Issue 6 2013

AFRICAN NEBULA

UNIOSUN JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES

In this issue:

African Nebula
ISSN 1838-1472

Content

Celebrating Samar Habib, an 'Africanist' Scholar Par Excellence

Olukoya Ogen
Editor-in-Chief, *African Nebula*
Osun State University & CWAS, University of Birmingham
koyaogen@uniosun.edu.ng; o.ogen@bham.ac.uk

The year 2013 cannot be easily forgotten in the history of the Nebulae journal family. The year marks the resignation of Samar Habib, Chief Editor of *Nebula*, and the abrupt stoppage of the publication of the parent journal in the Nebulae journal stable after eight and half years of existence, a period during which the *Nebula* journal also gave birth to two sister journals, *African Nebula* and *Nebu[Lab]*. Given these significant developments, it appears timely and auspicious for this current issue to briefly highlight the contributions of Samar Habib, founder and publisher of *Nebula* as well as *African Nebula*'s co-founder and publisher, to the promotion and dissemination of African intellectual production. Over the years, Samar has consistently and deservedly earned the reputation of a highly distinguished feminist scholar and unique 'Africanist.' Indeed, she has contributed immensely to the promotion and development of global multidisciplinary scholarship generally, and most significantly, to the dissemination of African intellectual production for almost one decade.

With a PhD from the University of Sydney, Samar has made significant contributions to research on gender and sexuality in Arab and Western world contexts. She is the author of several academic works, including *Female Homosexuality in the Middle East* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007 & 2009); *Islam and Homosexuality* (Oxford, Denver, Santa Barbara: Praeger 2010), *Arabo-Islamic Texts on Female Homosexuality* (New York: Teneo, 2009). Her critical translation of the Lebanese novel *Ana Hiya Anti / I Am You* by Elham Mansour (New York: Cambria) was published in 2008. She has also published articles and shorter academic works in *Feminist Approaches*, *EnterText*, *ISIM Review*, *History of Feminist Thought* and *LGBT Transnational Identities* among others. In addition, Samar has published a number of creative works including the novel *A Tree Like Rain* (Sydney: Nebula Press, 2005) and *Islands in Space* (Sydney: Nebula Press, 2008). Her second and latest novel, *Rughum and Najda*, was published by Oracle Releasing in West Hollywood in 2012. She has delivered several public lectures in Australia, Turkey, the UK, Canada, the US and Palestine (SOAS, 2012). Apart from the University of Western Sydney where she lectured until 2010, she has also served as visiting professor at San Francisco State University and was also an affiliated scholar at UC Berkeley, researching gender and sexual minorities in the Middle East and North Africa. Currently, Samar is a Research Associate at the Centre for Gender Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

She started editing for the English edition of the English–Arabic journal *Joussour* at the age of 19. In 2003 as a graduate student, she co-founded, *Philament*, a University of Sydney's arts and culture journal. As publisher and founder of *Nebula*, Samar inspired the floating of *African Nebula*, a sister journal which she co-founded and has been publishing online since 2010. Interestingly, the two Nebulae journals radiate that sense of spaciousness that is vintage nebula mainly because they reflect intellectual diversity at its best and showcase the varied human systems of thoughts and theories of knowledge. At the last count *Nebula* had published 25 issues and over 330 academic articles in less than a decade. About a quarter of these articles emanated from the African continent. *African Nebula*, an offshoot of the parent

Nebula, also rolled out six issues and published over 45 articles mainly by African and Africanist scholars between 2010 and 2013.

Compared to other thriving Nigerian-based journals, *African Nebula* is unique in several respects. First, it is associated with its Australian-based parent journal, *Nebula: A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship*. Second, it has an Australian ISSN for its online version because it was registered in Sydney. Third, the online version is also hosted and published in Australia. Finally, except when there is a need for a special themed issue, at least half of the contributors to any volume are drawn from outside Nigeria, this is in order to adequately reflect the journal's international scope. Thus, in spite of the fact that it is the official peer-reviewed journal of the College of Humanities and Culture at Osun State University, Nigeria, *African Nebula*'s registration, contents, editorial board, journal policies as well as mode of operation have unarguably conferred on it the status of an international journal of repute. Indeed, it is a luminous example of the success of international academic collaboration, in terms of journal publication, between the North and the South.

Apparently, the birth of *African Nebula* was the natural outcome of Samar's consistent and vigorous advocacy for the widespread dissemination of Nigerian, nay, African intellectual production. 'There is absolutely a great need for scholars from Nigeria to be able to publish in international academic journals,' she says. Indeed, she was shocked and at the same time impressed with the sheer volume of submissions from Nigerian scholars. For her, this tendency demonstrates the fact that 'the demand for academic publication by Nigerian scholars is not met by the avenues currently available for academic publication.' Samar was particularly interested in hosting special issues of *Nebula* on Nigerian studies but the dearth of committed and selfless editors with the requisite expertise who were willing to work with her made this dream unrealisable.

A highly distinguished scholar, Samar's contribution to the dissemination of African scholarship is also very remarkable because its timing coincides with the current wave of academic globalisation, a phenomenon that has further reinforced the unequal structures between the North and the South in terms of knowledge production and dissemination. Samar's remarkable commitment to the dissemination of Africa's intellectual production through the publication of articles emanating from the African continent in *Nebula*, on the one hand, and her intellectual, moral and financial support for the floating and publication of *African Nebula* on the other, makes her an 'Africanist' scholar in her own right. This becomes more significant when cognisance is taken of the fact that Samar is primarily and essentially an Arab feminist scholar. Thus, consciously and unconsciously, Samar through her publishing outlets has been playing critical roles in the ongoing attempts to redress the imbalance that characterises the neo-colonial politics of academic publication and marginalisation.

Samar, like every true Africanist, does not hide behind the veneer of racial prejudice and academic arrogance in her interactions with people across continents. Her scholarship as a poet, author, teacher, editor and publisher, bears eloquent testimony to the fact that knowledge is best pursued when it is ultimately directed at the search for truth and human happiness. Personally, my scholarship, and I am sure that of several other scholars, have benefitted immensely from our association with this committed 'Africanist.'

It is apparent that Samar stands tall when it comes to the dissemination of African humanities intellectual production. As a matter of fact, she has demonstrated a remarkable passion to

advance the cause of original and rigorous research on Africa, and also ensured that they meet the best global publication practices. This has made it possible for the global audience to access contemporary research on Africa. It has also encouraged closer academic cooperation and engagement between African scholars and their counterparts outside the continent. Thus, Samar, through her journals, has exhibited a profound level of passion for the advancement of the frontiers of African humanities knowledge and engagement. She is, therefore, eminently qualified to be admitted into the pantheon of the greatest Africanists of the twenty-first century. Thus, on behalf of the Editorial Board of *African Nebula*, I wish to acknowledge and salute Samar's tenacity, selflessness and resolute commitment to the promotion and dissemination of African scholarship. Most significantly, her moral, professional, technical and financial supports have been pivotal to birth and sustenance of *African Nebula*.

Notwithstanding Samar's resignation, it is interesting to note that Samar's passion for multi-disciplinarity continues to resonate with this current issue of *African Nebula*. No wonder, this present issue of *African Nebula* draws its five contributors from four different countries and the issues raised dovetail into language, digital communication, history and literature. For instance, Sarada Thallam analyses the writings of two African-American women writers, Harriet Jacobs and Adrienne Kennedy. The paper argues that their works challenge patriarchy and contemporary Anglo-American feminist discourses. It uses as its critical framework postcolonial theories of "othering" as enunciated by critics like Said and Spivak, to demonstrate the way in which Jacobs and Kennedy manipulate standard American English, to highlight the linguistic power of African-American women's writings.

In a slightly related article, Roshnavand and Movahedian argues that before the beginning of the twentieth century, black Americans underwent an all-encompassing process of 'otherization' and 'inferiorization' which saw them as inhuman, heathen and demonic. Under the tenacious hold of oppressive hegemonic discourses, they were forced to internalize the dominant negative stereotypes and thus, over time, came to detest their black skin colour and African racial origin. In such circumstances, the idea of Africanism which reached its zenith in a post-World War I nationalist climate came to the rescue. This paper tries to show that the vogue of Africanism was not a genuine call on the part of subalternized Negroes for a physical or cultural return to their ancestral homeland; rather, it was merely an instrument in the hands of black Americans through which they strived to prove their intrinsic worth and the legitimacy of their quest for equality and justice. The article concludes that black Americans' Africanist project was carried out in the context of Americanism as a way to find admission into mainstream society.

In the third article, Wale Oni explores some fundamental theories, models and perspectives used by scholars in communication studies as frameworks to understand and discuss the field of computer-mediated communication, which is an offshoot of mediated communication aspect of the communication studies. He discusses the academic landscape of communication technology and presents some of the notable perspectives, models and theories that scholars in new digital media studies have employed in their analyses. His approach seems to suggest an advocacy for a remarkable emphasis on the fundamental theories of computer mediated communication within the purview of communication studies, a trend that is the norm in the developed world but a rarity in Nigeria and several African countries.

From a largely historical perspective, Joseph Lon Nfi investigates the militancy of French-Cameroon immigrants which found its best expression in the Pan-Kamerun Movement during

the first few years after the Second World War in the then Southern Cameroons. His article explains why protest migrants from French Cameroon still desired a connection with their places of origin. By relying on an avalanche of data from archival and secondary sources, the author reveals that the militancy of French-Cameroon migrants in the movement was not because of the dream for a Greater Kamerun or the British neglect of the socio-economic development of the Southern Cameroons, but because of their status as "strangers" and other related problems which they faced. The study concludes that they championed the course for a Greater Kamerun because they wanted to be citizens in their new homesteads.

In the last article, Temitope Balogun examines the low-usage of Yorùbá language among some selected secondary school students in Yorubaland, Southwest Nigeria. The paper considers and measures the knowledge of Yorùbá language among respondents in three Yoruba speaking states in southwestern Nigeria. The results of the data show that Yorùbá language enjoys low patronage among the respondents. Many of the respondents found it difficult to express themselves freely in Yorùbá language. They were also unable to provide meanings for selected Yorùbá proverbs, words, and expressions. The author concludes that Yorùbá language stands the risk of gradual extinction if urgent measures are not taken by all stakeholders concerned to arrest the dwindling fortunes of the language.

Individually and collectively, the five articles make interesting reading. The Editorial Board is, therefore, pleased to deliver this edition of *African Nebula* which is specially dedicated to Dr Samar Habib.

Happy reading!

African Nebula, **Issue 6, 2013**

African-American Feminist Discourses: Understanding the Writings of Harriet Jacobs and Adrienne Kennedy

Sarada Thallam
Fulbright Senior Research Fellow
Department of Afro-American Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison
saradabalaji@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper analyses the writings of two African-American women writers Harriet Jacobs and Adrienne Kennedy. It argues that their works challenge patriarchy and contemporary Anglo-American feminist discourses. It uses as its critical framework postcolonial theories of "othering" as enunciated by critics like Said and Spivak, to demonstrate the way in which Jacobs and Kennedy manipulate standard American English, to highlight the linguistic power of African-American women's writings.

Keywords: feminism, othering, otherness, slavery, language

Introduction

African American women's writings are a product of a successful struggle against hegemonic value systems perpetuated by a dominant imperio-political culture. Apart from its deep creativity, the writings are also cast in a deliberately defiant mode since these literary works are often interesting sites of resistance against epistemic enslavement. Such form of creative confrontation is evident in women's writings from the earliest slave narratives to the contemporary performances on the stage.

This paper proceeds to analyze Black women's linguistic inventiveness, their deliberate subversion of standard American English and the rooted complexities in two seemingly diverse texts- Harriet Jacob's slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) and a play by Adrienne Kennedy entitled *A Lesson in Dead Language* (1968. It examines the linguistic modes of resistance that these works interestingly offer and to perceive these texts as creative answers to the hegemonic strategy of "othering" that attempts to silence non-white female creativity. Written in apparently varied genres, the aim of both Jacobs and Kennedy is to linguistically experiment and counter the dominant culture's tactic of "othering" to vindicate their creative selves.

The Concept of 'Othering' and 'Otherness'

Before moving to analyze the selected texts, it would be rather appropriate for us to explore this practice of "othering" at a deeper level. "Othering" and "otherness" are processes that remain intensely debated in contemporary postcolonial, cultural, feminist and subaltern studies which seriously discuss how the powerless and the non-white groups are grossly misrepresented by the

white supremacist discourses for their imperial aggrandizement. Basically, the term "other" is borrowed from continental philosophy where it is construed as a binary of "self." Philosophically speaking, Hegel was among the first thinkers to have used the term "other" as a vital aspect of ones's self-consciousness, since he contends that each aspect of the consciousness pursues the death of the other. The term involves the demise of an earlier consciousness in the place of a new one, while also entailing deep chasm between the "self" and the "other" that is ultimately resolved only with the help of the famous master-slave dialectic.[1]

An existentialist dimension to the concept of "othering" was further added by Sartre who in his *Being and Nothingness* (1943), pronounces an altered perception of the world on the appearance of another person. But Sartre does not perceive the process as being radical or life-threatening. De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) infers to a master-slave dialectic in the relationship between a man and a woman. The "other" is thus always a woman who is defined as being opposite to a man. Post-colonial critics like Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak locate the process in a post-colonial imperialist subaltern praxis and also attempt to provide alternate historical insights of the larger imperialist discourse. Said's views are contained in his *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) where the "orient" is always Europe's "other" and its binary opposite. The "othered" are thereby relegated to objects of observation, reduced to a sub-human status and associated with non-activeness, non-autonomy and non-sovereign selves. Spivak's works also concede on the point of the "epistemic violence" inflicted upon the colonized nations[2].

These postcolonial, imperial axioms of othering are crucial for our understanding of the African American women's predicament since these women face major challenges on account of their distinctiveness. The only race which was brought to the United States by force, their status in a largely white nation is an interesting source of enigma. Transplanted in the First world, their positions are largely akin to that of the Third world colonized women who have been othered by the dominant powers. Writing from liminal positions, they are confronted with a unique perplexity of quite naming their peculiar agonies. Spivak's works like *Can the Subaltern Speak* and *French Feminism in an International Fame* critiques the hegemonic feminist models that have so dominated the world literary scenario. The latter essay is significantly concerned with the issue of naming the concerns of the "othered" women. The problem of naming is crucial to African American women's studies since it involves an innate identification of hitherto unrecognized issues which have surfaced as an aftermath of a seamless struggle. Succinctly speaking, the African American women's positions are closer to the postcolonial, Third world "othered" women as pronounced by Spivak.

> There is a simultaneous other focus: not merely who I am, but who is the other woman? How am I naming her?... how does she name herself in her own narratives? How does she find meaning in her own experiences, and how does she understand the role of language in her efforts to name these experiences? (Spivak, 1981: 150).

Although Spivak only has in mind Indian women and the other women of the Third World, the statement is clearly applicable to African-American women also who are in a peculiar state of limbo on account of their peripheral existence in an imperialistic culture. The women needed to create a language to name their "selves" in their creative works. For instance, the poem "Slave

Mother" by Ellen Watkins Harper is one of the most powerful and short discourses on slavery. What Brent explains in her entire full length autobiography is succinctly encapsulated by her in a single page. The soul of the poem lies in the helplessness of an agonized maternal figure best delineated in a moving language thus:

He is not hers, although she bore
For him a mother's pains
He is not hers, although her blood
Is coursing through his veins.

He is not hers, for cruel hands
May rudely tear her apart
The only wreath of household love
That binds her breaking heart.

One of the most moving discourses against slavery, the poem attains profounder meaning in the concluding lines:

Their lives a streamlet blent in one
Oh Father! must they part?

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and *A Lesson in Dead Language

This paper analyses two texts by African-American women writers: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) by Harriet Jacobs and a play by Adrienne Kennedy entitled *A Lesson in Dead Language (1968).* Separated by more than a century, the former is a private genre, an autobiography, which chronicles the life struggle of a woman who fought her way to freedom. It is a kind of a feminist writing which seeks to represent the conditions under which African-American women lived during slavery. As a pioneering prose text, it had to wade through linguistic and literary "othered" spaces from which they attempted to talk back to the dominant culture. *A Lesson in Dead Language* (1968) by Adrienne Kennedy is a public genre. It is a play aimed at a performance before a live audience. The play is deeply concerned with the process of education of young African American women, which Kennedy seems to suggest needs to be in consonance with their ethno-specific experiences. Most importantly, this particular play focuses on the inadequacy of the English tongue to delineate the particular racio-sexual experiences that the African American women in particular face. In many ways Kennedy's dramatic text could be perceived as a historical and logical corollary of Jacob's autobiography. Jacob's autobiography narrates in a linear mode, the condition of African American women grovelling under the horrendous system of slavery, with little literary and creative spaces through which they could express the multiple rapes, forced motherhood and coerced sexual liaisons in an explicit style, Kennedy's plays in fact deftly encapsulate the racial horrors meted out to Black women in America and the historicity of the legitimised rape which has almost annulled their psyche and their linguistic capacities in a deft and condensed dramatic style. As a contrast to Jacobs, Kennedy follows a circular style. These two outwardly dissimilar mediums of creativity in fact vindicate the linguistic spaces of African American women's writings.

As stated above, the earliest imprints of the power of African American women's language is evident in their slave narratives. A pioneering, yet powerful discourse produced during the

tumultuous times of slavery, *Incidents* is an early attempt by an African-American woman writer to both define the horrendous system of slavery and to also look back at the overriding culture with its linguistic assertiveness. The very act of writing was valorizing for the African American women given the times at which Harriet Jacobs penned the narrative. It is an act of epistemic vindication given the fact that she penned the incredible narrative only at irregular intervals whenever she could take some time off from her domestic drudgeries.[3] It is indeed a part of the larger discourse of abolition literature with the added gendered dimension. As the protagonist Linda Brent concisely expresses:

> Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, sufferings and modifications peculiarly their own (Jacobs, 1861) .

The gendered facet of slavery is effectively recounted in a language of her own. Jacob's language depicts the peculiar woes of a slave woman like forced sexual coercion, rape, paranoid fugitiveness, fear of discovery, paralyzed life in the attic, flight towards freedom, maternity, protection of children etc. Jacob's discourse is both aimed at exciting sympathy, and at consciousness raising, especially amongst the women of the North regarding the dehumanizing dimensions of slavery and its impact on the southern slave women. The powerful discourse is not an individual voice of protest, but a collective voice aimed at the elimination of slavery:

> I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the free states what slavery really is. Only by experience can anyone realize how deep, dark and foul is that pit of abomination (Jacobs: 1861)

Slave narratives thus form an important early milestone in the journey of African-American women's literary discourse, since it simultaneously enacts the rhetorical role of claiming their selves with their symbolic language, resounding with a liberatory aura that orders their otherwise chaotic existence. Their discourse then validates their psycho-linguistic terrains since as Morrison says that Harriet Jacobs had "nothing to fall back upon": "not maleness, not whiteness, not anything, And out of the profound desolation of her reality, the Black female may have invented herself". Slave narratives like *The History of Mary Prince-A West Indian Slave* (1831), *Memoir of Old Elizabeth-A Colored Woman* (1863), *The Story of Mattie Jackson* (1866) or that of Harriet Jacobs form a unique landmark in the annals of African-American writing since the language and style not merely asserted their womanhood, but also authenticated their aesthetic existence.

A better understanding of Harriet Jacob's work emerges when her work is compared with the 1845 male slave narrative of Fredrick Douglass. Douglass's narrative was an international bestseller. A reviewer of a Massachusetts newspaper compared him to Daniel Defoe and called it "the most important book the American press had ever issued" (Stauffer, 2007: 204). Cast in the larger discourse of transnational abolitionism, the "I" in Douglas, opines Stauffer is cast in the mould of an "Emersonian self" holding within him a power to embrace an "indwelling god who is present within the self and the world" (Fisch, 2007: 205). The text achieves an "ekphrasis" (Stauffer, 2007: 205) that triggers every reader towards abolitionism. But Douglass's narrative presents only a limited picture of slavery. It does not deal with how the other half of his people suffered under the cruel system. The gyno-critical subtext of slavery was not represented until

the female slave narratives emerged. The gap of 16 years. that exists between the narrative of Fredrick Douglas and that of Harriet Jacobs explains the constricted linguistic and intellectual freedom available to black women since both of them were abolitionists.[4] Jacob's tale for the first time chartered a specialized voice to highlight the gender-specific complexities deeply embedded within the cruel system of slavery. In a way it is both a compliment and a counter-discourse to patriarchy. In fact it is one of the most compelling narratives of the conventions of African American womanhood by a black woman author before emancipation.

Incidents remarkably reflect two modes of linguistic resistance: the contest of spaces between the oral and the written dialects in the text and the presence of an assimilative tendency known as *La Mestiza.* Basically, *Incidents* tests the self-inventiveness of Jacobs where she struggles to fuse an inherited oral tradition with a literary tradition of her self-education. *Incidents* is therefore transformed into a site for contending spaces where the oral and the written registers war for legitimate spaces. The simultaneous presence of these twin registers in the narrative, amalgamates the seemingly contradictory traditions and communicates a creative vision that forms an interesting pattern. Harryette Mullen makes an interesting comment on this aspect of *Incidents:*

> Their texts, by focusing on a continuum of resistance to oppression available to the illiterate as well as the literate, tend to stress orality as a presence over illiteracy as an absence (Mullen, 1992: 255).

The dominant presence of the oral dialect is in consonance with African American women's slave experience and not that of a dominant American society. The literal address, direct conversation and informal speech are consistent with their lives in the plantation. In fact, Jacob's text presents a resilient pattern occupying both the oral and written words/worlds into it. The Tejana feminist, Gloria Anzuldua, refers to a process of *La mestiza* which is actually a consciousness of the borderlands wherein the value systems of one group are transferred on another:

.

> cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of borders, an inner war… (Anzulda, 1987: 78).

Similarly, Jacob's text straddles multiple linguistic registers, committing acts of linguistic border-crossings that is aimed at freedom from narrow linguistic confines to effectively combat philological hegemonies that attempt to silence them. It provides a critical consciousness that helps the reader to unearth the deepest maneuverings of patriarchal power that is almost ubiquitous in the literary domain. The language forcefully questions the fundamental structures of male-controlled power play and thus disseminates an alternative feminist model that is non-eurocentric, non-white and does not covertly reproduce the imperialist axioms.

From an intensely personal domain of creativity like the autobiography, which is linear, presenting little textual complexities, I now turn to interrogate a more public genre, the drama. Requiring the architectonics of the theatrical space, Kennedy's drama is performative, complex, condensed, intense and non-linear. A poet of the American theatre, Adrienne Kennedy is a part of the lineage going back to O'Neill, Williams, Sheppard, Baraka, Bullins and the like. Her plays

make a steep departure from the realism of Hansberry or the protest tone of Baraka and Bullins. Kennedy's theatre is aimed at shredding layers of the troubled consciousness of her protagonists in an intense, non-linear, dramatic space that reverberates in the spectator's consciousness long after he/she has witnessed the plays. As a postmodern poet of the American theatre, her characters are located in multiple selves, metamorphosing their African-American states. Philip C. Kolin (2005) describes her works as being "intense jabs to the psyche." Kennedy's plays are largely autobiographical. If Jacob has produced a single, prose, linear autobiography, Kennedy's oeuvre of plays is constant enactments and re-enactments of her autobiographical core since she presents her intense personal life in a concentrated dramatic medium. If Jacobs presents a holistic, single self in her work, Kennedy's plays depict fractured identities, postmodern plural selves devoid of any intention to attain wholeness. To forge such an intense personal psyche onto the stage, Kennedy uses a language that is forcefully her own. In a complex way, she seems to agree with Ntozake Shange:

> We have to murder the King's English before it murders us [. . .] because that particular language can't speak for us [. .] language determines how we perceive ourselves and unless women and people of color take charge of language, we are nothing(Lester, 1995: 271).

Her use of English is different from that of Baraka, Bullins or Sanchez who impart a raw intensity to their dramatic discourse. It is not also in terms of abandoning capitals and contraction of auxiliary verbs as in Shange or Ishamael Reed. In fact, England and the English language interact with her in a strange way. Her autobiography, *People Who Led to My Plays* reveals both her fascination for England and her acute realization of her place as a Black woman in a white patriarchal English world. English literary figures like Chaucer and Shakespeare emerge as tyrannical characters in her play *The Owl Answers* who thwart the creativity of the Black woman who continues to love them though. In fact, her short and powerful play *A Lesson in Dead language* (1964) examines the outmoded educational system that fails to validate the epistemic existence of African American women in a land of promise.

Kennedy's *Lesson* takes place in not an ordinary classroom, but in an intense subterranean world, where the minds of seven African American adolescent girls are indoctrinated with irrelevant Latin lessons, while their bodies undergo a sexual rite from adolescence to womanhood. Caught in a profound gyno-psychological terror, they are unable to comprehend the language as also their bodies. Kennedy skillfully uses an evocative form of English to describe the locale. It is no mere accident that she devotes a half-page description for a three page play. The classroom is "bright", the teacher a "great white dog", the seven adolescent girls wear "white organdy dresses" and they write on "imaginary tablets". The ironic presence of statues of religious figures like Jesus, Joseph, Mary and Two Wise Men is significant, since these religious figures stand as a mute witness to the horrific happenings on the stage. The classroom depicted is a classroom of the mind which may be different from Kennedy's Cleveland education, but it could be closer to her experiences at Ohio as depicted in *Ohio State Murders*.

Kennedy's language moves in a state of intense concentricity, accompanied by forceful repetition. The play's movement is circular, with an incantatory repetitive style. The key to the play is her repetition of three words and phrases to heighten the effectiveness of the dominant

emotion of the play so as to make the audience also partake of this painful intensity. There are three stylistic traits evident in the play.

Firstly, she frequently alludes to the terms "blood" and "bleed." Blood is the central image of the play. Kennedy uses the words "blood" and "bleed" synonymously with an overwhelming power that it occurs 37 times in the short play of three pages. Her symbolic use of blood is similar to that of Lorca's *Blood Wedding*. In *People,* she mentions Lorca as having a strong influence on her dramatic consciousness. Blood is a persistently loaded metaphor in Lorca's plays. While it signifies revenge in *Blood Wedding*, it symbolizes life and birth in his *Yerma*. Kennedy loads it with religio-sexual connotations. Blood symbolizes the crucifixion of the race, especially the African American women whose lives see little resurrection in Kennedy's fragmented world. The statues of Jesus, Joseph, Mary and the Two Wise men are therefore an ironic presence since these patriarchal white colonizer's religious icons stand as mute witnesses to the multiple forms of violence inflicted on their bodies and psyche. Education does not empower them; rather as Gadby Rogers mentions, it is a "terror trip" where the young girls speak artificially like a "corps de ballet" where their individuality has been "practically obliterated." (Jackson and Overbeck, 1992: 200). "Blood" is a racio-sexual symbol reminding them constantly of their horrors like rape, miscegenation, lynching etc. It evokes strong bodily memories, as blood in this play not merely exists but also acts. Blood is in the movement. From small spots on the dresses of these women, it becomes larger and larger until it fully drenches them and they stand desiccated. Towards the end of the play "their skirts are covered with bright blood, heads hung"(40). Their sapped out bodies echoes Billie Holiday's image of African American bodies in her famous song "Strange Fruit." The dramatic enactment of the alphabets is also clear. The two o's in the word blood connotes the circular, continuous ever-returning nature of the horrors that so predates the psyche of African American women.

Secondly, juxtaposed to the haunting image of "blood" and "bleed" is the image of "lemons and the grass and the sun." Collectively, these three images together connote a single image of sunshine, joy, optimism, a lost Eden and a prelapsarian state of innocence. The word "lemon" occurs at least five times in the play along with "grass." Philip. C. Kolin gives at least two other symbolic interpretations of the term "lemon".

It symbolizes the girls "ovaries and the bitter taste of womanhood before them" (Kolin, 2005: 93). The onset of the menstrual cycle connotes the increased anxieties and their greater vulnerability to be raped. Kolin also contends that "lemon" is also a Roman Catholic symbol which Kennedy must have been familiar with. He quotes Anna Chupa who describes the rituals of Saint Joseph's altars. Kennedy must have been familiar with the Virgin Mary rituals like stealing the lemons from the altar which is seen as a sign of good luck, during which coins are left for the poor. Further, a lemon on St. Joseph's altar was believed never to turn black (Kolin, 2005: 96)

Finally, the vision of the "falling pinnacle" is yet another haunting image in the play. Though literally referring to Caesar's death and Calpurnia's dream (which Kennedy has borrowed from Plutarch), it signifies the fall of the young girl's hope and confidence. In Shakespeare's play, Caesar goes to the capitol only to be killed. Calpurnia's foreknowledge does little to avert the catastrophe. Similarly the mothers are also unable to avert the disaster that may befall their daughters. Rosemary Curb considers the pinnacle as a "phallic principle" since the girls understand their sexual vulnerability for the first time.

These three major images and poetic symbols are used alternatively, repetitively and simultaneously by Kennedy thus forges a peculiarly powerful language which creates an emotional stasis for the spectators. Hers, like Maeterklinck, is a theatre of stasis. The repetitive, cyclical style wherein the three images act with a powerful simultaneity create a visual blitzkrieg in the spectators. The repetitive style of Kennedy could be traced to two sources: Her African ethnic roots where repetition is an integral element. It could also be traced to Jazz, the music with which she would have grown up with. Although Kennedy does not make any confessions on her dramatic art, Susan Lori Parks, her dramatic descendant who also uses a non-linear, repetitive circular style in her plays makes statements on her craft which could be applicable to Kennedy's plays too. Parks confesses that "Rep & Rev" being a major element in her works, her dramatic texts appear more like a "musical score." Her plays, she contends, are "dramas of accumulation . . . where. . . all elements lead the audience toward some single explosive moment." (Parks, 1995: 9). The single explosive moment arrives in all of Kennedy's plays. In this play, it occurs when all the seven women wither towards the end with their gowns soaked in blood. The repetition is not done for repetition sake. As in poetry where repetition is an accepted tradition, the poetic theatre of Kennedy is also repetitive with improvisation. Each repetition gives a new and a nuanced layer of meaning into the words. Susan Lori Parks uses the word "incremental refrain" wherein each repetition creates an increased tempo of weight and rhythm. The movement of the play is not from "A-B but from A-A-A-B-A. (Parks, 1995: 9). Time itself in plays like this is not linear but circular, moving forever towards the central explosion. At the core of the emotional turbulence is stillness, a silence which is inexplicable and enigmatic. Her plays continue to haunt the minds of the spectators long after they have watched it because of this strange dialectical relationship between the ominous silence and the exploding images which together act a with a power that overrides the consciousness of the spectators. This dialectical pattern resonates with a metalinguistic authority that disturbs our complacency.

On the whole, an analysis of the philology of these texts suggests the fact that their language is a product of their experiential consciousness. This experience is reflected in their language. Bell Hooks'*Ain't I a Woman (1981)* devotes an entire chapter to "Sexism and the Black Female Slave Experience". Experience affects consciousness which in turn shapes their language. Phenomenologists like Husserl, Heidegger, Ponte and Sartre agree on the basic issue of the impact of the structures of human experience on consciousness. Husserl uses the term "intentionality" to refer to the structured pattern of human experience. This emerges from a first person point of view, encompassing within it a wide range of thought, emotion, desire and action. African American women accord primacy to the lived experience that has been meted out to them in America . The first person point of view is naturally incorporated in their works since all the characters created by the creative conscience emanate from the strong racial consciousness of the writer. The lived experience is a necessary strategy needed for their emotional survival in a legacy of genocidal diaspora. Language thus graphically describes their psycho linguistic domains and maps their inner topographies not merely as an act of delineation but as a semiotic signal, enacting the inner life onto the stage.

Conclusion

Language is an intensely contested space where colonial linguistic imperialism continues to dominate long after political emancipation. The linguistic tirade waged by these women assumes complex proportions given the interlocking nature of their liberatory politics where race, gender

and class issues overlap each other to form a single continuum, on the one hand, which is at loggerheads with the linguistic and colonial domination striving to seek expression in a legitimate linguistic space, on the other hand. Basically, language itself is a symbolic space where non-Europeans and women occupy peripheral positions.

Bell Hooks; *Talking Back* (1989) defines three modes of resistance adapted by African American women: speechlessness, self-reflexive speech and talking back. These are the three distinct stages of the linguistic fruition of the African American women. "Speechlessness" is the first stage of linguistic perplexity experienced by the "othered" women when they were first imported to the white man's land and bequeathed with harsh racist treatment. Bereft of speech and the initial ability to translate them creatively, they stood speechless. "Self-reflexive speech" is the second stage of their discourse wherein they first communicated their harsh experiences with themselves as is evident in their spirituals, songs and lullabies. This act of communication imparts to them a strange sense of satisfaction as one would have after having emerged out of a confession box. "Talking back" is the third and crucial stage wherein the enslaved subject forges a new language for herself and ventures to create her works in such a manner as to both write back to the subjugating hegemony, while also creating unique linguistic identities that orders their tumultuous experiences in a creative manner. Both Harriet Jacobs and Adrienne Kennedy "talk back" through their respective texts thereby vindicating the intellectual traditions bequeathed to them by their foremothers like Sojourner Truth, while also countering essentialist, stereotypical notions of Black womanhood and replacing them with positive images. Though, clearly demarcated into marginal positions by the dominant imperialist culture, they continue to voice their hitherto unexpressed contours of their experiences and thus create novel epistemes that finds legitimacy through their creativity. Through their art they transcend their second sex status and express themselves with a hitherto unknown vibrancy.

Notes

[1]This is a famous section in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807) which narrates the development of self-consciousness in two distinct self-conscious beings. Hegel contends that human consciousness is an innately social process and that none can ever be fully certain of consciousness unless it is mediated through another entity. The person needs to receive an acknowledgement of consciousness from another person to validate one's own. When two such self-conscious people meet, there may be an abstract metaphorical struggle in trying to validate each other's consciousness, which eventually leads to the annihilation of one. As an alternative is the willing subordination of one's self to another in a master-slave relationship. Here, the slave does not die and the master also possesses someone who can provide a conscious mediation. However, this relationship is also gradually soured since the power relations between the duo are asymmetrical. This basic Hegelian model has been modified by contemporary thinkers. Edward Said sees this model as replicating the imperial power axioms of colonial domination. De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* uses the model to delineate the imbalance of power between the sexes whereas Spivak's works blend both the imperial postcolonial and the gender dimension in her *Can the Subaltern Speak?* and *French Feminism in an International Fame.*

[2]Spivak analyses this issue in her seminal essays like *The Rani of Sirmur* (1985) and *Can The Subaltern Speak* (1988) where the Indian subjects remain analysed as Europe's "other". If Said's concern was the Arabs as Europe's other, Spivak's thrust was on the Indian women who remained bereft of a voice and history.

[3]The act can truly be perceived as an epistemic triumph since Linda Brent had to struggle against multiple odds to pioneer for legitimate linguistic spaces for herself with the limited historical, geographic and epistemic spaces available to slave women. Her self-education was also to a certain extent, a limiting factor. Her case has a few parallels in the literary world. An Indian woman writer of the nineteenth century, Rassundari Debi's autobiography *Amar Jiban* ("My Life") (1876) depicts her impediments to gain literacy since women in early colonial India had no access to education. She had to steal pieces of paper from her son's notebook and keep them in the kitchen and pursue her self-education by merely looking at a group of boys being imparted education from a distance.

[4]The same disparity also exists between the genders also exists in the field of African American dramatic creativity. The first African American play to have been written was William Wells Brown's *Escape: Or a Leap to Freedom* (1858).The first properly produced play by an African American woman was Angelina Weld Grimke's *Rachael* (1961). The long hiatus of 58 years between Brown and Grimke adequately reflects African American women's lack of access to language and knowledge systems.

[5] A similar form of ritual is also present in the Hindu faith of the Southern parts of India. Like Mother Mary, *Maariamma* (an incarnation of Goddess Durga or Shakti) is worshipped with lemons which the southern Indian Hindus believe as being auspicious.

References

Anzuldua. (1987). *Borderlands of La Frontera: The New Mestiza.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute.

Brinat-Jackson, P & Overbeck, O. (1992). *Intersecting Boundaries: The Theatre of Adrienne Kennedy.* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black Feminist Thought.* Boston: Unwynn Hyman.

Fisch, A. (2007). *The African American Slave Narrative.* Cambridge: CUP 2007.

Guy, Sheftall, B. (ed.), (1995) *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Print Thought*. New York: New Press.

Hooks, B. (1981). *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Back*. Boston: South End Press.

Hooks, B. (1983). *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism*. London: Pluto.

Jacobs, H. (1861). *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. New York & London: Norton.

Kennedy A. (1968). *A Lesson in Dead Language*, New York: Collision Course.

Kolins, P. C. (2005). *Understanding of Adrienne Kennedy.* South Carolina: University of South Carolina.

Lester. A. N. (1995). *Ntozake Shange: A Critical Study of Her Plays*. NY: Garland.

Mannoni, O. (1950). *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonisation.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.

Morrison, T. (2002). *Sula*, New York: Knopf.

Mullen, H. (1992). "Runaway Tongue: Resistant Orality in *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, and *Beloved*". *The Cultural Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth- Century America*. Shirley Samuels (ed). New York: Oxford University Press.

Parks, S. L. (1995). *The America Play and Other Works.* New York: Theatre Communication.

Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.

---------- (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage.

Sartre, J. P. (1992). *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. NY: Pocket Books.

Shange, N. (1981). *For Colored Girls.* NY: Bantam.

Slemon, S. (1995) "Unsettling the Empire Resistance Theory" *Postcolonial Studies Reader.* Bill Ashcroft: Routledge.

Spivak, G C. (1987). *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen.

Stauffer, J. (2007) "Fredrick Douglass's Self-Fashioning and the Making of a Representative American Man." In Audrey Fisch (ed.) *The African American Slave Narrative*. Cambridge: CUP.

Walker, A. (1983). *In Search of our Mother's Gardens*. NY: Harcourt.

Xiomara, S. (2007). "Black womanhood in North American slave narratives." In Audrey Fisch, (ed.) *The African American Slave Narrative*, Cambridge: CUP.

Instrumentality of Africa for Black Americans: A Critical Analysis of Black America's Africanist Project in the Early Twentieth Century

Farshid Nowrouzi Roshnavand and Hamed Movahedian
University of Tehran
Iran
far.nowrouzi@ut.ac.ir

Abstract

Before the beginning of the twentieth century, black Americans underwent an all-encompassing process of 'Otherization' and 'inferiorization' which saw them as inhuman, heathen and demonic. Under the tenacious hold of oppressive hegemonic discourses, they were forced to internalize the dominant negative stereotypes and thus, over time, came to detest their black skin colour and African racial origin. In such circumstances, they viewed integrationism and assimilationism as the only possible survival strategies in the white-dominated United States. However, a number of factors went hand in hand in the early twentieth century to undermine the long-held assumption of white supremacy and black inferiority. This paradigm shift resulted in a vogue of Africanism among black Americans who wished to regain their missing self-respect in the face of white oppression. Most notably propagated by Garvey and Du Bois, Africanism reached its zenith in post-World War I nationalist climate. This paper tries to show that the vogue of Africanism was not a genuine call on the part of subalternized Negroes for a physical or cultural return to their ancestral homeland; rather, it was merely an instrument in the hands of black Americans through which they strived to prove their intrinsic worth and the legitimacy of their quest for equality and justice. This means that black Americans' Africanist project was carried out in the context of Americanism as a way to find admission into the mainstream society.

Keywords: Africanism, African Americans, Nationalism, World War I, Instrumentality.

Introduction

> If America does not allow the Negro to find pride in himself as an American, then he will inevitably seek acceptance as a black man (Cayton, 1966: 45).

After the first encounter between European colonizers and the negroid in the fifteenth century, the Western consciousness embarked on a subtle mechanism which ultimately aimed to justify the heinous crimes and misdeeds committed against non-white, non-Christian subjects in the colonized lands. This gave rise to a constructed image of the non-white subject in which certain characteristics were deliberately underscored; by exaggerating the differences of the non-white populations, the Western enterprise of colonization managed to Otherize and inferiorize them, and thus create a seemingly defensible rationale to naturalize slavery, domination and

discrimination (Brown, 1993: 659-560). By relating the black colour of the negroid to the biblical curse of Ham or Canaan, the immoral aspects of exploitation and plundering were condoned since they were seen as the natural outcome of the alleged inferiority of the black race (MacCann, 2001: xxviii-xxix).

In addition to Europe, the same fixating mechanism of otherization, inferiorization and subalternization was used in the United States where many of the socio-political elite of society, who were themselves slaveholders and landowners, had a vested interest in the perpetuation of the pattern of domination and subordination (Greenfield, 2001: 41). Resorting to the hierarchical rhetoric of the Calvinist thought (Robbins, 2007: 22) and later to Social Darwinism (Jones, 2010: 193), the mainstream American society, driven by sheer mercantile interest (Williams, 1944: 19-20), promoted an aura of sacrosanctity around the constructed concept of white supremacy and black servitude (Keim, 2009: 7-10). The centuries-long pattern of domination was so overbearing in the American society that remained mostly intact even after the Emancipation. The consequence of this hegemonic discourse of inferiorization was a marginalized black deprived of his basic civil rights.

Due to the unbearable weight of demeaning stereotypes and the discriminatory atmosphere of the pre-twentieth century America which denounced black pigmentation and socio-cultural norms as deviant and base, most of the Negroes, were forced to reject their African ancestral background and internalize whatever the white dominators imposed on them. For many years, the American capitalist socio-political structure compelled blacks to internalize its negative stereotypes which represented blacks as soul-less, poor, depraved, uncultured, irrational and savage. This hegemonic pattern led to self-hatred among blacks and encouraged their efforts to live like the powerful bourgeois whites. Amidst this racial, socio-political and economic discrimination, blacks opted for the assimilation and reproduction of white America's norms in order to ameliorate their material conditions and achieve economic gain and socio-cultural status; this integrationist agenda ultimately resulted in African-Americans' cultural amnesia and collective loss of memory about the essence of their history and customs (Mocombe, 2009: 33-37).

However, the dominant views against the blacks underwent drastic metamorphosis as a result of a number of overlapping trends including African-Americans' distinguished participation in World War I, the Great Migration of more than one million black Americans from the South to the North in 1910s and the modernists' fascination with the primitive art. These factors ushered African-Americans into an age of redefinition and changed the way they thought about themselves and the nature of their citizenship in the United States. The upshot of this new consciousness was the creation of a modern national African American community with a more informed international spirit. Out of this great metamorphosis emerged an Africanist inclination among black Americans who wished to achieve self-assertion and self-definition against the hegemonic discourse of white supremacy. This paper tries to shed light on the fact that the popular Africanism of post-World War I era was merely a voguish trend serving as an instrument in the hands of subalternized blacks in their quest for gaining civil rights and admission into the mainstream American society.

