

AFRICAN ELECTRONIC LITERATURE ALLIANCE &
AFRICAN DIASPORIC ELECTRONIC LITERATURE
(AELA & ADELI)

Vol. 3 (1) 30th December 2025

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Multilingual African Digital Semiotics & E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
2025, Vol. 3(1), i-vi | ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/6kmjgn43
Peer-Reviewed Article

EDITORIAL: Language, Literature and Media technologies

This first issue of volume 3 of the Multilingual African Digital Semiotics and E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ) assembles three articles that, from different perspectives, explore how language, literature, media and technology shape contemporary African life. Their subjects range from algorithmic representations of African identity to French-language health communication and the influence of cartoons on young audiences. At first glance, these topics may appear distinct. Read together, however, they raise a shared question: how do the stories, images and media that circulate around us influence what societies know, value and imagine?

Ajah's "African Identity in the Age of Algorithms: Literary Imaginations, Digital Cultures, and Africanfuturist Futures" opens this conversation by considering what it means to represent African identities in an increasingly data-driven world. The article draws attention to the possibility that algorithms, artificial intelligence and data economies may reproduce older inequalities in new technological forms. This concern resonates with Nick Couldry and Ulises A. Mejias's account of data colonialism, which examines how human life is appropriated as a source of data and value within contemporary systems of capitalism as it was in the previous centuries (Couldry and Mejias 83). The question, then, is not simply whether African societies have access to digital technologies, but also who designs these systems, whose knowledge they recognise and whose stories they make visible.

Ajah's discussion also places African literary and digital production within the imaginative possibilities of Africanfuturism. Nnedi Okorafor's distinction between Africanfuturism and Afrofuturism is useful here because it foregrounds Africa, its histories, cultures and geographical realities as starting points for imagining the future (Okorafor). Through readings of selected literary works and digital narratives, Ajah considers how African creators can use technological media to recover narrative agency and imagine futures that are not dictated by technological systems alone. The article's central insight is that technology does not determine the future by itself. The meanings and consequences of technological change also depend on the memories, values, choices and creative practices of the communities that domesticate it.

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Multilingual African Digital Semiotics & E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
2025, Vol. 3(1), i-vi | ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/6kmjgn43
Peer-Reviewed Article

The second article, "Français et objectifs de développement durable: une analyse linguistique systémique fonctionnelle de quelques pathographies infographiques francophones," by Harmony Ezinne Okoro and Eunice Toluwalope Akanbi, turns to the role of language and visual communication in public health. Focusing on Mohamed Aouamri's *Ulcère de Buruli* and Keline Fichter's *Juma et le Trachome*, the authors examine how French-language infographic narratives communicate information about neglected tropical diseases, treatment and prevention. Their analysis is informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly the account of language as a resource for making ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (Halliday and Matthiessen 1). The article also considers how images and written language work together. This emphasis is consistent with Kress and van Leeuwen's approach to visual design, which treats images as organised systems of meaning rather than as mere illustrations (Kress and van Leeuwen 79). In health communication, such choices matter: the way information is worded, arranged and visualised can affect whether readers understand it and know how to respond. Nutbeam's work on health literacy is relevant to this point because it extends the concept beyond the simple receipt of information to include people's ability to access, understand and use health knowledge (Nutbeam). By bringing linguistic and visual analysis to francophone health materials, Okoro and Akanbi show how language studies can contribute to wider conversations about public communication, health literacy and sustainable development. Their focus also connects with the United Nations 2030 Agenda, which places health and well-being among the central priorities of sustainable development (United Nations, General Assembly).

Oyegbade's "Language, Literature and the Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Cartoon Media on Youth Development" addresses another influential part of everyday communication: the cartoons watched by children and young people. Through a critical discourse analysis of five selected cartoons, the article considers how animated programmes may shape curiosity, attitudes, values and behaviour. The findings reported in the abstract point to a mixed picture. Some productions encourage constructive values, while others may present or normalise behaviours that the study regards as undesirable, including aggression, truancy, laziness and gambling. The article therefore calls for greater attention to the content made available to young audiences and to the responsibilities of media producers.

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2025, Vol. 3(1), i-vi | ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/6kmjgn43
Peer-Reviewed Article

Research on media effects offers a useful context for this discussion, while also reminding us to avoid overly simple claims about causation. Anderson and his co-authors review evidence concerning the relationship between exposure to media violence and aggressive behaviour among young people (Anderson et al. 81–110.). Patti M. Valkenburg and Jochen Peter, in turn, argue that media effects differ according to individual and social characteristics, rather than affecting every audience member in the same way (Valkenburg and Peter 221–43). These perspectives help frame the questions raised by Oyegbade: what kinds of behaviour do cartoons portray, how might young viewers interpret those portrayals, and what roles do age, family, school and social environment play in the process? The article's emphasis on responsible media selection is therefore relevant to ongoing discussions about media literacy and youth development.

Although the three articles examine different materials, they meet around the question of representation and its consequences. Ajah considers whose identities and cultural knowledge are recognised in algorithmic spaces. Okoro and Akanbi examine how linguistic and visual choices make health information meaningful and accessible. Oyegbade explores the values and behavioural models communicated through children's cartoons. In each case, media are more than neutral channels through which information passes. They help organise meaning, shape attention and influence how people understand themselves and the world around them.

This shared concern gives the issue its interdisciplinary character. The contributions bring postcolonial critique and Africanfuturist thought into conversation with Systemic Functional Linguistics, multimodal analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. They also move between English- and French-language scholarship and address questions that matter across linguistic and national boundaries. Such encounters are important to African humanities, where the study of cultural production increasingly requires attention to digital systems, public communication, visual expression and everyday media practices.

Taken together, the articles invite readers to think critically about the media and technologies through which contemporary societies tell stories, communicate knowledge and transmit values. They remind us that digital innovation must be considered alongside questions of cultural agency and representation; that public health information must be communicated in ways people can understand and use; and that media for young audiences deserve careful attention. These are not

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2025, Vol. 3(1), i-vi | ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/6kmjgn43
Peer-Reviewed Article

isolated concerns. They are part of a broader effort to build more inclusive, informed and socially responsible cultural environments.

We are grateful to the contributors for entrusting their work to MADSEJ and to the reviewers for the time and critical attention they have given to the manuscripts. We also thank our editorial colleagues and readers for sustaining the journal's commitment to rigorous, multilingual and interdisciplinary scholarship. We hope that the articles in this issue will encourage further research and conversation across African literary studies, digital humanities, language studies, media studies and related fields.

