

CROSS-CURRENTS *in*
Language, Literature & Translation

Festschrift for Prof. J. P. A. Ukoyen

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Prof. J. P. A. Ukoyen



Editors

D. D. Kuupole
Isaiah Bariki
Robert Yennah

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Prof. D. D. Kuupole obtained a doctorate in Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics from Université de Franche - Comté, Besançon, France. He is a Professor of French and current Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. His numerous publications cover mainly Semantics, Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis and French Language Teaching

Dr. Isaiah Bariiki is an Associate Professor and Acting Head of Department of French, University of Ilorin. His research interests are primarily Translation Theory & Practice, Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching.

Dr. Robert Yennah is a Senior Lecturer of French, Department of Modern Languages, University of Ghana, Legon. An expert on Rousseau and Voltaire, he obtained his Ph.D. in Paris VI. His writings are geared towards these philosophers and enlightenment vis-à-vis development in Africa.

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Language, Literature & Translation**

Festschrift for Prof. J. P. A. Ukoyen



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SAMSON OLUSOLA OLATUNJI
G. P. . BOX 41038,
Dugbe, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
samsholat(a)gmail.com
07059428042

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D. D. Kuupole

Isaiah Bariki

Robert Yennah

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ILWUTA JO ALOSUJO NO...
C. P. BOX 41038
Dagbani, 100000, Oyo State, Nigeria
samuel@kmail.com
01000418042

CROSS-CURRENTS IN LANGUAGE LITERATURE AND TRANSLATION

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EDITORS

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FOREWORD

This compendium of thoughtful essays is a rightful tribute to Prof. J.P.A. Ukoyen, one of Nigeria's first generation scholars in the field of French studies in this country. Asking me to do a foreword on the book is in itself a useful opportunity for me to share my joy with the brains behind the book project who are no less impressed than I am with the quiet but lofty contributions of this frontline Nigerian academic to French in the three broad ramifications announced by the title of the book. In Language, but more in Literature and Translation there is convincing evidence that Ukoyen's voice is a familiar one.

As one of the earliest and, perhaps, youngest academics equipped with all that it takes to justify standing tall before undergraduates and postgraduates alike in French, Prof. Ukoyen leaves an enduring impression of a seasoned, well-trained and thrillingly articulate teacher and motivator. As one of his old students in his 'youngster' days, I testify to his thoroughness, his immaculate mastery of classical French and his diligence, all of which is manifest in his teaching and research publications.

This book of readings is, to me, more than an occasion to remind us of the good works of Professor J.P.A. Ukoyen; it also seeks to launch a parable about the man's underlying academic and professional interests as it turns out to be a subtle recall of all such aspects of research as are of direct or indirect relevance to his passion. Besides, we find in the publication a compelling luster of the rich fragrance of collaborative work. The fine editorial work is also a tribute to the honoree's known attention to details and his near-obsessive care for tidy finish.

It is a book well worth the labour devoted to its publication and, of course, the reader's time.

Tunde Ajiboye
Professor of French
University of Ilorin.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This book could not have seen the light of the day but for the intellectual and financial contributions of numerous colleagues and friends. Worthy of mention is first and foremost the members of the Editorial Board who enthusiastically read the articles sent to them with an amazing speed in spite of their very busy schedules.

Dr. Femi Dunmade was very selfless and swift in making very useful contributions. Dr. (Mrs.) De Campos, Dr. Moji Adeyemi, Mr. Matthew Akande, Mr. Oshounniran, Mrs. Yemi Bariki played very key roles in typesetting, proof-reading and connecting the publishers at very critical times.

We are also extremely grateful to Prof. Tunde Ajiboye for graciously agreeing to write the foreword.

Professor J. P. A. Ukoyen

The book *Cross-Currents in Language, Literature and Translation* is produced to honour Professor Joseph Patrick Akpan Ukoyen, a translologist and a literary critic who hails from Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The title reflects to a great extent, Prof. Ukoyen's research interests. Born on 11th November, 1940, Professor Ukoyen graduated from University of Ibadan, Nigeria with a B.A (Hons) French, First Class in 1967. The young and brilliant Ukoyen enjoyed University of Ibadan Scholarship throughout his student days. He was also a beneficiary of other scholarships and honours that took him to Great Britain and France.

He bagged a doctoral degree in 1971 from University of Ibadan where he lectured till 2006 when he retired. His doctoral thesis was on Balzac, a renowned French writer of the 19th century, but his research interests were broadened to include translation following an intensive course he undertook in Translation Studies in the famous Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT), University of Paris III. This training course launched him fully into translation. Today, Professor Ukoyen is well known in the academic world as a translologist. He produced a total of six Ph.D holders - all in translation.