Dominant White Representational Strategy and Black Americans' Denial of Africa

Throughout the eighteenth century, slaves were transported directly from Africa to various harbors along the eastern seaboard of the United States. However, from the second quarter of the

nineteenth century onwards, the slave trade declined and on that account, an overwhelming percentage of nineteenth century slaves were indeed native Americans (Blassingame, as cited in Mocombe, 2009: 22). The cessation of the slave trade put an end to the interaction of American-born blacks with African-born people. What compounded the break between black Americans and their African origin was the compulsory migration of nearly one million slaves westward in the United States which took place fifty years before the official end of slavery in 1865 (Corbould, 2009: 2). Moreover, dominant white Americans tried to shut blacks from their African culture and heritage through legislative measures; for instance, they outlawed African religious rituals including dancing and drumming which they considered as heathenistic and wanton, and even banned slaves' employment of African languages (Harding, as cited in Mocombe, 2009: 34).

Whereas in the first half of the nineteenth century, free coloured people in America sometimes, proudly referred to themselves as "African" and repeatedly used the term in the names of their organizations, as in the African Methodist Episcopal church, a connection to Africa turned into an encumbrance when their lives became increasingly unstable and insecure after the Emancipation. As the American Colonization Society began to plan to send free black people to Liberia, a new American colony at that time, in order to save the United States from the putative threat of a racially mixed society, Africa, instead of an origin to be glorified, became a destination to be afraid of. The diminution of direct relations with Africa signified that the former slaves stopped considering themselves as African; consequently, many black Americans became alienated from and even embarrassed of their African roots, and ceased to employ the term "African" when referring to themselves (Corbould, 2009: 2).

In addition to white America's desire to repatriate freed slaves, there were many other factors which, over time, made Africa seem less attractive in the eyes of the black residents of the United States. With the increasing expansion of European colonies, the belief that each person belonged to a biological race became more and more popular. Under the considerable influence of Darwin's theories, the concept of race came to be seen as closely related to the evolution of humankind. The conviction that Africans were inferior creatures who had not yet progressed to the uppermost, or even the middle, steps on the ladder of civilization had great practicality for Anglo-Americans who were afraid of the aftermaths of abolition of slavery. Asserting the lower status and even the inhumanity of the black race signified that former slaves could easily be subjugated and disparaged as inefficient and in dire need of white administration (Childs, 2000: 40-42). This hierarchical pattern of human development served slaveholders and landowners who actively sought ways to sustain their cheap labouring force (Greenfield, 2001: 41).

In the popular consciousness, Africa gradually came to represent a land of inscrutable jungles and cryptic rivers ready to be subdued by the 'superior' white race; and Africa's culture and people were portrayed much like the landscape. In effect, the dominant images of Africa differed markedly with those of industrial urban United States. While America progressively moved forward, specifying what it meant to be modern and civilized, Africa was depicted as a place with no history and culture where time stood still, and thus had nothing to be proud of. In this context, it was psychologically and socially demanding for black Americans to make or claim connections with Africa when the continent and its inhabitants were so badly defamed. Africa

was transformed into a place which they wished to keep at a distance in order to demonstrate that they had outstripped it (Corbould, 2009: 3-4).

Even after the Emancipation, the American society was still inundated with stereotypical representations of black Americans which portrayed them as the savage Africans. Mass consumer culture, from the packaging of food products and magazine advertisements to the first film screens and even children's comic books, depicted and broadcast black people as picaninnies, mammies and Uncle Toms who were foolish, mischievous and, sometimes, cunning but never heroic and competent. In such discriminatory and stifling socio-racial atmosphere, many African-American activists of the day strived to prove that the idea of racial inferiority of blacks was groundless and that black Americans were equal to the whites. However, their strategy which was centred on improving race relations in America had little esteem in it for any kind of identification with Africa (Corbould, 2009: 4). Rather, these activists, mostly from the middle class, took on what T. O. Moore called "a maladaptive response" (2005: 753), drew class lines between various strata of African-American community and tried to consolidate black elites' identification with their class counterparts in the dominant white race (Corbould, 2009: 5). The literature of this group of black American society, sometimes labelled derogatorily with such terms as "Best Foot Forward" and "Genteel School", was more frequently than not, written for a white audience and had as its battle cry the pathetic motto "We are like you". In order to show that black Americans were not different from whites, "Best Foot Forward" literature only portrayed the positive aspects of black middle-class life and neglected the seamy sides of African American experience in the United States (Moses, 1987: 64). The black bourgeoisie did its utmost, in Fanon's words, "to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect" and struggled to show that they could be just as human as the dominant white Americans (2008: 3). These black bourgeois uplifters sought out recognition and respect from the mainstream society, a desire that gradually led them to disparage their racial origin. Consequently, they neither venerated African culture nor deemed Africans as kin; quite the contrary, they based their politics around the necessity of acquiring middle-class respectability and disavowed Africa as primitive and backward (Corbould, 2009: 5).

Nevertheless, black bourgeoisie' claim to equality through the disavowal of Africa did not quell a persistent interest of many black Americans in African cultural elements during the nineteenth century, and African American folk culture was still abundant with tales and songs originally rooted in Africa. Likewise, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a tie between black Americans and Africa remained largely strong in the significant area of religion. Black sermons and religious songs frequently alluded to the stories of the Old Testament and the books of Psalms including the exodus from Egypt and the future redemption of Ethiopia. Some preachers even revised biblical accounts to inspire black congregations to anticipate a day with pleasure when black Americans would return to the Promised Land, Africa, and blackness would be restored (Corbould, 2009: 6). Religion, in effect, was one of the few sources of black Americans' hopefulness that injustice and suffering would not endure eternally and in this way, managed to help them develop a new sense of self and a power to keep going on, notwithstanding dehumanizing forces (Sernett, 1999: 3-8). Thus, "the chief 'function' of the Negro church has been to buoy up the hopes of its members" (Myrdal, as cited in Conroy, 1971: 20) who desperately wished "to find salvation in the next world and to escape from the sickness and insecurities of this world" (Frazier, as cited in Washington, 2001: 42). Considering the

elevated status of religion among Negroes, it is of great significance to note that Africa was an inseparable element of black American religious life; as an elemental bond of group identity, the sense of religious belonging helped African Americans to come close to a collective sense of black nationhood within the United States (Rogers, as cited in Sernett, 7). All the same, traditional Negro religiosity lost its considerable force in the early twentieth century, especially among many of the African-American intelligentsia, including Nella Larsen, J. A. Rogers, James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke and Langston Hughes, who denounced Christianity and professed to be atheists (Spencer, 1996: 454-455), and this meant that they had to seek their African origins in places other than churches.

World War I, Nationalism and the Upsurge of Africanism among Black Americans

A confluence of events in the first quarter of the twentieth century went hand in hand in creating a new racial consciousness among black Americans. African-Americans' participation in World War I, the Great Migration, Boasian anthropology, modernists' fascination with the primitive art and Westerners' dissatisfaction with the sterility and barrenness of puritan life led to the development of new ideas which were in one way or another concerned with Africa and with black Americans' attachment to the continent and its people, an interest that finally brought about the explosion of black ethnic culture.

As in the case of most of the wars, the requirements of World War I released a deluge of nationalism all over the world. By the end of the war, ethnic nationalism became the principal ideology by which people constructed their social identity. While reason and literacy defined humanity during the Enlightenment, "nationness" turned into the index of humanity and entitlement to social rights in post-World War I era. In such socio-political climate, a historical sense was indispensable to create a nationalist identity. As a result, nationalists were greatly obsessed with the concepts of origin and tradition and believed that they could make greater claims regarding their rights and intrinsic worth if the founding of the nation was depicted to be more heroic. On that account, many academics and intellectuals involved in the nationalist project endeavoured to create a collective memory which served to produce a sense of common destiny. They portrayed the earliest days of the nation as an idyllic time of grandeur, governed by the sagacious and impeccable people who deserved everlasting encomium. The purpose of the nationalists was to make it easy for their compatriots to admire their political parents and follow their wishes, an agenda that eventually gave rise to the formation of a prejudiced consciousness at the service of the political interests of the nationalist movement. To nationalists, the concept of genetic heredity was also of grave importance in the establishment of historical continuity and the construction of a nation or a community. They often used the concept of "blood" as the central figure in defining one's national origin and identity, and maintained that one's attachment to his political forefathers was as "thick as blood" (Dawahare, 2003: 3-6).

Such nationalist zeitgeist wormed its way into the mindset and writings of so many African American intellectuals and activists of post-World War I era. Different aspects of racism that had been at work against blacks and other minorities in the United States had for a long time denied historicity and cultural integrity to their productions and contributions (Podesta, 1991: 400). This hegemonic process of subalternization became more conspicuous after the watershed event of World War I in which more than 200,000 African-American soldiers fought in the European frontiers. Notwithstanding their heroic contribution to the cause of "War for Democracy", as

President Wilson called it, African-American soldiers experienced ferocious hostility by dominant whites upon their return to the United States after the war and were still deprived of their basic civil rights (Ciment, 2007: 129). Though one can claim that black participation in the war did not cause any major improvement in the socio-political status of African-Americans in the United States, it is incontestable that it inspired a New Negro who dared to come out of his marginalized, obsequious mold and think about his identity in more sophisticated terms. Blacks' contribution to the cause of war politicized blacks and introduced the up-to-then intimidating and taboo concepts of self-determination, collective identity-construction and separatism to black America (Early, 2008: 13).The racist attitude of mainstream American society which neglected the sacrifices of black Americans during war time had a profound influence on the fragmented formation of African-American consciousness and the subsequent quest for history and culture among blacks in the early twentieth century and even later on. James Baldwin (1972) wrote in *Notes of a Native Son* of his dual, ambivalent feelings regarding his race and agony over African-Americans' supposed lack of history and culture:

> I was forced to recognize that I was a kind of bastard of the West; when I followed the line of my past I did not find myself in Europe but in Africa. And this meant that … I brought to Shakespeare, Bach, Rembrandt, to the stones of Paris … and to the Empire State Building, a special attitude. These were not really my creations, they did not contain my history, I might search in them in vain forever for any reflection of myself (1972: 4).

In such coercive climate, many blacks employed the discourse of tradition to critique oppression and injustice in America. In fact, the notions of tradition and deep historical root turned into the defensive posture of many blacks who wished to assert the legitimacy of their demand for socio-political rights in the face of the oppressive power of white supremacy. Deep historical and traditional root served as a refuge for African-Americans which could provide, at least temporarily, a consolation from the hegemonic forces of racism and discrimination and also from the repulsive memories of slavery (Gilroy, 1993: 188-9).

Garvey, Du Bois and the Africanist Project

African-American thinkers and writers such as Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) and Alexander Crummell (1819-98) showed an African consciousness in their writings in the nineteenth century (Kanneh, 1998: 59-61). However, black America's Afro-centric project gained momentum after World War I. Among the leading activists of the day were Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. Du Bois in whose writings we can detect the discourses of unique racial origin, historical destiny, and familial connections characteristic of ethnic nationalism.

Garvey, with his notion of return in "Back to Africa" movement, encouraged African Americans, "orphaned" in the Diaspora, to discover their true lineage and reclaim their birthrights. He represented "Mother Africa" and the origin of origins whose fertile body gave birth to "the first great civilization of the world," while at that time "the people of other races were groping in savagery, darkness and continental barbarism" (as cited in Dawahare, 2003: 7).

Garvey firmly believed that black people throughout the world should not wait for and rely on the white dominators to end injustice and provide equality. Claiming that "we are the descendants of a people determined to suffer no longer" (as cited in Alexander and Rucker, 2010: 783), he constantly reminded blacks of their rich history and culture and thus berated those activists who favoured integrationism and assimilationism (Ciment, 2007: 132). To promote his principles of economic self-reliance, independence for black Africa and political self-determination, he founded the first black international organization for blacks in 1914 and called it the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) (Alexander and Rucker, 2010: 781). He also established the Black Star Steamship Line which aimed to engender an independent transportation system for black trade and help African-Americans who wished to return to their ancestral homeland, Africa (Ciment, 2007: 132).

Nevertheless, Garvey's Africa was indeed a duplicated version of urban America. Garvey stated that blacks should return to Africa only after railroads and institutions were constructed and once "we get a Lenox Avenue and a Seventh Avenue . . . put up those big apartment houses and get the bell boys to say 'Going Up' before you get Negroes to leave Harlem" (as cited in Dawahare, 2003: 8). This contradiction ultimately wiped out the cultural differences he otherwise tried to defend.

All the same, Du Bois' nationalistic rhetoric was much more sophisticated than Garvey's. Du Bois is famous for positing the concept of African-American double consciousness in which he severely decried the hegemonic process of subalternization and inferiorization at work against blacks in the United States. However, he believed that blacks' marginalized status and their unique ancestral background had provided them with a "gift" of second sight through which they could recreate their self-realization, self-consciousness and self-respect, prove their potential abilities to the white society and find a way into what he called the American "kingdom of culture" (Edwards, 2007: xiv; Liss, 1998: 134). Consequently, his plan to find admission into the mainstream American society had little or no place in it for a Garveyite kind of black nationalism. In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), and his other writings, he claimed that if one had worked strenuously to build a nation, one was automatically a part of it, even if his or her rights were ignored and unrecognized in law. He based his claim to being American on the duration of time that Africans had resided in America, alongside their "gifts" and contributions to the country (Dawahare, 2003: 9). He stated that "we are Americans . . . there is nothing so indigenous, so completely 'made in America' as we" (as cited in Hutchinson, 1995: 146).

Uncritically embracing a number of "scientific" racial theories that had colluded to uphold the institution of slavery and African-American oppression (Allen, 2002: 236), Du Bois developed the ethnic nationalist motif of illustrious racial origins and traditions. Glorifying African history beyond compare, Du Bois maintained that Africans, more than any other group in the world, had advanced from the level of animal savagery to a progressive primitive civilization (Dawahare, 2003: 11). Greatly influenced by Franz Boas, the leading anthropologist of the day, who constantly encouraged black Americans to look back to their heroic ancestral origin (Liss, 1998: 137), he claimed that Africa, as "the Father of mankind", had bequeathed many precious things to the world, since, in his view, Africa initiated modern industry via the invention of iron fusion, originated religion and mythological archetypes including the prototypes of the Greek gods, and

pioneered a collective culture and administration epitomized in the African village unit (Dawahare, 2003: 11).

In a similar manner, he favoured an African *Gemeinschaft* (an organic community centered upon kinship) over the European *Gesellschaft* (an emotionless, rationalized and mechanical community), since the African village unit, unlike modern Western civilization, did not attempt to "submerge and kill individuality" and therefore did not create "a soulless Leviathan" (as cited in Dawahare, 2003: 11). The ancient African village had great appeal to Du Bois because it provided a pattern of an integrated, spiritual black community unaffected by monopoly, poverty and prostitution which he considered as the ills of capitalism. Representing utopia as a return to a beatific childhood free from the exigencies of industrialization, capitalism and racism, Du Bois idolized Africa as the epitome of the ideal society and maintained that

> This is not a country, it is a world … Africa is the Spiritual Frontier of human kind … Then will come a day ... when there will spring in Africa a civilization without coal, without noise, where machinery will sing and never rush and roar, and where men will sleep and think and dance and lie prone before the rising suns, and women will be happy … We shall dream the day away and in cool dawns, in little swift hours, do all our work. (as cited in Lorini, 2001: 169-170)

Du Bois discovered in his construction of the African village that his desires were not fulfilled under oppressive and discriminatory industrial and urban capitalism. Thus, to him, Africa, seemed to offer social intimacy, equality, tenderness and honour that were missing in the cold, unegalitarian, alienating, and unsympathetic urban West.

We should note that Garvey, Du Bois and other early twentieth century African-American nationalists' glorification of Africa and its history and culture provided the underlying foundation for black national and political identity in post-World War I era. By embracing notions of genetic heredity and common destiny, they imagined that the racial and national eminence of ancient Africa confirmed that blacks in the United States could establish a new nation of equal grandeur. In the cases of Garvey and Du Bois, a physical or cultural return to Africa offered black Americans the hopeful prospects of an upcoming socio-political prominence and racial/national self-sufficiency. African-Americans' ethnic nationalism in fact demonstrated their longing for moving from the colonized and isolated margins of modern history to its centre. Garvey and Du Bois's oppressed black individual, socio-politically and historically subalternized by racist and colonial discourses and practices, wished to relocate himself from the periphery to the centre of world history, and become the vanguard for all marginalized peoples. Black nationalists of the early twentieth century assumed that the "universal Negro" could vanquish his inferior status in the Western ideological and socio-political rhetoric through appreciation of his African origin (Dawahare, 2003: 13-4).

Africanist Vogue in the Early Twentieth Century Artistic Trends

In the early twentieth century and especially in the decade following World War I, many European avant-garde intellectuals, disaffected by the cruelty of Western political system and the inefficacy of religion in restoring order and peace to the chaotic West, opted for the world of art

which, according to them, had the potential to change the world for the better (Childs, 2000: 27). Their aesthetics-oriented agenda finally led to the rejection of the mainstream realism and the acceptance of non-Western artistic conventions, particularly those of Africa (Rubin, 2006: 131). Within a short time, many of the famed painters, composers and writers of the day, such as Picasso, Gauguin, Matisse, Satie, Auric, Apollinaire and Cocteau, produced groundbreaking works directly inspired by "l'art nègre". This fascination with black cultural and artistic expressions crossed the Atlantic and was translated into the American art and literature of the Jazz Age. Many rebellious thinkers of white America, disgruntled by industrialism, commercialism and their ensuing demand for standardization, sensed growing nostalgia for the primitive, forceful and unmechanized lifestyle. Therefore, in their pursuit of cultural and psychological reform, the discontented Americans in most of the fields were attracted to the long-looked-down-upon black American ethnic world and developed an unprecedented liking of and perspective on black American life. Greatly influenced by the primitivist vogue in Europe, many works of 1920s American writers captured the same faddist preoccupation with an Other culture that could supposedly save the soulless mechanical life of post-war America and also cater to the Jazz Age prevalent predilection for hedonism and exoticism. Interestingly, the so-called "vogue of the Negro" reached more popularity and influence in 1920s America than in Europe, and this is evident in the artistic productions of Eugene O'Neill, Sherwood Anderson, Waldo Frank, DuBose Heyward and Carl Van Vechten. In such an atmosphere, African American intellectuals and artists considered the unprecedented interest of white writers in black culture as an opportunity through which they could launch their literary careers and also activate social and racial reforms (Washington, 2001: 25-33).

The white American society had for long belittled black Americans as culturally deprived and unable to create artistic and literary productions, and thus had a general inclination to pay no heed to the artistic and cultural contributions of blacks in the United States. Inevitably, many African-American activists and intellectuals, viewing the elevated status of art in post-World War I era and the inspiring role of "l'art nègre" in both Europe and America, came to the conclusion that blacks could prove their merits and achieve their long-withheld civil rights through exemplary contributions to American art and culture. For instance, James Weldon Johnson, the famous black writer and civil rights activist of the early twentieth century, stated in 1919 that "No race that produced a great literature has ever been looked upon by the world as distinctly inferior" (as cited in Early, 1991: 137). Influenced by the popular vogue of Africanist primitivism and greatly optimistic about the role their art could play in effecting racial reforms in the United States, African-Americans came to appreciate (or better to say, appropriate) their African origin, a former burden that later appeared to them as a "gift". Consequently, an African background, which underscored either the white-mooned pulchritude of jungle nights or the pulse-stirring beatings of the tom-tom, wormed its way into the works of many famed black writers of the day, including Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Wallace Thurman and Countee Cullen (Washington, 2001: 14-5)

However, the Africanism of the early twentieth century black American artists did not mean that they all started to call themselves Africans or consider themselves as Africans' blood brothers; rather, Africa became a vital instrument in their hands by which they employed novel and dynamic ways to portray themselves both individually and collectively and obtained a more secure status in the racially and oppressive American society. The exploitation of Africanist

theme reflected African-Americans' extreme subalternity in the mainstream American society and their desire to achieve self-respect and self-definition in the face of white supremacy. Such an instrumental appropriation of Africa and African art was greatly propagated by Alain Locke, the outstanding ideologue and theorist of the Harlem Renaissance, who encouraged young black artists of the day to embrace and imitate European Africanist primitivism to know their African legacy. Locke maintained that blacks' cultural contributions to the framework of European Africanist primitivism could prove the ability of the American Negro to produce culture and therefore his merits for socio-political equality (Lemke, 1998: 8-9); a supposition which soon turned out to be extremely naïve (Washington, 2001: 27).

Conclusion

> … from the earliest days of organized abolitionism in the early nineteenth century to the present, Africa had always served Black American as a basis for articulating identity and inspiration in the struggle for freedom and survival only to be discarded, when a form of success is achieved. Entry into the American political system and culture demanded a rejection of Africa and African values. (Iheduru, 2006: 216)

The search for a cultural past in Africa, expedited by Garvey, Du Bois and other black nationalists of the early twentieth century, was in fact a quest for psychological health, social validation and collective memory which subalternized black Americans were deprived by the oppressive socio-political system of the United States (Iheduru, 2006: 217). White Americans had assumed that black Americans and Africans were of the same extraction and that all of them were inferior to the white race. This assumption, previously employed as a rationale for implementing pervasive discrimination against blacks, took a different turn and became the object of fascination of the Jazz Age writers who appreciated the alleged primitive lifestyle of black people which, they believed, could cure what Freud called Western over-civilization (Corbould, 2009: 15). Influenced by this aspect of the 1920s American socio-cultural and literary scene, the African-American activists and writers of post-World War I era claimed that black Americans had an exquisite legacy in African *modus vivendi* and thus employed an Africanist agenda to prove that the long-held presuppositions about black racial inferiority were unwarranted (Washington, 2001: 25-7). They used both nationalistic and assimilationist strategies, at the same time, capitalized on the primitivist vogue of the period and romanticized Africa as a pre-modern idyll in the context of Ameriocentrism (Gilroy, 1993: 191-3). Put simply, Africanism was just a tool used by African-Americans for a reorientation of values that borrows from Africa's past since they believed that the prospect of emancipation for blacks in the United States was possible just by means of awakening an Afrocentric consciousness among themselves through which they could change white America's racist attitudes (Early, 1991: 145). But their wish never materialized in the turbulent atmosphere of post-World War I United States.

