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**A MULTI-NODAL APPROACH TO TEACHING
LITERATURE-IN-FRENCH AT TERTIARY LEVELS**

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A MULTI-NODAL APPROACH TO TEACHING LITERATURE-IN-FRENCH AT TERTIARY LEVELS

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to propose solutions to the problems posed by the teaching of Literature-in-French to the Anglophone learner who has not gained mastery of the appropriate collocations, registers, jargons and expressions that can adequately describe an experience, an emotion or a philosophical position as to be able to analytically engage in the debates or polemics raised by the author of a literary text.

Methodology: The methodology used is explanatory and historical in which the brief account of French language teaching and its importance to the Nigerian economy is traced; the foundational teaching at the secondary and teacher training levels and French teaching for special purposes are fundamental to mastery and ability to communicate and engage in literary analyses, which is the major discourse. The teaching of French is explored and the practice of traditional approaches is juxtaposed with the innovative multi-nodal approach, developed from the author's over thirty years of tertiary teaching.

Findings: The findings are that a multi-nodal approach to teaching Literature-in-French to Anglophone learners will improve their linguistic and communicative abilities and is a predictor of better achievement in French.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: This research has proposed a multi-nodal technique for teaching Nigerian students whose limited lexical and syntactical competencies in French do not allow for elaborate analysis of literary subjects. The implication for teaching literature-in-French is that it will be theory based, the type that falls within the experience of learners and that they can discuss with ease. The multi-nodal approach comprises of other innovative activities like translation, comparative study, computer-aided learning, students' participation in roles plays, skits and in particular the use of easy-to-read texts. All these activities combined should enable an all-round achievement in French language and literary performance.

Keywords: *Multi-nodal approach, Translation, Comparative study, Interaction.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of French to Nigeria in the early sixties, the status and teaching of French as a second language have evolved from a political instrument and has taken on more social and economic relevance. Nigeria enjoys political and fiscal benefits from her relationship with France and other francophone countries. The importance of French to our economy and relevance to our national development are no longer controversial as both military and civil government have often flirted with the policy to make it a second official language. Nigeria is flanked by francophone countries, which implies that effective communication and good diplomatic, social and economic relations with the countries would be contingent on good teaching of French Language in our schools (Omolewa, 1978).

Departments of French studies in Nigerian Universities have trained many professionals for the past five decades, those who have occupied and still occupy high cadre positions nationally and internationally. At the beginning of French studies in Nigeria, students enjoyed French Government scholarships to do linguistic immersion in France. The initial small number was easy to cope with, however, with the increasing student population, a huge subvention was needed to keep the programme going, therefore the option of sending students to Francophone countries in West Africa and subsequently creating an Inter-University Centre for French Studies, popularly called French Village at Badagry in Nigeria in order to simulate a Francophone setting; the town being on the route to West African countries (Afolabi, 2018). A memorandum of understanding with France led to the establishment of the Nigeria French Language Village at the border town of Badagry, in 1992 as an Inter-University Centre for French teaching. The Centre has catered for the teeming interested undergraduate learners of French, who influx from tertiary institutions to participate in the Language Immersion Programme, which has been put in place to replace the former heavily subsidised one year abroad (in France or in Francophone countries). Included in the activities of the Village is curriculum customised to meet specified needs and designed as French for Special Purposes: for Teachers' Workshops, Training of the staff of the Foreign Affairs Academy, the Military, Pre-degree, beginners with specialised needs etc. (Thanasoulas, 2001).

