

MAKEUP EFFECT, FORMATIONS AND EXPRESSIONS IN NOLLYWOOD FILMS: AN ANALYSIS OF FUNKE AKINDELE'S *SHE MUST BE OBEYED*.

Precious Chizaram OGBONNA.
Department of Theatre and Media Art
Federal University, Oye Ekiti, Ekiti State
preciouschizaram45@gmail.com

Abstract

Makeup, in the past and present time is proven to have influence on actor's character representation on stage and motion pictures. As one of the most effective visual arts that help in project realization, makeup creates a satisfied appearance of an actor on screen. Makeup is often misinterpreted in some films, and sometimes, it fails to portray the character and this gives room for concern. This study explores the roles of makeup effects, character formation and narrative tool in Funke Akindele's She must be Obeyed. The research examines the transformative roles of makeup in shaping the inner essence, physical and emotional aspects of the character. The study identifies makeup effects and the impact it has on character formation and as a narrative device for the transformative journey of characters. This paper employs the qualitative research method and uses critical film theory to analyze the film. The work argues that makeup is more than just aesthetics; it is a rich visual storytelling tool that adds a new dimension to film narrativity. This study has the potential to contribute to the deeper understanding of film aesthetics, character formation and storytelling role of makeup in creating impactful and meaningful cinematic experience.

Keywords: *Makeup, Film, Nollywood, Character Formation, She must be Obeyed.*

Introduction

In the theatre, makeup is used to adorn the face and it is one of the earliest approaches in interpretation of the character on stage, it is suitable for character formation and the appropriate expression of actors on screen. Makeup is the general mixture of chemical compounds made out of natural sources; many of which are synthetic, or known as cosmetics which are used to enhance the appearance of the face. The use of makeup in theatrical performances could be traced back to ancient performance traditions where actors used substances such as soot, chalk and pigments to enhance facial expression and character identity on stage (Corson, Norcross and Glavan 3).

Historical records show that actors in ancient Greece and medieval religious drama used pigments and facial adornments to distinguish characters and communicate dramatic roles (Brockett and Hildy, 65). The ancient Greek actors used white lead powder and soot to create mask, while the Egyptians applied kohl around their eyes. In religious plays of medieval Europe, actors who took certain roles used different pigments/ substances to adorn their faces. During this period, actors who took the role of God had their faces painted with white or gold pigments, while the faces of the Angels were painted bright red.

Scholars of stagecraft observe that early theatre makeup relied heavily on household substances like flour and powdered pigments to lighten the face, while wool or hair from animals was

fashioned into beards and moustaches for characterization (Carver, 219). During the Elizabethan era; actors playing the role of ghost and murderers powdered their faces with chalk and those playing blacks and moors were blackened with soot and burnt cork. Makeup is used to enhance the facial features of a character; an actor can only become the character desired when he or she takes up a role and uses makeup to aid this prospect. Makeup in film sprang up to aid the appropriate appearances of the actors on screen or stage. Generally, it is believed that Thespis was the first actor to step out of chorus in Greek theatre in the 6th century BCE, and the foremost to apply white lead and wine to his face.

The first use of makeup in the theatre was to transform performers into gods, goddesses, and other characters they are portraying on stage. The Duke of Saxe-Mengen, in the 19th century, actors did not wear makeup because they were masked according to their mood and the genre of the performance and this shows the mask as an effect to change the character at that time. This created an identity for the character during different activities such as; carnival, dance, films, theatre performances, television shows amongst others. Also, it distinguishes roles of the characters, foster expression and helps define the characters. Duro Oni notes that stage aesthetics depend greatly on visual elements that support characterization. He argues that “makeup, alongside costume and lighting functions as a visual code through which the audience interprets character, status and dramatic context” (72). Also, Nigerian Theatre Scholar, Ahmed Yerima notes that “makeup provides the actor with the physical identity necessary to communicate age, emotion and social background within the dramatic illusion” (103).

