

Folktale and Superstition as Informal Methods of Education in Igbo and Hausa Languages

Nwosu, Florence Chika

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages

Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin

nwosu.fc@unilorin.edu.ng; nwosu.fc5099@gmail.com

Mukhtar Ibrahim Abubakar (Ph.D)

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages.

The Nigeria Police Academy, Wudil, Kano

ikashakn@gmail.com

Abstract

The Igbo and Hausa societies are characterized by cultural and experiences of the pre-colonial and post-colonial factors. In the pre-colonial Igbo and Hausa, the traditional method of transmitting cultural heritage was through oral tradition by means of folklore, myth, legend, proverbs and stories. The history of the Igbo and Hausa people, their communities and that of their heroes and heroic deeds, as well as the teaching of moral values and socialization processes were all made possible in the authentic traditional African context through the orally-based tradition of folklore, myth, legend, proverbs, superstitious statements, stories and other forms of the oral tradition, as the community members were non-literate. In such traditionally-based contexts, parents, elders, traditional institutions and other members of the community served as teachers, as from them socialization and acquisition of knowledge were made possible. The study critically explored from linguistic and sociological perspectives the nature, forms, processes and associated methods in the context of pre-colonial African period in the education and socialization of the individual members of the Igbo and Hausa communities. The need to revitalize the traditionally induced system and integrate it as part of the present day system of education is suggested for the preservation and continuous transmission of indigenous cultural heritage in the modern African setting that is dominated by element of foreign culture. The method used as the design of the study is Ethnographic Design. Stories and other forms of oral traditions were collected through contextual interviews, watching of video and TV programmes (like Tales by Moonlight) clips.

Key Words: Igbo, Hausa, Folktale, Superstition, Informal

Introduction

Hausa and Igbo are two separate nations with distinctive languages that exist together in Nigeria. Hausa language belongs to Chadic group of languages under Afro-Asiatic while Igbo language is under Kwa language family both of them belonging to the larger family umbrella of Niger-Kordofanian languages family.

The pre-colonial traditional Igbo and Hausa socio-cultural settings is characterized by many factors that determined the existence of a full-fledged socio-cultural linguistic community which included the presence of socio-cultural norms and institutions, accepted norms and values, tradition, common belief and means of socialization. In the primitiveness of the period there existed a system of cultural transmission, socialization as well as means of educating members of the society. Written history existed for centuries in the certain societies; nevertheless, oral history heard it that majority of Hausa speakers could not read nor write before even after the advent of Arabic, and in the same vein, majority of the Igbo people could not read nor write; and at the same time could not interpret the NSISBIDI writing. So the transmission of knowledge was mainly through the oral tradition (verbal communication through messengers) and performance rather than on written texts.

Education was transmitted via the oral tradition of folklore, oral history, myth, legend, superstition, stories, songs, panegyrics, proverbs and the other forms of the oral tradition. Through the use of the oral tradition the history is transmitted and preserved; the origin and historical development of the community is revealed, the heroic deeds and the communities outstanding heroes and founders is made known to the younger generation (Hassan, 2000 and Morris, 2000).

This paper examined the roles of the different forms of the Oral Tradition in the education processes of the members of the Igbo and Hausa socio-cultural groups in order to ascertain the roles of Folktale and Superstition as Informal Methods of Education in the two socio-cultural groups.

Literature Review

Folklore as a universal phenomenon and as well culture specific is a repertoire of knowledge. It contains a number of branches and sub-branches, composed to inculcate culture and norms of the community into the members. Folklore encompasses the customary means of inculcating the beliefs system of a people to its adherents. Similarly, Dundes (1965), refers to Folklore as being constituted of the customs, beliefs, attitudes, life style, joys, sorrows, entertainments, events, states, habits, traditions, and so forth of a particular group of people or community which manifests itself as myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, tales, poetry, and other forms of artistic expression and passes down through the oral tradition. Yahaya (1979) in his own view about the concept of Hausa folklore sliced folklore into four different forms. They include:

1. Visualised forms: such as; farming, crafts, designs, pottery, metal and wood work, native medicine, and so on.
2. Recreational forms: are; dances, games, boxing, wrestling, hunting and so on.
3. Institutionalized forms: are; beliefs, headship, guilds, chiefship, ceremonies; *salla*, *tashe*, *cika-ciki*, *takutaha* and so on.
4. Verbalised forms: expressive art forms such as; oral poetry, tales, proverbs, superstition, legends, myths and so on.

