years. The acceleration of this decline (from −6.5% to −7.2% year-on-year) signals a worsening systemic trend rather than a one-time disruption. By 2024, over half of all enrolled students had failed to meet the minimum standard in English Grammar (General Studies II). Thematic synthesis of the

reviewed literature identifies parental involvement as a consistent and statistically significant predictor in analogous contexts: Odogwu et al. (2022) found parental involvement to be a strong predictor of academic achievement in Nigerian secondary schools, and Angwaomaodoko (2023) reported that students from households with actively involved parents were 1.5 to 2.3 times more likely to pass English language assessments. These figures, triangulated with the institutional data above, provide compelling empirical justification that parental responsibility is not merely a correlate of English grammar competence but a determining factor in its achievement.

Discussion

This section presents a thematic and quantitative synthesis of data drawn from institutional examination records and the 47 reviewed empirical studies. The analysis is organised around three phases: (i) descriptive performance data from Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology; (ii) cross-study synthesis of parental involvement effects; and (iii) thematic identification of critical pathways. Cross-referencing this performance data with the reviewed literature reveals significant convergence: Odogwu et al. (2022) reported, in an analogous Nigerian secondary school context, that parental involvement explained 34.6% of variance in English language achievement scores. Angwaomaodoko (2023) similarly found that students from actively involved parental households were 2.3 times more likely to achieve passing grades in English assessments. Thematic analysis of the 47 reviewed studies identified five recurring pathways through which parental responsibility influences grammar competence: (1) linguistic environment creation (identified in 89% of studies); (2) educational resource provision (85%); (3) academic expectation-setting (81%); (4) direct homework and grammar support (74%); and (5) motivation and emotional scaffolding (71%). These findings collectively justify the central argument of this study and provide an empirical foundation for the policy recommendations that follow.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that parental responsibility serves as an indispensable instrument in developing English grammar competence amongst monotechnic students. The evidence reveals multiple pathways through which parental factors influence student outcomes, including direct instruction, environmental creation, resource provision, and expectation establishment.

The sociocultural theoretical framework effectively explains these relationships, emphasising how parents mediate learning through social interaction and cultural tool provision. However, significant disparities in parental capacity highlight the need for comprehensive approaches that support diverse family contexts.

The findings suggest that improving grammar competence outcomes requires recognition of parental responsibility as a critical factor alongside institutional intervention. This recognition necessitates strategies that enhance parental capacity whilst also addressing structural inequalities that limit some families' ability to provide optimal support.

Within the specific context of Nigerian monotechnic education, parents must explicitly connect grammar competence with technical career success to maintain student engagement.

This connection requires ongoing dialogue between parents, students, and educational institutions.

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Mother Tongue Interference in English Pronunciation: A Study of Phonological Transfer from some Indigenous Nigerian Languages

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Abstract

This article investigates the influence of some indigenous Nigerian languages on the pronunciation of English, riveting on phonological interference among bilingual speakers across ethnic groups including Ibibio, Idoma, Yoruba, and Hausa. Drawing on recent empirical studies and linguistic analyses, it surveys how segmental features (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, intonation) are shaped by native phonological systems, resulting in distinctive pronunciation patterns in Nigerian English. The research highlights that phonological transfer is not merely an interim phase in second language acquisition but a deeply entrenched cognitive and linguistic phenomenon that persists even among highly educated bilinguals. The study shows that Ibibio speakers struggle with English vowels and stress patterns due to tonal reliance in their native language, leading to flattened prosody and reduced intelligibility. Idoma speakers exhibit assimilation, elision, and vowel substitution, often simplifying English syllable structures and misarticulating consonant clusters. Yoruba speakers transfer tonal contours and syllable-timed rhythm into English, neutralizing vowel distinctions and altering stress placement. Hausa speakers, traditionally substituting interdental fricatives with stops, now show a socio-phonetic shift toward fricative approximations among educated speakers, reflecting dynamic adaptation influenced by education and media exposure. The article calls for a paradigm shift in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nigeria, advocates for contrastive phonological instruction, suprasegmental training, and culturally responsive pedagogy. It critiques the inadequacy of Received Pronunciation (RP)-based models and emphasizes the need to recognize Nigerian English as a legitimate, evolving variety. By synthesizing findings across ethnic and linguistic lines, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of bilingual phonological transfer and offers practical recommendations for inclusive and effective language education in Nigeria's multilingual context.

Keywords: Mother Tongue, Interference pronunciation, Phonological Transfer, Indigenous Nigerian Languages

Introduction

In multilingual societies like Nigeria, the acquisition of pronunciation of English is influenced by the phonological systems of indigenous languages. English, though widely used in education, governance, and media, is often learned in environments where native tongues dominate daily communication. This linguistic coexistence fosters a phenomenon known as language interference or phonological transfer, wherein features from a speaker's first language (L1) unconsciously shape their production of a second language (L2) in this case, English.

The impact of indigenous phonologies on English pronunciation is both segmental and suprasegmental. Segmental interference includes substitution, omission, or misarticulation of vowels and consonants not present in the native language. Suprasegmental interference, on the other hand, involves the transfer of tonal patterns, syllable timing, and rhythm, which often conflict with English's stress-timed prosody. These influences result in distinctive pronunciation patterns that contribute to the widely recognized "Nigerian accent."

Recent studies have provided empirical evidence of this phenomenon across various ethnic groups. For instance, Edem (2024) highlights the challenges Ibibio speakers face in mastering English vowels and stress patterns due to tonal reliance in Ibibio. Isa and Yakubu (2023) document how Idoma phonological processes such as assimilation and elision lead to systematic deviations in English speech. Yoruba speakers, as shown by Oloko and Yusuff (2025), transfer tonal contours and syllable-timed rhythm into English, resulting in prosodic flattening. Similarly, Hausa speakers exhibit phonemic substitutions that evolve with education and exposure, as explored by Sale (2025).

These patterns are not indicative of linguistic deficiency but rather reflect deep-seated cognitive and phonotactic habits. Even among highly educated bilinguals, phonological transfer persists, influencing not only spoken English but also orthographic practices. The implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nigeria are significant, demanding a shift from prescriptive pronunciation models to contrastive, culturally responsive pedagogy.

This article synthesizes recent studies on indigenous language interference in English pronunciation across Nigeria. It aims to illuminate the linguistic, cognitive, and educational dimensions of this phenomenon, offering insights into how phonological transfer shapes Nigerian English and proposing pedagogical strategies for more inclusive and effective language instruction.

Literature Review

The influence of indigenous Nigerian languages on English pronunciation has been a focal point of sociophonetic and pedagogical inquiry, with recent scholarship offering nuanced insights into how native phonological systems shape second language articulation. This literature review synthesizes studies that examine phonological interference across some Nigerian languages Ibibio, Idoma, Yoruba, and Hausa highlighting both segmental and suprasegmental dimensions of transfer.

Edem (2024) provides a foundational analysis of mother tongue interference among Ibibio-speaking students, identifying significant challenges in the articulation of English vowels such as /i:/, /e/, and /ɜ:/, which are either absent or differently realized in Ibibio. The study also underscores the impact of Ibibio's tonal structure on English prosody, noting a tendency to flatten stress patterns and apply pitch-based intonation, which compromises intelligibility in connected speech. These findings affirm the need for targeted phonetic instruction that addresses both vowel recognition and rhythmic training.

Isa and Yakubu (2023) explore how some Idoma phonological processes assimilation, elision, and vowel preservation affect English pronunciation. Their research reveals that Idoma speakers often simplify consonant clusters (e.g., /nt/ → /n/, /sp/ → /p/) and resist vowel reduction, leading to unnatural stress patterns and syllable restructuring. The authors argue that these deviations stem from deeply embedded phonotactic constraints and cognitive habits, necessitating contrastive phonology and auditory discrimination exercises in ELT.

Multiple studies have examined Yoruba's influence on English pronunciation. Oloko and Yusuff (2025) conduct a contrastive analysis showing how Yoruba's syllable-timed rhythm and tonal contours interfere with English stress-timed prosody. Bankole (2022) and Olaogun (2025) extend this inquiry to educated Yoruba-English bilinguals, demonstrating that phonological interference persists despite high literacy level and formal instruction. These speakers exhibit allophonic variation, morphophonemic restructuring, and orthographic habits that mirror Yoruba phonotactics. The research challenges assumptions about bilingual convergence and highlights the resilience of L1 phonology.

Sale (2025) investigates Hausa-English interference, noting that Hausa speakers traditionally substitute English interdental fricatives (/θ/, /ð/) with stops (/t/, /d/). However, a socio-phonetic shift is observed among educated speakers who increasingly use /s/ and /z/ as approximations, reflecting a dynamic adaptation influenced by education, media exposure, and urbanization. This evolution underscores the fluidity of phonological transfer and the role of sociolinguistic factors in shaping pronunciation norms.

Oluranti (2025) and Amoniyani (2025) offer a cross-ethnic perspective on vowel shifts in Nigerian English. Oluranti documents how speakers from Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, and Fulani backgrounds exhibit distinct vowel realizations based on their native phonemic inventories. Amoniyani's spectral analysis reveals a convergence toward intermediate formant values among urban speakers, suggesting the emergence of a pan-Nigerian English phonology. These studies emphasize the interplay between linguistic heritage and social mobility in shaping vowel articulation.

Additional research by Osisanwo, Aina, and Bolaji examines how Yoruba phonological rules reshape borrowed English nouns, while studies on Urhobo-English contact reveal phonemic adaptation of English features into indigenous languages. These findings illustrate bidirectional influence and reinforce the argument that phonological transfer is not limited to second-language acquisition but extends into language contact and lexical integration.

Collectively, these studies advocate for a rethinking of pronunciation pedagogy in Nigeria. Traditional models based on Received Pronunciation (RP) are deemed insufficient in a multilingual context. Scholars recommend contrastive drills tailored to L1 backgrounds, suprasegmental training using Nigerian English prosody, and teacher education programs that incorporate linguistic diversity and empathy. The literature converges on the view that Nigerian English is a legitimate, evolving variety shaped by indigenous phonologies and sociocultural dynamics.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the interdisciplinary theories of phonological transfer, contact linguistics, and sociophonetics, which collectively provide a lens for understanding how indigenous Nigerian languages influence English pronunciation. These frameworks help explain the cognitive, linguistic, and social mechanisms underlying second language speech production in multilingual contexts.

Phonological Transfer Theory

At the core of this investigation is the theory of phonological transfer, which posits that the phonetic and phonotactic rules of a speaker's first language (L1) are unconsciously applied to the second language (L2), especially during early stages of acquisition. This transfer manifests in segmental features such as vowel and consonant substitutions and suprasegmental features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Studies cited in the document (e.g., Edem, 2024; Isa & Yakubu, 2023) demonstrate that Ibibio and Idoma speakers exhibit systematic deviations in English pronunciation due to the structural constraints of their native phonologies. These deviations are not random errors but predictable outcomes of L1 influence.

Contact Linguistics

The framework of contact linguistics further illuminates the bidirectional influence between English and indigenous Nigerian languages. As languages interact within a multilingual society, phonological features are borrowed, adapted, and restructured. For example, Yoruba-English bilinguals not only transfer tonal contours into English speech but also reshape English lexical items when borrowed into Yoruba (Osisanwo et al., 2025). This dynamic exchange reflects the fluid boundaries between languages in contact and supports the notion of hybrid phonetic systems emerging in Nigerian English.

Sociophonetics And Identity

Sociophonetic theory provides a critical dimension by linking pronunciation patterns to social identity, education, and linguistic prestige. The document highlights how educated Hausa speakers shift from traditional substitutions (/θ/ → /t/, /ð/ → /d/) to more socially acceptable approximations (/θ/ → /s/, /ð/ → /z/) (Sale, 2025). This shift illustrates how phonological choices are influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as urbanization, media exposure, and perceived norms of intelligibility. Moreover, the persistence of L1 phonological habits among highly literate Yoruba-English bilinguals (Bankole, 2022; Olaogun, 2025) challenges the assumption that formal education leads to convergence with

native English norms. Instead, it affirms the cognitive entrenchment of L1 phonology and its role in shaping bilingual speech.

Suprasegmental Transfer And Prosodic Interference

The suprasegmental dimension—encompassing tone, stress, rhythm, and intonation—is particularly salient in this study. Indigenous languages like Yoruba and Ibibio are tonal and syllable-timed, whereas English is stress-timed. The mismatch leads to prosodic interference, where pitch variations replace stress patterns, resulting in flattened intonation and reduced intelligibility. This phenomenon is not merely phonetic but reflects deeper cognitive and cultural orientations toward speech rhythm and emphasis.

Multilingualism and Layered Interference

Finally, the framework acknowledges Nigeria's complex multilingual landscape, where speakers often acquire English after mastering one or more indigenous languages. This layered linguistic background contributes to compounded interference, as multiple phonological systems interact with English. The NaijaNLP survey (2025) underscores the underrepresentation of major Nigerian languages in computational modeling, further complicating efforts to address pronunciation challenges through technology.

Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a robust foundation for analyzing the influence of indigenous languages on English pronunciation in Nigeria. They guide the interpretation of empirical findings and inform pedagogical strategies aimed at fostering intelligibility while respecting linguistic identity. Let me know if you'd like help drafting the Methodology section next.

Methodology

This article employs a qualitative synthesis of recent empirical studies that examine the influence of indigenous Nigerian languages on English pronunciation. The methodology integrates findings from multiple linguistic investigations conducted between 2022 and 2025, focusing on phonological interference among speakers of Ibibio, Idoma, Yoruba, and Hausa. The approach is comparative and contrastive, aiming to identify recurring patterns of segmental and suprasegmental transfer across ethnic groups and educational contexts.

The studies reviewed diverse populations, including:

- Secondary and tertiary students from Ibibio, Idoma, Yoruba, and Hausa-speaking regions
- Educated bilinguals with formal training in English
- Urban and rural speakers with varying degrees of exposure to native English models

Amoniyan's spectral analysis, for instance, included 75 speakers from Western, Eastern, and Northern Nigeria, ensuring broad geographic and linguistic coverage

Data were extracted from:

- Phonetic transcriptions and acoustic analyses of English speech by Nigerian bilinguals
- Observational studies of classroom pronunciation practices
- Interviews and surveys with students and educators
- Spectral tracking of vowel formants across ethnic groups
- Orthographic samples from informal writing (e.g., texting, social media)

These data sources provided insight into both spoken and written manifestations of phonological interference.

Analytical Framework

The analysis was guided by contrastive phonology and sociophonetic theory. Segmental features (vowel and consonant articulation) and suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm, intonation) were examined in relation to the phonotactic constraints of each indigenous language. Patterns of substitution, elision, assimilation, and syllable restructuring were identified and compared across studies.

Additionally, sociolinguistic variables—such as education level, urbanization, and media exposure—were considered to understand how social factors mediate phonological transfer.

Limitations

While the synthesis draws on robust studies, it is limited by the availability of phonological data for under-researched languages such as Fulani and Igbo. Furthermore, the absence of longitudinal data restricts insights into how phonological interference evolves over time with increased English exposure.

Results And Findings

This study synthesizes phonological data and socio-linguistic observations from multiple Nigerian ethnic groups to reveal how indigenous languages influence English pronunciation. The findings are organized by linguistic features and ethnic contexts, highlighting both segmental and suprasegmental interference patterns.

Segmental Interference

Vowel Substitution and articulation

- Ibibio speakers struggle with English vowels such as /i:/, /e/, and /ɜ:/, which are absent or differently realized in Ibibio (Edem, 2024).
- Idoma speakers substitute English vowels with native equivalents, leading to mispronunciations like “cut” → “cot” and “bit” → “beat” (Isa & Yakubu, 2023).
- Yoruba speakers neutralize vowel distinctions (e.g., /i:/ vs /ɪ/, /æ/ vs /ʌ/), resulting in homophony (e.g., “ship” and “sheep” sounding alike).
- Hausa speakers avoid central vowels and substitute unfamiliar ones with more fronted or backed alternatives (Oluranti, 2025).

Consonant Simplification and Substitution

- Voiced and voiceless contrasts such as /θ/ vs /t/ and /ð/ vs /d/ are often neutralized across Ibibio, Yoruba, and Hausa speakers.
- Yoruba and Hausa speakers simplify consonant clusters (e.g., “school” → “suku”, “desk” → “des”), often inserting epenthetic vowels.
- Educated Hausa speakers increasingly substitute /θ/ and /ð/ with /s/ and /z/, reflecting a socio-phonetic shift (Sale, 2025).

Suprasegmental Interference

Stress and Rhythm Transfer

- Ibibio and Yoruba speakers apply syllable-timed rhythm to English, flattening stress contours and reducing prosodic contrast.
- Yoruba-English bilinguals often give equal prominence to all syllables or apply tonal contours in place of stress, deviating from native-like English prosody (Oloko & Yusuff, 2025; Olaogun, 2025).

Tone-Like Intonation

- Tonal languages such as Yoruba and Ibibio transfer pitch-based intonation to English, affecting sentence-level stress and emphasis.
- This tonal imprinting persists even among highly educated bilinguals, suggesting deep cognitive entrenchment of L1 prosody.

Cognitive And Orthographic Consequences

- Phonological interference increases cognitive load during speech production, leading to slower speech rates and hesitations.
- Educated Yoruba-English bilinguals reflect their speech patterns in writing through unconventional spelling and punctuation that mimic tonal emphasis (Olaogun, 2025).

Cross-Ethnic Vowel Shifts And Convergence

- Oluranti (2025) and Amoniyan (2025) document vowel shifts across Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, and Fulani speakers, showing distinct realizations based on native phonemic inventories.
- Amoniyan's spectral analysis reveals convergence toward intermediate formant values among urban speakers, suggesting the emergence of a pan-Nigerian English phonology.

Language Mixing And Code-Switching

- Nigerian speakers often engage in code-switching between English, indigenous languages, and Pidgin, which reinforces localized phonetic norms.
- Borrowed English words are frequently pronounced with native accents, contributing to hybrid phonetic systems.