Though French was introduced into the school curriculum, decades after English Language had gained a consolidated foothold, the process of acquisition as second foreign language is rather slow and unsteady. For about thirty years since the first awareness of its existence and informal presence as a school subject in some institutions of learning, French was only included in the revised 1998 National Policy on Education. It is hoped that with this great stride there would be a structured implementation that would enhance considerable improvement in the teaching of French in schools. What might be of prime importance is the training of teachers for both the primary and secondary school levels, since the major problem has been presenting a justifiable number of candidates for the SSCE, NECO and GCE examinations. Students of the colleges of education are sometimes obliged to study the French language as a subsidiary of their two teaching subjects. This effort provided more learners of the language at the tertiary level, many of whom are lost into the administrative workforce because a high number of the graduates want other jobs like translation and interpretation, diplomatic and foreign mission services, where they hope to make more money than in teaching. Though the current National Policy on Education mandates French

teaching at the higher Basic classes and Junior secondary schools, many schools still do not have French on their school programme because of lack of teachers (Faniran, 2016).

French Teaching at Tertiary Level

Only those who are sufficiently motivated may opt to teach French or proceed to a higher level of learning. Some researchers (Araromi (1987); (Ajiboye (1993); Ajibade (1994) have adduced this to poor teaching methods, inadequate curriculum methods, learner's motivation, and subsequent dropping out due to poor academic achievement or gender disparity. These have been observed problems related to French teaching. French language is apparently disadvantaged compared to English, which Nigeria received has a legacy from Great Britain. The indisputable relevance of English as a status forger since the colonial era and its classroom use for all subjects explain its rapid growth. It is then useful to look into language needs as justification for its teaching and status upgrading. For instance, it is the language need that should determine the curriculum content and of course learning outcomes, therefore sufficiently motivated learners should achieve better as they are made to realize the social and economic importance of learning French. As observed by Araromi (1987:10/11):

poor teaching may be a direct result of lack of experience, poor qualification and lack of dedication to duty on the part of the teacher. All these factors contribute in no small measure to poor achievement of the pupils in French. However, apart from teaching characteristics, pupil's own characteristic also contributes to pupil's effectiveness in French. These include motivation and positive attitude on the part of the learner, if from the onset pupils are motivated to learn French they will certainly perform well in the subject. A student who feels that learning French will make him obtain a good job in the future or one who feels learning French will be useful towards his future career will certainly want to study the subject with zeal. In the same vein the learner who develops a positive attitude towards the subject from the beginning will be highly motivated to study the subject.

This assumption has not taken into consideration the cognitive competence of the learner. Tertiary students who did not get admitted into the course of their choice resort to learning French to escape boredom and staying at home. From the writer's experience at the French Village, some students cannot write or speak English correctly and this weakness eventually reflects in their performance in the practice of French. In addition, a major constraint to French learning is the variations that exist; Africa counts as many as eighteen francophone countries that use French as official language. It is strongly influenced by local languages so much so that a kind of dialectisation of the language has occurred across the "Francophonie"; the main medium of learning being the school setting. Furthermore, social contacts have also contributed to variations of French spoken in Francophone countries.

As Carole de Feral 1994: 7) observes :

Le véhicule privilégié du français en Afrique depuis la colonisation qu'elle fut belge ou française est l'école. Il est cependant maintenant un autre mode d'accès au français, non institutionnel: la rue

The privileged medium of access to French in Africa since colonization, whether Belgian or French has been the school. There is now another medium of access to non-institutional French: the street.

In Nigeria, French learning has been largely restricted to classroom and since the classroom is not corroborated by social contacts it is difficult for learners to retain the content of learning for long, though it is an Immersion Centre that simulates the francophone milieu. This appears a tall dream; nevertheless, the Nigeria French Language Village has incorporated excursions to the neighbouring countries of the Republics of Benin and Togo on the programme of study. It is often not practicable to make students speak French all the time, in reality they are often caught forgetfully chatting away in their maternal languages. Sometimes some notions are better communicated with students in the language they know best, their maternal languages or first languages and in this case, English, which is the common language to all. And as some psychologists like Grosjean (1982) have discovered, bilingualism often improve perception and cognitive performance. It is quite certain that beyond classroom learning, audio-visual instructional model provides unlimited opportunity for learning and practice of the language if appropriately deployed.

DOES COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH INCLUDE TEACHING LITERATURE-IN-FRENCH?