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Multilingual African Digital Semiotics & E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
2025, Vol. 3(1), i-vi | ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/6kmjgn43
Peer-Reviewed Article

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2025, Vol. 3(1), i-vi | ISSN: 1115-5884
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Multilingual African Digital Semiotics & E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
2025, Vol. 3(1), 1-14| ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/djze2x46
Peer-Reviewed Article

African Identity in the Age of Algorithms: Literary Imaginations, Digital Cultures, and Africanfuturist Futures

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Abstract

This article examines how African identity is reimagined and contested in the technological age, focusing on the role of the humanities at the intersection of postcolonial critique and Africanfuturist imagination. It considers how algorithms, data economies, and artificial intelligence may reproduce unequal structures of representation, while African literary and cultural productions can reclaim narrative agency in digital spaces. Through close readings of digital storytelling and speculative fiction, the article explores how creators adapt technological media to express African cultural knowledge and imagine alternative futures. It adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach to selected literary works and digital narratives, informed by postcolonial theory, Africanfuturism, and digital humanities. The discussion argues that technologies do not determine African futures on their own: their cultural significance depends on the stories, memories, values, and ethical choices through which communities interpret and use them.

Keywords: African identity, Digital colonialism, Africanfuturism, Digital humanities, Postcolonial critique

Résumé

Cet article examine la reconfiguration de l'identité africaine à l'ère technologique, en mettant l'accent sur le rôle des sciences humaines à l'intersection de la critique postcoloniale et de l'africanfuturisme. Il étudie comment les algorithmes, les économies de la donnée et l'intelligence artificielle peuvent reproduire des inégalités de représentation, mais aussi comment les productions littéraires et culturelles africaines peuvent reconquérir une agentivité narrative dans les espaces numériques. À travers des lectures de récits numériques et de fictions spéculatives, l'article analyse la réappropriation des technologies à des fins d'expression culturelle et d'imagination de futurs alternatifs. La démarche qualitative s'appuie sur la critique postcoloniale, l'africanfuturisme et les humanités numériques. L'article soutient que la technologie ne détermine pas seulement les futurs des africains : leur signification dépend aussi des récits, des mémoires, des valeurs et des choix éthiques par lesquels les communautés interprètent et utilisent ces outils.

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2025, Vol. 3(1), 1-14| ISSN: 1115-5884
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Mots-clés : Identité africaine ; colonialisme numérique ; afrofuturisme ; humanités numériques ; critique postcoloniale.

1. Introduction

Technology has overwhelmingly reconfigured regimes of perception and knowledge production, reshaping not only what is seen and known, but also the temporalities, spatialities and modalities through which seeing and knowing occur. Within the contemporary digital milieu, the boundaries of culture and identity are increasingly fluid and flexible, marked by processes of expansion, deterritorialization, and radical hybridization. African identity, already undermined by the epistemic and structural violence of colonial intervention, continues to undergo re-articulation under the pressures of digital modernity. In *Colonial Intervention and Destabilization of African Identities*, Mfum-Mensah (63-77) locates the fragmentation of African identities within Europe's colonial enterprise, whose enduring legacies sustain contemporary identity crises and the politics of representation in postcolonial Africa. While African identity has been extensively theorized and critically examined, emergent configurations of digital representation, networked cultures, and African studies necessitate renewed interrogation and reinterpretation. These developments invite a reassessment of how algorithmic technologies mediate, reconfigure, and circulate notions of identity. This article therefore seeks to examine African identity in the age of algorithms, situating its inquiry at the intersection of literary imaginaries, digital cultures, and Africanfuturist futures, in order to interrogate the shifting epistemologies and subjectivities produced within these evolving techno-cultural formations.

While Amina Mama asserts that "identity is all about power and resistance, subjection and citizenship, action and reaction" (13), this study extends that formulation by conceptualizing African identity as a dynamic and evolving condition of being African and embodying Africanness. This position aligns with Zeleza's argument that "African identities, like African languages, are [social] inventions, mutually constitutive, existential and epistemic constructions" (14). Consequently, as Nyamnjoh (27) observes, such identities are neither fixed nor immutable, but remain continually renegotiated in response to emerging experiences, aspirations, and socio-historical transformations.

The transformations currently reshaping African identity are not solely socio-historical but are increasingly socio-technological and socio-technical in nature. As Brown et al. (65) observe, digital environments play a "paramount role" in identity formation, particularly as the rapidly evolving landscape of digital technologies intensifies the interplay between technological infrastructures and lived experience. This study aligns with the view that contemporary identities are co-constructed through the affordances of social media, multimedia technologies, and digital platforms.

To theorize the invention and negotiation of emergent African identities, this essay mobilizes Afrofuturist speculative fiction alongside Afrocentric digital narratives. Afrofuturism, as Womack (9-10) suggests, operates at the intersection of imagination, technology, futurity, and liberation, while digital creators leverage platforms such as video, graphics, and interactive media to narrate culturally embedded stories. Social media, in particular, has revolutionized African storytelling, necessitating critical attention to the proliferation of digitally mediated narratives across

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platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, where myths, legends, and folktales are continually remediated and augmented.

In this regard, Ajitoni (90) conceptualizes storytelling as an evolutionary continuum, from oral to textual, visual, and ultimately digital forms, demonstrating how digital platforms mediate the construction and expression of cultural identity. The integration of artificial intelligence further instrumentalizes storytelling within algorithmic culture, thereby necessitating a sustained humanistic inquiry into how such narratives shape both contemporary identities and future African societies.

Modern cultural productions, including African science fiction, social media narratives, and AI-assisted storytelling, thus offer critical discursive sites through which future African societies are imagined, anticipated, and, to some extent, preconfigured. This study interrogates multilingual thematic patterns, techno-aesthetic poetics, and ideological formations that both reflect and project Africa's evolving identities. Texts such as *Binti* (2015), alongside digital narratives produced on platforms like YouTube and Facebook, serve as analytical entry points into these transformations. Ultimately, while technology undeniably reshapes African realities, it is the humanities that provide the interpretive theoretical frameworks through which such transformations are understood, humanized, and critically directed.

2. Theoretical Framework

Emergent African identities are increasingly shaped within sociotechnical cultures and therefore require careful conceptualization in the humanities. Much like cartographic practices, technologies encode the languages, values, and imaginaries of their producers, often reflecting corporate and geopolitical interests. Postcolonial theory provides a critical framework for examining asymmetrical relations between technology corporations in the Global North and users in the Global South, and for considering how these power differences shape interactions among digital content, platforms, creators, and audiences.