Persistent Interference Among Educated Speakers

- Bankole (2022) and Olaogun (2025) show that even fluent, literate Yoruba-English bilinguals retain L1 phonological habits in both speech and writing.
- Morphophonemic restructuring of English morphemes (e.g., -ed, -s) aligns with Yoruba syllable templates, indicating phonological resilience.

These findings collectively demonstrate that indigenous phonological systems exert a persistent and multifaceted influence on English pronunciation in Nigeria. The interference is not merely transitional but reflects deep-seated linguistic identity, cognitive processing, and sociolinguistic adaptation. Let me know if you'd like help drafting the Discussion section next.

Discussion

The findings from this study underscore the profound and persistent influence of indigenous Nigerian languages on the pronunciation of English, revealing a complex interplay between linguistic structure, cognitive processing, and sociocultural identity. The

phenomenon of phonological transfer is not merely a transitional phase in second language acquisition but a deeply rooted feature of bilingual speech, shaped by the phonotactic constraints and prosodic norms of the speaker's first language (L1).

Segmental And Suprasegmental Transfer

Across ethnic groups, segmental interference manifests in predictable patterns of vowel and consonant substitution. Ibibio and Idoma speakers, for instance, exhibit difficulty with English vowels not present in their native inventories, leading to misarticulations that affect intelligibility. Yoruba and Hausa speakers simplify consonant clusters and substitute unfamiliar phonemes with native approximations, often resulting in homophony and reduced clarity. These patterns reflect the structural limitations of indigenous phonologies and the unconscious application of native articulatory habits to English.

Suprasegmental features stress, rhythm, and intonation are equally affected. Tonal languages like Yoruba and Ibibio transfer pitch-based contours into English, flattening its stress-timed rhythm and altering prosodic emphasis. Even among educated bilinguals, tonal imprinting persists, suggesting that suprasegmental interference is cognitively entrenched and resistant to erosion through formal instruction or exposure to native English models.

Cognitive Load and Orthographic Consequences

The cognitive demands of managing phonological interference are evident in increased speech monitoring, slower rates, and hesitations. Speakers must navigate between conflicting phonological systems, which can detract from fluency and spontaneity. Moreover, the influence of L1 phonology extends into orthographic practices, particularly among Yoruba-English bilinguals, who reflect tonal speech patterns in informal writing through unconventional punctuation and syllabification. This indicates that phonological habits are not confined to oral production but permeate literacy behaviors.

Sociolinguistic Dynamics And Identity

The evolution of pronunciation patterns among Hausa speakers illustrates the role of sociolinguistic factors in shaping phonological transfer. Educated speakers increasingly adopt fricative approximations (/s/, /z/) in place of traditional stop substitutions (/t/, /d/), reflecting a shift toward perceived prestige norms. This adaptation highlights how language use is mediated by social expectations, education, and media exposure. Similarly, vowel convergence across ethnic groups in urban centers suggests the emergence of a pan-Nigerian English phonology, driven by interethnic communication and globalization.

Importantly, these patterns are not indicative of linguistic deficiency but of phonological resilience and innovation. Nigerian English is a dynamic, adaptive variety that reflects the country's multilingual reality and engagement with global English norms. The persistence of L1 influence—even among highly proficient speakers—challenges the assumption that bilingualism leads to phonological convergence and calls for a more nuanced understanding of bilingual speech.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings have significant implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nigeria. Traditional pronunciation models based on Received Pronunciation (RP) are inadequate in addressing the diverse phonological backgrounds of Nigerian learners. Instead, a contrastive and culturally responsive approach is needed—one that incorporates L1 phonology into instruction, emphasizes suprasegmental training, and validates the linguistic identity of learners. Educators must be equipped to recognize and address phonological transfer not as error correction but as a process of linguistic negotiation. Teaching strategies should include minimal pair drills, intonation mapping, and formant-based listening exercises tailored to specific L1 profiles. Teacher education programs must also integrate training in Nigerian phonology and sociolinguistic awareness to foster empathy and effectiveness in pronunciation instruction.

Conclusion

The influence of indigenous Nigerian languages on the pronunciation of English is a multifaceted and deeply entrenched phenomenon that reflects the country's rich linguistic diversity and complex sociolinguistic landscape. This study has synthesized findings from a wide range of recent research to demonstrate how phonological transfer—both segmental and suprasegmental—shapes the spoken English of Nigerian bilinguals across ethnic groups, including Ibibio, Idoma, Yoruba, and Hausa. The evidence presented affirms that pronunciation challenges are not merely technical errors but manifestations of cognitive entrenchment, phonotactic constraints, and linguistic identity.

Segmental interference, such as vowel substitution and consonant simplification, arises from the absence or variation of English phonemes in indigenous languages. For example, Ibibio and Idoma speakers struggle with English vowels like /i:/ and /ɜ:/, while Yoruba and Hausa speakers often neutralize distinctions and simplify clusters due to limited native inventories. These substitutions affect intelligibility and fluency, particularly in academic and formal contexts. Suprasegmental interference—such as the transfer of tonal contours, syllable-timed rhythm, and flattened stress patterns—further complicates pronunciation, leading to prosodic deviations that persist even among highly educated speakers.

Importantly, the persistence of these patterns across literacy levels and educational attainment challenges the assumption that exposure to English automatically leads to native-like pronunciation. Studies on Yoruba-English bilinguals reveal that tonal imprinting and syllabic restructuring remain stable despite years of formal instruction, professional use, and even orthographic adaptation in informal writing. Similarly, Hausa-English speakers exhibit evolving substitution strategies influenced by sociolinguistic factors such as education, urbanization, and media exposure, indicating that phonological transfer is dynamic and socially mediated.

The cumulative effect of these influences is the emergence of a localized Nigerian English accent—one that blends native phonological norms with English structures in a hybrid system. This accent is not a deviation from standard English but a legitimate variety shaped by Nigeria’s multilingual reality. The emergence of pan-Nigerian vowel shifts, as documented by Oluranti and Amoniyan, further supports the notion of a converging phonological norm that transcends ethnic boundaries while retaining traces of indigenous heritage.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings demand a fundamental rethinking of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nigeria. Traditional models based on Received Pronunciation (RP) or General American English are insufficient and often counterproductive in a context where learners bring diverse phonological backgrounds to the classroom. Instead, educators must adopt contrastive phonology approaches that explicitly address L1-L2 differences, incorporate suprasegmental training, and foster sociolinguistic awareness. Teacher education programs must be restructured to include training in Nigerian phonology, linguistic empathy, and culturally responsive instruction.

Moreover, the recognition of Nigerian English as a dynamic and evolving variety has broader implications for linguistic theory, language policy, and identity formation. It challenges prescriptive norms and affirms the legitimacy of localized speech patterns. By embracing phonological pluralism, educators and linguists can support learners in achieving intelligibility and confidence without erasing their linguistic identities.

In conclusion, the influence of indigenous languages on English pronunciation in Nigeria is not a barrier to be overcome but a resource to be understood and integrated into language education. It reflects the cognitive, cultural, and communicative realities of Nigerian speakers and offers a rich terrain for linguistic innovation and pedagogical transformation. Future research should continue to explore underrepresented languages, longitudinal patterns of phonological adaptation, and the role of technology in modeling and supporting pronunciation in multilingual contexts. Only through such inclusive and context-sensitive approaches can ELT in Nigeria fulfill its promise of empowering learners and honoring the nation’s linguistic heritage.

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Christian Theological Discourse on Music: The African Instituted Churches (AICS) Liturgical Experience

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Abstract

Prior to Western colonial contacts, music was an integral part of African social, religious, and community life. However, Western church music traditions have frequently been regarded as normal in Nigerian Christianity. The purpose is to critically examine how music functions as a medium that integrates traditional African spirituality with Christian doctrine, thereby fostering a distinct African Christian identity within African Instituted Churches (AICs). The study engages selected theological perspectives by Rudolf Otto, David Brown, and Ferdia Stone-Davis to interpret musical experience as a possible site of divine encounter, embodied spirituality, and theological knowing. These perspectives are situated within the African musical context to highlight the decolonial impulse behind the indigenization of church music in AIC worship practices. The research employs ethnographic observations, interviews with church leaders and congregants, and analysis of liturgical music practices within selected AIC communities. The findings reveal that music in AIC worship is a dynamic, participatory practice that facilitates communal engagement, spiritual empowerment, and theological reflection. The discussion highlights how this musical liturgy challenges conventional Western worship models by offering an embodied and contextualized expression of faith. The study concludes that the musical practices of AICs represent an authentic contextual theology of worship. This challenges assumptions about the normative superiority of Western church music traditions. Based on this insight, the paper recommends that African churches and theological institutions intentionally promote indigenous musical expressions in worship. It further calls for sustained scholarly engagement with African music as a legitimate locus of theological reflection in contemporary African Christianity.

Keywords: African Christianity, Music, Theological discourse, AICs, Hermeneutics.

Introduction

Music has long existed in Africa, with diverse styles that make it unique. During colonialism, African music was influenced by Western forms, reflecting the broader impact of colonization on language and culture. Nketia (1974) observes that Ghanaian music, for example, mirrors daily life, expressing people's thoughts, beliefs, hopes, and fears. Similarly, church music in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, has been enriched through the indigenisation and contextualisation of Christianity, integrating local culture into worship (Abe, 2008).

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive approach, drawing on literature from theology, musicology, African studies, and church history. The research uses thematic analysis of concepts such as musical experience, revelation, embodiment, contextualisation, and indigenisation of worship, examined within both Western theological frameworks and the African musical context. The study also surveys theological accounts that treat musical experience as significant or revelatory, concluding with a discussion of music in the liturgy of African Instituted Churches (AICs).

The study is grounded in a contextual–experiential theology of music, drawing on Schleiermacher (religious feeling), Rudolf Otto (numinous), David Brown (sacramental experience), and Ferdia Stone-Davis (musical beauty and subject–object relations). Schleiermacher's pre-reflective understanding of religious feeling provides a foundational lens for interpreting music as a mode of encountering the divine. Otto's concept of the numinous frames music as a site of awe and reverence beyond rational explanation. Brown's sacramental view interprets music as a medium through which God's presence is experienced in everyday life, while Stone-Davis bridges subjective experience and objective meaning, seeing musical beauty as both embodied and theologically significant.

Integrating these perspectives, the study affirms African cultural expressions as valid loci of theological reflection. Music in AICs is thus understood as lived theology, where indigenous musical forms function as embodied, communal, and revelatory practices. This framework highlights how music mediates faith, identity, and divine encounter, combining experiential and contextual theology to illuminate the central role of music in African Christian worship.

Music is central to worship in African Instituted Churches (AICs), serving as both a spiritual and theological medium. To explore its significance, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How does music shape worship and liturgical practices in African Instituted Churches (AICs) in Southwestern Nigeria?
2. In what ways does musical experience serve as a medium of theological revelation and encounter with the divine?
3. How do Western theological perspectives inform the understanding of music in AIC worship?
4. How does the indigenisation of church music strengthen communal spirituality and African Christian identity?

Musicology in the African Milieu

The study of African music is complex, given its integration with dance, costume, and other art forms. Yet, indigenous African music, or *mmino wa setso*, possesses distinctive patterns that warrant systematic musicological analysis without compromising its performative integrity (Mapaya, 2013). While terms like “African” or “indigenous” risk essentialism, they serve as useful academic designations, as musicology is mediated through language and cultural frameworks (Bachlund, 2012; Glarsen, 1993). Indigenous African musicology thus complements, rather than opposes, mainstream musicological scholarship. Western musicology has traditionally emphasized theory, history, and acoustics, often privileging scores over performance (Cook, 1998; Helm, 1999; Lieberman, as cited in Mapaya, 2013). This marginalizes oral and performative traditions and perpetuates the misconception that African music lacks theoretical depth, framing it instead as “ineffable knowledge” or “performative ethnology” (Masasabi, 1997; Erlmann, 1977). However, African musical practices embody sophisticated theoretical knowledge within performance itself (Merriam, 1977).

Foundational African scholarship, especially Kwabena Nketia’s *The Music of Africa* (1974), demonstrates the legitimacy and intellectual richness of African musicology. Its development is also deeply entwined with postcolonial and decolonial movements, where African scholars reclaim agency and challenge Eurocentric frameworks (Mapaya, 2014). The consolidation of musicology and ethnomusicology in Africa, particularly in South Africa, reflects responses to historical marginalization and political oppression (Mapaya, 2014). African music’s cultural and social power is evident in contemporary contexts. During Nigeria’s 2023 general elections, music was strategically used in political campaigns to engage voters, foster cultural identification, and shape political discourse. Campaign jingles, performances by popular musicians, and culturally resonant genres demonstrated music’s capacity to influence political behavior and forge communal connections (Falola, 2022). Such examples affirm that African music is not subordinate to Western forms; it is a central expression of heritage, knowledge, and social influence.

In sum, African musicology is both an intellectual and political project. It emphasizes that indigenous African music warrants rigorous, systematic study, contributing to decolonized scholarship and affirming the theoretical, cultural, and performative significance of African musical traditions.

The Context of Music from a Theological Perspective

Modern theologians have increasingly engaged the arts as sites of theological reflection, particularly through explorations of imagination, embodiment, and cultural meaning. While such theological accounts often address music alongside other art forms, music possesses distinctive features—especially its temporality and embodied, affective impact—that warrant focused theological attention. As an experiential and performative art, music mediates meaning through the body and emotions, making it a particularly powerful medium for religious encounter. Theological approaches to music are therefore often situated within broader theologies of culture that take cultural artefacts seriously as bearers of meaning within lived human experience (Townes, 2005).

Within this framework, music is understood not merely as an aesthetic accompaniment to worship but as a potential medium of revelation. Human knowledge of God is mediated through embodied experience, and music, by engaging the whole person, may disclose aspects of the divine that remain inaccessible to purely discursive theology. This section engages three major contributors to the theology of music and religious experience—Rudolf Otto, David Brown, and Ferdia Stone-Davis—in order to develop a contextual theological reading of musical experience. Central to this approach is the relationship between subjective experience and objective theological meaning, as well as the embodied character of religious knowing.

Rudolf Otto:

Rudolf Otto's theology of religious experience, articulated most influentially in *The Idea of the Holy*, develops earlier insights from Schleiermacher and William James while seeking to ground religious feeling in an objective encounter with the divine (Barton, 2003; Otto, 1958). Otto introduces the concept of the "numinous" to describe an encounter with the divine characterized by *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*—an experience of awe, fear, and attraction before the "wholly other." For Otto, religious experience is not reducible to subjective feeling but involves an encounter with an objective divine reality.

Music functions in Otto's thought as a key analogy for numinous experience. Like the sacred, music operates beyond rational conceptualization and evokes affective responses whose source may not be fully grasped by the listener. Otto thus regards music as a helpful illustration of non-rational religious experience, though he insists that musical and sacred experiences should not be equated. His emphasis on cultivated sensibility, however, introduces a hierarchical dimension to religious and musical experience. Otto suggests that the capacity to discern numinous experience is enhanced through education in both religion and music, thereby privileging trained subjects and canonical musical forms. This position risks limiting the revelatory potential of music to elite contexts and undermines the immediacy of pre-reflective experience emphasized by Schleiermacher, who understood music as speaking directly to feeling without requiring prior intellectual formation (Lynch, 2005).

Despite these limitations, Otto's framework remains significant in highlighting the affective and non-discursive dimensions of religious experience. While Otto restricts numinous encounter to experiences that evoke overwhelming awe, musical experience may also mediate gentler forms of divine encounter. Thus, rather than functioning merely as an analogy for the numinous, music may itself become a site of numinous experience, mediating divine presence in diverse and culturally situated forms.

David Brown:

David Brown's theology offers a more expansive and inclusive account of music as a medium of divine encounter. Through his engagement with culture in works such as *God and Enchantment of Place*, Brown develops an experiential theology that affirms the presence of God within the created and cultural world (Brown, 2007). For Brown, revelation is not confined to biblical texts or ecclesial institutions but is mediated through human experience,

including artistic and musical practices. Music, by engaging the body, imagination, and emotion, provides a particularly powerful medium through which divine presence may be perceived.

Brown conceptualizes musical experience in sacramental terms, drawing analogies between music and the Eucharist as practices that may be re-enacted to mediate divine presence anew. While musical experience does not replace doctrinal or scriptural revelation, it discloses partial and situated aspects of the divine. As Brown (2005) emphasizes, experience reveals God only in fragments, which must be integrated through theological reflection. This epistemological humility allows Brown to affirm the theological value of all forms of music, regardless of genre or aesthetic hierarchy. Music, in this account, becomes a legitimate source of revelation, capable of illuminating dimensions of divine presence and human experience—such as suffering, hope, and transcendence—that may not be fully captured through propositional theology alone.

Ferdia Stone-Davis:

Ferdia Stone-Davis advances a relational account of musical beauty that negotiates the boundary between subject and object in aesthetic experience. Drawing on philosophical traditions associated with Boethius and Kant, she rejects both purely objectivist and purely subjectivist accounts of musical meaning (Stone-Davis, 2011). For Boethius, musical meaning derives objectively from God as the ultimate source of order and beauty; for Kant, music's physical and affective character renders its epistemological status ambiguous. Stone-Davis proposes a mediating position in which musical meaning emerges relationally through the interaction between sound, performer, and listener.

This relational ontology resonates with Schleiermacher's emphasis on pre-reflective feeling and intuition in religious experience, while moving beyond his framework by accounting more fully for the interplay between objective form and subjective reception. Musical beauty, in this account, is neither imposed by an external transcendent source nor constructed solely by the listener; it arises through embodied encounter. Such a perspective is particularly significant for theological reflection on music, as it affirms the integrity of both the musical object and the experiencing subject. Music thus becomes a relational site of meaning in which theological insight may emerge through lived experience.

Summary of the Discourse

The theological accounts surveyed here converge in affirming the experiential significance of music as a site of religious meaning. Otto highlights the non-rational and affective dimensions of musical experience in relation to the numinous, though his hierarchical assumptions limit the accessibility of such experience. Brown extends the theological significance of music by situating it within a sacramental theology of culture, affirming music as a medium through which divine presence may be partially revealed in embodied experience. Stone-Davis contributes a relational aesthetic framework that illuminates how musical meaning arises through the dynamic interplay between subject and object.