However, Makeup in film is quite different from Makeup on stage; Makeup for stage is more projected while film is corrective and clear. Buttressing this, Yerima further observes that “stage makeup is designed to project facial features across distance while screen makeup focuses on correcting and refining the actors’ natural appearance for the camera” (114). In the same vein, Sunday Ododo lends his scholarly voice by asserting that “while stage makeup exaggerates the actor’s facial features for projection, screen makeup seeks naturalism because the camera captures even the smallest facial details. In the process of developing a character, makeup plays an essential role in helping the actors embody their roles genuinely. Beyond the physical appearance, it enhances the very essence of the character in influencing their mannerisms, gestures and vocal inflections. Makeup in film production is a creative tool responsible for the visual appearance of a character which contributes effectively to the production of inner feeling through interpretation.

It is believed that what many people know about their places is through film, hence makeup is used to identify the age, status, background, locality of the character when appropriately applied. Makeups further help the viewers to relate to the story line and the ability to identify and differentiate each character’s action with his or her appearance. Since film is visual, makeup should be applied correctly to portray the character and help actors express themselves on screen. Moreover, makeup plays an essential role in creating identities of characters and this is achieved through working closely with the director and costume designers. This establishes the appropriate personality, background and life journey of the character in a film. The obvious impact of makeup in storytelling is that it helps actors get into character thus, transforming their appearance to match the persona they are portraying.

Emmanuel Nwachukwu observes that “We must understand that the mere use of powder on the face is an act of makeup because it reduces the shine and oil nature of the face and so alters it in appearance” (131). In this regard, makeup is as old as our traditional practices where natural/native materials/pigments were used to create an effect on the body, hence the masquerade, with close observation through the application of makeup on the body and mask worn generates the natural expression of a masquerade by the actor who assumes the role. Tracie Chima Utoh-Ezeajugh states that:

The art of costume and makeup are primordial engagement which has over years aided man to physically transform himself into any character his situation demands. He becomes these, which are at first purely utilitarian, since man needed to disguise in order to kill the animal he required for his meals. It has grown and evolved into social and artistic endeavor (8).

Makeup is an indispensable tool that has contributed effectively to every film production, as a specialized art used to portray different moods of the character[s]. According to Milton Smith, “makeup is one of the visual aids to an interpretative understanding of a performance” (55). Furthermore, Utoh-Ezeajugh submits that:

The story of any play could easily be told through the costume and makeup design because one of the aims of costume is to characterize the wearer such that the audience could easily understand the kind of person that the action of the play is going to unfold. Makeup design on the other hand “consolidates costume by giving a physiognomic classification to a character and as such, could be considered an extension of costume. (42).

Makeup is a craft that skillfully aids the creation of an actor in a film or theatre production. This process makes characters visually appealing and on same pace puts the audience in a deeper imaginative mood and also allows the actors to fully embody their roles with precision rating from the smallest application to the special effects. Each makeup contributes to the enchantment of the production, by captivating viewers and creating an impression on their minds. Buttressing this, Michael Gillette notes that:

Through skillful application of the various techniques of makeup, younger faces can be made to look older, older faces can be made to look younger, pretty faces less attractive, blemished skin clear and rather plain faces, ravishingly attractive. The various contributions connote and prove makeup as a tool for transformation of individuals into believable characters (P.432).

Through this application, the external features of the actor are changed to suit the character the actor is portraying. The design achieved and effect created communicates to the audience aside creating special likeness of the character by the audience. Another essential purpose of makeup effects, “is to assist the actor in the creation of a character, by making suitable changes in the actor’s physical appearance” (Richard Corson, (as cited in Utoh, 16).) As its core, makeup in film production is an essential tool used for transformation and enabling actors to inhabit different roles, through skillful application of makeup by the makeup artist who transmogrify actors to create astonishing character in reality. Therefore the formation and expression of actors who have

different roles is solely dependent on the application of makeup by the artist who is charged with the responsibility to make sure the actors look exactly like the characters they portray.

To achieve our research objective, this paper employs the qualitative method, citing journals and articles that are centered on makeup as a transformative and expressive tool while selecting the movie, *She must be Obeyed* as a study.

