TEACHING AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE IN TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN AGE: IMPORTANCE, TEACHERS ROLE AND CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

In the twenty-first century, with information and communication technology (ICT) taking centre stage, professional literature teachers in every school should be giving serious consideration to updating the teaching and study of African Oral Literature (AOL). The review examined a number of factors, including the importance of AOL in Nigerian education, including the preservation of cultural heritage and the encapsulation of customs, beliefs, values, and histories of the country's ethnic communities. It also listed the duties of teachers in fostering inclusivity and diversity, mediating conflicts, and facilitating narratives. The article addressed obstacles faced by teachers when implementing technology, including limited access to technology, inadequate training and professional development, and resistance to change. It was determined that if teachers are well-versed in the usage of contemporary technology, teaching AOL can be more resourceful in the technological age. It was suggested that teachers, particularly those working in remote locations, receive thorough training in the use of contemporary technology to enhance the teaching of African oral literature for sociocultural development, among other goals.

Key words: African Oral Literature, Technology Driven Age, Teachers' Role, Challenges in Nigeria

Introduction

A crucial nexus between modern teaching techniques and traditional cultural preservation is covered in "Difficulties of Teaching African Oral Literature in Nigeria." A greater understanding of the necessity of using contemporary technology in teaching methods has

emerged in recent years, especially in the context of conserving and disseminating African oral literature.

According to Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2022), Nigeria provides a poignant case study for analysing the difficulties faced by teachers in this respect because of its rich tapestry of oral traditions and varied cultures. The use of contemporary technology, such as online platforms, digital archives, and video materials, has enormous potential to improve the teaching of African oral literature (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2022; Nyagu, 2017). This shift is not without its challenges, though. The digital gap, which shows itself as unequal pupil access to technology, is one of the main problems. There are differences in the educational experience since rural locations may lack the resources required, even though urban areas may have greater infrastructure. It is crucial to close this gap in order to guarantee that all pupils can benefit from technology in an inclusive manner (Konate, 2021).

Another big worry in the digital age is maintaining the authenticity of oral literature. The storytelling process can be altered by contemporary technology, which could weaken the subtleties and depth of culture preserved in oral traditions. For teachers, finding a balance between using technology for educational objectives and preserving the authenticity of oral literature becomes crucial (Ugwu, 2022).

Ugwu (2022) further explores the opposition that teachers can run against from pupils who are used to conventional teaching techniques. As technology advances, teachers must not only modify their instructional approaches but also devise efficacious strategies to foster students' interests and acceptance. In summary, the investigation into teaching African oral literature in Nigeria through the lens of contemporary technology is complex and multidimensional. In order to preserve the spirit of Africa's dynamic oral traditions while enhancing the educational experience, teachers must navigate issues

pertaining to accessibility, cultural preservation, and student acceptability.

The curiosity is piqued by effective teaching, which presents African oral literature in an interesting and captivating way. Teachers that pique students' attention with lively narrative, multimedia materials, or interactive exercises encourage curiosity and a desire to learn more about the subject. When teachers include interactive activities that promote active participation, student engagement rises. Students can actively participate with the oral literature through discussions, role-playing, and group projects, which helps them develop a deeper understanding of the cultural narratives (Konate, 2021).

African oral literature is made relevant and meaningful for pupils when it is taught in a way that makes connections to their daily lives. By connecting the dots between classic tales and students' real-world experiences, teachers show how these stories relate to current situations. Multimodal approaches and a variety of teaching techniques improve students' involvement. A wide range of students find the study of African oral literature more engaging and accessible when teachers incorporate visual aids, aural components, and hands-on activities. The historical, social, and cultural backgrounds that are required for students to comprehend African oral literature are provided by effective instruction. By enabling students to appreciate the relevance of stories within their cultural and historical frameworks, this contextual awareness improves appreciation. Students' participation can be increased by utilising technology, such as virtual guest speakers, online resources, and multimedia presentations. Sensible technology integration by teachers produces dynamic, immersive learning environments that strengthen students' bonds with African oral literature. Efficient pedagogy fosters critical thinking abilities by motivating learners to evaluate and comprehend spoken texts. Teachers who assist their pupils in challenging, assessing, and synthesising

material foster in them a more sophisticated understanding of the creative and cultural elements of the stories (Umar & Iyere, 2021).