The impact of Professor Ukoyen's intellectual prowess and influence was not limited to University of Ibadan. It was also felt in different capacities in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom, Federal Polytechnic Idah, Benue State and Université de Lomé, Lomé, Togo, just to mention a few. Professor Ukoyen was an External Examiner to many universities. He was also a one time editor of RENEF (la Revue Nigériane d'Etudes Françaises), a highly esteemed academic journal of the Nigeria French Village, Badagry.

Professor J.P.A. Ukoyen has been teaching French in Ekiti State University since his retirement. He is married and has five children.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This is the second in our series of book of readings in honour of eminent Nigerian and Ghanaian scholars. The first book entitled "Applied Social Dimensions of Language Use and Teaching in West Africa ..." was in honour of Professor Tunde Ajiboye of University of Ilorin in Nigeria. A third one in honour of the Ghanaian born erudite linguistic Professor E. N. Kwofie will be out soon.

Below are a resume of the papers in this edition.

R. K. Omoloso uses morpho-sociolinguistics as an analytical tool to examine coinage as one of the morphological processes employed by languages to beef up their vocabulary items. Backed up by sociolinguistic motivations, coinage has rich communicative values in Yoruba despite its sometimes unstable nature

R. O. Ikotun examines the numeral derivational morphology of Nigerian Languages namely, Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá. He reveals that the morphology of the three languages only has positive integers; it has no negative integer and positive and negative non-integer numbers. He posits that it is important to borrow the idea of negative integer and positive and negative non-integer numbers into the morphology of the three Nigerian languages so as to modernize them and make them more relevant to the modern day scientific and technological needs. He also observes that the inclusion of the mathematical terms into the morphology of the Nigerian languages will make the languages more relevant nationally and internationally.

In his paper "Quel modèle privilégier pour mieux appréhender les phénomènes interlinguistiques: analyse des erreurs ou analyse contrastive", Boniface Igbeneghu discusses Error Analysis (EA) and Contrastive Analysis (CA) from the perspective of crosslinguistic phenomena..

S. A. Dada seeks to appraise and review the major developments recorded in Nigeria's educational language policy since 1979. Issues examined in his paper include legal provisions, steps taken by the government towards implementation of the policy and the use of language in various domains in the light of Nigeria's multiplicity of languages. The paper advises on appropriate strategies in order to

ensure a realization of the nation's language policies.

Drawing inspiration from psychology and pragmatics, Friday-Otun's paper which is a nexus between speech acts and behavioural research, explores the pragmatic functions of the Nigerian pledge as well as the level of attitudinal (if any) changes resulting from the performative..

M. A. Adedimeji and J. O. Ojuade observe that the need to express local (Nigerian) wisdom and concepts through the medium of an otherwise foreign language (English) has generated the regional lexico-semantic variation that characterises the use of the language. They further assert that the utilitarian values and the creative undercurrents engendering the emergence of new idioms and lexical choices have given rise to Nigerianisms that are so profound as to find expression in Nigerian literary works. Their paper investigates lexico-semantic patterns and choices in Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi* and *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* in the light of these observations. They find that Nigerianisms are manifest in the works at the levels of semantic shift and extension, analogy, translation equivalents, lexico-semantic duplication and redundancy, ellipsis, conversion, idioms and Nigerian Pidgin. The analysis ultimately reveals how Nigerians have enriched the English lexicon based on their peculiar linguistic and cultural experiences.

Layo Ogunlola advocates the use of mother-tongue as a medium of instruction with particular reference to Yoruba. He posits that the use of the mother tongue should form the basis for the child's learning as this will help the child to be able to give free reins of his thoughts and express them in a creative language, thereby paving way for a meaningful education.

E. M. Onumajuru writes on some phonetic difficulties encountered by Igbo-speaking learners of French. He compares the phonological systems of Igbo and French and highlights problem areas for particular pedagogical attention.

B. E. Arokoyo presents her findings on the development and the nature of overt argument-NPs used by the Yoruba child. She discovers that at a point, the Yoruba child begins to make use of overt arguments and gradually, null arguments give way. She adopts the *Minimalist Program* as the framework for her syntactic analysis and uses the *continuity* and *maturational* hypotheses to account for the development of overt argument-NPs by the Yoruba child. She discovers that from the very early stage, the Yoruba child begins to acquire different overt arguments which include bare nouns, definite nouns, plural nouns, and pronominals. These NPs occurred in different positions like subject, direct object and

indirect object positions. The first to be acquired by the Yoruba child is bare nouns, followed by definite nouns, and plural nouns. She concludes that both cognitive and syntactic factors are responsible for the order of acquisition of overt argument-NPs by the Yoruba child.