The recent emphasis on communicative approach has often given rise to confusion about teaching literature-in-French and composition writing and their relevance in teaching French as Foreign Language, if all that learners need is just to communicate and be understood. In addition, students do not like reading much and they tend to write what they say. Internet navigation and texting have drastically reduced the quality of syntax and autography of most languages and the same factors that are responsible for common errors in English like : “She did not came, He have not come, I did not saw it or my eyes cannot take it” are responsible for such flaws in French. Transliteration makes code switching difficult and error loaded. As submitted by Ajiboye (1993: 6-21).

Aussi, la pédagogie du FLE est-elle pour ainsi dire invitée à ne pas confondre le français oral avec le français écrit. Même dans le choix des textes, il est hautement recommandé que l’enseignement soit cohérent, à savoir reconnaître les textes mieux adaptés à l’usage oral qu’à l’usage écrit et vice versa et profiter de cette connaissance. C’est ce principe qui fait que les grammairiens s’empressent les deux. Nous citerons pour preuve la Grammaire française de base surnommée “Feux Vert de Souet A. et al. publiée par Didier/Hatier (1981) et un ouvrage beaucoup plus connu au Nigeria, Grammaire pratique du français d’aujourd’hui de Mauger chez Hachette (1968).

Also the pedagogy of FLE (French as Foreign Language) is not expected to confuse oral French with the written form. Even in the choice of texts, it is highly recommended that teaching be coherent, that is it should take cognizance of the texts that are better adapted for oral use than for written and vice versa and should benefit from this fact. It is this principle that made grammarians readily separate the two. We would cite as proof Grammaire française de base nicknamed “Green Light” by Souet A. et.al published by

Didier/Hatier (1981) and a work better known in Nigeria Grammaire Pratique du français d'aujourd'hui by Mauger published by Hachette (1968).

The texts mentioned in the quote are not specifically for literary study. However, according to the quote, it then means that in order to teach Literature-in-French appropriate texts have to be selected to enhance the acquisition of written skills. The peculiarity of French teaching in an English speaking country calls for a methodology of literature that takes into consideration the intervening variables that might improve or mar learning.

WHY TEACH LITERATURE-IN-FRENCH?

Young learners should be introduced to literature as soon as they start reading. Literature has been described as any written material; however, it is known that literary studies include the study of the genres of poetry, prose and drama which are works of creativity and imagination that deploy the aesthetics of idioms, imagery, rhythms, metrical patterns, figures of speech to create a cathartic effect and varying reader responses. Aristotle had prescribed the three unities that should define drama: the unity of time, place and action, these have guided European dramatists all through the Classical period to the Romantic era. For each literary period there have been rules guiding the content and style of writers. For instance, in the eighteenth century French Literature, the philosophers called the Enlightened ones, opposed the status quo established by the classical poets of the preceding century, who patronized the royalty, they vehemently opposed the *ancien régime*, the moribund monarchy and clamoured for change in view of the excesses of the latter. Their iconoclastic writings led to the Great French Revolution of 1789. The English Metaphysical poets were guided on the other hand by their beliefs in God and the sentimentality of love and relationships. For each literary epoch there were stipulated styles and values. The Romantic writers in all of Europe, from Germany through France to England and vice versa, shared similar thoughts and forms of writing, emphasizing beauty in language, sensitivity, lyrical forms of personal emotions and deep thoughts about nature and life.

It is against this background that African writers, who were trained by the European cultures and aesthetics have developed their own styles, yet maintaining the peculiarities and differences, since literature is borne out of experiences, individual or collective, African writing therefore reflects the culture, the superstitions, the taboos, the traditions, the history of enslavement, of colonization and the woes of unfulfilled hopes and aspiration of the independence that the forefathers laboured to accomplish. Hence, literature must be studied within the purview of its motivation, birth and creation.