By allowing students to express their thoughts and experiences with African oral literature, teachers can foster intercultural dialogue. By exchanging ideas, students from different backgrounds can better understand and appreciate one another in a collaborative learning environment (Umar, & Iyere, 2021). Well-considered evaluation techniques enhance students' interest and understanding. Students can demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of African oral literature when teachers provide assessments that foster creativity, contemplation, and a personal connection to the subject matter. A richer learning environment is produced by teachers who incorporate storytellers, cultural experts, or members of the local community. By giving students real-world experiences, community participation broadens their understanding of oral traditions outside of the classroom. A pleasant learning atmosphere is created when students' contributions to conversations, projects, or performances are acknowledged and celebrated. Students' involvement and desire for a deeper connection with African oral literature are increased when they perceive that their ideas are appreciated. Reflective practices are essential to effective teaching, as they allow teachers to evaluate their approaches and modify them in response to input from students (Usman, Ogunnaike, Muniyandi & Adenubi, 2021). This cycle of continual development makes sure that teaching strategies continue to be sensitive to the requirements and preferences of pupils.

African oral literature and its importance in Nigerian culture

African oral literature refers to the rich tradition of storytelling, poetry, proverbs, myths, legends, and other verbal art forms passed down through generations within African communities. Unlike written literature, which relies on books and manuscripts, oral literature is

transmitted verbally from one person to another. It is a dynamic and living tradition deeply rooted in the cultural, social, and historical contexts of diverse African societies (Nnyagu, 2017; Kaschula, 2013; Konate, 2021). Characteristics of African Oral Literature are: Orality and Performance which is characterized by its orality and performance. Stories, poems, and other forms of verbal art are often meant to be spoken, sung, or performed rather than read silently, Community-Centric which is inherently communal. It is shared within communities and often involves audience participation. Variety of Genres: The tradition includes a wide range of genres, such as folktales, epics, praise poems, riddles, and rituals. Storytellers, griots, and other oral performers play crucial roles in maintaining and disseminating cultural knowledge (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2022). Every genre has a distinct function in culture, education, or entertainment. Cultural Diversity: The great diversity of African cultures is reflected in the oral literature of the continent. The oral tradition as a whole benefits from the distinct stories, linguistic expressions, and artistic endeavours of various ethnic groups.

African oral literature is extremely important to Nigerian culture for a variety of reasons, including the preservation of cultural heritage, which suggests that African oral literature is the main source for maintaining and disseminating Nigerian cultural history (Dahiru, 2020). It contains the customs, beliefs, values, and histories of the many ethnic groups that make up the nation. It also focuses on the morality and values that are passed down orally, which is an important way that moral ideals, ethical concepts, and social norms are passed down. For instance, proverbs and folktales teach moral lessons and offer advice on appropriate behaviour in Nigerian communities. They also function as historical documentation, demonstrating how traditions function as a type of historical record. African oral literature becomes an effective tool for cultural education and socialisation through storytelling, songs,

and rituals. Griots and storytellers share tales that chronicle the hardships, victories, and historical events of Nigerian communities. They also contribute to a collective historical consciousness (Konate, 2021). It disseminates information about rites of passage, customs, and individual responsibilities in Nigerian communities.

The preservation of indigenous languages, which is directly related, is another advantage of AOL, because it is passed down orally. It reinforces the linguistic diversity within Nigeria and aids in the preservation and survival of various languages. It also fosters a sense of community bonding and unity, which has the added benefit of bringing people together. In addition to bringing people together and strengthening a sense of collective identity among Nigeria's different ethnic groups, shared narratives and communal storytelling events, also foster creativity, a form of artistic expression that highlights the inventiveness of Nigerian cultures. Folktales, myths, and songs are examples of oral traditions that incorporate poetic language, rhythm, and metaphors into their cultural heritage, adding to its aesthetic value. These narratives also serve to entertain and foster social cohesion. Events that tell stories frequently involve the audience and create a shared experience that improves interpersonal relationships. African oral literature provides a tool of cultural resistance and resilience in the face of outside influences and difficulties. It turns becomes a weapon for upholding and defending cultural values in a world that is changing. African oral literature is essentially an essential component of Nigeria's cultural fabric, helping to preserve the country's unique cultural tapestry, identity, and values. Beyond just literary expression, its significance affects the nation's artistic environment, educational system, and social cohesiveness (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2022).