M. O. Adesola suggests pragmatic measures to improve on the repertory of French in Nigeria: tutorial classes, orally recorded lexicographic documents, a well thought-out educational policy for French right from primary school and, above all, a strong political will.

S. O. Olatunji debunks the claim that anybody can teach. In his view, result-oriented teaching is too lofty for the untrained person. The situation becomes more demanding when the teacher has gifted learners in the class. He identifies giftedness in language learning and strongly advises that the teacher should keep himself abreast of the latest discoveries in the pedagogy of language teaching and learning, psychology, etc.

K. Adewale Rafiu's preoccupation is the endangered written and unwritten languages in Nigeria. He proffers practical steps that can stem the tide of loss of endangered languages in Niger State.

O. G. Olutayo explores the intricacies of interruptions and overlaps as supportive strategies in conversational discourse with special reference to Nigerian television talk shows. She takes her data from three popular Nigerian television talk shows namely: "Patito's Gang", "New Dawn with Funmi Iyanda" and "Inside Out" by Agatha Christie. Each selected talk show comprises four sampled episodes. Her findings reveal that there are more frequent occurrences of interruption than overlap in discussion programmes. She asserts that a successful overlap becomes an interruption and that both overlap and interruption are often employed to support/agree with the current speaker on the topic of discourse and not necessarily to "snatch" turns from him/her.

S. B. Olajide opines that research accounts for the tremendous progress that man has enjoyed in modern times. Crucial to scholarship and most adequate when based on relevant literature, research is a significant requirement of advanced learning. However, he further observes that most student researchers in English Language Education so far encountered by him (in the Second context) have not been fully efficient at providing adequate related literature background for their research work. This deficiency, according to him, could lure less critical supervisors into passing the impoverished work, and make them miss the glory of leading the student-researchers to successfully expanding the target

frontiers of knowledge in the target area. Thus, Olajide's paper is an attempt at making student-researchers, their supervisors and interested others sensitive to the literature content of their research work in Language Education.

Femi Dunmade's paper examines the villanelles by Empson, Thomas and Updike and reveals that the poets revived the form for serious poetry. The poets treat the fatal effects of romantic longings, man's mortality and air pollution and its fatal consequences. Form in each poem disguises a structure : the first tercet sets the theme of the poem; the four following elaborate on this and the theme peaks in the quatrain. The poet pivots on the four tercets for his aesthetic ideology : Empson's mythic and scientific imagination; Thomas's liturgical and biblical philosophy and Updike's ironic and serio - comic ideology. Though disguised by the form of the villanelle, the structure described above contributes to the poetics of the set form and, if applied to other villanelles, may illuminate our understanding them more.

Deriving his corpus from L'Amour, La Fantasia and Ombre sultane by Assia Diebar, Y. O. Aremu reflects on different perspectives of the use of veil by Maghrebian muslim women. He explains Maghreb's cultural affinity to the veil, but explains how it has been misused in some instances a situation that robs it of its cultural beauty.

A. S. Moye deals with Koffi Kwahule's *Les Recluses* where all the principal characters (women) have been victims of sexual abuse. He discusses their sordid experiences and concludes that the drama is an appeal to fight against sexual abuse.

O. K. Owoeye examines Nigerian English as used and written in works of playwrights like Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Olu Obafemi, Niyi Osundare and some others in an attempt to establish the fact that the variety has been codified in their works, albeit partially.

S. Olaiwola recalls that the The French National Assembly proclaimed in 1789 that ignorance and abuse of human rights were responsible for public calamities and corruption in government. He has recourse to Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* to reaffirm the truth in the French Assemblée nationale's declaration and compares the situation in France then what obtains currently in Nigeria.

Victor O. Ogbeide's paper is an exploration of the changing role of the modern African woman in a changing African society in Aidoo's *Changes*. It contends that while Aidoo, in a subtle artistic way, asks the African man to learn to appreciate the catalytic role of the modern career African woman to social reforms and progress in Africa and therefore redefine his hardline patriarchy, she also cautions the privileged African woman to tread

softly in her pursuit of total cultural liberation. It concludes that future gender discourse in Africa is likely to be dominated by the management of women's success, prosperity and sex relation rather than the present deprived African womanhood.

F. U. Angrey recalls the developmental objectives enunciated in the year 2000 in line with the needs of developing countries in Africa and Asia. Twelve years after this initiative meant to galvanize these countries into action, little progress has been made in the areas of health, education and agriculture in most of these countries. Angrey highlights the challenges involved and observes through a comparative study of *Gouverneurs de la rosée* and *Les tresseurs de corde*, the works of Caribbean writers to show authors too are not left out of the search for development.