This theoretical orientation is particularly apt given its interdisciplinary scope and its emphasis on the cultural and epistemic consequences of colonialism, often examined through literary and cultural analysis (Shakun 195). Postcolonial scholars widely acknowledge that the legacies of colonialism continue to structure postcolonial societies, cultures, and identities, while also informing the production, circulation, and consumption of contemporary technologies and media. These dynamics have contributed to the emergence of what is now termed postcolonial digital humanities.

As Singh argues, postcolonial digital humanities interrogates how digital technologies may either reproduce or disrupt colonial epistemologies within scholarship, archiving, and cultural production (118). Within the African context, the proliferation of digital technologies has generated critical debates, particularly as the continent is often positioned as a recipient of externally produced technological systems. While Birhane (391) critiques the phenomenon of algorithmic colonization driven by corporate imperatives, Onebunne further examines the notion of algorithmic gaze and algorithmic othering on digital platforms, processes through which certain groups are constructed as fundamentally different, frequently in reductive or hierarchical terms (30). The call for the decolonization of digital infrastructures and tools emerges from critical concerns about the ontological and epistemological foundations underpinning contemporary digital systems. These systems are largely shaped by Western-centric ideologies, which influence the design, production, and dissemination of digital platforms, tools, and content. As a result, digital technologies often reproduce global power asymmetries, privileging the interests, languages, and worldviews of their Western producers. This structural bias is evident in the predominance of

European languages in software design and user interfaces, which marginalizes non-Western linguistic and cultural expressions.

Language is a key site of power in this context. Chonka and Diepeveen argue that "global linguistic diversity conditions forms of algorithmic power" (250). This suggests that algorithmic systems are not neutral: linguistic hierarchies can influence visibility, accessibility, and participation in digital spaces. The limited availability of content and functionality in African languages on online platforms may reinforce digital exclusion and restrict African users' epistemic agency.

However, this framework does not position African actors as passive recipients of technological dominance. Rather, it highlights the agency of African digital artists who actively engage with, appropriate, and repurpose these technologies. By leveraging digital tools and artificial intelligence, they demonstrate innovation and creative resilience, transforming imposed technological structures into sites of cultural expression and resistance. Their practices illustrate a form of digital re-appropriation that challenges hegemonic norms and contributes to the emergence of alternative, locally grounded digital epistemologies. Thus, this study situates itself at the intersection of postcolonial theory, africanfuturism, digital humanities, and critical technology studies, emphasizing both the structural constraints of digital coloniality and the transformative potential of African digital creativity.

The emergence of Afrofuturism within African cultural studies has opened new avenues for interrogating Africa's future. It was catalysed by the works of key figures such as Octavia E. Butler, Sun Ra, Janelle Monáe, and Mark Dery. The term *Afrofuturism*, coined by Dery in his 1994 essay "Black to the Future" (Womack 16), has evolved into a critical framework whose aesthetics, as Eismann (65) observes, can be traced to its emergence in the mid-twentieth century. Afrofuturism, also referred to as Black Futurism, provides a bold and imaginative lens for reinterpreting African experiences, challenging dominant narratives, and envisioning alternative futures (Udisi, 608). It operates at the intersection of technology, science, history, and imagination.

However, Afrofuturist poetics remain fundamentally Afrodiasporic, largely shaped by Black experiences in the African diaspora, particularly in the United States. This diasporic orientation has led to critical debates among African scholars. Notably, Nnedi Okorafor problematizes the application of Afrofuturism to African contexts, emphasizing the distinction between Black identity and African identity. She advocates instead for *Africanfuturism*, a conceptual framework more directly rooted in African cultures, histories, mythologies, and perspectives (Talabi). According to Okorafor, Africanfuturism foregrounds Africa as its primary locus and is concerned with optimistic, technologically mediated visions of the continent's future, particularly as articulated by writers of African descent grounded in African realities.

This study, therefore, aligns postcolonial theory with an Africanfuturist perspective to examine the dynamic interplay between literary fiction, social media narratives, and African mythology and cosmology. In doing so, it situates the African future within a framework where authors and digital creators appropriate and reconfigure technological tools to negotiate, reconstruct, and redefine African identities and reimagine its futures. It is evident that there exists a theoretical and methodological interconnection between literary studies, postcolonial theory, Africanfuturism, and the digital humanities, particularly as social media and AI-assisted narratives can be situated within the subgenre of electronic literature, itself a significant branch of digital humanities.

3. African Identity in the Technological Age

The technological age, characterized by multimedia tools, social media, and digital spaces, has reshaped

cultural and social life across Africa. The internet and its associated cyberspace have generated youthful creative energies that permeate major cities and urban centres across the continent. Adenekan attributes this creative engagement with digital space to processes of middle-class identity formation and performance. He argues that "the internet has become the main catalyst for a growing desire for new ideas, be it in politics, popular music, film or literature" (3), and further notes that "online forums and social network platforms are becoming spaces where middle-class Africans can assert their presence" (73).

Technology has had a profound, though often underexamined, impact on contemporary African literary practice and production. Social media platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and X, among others, have created new opportunities for artistic digital production and dissemination. As Journo (2) observes, these platforms constitute spaces relatively free from traditional boundaries and constraints. Among them, YouTube and Facebook appear particularly favoured by African digital artists, who employ these platforms to narrate old and new tales, myths, legends, and contemporary stories through digital tools, applications, and artificial intelligence. Such practices contribute to the realization of Africanfuturist imaginaries and digital realities that speak about Africa's future societies and identities.

A key incentive for the use of social media platforms for creative purposes in Africa is economic accessibility, as most of these platforms are free to join and easy to maintain. Englert and Harisch (45) note that an increasing proportion of communication in Africa now occurs via platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, where "users not only store photographs, but also share and comment on textual, visual, and audiovisual elements" (32). The use of YouTube and Facebook for creative expression forms part of a broader wave of alternative media that has emerged, which Ong'ong'a (199) describes as a response to mainstream media structures. While YouTube is widely regarded as "the most popular platform in the world for audio-visual sources" (Englert 51), Facebook is noted for its strength in media dissemination and audience engagement (Ong'ong'a 200). Both platforms function as vital digital spaces for African storytelling, enabling the circulation of traditional and contemporary narratives with enhanced visibility, accessibility, and audience interaction. They also provide important avenues for curating African heritage, folklore, cultures, and everyday experiences. YouTube has been used to reinvent African tales, myths and legends by digital creators such as *Au Coeur de la Story* and *Lh Story* as we shall see shortly.