Teachers' Responsibilities in teaching African Oral Literature

In order to help students explore and comprehend the rich cultural histories, customs, and values of Africa, teachers play a critical role as guides and facilitators in the teaching of African oral literature. When teaching AOL according to Obiweluozo (2011), Owiti, Onchera & Kulo (2014), Makena, (2022) and Mojapelo, (2023), teachers play several crucial roles that include but not limited to the following:

1. Teachers bridge the gap between students and the various cultural settings found in African oral literature by acting as cultural mediators. Through their assistance, students are able to gain a deeper knowledge of the historical, social, and cultural relevance of oral traditions, as well as the context in which they originated.

2. Narrative, teachers and facilitators provide storytelling sessions by allowing community members to share stories aloud or by sharing oral literature themselves. This gives pupils a first-hand encounter with the oral tradition. They support critical thinking and interpretation by assisting students in examining the themes, narrative devices, and symbolism in the stories.

3. Language and Communication Skills: by studying oral literature, teachers aim to enhance students' language and communication abilities. This involves improving vocabulary, comprehension, and listening abilities. To enhance their oral communication skills, students are encouraged to participate in debates, seminars, and presentations about oral literature.

4. Preservation and Documentation: Teachers can help to preserve oral literature by recording it and making sure that future generations carry on these traditions. They can also involve students in projects that involve gathering,

transcribing, and archiving oral narratives, so helping to preserve cultural heritage.

5. Interdisciplinary Connections: Teachers link the study of African oral literature to pertinent topics in history, anthropology, sociology, and other fields by integrating it into larger interdisciplinary frameworks. This method assists students in understanding how many facets of African culture and society are connected to oral literature.

6. Encouraging Diversity and Inclusivity: Teachers cultivate an atmosphere that is inclusive and recognises the diversity of African oral literature, which spans a vast array of languages, ethnicities, and geographical locations. They inspire students to investigate and value the variety of viewpoints and voices found in African oral traditions.

7. Evaluating and Interpreting Critically Instructing pupils in the critical analysis and interpretation of oral literature, teachers underscore the significance of cultural sensitivity and steer clear of prejudices. Students acquire the ability to recognise the nuanced meanings present in oral storytelling through homework and facilitated conversations.

Essentially, teachers are crucial in ensuring that African oral literature is a lively and significant component of the curriculum and that students recognise the diversity and depth of African culture it represents.

Challenges facing Teachers in incorporating Modern Technology in Teaching.

According to Chepkemboi (2018), integrating contemporary technology into teaching poses a number of difficulties for teachers. These difficulties may affect how well technology is integrated. Teachers have many obstacles when working beyond regular school hours.

Limited access to technology and uneven student access to technology make it difficult to adopt tech-based teaching strategies (Jacob & Musa, 2020). A digital divide may arise because certain pupils do not have consistent access to technology or the internet, particularly between members of urban elite communities and rural impoverished agrarian communities. Lack of professional development and training. According to Dahiru (2020), many teachers may not have gotten enough instruction on how to use technology in the classroom. The swift advancement of technology necessitates continuous professional growth, which could be deficient in some educational environments. Opposition to change is also an issue of concern. Fear of the unknown or a preference for conventional teaching techniques may cause certain teachers to oppose the adoption of new technologies (Jacob & Musa, 2020). It takes a mentality change and a supporting institutional culture to overcome this reluctance (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2022).

Problems with old hardware, sluggish internet access, or inadequate software can all contribute to a lacklustre technological infrastructure in schools, which can make it difficult to seamlessly incorporate technology into the classroom. Due to their busy schedules and constrained class hours, teachers frequently struggle with time constraints (Kiura, 2019). Effective technology integration may necessitate more time for planning, executing, and troubleshooting—all of which can be difficult. There may be differences in the digital literacy of teachers and students. While pupils could have varied levels of experience with digital tools, some teachers might feel less comfortable utilising technology (Skobo, 2020). This disparity could affect how well technology integrates. Teachers may be concerned that bringing technology into the classroom could cause pupils to become distracted and behave in an off-task manner and develop necessary applications (Kiiru, 2021; Okueso & Osikomaiya, 2017).