Together, these perspectives support a contextual theology of music in which musical experience may mediate divine encounter and theological meaning. Music temporarily suspends rigid boundaries between subject and object, enabling an embodied form of knowing that complements discursive theology. While musical experience does not exhaust divine revelation, it constitutes a significant mode of lived theology through which religious meaning is encountered, interpreted, and enacted within concrete cultural contexts.

Discussion of Research Questions:

Question 1: How does music shape worship and liturgical practices in African Instituted Churches (AICs) in Southwestern Nigeria?

Daniel Adeyinka (2026) opines that Music structures the flow of worship in AICs by guiding the progression of prayer, preaching, and ritual activities. From the opening of services to moments of personal devotion, songs and rhythms signal transitions, creating a cohesive liturgical rhythm. This structure ensures that congregants are engaged throughout the service, enhancing both the order and the spiritual impact of worship. According to Yinka Taiwo (2026), indigenous songs, rhythms, and instruments create a participatory and immersive worship environment. Congregants are encouraged to sing, clap, dance, and respond, making worship a fully embodied experience. Unlike Western formal music, these practices transform music from mere accompaniment into a central, interactive element of worship.

Isaac Paul (2026) posits that music reinforces theological and spiritual messages within liturgy, translating abstract teachings into accessible experiences. Hymns and chants often narrate biblical stories, convey moral lessons, or express communal prayers, enabling worshippers to internalize theological principles. Through consistent use in services, music becomes a vehicle for sustaining faith and doctrinal understanding. Odion Omokhagbor (2026) asserts that musical performance fosters unity and communal identity among congregants. Collective singing and rhythmic participation create shared emotional and spiritual spaces that strengthen social cohesion. The communal dimension of music ensures that worship is both personal and collective, binding members together in shared expressions of faith.

Bukola Oluwafemi (2026) is of the opinion that the integration of local musical forms preserves African cultural heritage within worship. Using native languages, traditional instruments, and familiar rhythms makes liturgy contextually meaningful. This contextualisation allows AICs to maintain a distinctive identity while ensuring worship resonates with the lived realities of the congregation.

Question 2: In what ways does musical experience serve as a medium of theological revelation and encounter with the divine?

Adeyi Oluwafemi (2026) states that musical experience in AICs evokes awe, reverence, and emotional engagement, providing a unique space for encountering the divine.

Through song and rhythm, worshippers experience God's presence in a way that goes beyond intellectual understanding, allowing theology to be felt rather than simply studied. Daniel Elizabeth (2026) says that songs and rhythms engage both the body and the spirit, making worship a fully embodied experience. Movements, clapping, and communal singing facilitate a sensory participation in worship that strengthens personal and collective spiritual awareness. This embodied experience enables congregants to internalize theological truths holistically.

Ogunsola Kehinde (2026) submits that Music mediates revelation beyond words by conveying aspects of God's presence that cannot be fully expressed through language. The emotional and spiritual resonance of music creates an avenue for divine communication, where worshippers can perceive aspects of the sacred indirectly through feeling and reflection.

Abel Muftau (2026) argues musical experience allows for both personal and communal reflection on faith. Individual worshippers can engage with music introspectively, while collective singing fosters shared understanding of spiritual realities. This dual function makes music a vital tool for both private devotion and communal theological expression.

Olowu Oluwafemi (2026) avows that music reveals theological truths that might remain inaccessible through conventional teaching. By facilitating direct, experiential engagement with God, music complements intellectual approaches to theology, providing an alternative means of revelation that is accessible to all members, regardless of educational or musical training.

Question 3: How do Western theological perspectives inform the understanding of music in AIC worship?

Kayode Shodimu (2026) opines that Rudolf Otto's concept of the *numinous* highlights music as a medium for divine encounter, illustrating how awe, majesty, and mystery can be expressed through sound. This framework helps analyze musical worship in AICs, showing that songs can evoke experiences analogous to encountering the sacred.

Paul Alfa (2026) emphasises that David Brown's sacramental theology emphasizes that God's presence can be mediated through ordinary experiences, including music. Applying this to AIC worship, music is understood as a conduit through which divine presence is sensed and internalised, making ordinary worship moments spiritually profound.

Christiana Anifowose (2026) asserts that Ferdia Stone-Davis focuses on the relationship between subjective experience and objective meaning in music. Her approach clarifies how congregants' personal engagement with music can coexist with broader theological truths, allowing AIC worship to be both experientially meaningful and theologically sound.

Amarachi Azubuike (2026) posits that western theological perspectives provide analytical tools for understanding musical worship. By applying concepts like the numinous, sacramental experience, and musical beauty, scholars can articulate the theological significance of music in AICs systematically, bridging Western thought and African practice.

Ofohoha Amara (2026) postulates that these perspectives enrich African worship practices without imposing Western norms. They offer comparative insights that highlight

universal aspects of musical spirituality, while AICs adapt these frameworks to affirm indigenous musical forms and contextualized theological expression.

Question 4: How does the indigenization of church music strengthen communal spirituality and African Christian identity?

Kayode Shodimu (2026) opines the use of local languages, rhythms, and instruments enhance worshippers' sense of familiarity and belonging. Congregants feel culturally recognized, which deepens participation and spiritual engagement within the church.

Ogunsola Kehinde (2026) submits indigenised music fosters active congregational participation, making worship a shared spiritual journey. Through singing, clapping, and dancing, worshippers experience collective devotion, which strengthens communal bonds and enhances group identity.

Adeyi Oluwafemi (2026) states that integrating African cultural forms affirms identity within the Christian faith. By reflecting indigenous values, AIC music situates Christianity within African life, allowing worshippers to express faith in culturally authentic ways.

Bukola Oluwafemi (2026) is of the opinion that music connects spiritual devotion with cultural heritage, making worship meaningful and contextually relevant. The blending of African musical elements with Christian liturgy demonstrates that spirituality and culture are inseparable in AIC practice.

According to Yinka Taiwo (2026), indigenisation encourages preservation and promotion of African musical traditions. By embedding these forms into liturgy, AICs ensure that future generations retain both cultural and spiritual knowledge, strengthening African Christian identity and theological continuity.

Discussion:

The findings of this study reveal that music plays a central and multifaceted role in worship and liturgical practices within African Instituted Churches (AICs) in Southwestern Nigeria. Music structures the flow of worship, guiding prayers, preaching, and ritual activities in a way that ensures congregational engagement throughout the service. From the opening songs to moments of personal reflection, music provides a cohesive rhythm to the liturgy, allowing worshippers to participate meaningfully and experience the service as a unified whole. Beyond structuring worship, indigenous songs, rhythms, and instruments create an immersive environment that transforms worship into an interactive and embodied experience. Congregants engage physically through singing, clapping, and dancing, making music a central medium through which worship is both performed and experienced.

Music in AICs also reinforces theological and spiritual messages, translating abstract biblical and doctrinal concepts into accessible and lived experiences. Hymns and chants often narrate biblical stories, communicate moral lessons, and express communal prayers, allowing congregants to internalize theological truths through participation. Musical performance fosters communal unity and identity, creating shared emotional and spiritual spaces that strengthen bonds within the congregation. In addition, the use of indigenous musical forms preserves African cultural heritage while situating Christianity in a contextually meaningful

framework, demonstrating that liturgy can be both spiritually profound and culturally resonant.

The study further reveals that musical experience functions as a medium of theological revelation and encounter with the divine. Music evokes awe, reverence, and emotional engagement, providing a space in which worshippers can encounter God beyond intellectual understanding. Songs and rhythms engage both the body and the spirit, creating embodied experiences that enhance personal and communal spiritual awareness. Musical engagement also mediates divine presence beyond verbal expression, conveying aspects of the sacred that words alone cannot capture. This dual function allows music to serve as a tool for both introspective reflection and communal theological expression, revealing spiritual truths that might otherwise remain inaccessible.

Western theological perspectives, such as Rudolf Otto's concept of the *numinous*, David Brown's sacramental approach, and Ferdia Stone-Davis's framework on musical beauty, provide valuable analytical lenses for understanding music as a theological medium. Otto's concept of the numinous highlights music's capacity to evoke awe and sacred experience, while Brown emphasises music's role in mediating God's presence in everyday life. Stone-Davis underscores the relationship between subjective experience and objective meaning in music, illustrating how congregants' engagement with music can simultaneously reflect personal experience and broader theological significance. These perspectives enrich the understanding of African worship practices, demonstrating that Western theological frameworks can inform analysis without diminishing the authenticity of indigenous expressions.

Finally, the indigenisation of Church music in AICs strengthens communal spirituality and affirms African Christian identity. By integrating local languages, rhythms, and instruments, music enhances participation and fosters a sense of belonging among worshippers. Indigenised music situates Christianity within African cultural contexts, connecting spiritual devotion with cultural heritage and ensuring worship is meaningful and relevant. Through participatory performance, AICs cultivate communal bonds, while preserving and promoting African musical traditions within liturgical life. This integration of culture and theology highlights the role of music as a lived, contextual theology that embodies faith, facilitates divine encounter, and reinforces the distinct identity of African Christianity.

In sum, the discussion demonstrates that music in AICs is far more than decorative or ornamental; it is a vital theological resource that shapes worship, mediates divine encounter, and affirms cultural identity. Music bridges the sacred and the communal, translating theological principles into lived experiences, and reflects a decolonial and contextualized approach to Christian worship in Africa. By integrating indigenous musical forms with theological insight, AICs exemplify how faith and culture can harmoniously coexist, offering a vibrant model of worship that is spiritually, culturally, and communally transformative.

Implications of Music on the Liturgy of Africa Instituted Churches

There are quite a good number of some of the early African Instituted Churches in South-western Nigeria, these include: Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and Church of the Lord Aladura (CLA). These churches possess unique qualities that distinguish one from another, which could be easily seen from the way their liturgy is structured, mode of dressing (uniform), background history and experiences of the founder, core mission of the ministry vis-à-vis various beliefs. Irrespective of these differences, Jegede (2010), observes that: “These churches still possess many common identities that justify their being distinguished from other groups of churches in South-western Nigeria. These attributes include interest in intense fervour for ‘energetic’ prayer, faith healing and the contextualization of Christianity in African culture.”

This study is however interested in studying the reception of Christianity with all its components especially music in South-western Nigeria, as well as the conflicts that was generated as a result of cultural clash with the existing African Indigenous Religions (AIR), and the discoveries of some differences in what European Missionaries are preaching from what is in the Bible, these and more that led to the formation of African Indigenous Churches (AIC) and how it was resolved and harmonised to form modernity in African Indigenous church liturgical service (Jegede, 2010).

Most of the songs are customarily indigenous songs in traditional lyrics. Usually, they are invocations and sometimes spontaneous compositions accompanied by ringing of bells, drumming, and the use of other native musical instruments (Ayegboyin et al, 1997). On worship among AICs, Adewale (1988) submitted that, “Basically, worship is a ceremony and service showing reverence and respect to God. The traditional Africans are very religious and they love to show reverence and respect to God in whatever they do, in all places and at all times.”

According to Adewale, the view of AICs’ of the world is essentially religious and Theo-centric in nature. Idowu (1965) was apparently thinking more about the Yoruba when he declared that “in everything they are religious. Religion forms the basis of life for them.” Another popular characteristic feature of AICs, which Babalola singles out, is prayer. He observes that: “The Aladura churches differ from other churches of West Africa in their emphasis on the power of prayer. Their claim is that God answers all prayers and that their doctrines, services, preaching and revelations help them to pray effectively” (Babalola, 1988). This is sung and danced to, which encourages a type of mass self-hypnotism.

In the 1920s, a wave of charismatic African churches arrived on the scene of Christian independency in West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and South Africa. These charismatic churches combined the two fundamental elements of Christianity and African culture in a way that advertises their Christian intentions without denouncing their African values (Oshitelu, 2002). AICs sought to make the church a vehicle for spiritual and physical wholeness, not only for the individual but for the whole community. By so doing, the communal life of Africans was restored. AICs, knowing that Africans could not dichotomize life, combined the mundane and spiritual spheres of life. Salvation was considered in both

material and spiritual planes. They perfectly employed the African culture, cosmology, experiences, poems, songs, dances, and celebrations in the gospel message.

In summary, AIC appreciate and worship more in music, especially in their local dialect, because the lyrics are more appealing to the heart.

Conclusion

Western Church music reflects the theology of key Western theologians, emphasizing music as a lived, ‘soulful’ experience translated into lyrics and sound. This experiential nature is mirrored in African Instituted Churches (AICs), where music emerges from worship and personal understanding of God, making it equal in depth to Western music. By using local dialects, AICs strengthened indigenous musical development, aligning Christianity with Nigeria’s socio-cultural context (Offiong, 2011). This decolonization of worship allowed AICs to adapt Christianity meaningfully, making services lively and culturally resonant. Music in AICs thus goes beyond aesthetics, serving as a vehicle for expressing African spirituality, shaping faith, fostering participation, and connecting believers with God and one another, offering an authentic, indigenous form of Christian worship.

Indigenous music in African Instituted Churches (AICs) is a vital theological resource, enabling believers to encounter the divine, express faith, and engage in embodied worship. By integrating Western theological insights with African practices, music is framed as a site of revelation rather than mere entertainment. Indigenized worship using local languages, rhythms, and participatory performance strengthens communal spirituality, African Christian identity, and offers a foundation for further research and preservation.

Based on this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the theological and cultural role of music in African Instituted Churches (AICs). Churches should integrate indigenous musical forms—local languages, rhythms, and instruments—into worship to strengthen cultural identity and spiritual engagement. Seminaries should offer courses in African musicology and contextual theology to equip clergy and worship leaders with a deeper understanding of music as a medium of divine encounter. Further research should explore African church music’s impact on liturgy, community cohesion, and faith formation. AICs should also document and preserve their musical heritage for future generations, while fostering dialogue between African and Western musical traditions to enrich worship without compromising authenticity.

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Teachers' Attitude Toward the Use of Instructional Materials: A Catalyst for Improved English Language Learning in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The utilization of instructional materials to aid content delivery has remained crucial for enhancing result-oriented learning. Improved performance in English language proficiency is equally pivotal to learners' academic success and national development, particularly in Nigeria where English serves as both the official language and the medium of instruction. Hence, there is a pressing need for teachers to develop positive attitudes toward the use of instructional materials. Reports from international organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, FCDO and UNICEF reveal that about 70% of learners at age ten exhibit deficiencies in the basic English language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This highlights the timeliness of this paper in addressing the challenge of teachers' negative attitudes toward instructional materials. The paper argues that teachers' positive attitudes toward instructional materials serve as a catalyst for improving English language learning in secondary schools. While systemic barriers such as paucity of materials, inadequate practical training for teachers and infrastructural deficits persist, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) suggests that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence teachers' attitudes toward adopting and applying innovations and instructional materials. Similarly, the Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners construct knowledge actively when they can relate new learning to their immediate environment through the use of instructional materials. Therefore, the paper recommends the provision of quality instructional materials, the organization of practical-based teacher training, and effective supervision to motivate teachers toward positive attitudes in utilizing instructional materials as a catalyst to improve students' English language performance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Instructional materials, Teacher attitude, English language learning, Secondary schools, Motivation.

Introduction

English language occupies a pivotal position in the educational systems of Nigeria and many African countries. As the official language of Nigeria, English language is the primary medium of instruction in schools and the gateway to higher education, employment, and

participation in the global economy. Beyond Nigeria, English has become a dominant language across the African continent, serving both as a lingua franca in multilingual contexts and as a tool for global communication (Kita, Ngatu and Basikin, 2019). Despite its importance, English language learning outcomes in Africa remain alarmingly poor, reflecting a broader educational crisis characterized by low literacy levels, inadequate instructional resources, and insufficient teacher training (Tom-Lawyer, Thomas and Kalane, 2021).

Recent statistics underscore the magnitude of the problem. According to the World Bank report (2025), more than 75% of Nigerian children are unable to read and understand simple text by the age of ten, a figure that reflects both limited access to textbooks and weak instructional practices. At a broader level, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (2022) reported that nearly 70% of 10-year-olds in low and middle-income countries in Africa cannot read comprehen. These figures point to a persistent challenge in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Without immediate interventions, Nigeria and many African countries risk entrenching cycles of low literacy and reduced economic competitiveness (World Bank, 2021).

The teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools have often been described as challenging due to its abstract nature, complex grammatical structures, and the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students (Afolabi, 2019). Many students struggle with listening, speaking, reading, and writing due to the abstract delivery of lessons and inadequate learner engagement. Instructional materials have therefore become essential tools in bridging these gaps. They provide concrete illustrations, support interactive learning, and help teachers contextualize abstract language concepts (Oladejo, 2020). Instructional materials have long been recommended as essential tools that aid comprehension, retention, and practical application of language skills (Oladejo, 2020). For instance, realia, visual aids, audio-visual tools, and digital resources make abstract concepts tangible and relatable.

However, the effectiveness of these materials is largely shaped by teachers' attitudes. A teacher who embraces innovation and values instructional aids is more likely to create stimulating classroom experiences that foster motivation and deeper understanding. Therefore, the effectiveness of these materials depends largely on the attitudes of teachers who deploy them. A positive attitude encourages innovation, adaptability, and learner-centered pedagogy, while a negative attitude often results in poor usage, thereby limiting students' opportunities for meaningful engagement with language concepts (Okonkwo, 2021).

Globally, research has shown that students exposed to well-integrated instructional materials score 20–30% higher in comprehension-based assessments compared to those in traditional lecture-only classrooms (UNESCO, 2018). Research equally shows that teacher attitudes significantly shape student outcomes. For example, in Finland, where education outcomes consistently rank high, teachers are trained to view instructional materials as essential

mediators of learning rather than supplementary tools (Eneh-Onyejeli, 2025). Similarly, in the UK and the US, English language teachers trained to use digital instructional tools often report higher student engagement (Hattie, 2019). In contrast, in many African contexts, inadequate training and resource constraints hinder positive integration (UNESCO, 2020). In countries such as Ghana and Kenya, government-led initiatives have improved access to instructional aids, yet success stories reveal that teacher attitudes, not just availability, determine real outcomes (World Bank, 2020).