For the child as well as the adult, literature enables the learning of the four skills of: Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking. In second language learning as in French, when learners read out and are made by the facilitator to produce correct phonology repeatedly, they listen to other learners, they can subsequently write in correct autography and then speak correctly. It must be stated that it is only through reading good literature materials that grammatical competence is gained and vocabulary is expanded. Of course, someone may talk about the media, yet quite often the colloquial styles of the Radio and TV do not favour serious academic work and may largely have an unpleasant effect on the quality of education in Nigeria. The four skills constitute a chain in language study. A good literature material should fulfil all these functions in learners so that

they can acquire high intellectual powers from what they learn from it. Therefore, such texts should be carefully chosen and not the cheap sex-thrillers that litter the streets.

Cultures are also mediated through literary texts that focus on them. Texts may be social tableaux that describe societies and cultures against the background of the writer's imagination. Depending on the intention of the writer the work may serve the purpose of heightening the reader's emotional and aesthetic responses. Young people need to develop their affective abilities through what they read and how they are guided to react to the issues raised by an author. It should be firmly reiterated that literature has an immense potentiality to make positive changes in the lives of readers. Young Black people who have read Alex Haley's *Roots* or watched the film should not want to banter away about their origins. In addition, feminists' writings have now become so popular that issues of gender parity and equality have become prominent in educational setting, the social life and polity such that some universities in Nigeria have set up Centre for Gender Studies. Literature is a change agent; it was meant to be since the inception of writing. Many writers set out from the start to be committed to change by making a case of contemporary issues. The 17th Century French dramatists, Moliere wrote the set of plays tagged 'Comédies de mœurs' which were intended to correct vices in the society. Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Femi Osofisan, Chukwuemeka Ike and female writers like Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta are Nigerians whose writings are protests as well as entertaining.

SOME METHODOLOGIES ADAPTABLE FOR TEACHING LITERATURE-IN-FRENCH

Both Jeanne-Antide Huynh and Isabelle Pecheyran (1995) define didactic as "La didactique désigne la réflexion sur ce qu'on propose d'enseigner et les moyens efficaces d'y parvenir en fonction de son public" (it is in short reflecting on what one wants to teach and the effective ways of arriving at it to meet the target audience.) In this wise a number of methods have been developed for teaching French as Foreign Language.

AUDIOLINGUAL

Dada (1993) identified the contribution of the work of the psychologist B.F. Skinner to the teaching method called "audiolingue" or "audio-orale" (Besse 1993), popularly referred to as audiolingual in English. It is a method that emphasizes aural and oral skills. Language is taught mainly in terms of phonological, grammatical and lexical structures. This method relies heavily on dialogue with activities like mimicry, memorization, listening and speaking. This is a very effective method for teaching French literature. Through assigning roles to students for a play or for prose or poetry reading, students listen and codify speeches that have been memorized while they are also permitted to have their own turn to make such discourses from texts to facilitate their oral performance. This method is based on structural linguistics and the theory of behavioural psychology – language like much of human behaviour takes the form of repeated responses to similar stimuli. Its limitation lies in not doing justice to the function of language for the purposes of social interaction.

COGNITIVE APPROACHES

Researchers have also identified cognitive approach. (Dada 1993; 20-30) citing Carroll stated that

L'apprentissage d'une langue est un processus qui implique l'acquisition d'un contrôle conscient des éléments phonologiques, grammaticaux et lexicaux de la langue cible, principalement à travers des études et analyses de ces modèles en tant qu'un corps de connaissance. La théorie attache plus d'important à la compréhension par l'apprenant des structures de la langue étrangère qu'à sa facilité dans l'usage plus qu'on persuade que le débit se développe dans des situations signifiantes après la bonne compréhension des structures.

The teaching of a language is the product that implies the acquisition of a deliberate control of phonological, grammatical and lexical elements of the target language principally through the studies and analyses of those models as a body of knowledge. The theory attaches more importance to learners' comprehension of structures of foreign language than to its ease during use as one is persuaded that the flow will increase in meaningful situations after a good understanding of the structures.