It might be difficult to strike a balance between paying attention to instructional content and avoiding distractions. Expenses and financial limitations: Purchasing and sustaining modern technology can be costly. Financial limitations could restrict the resources available for buying hardware, obtaining software licences, and keeping up the required infrastructure. When employing technology in the classroom, teachers need to be mindful of issues related to data security and privacy. Adoption of some digital tools may be impeded by worries about the security of sensitive student data (Dahiru, 2020; Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2022; Skobo, 2020). Constant technological evolution: Due to the quick speed at which technology is developing, educators must always stay current on their knowledge and skills. Keeping up with new technologies can be difficult and time-consuming.

Value of Oral Tradition in preserving cultural Heritage

The importance of oral tradition in maintaining cultural legacy and advancing indigenous knowledge is highlighted, underscoring the significant influence spoken stories, customs, and practices have in forming a community's identity and knowledge.

As Keepers of Cultural Memory: By conserving the collective experiences, histories, and identities of communities, oral traditions act as keepers of cultural memory. Generations transmit information through songs, rituals, and storytelling that might not be recorded in writing. Oral traditions serve as the main channel for the transmission of indigenous knowledge (Ghouti, 2015). Oral histories frequently incorporate practical skills, agricultural techniques, medicinal practices, and environmental information, so guaranteeing the preservation of invaluable expertise (Finnegan, 2012). Oral traditions possess a dynamic and adaptable nature that enables communities to react to alterations in their surroundings and situations (Kaschula, 2013).

Oral tales' adaptability allows for the integration of fresh information while upholding the fundamental cultural values. *Language Preservation:* The preservation of indigenous languages is greatly aided by oral traditions. A community's linguistic diversity and vitality are enhanced by the widespread transmission of oral narratives in its original tongues. Oral tradition is a means of promoting a sense of cultural identity and belonging. People can strengthen a common knowledge of who they are and where they originate from by connecting to their roots through stories, myths, and rituals (Skobo, 2020).

Additionally, oral tradition serves as a *medium for the transfer of moral and ethical principles*. Moral lessons are frequently imparted by proverbs, folktales, and myths to assist people in understanding their place in the community and making moral decisions. Rites and Ceremonies: Oral traditions are closely entwined with many indigenous rights and ceremonies. Symbolic actions, chants, and storytelling are used in these ceremonies to convey knowledge and reinforce traditional values while bringing the community together. *Ecological Wisdom:* Oral traditions frequently contain indigenous wisdom pertaining to sustainability and the environment. Wisdom regarding ecological balance, resource management, and peaceful coexistence with nature may be found in oral storytelling. *Resistance to Cultural Erosion:* Oral tradition emerges as a potent weapon against cultural erosion in the face of globalisation and cultural uniformity. It aids communities in preserving their uniqueness and fending off the extinction of customs and knowledge (Skobo, 2020).

Furthermore, as an example of how different aspects of culture are interwoven, oral tradition combines language, dance, music, and visual arts. This connectivity strengthens ties within a community and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage. *Living legacy:* Cultural legacy becomes a dynamic, living thing when it is transmitted orally. Instead of remaining constant, it changes

with every telling, adjusting to modern situations while keeping the core of traditional values and knowledge.

Role of Teachers in Teaching African Oral Literature

Teachers are essential in teaching African oral literature, and their duties don't end with standard classroom education. Here is a thorough examination of the duties and expectations placed on teachers in this situation. *Cultural competence:* It is expected of teachers to have a thorough awareness of the various African cultures that are portrayed in oral literature. This includes having an understanding of many ethnic groups, languages, customs, and historical settings. Research and preparation: In order to fully comprehend the particular oral traditions they are teaching, teachers should conduct in-depth research (Umar & Iyere, 2021; Danner & Musa, 2019).