References

Alexander, L. M., & Rucker, W. C. (Eds.) (2010). *Encyclopaedia of African-American History*. California: ABC-CLIO, LLC.

Allen, E., Jr. (2002). "Du Boisian double Consciousness: the Unsustainable Argument." *The Massachusetts Review*. 43 (2), 217-253.

Baldwin, J. (1972). *Notes of a Native Son*. New York: Bantam Books.

Brown, R. H. (1993). Cultural representation and ideological domination. *Social Forces*. 71 (3), 657-676.

Cayton, H. R. (1966). "Ideological forces in the work of Negro Writers." In: H. Hill (ed.), *Anger and Beyond: the Negro writer in the United States*, (pp. 37-50). New York: Harper & Row.

Childs, P. (2000). *Modernism*. London: Routledge.

Ciment, J. (2007). *Atlas of African-American History.* New York: Facts On File.

Conroy, M. (1971). "The vagabond motif in the writings of Claude McKay." *Negro American Literature Forum.* 5 (1), 15-23..

Corbould, C. (2009). *Becoming African Americans: Black Public Life in Harlem, 1919–1939.* Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Dawahare, A. (2003). *Nationalism, Marxism, and African American Literature between the Wars*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi.

Early, G. (1991). *Three Notes toward a Cultural Definition of the Harlem Renaissance*. Callaloo. 14 (1), 136-149.

Early, G. (2008). "The new Negro era and the great African-American transformation." *American Studies*. 49 (1), 9-19..

Edwards, B. H. (2007). "Introduction." In: W.E.B. Du Bois. *The Souls of Black Folk,* (pp. vii-xxiii). New York: Oxford UP.

Fanon, F. (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. C. L. Markmann. London: Pluto Press.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.

Greenfield, S. M. (2001). "Nature/nurture and the anthropology of Franz Boas and Margaret Mead as an agenda for revolutionary politics." *Horizontes Antropológicos*. 7 (16), 35-52.

Hutchinson, G. (1995). *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White*. Cambridge: Belknap Press.

Iheduru, O. (2006). "Social values, democracy, and the problem of African-American identity." *Journal of Black Studies.* 37 (2), 209-230..

Jones, J. E. (2010). "Simians, Negroes, and the 'missing link': evolutionary discourses and transatlantic debates on 'the Negro question'." In: J. E. Jones & P. B. Sharp (Eds.), *Darwin in Atlantic Cultures: Evolutionary Visions of Race, Gender, and Sexuality*, (pp. 191-207). New York: Routledge.

Kanneh, K. (1998). *African Identities: Race, Nation and Culture in Ethnography, Pan-Africanism and Black Literatures*. London: Routledge.

Keim, C. A. (2009). *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind.* 2nd ed. Boulder: Westview Press.

Lemke, S. (1998). *Primitivist Modernism: Black Culture and the Origins of Transatlantic Modernism*. New York: Oxford UP.

Liss, J. E. (1998). "Diasporic identities: the science and politics of race in the work of Franz Boas and W. E. B. Du Bois, 1894-1919." *Cultural Anthropology*. 13 (2), 127-166..

Lorini, A. (2001). "The spell of Africa is upon me: W.E.B. DuBois's notion of art as propaganda." In: G. Fabre & M. Feith (Eds.), *Temples for Tomorrow: Looking back at the Harlem Renaissance*, (pp. 159-176). Bloomington: Indiana UP.

MacCann, D. (2001). *White Supremacy in Children's Literature*. New York: Routledge.

Mocombe, P. C. (2009). *The Soul-less Souls of Black Folk*. Lanham: UP of America.

Moore, T. O. (2005). "A Fanonian perspective on double consciousness." *Journal of Black Studies*. 35 (6), 751-762..

Moses, W. J. (1987). "The lost world of the Negro, 1895-1919: Black literary and intellectual life before the 'Renaissance'." *Black American Literature Forum*. 21 (1), 61-84..

Podesta, G. A. (1991). ''An ethnographic reproach to the theory of the avant-garde: modernity and modernism in Latin America and the Harlem renaissance.'' *MLN* 106 (2), 395-422..

Robbins, S. (2007). *The Cambridge Introduction to Harriet Beecher Stowe*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Rubin, W. (2006). "Modernist Primitivism: an introduction". In: H. Morphy & M. Perkins (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader*, (pp. 129-146). MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Sernett, M. C. (1999). "Introduction." In: M. C. Sernett (Ed.), *African American Religious History: a Documentary Witness*, 2nd ed., (pp. 1-10). Durham: Duke UP.

Spencer, J. M. (1996). "The Black church and the Harlem renaissance." *African-American Review*. 30 (3), 453-460..

Washington, R. E. (2001). *The Ideologies of African American Literature*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Williams, E. (1944). *Capitalism and Slavery*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

A Survey of Fundamental Theories, Models and Perspectives on Computer-Mediated Communication

'Wale Oni
Osun State University
Osogbo, Nigeria
olawaleoni@ymail.com

Abstract
In this paper I explore some fundamental theories, models and perspectives used by scholars in communication studies as frameworks to understand and discuss the field of computer-mediated communication, which is an offshoot of mediated communication aspect of the communication studies. In my approach, I discuss the academic landscape of communication technology, with a view of locating the concept, nature and scope of CMC. Specifically, I present some of the notable perspectives, models and theories with which scholars in new (digital) media studies have used in explaining trends of adoption, uses and social implications of communication technology against the backdrop of some media constraints and affordances as discussed in select journal publications, while I use schemas to explain the concept where necessary. It is no doubt that this approach will not only introduce the fundamental theories of computer mediated communication within the purview of communication studies, but also advance scholarship in the field of CMC, which has been ongoing as far back as 1970s (Herring, 1994), but which has not been significantly studied in Nigeria and by extension Africa beyond the narrow confines of an oft-quoted theory of media effects.

Introduction

The last decade has witnessed a significant shift of Computer Mediated Communication (hereafter, CMC) into the mainstream of scholarship in communication studies and the allied disciplines like sociology, psychology and composition studies (to name but a few). This shift has been attributed to the increasing levels of penetration of practical CMC in the general population, thereby affirming its place among scholars the world over. For instance, it is estimated that the number of people having access to the Internet at home has increased from 1.4 billion in 2009 to almost 1.6 billion in 2010. And of the 226 million new Internet users in 2010, 162 million would be from the developing countries where Internet users grew at a higher rate (International Telecommunications Union, 2010). Thus, the global digital divide seems to be shrinking, especially with the accelerated introduction of mobile phones to populations in developing countries, where of the 5.3 billion global subscriber base 3.8 billion would be in the developing world, where Africa is categorized. Though issues of access to Information and Communication Technologies still pose significant challenges, stemming principally from the low literacy level and per capital income, it has been estimated that penetration levels in developing countries remain low at 4.4% compared to 24.6% in developed countries.

Be that as it may, crucial to the understanding of CMC is the concept of "persistent conversation", which is described as:

> …the transposition of ordinarily ephemeral conversation into the potentially persistent digital medium. Persistent conversations occur via instant messaging, text and voice chat, email, blogs, web boards, MOOs, graphical and 3D virtual environments, gaming systems, video sharing sites, document annotation systems, mobile phone texting, etc. Such communication is persistent in that it leaves a digital trace, and the trace in turn affords new uses. It permits conversations to be saved, visualized, browsed, searched, replayed, and restructured. Persistence also means that conversations need not be synchronous: they can be asynchronous (stretching out over hours or days) or supersynchronous (with multiple parties 'talking' at the same time). Finally, the creation of persistent and potentially permanent records from what was once an ephemeral process raises a variety of social and ethical issues (Erickson and Herring, 2007).

The increased importance of CMC in general, and of text-based CMC in particular, in the lives of individuals, led to challenges such as information overload (Jones, Ravid, & Rafaeli, 2004; Whittaker & Sidner, 1996; Zeldes, Sward, & Louchheim, 2007), and new types of distractions and interruptions (Gonzalez & Mark, 2004; Mark, Gonzalez, & Harris, 2005; Russell, Purvis, & Banks, 2007). These challenges are interesting from a research point of view since they represent classical communication challenges that have been researched in the past, that now need to be re-examined in light of the introduction of novel computer-mediated communication channels.

In this paper, I attempt a survey of computer-mediated communication, which is an offshoot of mediated communication aspect of the communication studies. In my approach, I begin with an overview of the communication technology, and then briefly discuss the nature and scope of CMC. Specifically, I present some of the notable perspectives, models and theories with which scholars in new (digital) media studies have used in explaining trends of adoption, uses and social implications of communication technology against the backdrop of some media constraints and affordances. Thus, contributions to peer-reviewed journals such as *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, Journal of Communication, Communication Research* as well as other related publications on CMC are explored, while I use schematic diagram to explain the concept where necessary. It is no doubt that this approach will not only introduce the fundamental theories of computer mediated communication within the purview of communication studies, but also advance the scope of its readers to the field of CMC, which has been ongoing as far back as 1970s (Herring, 1994), but which has not been significantly studied in Nigeria and by extension Africa beyond the narrow confines of an oft-quoted theory of media effects in spite of the ever increasing adoption of the media technology.

The Nature and Scope of Computer-Mediated Communication

A popular definition of CMC that, pragmatically and in light of the rapidly changing nature of communication technologies, does not specify forms, describes it as "the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages" (December, 1996). This seems to encompass both the delivery mechanisms, derived from communication theory, and the

importance of the interaction of people that the technologies and processes mediate (Naughton, 2000). It also provides for great flexibility in approaches to researching CMC, as "studies of CMC can view this process from a variety of interdisciplinary theoretical underpinnings by focusing on some combination of people, technology, processes, or effects" (December, 1997).

The social aspects of the communication, rather than the hardware or software, form the basis of the more recent definitions. One of the most overt examples of the move away from a technological focus in definitions describes it thus: "CMC, of course, is not just a tool; it is at once technology, medium, and engine of social relations. It not only structures social relations, it is the space within which the relations occur and the tool that individuals use to enter that space" (Jones, 1995). According to Shaft, Martin and Gay (2001), CMC is human-to-human communication using networked computer environments to facilitate interaction. It is an umbrella term for all kinds of interpersonal (private and public) communication carried out on the Internet by e-mail, instant messaging systems, mailing lists, newsgroups, web discussion boards, Internet Relay Chat, and web chat channels (cf. Herring 2001, 2004). CMC is different from mediated communication because the human-to-human interaction is interactive. One is both a sender and receiver of communication. Individuals involved in the computer-mediated interaction act simultaneously as source and receiver. Computer, connected via the Internet or a computer network, act as the channel of communication. Because the interaction is personal, the message can consist of anything the two people wish to discuss; sports, music, movies, politics, or even plans for a date, as a result of this *interactivity*, feedback naturally occurs, in some CMC systems, through the exchange of real time messages (see Fig. 1).

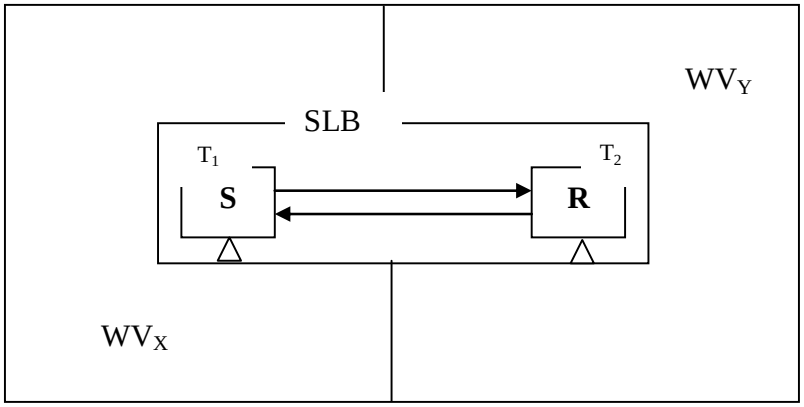


Fig. 1: Schematic diagram of interpersonal computer-mediated communication

Figure 1 indicates interactants S-R negotiating within the two frames of shared linguistic background (SLB) and mutually exclusive worldviews (WV). Negotiation takes place through the adoption and appropriation of similar or dissimilar independent technologies (T), for an effective communication to take place.

Apart from interactivity, other important concepts of the CMC which have implications on how it is perceived and studied include the *synchronicity* or *asynchronicity* of the media technology; i.e. whether it affords real-time discourse, the *orality* or *textuality* of the communicative pattern; i.e. whether it is akin to oral discourse or to written texts, or whether it is a hybrid, the *convergence* i.e. whether it affords multiple media (multimedia) and lastly, the *degree of*

involvement from users or *level of participatory*, which focuses on whether users can afford to be active or passive in participation (*lurking*). It is against these as well as other unique features, stated as constraints and affordances, that CMC is studied and theorized.

Constraints and Affordances of the Media Technology

This issue of media constraint/affordance is quite relevant to our discussion of the theories of CMC because some of these constraints and media affordances have implications on the theories with which CMC is being studied. From the literature, 12 constraints are identified. I will discuss each constraint and how they relate to CMC studies with special reference to some of the popular CMC systems. The first eight is in relation with the *collaborative theory of language use* advanced by Clark (1996), Clark and Wilke-Gibbs (1986) and Clark and Brennan (1991) 'grounding' concept of communication effectiveness. These are summarily presented in Table 1.

No.	Constraint	Interpretation	Communicative Cost	Popular CMC Media
1.	Copresence	This is that CMC interactants are communicating within the same physical environment.	Interactants have an understanding cost which requires them, if necessary, to explain what's going on around them to each other.	1. IM (only when interactants share the same office/ workstation)
2.	Visibility	This is that communicators see each other while communicating.	Communication is increased especially when non verbal cues are allowed. But may also increase redundancy.	1. IM (only when webcam is enabled). 2. Video Conferencing.
3.	Audibility	This is that speech is used to communicate.	Prone to ambient noise and eating. But highly useful in conveying relational messages thru intonational cues. To compensate the cost, interactants use abbronyms (homophonic & non homophonic, emoticons, RPMs, or vext cf. Oni 2007; Oni and Oke 2010).	1. GSM voice call/voice mail. 2. VoIP (using Skype™ or Yahoo! Beta IM progam).
4.	Cotemporality	This is that production and comprehension take place in synchrony.	No feedback delays hence increase in comprehension.	1. Chat & ICQ (IM is quasi-synchronous, cf. David & ?)
5.	Simultaneity	This is that production and comprehension are	Though no feedback delay, but addressees'	1. Chat (Not in IM where there

		simultaneous (this use of *simultaneity* differs from the use of the term to refer to multitasking; Cameron & Webster, 2005, p. 90). This differs from cotemporality in that production and comprehension can occur at the same time.	behavior can affect production.	is 'waiting' usually leading to turn disruption and repairs). 2. GSM voice call, video call
6.	Sequentiality	This is that turns go in sequence. Sequentiality helps prevent confusion about what is responding to what.	No delays and there is increase in comprehension.	1. Chat & ICQ 2. IM 3. E-mail
7.	Reviewability	This is that senders can review communication before it reaches addressees.	It promotes message clarification by the sender, thus reduction in ambiguity or failure in communication.	1. IM 2. E-mail 3. GSM SMS (and other text-base CMC media) 4. Blog post
8.	Reviseability	This is that senders can privately revise messages before addressees encounter them.	Errors are not permitted as senders are more accountable for messages sent.	1. GSM SMS 2. Blog post 3. Email 4. IM (partially though)

Table 1: Showing some of the constraints of the CMC media

In addition to these constraints, there are several additional media constraints inspired by Hård af Segerstad and Ljungstrand (2002).These are the *multimodality constraint* where information is conveyed in multiple ways, such as voice, face, and body; the *locatability constraint* where communicators are aware of each other's position in the environment; the *anonymity constraint* where communication can take place under anonymous conditions, and the *synchronicity awareness constraint* in which case participants know whether conversation is synchronous or not.

4 CMC Theories from Relating Online Dimension

The two major dimensions to theorizing CMC are: (i) online interaction in text-based and multimedia environments and (ii) communication technology adoption, uses and appropriation.

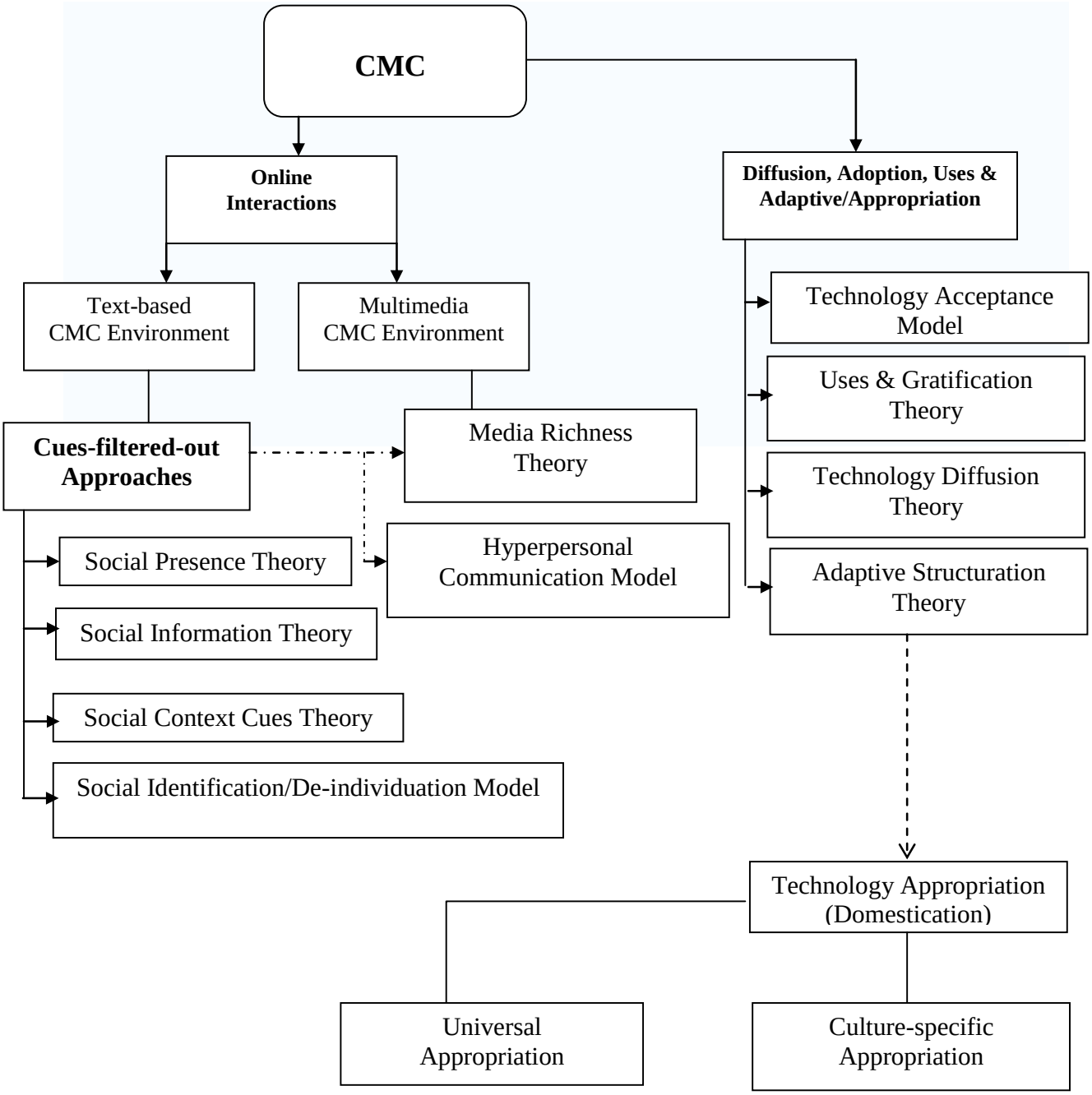


Fig. 2: Schema showing fundamental theories for CMC studies

As far as online interaction in text-based and multimedia environments is concerned, perspectives and theories are drawn from the characteristics of the CMC media in relation to the aforementioned constraints and affordances. Apart from this, some of the theories do compare what obtains in face-to-face interactions with online interactions. The earliest approach to theorizing CMC in text-based environment is the cues-filtered-out, while uses and gratification are often hinged on in the other category. Figure 2 shows the schematic diagram of this trend as observed in the literature.

Cues Filtered Out Approaches

In the study of computer-mediated interactions, major perspectives focus on comparing the context of CMC with face-to-face (F2F, or interpersonal communication). Primarily, the framework presupposes that CMC does not allow a full array of non verbal behaviour to be utilized. Although, dated CMC studies held strongly that CMC would not even allow any of the nonverbal cues; that it is predominantly text-based and therefore a "lean medium" in terms of information exchange, which is unsuitable for carrying out tasks or social relational functions that requires rich, detailed and nuanced communication.

Thus, with this notion came the "cues-filtered out" perspective (Culnan & Markus 1987; Parks and Floyd, 1996). The cues-filtered out (CFO) perspective, an umbrella term for several related theories (e.g. Social Presence Theory [SPT]; Short, William & Christie, 1976) which points that the lack of non verbal cues in CMC causes it to be more impersonal than face-to-face (FtF) interaction. Media Richness Theory, MRT (Daft & Hangel, 1986) also focuses on CMC's predominantly lexical mode of interaction, deeming it a lean medium compared to FTF interaction, which has multiple cues and a high degree of personalization.