Oral Tradition covers the means by which members of a society transmit history, literature, social norms and values and other knowledge across generations without a writing system (Parry, (2001). David (2005) added that cultural material could be transmitted through vocal utterance. In the same

vein, Oral Tradition also comes into play when messages are transmitted orally from generation to another (Oscar, 2005). To Oscar, messages may be passed down through speech or song and may take the form of folktales and fables, epic histories and narrations, proverbs or wise sayings and songs. Also, Henkell (2000) argues that the expression of oral tradition, applies both to a process and to its products. The products are oral messages based on previous oral messages, at least a generation old. The process is the transmission of such messages by word of mouth overtime. Accordingly, Bagchi (2010) offered that oral tradition as keeps people's culture alive through generations by orally narrating the memorized stories of their history, beliefs, values and practices, Based on the various definitions it became obvious that oral tradition which manifests through folktales and superstitions has certain peculiar features and serves many social functions. The obviously manifested features include the verbal transmission of the tradition, as everything is rendered orally; the transmission of knowledge, history and experiences were mainly through the oral tradition and performance rather than on written texts. Also, the story teller is very relevant in the context of oral tradition. A storyteller's tools are not just words, but gestures, singing, facial expressions, body movements and acting to make stories memorable and interesting. Sometimes masks and costumes are used to enhance a performance. A story teller performs epics that can be hours or even days long that relate history and genealogy, battles and political uprisings of a community. They use riddles, proverbs and myths to educate and entertain. Storytelling is an important shared event with people sitting together, listening and even participating in accounts of past deeds, beliefs, taboos, and myths. Gifted or well-known story tellers often repeat the story with the same words and same expressions in each performance as they travel. They also add new material to an old story to make it more interesting or meaningful to different audiences. Oral storytelling emphasizes repetition of the language and rhythm, which are two of its most important characteristics. Story tellers often repeat words, phrases, refrains, sounds, whole lines and even stanzas. The use of repetition helps the audience remember the chorus and allows them to join in with the story teller. A story teller pays close attention to the beating and how the words sound. Using short phrases makes the stories easier to understand and recall from memory. When audiences who are familiar with the stories actively participate in their story telling, they feel a sense of belonging to the community (Bagchi, 2010). Parts of the social functions of the oral tradition include the guiding of social and human morals, giving people a sense of place and purpose. There is often a lesson or a value to instill, and the transmission of wisdom to children is a community responsibility. Parents, grandparents, and relatives take part in the process of passing down the knowledge of culture and history from one generation to another.

Proverbs are wise saying that are used to convey wisdom, truth, a discovery of ideas, as well as life lesson. They are often a reflection of deep social and psychological experiences. Proverbs are also illustrations of a vivid and fundamental truth about life. They are as condiments to speech (Obiechina, 1978). Nwadike (2009) opines that a proverb is a form of speech which is pregnant with meaning. Ofomata (2004) argues that proverbs are group of words with deep meaning that Igbo people use to explain and express their belief, language, culture, their attitude to life, thought and their total view about life. Similarly, Ogundipe (2007) adds that proverbs are short sayings that use things from the everyday life experiences to teach a lesson or give advice. Egudu (1977) views proverbs as tools for linguistic expression and compositions for the purpose of rhetorical adornment and persuasion. Achebe (1958) cited in Nwadike (2009) describes proverbs as the palm oil with which words are eaten, while Ugonna (1974) sums it up as a kind of mirror which reflects

human experience. Proverbs are used as means of warning, advice and the indication of the resultant impact of one's actions. The following are popular African proverbs.

- (a) Otu onye na-amụ ma otu onye anaghị azụ. (One individual gives birth to a child but it takes a whole village to raise a child.)
- (b) Ụkwa ruo oge ya o daa. (There is time for everything.)
- (c) Ihe mere ede o jiri bee nwiji. (There is no smoke without fire)
- (d) Emee ngwa ngwa emeghara ọdachi. (A stitch in time saves nine)
- (e) Nwata kwọọ aka ya o soro ọgaranya rie nri. (When a child washes his hand, he dines with the wealthy.)
- (f) Anyukọọ mmamiri ọnụ o gbọọ ufufu. (A generally agreed issue turns out successfully)
- (g) Egbe bere ugo bere (Let the kite perch, and let the eagle perch. Live and let live.)