Figure 1 : Amara and the old wise woman.

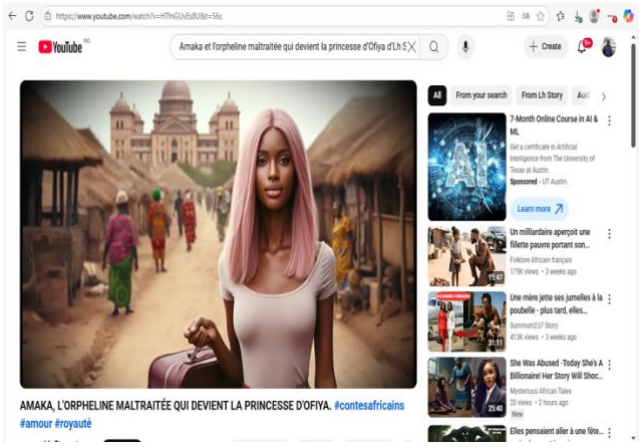

Figure 2: Amaka, the maltreated orphan that becomes the princess of Ofiya

The two screenshots show stories published on YouTube. Princesse Amara et la vieille femme sage (Princess Amara and the Old Wise Woman) tells the story of Princess Amara and her sacrifice to restore her kingdom's economy after a mysterious catastrophe. Amaka, l'orpheline maltraitée qui devient la princesse d'Ofiya (Amaka, the Mistreated Orphan Who Becomes the Princess of Ofiya), reworks elements of the Western Cinderella tale, presenting an orphan who is mistreated by her stepmother but eventually becomes a princess. The creators adapt these stories as video dramas using still images, text-to-speech narration, editing, and other digital techniques. These choices reshape how audiences encounter and interpret the narratives.

The costumes of Amara and members of her royal court evoke Egyptian visual traditions and identity. The tale combines African and Western semiotic values: Amara (an Igbo name), Mama Gbémi (a Yoruba name), clothing inspired by Egyptian and Fulani traditions, braided hair (African), thatched-roof houses (rural Africa), a royal palace (modernity), wigs (exotic), electricity (Western), exaggerated makeup (exotic), and so on, all contributing to its enrichment and linking it to contemporary realities.

Unlike Princess Amaka, the story of the mistreated Amaka is longer, lasting about twenty-six minutes. This narrative, which recounts the ordeal of a young orphan and her eventual marriage to the handsome Prince of Ofiya, also presents a mosaic of African and Western cultures. Its reliance on a rich and heterogeneous onomastic repertoire is evident in names such as Zara, Mariam, Hawa, Moussa, and Salima (Arabic/Hausa), Amaka, Ogechi, and Ijeoma (Igbo), and Fatou (West African), their shoulder-revealing clothes, and extraordinary hairstyles. This scene provides "opportunities for the revelation of exotic fashions" (Ajah and Egege 60).



Figure 3: the Wife Selection Contest for the Prince of Ofiya

Figure 3 shows six young women selected for a contest to determine whom the prince will marry. They remain in the royal palace for a set period and face daily challenges. The tale resembles Charles Perrault's Cinderella: it features a mistreated stepdaughter, a cruel stepmother, a prince seeking a wife, and a favoured biological daughter. However, the costumes, plot developments, cultural signs, and anachronisms introduce significant variations.

For instance, the image of the six young women is set against a bucolic village background; yet the fashion of the contestants reflects contemporary modernity, clothing, makeup, and hairstyles associated with urban life, which function as resources of affect, sensoriality, and potentially of impressionistic play motivated within the multimodal narrative (Crucifix 1,3). These elements also engage multiple senses in the creation of landscapes, colours, and atmospheric sensation (Rio). Although this feature may appear anachronistic, it offers new interpretive possibilities for the construction of semiotic meaning and emerging African identities.

This anachronism places modernity within an oral-tradition setting, or contemporaneity within an imagined antiquity, and functions as a form of multimodal augmentation. Through image-based, quasi-cinematic montage, the tale connects past and present. Its visual retouching creates a narrative utopia and adapts the traditional folktale form. As Wells-Lassagne (4) observes, adaptation can

unsettle assumptions about medium, genre, nationality, temporality, and content. Writing and its evolving forms can therefore participate in postcolonial projects that appropriate and challenge Eurocentric literary canons (Ajah 1).

Many young African digital artists favour Facebook as a key platform for artistic expression. In the Nigerian digital space, AI-assisted storytelling is increasingly widespread, produced by creators both within the country and across the diaspora. With thematic concerns that reflect Africa's contemporary realities and anticipate its future societies, such as the get-rich-quick syndrome, fragile marital commitments, arranged marriages, boardroom politics, and domestic violence, these AI-assisted narratives, unlike the YouTube animated tales discussed earlier, are typically produced as short, episodic series, often lasting between 60-90 seconds. As Facebook Reels, they incorporate voice, music, visual effects, filters, and text. These multimodal elements are both technologically and technically harnessed to create lasting impressions on the audience. Scrolling through Facebook Reels provides access to a wide range of short videos created and uploaded for public viewing.

From an Africanfuturist lens, *Princesse Amara* foregrounds indigenous epistemologies through its emphasis on sacrifice, communal restoration, and spiritual causality. Its semiotic blend,Igbo and Yoruba names alongside Egyptian and Fulani aesthetics, constructs a pluriversal African imaginary that re-centers local cosmologies within digital media. By contrast, *Amaka* reflects Afrofuturist hybridity through its adaptation of Cinderella. While retaining the Western narrative structure of an oppressed orphan's rise, it recontextualizes the tale through African names, settings, and cultural codes. Its diverse onomastics signals a transcultural, pan-African identity shaped by cultural remixing. From a Digital Humanities perspective, both narratives exemplify multimodal storytelling, combining still images, text-to-speech, and editing techniques to remediate oral traditions into digital forms. However, they differ in structure: *Princesse Amara* is condensed and symbolic, whereas *Amaka* adopts a longer, linear, melodramatic mode enabled by a digital space and its tools.