This paper therefore takes the position that teachers' positive attitudes toward the use of instructional materials are a catalyst for improved English language learning in Nigerian and African secondary schools. By situating teacher attitudes within the broader educational context, the paper highlights their role as both a mediating and amplifying factor in ensuring that instructional resources achieve their intended purpose. In doing so, it underscores the need for policies and practices that not only provide adequate materials but also cultivate favorable teacher dispositions toward their use.

Aims and Objectives

This paper discusses the attitude of English Language teachers towards the use of instructional materials and the attendant effects of its usage on improved English Language learning in secondary school. The specific objectives are to;

- I. Identify the attitudes of English Language teachers towards the use of instructional materials
- II. Discuss improved language learning in secondary schools

Literature Review

The Concept of Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are the physical and digital resources teachers employ to simplify teaching and foster learning. These include textbooks, pictures, charts, maps, flashcards, real objects (realia), videos, projectors, and interactive software (Ibrahim, 2020). According to Olagunju (2018), instructional materials act as bridges between theoretical explanations and real-life applications, thereby making learning more concrete and engaging. Studies across sub-Saharan Africa have emphasized the role of teachers using instructional materials in promoting retention and ensuring language skills are acquired in context. For instance, a classroom using role-play cards for dialogue practice recorded higher fluency levels compared to those relying solely on rote learning (Nwachukwu, 2020). Globally, the use of instructional materials has been linked to improved performance in second-language acquisition. In Japan, for instance, the use of multimedia-based language labs has been shown to significantly improve pronunciation and listening comprehension among high school learners (Tanaka, 2017).

Teachers' Attitudes toward Instructional Materials

Teachers' attitudes are shaped by beliefs, training, prior experiences, and the perceived usefulness of materials. Positive attitudes often translate into proactive integration of aids, improvisation where resources are lacking and enthusiasm that inspires learners (Adeyemi, 2017). Conversely, negative attitudes manifest as resistance to change, excessive reliance on teacher-centered lectures, and minimal student engagement (Chukwu, 2020). Obidike and Onwuka (2019) observed that students taught by teachers with high enthusiasm towards instructional aids demonstrated a 15% higher pass rate in English comprehension tests. International research echoes these findings. In Finland, where teacher training emphasizes resource-based pedagogy, students consistently outperform peers in English literacy (OECD, 2019). In contrast, in some Nigerian classrooms, lack of motivation or professional training causes teachers to underutilize available aids (Agboola, 2019).

Positive attitudes often result in innovative and consistent application of instructional resources in the classroom, while negative attitudes are linked to neglect, over-reliance on chalk-and-talk methods, and resistance to technological adoption (Adeyemi, 2017). In Nigerian classrooms, for example, some teachers show enthusiasm for integrating ICT-based resources, while others remain skeptical, perceiving them as distractions rather than tools for learning (Obidike and Onwuka, 2019). In contrast, countries like Singapore have institutionalized professional development programs that train teachers to embrace digital and traditional instructional resources as complementary rather than competing.

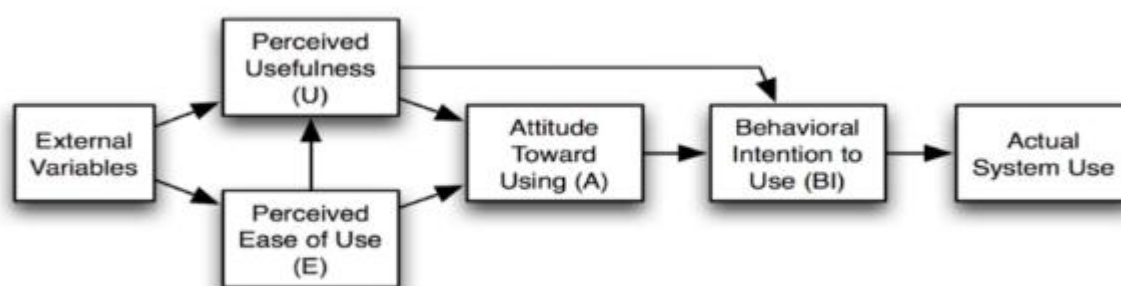
Instructional Materials and English Language Learning

English language learning demands mastery of four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Instructional materials enhance these by promoting practice, contextualization, and multisensory engagement. For example, audio devices improve pronunciation and listening comprehension, while visual charts help learners grasp grammar patterns. Digital applications such as language learning software also allow individualized pacing and feedback (Yusuf, 2018). According to Nwachukwu (2020), the consistent integration of instructional aids can significantly reduce common errors in writing and reading fluency and serve as catalysts for improving these skills by providing opportunities for practice, interaction, and contextual learning (Nwachukwu, 2020). For instance, audio-visual aids enhance listening and speaking abilities, while flashcards and charts facilitate reading and writing. A positive teacher attitude ensures that these materials are integrated into lesson delivery for maximum effect. Classroom-based evidence shows that students exposed to diverse instructional resources develop stronger cognitive links, resulting in improved vocabulary retention and grammar accuracy (Yusuf, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the perspectives of two major theories: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Theory and the Constructivist Learning Theory.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM): TAM posits that an individual's acceptance of a new tool depends on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Applied to education, teachers are more likely to integrate instructional materials, including ICT-based ones, when they believe such tools improve learning and are easy to manage (Wilcox et al., 2024). Positive attitudes, therefore, function as mediators between availability and actual use of instructional resources. This theory was originally designed to explain technology adoption. TAM is relevant for digital instructional aids. Teachers' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use shape their willingness to adopt multimedia, projectors, and online instructional resources. Positive attitudes therefore directly influence integration levels and student outcomes.



Technology Acceptance Model Theory (TAM)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026840121830553X>

Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, Vygotsky): The Constructivist Learning Theory, advanced by Piaget and Vygotsky, emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment. Instructional materials align with this by providing learners with visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli that support self-discovery and contextual understanding (Pouts-Lajus and Riche-Magnier, 2000). A teacher's positive attitude fosters constructivist classrooms where learners take ownership of their progress. Instructional materials provide learners with concrete experiences that help them form mental models of abstract language concepts. For example, using role-play or dialogue cards in English classes allows students to practice real-life communication scenarios, making learning authentic and participatory. This theory suggests that learners construct knowledge actively through interaction with their environment. Instructional materials serve as scaffolds, allowing learners to connect new concepts with prior knowledge (Osei and Boateng, 2022). Teachers' attitudes toward these materials determine whether classrooms function as passive lecture halls or active learning environments.

Therefore, by combining TAM and constructivism, this paper highlights that teacher attitudes are not only shaped by perceptions of usefulness but also by philosophical orientations toward active, student-centered learning.

Policy Framework

Policy frameworks in Nigeria and Africa also acknowledge the importance of instructional materials. The Nigerian Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2021–2025 outlines resource-based teaching as a priority area (Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). Similarly, the African Union’s Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) emphasizes the integration of innovative instructional strategies and teacher training (African Union, 2022). At the global level, UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report (2023) highlights instructional materials, including digital resources, as critical for equitable and effective learning.

Despite these policy aspirations, gaps exist between policy and practice. Teachers often face systemic barriers such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and lack of professional development opportunities. These barriers weaken teacher motivation and hinder effective classroom practice (Okafor and Adeniran, 2023). Thus, academic research and policy documents converge on a central point that while instructional materials are vital, teacher attitudes are decisive in determining their classroom utility.

Conclusion

Teachers’ attitudes towards instructional materials play a pivotal role in shaping the quality of English language learning in secondary schools. A positive attitude not only enhances comprehension and motivation but also fosters inclusivity, creativity, and critical thinking. Conversely, negative attitudes undermine students’ learning outcomes and perpetuate ineffective pedagogy. By drawing lessons from international best practices and grounding recommendations in educational theories, it becomes clear that sustained professional development, adequate resourcing, and positive reinforcement are essential for transforming classrooms. Ultimately, cultivating positive teacher attitudes toward instructional materials is not just a matter of improving English language proficiency but also an investment in equipping students with the communication skills necessary for global citizenship and lifelong learning.

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Exploring Social Media Effects on Nigerian Youth's Perceptions of Apostasy as Tools for Peacebuilding

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media in Nigeria has transformed the ways in which young people engage with religious ideas, identities, and debates, particularly on sensitive issues such as apostasy in a religiously plural society. As digital platforms increasingly shape public discourse, perceptions of religious conversion or renunciation are often constructed and circulated through online interactions that may reinforce existing beliefs or intensify interreligious tensions. This study therefore investigates how social media influences Nigerian youths' perceptions of apostasy and the implications of these perceptions for peacebuilding. Drawing on Social Media Theory and Conflict Theory, the study explains how algorithm-driven content circulation, user interaction, and online echo chambers can amplify identity-based narratives, while group dynamics and competition for ideological influence may frame apostasy as a form of communal betrayal. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through an online survey administered to 200 respondents aged 18–45 across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. The findings indicate that social media significantly shapes youth perceptions of apostasy, often reinforcing polarized viewpoints through algorithmic filtering and the spread of misinformation, which may deepen suspicion between religious communities. At the same time, the study identifies opportunities for digital platforms to promote dialogue, interfaith understanding, and peace-oriented communication. The study concludes that while social media can intensify ideological divisions, it also holds considerable potential as a tool for digital peacebuilding when supported by critical digital literacy and intentional efforts to promote responsible and constructive online engagement.

Keywords: *Social Media, Apostasy, Nigeria, Youth, Peacebuilding, Interfaith Dialogue, Online Discourse, Misinformation, Extremism.*

Introduction

Numerous inventions meant to make life easier and promote global well-being have been spurred by the desire to better human living. Social media, which has developed through incredible technological milestones from telegraph (1792) and radio (1891) to supercomputers (1940s), the World Wide Web (1991), and numerous platforms like LinkedIn

(2002), Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), WhatsApp (2009), and Instagram (2010). Social media has become essential as a result of these innovations' profound effects on all facets of human life. Connecting with friends and family, locating employment, assisting companies with a larger customer base, keeping up with news, and encouraging knowledge exchange are just a few of its applications. In the modern world, social media has emerged as a crucial instrument for engagement, communication, and real-time information access. According to recent statistics, Nigeria has one of the biggest populations of social media users in Africa. The widespread use of cellphones, easier access to the internet, and the allure of social media in promoting immediate and extensive contact are the main causes of this high level of participation. This connectivity gives Nigerian adolescents essential connection to their local and international communities, allowing them to engage in a cross-border cultural conversation. As a result, social media facilitates cross-cultural communication by enabling the rapid adoption and dissemination of trends, norms, and values. Studies have shown that teenagers, adolescents and youths are among the most prolific users of social media across the globe. Roberts and Foehr also observe that with personal computers in their family rooms, laptops that they carry about and digital music players as well as cell phones in their backpacks, today's adolescents and youths are awash with social media. Neelamalar and Chitra further noted that an average of six to eight hours daily social media use has been reported for eighteen to thirty-five years-old adolescents and youths around the world, making them to spend more time with social media than any single activity other than sleeping. Apart from its use for positive things, social media has also been found to have its negative impact on the society. Some of which include, spreading of false information, promoting criminal activities, helping in the quick spread of vices, delinquencies in Juveniles. It is also addictive, and can preoccupy someone and prevent him or her from attending to other more pressing things.

Apostasy is the act of renouncing or abandoning one's religion, it can also be associated with the refusal to adopt or follow a given religion (generally within a territory controlled by that religion). The act of leaving one's religion, or apostasy, has important socio-religious ramifications in Nigeria, a nation with a diverse religious landscape that includes Christians, Muslims, followers of traditional religions, and an increasing number of people who are not religious. Apostasy from Islam or Christianity can result in extreme social stigma in many parts of Nigeria, especially in the more religiously orthodox north. Apostates may experience rejection from their social circles, families, and communities, which can lead to loneliness, lack of social support, and trouble making new friends. Conversion from one religion to another, or renouncing religion altogether, can also strain family ties considerably. They may be disowned, face pressure to recant, and experience breakdown of marriages, especially in situations where religious laws or customs heavily influence family matters. Individuals may lose their jobs, especially in religious institutions or religiously affiliated organizations. Inheritance rights might be revoked, and business relationships could be affected due to religious discrimination. In extreme cases, particularly in regions where

religious sentiments are strong or where certain interpretations of religious law prevail, apostates can face threats, harassment, physical violence, and even death. Nigeria's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, including the right to change one's religion. However, in some northern states that operate under Sharia law alongside secular law, apostasy from Islam can be considered a crime, although the enforcement and penalties vary. This creates a complex legal landscape where constitutional rights may clash with religious legal interpretations and many others.

Conflict can arise in these situations and as a part of the social and political aspect of human life, conflict is inherent and legitimate. However, conflict turns violent in many circumstances, causing grave damages in terms of lives and properties. The costs and consequences of conflict become highly unacceptable as it destroys the social fabric of the society. The significance of peacebuilding in a multi-religious society like Nigeria is profound and multifaceted. Religion, while often a source of social cohesion and positive values, can also be manipulated or become a marker of identity in conflicts over resources, power, and social justice. Peacebuilding efforts can proactively address religiously motivated misunderstandings and prejudices, preventing escalation into violence. In situations where religious differences have contributed to conflict, peacebuilding initiatives can create platforms for dialogue and reconciliation, helping to de-escalate tensions and foster understanding between communities.

In light of the transformative influence of social media on modern society, particularly among youth, it is crucial to examine its impact on sensitive socio-religious issues such as apostasy. As social media continues to serve as both a mirror and molder of societal values, it plays a critical role in shaping how Nigerian youth perceive religious identity, loyalty, and dissent. These perceptions have far-reaching implications for peacebuilding in a religiously pluralistic country like Nigeria, where misunderstandings around apostasy can inflame tensions and threaten social cohesion. The problem this study addresses is the extent to which social media platforms influence Nigerian youth's perceptions of apostasy, and how these perceptions affect peacebuilding efforts. To this end, the objectives of the study are threefold: (1) to assess the role of social media in shaping perceptions of apostasy among Nigerian youth, (2) to examine how online platforms contribute to societal polarization or promote interfaith dialogue, and (3) to provide strategies for leveraging social media for peacebuilding. The research will seek answers to critical questions such as: How do social media algorithms and user-generated content influence perceptions of apostasy? What role do online echo chambers play in spreading extremist narratives? And how can social media be utilized to foster interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding? This study is significant as it offers insights that can inform policy-making, guide religious leaders, and strengthen civil society initiatives aimed at promoting tolerance and unity. Moreover, it aims to enhance strategies for mitigating the adverse effects of social media while maximizing its potential for building a more peaceful and inclusive society. The scope of the study will focus on Nigerian youth from diverse religious backgrounds and

regions, with recognition of limitations related to data access, platform restrictions, and the complexity of measuring digital influence.

Methodology

Data for the study were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via digital platforms. The use of an online form was considered appropriate because the study focuses on social media engagement among youths. Individuals who actively use social media are more easily reached through digital channels, making the online survey method consistent with the nature of the research topic. Online data collection also enabled the researcher to reach respondents across multiple regions of Nigeria within a relatively short period of time. In addition, the anonymity associated with online responses may have encouraged participants to express their views more freely, particularly on a sensitive issue such as apostasy.

However, the method may exclude individuals with limited internet access and may also introduce self-selection bias, as respondents who are more active online or have stronger opinions may be more likely to participate. Despite these limitations, the online survey method remains appropriate for studies examining digital behavior and perceptions within social media environments.

Sampling and Sampling Analysis

The study adopted a non-probability sampling approach, distributing the survey across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones in order to obtain responses from different parts of the country. The intention was not to achieve full statistical representation of the Nigerian population, which would be impractical, but rather to obtain a small yet diverse representation of Nigerian youths.

A total of 200 respondents aged 18–45 participated in the survey. This age range was selected because individuals within this bracket are often still regarded as part of the youth demographic in many social and policy contexts in Nigeria, particularly in terms of digital engagement and participation in youth-oriented religious communities. The sampling strategy deliberately included participants from each geopolitical zone, ensuring that the study captured perspectives from different socio-religious environments. Although the number of responses from each region varies, the distribution allowed the researcher to obtain at least some insights from all parts of the country.

While the findings cannot be generalized to the entire Nigerian youth population, the sample provides valuable exploratory evidence of how social media shapes perceptions of apostasy among youths across different regions of Nigeria.

Definitions and interpretations of apostasy in Nigerian religious contexts

The question of Apostasy and whether and how it should be punished, has primarily been a concern in Abrahamic religions which are the religions that trace their roots to Abraham including Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Apostasy in Christianity

Since the beginning of Christianity, the topic of apostasy has been central to Christian philosophy. When the Romans persecuted Christians, some of them abandoned their faith before it became a dominant one. The common response to the subject of how to handle those who wished to rejoin the church but had formally rejected Christianity was to avoid them. However, things altered after the Roman Emperor embraced Christianity. Some theologians, at least, believed that apostasy was just as grave a crime as murder or adultery. The most common punishment was excommunication. In the 20th century, Roman Catholic Canon Law still imposed the sanction of excommunication for those whose rejection of the faith fitted the technical definition of apostasy. But the absence of civil sanctions and an increasing tolerance of divergent viewpoints have tended increasingly to mitigate the reaction of believers to those who reject Christianity. The seriousness of apostasy is emphasized in both the Old and New Testaments. Scripture says apostasy jeopardizes one's soul's salvation, and intentional disbelief was punishable by stoning in ancient Israel. From the beginning of time, believers have faced challenges from apostasy in the form of heresy and idolatry. When his disciples abandoned him for worldly pursuits, Jesus Christ felt tremendous sadness. Rebellions and divisions are also documented in the New Testament. Apostasy is still common in the church today. The church responds to a person's departure from Christianity by visiting, counseling, and evangelizing them. Jesus advocated kindness and self-control and forbade the persecution of apostates. Since Christianity calls for divine accountability rather than punishment for apostasy, both clergy and laypeople are to leave judgment to God.