Media Richness

Media richness theory argues that task performance will be improved when capabilities of the media (cues, feedback, personal focus, and language variety) are matched to task ambivalence and uncertainty. In this approach, face-to-face communication is considered the richest communication medium in a hierarchy followed by the telephone, electronic mail, letter, note, memo, special report, and finally, flier and bulletin. Some observations and predictions are made regarding the propriety and efficiency of different media. Specifically, this theory suggests that performance in equivocal tasks would be better when using "rich" media. According to this theory, in the case of unequivocal tasks, performance would be better if leaner media are used. Unfortunately, empirical data to support media richness theory fall somewhat short (Dennis, Kinney, & Hung, 1999; Dennis & Valacich, 1999; El-Shinnawy & Markus, 1997; Morris & Ogan, 1996; Riva, 2002). An interesting theory which developed from a critical examination of media richness theory is the *theory of media synchronicity* (Dennis & Valacich, 1999) which proposes that media choice is influenced by five media capabilities (feedback, symbol variety, parallelism, rehearsability, reprocessability) to support two fundamental communication processes (conveyance and convergence).

Social Information Processing

The social information processing (SIP) theory of CMC interaction (Walther, 1992; Walther & Parks, 2002) provides a more constructive analysis of the limitations of online communication. According to SIP, users of CMC find alternative methods to reduce interpersonal uncertainty, to form impressions or to develop affinity, and that they perform these tasks using whatever cues the medium allows them. SIP claims that the apparent superiority of face-to-face communication is a result of the fact that CMC is often slower than face-to-face communication. But, when these time restrictions are lifted, and users are provided with enough time to exchange online messages, they are able to reach levels of impression and relational development comparable with those achieved in face-to-face communication (Walther, Anderson, & Park, 1994). This fact that time has such a central role in the quality and effectiveness of online communication,

underlines the importance of chronemics in online communication (Walther & Tidwell, 1995). Walther (1996) as well as Herring (1999) have taken this concept one step further, showing how CMC users leverage the unique attributes of specific CMC media to achieve communication goals that go beyond the interpersonal levels typically achieved in face-to-face communication. These findings might be surprising in light of the dire descriptions of the limitations of CMC in relation to face-to-face interactions, but are not surprising in light of the incredible success and penetration of certain forms of CMC.

It is thus clear that face-to-face interactions are neither an ideal nor should be treated as an ultimate standard. Social cognition develops in a variety of loci/media. Previous research has already contested the standard of face-to-face asserting that interpersonal interactions and social influences affect media choice (Fulk, Schmitz, & Steinfield, 1990), and online relationships have been shown to be healthy, a complement to face-to-face relationships (Peris et al., 2002), and based on unique information seeking strategies (Ramirez Jr, Walther, Burgoon, & Sunnafrank, 2002). With the Internet there is the possibility that face-to-face be demoted from its ostensibly classic preordained position/status as ultimate yardstick. The Internet itself is a plurality of media operated by diverse technologies which constitute a culture or a social space in its own right. In fact, the "richness" of CMC is a variable, not a characteristic.

Social Identification/De-individualization Model

Also, due to the burgeoning use of the Internet for social purposes, observations of online encounters have shown that people can have intimate relationships in the CMC environment. According to Postumes et al. (1998), it is exactly because there are so few nonverbal cues to process in online environments that people more actively seek out "norms" of behaviour in order to find acceptance among the other participants. For instance, during a chat session abbronymizations, such as LOL for "laugh out loud" are used, the SIDE model predicts that you are likely to pick up this norm for yourself. In doing so, you are likely to appear more attractive to those around you and thus have a better chance of initiating relationships. The SIDE model asserts that you are more likely to comply with a social role than worry about asserting your individual identity. This is to say that people learn to play by the rules, as it were, and in doing so increase their attractiveness to other interactants. In text-based interaction, there is less individuating information available to communicators. In lieu of relying on distinctions to mark us as attractive, the SIDE model argues that it is our similarities that foster attachment among people online.

In short, the SIDE model predicts that people will set aside personal identity and adopt the appropriate social identity in order to find acceptance among others. Perceived similarity has long been held to be a strong predictor of individual attraction (Trenholm & Jensen, 2000), and it seems to be a key in explaining the SIDE model's effects in cyberspace. More recently, researchers have found support for the SIDE model in fostering resistance against certain outgroups. For instance, they found that students were more likely to find support among their peers and consequently express opinions deemed unacceptable by faculty when communicating through computer-mediated channels (Spears, Lea, Cornelliussen, Postumes, & Harr, 2002). From the SIDE perspective, people who conduct relationships online must communicate enough common ground with one another that the parties involved are interested in sustaining relational ties.

Hyper-personal Communication Model

Another theory articulated as an extension of both SIDE and SIP perspectives is Walther's (1996) Hyper-personal Communication Model (HCM). This introduces factors that explain how the CMC environment can allow the individual to experience a level of closeness above the norm in FtF condition. According to this theory, CMC is typically characterized (or constrained) by reduced visual, auditory, and contextual cues, such as social status cues. One important consequence of CMC's reduced cues is that CMC interactants, as noticed, become less concerned about how others perceive them and thus they feel fewer inhibitions in disclosing themselves (Joinsen 2001).

Walther describes three necessary conditions for hyper personal communication to occur, these are;

1. The receiver's idealization of the other due to over-attributions, where by the receiver assigns magnified positive values to his or her partners;
2. Sender's selective self presentation, in which the sender has the advantage of being able to optimally edit his message before transmitting.
3. Feedback loop or reciprocity of interactions, whereby the interplay of idealization and self presentation becomes a dynamic process and creates a self-reinforcing cycle.

Another plausible consequence of CMC's reduced cues is that the range of possible uncertainty reduction strategies is limited. In face-to-face settings, one can reduce uncertainty about a communication partner in many different ways, including observing the partner and asking others about him or her. However, in CMC, the range of uncertainty reduction strategies is often confined to interactive strategies, such as direct questioning, self-disclosure and profile updating. Although these direct strategies may be regarded impolite in face-to-face settings, in CMC they may be more accepted and, as a result, more frequently used (Tidwell & Walther, 2002). If these conditions are met, people can develop a sense of closeness and rapport in their CMC interactions.

4.6 Social Context Cues Theory

According to Sproull and Kiesler (1986), social context cues serve as indicators of appropriate behavior. They govern both contact, telling us with whom we should and should not communicate, and content, regulating what kinds of information we should and should not disclose. Some social context cues include geographic, organizational, and situational variables. Sproull and Kiesler (1986), in their study on email use in organizational communication, found that the short supply of social context cues has an effect on the nature of human behaviour in mediated contexts. Kiesler, Siegel, and McGuire (1984) argue that the lack of social context cues leads to feelings of anonymity, reduced self-regulation, and reduced self-awareness. From one perspective, this state can foster greater personal independence, getting one out from under the thumb of social control. On the other hand, it can foster the flouting of social standards, leading one to utter things that are later regretted. In short, the short supply of social context cues can create perceptions of impersonal replies and impersonal interpretations of messages.

5. Theories of Diffusion of Innovations, Adoption, Uses and Appropriation in CMC

5.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Among the various efforts to understand the process of user acceptance of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the TAM, introduced by Davis (1986), is one of the most respected theoretical frameworks. The model aims not only to explain key factors of user acceptance of ICTs but also to predict the relative importance of such factors (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw 1989). Further, the model attempts to derive the determinants of technology acceptance explaining user behavior across a broad range of end-user applications, while trying to be parsimonious and theoretically justified (Davis et al., 1989). Drawn from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) in socio-psychology, the TAM explores the factors that affect behavioural intention to use information or computer systems, and suggests a causal linkage between two key variables—*perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use*— and users' attitudes, behavioural intentions, and actual system adoption and use (Davis, 1986).

Like Shannon and Weaver's 1948 model of communication out of which many other communication theories stem out, TAM is equally linked with such models as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and Model of Adoption of Technology in the Household (MATH). While the UTAUT recognizes demo-psychographic indices such as gender, age, experience, and voluntariness of use as moderating variables in the process of ICT acceptance and use, MATH sheds further theoretical light on the acceptance and use of ICTs, given that ICT acceptance in many cases takes place in individual and household settings instead of organizational contexts. Based on the TPB, the MATH presents three main constructs—attitudinal beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs—and their roles in technology adoption (Brown & Venkatesh, 2005). By adding the factors of family dynamics and fun in ICT adoption, the MATH has extended the realm of ICT acceptance and use beyond the workplace.

Although the TAM is a well-documented model for explaining users' technology acceptance, there exist two weaknesses in the model. The first is its lack of explicit inclusion of antecedent variables that influence perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Dishaw & Strong, 1999) because of the original model's intended generality and parsimony. The second weakness of the TAM is that it assumes ICTs as given and focuses on the factors that affect technology acceptance and use, yet lacks an explanation of why people are accepting and using specific ICTs.

5.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

One compelling complementary theoretical framework to overcome the TAM's limitations is the uses and gratification approach (Palmgreen, 1984; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rosengren, 1985; Rubin, 1986, 1994), which has been widely used for decades in the area of media effects. Although the approach focuses primarily on why and how people use entertainment media, its emphasis on activities and choices of individual media users makes it suitable for application to the adoption and use of other technologies. The approach emphasizes the role of people's initiative and activity, and consequently focuses on motivation—which can be defined as a general disposition that influences the actions people take to fulfill a need or want (Rubin, 1993)—as a factor that accounts for their selective choice and subjective interpretation of media messages. Because people are said to be actively aware of their choices of media and technology,

they are assumed to exhibit motivations to use particular media or technology (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1993). Put differently, the approach views motivation as driven by felt needs and individual differences (Rosengren, 1974) and as playing an important role in increasing people's behavioral intention and actual use of media (Park et al., 2007).

Research utilizing the uses and gratification approach has been widely applied to a variety of new media and communication technologies, including the video cassette recorder (VCR) (Cohen, Levy, & Golden, 1988; Rubin & Bantz, 1987), cable television (Bantz, 1982), bulletin board systems (Garramone, Harris, & Anderson, 1986; Rafaeli, 1986), the World Wide Web (Ferguson & Perse, 2000), online services (Lin, 1999), the GSM and the Internet in general (Flanagin and Metzger, 2001; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000).

In the case of Internet use in particular, researchers claimed that the uses and gratification approach could be a productive means for understanding the relationship between individual users and the technology (e.g., Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996). That is, considering the approach's applicability in the field of mass media, it has been posited that the approach would be well suited for examining CMC including Internet use (e.g., Flanagin & Metzger, 2001; Morris & Ogan, 1996; Newhagen & Rafaeli, 1996; Rubin, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000; Williams, Strover, & Grant, 1994). Not surprisingly, the study of the telephone based on the uses and gratification approach has focused on identifying the key motivations for its use. For instance, Keller (1977) identified two broad motivations: intrinsic (or social) and instrumental (or task-oriented) uses. According to the study, intrinsic motivations for telephone use refer to calls for socializing including chatting, gossiping, and maintaining family contacts, while instrumental motivations include calls for utility such as making appointments, ordering products, or seeking information. Park (2010), (citing Singer, 1981 and Fischer, 1988) also distinguished between the ''social'' and the ''practical'' uses of the telephone, while Claisse and Rowe (1987) also cited in Park (2010) categorized telephone uses as having ''functional'' and ''relational'' motives.

Although the terms for the motivations for telephone use are slightly different from each other, all of these studies generally categorize the motivations as ''social'' and ''instrumental'' functions. Williams, Dordick, & Jesuale (1985) added the motivation of fun or entertainment, while Dimmick et al. (1994) extended the motivations with the ''reassurance'' function, the use of the telephone to fulfill one's psychological needs for feeling secure. Further, O'Keefe and Sulanowski (1995) claimed that telephones become a mixed mass media and interpersonal communication channel, listing sociability, entertainment, acquisition, and time management as key motivations for using telephones. In addition, Leung and Wei (2000) investigated the uses of cell phones and identified fashion/status, affection/sociability, relaxation, mobility, and immediate access as key motivations. In an extensive review of studies about telephone use, LaRose (1999) claimed that the uses and gratification approach sheds light on interpersonal communication between two parties by identifying interpersonal communication motives.

For instance, Rubin, Perse, and Barbato (1988) classified six dimensions of interpersonal communication motives including pleasure, affection, social inclusion, escape, relaxation, and control. LaRose (1999) also posited that the aforementioned functions of social and instrumental uses of the telephone can be connected to social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) in that people's learning experiences motivate and regulate their telephone behavior.

Technology Diffusion, Appropriation and Adaptive Structuration Theories
Another important theory for studying CMC is Roger's (1995) Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI). Diffusion, in this theory, is defined as the process through which an innovation is communicated and spread over time to members of a community. The communication process takes the form of a cumulative "S-shaped" curve starting slowly but accelerating to a take-off phase as more users accumulate, building ultimately to a plateau as the number of potential adopters becomes exhausted (Rogers 1995).

Additionally, Rogers predicts that there will be a group of adopters who are more prone to innovation and who are identifiable by key characteristics. Whereas Rogers theorizes that diffusion is a one-stage process through an "S-shaped" flow, appropriation extends diffusion to a more detailed view of the actual use of the adopted technology (Fichman, 2000). Thus insight into the adoption and diffusion of innovation provides a background for understanding the decision to purchase a technology, whereas appropriation seeks to explain the actual use of technology (see Sangwan & Pau (2005); Aoki & Downes 2003). However, inasmuch as diffusion theory provides a basis for understanding who will use a technology and how quickly it will diffuse through a population. Yet the actual manner of use of the technology is largely disregarded in diffusion studies and thus provides only a basis for studies and little in-depth understanding as to the actual appropriation of a technology.

Adaptive Structuration Theory
DeSanctis and Poole (1994) conducted much of the early theoretical work regarding appropriation of new information communication technologies. They propose the use of adaptive structuration theory (AST) as a method for examining process change resulting from the use of advanced information communication technologies (ICTs). AST stipulates that change can be examined by focusing on the structures that are created inherent to the technology and the structures that then result from human interaction with the technology. Thus, as defined by DeSanctis and Poole, appropriation of technology is an ongoing practice whereby people interact with technology and then actively select structures of use from a larger set of possibilities. They identify four aspects of the appropriation process under this definition: appropriation moves, faithfulness, instrumental uses and attitudes. In this framework, appropriation moves is the process of determining how a structure is used – directly, indirectly, in a modified manner, or negated. Faithfulness is the degree to which a structure is used in accordance with the intent of the technology's designers. By this definition, appropriation occurs at the intersection of technical design and social structures. As a view of appropriation this treats the relationship between production of technology and use in action as a production of socio-technical systems (Hiltz & Johnson, 1990). Some of the notable studies in this regard is CheNeau-Loquay (2000) and Horst (2006).

Appropriation: The Place of Culture
Media technology scholars have realized the fact that apart from the manufacturers' intended default use of certain media technologies, adopters do circumvent the norm an adapt media to different plans in their private uses. This is what is being referred to as appropriation. According to Bar, Pisani and Weber (2007) for a technology to evolve and become better adapted to its users needs and ever more important to their social and economic development, something more

than mere adoption is needed. The long-term, innovative effects occur when users appropriate the technology, when they make it their own and embed it within their lives. The appropriation process is fundamentally political: it is a battle for power over the configuration of a technological system and therefore the definition of who can use it, at what cost, under what conditions, for what purpose, and with what consequences. This confrontation is deeply creative and fuels a powerful innovation engine. Users re-invent the technology while they try out its features, tweak devices and applications so they better answer their needs, come up with different ways to use services, and develop new social, economic and political practices around the possibilities open by new technological systems.

While appropriation is important for all kinds of technologies, more importantly ICT, the concept, as I observe, oscillates between two paradigms: the *universal appropriation* of media technology and *culture-specific appropriation* of media technology. While the former addresses the default use of the media technology at all places and across all social strata/demography the world over, the latter centres around linear contextual or peculiar usage within an individual group or community of people. For instance, the manufacturer intend use for mobile phone is for both voice and text messaging (including voicemail service), however users' do "appropriate" the technology by flashing or beeping or missed calling, which have been observed to be of communicative value (cf. Donner 2007). A study have equally observe that during IM'ing on *Yahoo Messenger* (and other IM systems) Nigerians could only use 9 of the 54 emoticons in their interactions being the only universally intelligible options in the pool of emoticons (Oni & Shoki, 2008). In line with this perspective, users of the social network site in Nigeria have also been appropriating the media systems culture-specifically in their different individual or organizational engagements such as wall posting, expression of likes and identifying with a course, community, individual, religion and politics; some of which betray their cultural orientations and belief systems.

Conclusion

This survey of computer mediated communication theories, specifically from communication studies perspective, so far has shuttled between two important paradigms; the mass media effects theories and the technology acceptance/adoption approaches. While the semiotic approach (base on research output) is graphically hinted upon as a contributive approach to the study of computer-mediated interactions. This review thus covers vital perspectives used in earlier CMC studies such as the CFO, SIP, SIDE, DOI, etc. while detailed discussion has also been given to the media effect theory, mainly uses and gratification theory, diffusion of innovation theory and the technology acceptance model as three important approaches to the study of computer-mediated communications.

More important in this paper is the presentation of some media constraints distilled from the collaborative theory of language use and grounding concept in effective communication. The relationship between the CMC systems and these affordances are stressed in tabular presentation. It is however hoped that the models presented in this paper will further reduce the 'knowledge gap' between the scholars of the conventional communication media technology and the new media of the Internet and the mobile phone as a means of advancing literature in computer-mediated communication and by extension the field of communication studies in Nigeria and Africa, where media technology is uniquely appropriated against socio-cultural backgrounds.

Acknowledgments:
This paper has benefitted immensely from contributions of scholars as it had been presented in two seminar series at the Department of Communication and Language Arts, University of Ibadan and the College of Humanities and Culture, Osun State University. I am indeed very grateful to Dr. Godwin O. Shoki and Dr. N. Christopher of the Communication and Language Arts Department, University of Ibadan, Nigeria for their insightful suggestions.

References

Ajzen, I. (1991). "The Theory of Planned Behavior". *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179–211.

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Aoki, K., & Downes, E. (2003). An Analysis of Young People's Use of and Attitudes Toward Cell phones. *Telematics and Informatics, 20* (4), 349-364.

Aune, K.S., Buller, D.B., and Aune, R.K. (1996). "Display Rule Development in Romantic Relationships: Emotions Management and Perceived Appropriateness of Emotions across Relationship Stages". *Human Communication Research*, 23(1), 115-145.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bantz, C. R. (1982). Exploring Uses and Gratifications: A Comparison of Reported Uses of Television and Reported Uses of Favorite Program Type. *Communication Research*, 9, 352–379.

Bar, F., Pisani, F, and Weber, M (2007). "Draft Mobile Technology Appropriation in a Distant Mirror: Baroque Infiltration, Creolization and Cannibalism". Being a draft paper Prepared for discussion at: *Seminario sobre Desarrollo Económico, Desarrollo Social y Comunicaciones Móviles en América Latina*. Convened by Fundación Telefónica in Buenos Aires, April 20-21, 2007.

Berger, C. R., & Calabrese, R. J. (1975). "Some Explorations in Initial Interaction and Beyond: Toward a Developmental Theory of Interpersonal Communication". *Human Communication Research*, 1, 99–112.

Brown, S. A., & Venkatesh, V. (2005). "Model of Adoption of Technology in Households: A Baseline Model Test and Extension Incorporating Household Life Cycle". *MIS Quarterly*, 29(3), 399–426.

CheNeau-Loquay, A. (2000). Africa in Global Communication Networks: from Networks

Claisse, G., & Rowe, F. (1987). "The Telephone in Question: Questions on Communication". *Computer Networks and ISDN Systems*, 14, 207–219.Cohen, Levy, & Golden, 1988

Clark, H. H. (1996). *Using Language.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, H. H., & Brennan, S. E. (1991). "Grounding in Communication". In L. B. Resnick, J. M. Levine & S. D. Teasley (eds.), *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition* (pp. 127-149). Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.

Clark, H. H., & Wilkes-Gibbs, D. (1986). Referring as a Collaborative Process. *Cognition, 22*, 1-39.

Cohen, A. A., Levy, M. R., & Golden, K. (1988). Children's Uses and Gratifications of Home VCRs: Evolution or Revolution. *Communication Research*, 15, 772–780.

Collentine, J., and Collentine, K. (1997). "The Compatibility of Computer-mediated Communication Solutions with Beginning Level Foreign Language Curricula". *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 10, 411-425.

Daft, R.L., & Lengel, R.H. (1986). "Organizational Information Requirements, Media Richness, and Structural Design". *Management Science*, 32, 554-571.

Davis, F. D. (1986). "A Technology Acceptance Model for Empirically Testing New end-User Information Systems: Theory and Results". Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge.

Davis, F. D., Bagozzi, R. P., and Warshaw, P. R. (1989). "User Acceptance of Computer Technology: A Comparison of Two Theoretical Models". *Management Science*, 35 (8), 982–1003.

December, J. (1997). "Notes on Defining of Computer-Mediated Communication". *Computer-Mediated Communication Magazine*, (3):1 [WWW Document] URL: *http://www.december.com/cmc/mag/1987/jan/december.html*. Retrieved on 2005-05-17.

DeSanctis, G., & Poole, M. (1994). "Capturing the Complexity in Advanced Technology Use: Adaptive Structuration Theory". *Organization Science, 5*(2), 121-147.