A number of digital content creators operate within this space, including Tari Folktale Stories, True Heart Stories, Marvellous TV, Mercy's Folktales, SISI Moonlights Folktales, Vida Fantasy, Fatibobo Mini Films, The Eyitayos, Olua Patience Mgbo Lifestyle, Life in Motions AI Stories, Talez by Moon Light, Dogas Stories Hub, Chimeremeze Storyline, Nancy's Folktales, Diva Story Series, Donia_nalita Stories, Tales by Orange, Cyril's Storytime, Moonlight Folktales, and Ada Imo TV, among many others. They can be classified into AI storytelling, folktales, lifestyle, and mini films. Dogas Stories Hub can be classified as Folktales and it has produced many titles such as *Snake Girl*, *The Return of Snake Girl*, *The Price of Unseen Wealth*, *Under the Shadow of the Witches*, *The Reverend and the Secret of the Dark Order* and *Last Burial*.



Figure 4: Screenshot of The Snake Girl

The digital creator behind Dogas Stories Hub, who has amassed over 216,000 followers on Facebook and is based in Dubai, produces captivating serialized narratives for online audiences. The creator is currently streaming *The Rise and Fall of the Ikachi Witches* series. *The Snake Girl* and *The Return of the Snake Girl* constitute a duology, as they form interconnected parts of a broader narrative depicting a magical war between the powerful native doctor, Agada, and Mary, the goddess of the sea, whose three beloveds are captured by the kingdom of snakes.

With the assistance of Akataka the greatest native doctor, Agada eventually overcomes the onslaught of the Patriarch of the sea kingdom, symbolically represented as a colony of cobras. This digital narrative exemplifies the reincarnation and reinvention of African mythology, re-presenting myths, folktales, and legends through motifs of human–animal metamorphosis. Both Agada and Mary possess the ability to assume multiple forms, enabling them to confront adversaries or evade danger, thereby reinforcing the fluidity of identity and power within contemporary African digital storytelling.



Figure 5: A Screenshot of The Other Mrs. Okafor by Fatibobo Mini Films

Fatibobo Mini Films, based in Nigeria, is another noteworthy content producer within this digital storytelling ecosystem. The platform has garnered over 472,000 followers on Facebook and, in addition to *The Other Mrs. Okafor*, has produced titles such as *Before We Married* and *The Shift*, among others. *The Other Mrs. Okafor* has proven particularly successful, attracting over 10 million views. The narrative centres on Emeka Okafor and his mother, a powerful matriarch whose domineering presence exerts significant control over her son's family. Under her influence, Emeka becomes polygamous, maintaining multiple wives across Lagos and Enugu. The storyline unfolds as a complex drama of betrayal, inheritance disputes, and strategic marital alliances within the Okafor family empire, highlighting the tensions between tradition, authority, and modern family structures.

From an Africanfuturist perspective, Dogas Stories Hub offers a speculative reimagining of African cosmologies. Its narratives feature deities, magical warfare, and metamorphic transformations, bringing indigenous myth into technologically mediated futures. The Snake Girl and The Return of the Snake Girl form a connected narrative about a conflict between Agada, a powerful traditional healer, and Mary, a sea goddess whose loved ones are captured by the snake kingdom. Such narratives recirculate and transform myth through contemporary digital media.

In contrast, *Fatibobo Mini Films* operates within a framework better explained by Digital Humanities and postcolonial media studies, where storytelling reflects socio-cultural realities rather than speculative futures. Narratives such as *The Other Mrs. Okafor* foreground issues of patriarchy, polygamy, inheritance, and familial power struggles in urban contexts like Lagos and Enugu. These themes situate the platform within a continuum of Nollywood realism, albeit adapted to short-form, algorithm-driven environments like Facebook.

Rather than projecting alternative futures, the narratives interrogate the complexities of present-day African social structures, making them legible and emotionally resonant for a broad audience.

From a digital-humanities perspective, both creators illustrate how platform affordances, short-video formats, algorithmic visibility, and multimodal composition shape narrative production and reception. Their approaches differ, however: Dogas Stories Hub uses AI-generated imagery and visual effects to construct mythic worlds, while Fatibobo Mini Films relies on performance, dialogue, and serialized realism to extend cinematic storytelling into social-media formats.

- *Dogas Stories Hub* leverages AI-generated imagery, visual effects, and symbolic abstraction to construct immersive mythic worlds, reflecting a technopoetics of imagination.
- *Fatibobo Mini Films* utilizes performance, dialogue, and serialized realism, reflecting a digitized extension of cinematic storytelling traditions.

This distinction can be framed as a tension between speculative imagination and social mimesis. While the former (Dogas Stories Hub) expands the horizons of African storytelling into the realm of the possible and the mythical, the latter (Fatibobo Mini Films) reinforces the interpretive function of narrative as a mirror of society.

Ultimately, this comparative framework reveals that contemporary African digital storytelling is not monolithic but plural and layered. It accommodates both the re-enchantment of African myth through Africanfuturist imagination and the critical representation of lived realities through digitally mediated realism. Together, these modes illustrate how African creators are appropriating digital platforms not merely for entertainment but as sites of cultural production, epistemic negotiation, narrative innovation and identity realignment.

4. Literature as Archive and Laboratory: Interrogating Speculative Fiction

From digital storytelling to emerging speculative fiction, contemporary African literature functions both as an archive and a laboratory where authors experiment with indigenous knowledge systems, everyday experiences, and technologized textual forms. In doing so, they theorize African societies that are simultaneously given to Afrocentrism and Africanfuturism, while remaining receptive to both indigenous and external technological innovations. This dynamic is evident across Africa-cantered fantasy, science fiction, graphic novels, and comics, where creative practices negotiate the interplay between tradition and modernity, locality and globality, postcolonialism and posthumanism, as well as cultural continuity and transformation. Africanfuturist writing has proven itself as fictional space where authorial creative energies are deployed to reimagine the African future societies and identities.

Many African Anglophone authors are actively engaged in speculative literary experimentation within the frameworks of Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism. However, as theorized by Nnedi Okorafor, Africanfuturism privileges Africa-centered epistemologies, cultures, and cosmologies. Works such as *Binti* and *Who Fears Death* by Okorafor, *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi, *behind our Irises* by Tlotlo Tsamaase, *War Girls* by Tochi Onyebuchi, *Rosewater* by Tade Thompson, *Intruders* by Mohale Mashigo, and *Yat Madit* by Dilman Dila exemplify this orientation through their re-centering of African realities within speculative imaginaries.