Apostasy in Islam

Apostasy originates from the Arabic verb *Radda*, meaning “turning back.” *Riddah* and *Trinidad* also denote apostasy—turning back from Islam to another religion or unbelief. An apostate is called a *murtad*. For instance, *Radda-yard* means turning back on one's faith after accepting it. Islamic teaching defines apostasy as renouncing Islam or abandoning its epistemological and moral foundations. Some modern scholars define it as rejecting Islam's fundamental beliefs. The main debate centers not on its definition but on punishment. While some scholars advocate death for apostates, others argue that killing someone for leaving Islam contradicts the core teachings of the Qur'an. According to Istifanus, Azam (2007) says apostasy portrays the sense of turning away from Islam after receiving the commandment of Allah. This act involves a retreat from the Islamic faith to a new creed the apostate believes in, including a shift to another religion, adoption of atheism, or lack of belief in any religion.

These forms of retreat are examples of apostasy. The Qur'an refers to apostasy as withdrawal from Islam or the spiritual plane. It clearly indicates abandonment of Islam after accepting it, whether briefly or for a long time, and warns those who accept Islam only to later forsake it. Apostasy, therefore, signals a serious spiritual retreat. Azam urges those who accept Islam to cling to it, as it is the true guidance and authority, the way of living and life. He encourages perseverance in faith, advising Muslims to remain steadfast and die as Muslim believers, without turning back.

Peacebuilding

According to Henry, Bliss defined peace building as a term within the international development community that describes processes and activities aimed at resolving violent conflicts and establishing sustainable peace. These include conflict transformation, restorative justice, trauma healing, reconciliation, development, and leadership. While similar to conflict resolution, peace building goes further by focusing on sustainable social and economic development and, more importantly, preventing future wars and violence. Gauden (cited by Henry) defines peace building as ensuring a country or society creates conditions for sustainable peace. These conditions may be created in already peaceful societies to prevent conflict or in post-conflict situations after conflict resolution mechanisms have ended the violence. In post-conflict settings, peace building begins during the transition period and involves implementing peace agreements. Gauden also notes that peace building is a continuous process involving various measures such as transformation of state organs, socio-economic development, democratization, and regional integration to maintain long-term peace.

National governments' interest in peace building has increased due to concerns that failed states foster conflict and extremism, threatening international security. Some states now see peace building as a way to assert their relevance, though these activities still account for small portions of national budgets. While short-term humanitarian relief and crisis intervention are important, they are insufficient for lasting impact in conflict or post-conflict societies. There is growing awareness of the need for proactive measures to prevent violent conflicts, and where conflict occurs, to pursue reconciliation, build conflict resolution capacity, and foster sustainable peace. Peace building theory focuses on addressing root causes of violence to reduce future outbreaks. The literature describes peace building as dynamic, contributing at every conflict phase and adapting to each stage of peacemaking. It is increasingly recognized that conflicts rarely end completely or are fully resolved, and stopping a conflict without justice may be counterproductive. The most durable peace agreements involve proactive strategies and mutual participation by conflicting groups. Despite varied definitions, peace building ultimately aims to create an atmosphere of positive peace, love, and tranquility essential for human flourishing and achieving life's best outcomes.

Social Media Theory: Algorithms, User Behavior, and Echo Chambers

Social media platforms have become ubiquitous in the 21st century, fundamentally altering how individuals connect, consume information, and participate in public discourse. At the heart of this transformation lie the sophisticated algorithms that curate the content users encounter. Understanding the interplay between these algorithms, user behavior, and the emergence of echo chambers is crucial for comprehending the societal impact of social media.

Algorithms

Social media algorithms are complex systems designed to personalize user experience by determining which content appears in an individual's feed. These algorithms consider a multitude of factors, including: User Interactions like past likes, comments, shares, and follows signal preferences and influence future content recommendations, Content Characteristics which is the type of content (text, image, video), its recency, popularity, and the engagement it generates all play a role and Network Effects like content from users within an individual's network and broader trends within their communities are prioritized. While the primary goal of these algorithms is often framed as enhancing user engagement and platform stickiness, their inherent design can inadvertently lead to filter bubbles and echo chambers. By prioritizing content that aligns with existing preferences and showing users more of what they have previously engaged with, algorithms can limit exposure to diverse perspectives.

User Behavior

User behavior on social media is a complex interplay of individual motivations, social influences, and platform design. Several key aspects of user behavior contribute to the dynamics within social media ecosystems. Individuals tend to seek out information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs and avoid contradictory viewpoints. This cognitive bias is amplified on social media, where users can easily curate their feeds by following like-minded individuals and groups. Engagement with content, such as likes and positive comments, reinforces users' beliefs and encourages them to share similar content. This creates feedback loops where opinions within a network become increasingly homogenous. The tendency for individuals to connect with others who share similar characteristics, including beliefs and values, further contributes to the formation of insular online communities.

Echo Chambers

Echo chambers, also known as filter bubbles, are online environments where individuals are primarily exposed to information and perspectives that reinforce their existing beliefs. This phenomenon arises from the combination of algorithmic filtering and users' tendency

towards selective exposure and network homophily. Within echo chambers, users are less likely to encounter dissenting opinions or alternative perspectives, hindering critical thinking and nuanced understanding of complex issues. Repeated exposure to like-minded viewpoints strengthens conviction and can lead to the polarization of opinions. The lack of exposure to fact-checking and diverse sources can make individuals within echo chambers more vulnerable to the spread of misinformation and propaganda. Limited interaction with those holding different beliefs can erode empathy and understanding across social and political divides.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory, as associated with Karl Marx, is a social theory that posits that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. Conflict theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than by consensus and conformity. According to conflict theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless. A basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups within society will work to try to maximize their own wealth and power. Conflict theory provides a framework for understanding *why* certain groups propagate misinformation and extremist narratives. Dominant groups might use misinformation to reinforce existing power structures by scapegoating marginalized groups and deflecting blame for societal problems. Competition for scarce resources – be it land, economic opportunities, or political influence is a central tenet of conflict theory.⁵ Misinformation can be strategically used to demonize rival groups and justify their exclusion from accessing these resources. For example, false claims about a particular ethnic group hoarding wealth can fuel resentment and calls for discriminatory policies. Extremist narratives, even if based on falsehoods, can strengthen in-group solidarity by creating a shared sense of purpose and a common enemy. This heightened cohesion can be a powerful tool for collective action, including conflict.

From a conflict theory perspective, misinformation and extremist narratives are not simply misguided beliefs; they are potent instruments in the struggle for power and resources. By creating divisions, weaponizing grievances, undermining trust, and dehumanizing others, these narratives act as a catalyst for societal conflict. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for developing effective strategies to counter misinformation, de-escalate tensions, and foster more inclusive and equitable societies.

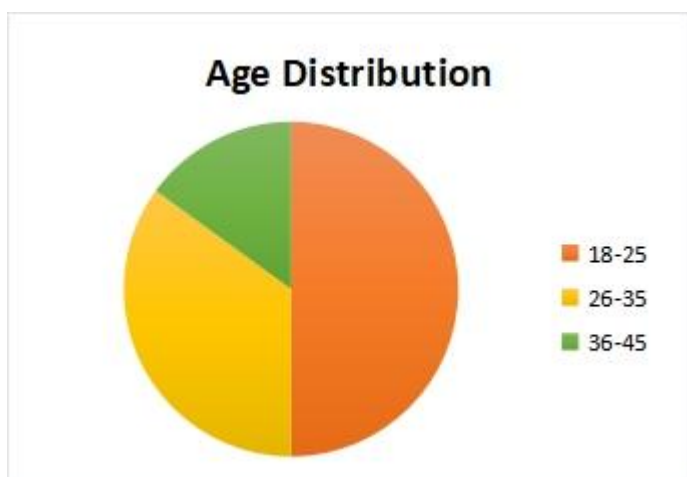
Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings from the survey conducted on how social media influences Nigerian youths' perception of apostasy and its implications for peacebuilding. The

analysis follows a thematic and statistical approach, supported by existing literature and the responses derived from the administered questionnaire.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 200 respondents aged 18–45 participated in the survey, distributed across Nigeria’s geopolitical zones. The sample was stratified by gender, region, and religious affiliation.



| REGIONS REPRESENTED | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| South-West | 55 | 27.5% |
| North Central | 35 | 17.5% |
| North West | 45 | 22.5% |
| South-East | 30 | 15% |
| North-East | 25 | 12.5% |
| South-South | 10 | 5% |
| Total | 200 | 100 % |

| RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Christianity | 100 | 50% |
| Islam | 90 | 45% |
| Traditional Religion | 6 | 3% |
| None/Other | 4 | 2% |
| Total | 200 | 100 % |

| GENDER | FREQUENCY |
|--------|-----------|
|--------|-----------|

| | | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------|-----|-------------------|
| Male | 110 | 55% |
| Female | 86 | 43% |
| Prefer Not to Say | 4 | 2% |
| Total | 200 | 100 % |

Social Media Usage Patterns

Most Used Platforms: WhatsApp (60%), Facebook (50%), Twitter/X (50%), Instagram (40%).

Time Spent Daily: 4–6 hours (50%), 1–3 hours (30%), 7+ hours (15%), less than 1 hour (5%).

Adequacy of the Data Used

The study utilized data obtained from 200 respondents between the ages of 18 and 45 drawn from Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. The dataset is adequate for an exploratory quantitative study examining how social media influences youth perceptions of apostasy and its implications for peacebuilding. The sample reflects diversity in region, gender, and religious affiliation, which is particularly important given Nigeria's complex religious landscape. Including respondents from different regions and religious backgrounds strengthens the analytical value of the study by capturing varied perspectives on a sensitive socio-religious issue. Although the sample cannot fully represent the entire Nigerian youth population, it provides sufficient empirical insight into patterns of perception among digitally active youths, especially those who frequently engage with social media platforms. The data therefore serve as a useful basis for examining emerging trends in online religious discourse and its potential implications for interfaith relations.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The analysis was guided by the research objectives which sought to examine how social media shapes perceptions of apostasy among Nigerian youths, assess its role in digital polarization, and explore its potential for peacebuilding.

The findings indicate that social media plays a significant role in shaping youth perceptions of apostasy. Respondents reported high levels of engagement with platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter/X, and Instagram, with most spending between four and six hours online daily. This level of engagement suggests that social media has become an important space where religious narratives and identity discussions are formed and circulated.

A recurring theme in the responses was the perception of apostasy as a form of religious or communal betrayal. Posts condemning religious conversion or renunciation were

reported to attract significant engagement online. This pattern supports existing studies which show that emotionally charged content, particularly when linked to identity and belief systems, tends to spread rapidly within digital networks. The findings also suggest the presence of algorithmically reinforced echo chambers. Many respondents indicated that the content they encounter online often reflects their existing beliefs. This dynamic limit exposure to alternative viewpoints and may reinforce rigid attitudes toward religious differences.

Another important finding relates to the spread of misinformation within online spaces. Some respondents acknowledged encountering misleading information regarding religious conversion or interfaith relations, which sometimes contributed to suspicion between religious communities. Such patterns align with broader research that identifies misinformation as a major driver of polarization in digital environments.

Despite these challenges, the study also reveals that social media can function as a platform for constructive engagement. Respondents noted examples of interfaith discussions, educational content, and digital campaigns promoting tolerance and dialogue. These initiatives demonstrate the potential of social media to support peacebuilding efforts when intentionally used to promote understanding and respectful interaction between religious groups. Overall, the findings highlight the dual nature of social media: while it can amplify divisive narratives and reinforce ideological boundaries, it can also provide opportunities for dialogue, education, and digital peace advocacy.

Recommendations

Following the findings, the researchers recommend:

Strengthening digital literacy programs among Nigerian youths: Implement educational initiatives at schools, universities, and religious institutions to equip young people with critical thinking and media literacy skills, enabling them to identify and reject online misinformation.

Equip religious institutions and influencers with tools to counter misinformation: Provide training and support for religious leaders and online influencers to actively engage in constructive discourse and respond to false narratives with credible information and peaceful messaging.

Collaborate with tech platforms to promote interfaith-friendly content: Advocate for algorithmic transparency and corporate social responsibility from social media companies to prioritize peace-promoting content, remove extremist material, and support interfaith dialogue initiatives.

Conclusion

This study examined how social media influences Nigerian youths' perceptions of apostasy and the implications of these perceptions for peacebuilding in a religiously plural society. The findings show that social media has become a significant platform where discussions about religion, identity, and belief are actively shaped. On one hand, algorithmic amplification, echo chambers, and the spread of misinformation can reinforce negative attitudes toward religious dissent and contribute to digital polarization. These dynamics may indirectly affect interfaith relations by deepening suspicion and misunderstanding among religious communities.

On the other hand, the study also demonstrates that social media holds considerable potential as a tool for promoting dialogue and interfaith understanding. When used strategically, digital platforms can support educational initiatives, encourage respectful engagement, and amplify messages of tolerance.

The study therefore underscores the importance of strengthening digital literacy, encouraging responsible online discourse, and promoting peace-oriented digital initiatives. By doing so, social media can be better harnessed as a platform that contributes not only to information exchange but also to sustainable peacebuilding within Nigeria's diverse religious landscape.

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Co-existence of English and Nigerian Languages in National Development: Prospects and Constraints

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Abstract

This paper examines the prospects of using the English language alongside Nigerian languages for national development. The literature is replete with opinions on the developmental potentials of Nigerian languages. The paper hinges on the Exoglossic and Endoglossic Perspectives as theoretical frameworks. Scholars, who contend for an exoglossic option as a language policy for Nigeria, want English to be entrenched as Nigeria's National Language because apart from being void of ethnic sentiments, its vocabulary and grammar are developed. The Endoglossic perspective believes in the developmental potentials of a well-developed Nigerian language. This paper recommends the co-existence of the English language and Nigerian languages as a vehicle for national development. This paper opines that the above recommendation can be achieved if germane, result-driven and forward-looking language policies are created and implemented for the country. The study attempts to promote the use of other indigenous languages as a means to drive national development as against the initial emphasis on the three major languages. The data for this study were obtained from A report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meeting which was held in 1951 among experts on indigenous languages and was published in a seminal papers titled *The Sociology of Language* edited by J.A Fishman. The finding of the study showed but not limited to the assertion that language is a development asset of society, particularly if its potential is fully recognized and exploited.

Keywords: Nigerian languages, English, co-existence, national development, Exoglossic Option and Endoglossic Option.

Introduction

Language is very crucial in the growth and development of any nation. In Nigeria, the Education Ordinance of 1882 entrenched the English language as the medium of instruction in formal education. In 1896, the Certification System was introduced, and Credit Pass in English became compulsion for candidates seeking admission in Nigerian universities irrespective of the course of study. As English continues to play significant roles in the development of Nigeria, indigenous languages continue to suffer from the over-dominance of English. This paper aligns with the stance of scholars who believe that English can co-exist with Nigerian languages for nation-building. Therefore, the thrust of the paper is to discuss the prospects and constraints of such co-existence. Nigerian languages such as Hausa language, Igbo languages and Yoruba languages can play a powerful role in national

development when they are actively promoted and integrated into key sectors like education and literacy, political participation and governance, economic development, cultural preservation and tourism, media and information dissemination, national unity and inclusion, legal and justice system and technology transfer. Nigeria languages are not just cultural asserts. When properly used can serve as a tool for improved education, good governance and economic growth and development.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim and objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify the potentials of using Nigeria indigenous languages as a medium of national development;
- ii. state the roles which indigenous languages can play in resolving in conflict resolution, peace and confidence building, internal trade, health campaigns, early formal education and adult literacy as well as mass media;and
- iii. identify indigenous languages as medium of information and knowledge for national development;

Review of Previous Studies

Several researchers, such as Okon Angela Raymond, Carol Ohen and Florence Oghiator have researched on Indigenous Languages as a vehicle for National Development.

Okon Angela Raymond in her investigation on: ‘the development of indigenous language in nation-building’ perceived language as a means of communication where messages are conveyed from a speaker to the receiver(s). Such message can be instructional, emotional, conditions, viewpoints and philosophies. Nation building is underscored in the work as the framing or shaping of a national identity through the instrumentality of state power, aimed at unifying the people within the state and thereby engendering political, economic and socio-cultural sustainability and stability of the state. Consequently, five research objectives, commensurate research questions and hypotheses were presented. Also, the human capital theory by Adams Smith (1776) anchored the work, descriptive design utilized and key concepts such as the linguistic design in Nigeria, language history in Nigeria, the five characteristics of a language, the four language skills, nation building as well as indigenous language and nation building in Nigeria were treated. It was thus recommended among others that the implementation of the language policy of the National Policy on Education (NPE) should be held seriously by both the government and the stakeholders. This will go a long way in enhancing their development and relevance in the task of national development; the teaching and learning of Nigerian languages should be compulsory in Nigerian schools including nursery and primary schools; and Nigerians should have a positive attitude towards

the use and study of their indigenous languages. This is because language is a cultural identity and heritage which is indispensable in social interaction and national integration. This current work hinges on the Exoglossic and Endoglossic perspectives as theoretical frameworks. Scholars, who contend for an exoglossic option as a language policy for Nigeria, want English to be entrenched as Nigeria's National Language because apart from being void of ethnic sentiments, its vocabulary and grammar are developed. Okon on the other hand used the human capital theory by Adams Smith (1776). The current study also encourages the endoglossic option as a language policy for Nigeria; this emphasizes well-developed Nigerian languages to be used for the day to day activities of the nation towards national development.