Dimmick, J.W., Sikand, J., & Patterson, S. J. (1994). "The Gratifications of the Household Telephone: Sociability, Instrumentality, and Reassurance". *Communication Research*, 21(5), 643–663.

Dishaw, M. T., & Strong, D. M. (1999). "Extending the Technology Acceptance Model with Task-technology fit Constructs". *Information & Management*, 36 (1), 9–21.

Donner, Jonathan, (2007). The Rules of Beeping: Exchanging Messages Via Intentional "Missed Calls" on Mobile Phones. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13 (1).

Donohue, W.E., Diez, M.E., Stahle, R., & Burgoon, J.K. (1983). *The Effects of Distance Violations on Verbal Immediacy: An Exploration.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Dallas, Texas.

Dourish, P. (2003). "The Appropriation of Interactive Technologies: Some Lessons from Placeless Documents". *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), 12*(4), 465-490.

Erickson, T., and Herring, S. C. (2007). *Persistent Conversation: Home Page*. Retrieved September 30, 2007, From Http://Www.Visi.Com/~Snowfall/HICSS_PC.Html

Ferguson, D. A., & Perse, E. M. (2000). The Worldwideweb As A Functional Alternative To Television. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 44, 155–174.

Fichman, R. (2000). The Diffusion and Assimilation of Information Technology Innovations. *Framing the Domains of IT Management: Projecting the Future Through the Past*, 105-127.

Fischer, C. S. (1988). 'Touch Someone': The Telephone Industry Discovers Sociability. *Technology and Culture*, 29, 32–61.

Fischer, G., & Ostwald, J. (2002). Transcending the Information Given: Designing Learning Environments For Informed Participation. *Computers In Education, 2002. Proceedings. International Conference On*, 378-381.Flaherty, Parce And Rubin 1998

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1981). "Attitude and Voting Behavior: An Application of the Theory of Reasoned Action". In G. M. Stephenson, & J. M. Davis (Eds.), *Progress in Applied Social Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 253–313). London: Wiley.

Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2001). Internet Use in the Contemporary Media Environment. *Human Communication Research*, 27, 153–181.

Gonzalez, V., & Mark, G. (2004). Constant, Constant, Multi-tasking Craziness: Managing Multiple Working Spheres. *Proceedings of the 2004 Conference on Human factors in Computing Systems*, 113-120.

Gonzalez-Bueno, M. (1998). "The Effects of Electronic Mail on Spanish L2 Discourse". *Language Learning & Technology*, Vol 1, No. 2 pp. 55-70. URL: *http//lt.msu.edu/vol1num2/article3/default.html.*

Hård af Segerstad, Y., & Ljungstrand, P. (2002). IM'ing with WebWho. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, 56*(1), 147-171.

Herring, S. C. (2004a). Slouching Toward the Ordinary: Current Trends in Computer Mediated Communication. *New Media & Society, 6*(1), 26-36.

Herring, S.C. (1994). "Gender Difference in Computer-Mediated Communication: Bringing Familiar Baggage to the New Frontier". A Keynote Talk at American Library Association Annual Convention, Miami

Herring, S.C. (1999). "Interactional Coherence in CMC". *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, JCMC* 4, 4. Retrieved on 12-10-2007, from http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol4/issue4/herring.html

Herring, S.C. (2001). "Computer-mediated Discourse". In D. Schiffrin et al. (eds.) *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Malden: Blackwell.

Herring, S.C. (2004b). "Computer-mediated Discourse Analysis: An Approach to Researching Online Communities". In S.A. Barab, R. Kling, and J.H. Gray (eds.) *Designing for Virtual Communities*

Horst, H. (2006). "The Blessings and Burdens of Communication: Cell Phones in Jamaican Transnational Social Fields". *Global Networks, 6*(2), 143.

Infante, D. A., Rancer, A. S., & Womack, D. F. (1993). *Building communication theory* (2nd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Jones, Q., Ravid, G., & Rafaeli, S. (2004). Information Overload and the Message Dynamics in Online Interaction Spaces: A Theoretical Model and Empirical Exploration. *Information Systems Research*, 15 (2), 194-210.

Jones, S, (1995). Computer-mediated Communication and Community: Introduction. Newbury Park, CA: Sage publications. Available on E-mail: comm._sj@vax1.utulsa.edu.

LaRose, R. (1999). "Understanding Personal Telephone Behavior". In H. Sawhney, & G. A. Barnett (Eds.), *Progress in communication sciences, Volume XV: Advances in Telecommunications* (pp. 1–27). Stamford, CT: Ablex.

Leung, L., and Wei, R. (2000). "More than Just Talk on the Move: Uses and Gratifications of the Cellular phone". *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77 (2), 308–320.

Lin, C. A. (1999). "Online-service Adoption Likelihood". *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39 (2), 79–89.

Mark, G., Gonzalez, V. M., & Harris, J. (2005). "No Task Left Behind? Examining the Nature of Fragmented Work". *Paper presented at the CHI 2005: Technology, Safety, Community: Conference Proceedings - Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*.

Morris, M., and Ogan, C. (1996). "The Internet as Mass Medium". *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 1*(4), http://www.ascusc.org/jcmc/vol1/issue4/morris.html.

Newhagen, J. E., & Rafaeli, S. (1996). "Why Communication Researchers Should Study the Internet: A dialogue". *Journal of Communication, 46*(1), 4-13.

O'Keefe, G. J., and Sulanowski, B. K. (1995). "More than just talk: Uses, Gratifications, and the Telephone". *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, **72**(4), 922–933.

Palmgreen, P. (1984). "Uses and Gratifications: A Theoretical Perspective. *Communication Yearbook*, 8, 20–55.

Palmgreen, P., Wenner, L. A., and Rosengren, K. E. (1985). "Uses and Gratifications Research: The Past Ten Years". In K. E. Rosengren, L. A. Wenner, & P. Palmgreen (Eds.), *Mass Gratifications Research: Current Perspectives* (pp. 11–37). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Papacharissi, Z., and Rubin, A. M. (2000). "Predictors of Internet Use". *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 44 (2), 175–196.

Park, N. (2010). "Adoption and Use of Computer-Based Voice Over Internet Protocol Phone Service: Toward an Integrated Model". *Journal of Communication* 60, pp. 40–72.

Park, N., Lee, K. M., & Cheong, P. H. (2007). "University Instructors' Acceptance of Electronic Courseware: An Application of the Technology Acceptance Model". *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, **13** (1), Retrieved November 15, 2007, from http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/park.html.

Parks, M.R., and Floyd, R. (1996). "Making Friends in Cyberspace". *Journal of Communication*, 46(1), 80-96.

Pearson, J. C., Nelson, P.E., Titsworth, S. and Harter, L. (2003). *Human Communication*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Rafaeli, S. (1986). "The Electronic Bulletin Board: A Computer-driven Mass Medium". *Computers and the Social Sciences*, 2, 123-136.

Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations*. (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Rosengren, K. E. (1974). "Uses and Gratifications: A paradigm Outlined". In J. G. Blumler, and E. Katz (Eds.), *The Use of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research* (pp. 269–289). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Rubin, A. M. (1986). "Uses, Gratifications, and Media Effects Research". In J. Bryant, & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Perspectives on Media Effects* (pp. 281–301). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rubin, A. M. (1993). Audience Activity and Media Use. *Communication Monographs*, 60, 98–105.

Rubin, A. M. (2002). The Uses-and-gratifications Perspective of Media Effects. In J. Bryant, and D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 525–548). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rubin, A. M., and Bantz, C. R. (1987). "Utility of Videocassette Recorders". In J. L. Salvaggio, and J. Bryant (Eds.), *Media use in the Information Age: Emerging Patterns of Adoption and Consumer Use* (pp. 181–195). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rubin, R. A., Perse, E., and Barbato, C. (1988). "Conceptualization and Measurement of Interpersonal Communication Motives". *Human Communication Research*, 14 (4), 602–628.

Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century. *Mass Communication & Society*, **3** (1), 3–37.

Russell, E., Purvis, L., & Banks, A. (2007). "Describing the Strategies Used for Dealing with email Interruptions According to Different Situational Parameters". *Computers in Human Behavior, 23*(4), 1820-1837.

Sangwan, S., & Pau, L. (2005). "Diffusion of Mobile Phones in China".

Short, J., Williams, E., and Christie, B. (1976). *The Psychology of Telecommunication*. London: Wiley.

Simpson, J. (2005). "Meaning-making Online: Discourse and CMC in a Language Learning Community". *Recent Research Developments in Learning Technologies*. Retrieved on 12-10-2007, from http//www.formatex.org/micte 2005/36.pdf

Singer, B. (1981). *Social Functions of the Telephone*. Palo Alto, CA: R & E Research Associates.

Tidwell, L. C., and Walther, J. B. (2002). Computer-mediated Communication Effects on Disclosure, Impressions, and Interpersonal Evaluations: Getting to Know One Another a Bit at a time. *Human Communication Research, 28*(3), 317-348.

Walther, J.B. (1992). "Interpersonal Effects in Computer-mediated Interaction: A Relational Perspective". *Communication Research*, 19:1, 52-90.

Walther, J.B. (1992). Interpersonal effects in computer-mediated interaction: a relational perspective. *Communication Research*, 19 (1), 52-90.

Walther, J.B. (1995). "Relational Aspects of Computer-mediated Communication: Experimental Observations over Time". *Organization Science*, 6(2), 186-203.

Walther, J.B. (1996). Computer-mediated Communication: Impersonal, Interpersonal and Hyperpersonal Interaction. *Communication Research*, 23 (1), 3-43.

Whittaker, S., and Sidner, C. (1996). *Email Overload: Exploring Personal Information Management of email.* Paper presented at the Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings.

Williams, F., Dordick, H., & Jesulae, H. (1985). Focus Group and Questionnaire Development for Exploring Attitudes Towards Telephone Service. In F.Williams (Ed.), *Social Research and the Telephone*. Los Angeles, CA: Herbert Dordick and Associates.

Williams, F., Strover, S., and Grant, A. E. (1994). "Social Aspects of New Media Technologies. In J. Bryant, and D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (pp. 463–482). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wood, J.T. (1993). "Engendered Relations: Interaction, Caring, Power, and Responsibility in Intimacy". In S. Duck (Ed.), *Social Context and Relationships*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

African Nebula, Issue 6, 2013

French-Cameroon Immigrants and the Pan-Kamerun Movement

Joseph Lon Nfi
University of Buea
Cameroon
nfi.joseph@ubuea.cm

Abstract

This paper investigates the militancy of French-Cameroon immigrants in the Pan-Kamerun Movement that surfaced in the Southern Cameroons few years after the Second World War. It explains why both economic and social (protest) migrants from French Cameroon still desired a connection with their birth places and homes of origin. A careful analysis of the data from archival and secondary sources reveals that their militancy in the movement was not because of the dream for a Greater Kamerun or the British neglect of the socio-economic development of the Southern Cameroons but because of their status as "strangers" and other related problems which they faced. The study concludes that they championed the course for a Greater Kamerun because they wanted to be citizens in their new homesteads.

***Key Words**: Immigrants, Pan-Kamerun Movement, "Strangers," French Cameroon, Southern Cameroons, Reunification.*

Introduction

The most significant event of the First World War in Cameroon was the Anglo – French partition of the German protectorate (Kamerun) in 1916. During the war, British, French and Belgian troops invaded and defeated the Germans by February 1916. The defeat and expulsion of the Germans was followed by the partition of the territory into British and French spheres.

The British sphere consisted of two disjointed narrow strips of territory in the west, stretching from Lake Chad to the Atlantic coast and bordering on Nigeria. It comprised about one fifth of the total area and population of German Cameroon. Britain further divided her territory into two: British Northern Cameroons and British Southern Cameroons. The French sphere consisted of the remaining four-fifth of the territory and populations. The League of Nations later approved the partition and Britain and France had to administer their respective spheres as separate mandate 'B' territories of the League of Nations.

French Cameroon immigrants refer to the inhabitants of the British Southern Cameroons whose birth places, homes of origin or ethnic bases were in the French administered Cameroon. These were people who migrated for one reason or the other and settled permanently in the British territory of Southern Cameroons before and during the Mandate and Trusteeship periods. They were both economic and protest immigrants because the reasons for their migrations included 'pull' and 'push' factors such as the lucrative plantation jobs, trade opportunities, British liberal policies and abundant fertile land in the Southern Cameroons, as well as population pressure, conscription into the army, *Indigénat*, de-Germanisation, forced labour (*Corvée and Prestation)*, high taxes, police harassment and the imposition of artificial chiefs in French Cameroon (Nfi, 2012). These immigrants became interested in the Pan-Kamerun Movement in their host

territory.The Pan-Kamerun Movement or the Cameroons Unification Movement developed among Southern Cameroons intelligentsia after the Second World War. Its members called for the recreation of the Greater Kamerun through the elimination of the artificial Oliphant-Picot boundary[1] and the reunification of British and French Cameroons. The movement opposed the balkanization of Kamerun and believed that this colonial division was detrimental to the development of the two territories and the freedoms of the indigenous peoples. They were out to remake German Kamerun hence their spelling of Cameroon with 'K'. French Cameroon immigrants featured prominently in this movement.

The abundant literature on the Pan-Kamerun Movement is almost silent on the interest of the immigrant population in the movement. Le Vine (1964), Welch (1966), Chem-Langhëë (1973), Kofele-Kale (1980), Chem-Langhëë and Njeuma (1980), Njeuma (1992), Amaazee (1995) and others attribute the birth of the Pan-Kamerun Movement either to the British neglect of the socio-economic development of the Southern Cameroons and the resultant Igbophobia by the victim population or to the 'Kamerun Idea', the nostalgia about German Kamerun. Where French Cameroon immigrants are mentioned, the researchers limit themselves to the role played by these immigrants in the reunification process. This is the case with Amaazee (1994).[2] This study therefore complements their findings by focusing on the reasons for French Cameroon immigrant's militancy in the Pan-Kamerun Movement.

Reasons for Immigrant's Militancy in the Pan-Kamerun Movement

As indicated above, it may appear a paradox that immigrant populations escaping from inadequate economic opportunities and political persecutions in French Cameroon had to work for the reunification of their host territory and their home of origin. French Cameroon settlers in the Southern Cameroons were victims of many forms of abuses, discrimination, tribalism and segregation. They were not considered as citizens or British protected persons. In response, they created pressure groups to carter for their grievances. In 1947 they created the French Cameroon Welfare Union (FCWU) under the leadership of Robert Kum Dibongue and Joseph Henry Ngu.[3] In 1949, they joined Endeley's Cameroon National Federation (CNF) and in 1951, they withdrew from the CNF to create the Kamerun United National Congress (KUNC). These pressure groups advocated the reunification of the Cameroons and the elimination of the Anglo-French boundary. They dominated the Kumba Pan-Kamerun Congress of 1951 and wrote many petitions between 1949 and 1953 to the United Nations in favour of reunification.

The British authorities saw the Pan-Kamerun Movement as a group of disgruntled Southern Cameroon elite who could be made to change their stance and the movement fundamentally weakened if greater autonomy was granted the Southern Cameroon within the Nigerian Federation. The British High Commission to the Southern Cameroons, E. J. Gibbons even declared in 1951 that "much of the drive behind the movement will disappear once N N Mbile (the prominent British Cameroon leader of the movement) has secured election to the House of Assembly and begins to turn his attention to more practical issues" (NAB) file vb/b (1951)1:7) However, what threatened the British authorities was the militancy of French Cameroon immigrants on this issue. They were more committed to the movement and this benefitted from the support of *Union des Population du Cameroun* (UPC), a communist oriented political party in French Cameroon. The commitment and militancy to the Pan-Cameroon Movement was influenced by the following problems:

Land Disputes: When the immigrants arrived in the Southern Cameroons, their major problem was the lack of adequate accommodation and land for farming. There were no resettlement homes erected for them. They were not granted permission to reside among the indigenes. To further aggravate the situation, immigrants were not initially allowed to buy land or to build or farm permanently. These restrictions were based on the existing land tenure system (Meek, 1957). During the colonial period, the plantations and cash crop economy made the colonial masters to encourage the occupation of land by "strangers" for the cultivation of cash crops. This change of policy attracted many French Cameroonians to the fertile volcanic soils in the Victoria and Kumba Divisions of the Southern Cameroons. By 1933, about 169 immigrants already had large Cocoa farms in Kumba Division. The influx of immigrants and their involvement in commercial farming was followed by land disputes between the indigenes and "strangers". The indigenes argued that if they permitted "strangers" to plant cocoa on land assigned to them, their claim to land property would be reinforced. The Bakweri Land Claim Committee and the Bakossi Land Syndicate were thus formed to protect indigenes land rights in the Victoria and Kumba Divisions respectively.[4]

Following the creation of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) in 1946 and the construction of the Kumba-Mamfe road in 1947 there was an influx of Nigerians into the plantation zone. This made labour cheap in the CDC plantations. As a result, most French Cameroonians decided to quit the plantations and create private farm or plantations. Due to the fertility of the soils and the lucrative nature of their agricultural businesses, these immigrants did not nurture an imminent desire to return to their areas of origin. Consequently land disputes with indigenes intensified. This was so because non-indigenes were generally hard working, a quality that brought more wealth to them, sometimes to the chagrin of some indigenes who felt threatened by their superior economic power. In a memorandum to the District Officer (D. O.) for Kumba in May 1953, the president of the FCWU wrote:

> …Our compatriots in the British Cameroons were casting covetous eyes on the excellent results achieved by French Cameroonians from their farming operations and that they were making strenuous efforts to reap the fruits of these men's labour. There are numerous instances where certain envious and improvident individuals sought and are still seeking to bring about, by subtle means, the eviction of industrious persons of French Cameroon origin who have developed excellent farms in their areas (NAB, si(1951)3, FCWU)

According to Robert Kum Dibongue, farmers from French Cameroon were subjected to a merciless and unremitting fleecing by the landlord in Kumba Division. The solution to this problem was the recreation of the Greater Kamerun so that immigrants should not be "strangers" in their own country.

The Scholarship Problem: One of the problems that immigrants faced because they were not British protected persons was the exclusion of their sons and daughters from the CDC scholarship scheme set up in 1949. In the various petitions of the FCWU in 1949 and 1951, the immigrants argued that they were equally responsible for the CDC revenue that was used to sponsor the Southern Cameroonians in schools and colleges. They indicated that the ex-German plantations being exploited by the CDC were opened by their kin and kith and that if not for their sweated labour there would have been no plantations for the CDC to operate (NAB, si(1951)10,

FCWU). Immigrants, therefore, requested the CDC scholarship for their off-springs in these words;

> We contribute a considerable part of the revenue from which the scholarship awarded to promising Cameroonians youths are financed. We submit, therefore, that it is but equitable and just that our children should be allocated equal opportunities in the matter of these scholarships with those of the local inhabitants (NAB, si(1951)10, FCWU).

The immigrants further stated that except for the very recent advent of the Igbo and other groups from the Eastern Province of Nigeria, almost all African enterprises such as petty trade, handicraft and motor transport in the Southern Cameroons were in the hands of French Cameroonians. As such they merited compensation through scholarships for their pupils. When this problem was first raised in 1949, the British authorities refused to see it as such . They reminded the immigrants that CDC scholarships were reserved exclusively for persons of British Cameroons origins. When the Commissioner for the Southern Cameroons, Gibbons, realized that the immigrants were increasingly becoming vocal on the subject of reunification because of this scholarship issue, he requested the CDC to revise the conditions for its scholarships. In 1951 the revised conditions indicated that persons eligible for the CDC scholarships had to be; "indigenes of the Southern Cameroons, children of indigenes of the Southern Cameroons and children whose parents have been resident in the British Cameroons throughout the child's primary and secondary education and provided the candidate in question has taken his or her primary education in the British Cameroon and secondary education either in the British Cameroon or Nigeria" (NAB, si(1951)10, FCWU). This was one of the frustrations of the immigrants that pushed them into the hands of the promoters of the Pan-Kamerun Movement

Employment: Another issue that featured prominently on their list of grievances was the problem of employment. The immigrants knew that because the overwhelming majority of the indigenes received not more than six years of education, they could also dominate the civil service and the teaching profession in the Southern Cameroons like the Nigerians. For example, in 1936, of the total 163 clerical staff in the government services, 130 were Nigerians while only 33 were indigenes. In 1938 there were 35 trained teachers in the territory out of whom 23 were Nigerians, 10 indigenes and 2 French Cameroonians (Aka, 2001). The immigrants were unable to understand why qualified French Cameroonians should be discriminated against in the matter of appointments in the administration when they were also Kamerunians They petitioned the recruitment of Nigerians on the grounds that they were not Kamerunians. As such they were determined to reunify Kamerun and guarantee jobs for all qualified Kamerunians

Again, even the employed immigrants, when on leave or retirement, were only entitled to government transport assistance from their town of service in the Southern Cameroons to the frontiers unlike the indigenes who benefitted from government transport from their work places to their villages of origin. They were responsible for their transport from the frontier to their ethnic or home base in French Cameroon. This was an important financial burden for workers from distant areas like Yaounde, Bafia, Babimbi, Kribi, Edea and Yabassi. Worse-still, upon the return of these workers from French Cameroon they were given no concession regarding reducing or easing custom duties on their personal belongings. The difficulties encountered by workers as they moved within Kamerun were the subject of many petitions. For example, in a

petition to the UN Visiting Mission in 1952 French Cameroonians led by B. S. Ambahne complained that:

> We cannot understand why a man whose parents are from Douala but who was born and educated and employed in Buea for example should not be given his leave pay right to Douala. That such officers are subjected to detailed search by the customs is an occasion to make us believe that we have lost our rights to free movement within our own country (Regional Archives Bamenda, NW/Bb/1952/2)

Immigrant militancy in the Pan-Kamerun Movement was therefore also due to the difficulties they encountered at the borders as they moved between the two Cameroons. Their problem was not only the inadequate socio-economic infrastructure in the Southern Cameroons, Igbo domination of economic activities, the inadequate constitutional reform in Nigeria or even the "Kamerun Idea" per se. Their problem was harassment at the borders and the desire for freedom of movements.