For analytical focus, this article examines Dilman Dila's "Yat Madit" and Tlotlo Tsamaase's "Behind Our Irises," two works that explore African futures through indigenous knowledge systems, sociocultural experience, and technologically mediated environments. Dila's story centres on Amaro and Yat Madit, a locally developed technological system intended to help reconstruct a

society weakened by corruption and economic decline. Amaro's father, a former president imprisoned for three decades and recently released, seeks political reintegration, linking personal history to national transformation.

Similarly, Tlotlo Tsamaase's *Behind Our Irises* presents a speculative workplace shaped by WeUs, a non-invasive, pill-based technology developed by a Nairobi technology hub to enhance productivity and regulate employees' lives. While also situated within African contexts, the story interrogates the ambivalence of technological advancement, revealing how such innovations can reduce individuals to "well-oiled cog[s] of the workplace machine."

Together, both narratives demonstrate how Africanfuturist writing approaches technology not as mere spectacle or imported futurity, but as a grounded site of ethical negotiation, socio-political critique, and the imaginative remaking of African futures. In *Yat Madit*, the very name, an Acholi-Luo expression meaning "a big tree", signals rootedness, collectivity, and indigenous epistemology. Here, technology is not alien; it grows from within the community it serves. As the narrator explains, "Yat Madit is the functional pillar of our country…It relies on us. Avatars listen to us. They learn what we like and understand our views and then feed this to Yat Madit, which uses this data to approve LC decisions, to advice LCs, and to draw policies" (Dila 27).

This framing foregrounds a distinctly Africanfuturist ethos: technological innovation emerges from local knowledge systems rather than dependence on Western infrastructures. The system becomes a digital extension of communal governance, enabling grassroots participation, strengthening local councils, and shaping people-centred legislation. In this sense, *Yat Madit* imagines Africans not as passive consumers of global technology but as active architects of their own socio-political futures.

By contrast, *Behind Our Irises* turns toward the future with a more ambivalent, even cautionary, gaze. While it similarly celebrates local innovation, the "WeUs" system developed within the Nairobi Tech Hub and scaled across the continent, it simultaneously exposes the ethical tensions embedded in technological advancement. The transformation of African professionals into cyborgs, human-machine hybrids with enhanced physical capacities, raises troubling questions about bodily autonomy, consent, and the limits of human augmentation.

Where *Yat Madit* envisions technology as a communal tool for democratic renewal, *Behind Our Irises* interrogates its potential for misuse, revealing how even locally produced systems can reproduce new forms of control or exploitation. Read together, these texts embody the core of Africanfuturism: a commitment to imagining African futures that are technologically advanced yet critically aware, locally grounded yet globally resonant, and always attentive to the moral stakes of innovation.

5. Africanfuturism, African Futures and the Politics of Imagination: The Birth of Postcolonial Africanfuturism

To account for the range of African digital storytelling and speculative fiction, this article proposes the concept of postcolonial Africanfuturism: a framework that connects speculative imagination with digitally mediated forms of expression grounded in African experience. It envisions futures that challenge colonial epistemologies while asserting African agency in technology, identity, and knowledge production. Rather than reproducing narratives of dependency, it positions Africa as a site of innovation and futurity.

Within this paradigm, postcolonial Africanfuturism operates as a mode of cultural reclamation and counter-discourse. It mobilizes science fiction, fantasy, and digital storytelling to interrogate postcolonial realities and to reimagine African

sovereignty beyond the constraints of colonial histories. These narrative forms do not merely project alternative futures; they also recover suppressed histories, revalue local epistemologies, and foreground the sociocultural specificities that shape African engagements with technology.

Importantly, both digital storytelling and speculative fiction reveal the capacity of African digital creators and authors to domesticate and repurpose technologies often perceived as Western in origin. In doing so, they not only adapt these tools to local contexts but also generate Afrocentric technological imaginaries rooted in indigenous knowledge systems. This process enables the emergence of new narrative taxonomies through which African identities are reconfigured, fluid, technologically attuned, and self-determined, thereby repositioning the continent within global discourses of the future. With the ontological redefinition of emerging African identities in the technological age, any illusion of homogeneity is further unsettled. Identity, in this context, becomes not only hybrid but also hyphenated and technologically augmented, layered through digital mediation, cultural exchange, and speculative reimagination. Africanfuturism captures this fluidity by foregrounding identities that are dynamic, adaptive, and resistant to fixed or essentialist categorizations.

This transformation is particularly evident in digitally enhanced storytelling practices such as *Lh Story* and *Au Coeur de la Story*, where African myths, folktales, and legends are not merely retold but creatively re-appropriated. Through the use of still visuals, voice narration, and translational speech-to-text features, these narratives become accessible across linguistic boundaries, for instance, enabling Anglophone audiences to engage with stories delivered in French. In this way, digital storytelling does not simply preserve tradition; it augments and recontextualizes it for transnational and technologically connected audiences.

Moreover, the deployment of proleptic, parachronistic, and technologically inflected anachronisms, such as wigs, exotic bangles, and hybridized dress forms, alongside multi-ethnic and multicultural naming practices within singular narrative spaces signals a deliberate break from canonicity. These aesthetic and narrative strategies destabilize linear temporality and singular cultural frameworks, reflecting a world in which histories, presents, and futures coexist and interact.

Such innovations point toward the emergence of African future identities in which rigid ethnic and tribal demarcations are increasingly blurred. Political affiliations, too, are reimagined or even rendered obsolete, as illustrated in “Yat Madit”, where the traditional roles of political parties in democratic processes are effectively dissolved. What emerges instead is a vision of participatory, technologically mediated governance that prioritizes collective agency over partisan divisions. In this sense, African digital creators are not only reshaping narrative forms but also articulating new sociopolitical imaginaries that redefine what it means to belong, to govern, and to exist in Africa’s futures.

6. Toward a Humanized Technological Future

Within an Africanfuturist framework, the convergence of technology and humanistic inquiry, often articulated through the field of Digital Humanities, offers a critical pathway for reimagining Africa’s technological trajectories. Rather than adopting technology as a neutral or imported construct, Africanfuturism insists on its ethical grounding within African sociocultural realities. This calls for the deliberate integration of the humanities into technological design, ensuring that innovation is shaped by local histories, values, languages, and communal modes of knowing.