STRUCTURAL GLOBAL AUDIO-VISUAL (SGAV)

This method as elaborated by Besse (1993) is a teaching methodology of modern languages design by P. Rivenc and P. Gunerina. A. Landery and Renard (1977) explains that it is a structured activity that requires perception, progression in the hierarchy of successive structures based on operations and creativity of learner; natural learning of speech from authentic situations and targeting precisely learners' language needs. The following procedures are carried out.

1. The teacher projects the filmstrip, video or slides several times. The visual material should be an adaptation of the literary text on students' curriculum it could also be a whole film based on a book being studied.
2. Explanation is carried out in an interactive session. The teacher asks questions on the contents. Syntactic groups are highlighted with much explanation or translation.
3. Learners repeat the semantic and syntactic groups.
4. Application: Projection of filmstrip/video/slides. The students comment. They identify grammatical structures and they form their own sentences based on the structures. They discuss with the teacher and hold group discussion on subjects raised from the film.

This is a highly recommended approach because most learning is acquired by the visual mode. Most of the texts for Literature-in-French are available on filmstrips, particularly those by French writers, while there may be few African writings filmed. It must be stated that these are the times of home videos and a lot of films are made from which students may not learn as they have not been designed to be resource materials for language improvement. Most of the difficult classical texts by Jean Poquelin Moliere, Pierre de Corneille, Jean Racine or by writers like Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert and others have been made into films.

Francophone writers like Sembène Ousmane have had their works made into films; novels like *Le Mandat*, *Le Docker Noir*, *Xala* exist as films. Sembène Ousmane was a novelist as well as a Film Maker, who spent his resources to make a legacy in the film industry. These films serve several purposes for the Anglophone learner: s/he sees the visual display of the culture and civilization of

the society and environment of the writer; the oral practice is enhanced by listening to the language spoken in context and the peripetias which constitute the nucleus of the intrigues are grafted into the memory by the acting. There are also different levels of the language use to be deduced like the colloquial, the familiar or the sophisticated high-level Parisian French.

ENGAGING THE MULTI-NODAL APPROACH

The concept of multi-nodal approach developed by this Researcher typifies a study that enables the grafting of several approaches to the central task of the interpretation and study of any given literary text. They are known approaches, which have been used for about the past three decades by this writer, which nonetheless come up with newer dimensions of use as each literary material differs in scope, intention and style and which mandate a peculiar theoretical base. The essence is to deploy a set of innovative approaches contingent on the interpretative requirement of the literary material; to lead learners to appreciate literature not only for its aesthetic values, but for its cathartic effect and also to establish a relevance in social and cultural studies for the purpose of engendering social change in individuals and in the society. Hence much depends on the teacher who should innovatively recourse to the use of any of the approaches as the need may be for any given literary text.

ADOPTING A LITERARY THEORY.

A theory gives a background to the placement of a literary text according to its thematic preoccupation, style, period and historicity. Interpreting a text according to a theory enables a directional analysis and does not imply a uni-directional or monolithic interpretation because there is a multiplicity of theories. The researcher has had to teach a postgraduate class in which theories were taught and students were required to align their analysis in compliance with the requirements of the literary, hence students worked on the theories of realism, socio-criticism, structuralism, post-structuralism, postmodernism, feminism, gender theory, psychological and psychoanalytic theories etc. Theories are fundamentally readers' responses to literary texts. Adopting a theory comes after doing a thorough interpretation of a text. Parkinson and Thomas (2000) present three stages of interpretation that may bring us to identifying an appropriate theory with which to describe a text. They wrote:

Perhaps the most satisfying from the teacher's point of view is the approach typified by the work of Ricoeur (1981). Ricoeur sees the process on interpretation in three stages: first comes a through and detailed description of the text, its linguistic features and its broader structure, with attention to content as well as to form; this is carried out in as objective a manner as possible. Then follows the actualization of the world of the text, that is, creating the text by engaging creatively with it in the process of reading. Finally, there is stage in which the text is reflected on and existentially and personally appropriate. 'The work thus draws us into it, distancing us from ourselves, but only to deepen our self-understanding by reflecting aspects of and possibilities for ourselves that we might otherwise never encounter'