Superstition is a form of belief in something that is irrational, non-physical and does not follow the rule of proving or justification. In superstition, people have a held belief about something or the belief that happenings or presence of something, conditions or certain phenomena may eventually cause or lead to the happening of something else (Ogundipe, 2007). For instance, there is superstitious belief among the Hausa and Igbo peoples that itching of one's palm is an indication that one will get lots of money. Similarly, itching of one's eyes in Hausa signifies that the person is about to be visited, whereas hitting of one's right leg on a stone when going somewhere signifies good luck but that of left leg indicates ill-luck. Examples of superstitions of Hausa and Igbo include:

(Hausa Examples)

1. Cin naman akuya na kara harzuka cutar kuturta
2. Yawan cin waina na haifar mura
3. Tuwon dawa na kara karfin gabobi
4. Idan aka dubi rana da rariya, za a ga diyan rana, amma za mutu
5. Shan sauran ruwan alwala na sa taushin zuciya.

(Igbo examples)

1. Ikwọ nwa n'azụ aga n'ukwu ụdara (Carrying a new born child on the back to go and pick cherry. This indicates that it is not good to carry a new born child to a cherry tree to avoid being initiated into ọgbanje kingdom)
2. Nwaanyi di ime ile mmọnwụ anya n'ihu. (Pregnant women looking directly to a masquerade's face especially the ugly and dangerous ones. This is to avoid giving birth to an ugly or evil child)
3. Nwaanyi iri elu ukwu akwụ maọbụ nwaanyi igbu akwụ (A woman climbing a palm tree or a woman cutting down palm fruit. This is to show the sacredness of a woman's private parts, which must not be exposed carelessly. More so, to inform that women are not supposed to engage in strenuous activities)
4. Ajọ nnụnụ ibere n'ukwu osisi di nso n'ulo mmadu na-ebe (Igbo people regard it as an evil omen for an evil bird to perch on a tree that is close to a person's house and be chirping. It shows that a close relation has died or would die).

Role of Igbo and Hausa Languages in Informal Education

Language provides the foundation for literacy development. Younger Igbo and Hausa community members need and require daily opportunities to learn and practice their native languages in order for their literacy skills to flourish through informal method of education. They also learn the culture, ethos as well as the Dos and Don'ts of their communities primarily by listening to language in use around them. It is through listening to what others say that they gain much of their vocabulary and sentence structure of their native languages, and through the same process, they also learn the context in which words are used. Igbo and Hausa languages the younger members of the communities listen to during informal gathering (for plays and entertainment usually at night after the day activities have been taken care of), serve as the input or data that they internalize and use to express their own meanings in their interactions with others. Imperative to mention here that these children require not only listening to instruction on the mode of acceptable behaviour and stories but also a safe and comfortable environment in which they can practice the skills that they have learned which is made available in the family open space or at freedom square (for Tales by Moonlight and other children's plays.) Such arena provides the younger ones the opportunity to listen, speak and carry on conversations before they can become active in the remaining language skills.

Younger members of Hausa and Igbo communities naturally acquire the language of play and daily life from social interaction with others including adults as it used to be in the early days before the intrusion of the western culture. They require explicit instruction and modeling organized in informal environment to be acquainted with the things of life. In addition, as they listen to stories and other teachings of the culture of the community that is spoken aloud, they become familiar with their languages (e.g., "Once upon a time" and "riddles and jokes") and its structure. With time and lots of opportunities to listen, observe, participate, and interact, younger members of the two communities, progress in understanding and are able to produce language that is increasingly complete, complex, and grammatical. This is similar to the natural way that most young children learn the languages spoken by their families at home in the context of activities and relationships.