Studying myths, folktales, proverbs, and other oral literature in the context of the cultures they represent requires an understanding of their cultural and historical background (Chepkemboi, 2018). *Selecting Appropriate Texts:* Teachers need to take great care when choosing oral texts that meet both the needs of their students' learning objectives and their sensitivities. When selecting resources, they must to take the pupils' age, cultural background, and level of language skill into account. The establishment of inclusive learning settings that honour the variety of African oral literature falls under the purview of teachers. They ought to design an environment where students are at ease investigating and valuing other cultural viewpoints.

Language abilities Development: Using ICT technologies to expose students to the linguistic diversity of African oral literature, teachers can help students strengthen their language abilities (Sani, Alabi, Danjuma, & Momohjimoh, 2021). As part of this, teachers should assist students in deciphering idioms, proverbs, and other language nuances used in oral tales. *Interactive Teaching Techniques:* Effective and

dynamic teaching techniques are crucial. To make learning engaging and memorable, educators should use role-playing, storytelling, group discussions, and other interactive techniques. Teaching African oral literature requires teachers to approach the subject with both cultural sensitivity and respect. They ought to steer clear of clichés and advance knowledge that recognises the richness and diversity of the civilizations that are reflected in the oral traditions (Umar & Iyere, 2021).

Teachers can increase the impact of African oral literature by incorporating it into other topics, like social studies, geography, and history. This multidisciplinary method offers a deeper comprehension of the cultural setting. Teachers should encourage students to critically analyse and understand spoken literature as a way to foster critical thinking skills. In order to promote a better comprehension of the content, this entails assisting students in recognising themes, symbolism, and cultural components within the narratives. Teachers can engage in community involvement by working with storytellers, cultural experts, or people of the community to enhance the educational process (Sani, Alabi, Danjuma, & Momohjimoh, 2021).

Engaging the community improves authenticity and gives students first-hand knowledge from people with a close relationship to the oral traditions. Teachers must provide suitable evaluation methods that gauge their students' comprehension of the literary and cultural facets of African oral literature. This could involve tasks, demonstrations, and evaluations that surpass simple memorization. Teachers should foster their pupils' creativity by encouraging them to produce original oral narratives or adaptations. This encourages a sense of ownership and ties students to the oral tradition by enabling them to actively interact with the material (Usman, Ogunnaike, Muniyandi & Adenubi, 2021).

Summary and Conclusion on the place of Teacher in teaching Oral Literature

In the classroom, teachers are essential as facilitators of cultural appreciation and understanding. Here is a thorough analysis of their significance in this capacity:

Teachers act as cultural intermediaries, guiding pupils through and assisting them in comprehending the nuances of many cultures. They fill in the gaps between what pupils already know and the range of cultural viewpoints that are included in the curriculum. Teachers play the role as cultural awareness promoters by introducing pupils to a range of cultural customs, histories, and viewpoints. Students who are exposed to other lifestyles are better able to approach them with empathy and open minds. Teachers actively combat prejudice and stereotypes by giving students accurate and insightful information about a variety of cultures.

They promote a more open-minded and knowledgeable perspective in pupils by assisting them in challenging stereotypes and stimulating critical thinking. It is the duty of teachers to establish inclusive learning environments that make students from a variety of backgrounds feel appreciated and valued. This entails giving each student a sense of belonging and introducing a variety of cultural topics into the curriculum. Teachers facilitate cross-cultural interactions in the classroom as intercultural facilitators. This can involve planning cultural events, bringing in guest speakers, or using multimedia materials to introduce real cultural components into the classroom.

Teachers cultivate a feeling of interest and inquiry about various cultures by promoting curiosity and inquiry. Students can ask questions, participate in discussions, and respectfully and genuinely investigate cultural differences in a secure environment that they have created. Teachers serve as a bridge between the curriculum and students' lives, highlighting the practical significance of cultural

appreciation and the relevance of cultural awareness outside of the classroom by tying academic subject to real-world experiences. By exhibiting cultural awareness in their interactions and methods of instruction, teachers provide an example for students to follow. Their actions serve as an example for students, fostering courteous communication and favourable views towards diversity.

Recommendations

1. In order to enhance instruction and learning, teachers must have enough training in the use of technology.
2. Application development to improve the learning experience when instructing AOL
3. Teachers ought to be more engaged in teaching about African cultures beyond Nigeria.
4. The literature curriculum should emphasise the value of acquiring oral traditional culture in order to foster national integration.

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