LITERARY INTERPRETATION ACTIVITIES

Ricoeur's approach is not a deviation from the norm as most teachers would recognise in his three stages their classroom practices; nevertheless, the suggestions below provide additional facilities to make the teaching process participatory, interesting, captivating and memorable. To aid interpretation this writer suggests that the teacher does a prior reading that allows cutting up the literary text (novel, play, poem) into thematic or stylistic segments for discussion. S/He identifies the main thrust of the material before an attempt to teach it in the class; reading in class is useful for the aspects of meaning and phonology yet these are not sufficient in literary study at the tertiary levels. The teacher studies beforehand the technicalities that aid in the analysis and talking with precision about the text being studied – language, figures of speech and their aesthetic effects and cultural norms that are remote to the foreign language learners. Parkinson and Brian propose a "Pre-teaching."

Pre-teaching means teaching selected language from the text - mostly vocabulary, sometimes a few grammatical or other features – before the learners are exposed to the text itself.

They raise concerns about inhibiting reading skills, which literature is supposed to enhance. It should also be added that the suspense is eliminated from the work if the teacher had done a complete work, s/he should rather whet the appetite of the students. The Foreign learners of French find the language work difficult and the teacher must necessarily ease it out.

STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION: PAIR AND GROUP WORK, EXPOSÉ AND ROLE-PLAYING.

Students prefer to be spoon fed as it makes their work easier. The Foreign French learner needs the encouragement and the teacher's notes are a useful reference and reminder. It seems easier for the teacher to get into the class and dictate the notes without serious explanation since the students may not easily grasp the high-level French this is the reason some innovations about forcing students to participate will be needful. They should remember better if they have had to participate in a short scene acting, group work and class presentation, and reading aloud with intermittent explanation than all the notes put together. These activities enhance mental performance and the recall of the salient parts of the study much more than personal reading or personal research online. Though very useful, online navigation may not replace the classroom contacts and performance as over seventy percent of what is seen dramatized are much more easily remembered. According to Doosur Ashaver and Sandra Mwuese Igyuve (2013) cited Swank (2011);

... stressing the effectiveness of visual materials in learning, estimated that about 40% of our concepts are based upon visual experience, 25% upon auditory, 17% on tactile, 15% upon miscellaneous organic sensation and 3% upon taste smell. With the above assertion, it becomes clearer why audio-visual materials are important in the teaching and learning processes. This is because they bring the different senses contributions together 100% clarity (45).

They concluded under the rubric that Audio-visual resources can therefore contribute to the clarity of information presented by allowing students to visualize what is learned. Thus, the saying:

What I hear, I forget

What I see, I remember

What I do, I know (46)

Pair and group work should enforce the participation of all students in the class, meanwhile if the groups are larger all the members may not be enlisted in the discussions as some may abscond. The Researcher devised a method by which each group does a presentation and members are scored based on the questions that they are asked in defence of the exposé of the group. In the long run the group members do not all score the same marks and no one feels cheated or gets away with undeserved marks. Role-playing may not only be a methodology used for children or secondary school students. After all Departments for Performing Arts in Tertiary Institutions practice stage drama. Short plays may be adapted from texts. The writer engaged students at the Nigeria French Village in role-plays and students were scored in conference with another lecturer. Students were encouraged to develop their own creative writing which they eventually staged. This methodology infuses life and vivacity into the texts, such that students readily remember what they have seen dramatized.

Unfortunately, many contemporary texts do not exist as films; writers have to get motivated to turn their works into films and deploy resources for their production with the hope that they can profit from their investments. None the less, students could adapt and write portions of a novel into a play, a discursive mode in order to improve their communicative and writing skills, after all they are making adaptation from a published text and that facilitates their own composition based on an existing material.