Discussion and Analysis

Makeup is a veritable tool through which a good Nollywood production is achieved. The style of designing and applying makeup in Nollywood films is of great value and contributes closely to the definition of characters, because it simply reflects the expression and formation through its application on characters. Nollywood film is established for the communication and promotion of ideas. In essence, it shows that film converts all subjects and objects into a good sign which communicates to the audience; the character's personality, likes, and dislikes. The blossoming nature of Nollywood films is developed from our indigenous stories which entertain and fascinate the audience. According to Alamu:

The thematic and aesthetic choices of Nollywood are determined to a large extent by the preference of its appeal. The themes are based on subjects such as infidelity, treachery, lust, hypocrisy, armed robbery, material problem, murder, cultism and occultism, witchcraft, jealousy, polygamy and so on. The themes are indeed broad and mirror the Nigerian society. To the filmmakers therefore, Nigeria is a narrative entity and their (filmmakers) films are agents in this narrative act (166).

The above statement posits that there is always a subject, which portrays that film must have a central idea and message in order to communicate to the audience through screen and establish film as a medium of narrativity. Nollywood's makeup style is determined by the directors' concept, as cited by Ovunda, Rabiger and Cherries' view of a directors concept "as one whose medium of storytelling is not the screenplay but the screen" which explains that directors use different devices as means of expression, their visual composition which includes makeup, costume, set design, and so on, also determines the picturization and makes aesthetic decisions such as; the composition of the story, the time, mood, and tone of the story.

It is important to note that the overall outcome of makeup style is determined by the director's concept, which is linked to the classification of the story - whether modern or traditional, the director always thinks about stories that suit the particular era he intends to capture in the film. The makeup style is also determined by the director who looks out for a professional makeup artist who is knowledgeable in the art of film making in order to capture the particular makeup style and materials used to achieve them. When this is done, it further enhances the interpretation of the story, depicts the era, setting, and also adds aesthetics to the film. This is a sacrosanct way of communicating to the audience. Therefore, makeup style goes in accordance to the director's picturization of the story.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study explores the relationship between the key variables of the study. Variables are observed, measured in different perspectives. This is best summarized by

Miles & Huberman 1994, as cited by Taofiq 2023, who categorized it as a system of concepts, assumptions and belief that supports and guides the research plan. Specifically, the conceptual framework “lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables and presumes relationship among them” (1994, 440) while Camp (2001) as cited by Taofiq 2023, aptly described a conceptual framework, asserting that a conceptual framework is a structure of what has been learned to best explain the natural progression of a phenomenon that is being studied.

The research conceptualizes makeup effect as the independent variable which influences the character formation, expression and most importantly the narrative meaning and audience perception. These variables are divided into three as it concerns this study;

Independent Variable (IV):

This is the factor that is used to change and manipulate. It is the makeup effect which includes the different makeup types used, (straight makeup, character makeup, prosthetics and wig work). In *She Must Be Obedied*, prosthetics makeup extremely altered the protagonist facial appearance which entirely changed her appearance. While the straight makeup is used to build her public personality. The independent variable in this context is a tool and makeup functions as a significant transformative tool.

Mediating Variable (MV):

The mediating variable is also known as the Intervening Variable. This simply explains how it affects the dependent variables. It plays its role as a middle man and contributes in creating an effect. In *She Must Be Obedied* the mediating variable explained how and why the relationship between the variables exists. It played a vital role in constructing the character thereby enhancing:

a. Character Formation:

The identification of the character through physical transformation which changed the entire look of the character to depict the age representation, the social class/status of the protagonist and the psychological portrayal. The effective application of makeup on the protagonist and other characters shaped their identity and contributed to how the character is visually perceived before actions and dialogue.

b. Character Expression:

This is another important effective part of this study because the expression of the characters tells the story effectively. The appropriate application of makeup builds the facial expression, body language, gestures, emotions with dialogue and actions.