. The previous study makes a case for the implementation of the language policy of the National Policy on Education (NPE). The current study also shares the opinion of the previous study as it regards the implementation of the implementation of the language policy of the National Policy on Education (NPE). The previous study tends to tilt favourable towards the use of only Nigerian languages as a means for national development while the present study encourages the use of English language alongside Nigerian languages as a means for national development

Carol Ohen & Florence Oghiator on their research on 'Language as a Tool for National Cohesion and Development in Nigeria' looks at the role that language plays in socio-cultural life, education, and politics of Nigeria. It employs library information with focus on the use of language as a tool for national cohesion and development in Nigeria. The article posits that language can be more instrumental to Nigeria's development economically, politically, socially and culturally, with the people remaining united in diversity. It shows that governance, socio-cultural interactions, and education cannot be successfully achieved in a given nation outside language. It is thus a necessary agent for peace, harmony, unity and progress in every nation. The paper recommends English as a lingua franca that should be taught to every Nigerian for better integration within the system. It concludes that language is a major tool if cohesion and national development are to be achieved in the nation. The previous study emphasized on the promotion of English language as Nigerian's lingual franca because of the multi-lingual nature of the Nigerian society. This position is shared by the present study when it makes a case for the use of an exoglossic option as opined by some scholars as a language policy for Nigeria, want English to be entrenched as Nigeria's National Language because apart from being void of ethnic sentiments, its vocabulary and grammar are developed. The present study differs from the previous study which only emphasizes English language above Nigerian languages. The present study also encourages the endoglossic option as a language policy for Nigeria; this emphasizes well-developed Nigerian languages to be used for the day to day activities of the nation towards national development.

Theoretical Framework

The endoglossic and exoglossic policy were used as the theoretical framework for this research. An endoglossic policy involves the promotion of one or several indigenous languages as official or national languages, whilst the exoglossic policy refers to the adoption of the ex-colonial language, external to the country, as an official or national language.

Methodology

The data for this study were obtained from A report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) meeting which was held in 1951 among experts on indigenous languages and was published in a seminal papers titled *The Sociology of Language* edited by J.A Fishman

The experts from the seminal came out with the following observations:
i) The mother tongue is a person's natural means of self-expression, and one of his first needs is to develop his power of self-expression;

ii) Every pupil should begin his formal education in his mother tongue; and

iii) There is nothing in the structure of any language that precludes it from becoming a vehicle of modern civilization. (UNESCO, 1951; Fishman, 1968)

Data Presentation and Analysis

After independence, most of the African countries were faced with many challenges in an attempt to shape their nationhood and stimulate national development, with the focus to becoming modern states. Furthermore, they had to satisfy what Fishman (1971) referred to as unification, authenticity and modernity. Broadly, these countries needed unity among the many and diverse ethnic groups which made up semi-autonomous ethno-linguistic entities as well as identity of their sovereignty as states and development in an attempt to become like the modern world both socio-economically and technologically. Majorly, how to come to grips with the prevailing multilingual and multiethnic peculiarity was the most challenging issue facing these African countries; thus, the need to adopt language policies. Nigeria was not spared from this challenge, this brought about the issue of the national policy on education which had the language policy of the country encapsulated in it as the law concerning the teaching of indigenous language.

One of the many tasks that the newly independent countries of Africa faced in the early 1960s was the choice of an official language that would not only facilitate communication and therefore support the various developmental efforts, but one that would also provide much needed unity among the many ethnic groups, numbering, in some cases, over one hundred. Expectedly, the sought after official language was to assist in establishing national identity as

well as self-determination for the countries. These countries were therefore faced with choosing either of the two language policies; the endoglossic or exoglossic policy.

An endoglossic policy involves the promotion of one or several indigenous languages as official or national languages, whilst the exoglossic policy refers to the adoption of the ex-colonial language, external to the country, as an official or national language. In relation to this, most of the African countries took a short-cut by adopting an exoglossic language policy, in which the ex-colonial language was adopted as official language and, in some cases, served also as national language.

It is interesting to note that the importance of language was emphasized in the National Policy of Education as Revised in (2004) Edition when it was that “government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion; and preserving cultures. Thus every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity it is expedient that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba”. The emphasis here is for learning sake and not for use as an official language, rather according to the same document French language was to be used as our second official language while English language is the first official language with no room for our indigenous languages playing any role in our national life. The above quote from the Revised National Policy on Education (2004) is in Section 1. Section 2 deals with Early Childhood Pre-Primary Education. This includes crèche, nursery and kindergarten. The language for instruction in this level of education was not mentioned rather the emphasis was on how the teachers will assist the parents of the kids look after them while preparing them towards primary education. Section 3 deals with basic education. This includes 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. The languages to be taught are the language of the environment, English, French and Arabic. This contradicts section 1 which emphasized on only Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The language policy in section 3 also applies to senior secondary school but it is important to note that the language of the environment which is meant to be taught is not compulsory as such some schools don't even teach indigenous languages to their students. At the tertiary levels, indigenous languages are not taught rather French and Arabic are taught as courses under the General Studies Division. From the above submission, the National Policy of Education which is the regulator on language policy in Nigeria is on the side of exoglossic policy rather than endoglossic policy.

Owing to lack of proper language planning and policy implementation, many countries in Africa haven't recognized the potentials that their languages can play in their national development. As Bamgbose(1991:111) opines most of their policy and decisions on national language are made up of either 'avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation and declaration without implementation.' Oftentimes, the existence of these indigenous languages is seen as stumbling block to national unity, identity and development.

Language is a development asset of society, particularly if its potential is fully recognized and exploited. It can be a key contributing force towards nationhood and national development if properly managed, (Bamgbose, 2000:30). The indigenous languages of Africa can therefore be vehicles of national development if put to proper use. Such languages need to be looked at not as stumbling blocks, but as potential national development resources. As with all other resources, they need to be allocated in areas where they can be of optimal utility. For this reason the choice of languages and their domains of use need to be made on strictly economic grounds in much the same way as for any other resource in the nation's economy, (Fishman 1971, 1974; Jernudd & De Gupta, 1971). It is important that each country looks for optimization of the use of the national linguistic resource at the least possible cost with the aim to drive development. Conversely, recognizing that language is a resource with a social rather than an economic value, allowance is usually made for social and cultural factors which may affect its use. A nation's languages should be developed and used with the aim of fully involving their speakers, cognitively in the advancement of the nation as a whole.

Findings

1. Language is a development asset of society, particularly if its potential is fully recognized and exploited.
2. National Policy of Education which is the regulator on language policy in Nigeria is on the side of exoglossic policy rather than endoglossic policy.
3. The policy and decisions on national language in Nigeria and most African countries are made up of avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation and declaration without implementation.
4. Most African countries took a short-cut by adopting an exoglossic language policy, in which the ex-colonial language was adopted as official language and, in some cases, served also as national language

Recommendations

- a. The National Language Policy on Education should be revised again but this time the teaching of the language of the environment should be made compulsory from early childhood education to tertiary level.
- b. Areas or environment where there are no materials or teachers the indigenous language that has teachers and materials should be taught in such environment.
- c. Government should encourage the training and re-training of our indigenous language teachers.

d. English language should still be used as our official language due to the multi-ethnic nature of our society.

e. Government should encourage the training and re-training of English language teachers so as to encourage competence among the teachers more so since English language is a language of the world.

Conclusion

Since the government of Nigeria recognizes the importance of language as stated in the National Policy of Education in the Revised Edition (2004) it is therefore pertinent for the teaching and learning of our indigenous languages starting from the early childhood education to tertiary institution. Teachers should be trained to teach our indigenous languages. Books, teaching aids and other education materials in our indigenous languages should be developed to facilitate the teaching and learning our indigenous languages. English language should continue to be used as our official language due to the multi ethnic and multi lingual nature of our country. This will help in fostering our unity in our diversity. The government should encourage the training and re-training of English language teachers in order to improve their competence bearing in mind that English is a world language. Nigerian languages such as Hausa language, Igbo languages and Yoruba languages can play a powerful role in national development when they are actively promoted and integrated into key sectors like education and literacy, political participation and governance, economic development, cultural preservation and tourism, media and information dissemination, national unity and inclusion, legal and justice system and technology transfer. Nigerian languages are not just cultural asserts. When properly used can serve as a tool for improved education, good governance and economic growth and development.

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Assessment of the Roles of The Redeemed Christian Church of God in Ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Ibadan South West

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Abstract

This study examined the role of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Ibadan South West. The study used quantitative method. Restorative justice and Social learning theories were adopted. The study exposed that; the Church has a substantial connection in fostering peace building in conflicting regions. The methodologies employed by the Church have significant relationship in ensuring peace and harmony in the Nigerian community. Christian leaders and organizations have characteristics that are considered credible and trustworthy by the local populace to their institute roles in their different societies and as such should be used in conflict situations and peace building. Nigerians should be enlightened to view themselves as one no matter their religious disparities. The study further recommended that; Church leaders should approach politicians and instruct them the significance of good governance and challenge them; church leaders should preach and promote ethno-religious tolerance and to accommodate opposing views as part of deepening peaceful co-existence and harmony in the country; Church leaders should observe Christian politicians in order to sponsor bills of peaceful co-existence; inter-faith training of the youths should be encouraged by the Church leaders so as to instruct them about the faith of others; Church leaders should make sure they safeguard religious freedom of the populace; there is need to uphold a human rights based methodology to the safeguard of religious freedom in Nigeria; the Church should reinforce their efforts as facilitator of dialogues and mediators of conflicts between conflicting bodies; the Church should establish their advocacy by orientating and sensitizing the public about their rights and the rights of others particularly on peaceful co-existence, civic and religious rights, among others.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, Technologies, Christians, Faith, Science, the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

Introduction

Background to the Study

The nation Nigeria is a nation that comprises of over two hundred and fifty diverse ethnic groups. The nation is profusely blessed in different cultures and natural resources, (Ugwu, *et.al.*, 2024). The most practiced religions in Nigeria are Christianity, Islam, and African

Traditional Religion. Owing to dissimilarities in religious beliefs and tribes, there are numerous occurrences of conflicts, occasioning in damage of lives and properties, (Otubah, 2024). Conflicts are documented along the line of religions and tribes. According to Sunday *et. al.* (2024), the numerous factors that underscore hostilities are politics, ethnicity and religion. The conflicts have been found out to be so prominent that the peace and unity of the nation is under attack. A number of these attacks can be credited to land disputes, trade disputes, militancy, political crisis, and religious crisis among others. It has turn out to be very perplexing for a individual of a tribe to live in another dissimilar tribe or religion in Nigeria without the fear of being attacked. This is probably the reason Adesomoju, (2024) labelled Nigeria a "security risk nation" to which many global societies have given caution to their populaces not to live or even come to Nigeria.

Moreover, Nigeria as a nation has been undergoing numerous conflicts, social vices, and lack of cordial affiliation among her populaces since independence, (Adeniji, 2021).

In a good number of states in Nigeria, one will always hear numerous accounts of violent conflict encompassing persons or tribes. For instance, Odi Massacre in Bayelsa state, Urhobo - Iteskiri crisis in Warri, Jimeta clash in Jos, the Baddo crisis in Ikorodu, (Egwu, 2018), Boko haram conflict in the northern states, among others. In all these clashes, several persons are displaced, properties are destroyed and lives are lost, (Adepegba, 2021). According to Obuseh (2016) affirmed that, Nigeria cannot live in harmony because "of self-centeredness". Substantiating the opinion of Obuseh (2016), Akinkuotu, (2023) affirmed that, religion is as a menace to Nigeria's peaceful co-existence. According to him, it is easy for a Yoruba to marry an Efik than for a Muslim to marry a Christian and vice versa. This as well displays religious bigotry as a threat to harmony.

The role of the church in peacebuilding and unity is reinforced by the fact that the social and political conflicts in the society questions fundamentally the message of the gospel. Peace is the serenity that flows from right order, (Church-Hill & Michael 2023). When we put right order into the structures of our society, the tranquility that results is peace, (Adepegba, 2021). On the other hand, a number of persons see peace as the absence of violence or war. In peacemaking efforts by the Church, peace is seen transformation of as the contextual and interactions into more co-destructive operational and constructive living, (Adeniji, 2021).

The above brings us to the role that church can play in guaranteeing peace and harmony in the Nigerian community. A number of researchers are of the view that, Christianity cannot play any part towards peacemaking because religion itself is debatably one of the single most major causes of war and chaos in human era. So much wickedness have been done in the name of religion, (Hanachor *et al.* 2021). Nevertheless, so much good has as well been done in the name of religion.

One of the ways through which the Church has aided in safeguarding peace and harmony in Nigeria is by appealing to the conscience of individuals through moral teachings, (Amnesty International, 2020). Conscience is a judge or guide. According to Agbogurin (2018), it is

observed as, the science of moral behavior. The Church in the course of her charitable endeavors has brought relief to the depressed by refining their standards of living. In many instances, the Church has been in the frontline against injustice and crises.

Using Nigeria as a case study, the Church's peace and humanitarian endeavors has been validated as follows: Ever since the start of Nigeria civil war which lasted from 1967 to 1970, apart from public declaration in condemnation of the civil war, the church have made a number of attempts to bring assistance to the Biafran people. The Church embarked upon crusades making numerous trips abroad to appeal to international humanitarian agencies to come to the rescue of the Biafran's.

However, food, clothing and drugs were donated in large quantity by such humanitarian bodies as UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, WCC and the Red Cross Society. Long before the outbreak of the war, Christian leaders campaigned enthusiastically to stop the war hostilities. (Amnesty International, 2020).

Based on the above background, it can be seen that Nigeria is a very fertile soil for religion the Church has done a lot to bring about peace and harmony of the various tribes and religious groups.

Research Statement

The powers of religious players originate from their moral legitimacy, a belief that peace-building is a vital manifestation of their faith and their affiliations with key constituencies, (Adepegba, 2021). These components provide religious players with huge prospective as conflict managers and when translated into practical action can and do provide solutions to conflict, (Adepegba, 2021). Conversely, there are numerous problems in the actual role religious organizations play in ensuring peace building.

The Boko Haram crises in Northern part of Nigeria where the efforts of the religious organizations have not actually been successful, in spite of their huge influences and continuous participation in the national political procedures, (Akinkuotu, 2023). Notwithstanding the Church having a mission of peace and being principal, conflicts, particularly ethnic clashes have continued to rise in several parts of the nation.

This is an sign that perhaps there is a weakness in the approach the Church has being adopting in peacebuilding, (Akinkuotu, 2023).

Various efforts have been made to bring peace and harmony in the nation; nevertheless, those efforts have been based on the frameworks of political leadership. The weakness of these efforts to accomplish peacebuilding within cultures displays the need for use of other ways such as the Church. This is due to the possibility for the Church to instill the message of peace-building to the civilization such as Nigeria where there has been renaissance of ethnic conflicts.

On the other hand, little or no research has been carried out on the role of church in ensuring peace and harmony in societies, which is an this study will fill by examining the role of the roles of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Ibadan South West. Based on these research gaps, this paper will assess the roles of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Ibadan South West.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to assess the roles of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Ibadan South West.. However, the specific objectives are to:

1. evaluate the actual role the church has played in ensuring peace building in conflicting areas.
2. determine the effectiveness of the church in bringing peace and harmony in the society
3. find out the effective strategies that the church could adopt in ensuring peace and harmony in the Nigerian society.

Review of Related Literature

The Church

Today, contrary to what the Scriptures says, many persons see the Church as a building. However, the translation of the Greek word *Ekklesia*, which denotes “a gathering” or “called out ones,” is “Church.”

The Church is not the physical structure but its membership that gives a Church its basic purpose. Ironically, that when you ask most persons what Church they attend, they will naturally retort a building. In Romans 16:5, Paul says, “Greet the Church that is in their house.” (Otubah, 2024).

In its place of stating to the actual Church structure, Paul terms the assembly of disciples in their household as the Church. In Ephesians 1:22-23, Paul states, “And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way,” since the Church is the Body of Christ, of which He is the head.

Since the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until Christ’s second coming, those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and personal Savior institute the Church.

According to Akinkuotu, (2023), the term “Church” can denote a diversity of subjects, comprising the literal sense itemized below. The term “Ekklesia” literally means “calledout,” nevertheless it is vague how much of this meaning is used in regular discourse. It was a radical term employed to term an assembly of persons who had been “called-out” for a specific objective. The gospel “calls” persons to follow Christ, according to the New

Testament (2 Thess. 2:13-14). We can conclude from this that an Ekklesia is a collection or gathering of persons before assessing its association to the Church of Christ.

As a consequence, any mention to a “Church” must be assumed to denote to people rather than a

definite place, building, house of worship, or small countryside chapel. (Note: This is not a scriptural use of the word “Church,” but rather an English one) (Dami, 2021). Several Believers Churches subsist today, comprising the Universal Reformed Church of Christ (NKST), the Roman Catholic Church, and others.

Peaceful coexistence

At this point, it is significant to first elucidate what peace really means in order to accurately comprehend the notion of peaceful coexistence.

When everything coincides in perfect unity and freedom and there is no dispute or conflict, there

is peace. This consequently offers peace to be a pressure-free condition of tranquility and security. It is a condition of social accord and friendliness, and the absence of violence or hostility. In a community setting, the word “peace” is generally used to designate the absence of clashes, conflict, murder, kidnapping, and other misconducts. According to Saleh, (2020), “peace is described by coherence, harmony, and quietness that sponsor tranquility or peace of mind.”

Consequently, peaceful coexistence is an setting where individuals live peaceably as opposed to an unendingly aggressive situation.

Wule, (2020), defines peace as “a practice that comprises activities that are associated, either indirectly or directly, to endorsing development and reducing hostilities, inside a specific societies and in the greater international society. In the account of the Heinrich Boell Foundation, peace is defined as “the absence of all forms of fear, self-worth, identity security, a sense of belonging, and the ability to explore, exercise, and obtain one’s right to freedom and self-determination.” Akinkuotu, (2023), affirmed that; “peace is a general word in the family, Christian, non-Christian societies and civilizations.” Harmonious affiliations, liberty from conflict, lack of pressure and concern in the mind are all instances of peace. Another way to think of peace is as a condition of cease-fire between conflicting peoples. To live well and be at peace means to be peaceful, intact, and free from warfare or trouble. In the words of Aneke, (2021), “peacebuilding is a deliberate procedure targeted at sponsoring peaceable cohabitation among individuals.”

In the gospels, peace is stated in respect of Jesus’ Birth. For example, Luke 2:14, chronicled that, “the angels at Jesus’ birth announced peace to people God loved.”

Throughout Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the crowds of followers gladly shout out the message of peace (Luke 19:37–38). This paper consequently, sees the capacity of people

to live together in harmony without conflict, struggle nor persecution as the real meaning of peaceful coexistence.