To safeguard Africa’s technological future, there is a pressing need to institutionalize Digital Humanities labs across the continent as sites of

collaborative experimentation. Such spaces can draw on speculative fiction and digital storytelling, evident in works like *Yat Madit* and Lh Story, as case studies for developing context-sensitive technologies. These narratives already model Afrocentric systems: participatory governance platforms, adaptive linguistic interfaces, and culturally embedded digital imaginaries. Translating these narrative insights into real-world applications can inspire the design of technologies that are not only functional but socially responsive. Equally vital is the advancement of indigenous language technologies. By embedding African languages into digital infrastructures, through speech-to-text systems, AI interfaces, and localized data ecosystems, technology becomes more inclusive and representative. This aligns with Africanfuturism's broader commitment to epistemic justice, where language is not merely a tool of communication but a carrier of worldview and identity.

Finally, fostering collaborative research ecosystems that bring together writers, digital creators, technologists, and scholars is essential. Speculative fiction and digital storytelling should not remain at the level of imagination alone; rather, they should inform policy, innovation, and design thinking. In this way, Afrocentricity becomes not just an abstract ideal but a guiding principle, ensuring that Africa's technological future is human-centered, culturally grounded, and collectively imagined.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study argues that Africanfuturism offers a useful framework for examining the intersections of identity, technology, and cultural production in contemporary Africa. Through speculative fiction and digital storytelling, African creators present the future as a site of negotiation shaped by local agency and imagination. African identity need not dissolve under globalization and technological change; it can evolve while remaining in dialogue with indigenous epistemologies and new digital realities. Equally, technology must be indigenized, not merely adopted. The narratives examined reveal that Afrocentric innovation is both possible and necessary, as communities reinterpret and redesign technological systems to reflect their sociocultural values and lived experiences. Such an approach resists dependency and repositions Africa as a producer, not just a consumer, of technological futures.

Finally, the humanities must take the lead in meaning-making. As technology continues to reshape human existence, it is the interpretive and ethical insights of the humanities that ensure these transformations remain human-centred. Together, these elements underscore an Africanfuturist vision in which culture, creativity, and critical thought guide the continent toward a self-determined and inclusive technological future. Africa's future will not be written by algorithms alone, but by the stories, memories, and imaginaries its humanities sustain.

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NB: Some videos cited in this paper are post-datedly used.

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Multilingual African Digital Semiotics and E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
2025, Vol.3(1), 15-27| ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/4n291y51
Peer-Reviewed Article

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND THE MEDIA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CARTOON MEDIA ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of cartoon media on the attitudes, values and behaviours of young people through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It investigates how media programmes shape children's curiosity, perceptions and social development. Drawing on structuralist and post-structuralist approaches, the study conducts pragmatic interpretations of five selected cartoons. Findings reveal that cartoon productions exert both positive and negative influences on young audiences. While some promote constructive values, others contribute to cultural erosion and undesirable behaviours, including meanness, pettiness, gambling, laziness, truancy, premeditated aggression and unrealistic expectations. These negative influences may encourage youth misconduct and generate wider social problems. The study highlights the responsibility of media producers and the importance of carefully selecting children's television content. It recommends prioritising cartoons that promote moral principles, positive social values and responsible behaviour to encourage peaceful coexistence, social harmony and the healthy psychological and social development of young people.

Keywords: CDA, Cartoon Media, Language, Literature, Youth.

Résumé

Cette étude analyse l'influence des dessins animés sur les comportements et les représentations des jeunes à travers une approche d'Analyse Critique du Discours (ACD). Elle examine comment les programmes médiatiques, notamment les dessins animés, contribuent à façonner la curiosité, les valeurs et les attitudes des enfants durant leur développement. À partir de cinq dessins animés sélectionnés, l'étude mobilise les approches structuraliste et poststructuraliste afin d'interpréter leurs significations pragmatiques. Les résultats révèlent une double influence de ces productions audiovisuelles : certaines véhiculent des valeurs positives, tandis que d'autres favorisent l'érosion culturelle et des comportements déviants tels que la méchanceté, la paresse, le jeu d'argent, l'absentéisme scolaire et l'agressivité préméditée. Ces influences peuvent également nourrir des attentes irréalistes chez les jeunes et affecter la cohésion sociale. L'étude

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Multilingual African Digital Semiotics and E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
2025, Vol.3(1), 15-27| ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/4n291y51
Peer-Reviewed Article

recommande ainsi de privilégier la diffusion de dessins animés fondés sur des principes moraux afin de promouvoir des comportements responsables, la paix et l'harmonie sociale.

Mots-clés : analyse critique du discours (CDA) ; productions animées ; langage ; littérature ; jeunesse.

1. Introduction

Osisanwo defines language as 'human vocal noise or the arbitrary graphic representation of this noise, used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for the purposes of communication' (1). In addition to its primary function as a means of communication, language is also characterised by some distinctive features which promote information sharing and mutual understanding. Such attributes include: symbolism, creativity, cultural transmission, duality of patterning, arbitrariness, conventionality, innateness, displacement, among others. Thus, language as a human phenomenon and a process through which people exchange mutually shared experiences is saddled with multiple functions. Technological advancement and diversification of knowledge across the world have necessitated a corresponding interest and crave for awareness on how information is shared using the technical resources of language. Cartoon net-work falls within the purview of communication by animated signs and symbols which is an aspect of creative use of language.

In Systemic Functional Linguistics, Halliday (152) is of the opinion that language is a system structured to make three kinds of meanings simultaneously. He describes the meanings as meta-functions, and they include: interpersonal, experiential and textual. He further stresses that these meanings are related to the context of situation which revolves around three register variables. That is: the *field* of discourse (what is going on), the *tenor* of discourse (who are taking part), and the *mode* of discourse (role assigned to language). This study focuses on the undeniable outcomes of context of situation, (which is characterised by physical, socio-cultural, psychological and linguistic variables), and the currents usually generated by children's cartoons.

Literature and the mass media are closely related. They are both used in generating information with a large audience in view. While literature is mainly concerned with recreating realities through poetry, prose and drama, the press is saddled with the responsibility of providing truthful access to everyday intelligence by clarifying and preserving the values of the society in a meaningful context. This is in tandem with the purpose of all communications, as they are geared toward persuading, influencing, modifying or changing the behaviour of people in some ways. The broadcast media, which includes radio and television, educates and mobilises a large number of subscribers in a relatively faster way than the print, which is limited by time and space. Although the radio has speed, adopts music as its staple item and uses language evocatively, it only thrives on sound which appeals to the ears. That is why the television has continued to dictate the broadcast space as it combines the qualities of colour, motion, sight and sound. The television makes lasting impact on children because they learn faster from what they see than what they hear. This reality explains the imperative of instructional materials in the teaching-learning process.