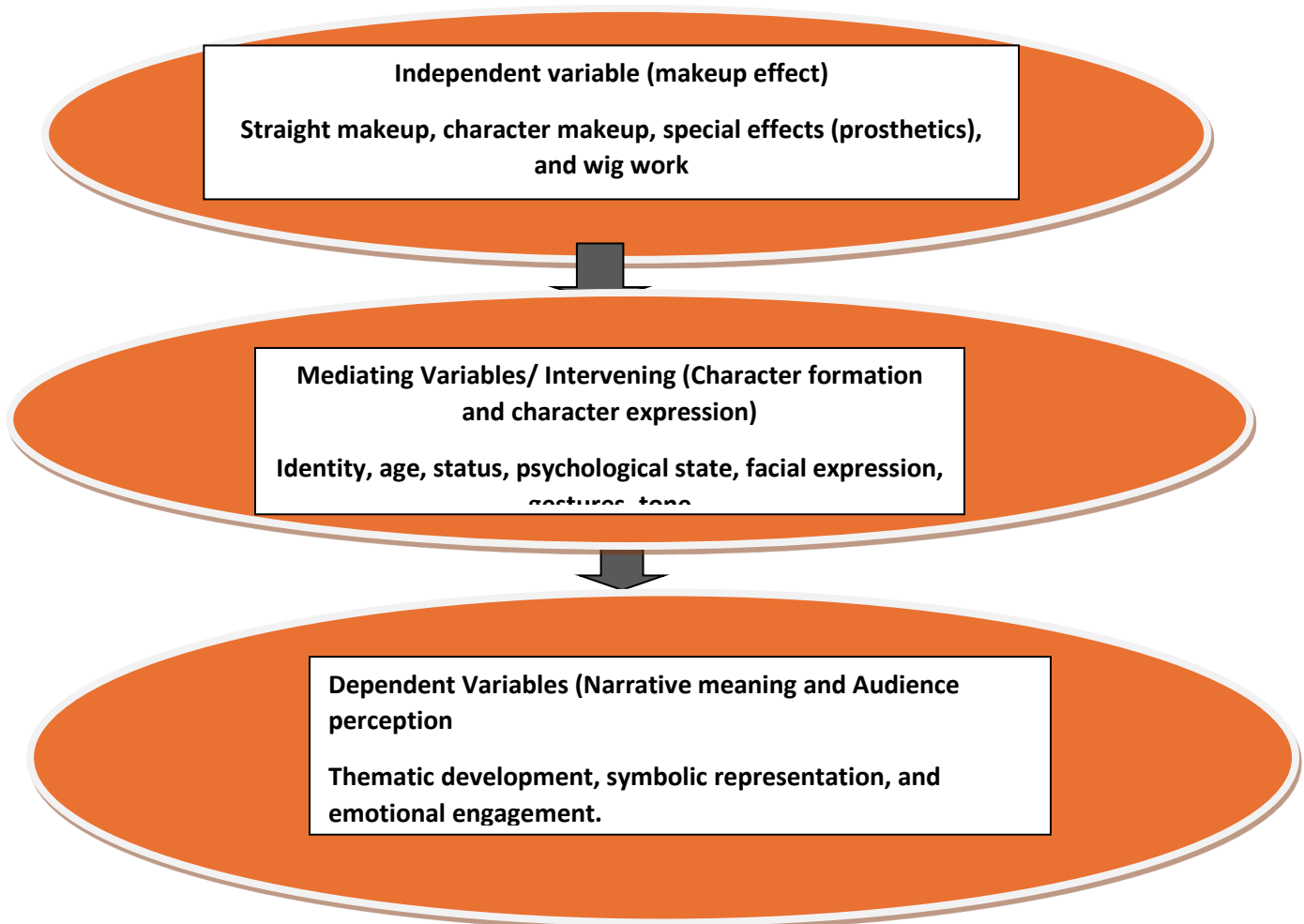
Thus, with the mediating variable the charisma and carriage of the actors is constructed within the actors which enables them to embrace and take up roles perfectly. It is important to note that the story is incomplete expression. The appropriate use of character makeup influenced the actor's performance, the role, emotions, thereby enhancing and shaping the audiences' interpretation and understanding of the series.

Dependent Variables (DV):

This refers to the result and outcome of the study which is “dependent on the independent variables” for example; in a medical scenario when testing a new medicine the patient level of recovery is the dependent variable which depends on the independent (which is the medicine). In the context of this research the dependent variable is focused on the narrative meaning and the

audience perception which explores the thematic development, story progression, symbolic representation, and emotional engagement. In the series, the relationship between the private deformity of the protagonist which is as a result of sickness and the public glamour as a music celebrity and also not being able to have original songs recorded in her voice reinforces the theme of deception, constructed identity and the industry competition.