A. S. Abubakar reminds us that the ecology has served as impetus for mythical and literary creations. According to him, literature is a by-product of culture which is rooted in the ecosystem. Thus the ecology is central to human socio-political and economic sustainability. The author undertakes a comparative study of the influences of the ecology on the creative imaginations of Wole Soyinka, an African, and Derek Walcott, a Caribbean, using the Ecosystem theory and the Parallelism device of Fabulous theatre to underscore the similar traits and variances in *A Dance of the Forest* and *Ti-jean and His Brothers* by the two playwrights respectively. The paper attributes the common traits to the tropical ecology in both Saint Lucia and Nigeria and the variances to the different political experiences in both contexts.

Irene Udousoro seeks to highlight some of Aminata Sow Fall's reflections on the Senegalese society and by extension the entire human race: respect for and promotion of interpersonal relationships in spite of class differences (*La grève des battus*), African cultural values (*L'appel des arènes*), self-employment and self-enhancement (*Festins de la détresse*), etc. She also intends to stir up further researches on Aminata Sow Fall's works and those of other African authors whose writings not only showcase Africa's rich cultural heritage but also contribute towards the concept of world literature.

Adopting the discourse of ecocriticism to analyze selected novels of D. O. Fagunwa, Lere Adeyemi remarks that the Yoruba society responded to climatic change through afforestation and preservation of heritage sites.

S. O. Kolawole attempts to investigate, in depth, the concept of ideology in translation. That is to say, the extent to which ideology has influenced the translator's style and choice of words in translating African texts that will, consequently, shape the receivers' worldviews.

This he tries to do by critically analysing the English translation of Camara Laye's *Le Regard du roi*.

In this presentation, V. O. Ariole says personal names are not given for fun in Africa. He explains how the abstracted or apostrophized syntactic structure of African names which conveys approximable meanings inspires a study in linguistic fossilization.

E. De Campos outlines and examines various language and communication challenges faced by interpreters of Pentecostal Churches generally in Nigeria and particularly in the Glory Tabernacle Ministry, Ibadan.

Babatunde S Moruwawon analyses the intrinsic linguistic constraints in the translation of Ferdinand Oyono's *Une Vie de Boy* into English in the light of Halliday's Systemic of Functional Linguistic Theory. His use of this theory offers him the opportunity to access meaning embellishment and translation equivalence occasioned by the textuality of Oyono's narrative. The author concludes that the literary translator could increase the readability and flavour of the original text by maintaining linguistic, cultural and emotional relations of the source text in the target text.

Elisabeth De Campos is interested in language and communication challenges faced by interpreters in Pentecostal churches in Nigeria in general and zeroes in on Glory Tabernacle Ministry, Ibadan.

I Bariki and D. Iwala discuss broad strategies of the translation of texts in advertisement in the light of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension. The paper brings out cultural imperatives that could help the translator in translating from French into Nigerian languages and vice versa.

TABLE OF CONTENT

LANGUAGE and LINGUISTICS	page 1
A MORPHO-SOCLINGUISTIC STUDY OF COINAGES IN YORUBA Rahim Kajogbôlá Ọmọlòşó	page 2 - 24
MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF NUMERICAL REPRESENTATIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: A CASE FOR THE REVIEW OF NUMERAL DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY OF NIGERIAN LANGUAGES Reuben O. Ikotun	page 25 - 39
QUEL MODÈLE PRIVILÉGIER POUR MIEUX APPREHENDER LES PHÉNOMÈNES INTERLINGUISTIQUES: ANALYSE DES ERREURS OU ANALYSE CONTRASTIVE? Boniface Igbeneghu	page 40 - 55
LANGUAGE POLICIES AND PLANNING IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES Samuel.A. Dada	page 56 - 79
PLEDGING TO THE NATION THROUGH LANGUAGE: ISSUES AND REALITIES Joseph Omoniyi Friday-Otun	page 80 - 95
A LEXICO-SEMANTIC STUDY OF NIGERIANISMS IN OLAROTIMI'S KURUNMI AND OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN Mahfouz A. Adedimeji & Jeleel O. Ojuade	page 96 - 113
MOTHER-TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF YORÛBÁ Layo Ogunlola	page 114 - 126
LA GENÈSE DES DIFFICULTÉS PHONÉTIQUES DU FRANÇAIS CHEZ LES APPRENANTS IGBOPHONES Emeka M. Onumajuru	page 127 - 141