COMPUTER-AIDED LEARNING

A lot of resources are available on the internet for students' use, including the aforementioned films. In addition, Susan Hockey (1992) considers computer as useful in literature and language study to perform mechanical operations such as counting, sorting, filing and searching information. She wrote that computer-aided stylometry is used to investigate the style of an author, to compare texts in order to determine authorship. Vocabulary of authors like Jane Austen has been studied in order to determine the idiolect of the characters. The computer has become an invaluable tool for lexicography, metrical analysis and sound patterns; the study of alliterations in languages and texts can be put into the computer and thus provide machine-readable texts for use. This is a rather sophisticated approach.

Abimbade (1979) identified two types of Computer Based Instructions as Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) and Computer Managed Instruction (CMI) in which the computer helps teachers administer and guide the instructional process. Abimbade and Egunjobi (2003) investigated the efficacy of two Computer-Assisted Instructional modes (tutorial and drill and practice modes) on learners' performance in practical geography and reported improved performance of students exposed to Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI). Conclusions from the various research conducted are that learners improve significantly on achievement tests when they have been trained using the CAI and they are better motivated to carry out individual work. The limitation for Nigerian lecturers and students of literature is that there is no access to programmes for computer aided stylometry or metrical analysis to support the classroom teaching of poetry and versification.

COMPARATIVE APPROACH

Furthermore, deploying a comparative approach to the study of Literature-in-French can be of tremendous effect, because it enables students fall back on other texts and disciplines in order to associate ideas with the on-going study. This approach mediates in the cognitive performance of learners as they associate ideas, their vocabulary becomes expanded and their exposure to more socio-cultural values enrich their worldview and ability to discourse on various subjects. They do not in any case treat a text as an individual and isolated item that has no bearing on any other aspects of life. Students are encouraged to deem a piece of writing as an offshoot from the author's social experiences and interactions with the society. Hence, the critique of each text considers the imprints of the culture of a people, their psychology, knowledge, their vices, their norms, collective conscience and spirituality and this scope is further expanded when the text is studied based on the approach of intertextuality ; though this may not be necessary for all the texts that are studied. Some authors have been known to do extensive description of places, historical events, festivals, landscapes, surgical procedures, medical science, oceanography or areas of human life, with which learners can identify from their background. For instance, in writing his novel *Germinal*, Emile Zola had to live for a short while in the miners' town in the North of France in order to adopt the appropriate registers for mining and do an on-the-ground, true-to-life mixed with imagination story on miners' deplorable life. Gustave Flaubert did a detailed description of the surgery performed on the amputation of Hippolyte, a character who had a gangrenous wound in the novel, *Madame Bovary*.

Apart from a comparative approach of texts across geographical and linguistic divides the kingpin of this approach is guiding students to be able to establish a continuum between the literary world and the actual world, thus links may be developed with other domains of learning like the sciences, psychology, economy, anthropology, religion, medicine or technology as the need may be and they could study how they relate to give meaning to the literary work and the vision of the writer. The approach is very practical and discursive in that students may talk freely and thus enhance their communicative competence through sharing varied experiences. It is during such oral presentations and discussions that the language theories and structures that have been learnt in the grammar class are put into practice, hence there is no dichotomy in the language and literature as there is an interplay that enhances the student's overall performance.