Here is a diagrammatical representation of the conceptual framework; the relationship between key variables can be represented as follows.



The framework establishes makeup as a functional visual tool in the transformation of shapes, identification of characters, influences performance /production and expression. This expression strengthens narrative communication and determines audiences' understanding and interpretation. Thus, makeup operates beyond aesthetics but is an effective element in storytelling in Nollywood film production. Makeup functions as a visual tool which establishes how audience perception is shaped through aesthetics. It is a narrative device that connects visual transformation to character psychology which enhances expression. It provides an analysis structure used to examine the scenes in *She Must Be Obeyed*.

Makeup and its Style, as Deployed in the Film.

Makeup is a veritable tool which plays a vital and essential role in film and theatrical productions. It is used to enhance and create a new look, which has to do with human appearance in the face and body. Makeup refers to lipsticks, powder and other substances applied to the face, used to conceal blemish. It is an application used also to change and enhance the external features of an actor thereby defining the facial features for more expressive action and proper formation of the role played by the actor. There are three core types of makeup which include; Straight makeup, Character makeup, Special effects.

Straight Makeup.

This type of makeup is used to enhance the external facial appearance of the character through painting for distinctiveness and visibility. It can also be referred to as our everyday makeup basically for beautification purposes.

Character Makeup.

Character Makeup is the facial appearance of the character in order to look like the targeted character. Such character could be impersonated or imitated with the aid of; eyebrows, eyelashes, false nose, moustache, wigs etc. These items are used to fix up the character's face to change his or her external features. For instance, a young actress in her thirties can be changed to look like a woman in her nineties. It is also used to depict special characters like monsters and ghosts, or indicate traits of madness and injuries, on the part of the body.

Special Effects Makeup.

The introduction of special effects to theatrical productions has facilitated growth in the entertainment industry generally. Special effect in conjunction with character makeup formation plays a vital role in creating an atmosphere for an expressive action by the actor. Hence, special effect is used to create characters and creatures that are realistic. Special effect makeup is an art of using prosthetics makeup and other materials to create illusions that appear to be real on camera. With the help of this form of makeup, film makers are able to achieve realistic effects on actors.

Special effects dates back to the early days when flour and glycerin were used by filmmakers to create realistic looking effect. This is made possible through the introduction of technology-based material advanced to latex and foam rubber now used in combination with traditional methods to create increasingly complex effects. Today this method is explored effectively in producing high quality films. In recent years, the use of 3D has allowed the creation of high quality prosthetics, enabling filmmakers to create more extreme physical transformation, which fosters unique stories and visuals. It is often referred to as Prosthetics. There are different types of special effect; Prosthetics, Airbrushing, Specialized makeup, Wig work, Animatronics.

Airbrushing: This is a technique which involves using of compressor and paint gum to apply layers of colours onto the skin. It is used to create realistic looking injuries, bruises, tattoos amongst others.

Wig work: This involves attaching wigs onto the actor's head in order to alter their overall look. It is commonly used for changing hair colour or style as well as creating characters with particular outstanding hair styles.

Prosthetic makeup (SFX): There are different types of makeup, one of them is prosthetic also referred to as special effect. It is used to create an illusion of wounds, scars, burn, marks, or to drastically change the structure of one's face or body part. Examples are high cheek bones, bigger nose, bare hair, make a younger person look older, elf ears, etc. The application technique differs

from the everyday makeup. Prosthetic makeup involves plastic materials, cosmetics and other substances used to alter the hair, face, and body of the actor. It is also silicone molds that are applied to the neck or body to change an actor's appearance. They are used for small alternation such as; adding wrinkles and scars or even extreme changes like transforming an actor into an entirely different character.

The prosthetic makeup style was deployed to achieve is film production. It was used basically to define and reveal the protagonist and the straight makeup also deployed to reveal same character and other characters as the film proceeds.

Synoptic Analysis of *She Must Be Obeyed* by Funke Akindele

The film *She Must Be Obeyed* was produced and directed by Funke Akindele in 2023.