The Frontier Problem: Out of the sixty-six petitions and supplementary petitions to the UN Trusteeship Council from the British Cameroons in 1949, eleven were on the question of the frontier (Ngoh, 1996). The petitions on the frontier issues came mostly from the immigrants. The frontier problem consisted of the high duties, restrictions in the flow of currency from one sphere of the Cameroon to another and the harassment of traders by customs and frontier police agents. The intra-Cameroon Anglo-French boundary had many custom frontier posts where customs officials, the police and *gendarmes* often extort money from people or, at other instances, searched them and seized their goods. (Johnson, 1970)

From 1952, there were even reports of the custom officers raiding homes of suspected smugglers inside towns and villages far removed from the customs frontier (NAB,vb/b1952/1KUNC). In fact, smuggling was a sign of protest and resistance to the obnoxious Anglo-French frontier and many French Cameroon smugglers died in water or in "bushes" as they struggled to escape custom harassments. Goods were abandoned in forests, dumped into rivers or completely destroyed when these smugglers were confronted by customs officers. These officers even stormed opened markets in the villages in jeeps and land rovers and seized all suspected contraband goods they could find. It was for this reason that the FCWU, in a petition to the UN in 1952, asked for free travel across the boundary without molestation of persons or seizure of goods and money (Gobina, 1990).

Besides, frontier customs barriers distorted traditional trade between the border people. The traders of Bamileke origin resident in the Southern Cameroons could not continue with their trade in Kola as well as other forms of small trans-frontier commerce because of custom barriers. Again, due to the extreme natural difficulty in the way of contact between the Southern Cameroons and Nigeria, as well as the paucity of fishing facilities from Victoria to Calabar and Port Harcourt, French Cameroon became the most convenient route for the evacuation of produce from the British side. Frontier harassment, therefore, prevented immigrant traders in Victoria and Kumba and Bakossi Cocoa farmers from evacuating their goods by the French-Cameroon railway to Douala (NAB, vb/b (1951), KUNC). These traders became particularly strong advocates of reunification because of frontier obstacles to trade. The recreation of Kamerun was to free them from these problems and revive traditional cross border and long distance trade between the peoples of Kamerun

Representation in Native Administration: The clamour for the integration of immigrants in Native Authority Administration began in 1922. In towns like Tiko, Victoria, Buea and Muyuka, French Cameroonians wanted to participate in the management of local councils and customary courts. Indigenous chiefs and their subjects resisted these requests. However, in the Victoria Division, the situation started improving in 1935 when the Newtown Council in Victoria was reorganized with provision for Yaounde and Bakoko members (Monono, 2001:74). In 1939, the Cameroon Welfare Union (CWU) and the Kamerun Union of Settlers (KUS) advocated the integration of the more progressive settlers into the Native Authority Councils even as observers. In 1942, A. Mandoline, a businessman of Beti origin, was co-opted into the Victoria Federated Council.

The FCWU in Tiko, led by Lucas Ayissi, sent a petition to the UN Visiting Mission in 1949 on the representation of immigrants in the local government of Victoria Division in these words;

> We the French Cameroons living in the British Cameroons in our humble petition, beg that we too should enjoy the same advantage of education and for the tax we pay in this land of our sojourn and also we should have representatives in the government to voice out the difficulties of the sprinkling, population of French Cameroonians (Monono, 2001:75)

In 1957, the KUS observed in a petition that there were more settlers than indigenes in the council areas of Tiko, Buea, Victoria and Balong in the Victoria Division and argued that settlers be given equal, if not more, representation in these councils. The FCWU in a letter to the DO for Victoria also argued that because of tribalism and discrimination, "strangers" who were paying seventy-five percent tax in the division could not be represented in the local councils (Monono, 2001: 80). "Strangers" who paid the highest tax and had more population were largely excluded from the local governments to the chagrin of these immigrants.

The non-representation of immigrants in the Local Councils and Native Courts led to other forms of discrimination. Settlers who violated indigenous customs and traditions, especially marriage and land laws, were tried in Native Courts and sanctioned severely. They were victims of common law offences such as theft, adultery, rape, illegal possession of arms and contraband. Many were jailed or repatriated from the territory because they were involved in these crimes. As a result of these severe sanctions, life became difficult for many immigrants.

Another source of discontent was harassment from Native Authority Sanitary Inspectors. These inspectors were too hard on the settlers. They invaded the homes of settlers and fined them, claiming that their homes were dirty (NAB, si(1957), KUS:2). It was noticed that indigenes that lived in a more dirty condition were not brought before the courts by the sanitary inspectors. The settlers were also over taxed and harassed by tax collectors. Liquor business known to be dominated by the immigrants had the Liquor Ordinance fees constantly increased (Ibid:4). These and other forms of discrimination suffered by the immigrants persisted because they had no political power and were not represented in the decision making structures.

The Question of Franchise: The most crucial problem that preoccupied French Cameroon immigrants was the lack of franchise. In Victoria and Kumba Divisions, these immigrants were known to constitute the 'king-post', which supported the economy of these divisions. These immigrants had, thanks to their industry and enterprise, prospered, and contributed to a very

large share of the revenue of these divisions. One of the Governors of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria had in a public meeting in Victoria made it clear that but for the revenue contributed by the immigrants, the Victoria treasury, would become insolvent leading inevitably to the curtailment of essential social services (NAB, si(1951)10, FCWU: 8). Despite their contributions to the economy of the Southern Cameroons, they could not vote or be voted into Local Councils, Native Courts or Nigerian Legislatures.

In July 1951, the immigrants reminded the British of one of the axioms of democracy "no taxation without representation. In a petition to Governor Sir John Stuart Macpherson, the FCWU condemned their disenfranchisement in the following words;

> Since we are paying head and income tax, we fail to see why we should be denied representation in the management of this country affair…as a result we cannot understand why immigrants from French Cameroon should be disfranchised (NAB, si(1951)10, FCWU: 6)

Apart from the taxes they paid, the FCWU petition of 1951 against the disfranchisement of immigrants also indicated that the population living in the areas covered by the Victoria Federated Native Authority and the Bakweri Clan Native Authority was worth being represented in decision-making institutions. According to the UN report of 1949, there were 4, 494 indigenes and 3, 451 settlers in Victoria Division. The FCWU wanted the enfranchisement of these settlers.

The immigrants also protested their exclusion from participating in the 1951 general elections following the Macpherson Constitution of that year. The immigrants were not given the chance to vote or be voted in the Eastern House Assembly in Nigeria. They requested for a special constituency for immigrants but nothing was done. The British responded to their numerous petitions by indicating that the status of British subjects or British protected persons was a necessary qualification for the franchise and persons born in French Cameroon or having acquired French citizenship were automatically disqualified. Immigrants could only vote if they had acquired the status of British subject through naturalization after five years of residence in the Southern Cameroons (Ibid: 28). On the issue of a special electoral unit for French Cameroonians, the British authorities considered it impractical since the immigrants were scattered all over the territory. The issue of franchise for French Cameroon immigrants remained crucial until independence as political leaders favoured and opposed it depending on their political options. It was the disfranchisement of French Cameroonians that constantly reminded them that they were "strangers" in their own land and that the solution was the recreation of the Greater Kamerun.

Conclusion

French Cameroon immigrants were the most vocal members of the Pan-Kamerun Movement. While the Southern Cameroonians joined the movement because of British neglect of the socio-economic development of their land and Igbo domination, French Cameroon immigrant saw reunification as a solution to their daily problems as "strangers" in the Southern Cameroons. They were denied the franchise, excluded from decision-making institutions, denied jobs, chased out of fertile land, denied CDC scholarships, harassed, persecuted, jailed, repatriated or expelled and exploited at the frontiers because they were not British subjects or British protected persons. All these discriminations could not be accepted because they believed that they were at home in

Kamerun. It was the need to end these discriminations that they championed the course for a Greater Kamerun. This was through their membership in all the pressure groups and political parties that had reunification as objective.

Notes

[1] The Anglo-French Boundary in Cameroon was also called the Oliphant-Picot line because the partition of Cameroon started in London in 1916 when Lancelot Oliphant, a senior official of the British Foreign Office and George Picot from France, drew a line on the Cameroon map dividing it into two.

[2] Amaazee, V.B., 1994, 'The Role of French Cameroonians in the Unification of Cameroon, 1916-1961 *'TransAfrican Journal of History*, No. 23, pp.195-234.

[3] Dibongue was from the Akwa clan in Douala. He migrated to the Southern Cameroon in 1918 and served the British as an administrator. J.H Ngu was a Bamileke from Dschang and served the British as a prison administrator.

[4] Created in the 1940s, the Bakweri Land Claim Committee did not go beyond agitations and petitions but the Bakossi Land Syndicate which existed since the 1930s moved from petitions to anti-settlers violence that resulted in the Bakossi-Bamileke War of 1966-1967.

References

Amaazee,V.B. (1994). "The Role of French Cameroonians in the Unification of Cameroon 1916-1961" *Trans-African Journal of History*, Vol. 23.

_____. (1995). "The Igbo Factor in the Politics of the Southern Cameroons 1916-1961" PhD Thesis, University of Calabar.

Chem-Langhëë, B. (1973). "The Kamerun Plebiscites, 1959-1961: Perceptions and Strategies" PhD Thesis, University of California.

_____ & Njeuma, M.Z. (1980). "The Pan-Kamerun Movement, 1949-1961" In Kofele Kale (ed.), *An African Experiment in Nation Building: The Bilingua Cameroon since Reunification.* Colorado: Westview Press.

Fanso, V. G. (1982). "Trans-frontier Relations and Resistance to Cameroon-Nigeria Colonial Boundaries 1916-1945" *Doctorat d'Etat* Thesis, University of Yaounde.

Gobina, F. E. (1990). "French Cameroon Immigrants and the Political Development of the Southern Cameroons, 1916-1961" DIPES11 Dissertation, ENS Yaounde.

Johnson, W. R. (1970). *The Cameroon Federation: Political Integration in a Fragmentary Society.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Meek, C. K. (1957). *Land Tenure and Land Administration in Nigeria and Cameroon.* London.

Monono, C. E. (2001). *Indigenous Minorities and the Future of Good Governance in Cameroon: An Inquiry into the Politics of Local Governance in the Local Councils of Fako Division, 1866-2001.* Buea: CEREDDA.

National Archives Buea (NAB)
-td(1949)14, Petitions from FCWU

-td(1949)17, Petition to the UNO from Cameroon under UK Trusteeship
-vb/b(1951)1, KUNC
-SI(1951)10, FCWU
-S(1953)3, FCWU
- SI(1957)3, KUNC

Nfi, J. L. (2012). "French Cameroonians in the Decolonisation Politics of the Southern Cameroons, 1945-1961" PhD Thesis, University of Yaounde, 1

Ngoh, V. J. (1996). *Cameroon History since 1800*. Limbe: Presprint

Njeuma, M. Z. (1992). "l'Idee de Cameroun dans l'independence du Cameroun, 1959-1961", in Ageron, C.R. AND Michel, M. (eds), *L'Afrique Noire Française: L'heure des Indèpendance.* Paris: L'Harmattan, pp.411-423.

Regional Archives Bamenda, file, NW/Bb/1952/2

Takougang, J. (2003). "Strangers Among Us? French Cameroon Immigrants to British Southern Cameroons 1916-1961", in Olufemi Vaughan (ed), *Indigenous Political Structures and Governance in Africa.* Ibadan: Sefer.

Welch, C. (1966). *Dream of Unity, Pan-Africanism and Political Unification in West Africa*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

African Nebula, Issue 6, 2013

An Endangered Nigerian Indigenous Language: The Case of Yorùbá Language

Temitope Abiodun Balogun
Osun State University
Osogbo, Nigeria
temitopebalogun@ymail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the low-usage of Yorùbá language among some selected secondary school students in Yorubaland. The paper uses questionnaire with cloze test to measure the knowledge of Yorùbá language among respondents in three Yoruba speaking states in southwestern Nigeria. The results of the data show that Yorùbá language enjoys low patronage and patriotism amongst the students used for the data. Many of these students found it extremely difficult to express themselves freely in Yorùbá language and at the same time, they were unable to provide meanings for selected Yorùbá proverbs, words, and expressions. The significance of this work is seen in the fact that Yorùbá language stands the risk of gradual extinction if urgent measures are not taken by all stakeholders concerned to arrest the dwindling fortunes of the language.

Introduction: The Linguistic Landscape in Nigeria

Language is the hallmark of any people's life and culture. Language encompasses people's worldview, custom, way of life and history in general. The loss of any language by a people is the loss of their root and the loss of their identity. When a language is lost, such a people who experience the loss continue to live in the shadow of other people's identity and culture. Ethnologists put the living languages of the world at seven thousand with a sad list of three thousand five hundred that are endangered and may be out of reach at the end of the twenty first century. Nigeria as a multilingual country is currently said to have over five hundred languages, though the dominant languages officially recognised by the government remain: English, Yorùbá, Hausa, and Igbo.

The exact number of languages spoken in Nigeria is not quite certain as there are some languages which are yet to be discovered. In fact, what constitutes a language or a dialect has been debated for too long a time by linguists. Hoffman (1974) classifies 396 in language families in Nigeria excluding dialects that are recognised while Hansford (1976) recognises 395 languages in Nigeria. Blench and Dendo (2003) record 550 languages as spoken in Nigeria.

Adekunle (1976) classifies the languages of Nigeria into groups according to their functions as medium of communication in the Nigerian context as examined below:

> Class A Languages are the major indigenous languages spoken by at least six million native speakers and used widely outside their state of origin by Nigerians whose mother tongues are different. They are Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá.

> Class B Languages are those not much used outside their state of origin but officially recognised and used at the national or federal level as one of the nine major languages. They are Kanuri, Fula, Edo, Efik, Tiv, and Ijo, etc.
>
> Class C Languages are minor languages with no official recognition at the state level.

While Adekunle's claims as regards the above classification may be questionable in some respects, especially with reference to Class C languages. It should be acknowledged that the Federal Government of Nigeria (1979) officially recognizes Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá as tools for the conduct of business in the National Assembly side by side with English. The multilingual character of the Nigerian nation has resulted in its inability to develop a national language that can reflect and integrate the cultural diversities of the nation. This development has placed the English language in a preponderance official life. Though regional languages like Yorùbá, Igbo and Hausa are also recognised by the 1999 constitution as official languages, it is, however, important to emphasise the fact that, English enjoys more prominence among the other languages because while these indigenous languages are restricted to the regions which culturally produced them, English language cuts across cultures, borders and races. Thus, the focus of this paper is on the dwindling fortunes of the Yoruba language and its progressive systematic displacement by the English language among secondary schools students in Yorubaland.

Historically, the Yorùbá are widely believed to have descended from Oduduwa, the acclaimed progenitor of the Yoruba nation. They are found in the southwestern part of Nigeria and spread out to states and areas like Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, and some parts of Kwara, Kogi, and Edo states. The Yorùbá language belongs to the West Benue-Congo of the Niger-Congo phylum of African languages (Williamson and Blench 2000). Apart from Nigeria with about 30 million speakers, Yorùbá is also spoken in Togo, Republic of Benín, Ghana, Sudan, Sierra-Leone and Côte D'Ivoire. Outside Africa, a great number of speakers of the language can be found in countries like: Brazil, Cuba, including Trinidad and Tobago. The effective speakers of the language in the country are about 35% of the country's total population. According to the International African Institute (1980: 60), the Yorùbá language "is used by the media; the Press, Radio and Television. It is also used as a language of formal instruction in some primary schools as well as a curriculum subject in primary secondary and tertiary levels. It has a standard orthography". It must be stated that Yorùbá language still occupies a privileged place within the entire range of African studies because relative abundant literature exists on the language.

Language endangerment and language maintenance

Endangered languages are not necessarily languages with few speakers; in fact, the size of a group hardly matters. The viability of a language is determined first and foremost by the general attitude of its speakers with respect to their traditional culture, of which their language is considered one of the most important exponents. NOW (2000) report is of the view that language endangerment arises in situations of contact between groups. Contact involves not only an exchange of cultural elements and products, but also of cultural prestige, which is often correlated with different degrees of technological advancement. A difference in technological know-how may lead to a sense of inferiority in the less highly developed group, which may then

be inclined to relinquish its culture, including its language, in favour of the more highly developed group. The report is keen to say that: the loss of one language is the gain of another: except in the case of genocide, a language is usually lost because speakers shift to another language.

Mufwene (2002) claims that "languages are parasitic species whose vitality depends on the communicative behaviour of their speakers, who in turn respond adaptively to changes in their socio-economic ecologies". Mufwene (2002) cited above is a general critique of the literature of the past decade on language endangerment, other scholars like Mühlhäusler (1996), Dixon (1997), Brenzinger (1998), Grenoble and Whaley (1998), Calvet (1998), Crystal (2000), Fishman (2000). Hagege (2000), Nettle and Romaine (2000), Maffi (2001) and Renard (2001) have also dealt extensively on this subject.

Derhemi's (2002) work is devoted to problems of endangered languages, particularly endangered languages spoken by minorities, focusing on the sociolinguistic study of the causes, circumstances and results of endangerment, and other structural and social processes related to endangered languages and to their survival. Omo-Ojugo (2004) asserts that a language can only resist death/extinction if it is able to move from the status of oracy to a written status. In his definition of endangered language, Darhemi (2002:6) avers that an endangered language is a language that may soon vanish, ceasing to be used as a vehicle of communication, perhaps even disappearing completely from human history. This position is similar to Godesborg (2007:4) when he opines:

a) Any language with over 50,000 speakers is 'not threatened'

b) Any language with under 400 speakers is 'definitely threatened'

c) Any language with fewer than 3000 speakers with no status data has been assigned to 'no information' on the grounds that it might well be threatened.

To synthesise the afore-discussed meanings of an endangered language, the current paper supports Woodbury (2012) who is of the opinion that languages can be considered dead or endangered when "they are no longer spoken in the form in which we find them in ancient writings". He also opines that any language that is falling out of use or whose speakers are not handing the language over to the next generation is endangered and could go into extinction in the near future. In other words, these are languages that have lost or fast losing their original forms and have become adulterated languages. In which case Yorùbá language fits in properly because of the fact that younger generation are finding it more convenient to use the English language than the Yorùbá language which is their indigenous language.

Wurm (1998) recognises five-level models of language status: (i) potentially endangered, (ii) endangered, (iii) seriously endangered, (iv) moribund, and (v) extinct. Following Wurm, therefore, Yorùbá language may be classified as belonging to the first level. Any language that crosses the lines of either being potentially endangered or endangered is already passed into the limbo of time. Such a language may continue to have existence in a recorded form but could be falling out of use because of the preference of its speakers for more socially acceptable language. Indeed, languages with large number of speakers like Yorùbá can nonetheless be in danger. Brenzinger (1998: 93) had earlier noted this when he said "even Yorùbá, with 20 million

speakers, has been called 'deprived' because of the way it has come to be dominated by English in higher education".

Fishman (1997) points out that it is not because languages are not being taught in schools or lack official status that make them to be endangered but that they become endangered because they lack informal intergenerational transmission and informal daily life support. Fishman (2002), maintains that a language is simultaneously indexical of both the material and the non-material properties of its traditionally associated culture, symbolic of that culture (and of membership in that culture) and, therefore, like all symbols, easily politicised, and, finally, language is also part and parcel of the bulk of any culture (note the complete interdependence of language and laws, religion, education, jokes, riddles, songs, blessings, curses, greetings and thousand pleasantries of everyday life). Culture and language are in large part identical rather than merely the co-occurrences or "fellow-travellers" that they are all too often taken to be.

Why and how languages are endangered?

There are both remote and immediate causes responsible for the gradual dying out of specific languages. For instance, there could be natural ruinous causes like the physical well-being of the speakers, unfavourable climatic and economic conditions, that is famine and drought, habitat displacement, devastating ferocious diseases, desertification as well as unpredictable human migrations.

Discussing one of the factors responsible for language endangerment and language death, Romaine (2002) posits that many language-policy statements are reactive ad hoc declarations lacking a planning element. A policy is a government statement on a planned course of action usually contained in national documents such as The Constitution and National Policy on Education. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE) states among other things the national policy on language use in government, education and so on. Romaine (2002) cited the Native American Languages Act (NALA) of 1990 as an example of such policy. He argues further that NALA is one of the most explicit statements on language ever issued by the United States Congress, yet it is a classic example of a policy with no planning dimension. Likewise, McCarty and Watahomigie (1998: 321) observe that "in practice, language rights have not guaranteed language maintenance, which ultimately depends on the home language choices of native speakers. Such decisions are notoriously difficult for extra-familial institutions to control, even when those institutions are community controlled".

In the specific case of Yoruba language, the attitude of native speakers is one of the major factors responsible for its endangerment. Parents want their children to speak and learn English for social acceptability and economic advancement. However, it has been found out that the total abandonment of the Yorùbá language brings total dislocation and loss of identity(Fabunmi and Salawu, 2005). The negative negligence and negligible use of Yorùbá by the élite, has spilling over effects on Yorùbá as a discipline. Fabunmi and Salawu (2005) submit that:

> As good as the introduction of the so-called western education in the Yorùbá land is, it has however made majority of the elite divided personalities. Many of them are cosmopolitan nativists, fighting very hard to eschew their nativity, and at the same time fighting very hard to be adopted into the cosmopolitan order. This

> is conspicuously demonstrated in the elite attitude towards the use of Yorùbá language.