Types of Igbo and Hausa Oral Traditions

Oral History

Oral history forms part of Igbo and Hausa oral tradition. It involves the recording, preservation and interpretation of historical information, based on the story teller's personal experiences and opinions. Oral history often takes the form of eye-witness account about past events, but can include folklore, myths, songs and stories passed down over the years by word of mouth. Oral stories could be about the history of the tribe. Some may be about great wars and battles while others may be about everyday life. Every community has its peculiar story telling system. For example, among the Igbo people, it is the elders or senior ones that tell stories (akụko ifo) while the younger ones surround him and listen to the words of wisdom. One person tells the story and others listen to the story. In addition, the similitude among the Hausa communities was the Marokan Baka and the 'Yan Kama Entertainers. Oral Histories involve Myth, a traditional story which embodies a belief regarding some fact or phenomenon of experience, and in which often the forces of nature and the souls are personified; a sacred narrative regarding supernatural

being, a hero, the origin of the world or of a people. Furthermore, there is a Legend, a story of unknown origin describing plausible, but extraordinary past events.

Examples of Fables and Folktales

Fables and folktales are stories full of wisdom and generally convey a moral or teach lessons. Often these lessons are ones of resourcefulness, independence, and illustrate the rewards of courage and positive attitude. Oraka et al. (1986, p. 6) argue that folktales are mediums through which the way of life and beliefs of the Igbo people are publicized. They went further to explain that folktales perform diverse functions to Igbo people such that they are used to teach manners to children, give advice, inculcate truthfulness, honesty, respectfulness to children towards human beings and the gods, as well as to point out the need for the growing ones to deviate from proud living and selfishness. Nwadike (2003, p. 23) added that folktales have been age long phenomena in the life of the Igbo people. Nwadike included that folktales are fictitious stories that are based on humans, animals and the spirits. According to Ihejirika (2002, p. 36), folktales are usually told during the moonlight nights either by the children themselves or by adult to the kids. Ihejirika said that folktales have a usual form of starting and have some lessons to be learnt out of it. There are different types of folktales, with fables and talking beasts' stories being the most common. Both fables and folktales contain fictitious narrative intended to enforce some useful truth or precept, usually with animals, birds, plants as characters. The stories are created and told to excite wonder, common talk, teach lesson and guide social behaviors. Badura (2000) pointed out that the traditional African folktales and fables have a moral point or that they are used to educate, entertain, correct behavior and explain certain human and animal behaviors. Examples of such can be exemplified in Igbo and Hausa as follows:

A: Akụkọ Ifo Gbasasra Nwa Enweghị Nne na Ụdara Ya. (A Story about a Motherless Child and his Cherry fruit)

Once upon a time, a woman went to the market and bought ụdara (cherry fruit). When the step-mother of the orphan returned from the market, she shared the cherry fruits to her biological children neglecting the orphan. She only ended up sending the poor orphan from one errand to another. The orphan was highly dispirited and he wept soberly. After those children and their mother had eaten the ụdara, the orphan picked the seeds and planted them at the back of their house; and every morning, afternoon and night he would go and water them, and after that he would sing the following song unto the ụdara:

1. Ụdara mụ puo (My cherry fruit germinate!)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

2. Puo puo puo! (Germinate germinate
germinate!)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

3. Puoro nwa enweghị nne !(Germinate for the
motherless!)
Nda !! Nda !!

4. Puoro nwa enweghị nna!(Germinate for
the
fatherless!)
Nda!! Nda !!)

5. Nwunye nna mụ! (My step-mother)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

6. Zụta ụdara n'ahịa ! (bought cherry fruit from
the market !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

7.. Racha Racha Racha! (Lick Lick Lick !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

8. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nne ! (and did not
give the
motherless!)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

9. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nna! (and did not
give the
fatherless !)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

10. Elu ụwa bụ ọrịrị ! (Life is a journey)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

11. Onye nọchaa ọ lawa ! (When one's time
is up he goes !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

As he was singing he noticed that one of the

seeds has germinated and he continued to sing:

12. Ụdara mụ too! (My cherry tree grow!)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

13. Too Too Too ! (Grow ! grow ! grow!)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

14. Toro nwa enweghị nne (Grow for the
motherless !)
Nda!! Nda!!)

15. Toro nwa enweghị nna ! (Grow for thee
fatherless)
Nda !! Nda!!)

16. Nwunye nna mụ! (My step-mother)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

17. Zụta ụdara n'ahịa ! (bought cherry fruit
from the market !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

18. Racha Racha Racha! (Lick Lick Lick !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

19. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nne! (and did not
give
the motherless !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

20. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nna ! (and did
not give the
fatherless !)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

21. Elu ụwa bụ ọrịrị ! (Life is a journey)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

22. Onye nọchaa ọ lawa ! (When one's time
is up he goes!)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

As he ended his song, he looked up and

saw that the cherry tree has grown to a mature one, and he continued to sing thus:

23. Ụdara mụ mịa! (My cherry tree
produce fruits)
Nda !! Nda !!
24. Mịa Mịa mịa! (Produce fruit produce fruits
produce fruits !)
Nda !! Nda!
25. Mịara nwa enweghị nne !(Produce fruits
for the motherless)
Nda !! Nda !!
26. Mịara nwa enweghị nna ! (Produce fruits
for the fatherless!)
Nda!! Nda !!)
27. Nwunye nna mụ! (My step-mother)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

28. Zụta ụdara n'ahịa! (bought cherry fruit from
the market !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)
29. Racha Racha Racha! (Lick Lick Lick !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)
30. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nne ! (and did not
give the
motherless!)
Nda!! (Nda!!)
31. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nna! (and did
not give the
fatherless !)
Nda !! (Nda !!)
32. Elu ụwa bụ ọriri ! (Life is a journey)
Nda!! (Nda!!)
33. Onye nọchaa ọ lawa ! (When one's time is
up he goes !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

Immediately, the cherry tree produced fruits all over and he increased the tempo of his song thus:

34. Ụdara mụ chaa! (My cherry tree ripe !)
Nda !! Nda !!
35. Chaa chaa chaa! (Ripe ripe ripe !)
Nda !! Nda !!
36. Chaara nwa enweghị nne !(Ripe for the
motherless!)
Nda !! Nda !!
37. Chaara nwa enweghị nna ! (Ripe for the
fatherless!)
Nda!! Nda !!)
38. Nwunye nna mụ! (My step-mother)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

39. Zụta ụdara n'ahịa ! (bought cherry fruit
from the market !)
Nda!! Nda!!)
40. Racha Racha Racha! (Lick Lick Lick !)
Nda!! (Nda!!)
41. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nne ! (and did
not give the
motherless!)
Nda!! (Nda!!)
42. Rachawọ nwa enweghị nna ! (and did
not give the
fatherless !)
Nda !! (Nda !!)

43. Elu ụwa bụ ọriri ! (Life is a journey)
Nda!! (Nda!!)

44. Onye nọchaa ọ lawa ! (When one's time
is up he goes) !
Nda!! (Nda!!)

When he saw that the cherry tree has ripened and was full of fruits, he was overjoyed and he picked as much as he could and went to share with the step mother and her children. From the story we could learn that wickedness is not good. It also shows that God can do all He can to comfort the needy and the rejected. Moreover, we have also learnt that it is not good to pay evil for evil.

B: The Hausa Folktale of Rabbit and Lizard

The story of Rabbit and Lizard tells us about two good friends (Rabbit and Lizard) who resided at the same place and engaged in the same profession (farmers). Afterwards, in spite of their friendship, one of them (the lizard) betrayed their friendship by lying to Rabbit, who ignorantly destroyed its farm produce by cooking it before planting according to the instruction of its friend. Rabbit, on finding out its friend's unfaithfulness and betrayal, also retaliated and deceived lizard into killing its own mother (Koko 2006: 74-75). The lesson from this story is that there is always a payback time for any good or bad deeds done.

Epic Narrations

These are the exploits of a hero who really existed and played a major role in people's history. The adventures of the heroes are often exaggerated in order to have created a greater impact on the listeners.

Examples include the stories of Ojukwu, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tafawa Balewa etc. and their contributions in their individual communities and Nigeria as a whole.