Filmography

Title – *She Must Be Obeyed*

Screen Play – Funke Akindele, Collins C. Okoh

Genres – Film, Comedy, Musical, Drama

Starring – Funke Akindele, Nancy Isime, Lateef Adedimeji, Akah Nnani, Patience Ozokwor, Mike Ezeronye, Veeiye, Waje, Shaffy Bello.

Producer – Funke Akindele

Director –Funke Akindele, JJC Skillz

Network - Amazon prime video

Costumier – Mariam Imosterne

Makeup artist – Feyisayo Onyebisi, Feyzol makeup artistry

Special Effects/Pyrotechnics – Hakeem's Effects Onilogbo, Eki Osagie Onilogbo, Yusuf Jamiu, Tobiloba Tunde, Daud Adewale, Daud Adebayo

Season – 1

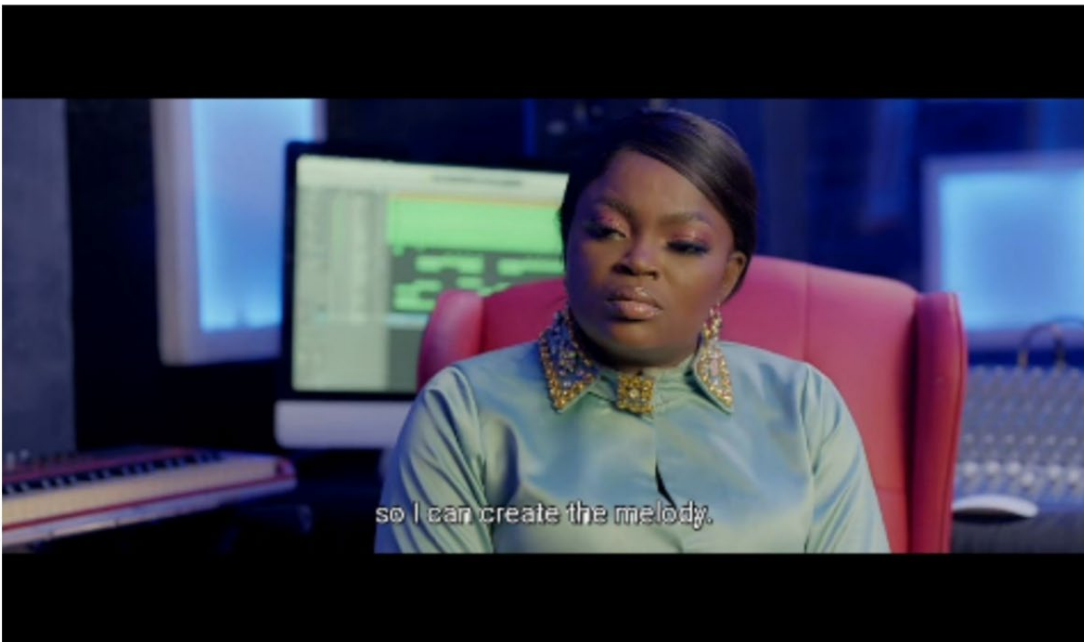
Episode – 5

Language – English

She Must Be Obeyed is about the lives of three successful music stars; She, Tito, and X-cite (played by Funke Akindele, Veeiye, and Waje respectively). Shiyonbola Adewale, known as She portrays a character determined to remain at the top, not minding whom she tramples on to get there. A group gathers to expose She's true nature. She on the other hand suffers from a rare disease called *Alopeliaareate*; this disease happens when the immune system attacks hair follicles and causes hair loss. With this sickness, she is not able to go out for her musical shows. This results in She being transformed with a glamorous makeup, which she uses to hide her blemish and look like a star that she is. This continues until her workers discover what she truly looks like and gather to bring her down because of her unfair treatment towards them.