TRANSLATION APPROACH

In the same vein the translation approach can also aid meaningful and long-range effective teaching and learning of French literature. Segments of very difficult texts may be translated by the lecturer in class, who makes them interesting by rendering portions in simpler French or in English language that they understand better. This approach is vital and needful for the teaching of classical texts or other difficult texts in French. The classical texts like Jean Poquelin's Moliere's plays like *l'Avare* that was at a time on the School Certificate syllabus posed a lot of difficulties to both teachers and students and may be a major reason for scrapping Literature-in-French at the secondary level. At the tertiary levels, teaching Classical literature can be very dicey as the old French like the Shakespearean English poses a lot of problem to those who have never been initiated into it. Meanwhile the texts provide material for the study of etymology and language

development as well as literary history. Reading such texts in class mandates impromptu explanation, which the lecturer who has done a previous preparation can easily do in English. In any case, many of the books have been translated and when students are encouraged to read the texts in both languages, they have a fuller and clearer understanding. The limitation is that they may end up transliterating their answers to questions during examinations and may also not code-switch to think in French. Notwithstanding the performances of students are improved when they are able to conceptualise in the language that they understand and then formulate their own words to express their thoughts in the newly acquired language (Siwoku-Awi, 2016). Osgood (cited by Steinberg, 1982) in his Compound-Coordinate Bilingual theory proposed translation as key to the processing of words in the second language.

USE OF EASY-TO-READ TEXTS

Some of the classical texts have been retold in modern French and lecturers can make use of such to teach fundamentals of literature as much as they would with the original and complete texts. The handicap is that most of the texts are not available in Nigeria and students have to resort to photocopying them wherever they are found. In recent times internet resources are freely and largely available, yet many still come to class without texts and unprepared. On the request of a colleague in a Nigerian University, who had taught students in Gender Studies English Department, with the translation of the novel *Modukpe: The Shattered Dream*, this Researcher (the translator) attempted to place order for the original copy of the text *Le rêve brisé* which had been approved for translation by Harmattan, the French Publishing House. *Modukpè: Le rêve brisé* by Adelaïde Fassinou had been translated as *Modukpè: The Shattered Dream*, by Tayo Siwoku-Awi (the Researcher) but the price came to about four thousand naira for a book of less than two hundred pages, about five times the price of the translated copy that was printed in Nigeria. This is an enormous price to pay for a book by students who are trying to survive in a bad economy. The range of literary texts in French are also limited in most Libraries of Nigerian Universities as lecturers and students would visit the French Village Library to make photocopies. The PDF resource on line is also a breakthrough that individuals are learning to get used to.

In the same vein, the system of evaluation anticipated by the lecturer goes a long way in determining the learning process. As required by the curriculum, tertiary students should be able to write simple correct sentences in French, this, however is not the case as many still grapple with the knowledge of basic grammatical structure of Subject + Verb + Object. The lecturer who expects written essays will treat these fundamental requirements and link students present class experience with the other segments needed for essay writing. In which case, evaluation may include grammatical structures as well as the literary content and analysis.

LIMITATION: SEPARATION OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.

All these are approaches that could be adapted for the different levels of French learning at tertiary Institutions. The main limitations identified are that literary studies are usually not indicated for each of the methodology since they were particularly designed for the teaching of syntax and semantics to beginners. It is therefore important to note that teachers in tertiary institutions have

to innovate a lot in order to make their adult learners attain the required level on the literature curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Literature-in-French is a most difficult yet rewarding aspect of French language teaching as it has been discussed because of its many intricate facets and laced with the language difficulties that our students have. Yet reading entire novels, poetry reading and drama is very core of the use of language as the various levels of expressions are found in them, be it academic, conversational, formal, informal or colloquial. Therefore, literature should not be side-tracked for the favour of communication or phonetic competence in language teaching as some have carefully engineered a distinction, possibly because of the difficult French texts, which are now available in simple retold forms. Anyway, as proposed in the article, adopting a translation mode will enable learners navigate in both English and French and they are the better for it, because they will improve in self-expression and confidently discourse in both languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that easy to read version of texts should be used or a translation because it provides much room for accuracy in reading for meaning, the explanation and subsequently in the textual analysis though the original text provides a just analysis of author's style. The corroborative use of audio-visual aids should make a considerable impact on learners' comprehension and output. Indigenous film makers should liaise with the Departments of literary studies (English and French) for information about texts on the curriculum that could be made into films. Government subventions should facilitate such ventures and should improve the quality of education in Nigeria.

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