OVERT ARGUMENT-NPS IN THE EARLY SPEECH OF YORUBA CHILDREN Bolanle Elizabeth Arokoyo	page 142 - 163
QUAND ON VEUT, ON PEUT: POUR UNE VALORISATION SOCIALE DU FRANÇAIS DANS UN PLURILINGUISME STRATEGIQUE AU NIGERIA Musibau Olatunji Adesola	page 164 - 176
GIFTED LEARNERS IN AN INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE CLASS: A SPECIAL DEMAND ON THE TEACHER'S EXPERTISE Samson Olusola Olatunji	page 177 - 187
DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS Graceful Onovughe Ofodu	page 188 - 195
HALTING THE TIDE OF LANGUAGE LOSS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA K. Adewale Rafiu	page 196 - 208
VERBAL PECULIARITIES OF YORUBA LANGUAGE: A COMPARATIVE APPRAISAL OF VERBAL PROPERTIES IN ENGLISH, FRENCH AND YORUBA Olu Akeusola	page 209 - 217
INTERRUPTION AND OVERLAP AS SUPPORTIVE CONVERSATIONAL STRATEGIES IN NIGERIAN TELEVISION TALKSHOWS. Omolara Grace Olutayo	Page 218 - 236
THE MORPHO-SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF BILINGUAL CODE- MIXING IN A YORUBA SUBURBAN TOWN. Samuel. A. Dada	Page 237 - 260
A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE USE IN SELECTED MUSIC OF JESSE KING ('BUGA') AND ABOLORE AKANDÉ ('GICE') Samiat Olubunmi Abubakre	page 261 - 269

ENSURING ADEQUATE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR Stephen Billy Olajide	page 270 - 278
--	----------------

LITERATURE

page 279

VILLANELLE POETICS AND THE EXAMPLES OF WILLIAM EMPSON, DYLAN THOMAS AND JOHN UPDIKE Femi Dunmade	page 280 - 291
---	----------------

"LE VOILE EST-IL UN INSTRUMENT DE VIOLENCE? LE SYMBOLISME DU VOILE ET LA THANATO-LIBIDO DE LA VOILÉE DANS LE ROMAN D'ASSIA DJEBAR" Y. O. Aremu	page 292 - 310
---	----------------

DE LA FICTION A LA REALITE : LES RECLUSES DE KOFFI KWAHULE COMME APPEL AU COMBAT CONTRE LA VIOLENCE SEXUELLE Austin S. Moye	page 311 - 320
--	----------------

CODIFIED FORMS OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH IN NIGRIAN DRAMA OF ENGLISH EXPRESSION O.K. Owoeye	page 321 - 330
--	----------------

LES MISÉRABLES DE VICTOR HUGO OU LA PEINTURE DU NIGERIA ACTUEL Simeon Idowu Olayiwola	page 331 - 342
---	----------------

MARITAL ILLUSIONS AND REALITIES: CHANGES AS VIRTUE IN AIDOO'S CHANGES Victor O. Ogbeide	page 343 - 357
---	----------------

BATAILLE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT RURAL DANS LA FICTION AFRO-ANTILLAISE: ÉTUDE COMPARÉE DE GOUVERNEURS DE LA ROSÉE DE JACQUES ROUMAIN ET DE LES TRESSEURS DE CORDE DE JEAN PLIYA Francis Unimna Angrey	page 358 - 371
--	----------------

ECO-IMAGINATION AND SOCIO-POLITICAL SUSTAINABILITY IN SOYINKA'S A DANCE OF THE FOREST AND WALCOTT'S TI-JEAN AND HIS BROTHERS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS Abdullahi S. Abubakar	page 372 - 385
NÉGRITUDE: AN EVER RELEVANT LITERARY MOVEMENT Adewuni Salawu	page 386 - 398
AMINATA SOW FALL'S WORKS: A COMPENDIUM OF DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED ISSUES Irene Udousoro	page 399 - 408
LITERATURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A DISCOURSE IN ECO-CRITICISM Lère Adéyemi	page 409 - 421
LA LUTTE POUR L'AUTODETERMINATION Victor Akano Balogun	page 422 - 433
A GYNOCRITICAL PERSPECTIVE IN TOKOFAI'S LE TISSU Elizabeth Eniwheru Ogin	page 434 - 445
TRANSLATION	page 447
IDEOLOGY IN LITERARY TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF THE ENGLISH VERSION OF CAMARA LAYE'S LE REGARD DU ROI AS RADIANCE OF THE KING Samuel O. Kolawole	page 448 - 472
THE DILEMMA OF COMMUNITY INTERPRETATION IN WEST AFRICAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES: THE CASE OF NIGER REPUBLIC Elisabeth De Campos	page 473 - 490
SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE FRENCH TRANSLATION OF FERDINAND OYONO'S UNE VIE DE BOY Babatunde S. Moruwawon	page 491 - 509

CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERPRETERS IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF GLORY TABERNACLE MINISTRY, IBADAN, OYO STATE Elisabeth De Campos	page 510 - 529
TRANSLATING AFRICAN NAMES: A STUDY IN SEMIO-SYNTACTIC FOSSILIZATION MARKERS Victor C. Ariole	page 530 - 540
REFLEXION SUR LA TRADUCTION PUBLICITAIRE Isaiah Bariki & Dinatu Iwala	page 541 - 550
BOOK REVIEW Tunde Ajiboye	page 551 - 553
BOOK REVIEW Mathew I. Alawode	page 554 - 555

GIFTED LEARNERS IN AN INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE CLASS: A SPECIAL DEMAND ON THE TEACHER'S EXPERTISE

Samson Olusola Olatunji
Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Arts and Education
Lead City University, Ibadan
Email: samsholat@gmail.com
Tel: +234 (0) 806 267 4466

Introduction

It is not unlikely to hear people argue that anybody can teach or that everybody is a teacher in one respect or the other, since parents teach children how to do some household chores and a craftsman shows apprentices how to manipulate pieces of wood and so on. Dada (1999) acknowledges this widespread belief but asserts that nobody can be rightly called a teacher without any form of professional training in the art and science of teaching, leading to a form of certification. Many scholars have also emphasized the need for teacher training (Onioye 2003; Olatunji and Kolawole 2006, Olakulehin 2007). The National Policy on Education (1977, revised 1998 and 2004) emphasizes adequate training of teachers by advocating the type of teacher education that would:

- *provide highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers;*
- *encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers for all levels of our educational system;*
- *help teachers to fit into the community and society at large;*
- *provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; and*
- *enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession. (p.33)*

The policy further stipulates that the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) shall be the minimum qualification for teaching at any level of education since "no educational system may rise above the quality of its teachers" (p.33). This is to ensure that the teaching profession is no dumping ground which accommodates those without formal training.

Adequate training of teaching personnel is an imperative. No degree of natural flair for teaching without professional preparation is enough to cope with the demands of modern-day teaching. As the teacher is confronted by the special needs of slow learners, he can also get distracted by the excesses of the gifted learner. Therefore, the teacher is faced with the challenge of satisfying these two extremes without neglecting the average learners in the same classroom. In order to achieve this state of equilibrium, it is imperative that the teacher first identifies such gifted learners, and this, simple as it sounds, requires some level of special education skills.

Gifted Learners in a Language Class

Meyerhoff (1999) and Muir (2001) acknowledge that the task of identifying or describing a gifted learner is extremely difficult because scholastic performance is not necessarily the sole indicator of giftedness. In fact, a gifted learner's response to a question may be different from what the teacher expects while such an "unacceptable" answer may be full of ingenuity. For example, let us suppose a class of learners is asked to complete the saying, "Heaven helps those who...." The expected completion is "help themselves". A child shoots up his hand and answers that "Heaven helps those who cannot help themselves". This learner's response sounds unacceptable because of its strangeness. But it is right in the sense that those who believe they can help themselves would not even cry to Heaven for divine help. Should Heaven even go out of His way to offer any unsolicited help, there is every tendency that such self-sufficient workers would not be humble enough to acknowledge and appropriate such help. In the final analysis, it is wise to conclude that Heaven helps those who acknowledge that they cannot help themselves and cry out for help. Meyerhoff (1999) gives another hypothetical case in which a child answers that "tree" is the plural of "leaf", a response that should not be taken as wrong because a tree has many "leaves".

Similarly, a learner who completes the simile, "...as white as..." with "cotton wool" instead of the generally accepted "snow" may be judged wrong while the response is actually true and right. Cotton wool also is white and, in fact, is what an average African child who has never seen snow knows. This means a learner who has an average score in a class may actually be gifted (Delisle and Berger 1990; Skline 2011). Stepanek (1999) corroborates this by asserting that gifted learners may take a longer time to complete assignments when they add details and extend ideas, or they may turn in messy papers

with careless mistakes because they have raced through their work. A single test administration is, therefore, not enough to identify a gifted learner (Bermudez and Marquez, 1998). The National Policy on Education (1977, 1998, and 2004) too lends credence to the notion that giftedness transcends high examination scores. It identifies gifted and talented learners as:

people (children and adults) who have/possess very high intelligent quotient and are naturally endowed with special traits (in arts, creativity, music, leadership, intellectual precocity, etc.) and therefore find themselves insufficiently challenged by the regular school/college/university programmes. (p.42)

The policy states the aims/objectives of special education to include:

- *(the provision of) adequate education for all people with special needs in order that they may fully contribute their own quota to the development of the nation; and*
- *(provision of) opportunities for exceptionally gifted and talented children to develop their own pace in the interest of the nation's economic and technological development. (p.42)*

Bainbridge (2011),

[Http://giftedkids.about.com/od/gifted101/1/bright_gifted.htm](http://giftedkids.about.com/od/gifted101/1/bright_gifted.htm)),

quoting Kingone, describes a gifted learner as one that:

1. poses unforeseen questions
2. is selectively mentally engaged
3. is curious
4. knows without working hard
5. ponders with depth and multiple perspectives
6. generates complex, abstract ideas
7. exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple ...
8. prefers the company of intellectual peers
9. creates complex, abstract humours
10. initiates projects and extension of assignments

11. is beyond the group
12. enjoys self-directed learning
13. Manipulates information

A thorough examination of the afore-listed features would show that the tasks of a normal language teaching and learning classroom are not challenging enough for the gifted learner. Without any conscious efforts to accommodate the special features of gifted learners, there would be nothing inspiring for such learners to gain from the class. And the consequences of this can be extremely disastrous.

Giftedness in a language teaching and learning situation is much more demanding because, as noted by Forlong, Kennedy, O'Byrne and O'Connell (2003), language learning is a complex process as a result of the need to develop receptive and productive aural, oral, and writing skills as well as communicative, pragmatic, cultural and intellectual competence. Caccavale (2006), in an interview with Duke, asserts that foreign language learning is much more a cognitive problem-solving activity than a linguistic activity and it also increases critical thinking skills, creativity and flexibility of mind. The centrality of the mind, or brain in this assertion is quite obvious. Harris, Plucker, Rapp, and Martinez (2009) even assert that second language learning situations are the best in identifying language giftedness. Marcos (2001) observes that linguistically gifted students are particularly good candidates for attaining native or near-native proficiency in other languages.

A gifted language learner, therefore, is one with superior ability to learn a second language (Deveau 2006) and demonstrates high level critical thinking skills, creativity and flexibility of mind in language learning (Caccavale in Duke 2007). The gifted language learner generalizes correctly, avoiding the pitfalls of overgeneralization into which average language learners fall. Such learners finish linguistic exercises requiring deep level thinking much earlier than other learners and produce argumentative and expository essays of astounding qualities easily. This, according to Eide and Eide (2004), is because of some exceptional physiological features of the brain that could be detected through functional brain magnetic response imaging (fMRI).

Failure to pose enough interesting challenges to the gifted learner by the language teacher cannot be without attendant problems.

Problems from Inadequate Challenges to Gifted Language Learners

Gifted learners in a language class encounter certain avoidable challenges when

"yoked" together wrongly with average and slow learners. These are boredom, misdemeanours and mediocre performance.

Boredom

Excitement and a relative difficulty index are indispensable ingredients of interest in a learning task. Should a teacher limit a gifted learner to the same sets of exercises that are appropriate for other students of average and below-average IQ, the gifted child finishes up the work in no time and becomes bored. Hannien (2005) observes that the gifted learner's brightness goes dim, excitement for learning fades and is suppressed when nothing beyond the normal instruction and tasks are given to all students irrespective of differing abilities. Page (2010) observes that, in such instances, the generalized assignments become repetitive and uninteresting to the gifted learner.

Misdemeanours

Hannien (2005) also identifies behaviour problems as a sure appendage to boredom. In a period of mental and physical idleness, gifted learners become so restless that they indulge in misdemeanours of varying types and degrees. Stepanek (1999) too asserts that gifted students cause disruptions when they are frustrated or unchallenged. Page (2010) goes further to state that gifted learners that are inadequately challenged become resistant to constituted authorities, refuse to complete routine and repetitious assignments, and even get frustrated with everyday life. Consequently, the teacher may have a number of personality and social problems to solve, thus robbing even the average learners of their much-needed teaching time. Misdemeanours, if not curbed in time, can eventually graduate to actual gross criminality.

General Mediocre Standard

When gifted learners' potentials are not allowed to reach actualisation stage, all other learners are deprived of the privilege of academic models from among themselves. Complacency thus sets in and mediocrity in academic performance becomes the standard (Hannien 2005). The implication of this for a language class is that aptness of diction in speech and writing, excellence in creative writing, seasoning with idiomatic and other figurative language use will not appear attainable. This type of situation will be a big minus to the nation's image at the global level.

This terrible problem could be avoided if the gifted students are encouraged to maximize their potentials, thus becoming practical examples of attainable language proficiency levels to their mates. A wise language teacher could even adopt means of utilizing the gifted to teach their less endowed colleagues without eliciting arrogance and animosity. The teacher's workload thus becomes less while the gifted learner is adequately, meaningfully and rewardingly engaged. This should not be seen as a means of just shutting the gifted learners in by merely using them. But the truism of the assertion that "to teach once is to learn twice" will justify the gifted learners' involvement in teaching their mates.