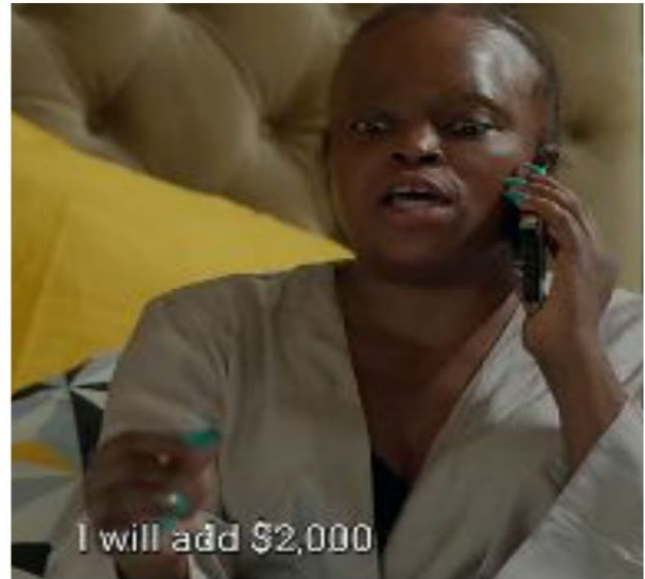
Also on the other hand, She was in charge of impersonating users on social media space where she uses different phones, posing as different users to make good comments on her platforms and condemning another artist who poses as her rival. The film spotlights a competition in the music industry. As the film evolves, it is discovered that her songs are not written by her; they are paid for. This payment covers up for the voicing too, which she mimes on stage. This film clearly shows the challenges those in the industry face, delving into the behind the scene, world of rumours,

controversies, and fake personas. It effectively highlights negative aspects of the music industry such as prostitution, lies, questionable lifestyles, bullying, and cutthroat competition.



Plates 1&2: *She on Display with Makeups*

The above pictures show the character makeup which She showcases on the outside as abig celebrity. This character makeup was used to enhance the external features of her face which she uses as a form of deception knowing how she truly appears in her space. And this was achieved with the use of foundation, lipsticks, powder, eye-shadow, eyelashes, eye-pencil for defining the brows, wigs and is complimented with accessories. This look is established as the impersonating look.



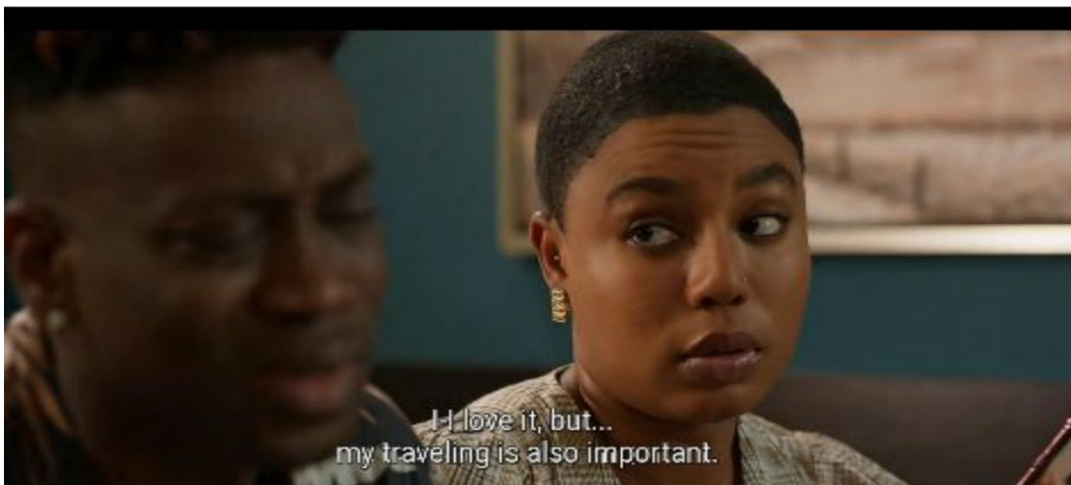
Plates 3, 4 & 5: *She On Display Without Makeups*

The above pictures unravel the focus of this study. Prosthetics is a major factor used to change the external features of the face as seen above. The makeup artist makes use of prosthetics, extremely transforming the actor to an entirely different character. The effects of this makeup is seen in her expression. As the film progresses, she is seen in her room carefree and plotting how to bring down her rivals. This transformation is the formation of the character and the expression is highlighted in her reaction, voice and total action in the film. The look is employed to be the character's actual look in the film which she hides from the public. Wig work is also used to alter the overall look and create an outstanding hairstyle, causing her facial appearance to change.