Another factor which has affected the fortunes of the Yorùbá language is the issue of job opportunities and economic policies. Fabunmi and Salawu (2005) further affirm that this factor directly relates to the attitude of the elites. Among the elites in Nigeria, the ultimate reasons for embarking on any educational discipline are financial inducement and economic well-being of the person pursuing such a discipline. In fact, rather than stick to their calling, some degree holders in Yoruba language still struggle to find their ways into the so-called big money-spinning commercial ventures in telecommunications, banking and the oil and gas industries. It appears that in today's globalised village, the major dictate of the trans-national global market economic policy is self-reliance. Thus, a greater number of the elites will never permit their children to study Yorùbá as a discipline because of lack of financial self-reliance. To them, therefore, of what use is the language if it cannot meet the dictates of the global economy?

Methodology and Data Presentation

The methodology comprises questionnaires, observations and interviews specifically meant to test students' knowledge of Yorùbá language and the parents' attitude towards the language. Three hundred students comprising public and private schools in Oyo, Osun and Lagos states were sampled. The questionnaires were structured into two parts and the students were given forty minutes to complete them. Ten schools were used in each of three states. Senior students in year two (SSC 2) were used as subjects for the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed with the help of the subject teachers and the class teachers. These were also collected immediately upon completion by the students with the same time limit given all of them. The questionnaires were later analysed.in order to test our hypothesis. To test the parents' attitude to Yorùbá language vis-a-vis the two other dominant indigenous languages which are Hausa and Igbo languages in Nigeria, personal observation and interviews were conducted on the parents across the three dominant languages in order to compare the parental attitude towards each of the three regional languages in Nigeria.

Data Analysis and Discussion

From the first part of the questionnaires, it was discovered that Yorùbá language is the mother tongue of all the students. All the respondents claimed that they can speak their indigenous language which is Yorùbá language, and they make use of the language at home and with friends. More than 70 % of these students said that they take Yorùbá as one of their subjects in school because it is compulsory. But it is very surprising when only 43.1% of the total students sampled claimed that they can speak their indigenous language clearly without mixing it with English, 4.1% said this will be impossible for them. 52.8% of the students said that they are not sure they can speak Yorùbá without mixing it with English language.

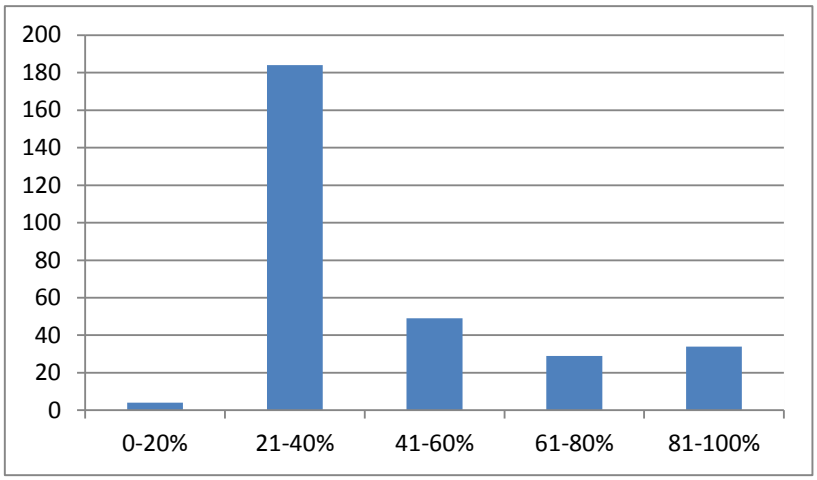
Section B was divided into four parts which comprised a comprehension passage with five questions. It also had five proverbs to be completed, five English words to be translated into Yorùbá language and five Yorùbá words and expression which the students were asked to supply their meanings. These were structured into section B, 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively while the answers were categorised and graded as follows:

0 – 21%, 21-40%, 41- 60%, 61 -80% and 81-100%.

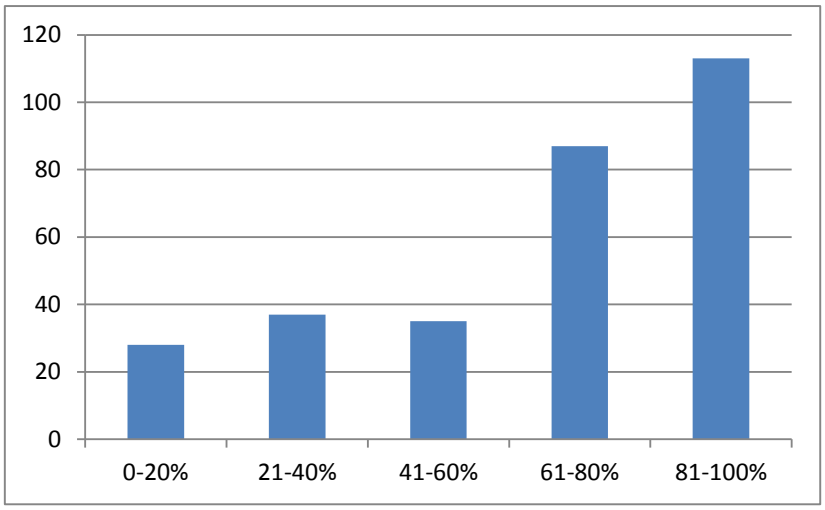
Using the simple percentage frequency, the results of the questionnaires are graphically presented below:

Grade Level	Comprehension	Proverbs	Translation	Meaning
0-20%	4	28	17	133
21-40%	184	37	152	135
41-60%	49	35	76	18
61-80%	29	87	40	10
81-100%	34	113	15	4

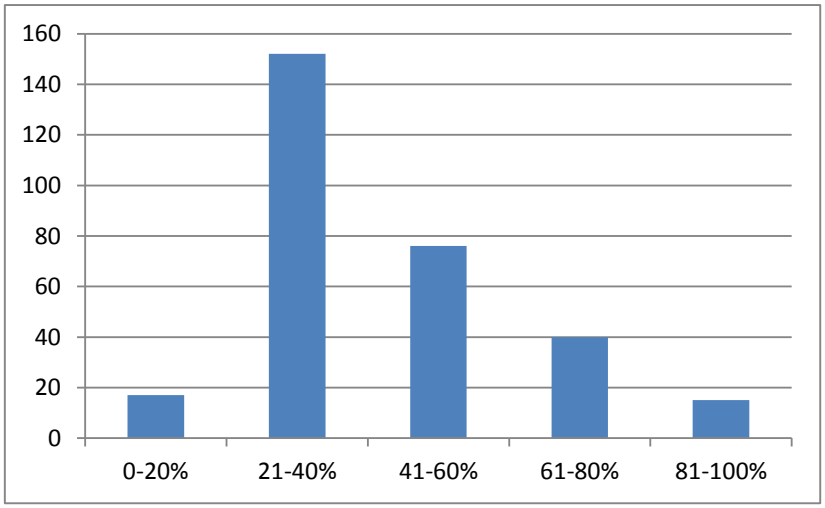
COMPREHENSION



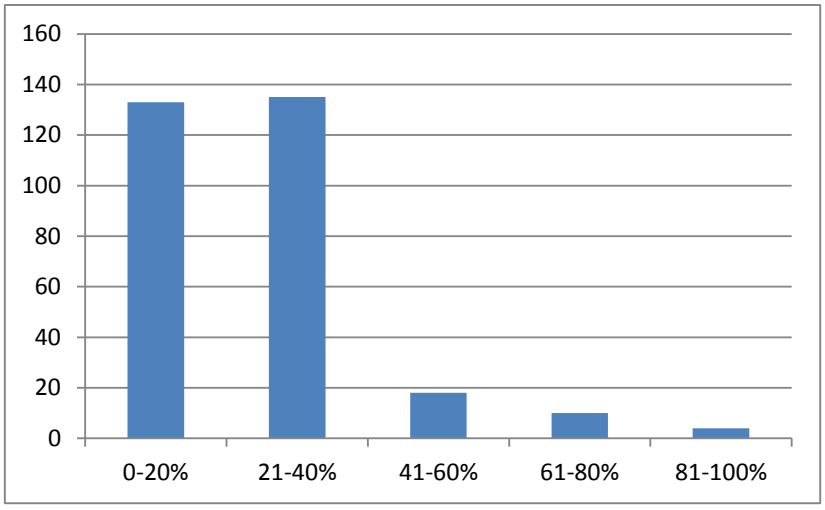
PROVERBS



TRANSLATION



MEANING



In B1, students' results in comprehension were not encouraging because they did not demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of reading comprehension in Yorùbá language. It is disheartening that, based on the performances of these students as presented above; they have deficiencies in reading which serves as the foundation of knowledge in any human endeavour. This showed that most of the students find it difficult to read Yorùbá language. This fact was attested to in the performance indicated above. In fact, more than 50% got between 21-40%. This 21 – 40% performance group remains a pointer to the low failure rate recorded in other grade level as seen above. 49 candidates were able to make the grades within 41 – 60% while 34 and 29 candidates respectively fell between the grades levels of 61 – 80% and 81 – 100% as it were.

The analysis for proverbs in B2 showed that the students had the full grasp of the common proverbs given to them. This is evident in their grade levels which showed a highest frequency (113 candidates) in the total number of students who fell between 81 – 100%, 87 students got between 61- 80%, 35students fell between 41 – 60%, 37 students were within the limit of 21 – 40% while 28 students got between 28 – 21%. This showed that they have internalised the given proverbs as they have nearly become common expressions among Yorùbá users especially students. It could still be noted that 65 students out of the total number of students examined got below the average which is an indication of their deficiencies in their indigenous language.

In section B3, the students were asked to translate the following English words into Yorùbá language. They are: *deep sleep, table, twilight, argument, and child*. The results that were got also revealed that most of these students even though they claimed they still take Yorùbá as a subject; they are nonetheless not properly grounded in the grammar of the language. This is because though we have just 6 candidates in the 0 – 20 %, 15 of them fell between 21 – 40 %. 6 % fell between the range of 41 – 60, while 51 and 15 were between 61 – 80% and 81 – 100% respectively. The implication of this is that many of the students have general knowledge of Yorùbá language since they claimed that they use the language at informal levels and mostly with their friends when they have the opportunity.

Section B4 was based on a test of meaning of some Yorùbá words. Students were asked to provide meaning to five Yorùbá words which are: *yege, idakureku, lugo, pegede, takete.* The analysis showed that 133 students got less than 20%, 135 students got between 21 and 40 %, 13 students got between 41 -60% while 28 students got between 61 – 80% and only 4 students were able to make the grade level that fell between 81 – 100%. What this suggests is the fact that students have peripheral knowledge of their indigenous language which makes the language to stand the risk of losing its original form as it were.

As a result of time and money constraints, the researcher could not visit the three states to interview parents and also to observe their modes of communication with their children. Thus, the visit was limited to Sabo, Gate, Ojaoba and Aleshinloye markets in Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria on different days. Before the researcher interviewed few parents, she had first monitored and observed the communication modes between the parents and the children.

At Sabo market in Ibadan, most of the children were seen around their mothers outside their abodes and the only medium of communication was the Hausa language. After few minutes of observation, the researchers proceeded to interview some of the parents both men and women. They were comfortable using their language to communicate with their children and they said it is part of their culture to train their children using their language. Similarly, at Gate market,

many Igbo motor spare parts sellers were put under observation as they related with their children and apprentices. This place consists of young boys who usually come around to assist their parents after school hours and some apprentices learning how to sell motor spare parts. Amongst these people, their dominant language is Igbo language which they speak with their children and apprentices even though sometimes, they code mixed with English language. Interviews conducted on some of these parents (mostly male) revealed that language showed their identity and bond them to their roots and this is what they want for their children hence, the usage of their language.

At Ojaoba market, the dominant language between parents and children who are still teenagers was Yorùbá language. The parents mostly women are uneducated and when interviewed, they lamented their inability to speak English and said that they speak Yorùbá language to their children because that is the only language they could speak. It was a different thing at Aleshinloye market, where there are different classes of women: highly literate, semi-literate and very few illiterates who have even been exposed to English language and could speak a bit of the English language. All these classes of women used English language as their main means of communication with their children. When they were interviewed, they were of the opinion that since the medium of instruction in school is English, speaking English with their wards will help them to master whatever subjects they are taught in school.

From the different studies carried out, it was discovered that most of these students identified with Yorùbá language but they obviously are not very well exposed to the language, they did not have it as their first language though it still remains their mother tongue. It was discovered that most of them were first exposed to Yorùbá language in schools which accounted for their ill performances especially in reading, translation and the provision of meaning for some common Yorùbá words and expressions. It is disheartening to know that parents who are Yorùbá speakers pride themselves in the fact that they communicate with their children in English. They thereby discourage their children from speaking and using the language as a means of communication. Parents buy story books in English language for their children but they do not deem it necessary to do the same for Yorùbá language thus, they are far contributing to the gradual extinction of the language as they help to reduce its spread by their various actions.

The Implication

When a language is moving gradually towards extinction as a result of the users' attitude, it is an indication that a culture is going out of existence. It is a pointer that the story of a people is about to be lost. Yorùbá language with its rich culture of aphorisms, proverbs, folklore, folktale, oral poetry, oral tradition, moonlight stories, songs, panegyric, praise, and others is gradually losing its relevance and emphasis. While parents do not find time to sit down and pass down cultural heritage through the earlier mentioned media to their children, the cultural values are ebbing out and these are being replaced with foreign cultures as exemplified in different forms of attractive entertainment like the cartoon network, Disney world and others. These acts and many others will have negative impact on the younger generation as it will push them further away from their roots and culture. Many students process their thoughts in English language and so produce expressions like: *Sibi ti subu ni kitchen* for the *spoon has fallen off the rack in the kitchen*. *Tunde refuse lati pick calls mi until yesterday*, an expression which is more of English than Yorùbá language and many other expressions like these. Notwithstanding the aforementioned facts, the paper regonises that language changes over time as a results of many things; these changes in

any case, validate the dynamism of language. The position of the paper is that such changes should enhance, enrich as well as strengthen the language rather than inhibiting it.

Way Forward

There is the need for government, parents, schools, policy makers, language planners and other stake holders to put in place urgent measures that will arrest this unwelcome situation. The first thing to do is to create cultural awareness and revival with the aim of repositioning Yorùbá language in a way that an average Yorùbá person will be proud of the language and also wants to identify with it. This can be done by encouraging people to speak pure mother tongue. The mixing of Yorùbá language with English by Yorùbá speakers should be discouraged. We should borrow a leaf from the French government who banned the mixing of French language with any other language on her media. We need to concentrate more on the upcoming generation so as not to sell out Yorùbá culture totally to a foreign culture like the English language. Also, parents need to go back to the tradition of storytelling to teach morals and cultural values; they should speak Yorùbá language to their children and encourage the children to do the same thereby enhancing their knowledge and confidence in the language. Parents must instill cultural pride in their children by regularly clothing them in traditional attires which must not follow the once in a year syndrome but parents should let this be seen as part of their children's wardrobe.

Furthermore, it is ironical to see academics in Yorùbá language presenting papers in English; they should be encouraged to write their papers in Yorùbá language instead of English language to lend credence to what they are professing. The media is not left out in this crusade; the media must encourage and look for sponsors for pure Yorùbá programmes. Also interesting programmes in Yorùbá language that are children and youth-related must be encouraged. Children and youth-focused drama, comedy; music with the active involvement of the target audience; the youths and children must be encouraged. This could gradually displace the cartoon, Nickelodeon and The Disney series which have nearly captured the upcoming generation. Government also needs to actively encourage the preservation of indigenous languages. It is not enough for our government to put policies in place but they must follow such policies up. Such emphasis that they lay on payment of tax by the citizenry should also be laid on the importance of the mother tongue.

Government can sponsor jingles to create awareness on the importance of the mother tongue; it can also sponsor billboards that will also create awareness with such written in Yorùbá language. Competitions that attract motivations and reward for excellent performance in Yorùbá language at all levels should be encouraged and given wide publicity in order to effect positive impact on other students. Yorùbá language dictionary should be made available online as a resource material, specialist in the language can also teach Yorùbá language in an interactive manner online. This no doubt will assist sincere and willing students to learn and improve their knowledge of the language. It is disheartening to note that some universities in the southwest of Nigeria do not have departments where Yorùbá language is studied. This should be looked into and addressed adequately. Lastly, this paper supports the establishment of a Yorùbá academy which will encourage academic research in the culture of Yorùbá as well as encourage the translation of some scientific-oriented subjects into Yorùbá language.

Finally, it is worthy of note that Nigerian's National anthem is rendered in English in all the geopolitical zones in the country. To enhance cultural rebirth and identification, the onus lies on

regional /state governments to ensure that the national anthem is also sung in their respective regional languages. This could help ignite a cultural rebirth especially in terms of language usage.

Bibliography

Adekunle, M. A. 1976. 'National Language Policy and Planning: The Nigerian Situation.' *West African Journal of Modern Languages,* Vol. 1.

Adewoyin, S.Y. 2011. *Imo Ede Asa ati Litereso Yoruba fun Ile Eko Sekondiri Agba* SS1 Lagos: Corpromitt Publishers.

Blench, R. 2011. "An Atlas of Nigerian Languages." Retrieved Sat. Jan., 4, 20114 from http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Africa/Nigeria/Atlas%%20of%%20Nigerian%%0Languages%%20ed%%20III.pdf

Blench, R. & Dendo, M. 2003. *Language Death in West Africa,* Paper given at the Round Table session on Language Endangerment. Bad Godesborg, 12th-17th, 2003. Retrieved Sat. Jan., 4, 20114 from www.ling.pdx.edu/childs/DKB.../blench_langauge_death_west_africa.pdf

Brenzinger, M. ed. 1998. *Endangered Languages in Africa.* Köln: Rüdiger Köppe.

Calvet, R. 1998. 'Linguistic contact across the English Language'. J. Fisiak. Ed. *Linguistic Change under Contact Conditions.* Germany: Mouton de Gruyler.pp.291-313

Crystal, D. 2000. *Language Death.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Fabunmi, F.A. & Salawu, A.S. 2005. Is Yorùbá an Endangered Language? *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 14(3): 391–408

Godesborg, B. 2007 *Language Death in West Africa.* UK: Answerphone

Derhemi, E. 2002. 'Protecting Endangered Minority Languages: Sociolinguistic Perspectives Introduction'. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (IJMS), Vol. 4, No. 2,150 – 161.

Dixon, V. 1997. *Linguistic Inquiry*. Retrieved July 6, 2012. From http://www.linganf.net/pdf

Fishman, J. A. 1997. 'Maintaining Languages. What Works and What Doesn't'. Gina Cantoni, ed., *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages,* 186–98. Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northern Arizona University.

Grenoble, L. A. and Whaley, L. I. 1998. 'Towards a Typology of Language Endangerment. Grenoble and Whaley. Eds. *Endangered Languages: Current Issues and Future Prospects.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haggege, C. 2000. *Language Reforms: History and Future.* Vol. 6. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag.

Hansford, K. J., Bender, S. and Stanford, R. 1976. 'A Provisional Language Map of Nigeria,' *Savanna*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 115 – 126.

Hoffmann, C. 1974. *The Languages of Nigeria by Language Families*, Ibadan: University of Ibadan.

Baker. P. Ed. 1980. *Provisional Survey of Major Languages in the Independent States of Sub Saharan Africa*. UNESCO: International African Institute.

Iweadighi S. 1997 *Origin or Geneology of the Igbo people of Nigeria.* Austria: University of Viena

Maffi, R. 2001. *An Index of Nigerian Languages.* Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.

Mccarty, T. & Watahomigie, L. 1998. 'Indigenous Community-based Language Education in the USA'. S. May. Ed. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 11 (3): 309–25.

Mufwene, S.A. 2002. 'Colonisation, Globalisation, and the Future of Languages in the Twenty first Century' *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (IJMS), Vol. 4, No. 2, 162 – 193

Muhlhausler, G. 1996. *Studies in Endangered Languages.* Tokyo: Hituzi syobo.

Nettle and Romaine, S. 2000. *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

NOW, 2000. *Report on Endangered Language Research: An Overview and Proposals*. Retrieved July 6, 2012 from http://endangered_languages.edu.au.

Ogundijo B. 2005 *Eremode.* Ibadan*:* Penthouse Publications

Omo-Ojugo, M.O. 2004. Esan *Language Endangered? Implications for the Teaching and Learning of Indigenous Languages in Nigeria*. Ekpoma: Ambrose Alli University Press. 1-40.

Renard, C. 2001. *Polyglotta Africana*. London: Church Missionary House

Romaine, S. 2002. 'The Impact of Language Policy on Endangered Languages.' *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* (IJMS), Vol. 4, No.2, 194 – 212

Strubell, M. 2001. Catalan a decade later. J. A. Fishman 'Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century Perspective'. *Multilingual Matters.* Clevedon, UK:.260–84.

Watahomigie, C. 1998. *Language, Culture and Society in West Africa.* Ems Court: Arthur: H Stock well Ltd.

Williamson, K and Blench R. 2000. 'Niger-Congo Languages'. D, Nurse Ed. *African Languages: An Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Woodbury,A. 2012. *What is an Endangered Language?* Washington: Linguistic Society of America

Wurm, S. 1998. 'Methods of Language Maintenance and Revival, with Selected Cases of Language Endangerment in the World'. In: *Studies in Endangered Languages*, K.Matsumura (ed.). Tokyo: Hituzi Syobo.