Songs

Traditional songs occupy important place in Igbo and Hausa oral literature. Songs are present in all moments of life, especially on occasion of celebrations and ceremonies. The traditional oral songs are of many kinds in Igbo and Hausa. They include: lullaby, war songs, marriage songs, burial songs, songs during farm work, songs for criticism, songs of praise, etc. For instance:

(Igbo Lullaby)

Nwa enwe nwa o (Child monkey child o)
Nwa enwe nwa (Child monkey child)
Nwa enwe nwa o (Child monkey child o)
Nwa enwe nwa (Child monkey child)
Nwa enwe i gbago ngo na-eso m gi (Child monkey if you go up I follow you)
Nwa enwe i gbada mbana na-eso m gi (Child monkey if you go down I follow you)
Nwa enwe i nye m oyọ nye m mgbirigba (Child monkey if you give me ishaka also give me a bell)
Ka m kpaba nwa n'aka (For me to put in the hand of the child)
Mgbe ọ ga-ebe o kiriwe (so that if she wants to cry she will look at it)

Burial Song (Igbo Example)

Ọnwụ bụ onye ohi o o o (Death is a thief o o o)
Ọnwụ bụ onye ohi o (Death is a thief o)

O zuru ɔ gbalaga (When it steals it runs away)
 Ɔnwɔ emee anyi aru o o o (Death has treated us harshly o o o)
 Ɔnwɔ emee anyi aru o (Death has treated us harshly o)
 O zuru ɔ gbalaga (When it steals it runs away)
 Ɔnwɔ egbuo enyi anyi o o o (Death has killed our friend o o o)
 Ɔnwɔ egbuo enyi anyi o (Death has killed our friend o)
 O zuru ɔ gbalaga. (When it steals it runs away)

Some Hausa songs are designed and composed to take care of children and as well marriage life situations. But it was the duty of the elders to prepare the songs by calling attention of the respective parents to select a good partner for their children, because a partner follows a footstep of or imitate his partner. For example, Malam Isa has said in his composed song on “Renon yara” meaning “the song of weaning of children”, where he said:

Kai yi shurunka (You keep quit)

Dan farin agogo ne, (It is a white watch)
 kai yi shurunka (So, you keep quit)
 Mai bi mai gilashi ne (It follows and has a glass cover)
 Kai yi shurunka (So, you keep quit)
 Ba ni daka da kai goye (Never I pounded as you are on my back)
 Kai yi shinka (So, you keep quit)
 Kada gari ya bata ka (Do you will never be disturbed)
 Kai yi shurunka (So, you keep quit)

More so, certain songs are composed in Hausa by children mostly young ones especially the females narrating a story of their boyfriends’ arrival. The target goal was to impress him by explaining his life style as follows:

Charnan Dudu (Charman Dudu is Mine)

Charnam dudu Charman Duduwa (Charma’s Dudu Charma’s Duduwa)	
Charmagade.	Charmagade
Akwai wani bako a gidan maigari (There is a stranger in a village head’s house)	
Charmagade.	Charmagade
Yana kunya yana lamuni (He is wise enough and tolerant)	
Charmagade.	Charmagade
Ba ya neman ‘yan matan gari (Never cares with women in town)	
Charmagade.	Charmagade.
Yayata dan jiyo man (My senior sister take care of him well)	
Charmagade.	Charmagade.
Kanwata dan jiyo man	(My junior sister take care of him well)
Charmagade.	Charmagade.

Findings of the Study

The role of the Igbo and Hausa oral tradition in the processes of educating members of the society can be seen from the following educative and knowledge acquisition roles:

Transmission of the Knowledge of History

One of the identified roles of informal education is the transmission of historical facts about the society, its people, and its past, about the heroes and about the important social happenings as seen in the cases struggles and contributions of the various community and Nigerian heroes vis-à-vis Ojukwu, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tafawa Balewa, Awolowo etc. towards the development and emancipation of Nigeria from colonial malady. And also how the stories on folktales and superstitions could deter people from engaging into evil deeds and at the same time encourage one to do well because of the glorious outcome.

Teaching of Morality and Virtues

Another important means of informal education of the members of the society through the oral tradition is the teaching of moral values, good deeds, and socially approved behaviours. Through stories, good deeds are encouraged and vice-versa. This is made possible by the depiction of negative consequences that befall a bad character. In addition, the oral tradition of superstitions, proverbs and songs advice and restrain against immoral acts are adequately provided or given. Such can be seen in a story about “The three Brothers and the Pot of Porridge”, where the three brothers on a journey needed a place to rest for the night, and were helped by an old woman. Incidentally, the youngest of three brothers stealthily ate the old woman’s porridge which they had been initially offered to them, which they turned down. When the old woman accosted them, they all denied the allegation including the culprit. As a result, the old woman put them to test and the younger one (the culprit) fell into it and was drowned. The story shows the consequences of insincerity and the calamity that befalls dishonest and ungrateful people.