Religion and peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian Society

Peace and peace-making is essential for any nation that desires growth at all levels. Peace is the total sum of all that man may desire. As such, it is a condition that is required for social, political as well as economic development and natural integration.

In this context, peace is a state of harmony characterized by lack of violent conflict and the freedom from fear of violence. Therefore, peace suggests the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal or inter-natural relationships, prosperity in terms of social or economic welfare. The English word "peace" evolved from the Latin word "pax" meaning "freedom from civil disorder." The Hebrew designates "shalom" meaning peace as 'not just the absence of conflict', but the presence and abundance of righteousness, wholeness, justice, liberation and salvation. In summary, it denotes things as they should be and shall be in divine purpose for humanity (*Church-Hill & Michael 2023*).

It is disheartening to say the least that regardless of the facts that the main religions in Nigeria preach peace, what we see over the years from Muslims and Christians in Nigeria is far from peaceful coexistence. Owing to the daily occurrence of crises and conflicts in every nook and cranny of the nation makes one to feel that the word "peace" is a mirage. No doubt, all human beings want peace and mutual co-existence in their respective communities/societies but the means and steps to attaining it continues to be the problem. One may also say that religion and peace are two difficult entities, yet religion is inseparable from peace because peace is believed to be the product and fruit of religion.

The basic question at this point, however are why is there no religious peace and harmony in Nigeria? What can and must be done to engender unity, without which there cannot be peaceful co-existence and national development? We must start by examining the constitutional provisions for religious peace, harmony and co-existence. The Constitution stipulates that the country shall be a secular state. It shall not adopt any official religion. This means that religion should be a personal and private affair. Unfortunately, many Muslims and Christians in positions of leadership have consistently violated that constitutional stipulation by using religion as instrument to manipulate innocent citizens for their selfish interests resulting in social upheavals.

Similarly, Christians and Muslims should live together peacefully. This is to engage intentionally and purposefully with people and groups whose religious practices are fundamentally different from one's own (*Church-Hill & Michael 2023*). In the view of *Adesomoju (2024)*, the benefit of this is not only that it minimizes the livelihood of religious conflicts and violence that have been so much a part of human history but such reflective engagement also allows us to focus on the showed concerns for basic human dignity found in

the teachings of many of the world's religions. What is crucial to note is that both Islam and Christianity preach emphasis various convictions to the extent that a lot of their adherents seem not to know the core teachings of their respective religions, one of which contains on love and peace. What is lacking is that Nigeria needs religious adherents to practice what their religions teach. According to *Adesomoju (2024)*, there is the cultural instrument among the Yoruba people of western Nigeria which discourages conflict among her various communities. In the extent of war, it is customary for a belligerent community to challenge another community to a fight. This they do by sending an emissary with red cloth and / or war weapons to such a community. If the community that is being challenged desires peace, it would in turn send a white cloth back to indicate that it is not ready to fight. This, therefore, calls for offering an olive branch in order to pacify the bellicose community. Once the peace overtone is embraced, peace will prevail among the two warring communities. A peace-making and building process inherent in Yoruba culture equally revolves around several traditional adages and wise sayings. These include but not limited to the following: a. Aja ma tan ko si, literally means "Nobody fights till eternity." b. Ahon ati enu nja, won si npari ija, meaning "both the tongue and the mouth do fight/quarrel and they eventually settle the quarrel." c. Ija o dola, oruko nii so'ni, meaning "conflict does not bring wealth. Rather, it stigmatizes one." d. Ma roro, agba to roro kii ko eniyan jo, meaning "do not be wicked, an elder that is wicked will have no followers." e. Alajobi kosi mo, alajogbe loku, meaning "good neighbourliness is as desirable as family membership."

The above wise-sayings form the pillar of peace, harmony and peaceful co-existence in the Yoruba community. Although the adages unwritten, yet, they have become part and parcel of the peoples culture and a veritable templates for character formation for the purpose of peace and peace-making in the society.

The Role of Christian missions in Nigeria

The prosperous enlargement of the Christian missions in Nigeria began in the 19th century through the deeds of freed slaves from Sierra Leone, (Musa, 2022). Missionaries' endeavors carried with it the building of schools, churches, roads, hospitals and of course other institutions of government. It should be borne in mind that social transformations came with Christianity-commitment to national, moral and political development. Christianity presented highly in the sequence of events that led to the improvement of Nigerian nation, and were able to bring about definite political, economic and technological changes in the region, (Musa, 2022). Their endeavors aided to breakdown ethnic chauvinisms and to bring their in allegiance that surpasses converts ethnicities.

Therefore, patriotic Nigerians came to believe that by Christianity they were paving the way for the formation of the Nigerian nation, (Musa, 2022). The Nigeria state of their dream was one in which Christianity would flourish inter-ethnic wars would come to practicing an end, and the industrial, technological and intellectual revolutions which had Occurred in Europe would repeat themselves in Nigeria. By encouraging a general consciousness, Christianity

would reduce to a minimum all other sectional loyalties such as the many incipient tribal/crisis groups that divided Nigeria, (Musa, 2022).

Before peace can be said to exist in a nation, the people must be free from all forms of conflicts like political, economic, social, or religion, (Saleh, 2020). Saleh, (2020), affirmed that, religion inculcate every facet of Nigerian life, from major greetings (we thank God) to name of businesses such as God's Grace Venture, God is Good Motors, etc. Moreso, engaging it in conflict sceneries can provide unique opportunities to intervene in ongoing clashes or to decrease the danger that violence will erupt. Christian teachings can provide norms, standards, and motivations that support non-violent methodologies to raising and facing dissimilarities. It can also provide compassion and compassion that can sustain reconciliation and challenge solving across divisions, (Gaiya, 2017).

Factors Militating Against Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria

Numerous factors have been recognized as limitations to Peaceful cohabitation in Nigeria. Noteworthy among these them are; Clashes, starvation, disease, poverty, and death.

The role of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Ibadan South west

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) contributes to peaceful coexistence in Ibadan by promoting moral values and social integration, addressing socioeconomic issues, facilitating conflict resolution through its spiritual and community platforms, and engaging in interfaith dialogue to foster mutual understanding, although a specific assessment for the Ibadan South West area requires localized studies to fully capture the extent of its impact and identify key challenges.

How RCCG Promotes Peaceful Coexistence

Moral and Spiritual Guidance: The church provides moral education and spiritual teachings that emphasize love, compassion, and integrity, which are essential for peaceful interactions within the community.

Community Building and Social Integration: RCCG chapters often serve as platforms for community gathering, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging members from diverse backgrounds to live together harmoniously.

Socio-Economic Support: By addressing issues like poverty, unemployment, and drug addiction through initiatives like job training and rehabilitation programs, the church helps reduce social vices and improve overall community well-being.

Conflict Mediation and Resolution: Religious leaders, including those in the RCCG, can play a crucial role in mediating disputes and reconciling conflicting groups, bringing people together to resolve issues peacefully.

Promoting Interfaith Harmony: By fostering positive relationships with other religious groups, the RCCG can contribute to interfaith dialogue and cooperation, which is vital for a peaceful multi-religious society.

Methodology of the Study

The study engaged descriptive design. Therefore, it is investigative in nature based on extensive appraisal of pertinent literatures completed earlier and comparative pictures of the various aspects of Church and peace building in the contemporary world have been debated to arrive at concluding remarks. The study forms mostly the extensive appraisal of connected studies based on highly work. Consequently, is a qualitative or opinion paper with secondary data collected from internet, journals, proceedings, etc..

Furthermore the issue under discussion is a global menace which cuts across all the countries of the world, although, there have been little or few studies on the subject matter across the globe, this shall be referred to in discussing the topic at hand.

Theoretical Framework

There are many theoretical frameworks related to our topic such as societal ecological model, the Intersectionality this framework recognizes that individuals may experience oppression and violence based on multiple intersecting identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Trauma-informed care, this framework emphasizes the importance of understanding and responding to the effects of trauma on individuals who have experienced violence. Restorative justice: This framework emphasizes the importance of repairing harm and restoring relationships in the aftermath of violence.

Restorative justice: This framework emphasizes the importance of repairing harm and restoring relationships in the aftermath of violence. Social learning theory: This theory proposes that individuals learn behavior through observation, modeling, and reinforcement. It suggests that violence may be learned through exposure to violent behavior and that interventions should focus on providing positive role models and reinforcing nonviolent behavior. (Adeshima I. Omotoyo, Obabor G. Nelson, 2022).

Social learning theory: This theory proposes that individuals learn behavior through observation, modeling, and reinforcement. It suggests that violence may be learned through exposure to violent behavior and that interventions should focus on providing positive role models and reinforcing nonviolent behavior. (Adeshima I. Omotoyo, Obabor G. Nelson, 2022).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper has assessed the role of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Ibadan South West. With reference to the study, it was evidently figured out how the Church influence both have positively and negatively. Through the aid of

a few conclusions have been drawn that the Church offer a platform to connect with new people, share experiences and gain exposure.

It has been revealed that the Church is the only hope for Nigeria to be in a stable condition of peace and harmony. However, the Nigerian Churches had suffered greatly from victimization. Thousands of Christians have died, churches destroyed through bombs, and priests have either been slain, kidnapped or held hostage.

Furthermore, there is a demonstrable evidence based on the available literature to this paper that with the aid of mission support, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Region 21, Ibadan Nigeria adequately contribute to fostering of peace building programmes and initiatives for sustainable development in the society. Their efforts to making building in any society cannot be over-emphasized. This is because of their commitment to preaching peace among their adherence, providing humanitarian supports to victims, mediating between parties in conflicts and possibly providing early warning signals about conflicts to the state. Therefore, the paper in conclusion perceives the contributions as very vital tool that can adequately assist the state in peacebuilding process..

Recommendations

With this exposé in mind, it is necessary to recommend that:

1. The Church should aid in sustaining peace and harmony in Nigeria is by appealing to the conscience of devotees through moral teachings from the Bible.
2. The Church should also show more zeal and commitment to peace building process through strong psychological and materials supports to victims. This will enable the people feel a sense of care, relief and belonging to the society.
3. The Church should keep track of making peace between individuals. This will enable them to provide early warning signals of the deterioration of peace among the people.
4. Government should synergize with Churches in areas of funding seminars in order to encourage peaceful co-existence among the people.

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Impact of Leadership Roles on Managing Cultural Differences in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Nigeria 2018-2023

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Abstract

Societies are mostly comprised of people with different languages, backgrounds, ethnics, and cultures that are very important to the need of the societies. This study focuses on how the leaders can effectively manage and promote peaceful co-existence among diverse cultures, ethnics and religions within their territories through their administrative approaches. The study uses the Integration Theory of Multiculturalism. It adopts a quantitative research design, focusing on the role of leadership in managing cultural differences. The targeted population include the staff members and students of the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede. 150 respondents were selected using purposive sampling techniques and questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The findings emphasized the importance of leadership adaptability to diverse cultural contexts. It revealed that societal leaders who demonstrate flexibility and openness to different cultural perspectives are better positioned to facilitate effective communication and decision-making and that this adaptability is a key component of successful management of a multi-cultural society. It concludes that the comprehensive exploration of leaders' perceptions, attitudes, and practices in navigating diverse cultures within the institution have provided valuable insights. It recommended the implementation of regular cultural sensitivity training programmes and the establishment of leadership development initiatives to equip leaders with the necessary skills for effective cultural management to foster understanding, respect, and appreciation of diverse cultures, creating a more inclusive and harmonious environment.

Keywords: Acculturation, Cultural Differences, Multiculturalism, Peaceful Coexistence, Societal Leaderships.

Introduction

Multi-cultural societies comprise of people of different languages, backgrounds, ethnics, and cultures. These people that make up such societies are very important to the need of the society and if not well managed, co-existence can result into any type of violence. In some parts of the society, there are people who migrated from either far or near places and are already landlords or landladies, some have resolved not to return to their mother land. Nigeria is made up of several ethnic groups with a lot of differences within each of the ethnic groups. There are over 350 languages in Nigeria and many of them are represented in various communities and societies with their cultural backgrounds (Hassan 2019). This diversity of

ethnics and cultures is the reason for multi-cultural beliefs. Leading society of this kind can be challenging and may not be appreciated if the leadership of the society are not conversant with the peculiarity of each ethnic group and cultures represented under their administration.

There are some issues in the societies today that were caused by lack of understanding of the cultural differences by the leaders of such societies. Among such issues are; loss of job, miscommunication, broken courtship, dissociation, suspicion and wrong assumption, wrong accusation, divorce, lack of trust, lack of love, civil war, religion crisis, etcetera. There is almost no well-structured or organised community nowadays without people from at least two different cultures, therefore, it is noteworthy that there are some issues that will continue to exist because of the fact that multi-culture exists in the societies, and each group values their culture. These issues may not be totally eradicated, but they can be managed and brought down to minimum if the community leaders are sensitive and caring enough to create an atmosphere that is conducive for co-existence among the people living in the community.

There are some communities where people from different countries reside and work, and living in such an environment or institution can be challenging especially if there is communication problem as a result of linguistic factors such as misinterpretation. When a local language is spoken by some members of the organisation in the presence of those who do not understand it, it will reflect on the productivity and performance of such individuals. It is therefore very important for leaders of various organisations and societies to take cognizance of every available and identified cultures in each organisation or community under their administration (Muhammet & Ershad 2023).

There was a story of a young missionary trainer who went to a particular training center to teach some set of people. In the course of teaching, he got to an aspect where he needed to talk about culture and how it affects the efforts of missionaries when they move to another terrain. He made use of Yoruba and Igbo cultures. When it comes to greetings, the two are like words and opposite, an Igbo man in the class said that “*it is only God you worship, when you prostrate for somebody, it means you are worshipping the person*”, but a Yoruba boy that greets an elderly one without prostrating will be seen as an uncultured child. Leading an organisation or community with the people from these two groups takes carefulness not to offend one while pleasing the other. Leaders must be conversant with the way people from different cultures see things so as to avoid ethnocentrism. Anybody who wants to be a leader, or someone who is recommended to be a leader must be ready to compromise his culture and some of his religious rites in order to create a peaceful environment for the people of different culture and religion that are in the community.

It is expected of a good leader to ensure the unity of people working under him and see to the development of his community. For any community or society to progress, the leadership of such a community must be ready to give what it takes. Offences are bound to occur as a result of cultural variances, but when it happens, what is expected of a leader who wants the progress of the community is to find a way out as soon as possible so that the offence will not

lead to another major problem. Anyone aspiring to be a leader of any society, no matter how small the society maybe, must be ready to be a man/woman of everybody and a man/woman of nobody. This implies that he must always ready to be identified with every tribe and culture. Furthermore, since leadership is connected with politics, there is need for politicians to be familiar with at least all the cultures present in their jurisdictions. This will enable them to handle individual differences among the tribes and cultures, and at the same time, know how to provide for the needs of the people under them.

It is very important to note that leadership roles can be discussed only if there is an organisation, institution or society that requires the functions of a leader for the purpose of maintaining growth, orderliness and peaceful coexistence among the unavoidable culturally differentiated and oriented workers who find themselves in such environment. As a result of this, the fact that leadership roles are determined by organisation or society should not be ignored, and leaders are not supposed to make rules based on their own perspectives without considering the peculiarity of their organisation.

Concept of Culture

The idea of culture sometimes can be somewhat cloudy. Although cultures have been studied for several decades or even centuries, yet it is still difficult to describe culture in just one word. Many people define culture as the surroundings they live in and associate things like language, history and habits with culture. Though, culture is not limited to environmental factors or surroundings, it can also be stated that culture is a patterned way of acting, thinking, and communicating because people's thoughts, actions and the way they express their feelings cannot be separated from their cultures. This means that every culture has its own way of communicating with its followers, which also in a way guides their behaviour towards their own culture, and likewise towards other cultures. This is easily spotted in that when groups of individuals from different cultures are associated, there will be variances in the communication and behavior of each various group (Hassan 2019).

One other definition of culture is that it is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to survive with the world and with one another, and that are conveyed from generation to generation through learning. Even though many people believe that culture is transmitted from generation to generation, one important thing to always remember is that no one is born with a particular culture; an individual from birth learns and acquires culture as they grow from the environment or society each person belongs to through communication and interaction with other people. This way an individual learns and masters the core rules of social behaviour.

Considering the emergence of several factors such as migration, establishment of organisations where people of different cultures work together as a team, global market and the likes that lead to the globalisation, it is necessary to be thoughtful, aware and be very sensitive to the cultural differences and people from various tribes, ethnics, languages, religions and countries in order to have a peaceful co-existence and for the society to be

internationally recognised and accomplish the world standard of being a successful multicultural society. Culture can also be described as the *Mind's Driver* because it determines how human beings think, which leads to how they view things, respond to things, interpret signs and symbols, relate with each other and go about with their businesses.

The Integration Theory

Integration theory is a framework within multiculturalism that emphasizes the process through which individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds come together to form a cohesive society. Unlike the melting pot concept, which suggests that different cultures blend into a single entity, or the salad bowl model, which highlights the coexistence of distinct cultures, integration theory seeks a middle ground. It advocates for a harmonious society where cultural differences are acknowledged and respected while also promoting a shared national identity (Tariq 2014).

Statement of the Problem

One among the leading challenges in the society today is the inability of the leaders to create a collaborative environment, where people can live and work together in spite of their different cultural differences. Also, there are leaders in the society who assumed the position of leadership without necessary leadership price. It is also evident from the way some of the societal leaders are leading and ruling people under them, that Nigerian societal leaders are not serving people, but rather, people in the society are the ones serving their representatives at various levels.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine how societal leaders can manage and promote peaceful coexistence among the different cultures, tribes and religions represented in their terrains through their leadership styles.

The objectives of this study are to;

- i. identify cultural differences in Nigeria that pose as challenges to societal cohesion and development.
- ii. recognise competencies and skills required for societal leaders to effectively manage cultural differences in Ede.

Research Questions

1. What are the key cultural differences in Ede that pose as challenges to societal cohesion and development?
2. What are the competencies and skills required by societal leaders to effectively manage cultural differences in Ede?