Plates 6: Tito on Display.

The above character is Tito, the makeup style deployed is a character makeup which defines her as a celebrity. This is achieved by the makeup artist with the aid of foundations, lipsticks, eyelashes, brush, contouring, eye shadow and specifically the choice of hair worn by the actor. Therefore, this contributes to the actor's carriage in defining the character as a music star, who is living in wealth and this was seen in her actions as established.



Plates 7&8: Bayo and Victoria on display.

These pictures show Bayo and Victoria. Bayo is **She's** younger cousin who doubles as her driver. He has been promised by **She**, a life changing ticket out of the country in search of greener pasture. The makeup style used simply defines him with a character makeup, with the hairstyle showing his carefree lifestyle as complimented by the ear-rings. This contributes effectively to his character formation and expression.

The next is Victoria; **She's** personal assistant who is working diligently to make ends meet but is disappointed at **She's** behaviour towards her staff. The makeup simply defines her character; no extreme application, the haircut, light makeup. This contributes effectively to her actions and enhances her formation.



Plates 9 & 10: Ruka and Etim on display.

This picture shows Ruka and Etim; two comic characters. Ruka, the house keeper and Etim the chef. Their makeup application can be classified a straight makeup; no application, their

appearance is effectively complimented with costume which enhance the formation of their characters and supported by makeup. Ruka having a very mild makeup application and Etim having his groomed bears.

Conclusion

Generally, makeup plays an important role in theatre or film productions. Makeup has been proven to be a vital tool for interpretation of characters such that it provides suitable representation of the characters and aids a clear understanding of the role by the audience. This helps actors to define their roles through proper application. Makeup duties should be given to only professionals who are schooled and equipped in the art of different makeup styles and should further investigate and conduct research before their application to avoid misapplication of makeup.

Recommendations

- Appropriate film producers should conduct training for growing makeup artists. Workshops should be organized to educate makeup artists on how makeup is applied, according to style and good character interpretation.
- Makeup artists are advised to carry out paper research for the script, especially one that pertains to different makeup applications to get an appropriate style to avoid misinterpretation.
- Notable continuity scenes of each character, this is important to keep good record to avoid mistakes or misplacement. A table form is advised as seen below.
- Makeup artists should endeavour to read and study deeply, the characters before any application.
- Makeup artists are advised to work closely with the director and the production team and ensure that materials and tools are always clean and complete.

Works Cited

- Alamu, Oluwakemi M. "Narrative and Aesthetic choices in Nollywood Films". *Journal of African Cinemas*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2010.
- Brockett, Oscar G., and Franklin J. Hildy. *History of the Theatre*. 10th Ed. Pearson Education, 2008.
- Carver, Rita Kogler. *Stagecraft Fundamentals*. 2nd Ed, Focal Press, 2013.
- Corson Richard, Beverly Gore Norcross and James Glavan. *Stage Makeup*. 10th ed., Pearson Education, 2010.
- Gillete, J. Michael. *Theatrical Design and Production: An Introduction to Scene Design and Construction, Lighting, Sound, Costume and Makeup*. 5th Ed. McGraw-Hill, 2005.
- Nwachukwu, Emmanuel Dike "Makeup and Mask in Traditional Nigerian Theatre." *Creative Artist: A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*, Vol. 6, No.1, 2012.
- Ododo, Sunday Enesi. *Technical Theatre Practice in Nigeria*. Ilorin: Haytee Press, 2015.
- Oni, Duro. *Theatre in Nigeria: The Dynamics of a movement*. Lagos: CBAAC, 2012.
- Smith, Milton. *Stage Makeup: A Practical Guide*. London: A & C Black Publishers, 1984.

- Utoh-Ezeajugh, Tracie Chima. *Costume and Makeup Design in Theatre and Film Productions: The Reality of Make-Believe*. 26th Inaugural Lecture, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Awka; Rex Charles & Patrick Ltd, 2015.
- Yerima, Ahmed. *Basic Techniques in Playwrighting and Theatre Practice*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2003.