This strategy, however, has to be employed with caution and expertise because overdoing it may translate into depriving the gifted language learner of equal opportunity to struggle to learn as the others (Kearney 1996). Shoplik (2004) too discourages this practice because all students are supposed to be learning new things at every point in classroom time. After all, the gifted language learner in such a situation is not provided with an opportunity to learn any new thing but to consolidate already learnt materials.

Satisfying the Gifted Learner in a Regular Language Class

At the curriculum design and planning level, the gifted learner must be given sufficient consideration (<http://www.sedl.org/loceted/communique/n06.pdf>). If the provision is not made in the planning and designing of the language curriculum at all levels, whatever efforts made by teachers in their classrooms cannot produce any significant results. That the gifted learner is deemed worthy of special consideration in the National Policy on Education is commendable. However, the current language curricula at different levels in Nigeria do not reflect any noticeable consideration for the gifted in content, methodology and evaluation. Strait-jacket marking schemes are prepared by a "council of gods". These marking schemes are rigidly followed by examiners in language examinations, external public examinations inclusive. In an internal examination, the poetry teacher must have prepared his marking scheme ahead of the examination. So, any candidate that writes anything slightly different from what the teacher has prepared like an oracle, no matter how sensible, could be marked wrong. The teacher's prepared marking scheme is like an oracle and any deviation, even when it is intelligently presented may be rejected.

Differentiated language instruction has been widely recommended to teachers who wish to take care of varying linguistic ability level students (Loveland 2011; Muir 2001; Heacox 2002; and Duke 2007). Differentiated instruction is based on a critical and creative

consideration of students' background knowledge, readiness, languages, preferences in learning, and interests (Skline 2011). The language teacher may, for instance, give the same comprehension passage to the whole class and afterwards give assignments of varying difficulty indices to different learners based on their different linguistic abilities.

In the alternative, the teacher could give the same set of questions to the whole class, with every next question being more difficult than the previous. The teacher could then stipulate the minimum number of questions to be answered by any class member.

Such a minimum should be what an average learner can accomplish. Those who can cope with just the minimum successfully are not derided while those who do more are not praised to the envy of those who do less. Every learner's success is assessed and rewarded without reference to another person. By so doing, each student will have enough tasks on hand without prejudice to other learners. Also, all of them will have enough opportunity to taste success at their individual levels. Five areas for differentiation have been identified:

- i. course content;
- ii. instructional strategies;
- iii. pace of presentation;
- iv. accommodating students' preferences; and
- v. creating a flexible environment.

Self-directed language learning has also been recognized as an essential ingredient of differentiated language instruction (Muir 2001). Self-directed language learning could be achieved through project method of teaching. Each language student is then enabled to work at a self-determined pace. The unpardonable injustice in either holding fast learners down while waiting for slow learners to pick up or neglecting the latter in order to keep the former busy would then have been easily avoided. Independent projects and investigations should, therefore, be encouraged among the students (Stepanek 1999).

The language teacher who is well versed in the pedagogy of computer use in a language class will be greatly advantaged in fostering self-directed learning and self-evaluation (Christensen and Knezek 2001; QCA 2006; Kolawole and Olatunji 2006; Olatunji and Kolawole 2007). Ariew and Frommer (1987) identify the benefits of computer-aided language learning exercises to include the following:

- i. students can make an infinite number of mistakes without trying the computer's patience;
- ii. students spend time only on their own mistakes without having to listen to

- iii. computer guarantees privacy if the scores are not recorded. There is, therefore, no public embarrassment (p. 178).

All the above would definitely be of unprecedented advantage to all language learners, irrespective of learning ability levels if the teacher makes appropriate application of the computer programmes.

Conclusion

The prevalence of teacher-centred and subject-matter-driven language curriculum planning, development, and implementation is grossly unacceptable in this dispensation. Differentiated instruction has been recommended to facilitate uninhibited language development of the gifted while not over-driving the average learner unnecessarily. Therefore, all stakeholders in the Nigerian education system have to make concerted efforts to ensure that the system exploits the benefits of gifted education in general and gifted language education in particular.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made towards meeting the peculiar needs of gifted and talented learners in Nigerian schools:

1. The National Policy on Special Education needs to be reviewed for greater clarity in order to give a sharper focus to teachers and other stakeholders in its implementation.
2. Specialists in gifted education need to be co-opted into the development and planning of language curricula in Nigeria at all levels of education, general education inclusive. Their inputs can inject the much-needed flexibility into such curricula.
3. Language teachers too should be exposed to pre-service and in-service courses in gifted language education in order to be able to implement adequately differentiated language instruction for the benefit of the diverse ability of learners.
4. Government should be ready to commit more funds to the purchase and maintenance of differentiated language instruction materials. Public-private partnership initiatives should also be exploited for this purpose.

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