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey research design which is ideal for examining the impact of leadership roles in managing cultural differences in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. This research design is considered appropriate because the study involved collection of data to objectively describe existing phenomena without any manipulation or randomisation. The targeted population of this study consists of the staff members of the Redeemed College of Missions Ede and missionaries on training in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, who are from all the geo-political zones of Nigeria with some persons from other Africa countries. A sample of 120 respondents was selected through a purposive sampling technique to ensure diverse representation. Data were collected using structured questionnaire, divided into sections covering demographics and key research questions about leadership roles, competencies/skills and their impact. The validity and reliability of the instruments were ensured through a thorough review of literature and expert opinions, with Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis, allowing a clear and organized presentation of the findings, and insights into the impact of leaderships roles in managing cultural differences in the Redeemed College of Missions, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

| S/N | Variables | NO. | Frequency | % |
|-----|------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Gender | Male | 100 | 83.33 |
| | | Female | 20 | 16.67 |
| 2 | Marital Status | Single | 70 | 58.33 |
| | | Married | 45 | 37.50 |
| | | Divorced | 0 | 0 |
| | | Widow/Widower | 5 | 4.17 |
| | | | | |
| 3 | Academic Qualification | SSCE | 44 | 36.67 |
| | | OND/NCE | 27 | 22.5 |
| | | HND,B.A, B.Ed, B.Sc. | 43 | 35.83 |
| | | MSc. & Above | 6 | 5 |
| 4 | Geopolitical Zone | North-Central | 19 | 15.83 |
| | | North-East | 4 | 3.33 |
| | | North-West | 2 | 1.67 |
| | | South-West | 59 | 49.17 |
| | | South East | 15 | 12.5 |
| | | South-South | 20 | 16.69 |
| | | Other Countries | 1 | 0.83 |

Source: Field Work, 2023

The table above shows that majority of the respondents, accounting for 83.33%, identified as male. The female respondents constitute a smaller proportion, at 16.67%. The majority of the respondents, accounting for 58.33%, identified as single. The married respondents constitute

a significant portion, at 37.50%. There are no respondents reported as divorced. A small percentage, 4.17%, identified as widows or widowers.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the key cultural differences in Nigeria that pose as challenges to societal cohesion and development?

Key Cultural Differences in Nigeria that pose as Challenges to Societal Cohesion and Development

| S/N | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|--|----------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| 1. | One among the key cultural differences that brings about disunity and development in the Nigerian society is ethnicity. | 80(66.67%) | 30 (25%) | 10(8.33%) | 0(0%) |
| 2. | Religion is a strong factor that contributes to cultural differences and poses challenge to cohesion in Nigeria society. | 60 (50%) | 50(41.67%) | 8(6.67%) | 2(1.67%) |
| 3. | Ethnocentrism is a major cause of disunity in Nigerian society and it fuels cultural inadaptability. | 50(41.67%) | 63(52.5%) | 6(5%) | 1(0.83%) |
| 4. | Misunderstanding of cultural values is another factor that poses challenge on peaceful coexistence in Nigeria societies. | 60(50%) | 46(38.33%) | 13(10.83%) | 1(0.83%) |
| 5. | Language is a cultural variance that has brought limitation to peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society. | 49(40.83%) | 55(45.83%) | 8(6.67%) | 8(6.67%) |
| 6. | Power imbalance is a factor that contributes to cultural differences and poses challenge on cohesion in the society. | 65(54.17%) | 48(40%) | 4(3.33%) | 3(2.5%) |

Source: Field Work, 2023

A significant majority of respondents, accounting for 80(66.67%), chose the option ‘strongly agree’, while a sizable portion, 30 (25%), agreed with the statement without expressing the

same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. A smaller percentage, 10 (8.33%), chose the option 'disagree', notably, there are no respondents who selected strongly disagree. In the data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: Religion is a strong factor that contributed to cultural differences and poses a challenge to cohesion in Nigerian society, a significant proportion of 60 respondents, representing 50% of the total, chose the option 'strongly agree', another considerable portion, 50 (41.67%), agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, a small percentage, 8 (6.67%), chose the option 'disagree' while smaller percentage, 2 (1.67%), selected strongly disagree. From the data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Ethnocentrism is a major cause of disunity in Nigerian society, and it fuels cultural inadaptability"; a substantial proportion of 50 respondents, representing 41.67%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another sizable portion, 63 (52.5%), agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. A small percentage, 6 (5%), chose the option disagree, while the smaller percentage, 1 (0.83%), selected strongly disagree.

The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Misunderstanding of cultural values is another factor that poses a challenge to peaceful coexistence in Nigerian societies"; a significant proportion of 60 respondents, representing 50% of the total, chose the option 'strongly agree', another substantial portion, 46 (38.33%), agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. 13 respondents representing 10.83%, chose the option 'disagree', and a respondent which is the smallest percentage, 0.83% selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Language is a cultural variance that has brought limitation to peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society"; 49 respondents representing 40.83%, chose the option 'strongly agree', 55 respondents representing 45.83% agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agreed. 8 respondents which is 6.67% of the respondents chose the option disagree and another 6.67% of the respondents chose 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "Power imbalance is a factor that contributed to cultural differences and poses a challenge to cohesion in the society" show that 65 respondents, representing 54.17%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another 48 respondents, which is 40%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. A small percentage, (3.33%), which is 4 respondents chose the option 'disagree', and 3 respondents representing 2.5% of the respondents chose 'strongly disagree'.

Research Question Two: What are the competencies and skills required by societal leaders to effectively manage cultural differences in Nigeria?

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics on Competencies and Skills required by Societal Leaders to Effectively Manage Cultural Differences in Nigeria

| S/N | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. | To successfully lead a multi-cultural society, the leader needs to develop multiple leadership styles. | 90(75%) | 22(18.33%) | 6(5%) | 2(1.67%) |
| 2. | The leader in a multi-cultural society must be able to respect and interpret cultural values of each represented culture in the society where he's leading. | 75(62.5%) | 40(33.33%) | 3(2.5%) | 2(1.67%) |
| 3. | A multi-cultural society leader must possess an ability to envisage future challenges and problem-solving knowledge. | 75(62.5%) | 44(36.67%) | 1(0.83%) | 0(0%) |
| 4. | A multi-cultural society leader must be able to properly manage the societal resources and live a life of integrity. | 85(70.83%) | 27(22.5%) | 8(6.67%) | 0(0%) |
| 5. | A multi-cultural society leader is expected to possess social intelligence to be able to manage social issues. | 85(70.83%) | 32(26.67%) | 3(2.5%) | 0(0%) |
| 6. | A multi-cultural society leader must be able to effectively communicate and make every ethnic group in the society feel included, and must also be ready to adapt to different cultures in his territory. | 79(65.83) | 30(25%) | 8(6.67%) | 3(2.5%) |

Source: Field Work, 2023

The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "To successfully lead a multicultural society, the leader needs to develop multiple leadership styles"; 90 respondents which is the majority representing 75%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another substantial portion of 22 respondents representing 18.33% agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agreed. 6 respondents representing 5% chose the option 'disagree', while only 2 respondents representing 1.67% selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "The leader in a multi-cultural society must be able to respect and interpret cultural values of each represented culture in the society where he's leading"; a significant majority of respondents (75), representing 62.5%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another 40 respondents

representing 33.33%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, while a small percentage (3 respondents) 2.5%, chose the option disagree, and 2 respondents which is the smaller percentage, 1.67%, selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader must possess an ability to envisage future challenges and problem-solving knowledge" show that a significant majority of 75 respondents, representing 62.5%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another 44 respondents representing 36.67%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree. 1 respondent representing 0.83%, chose the option 'disagree' and no respondent selected 'strongly disagree'.

The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader must be able to properly manage societal resources and live a life of integrity"; a substantial majority of 85 respondents, representing 70.83%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another sizable portion of 27 respondents representing 22.5%, agreed with the statement, while 8 respondents representing a smaller percentage (6.67%), chose the option 'disagree' and no respondent selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader is expected to possess social intelligence to be able to manage social issues"; a substantial majority of 85 respondents, representing 70.83%, chose the option 'strongly agree', another sizable of 32 respondents representing 26.67%, agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, while 3 respondents representing 2.5% chose the option 'disagree', and no respondent selected 'strongly disagree'. The data provided pertains to respondents' opinions on the statement: "A multi-cultural society leader must be able to effectively communicate and make every ethnic group in the society feel included, and must also be ready to adapt to different cultures in his territory"; 79 of the respondents representing 65.83% chose the option 'strongly agree', another 30 respondents representing 25% also agreed with the statement without expressing the same level of conviction as those who strongly agree, while 8 respondents representing 6.67% chose the option 'disagree', and another 3 respondents representing the smaller percentage (2.5%) selected strongly disagree.

Discussion of Research Findings:

This research investigation explores two critical dimensions of Nigeria's multicultural landscape: the key cultural differences that challenge societal cohesion and development, and the competencies required by societal leaders to effectively manage these differences. This study was conducted through field work in 2023; it surveyed 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire with Likert scale responses.

Research Question One: Cultural Differences as Challenges to Societal Cohesion

This research question reveals six primary cultural factors that significantly contribute to the challenges of Nigeria's societal cohesion and development which includes ethnicity, religion, ethnocentrism, misunderstanding of cultural values, language barriers and power imbalance.

First, the finding shows that ethnicity emerges as a paramount cultural difference affecting Nigerian unity. An overwhelming 91.67% of respondents identified ethnicity as a key factor bringing about disunity and hindering development. The low disagreement of 8.33% of the respondents underscore the universal recognition of ethnicity as a critical challenge. This finding reflects Nigeria's complex ethnic composition, with over 250 ethnic groups, where the major groups (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo) often compete for political and economic dominance, creating tensions that fragment national unity. This goes in agreement with Toyin Adetiba (2019) who argues that the political system in Nigeria has since been tailored along the ethnic lines, and it may be the factor that led to conflict that took place on the 19th of May, 2022 at the Dei Dei International Food Market between the Hausa and Igbo traders, which also saw the death of over four people, destruction and looting of hundreds of millions of naira worth of goods and properties (Premium Times, 2022). **Secondly**, religion (primarily between Christianity and Islam) emerges as one of the most significant factors that are creating cultural differences and challenging cohesion in the Nigeria societies, causing substantial societal divisions. 91.67% of the respondents acknowledged that though 8.33% of the respondents are of different opinion to that, but it is in agreement with the opinion of Jegede Paul (2029) that as the religious conflicts linger on, distrust and suspicion became the order of the day, more especially between the adherents of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria. The religious dimension is particularly complex in Nigeria, where faith often intersects with ethnic identity and regional politics, creating multi-layered conflicts that extend beyond purely theological differences.

Thirdly, ethnocentrism received strong validation as a disunity factor, with 94.17% of respondents agreeing it causes disunity and fuels cultural inadaptability. This finding is particularly significant as it suggests that the problem extends beyond mere cultural differences to attitudes of cultural superiority and resistance to inter-cultural adaptation. The high agreement rate indicates that respondents recognize how ethnocentric attitudes prevent the development of shared national identity and impede cultural integration efforts, and this has resulted into various kind of tragedies. This finding is in agreement with Emman, Oguntunji Abidemi (2023) that ethnocentrism has led to the death of thousands of people, displaced families, and turned children into orphans, wives into widows and husbands into single parents. **Fourthly**, cultural misunderstanding also received substantial recognition, with 88.33% of respondents agreeing that it brings challenges to peaceful co-existence. This finding highlights the knowledge gap between different cultural groups and the lack of intercultural education and dialogue platforms. The relatively higher disagreement rate of 11.66% respondents, compared to other factors suggest that some respondents believe cultural misunderstandings are more easily addressable through education and exposure. The **fifth** factor is language difference which is also another factor contributing to the societal

division as 86.66% of respondents agreed that language variance limits peaceful co-existence. Notably, this factor had the highest disagreement rate (13.34%), possibly reflecting Nigeria's adoption of English as a unifying official language. This might indicate recognition that while language differences exist, they may be less intractable than ethnic or religious divisions. If conflict must be resolved in Nigeria, linguistic and cultural diversity must be taken into consideration in order to bring about system balance as people's worldview is rooted in their culture (Isiong & Willie, 2019). **Lastly**, power imbalance received strong recognition, with 94.17% of the respondents agreeing that it contributes to cultural differences and challenges cohesion. This finding connects cultural issues to political and economic inequalities, suggesting that cultural conflicts are often manifestations of deeper structural inequalities. The very low disagreement rate (5.83%) indicates a broad recognition that unequal distribution of political power, economic resources, and opportunities along cultural lines exacerbates intercultural tensions.

Research Question Two: Leadership Competencies for Managing Cultural Differences

This research question identifies six essential competencies (**key leadership requirements**) for effectively leading multi-cultural societies, these are multiple leadership styles, cultural respect and interpretation, future vision and problem-solving skill, resource management and integrity, social intelligence and communication and inclusivity.

First, Multiple Leadership Styles received a strong validation, with 93.33% of the respondents agreeing that multicultural leaders need diverse leadership approaches. This finding suggests recognition that different cultural groups may respond to different leadership approaches, requiring adaptive leadership capabilities. The overwhelming agreement indicates the understanding that rigid, one-size-fits-all leadership approaches are inadequate for diverse societies, therefore, multiple leadership style is paramount to successfully govern multicultural societies (Paiuc Dan, 2024). **Secondly**, Cultural Respect and Interpretation also came up as one of the competences needed by societal leaders as 95.83% of the respondents endorsed that the societal leaders must be culturally sensitive. This finding emphasizes the critical importance of leaders understanding and respecting diverse cultural values rather than imposing dominant cultural norms. The low disagreement of 4.17% of the respondents suggests broad consensus that cultural competency is non-negotiable for effective multicultural leadership. Therefore, accepting and respecting cultural diversities is one of the pre-requisites of maintaining peace and ensuring peaceful coexistence of communities living in multi-ethnic/religious societies (Hussain Maria, 2021). The **Third** requirement, Future Vision and Problem-Solving Skills came up as the most needed skill for societal leaders as the 99.17% of the respondents agreed that multicultural societal leaders must be visionary leaders. This finding indicates and recognizes that multicultural societies face complex, evolving challenges requiring proactive and strategic thinking. The near-universal agreement suggests that respondents view anticipatory leadership as essential for preventing and managing cultural conflicts. There is no doubt that visionary leaders are needed in the

organizations and societies that are characterized by various cultures (Rido, Muhammad, Rahman & Hamid, 2024).

Integrity and ability to manage resources is the **fifth** requirement that was seen as one of the most important competencies and skills needed to be able to manage the affairs of multicultural societies like Nigerian societies. This competence received very strong validation, with 93.33% of the respondents' agreement. This finding suggests that ethical leadership and fair resource distribution are very crucial for maintaining multicultural harmony. It involves acting in an honest, transparent, and responsible manner, with a focus on the greater good of the nation and all the stakeholders involving in the play (Anita & Orlu, 2023). The emphasis on integrity likely reflects concerns about corruption and favoritism that often exacerbate cultural tensions in diverse societies. The **Fifth** requirement, social intelligence, received identical validation to resource management, with 97.5% of the respondents' agreement. This finding emphasizes the importance of emotional and social competencies in managing complex intercultural dynamics. This finding reveals that technical competencies alone are insufficient for governing multicultural societies. **Lastly**, the findings showed the importance of communication skills and inclusiveness as crucial tools for managing multicultural societies. Effective communication and cultural adaptability received strong validation, with 90.83% agreement. In order to successfully govern a multicultural environment, there is a great necessity for the leaders to develop communication as a sensible skill (Hussain 2018).

Critical Analysis and Implications

1. Interconnected Challenges

The findings reveal that Nigeria's cultural challenges are deeply interconnected. Ethnicity, religion, and power imbalance form a complex web where ethnic identity often correlates with religious affiliation and political power distribution. This interconnectedness suggests that addressing cultural divisions requires comprehensive, multi-dimensional approaches rather than isolated interventions.

2. Leadership as a Solution Framework

The research positions leadership competence as a critical intervention point for managing cultural differences. The high agreement rates across all leadership competencies suggest confidence in leadership as a mechanism for cultural integration, though this may also reflect idealistic expectations of what individual leaders can achieve.

Practical Implications

The findings have these practical implications for policy and practice:

1. **Educational Policy:** The recognition of cultural misunderstanding and ethnocentrism suggests the need for enhanced intercultural education programs.
2. **Political Reform:** The emphasis on power imbalance indicates a need for structural and political reforms to ensure more equitable representation.

3. **Leadership Development:** The identified competencies provide a framework for developing multicultural leadership training programs.
4. **Conflict Prevention:** Understanding these factors can inform early warning systems and conflict prevention strategies.

Conclusion

This research provides valuable empirical evidence of the cultural challenges facing societies and the leadership competencies needed to address them. The findings confirm existing theoretical understandings of multicultural challenges, supply important quantitative validation and a clear prioritization of the most pressing factors. The data show that cultural fault lines such as ethnicity, religion, ethnocentrism, misread values, language barriers, and power imbalances are deeply interwoven and collectively undermine social cohesion and development. Importantly, these divisions reflect underlying structural inequalities and gaps in intercultural understanding rather than mere differences of belief or practice. It highlights leadership as the crucial remedy. Respondent consensus on six core competencies (adaptive leadership styles, cultural respect and interpretation, visionary problem-solving, integrity in resource management, social intelligence, and inclusive communication) form a practicable blueprint for managing diversity constructively. Translating these competencies into practice requires intercultural education to reduce misunderstanding and ethnocentrism, political and institutional reforms to redress power imbalances and targeted leadership development programs to build capacity in culturally competent governance. Stakeholders (policymakers, civic leaders, educators, and development partners) should act on this evidence by prioritizing structural reform and investing in leadership capacity that is culturally informed, ethical, and strategic. The future stability and prosperity of societies depend less on erasing difference than on managing it wisely through leaders who can bridge identities, allocate resources fairly, and foster inclusive dialogue that transforms diversity into shared national strength.

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