Teaching of Cultural Beliefs and Social Norms and Values

Most of the thematic pre-occupation of the Igbo and Hausa superstitions revolve around warning against any act perceived as culturally prohibited (Badura, 2000 and Ogundipe, 2007). This is based on the fact that certain socially manifested acts are considered inappropriate due to either religious restriction or socially believed norms and values. According to Nganger (1997) African superstitious beliefs are related to religion-traditional religion. This is why the superstitions in Igbo and Hausa involve spirits, witches and dangerous animals, as such doing anything contrary to the wishes of these can cause serious consequences and implication to the individual and society. Similarly, some superstitions are meant to explain or interpret certain actions, events or situations, while others are meant to discourage doing something regarded as socially unacceptable or can have negative implication on the actor. Courtlander (1996) posits that African superstitions are powerful means of teaching cultural norms and values, as they are meant to teach individual member of the community what to do and what to avoid, as well as teaching/informing individuals about certain mysterious happening, through all these teaching is actually taking place. The following are examples of African-based superstitions and their teaching implications in the African context:

Mmadu idinechi uzọ (Igbo Superstition)

(A superstition banning one to sit, to lay or to sleep across the door step)

This superstition is based on the Igbo's believe that spirits move everywhere and that their movement will not in any way be blocked by humans. In addition, it is believed that the door step is a route regularly used by the spirits in order to guide and protect the members of a given household, so it is regarded as a sign of respect given to the spirits, not to block their passage and hinder their free movement.

Mpupee anya ikọ mmadu okọ

(The scratching of the eyelid)

The above is an Igbo superstition which indicates that if the lower eyelid of one scratches, it means that such a person may have reasons to weep, however, if it is the upper eyelid, it means that something good is on its way.

Other common superstitions from different parts of Africa include:

- (a) There must be some left-over food in the pot overnight
- (b) A child being delivered with the feet coming out first.
- (c) Never to put one's bag on the floor or the person will be a poor man.
- (d) Not to put one's hat on the bed, to avoid falling sick.
- (e) A child growing the upper tooth before the front ones

These superstitions are meant to teach different aspects of cultural norms and values.

Some are warning, while others are explanations on certain mystical social phenomena.

Socialization Processes of Individual Member of the Community in Igbo and Hausa

Education is identified as a fundamental agent of socialization processes of individual member of a given socio-cultural group. Through education, one is initiated and fitted into the society, as oral tradition is an informal means of educating members of the society, the societal members acquired the accepted values, norms and tradition, as well the language spoken in the community, the belief and the socially accepted behavior. Such means of socialization process in Igbo include: Otu Ogbọ (Age grade), Otu Nzuzo: Okonko/Mmanwu (Masquerade society) etc.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Igbo and Hausa societies were originally pre-literate, but like all other socio-cultural groups, they had their own culturally-based means of educating people. Through oral tradition, societal members were educated and fully integrated into the society. However, with the advancement of science and technology, globalization and language extinction, the oral tradition is seriously at the verge of extinction. In view of this, there is need for the revival of our cultural heritage.

A worldwide effort is needed to prevent oral tradition from becoming extinct. Storytelling needs to be revived, especially among children with low literacy level and those who are physically, socially and economically challenged. A concerted effort is necessary to reach children worldwide especially those born and bred outside Igbo and Hausa domain and touch them with the magic of stories and bring smiles on their faces. More so, a competitive socially oriented programmes need to be organized in these two

communities which will be bringing the school-aged home probably during the long holidays where issues about the language, culture and tradition of the societies will be deliberated upon. The wealth of stories found in great epics of every culture should be documented and transformed into animation films and dramatized versions, and presented to children, especially those who still remain deprived of their inherent cultural right to education. The oral tradition retains its strength to revive traditional values and that strength should be preserved and used for greater common good of children in the two societies and worldwide.

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