The fact that the television is capable of performing multiple functions is not in doubt, but behind the scene of presentation is a market-oriented ideology which encourages the deployment of different kinds of themes, many of which are capable of impairing the emotional sophistication of children. Some pertinent questions on a number of challenges that have continued to stare us in the face in recent times beg for answers: Why has terrorism defiled solution across the globe? What explains the preference for embezzlement and misappropriation of funds with impunity by public office holders? Among other disturbing graft cases, the exposed idea of offshoring money to evade tax as reported by the Panama Paper leaks in 2016 does not in any way minister grace to the ears, as it constitutes a setback

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to the developmental efforts of a world trying to rid itself of poverty, squalor and ill-health. Cultism, for instance, is believed to have crept gradually into Nigeria's educational system in 1952 (Olaniyonu 24).

However, the hydraheaded menace has continued to plague Nigeria in form of armed robbery, crude and barbaric murder, rape, abduction of schoolchildren, hostage-taking, drug trafficking, suicide bombing and oil pipeline vandalism.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica, as quoted by Bolarin (1), defines education as 'the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society'. Going by the glaring shortfalls in our educational outcomes, (Mohammed 4; Olaniyonu 18), one may be tempted to probe into the kind of learning experiences in form of 'values' and 'knowledge' the promoters of these heinous crimes were exposed to while growing up. The Cognitive Theory of Learning holds that 'learning is the organisation of experience into cognitive structure' (Akinade 19). We should therefore be concerned about the vicious circle of every succeeding generation getting entangled in the intricate web of 'poisonous products' packaged as therapy. Kwame Nkrumah, the late elder statesman and former president of Ghana, stresses that 'nobody was born a criminal, society makes him' (Nkrumah 109). If the above position is anything to go by, what kind of adults is our society making out of its teeming youths? Recently, while reflecting on three American toddlers who were already veterans in mail hacking, an analyst said: 'There are no normal children again'(Stewart). According to him, 'Children are 'going into extinction', while parents live in self-denial and pretend to be unaware of the harsh reality.

These and other disturbing events in recent times portray a sorry state that requires an urgent remedy. In the light of rising trend in preventable cases of impunity in Nigeria, this study examines the impact of electronic cartoons on the mindsets of the youth, with a view to establishing the fact that it serves as a motivating factor for many 'irrational drives' that manifest at adulthood. It needs be stressed that the words *child* and *youth* are used interchangeably in this study to delineate people of the age brackets that precede adulthood (BBC English Dictionary). The study is most timely considering the fact that the strength of a chain is determined by its weakest link.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Cartoons are narratives of the comic discourse with emphasis on entertainment and comedy. They are amusing drawings and images with messages covering all aspects of human endeavour. According to Akinpelu 'Cartoons are effective ways of visual communications… they are mostly satirical and caricature drawings that can simply capture attention and influence behaviour and attitude both in adults and children' (119). The above view underscores the multiple roles of cartoons as capable of influencing the audience in a number of ways to buy into certain ideologies. In the same way exposure to pornography can encourage the urge for defilement, rape, prostitution, sex slavery and teenage pregnancies, some cartoons and video games have been noted as capable of promoting injurious behaviours (Plante and Anderson 7).

Looking at cartoons from the angle of a popular genre given their predominance in children television programming, Tannen describes them as 'the most consistent daily transmitter of the civilisation's cultural values' (18). This explains cartoons as purveyors of shared societal cultural values provided for children to imitate. Differences in cultural values exist, but most cartoon messages are addressed to the cultural orientations and needs of the developed nations who own and control the technologies and the media. Products which promote world-wide capitalist relations that make national and international socio-economic and political affairs to be media-led may operate at cross-purposes to the collective aspirations of other climes, such as Nigeria. As the embodiment of cultures, cartoons thrive on imitation, where male and female stereotypes are assigned on different scales to project premeditated ideologies. In the process, simulation, described by Akomolafe (45)

as 'putting the learners (children) in circumstances that they can use later in life'', reinforces the idea of hyper-reality or references with no referents. These references with no referents register in the sub-conscious of children and form habits in them. Cartoons are mostly adapted and modified stories cutting across all the genres of literature. In an attempt to entertain and regale children with the good times ahead of them, many cartoons have been found to be capable of 'bending their minds' to negative tendencies, while far-reaching realities are either blown out of proportion or underestimated.

The shortfall of negative orientation has further heightened media criticisms in many quarters, as children are seen to be mainly influenced, manipulated and coerced emotionally and psychologically through fantasies that hold misleading mirrors to life. Bourdieu (10) observes that the television could be used to manipulate the people through its normal way of operating, with viewers believing that they have seen it all. Most television programmes are mere caricatures of realities, as they are usually subjected to fine or rigorous editing in furtherance of the ideologies the various media organisations operate on. So, what children view in cartoons are not the real events but the edited versions of reality. According to Parenti most of what people watch in television, hear on radio and read in newspapers are 'edited versions of reality'(23), and this often makes their views on social, political and economic matters deficient, deformed and distorted. In other words, what children listen to, read and watch as cartoons are what a particular interest group wants them to imbibe. So, their ideas and actions are invariably tailored to what the various interest groups want them to do. This is what Bagdikian describes as 'intellectual sterility' (206), which makes people to be subservient, gullible and confused.

In an attempt to determine the impact of cartoon media on children's conduct as they transit to adulthood, this study is anchored on the linguistic theories of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism. Structuralism is a mid-20th Century critical movement based on the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and the cultural theory of Claude Levi Straus. Structuralism views literary texts as systems of interlocking signs and seeks to explain the rules and codes that govern the form and content of all literature (Ogunpitan 128). In his *Structural Anthropology*, Levi-Straus is of the opinion that, 'Human activity and its products, including religion, social conventions, ritual, art and philosophy are artificial constructions and not natural'. Most cartoons thrive on simulations which are composed of references with no referents or, at best, hyperrealities which depict ideas 'underestimated' or 'blown out of proportion'. That is, a reality that is more 'real' than the true reality itself. In other words, cartoons blow events and experiences out of proportion, thereby leaving behind twisted and false impressions. It is therefore logical to say that counterfeit presentations where people or objects are given oratory and referents such as authority, nobility, royalty and brute force, are capable of tilting the minds of children towards illusive hopes and aspirations.

On the other hand, Post- Structuralism, which equally lays emphasis on the primacy of the text, like its Structuralist counterpart, also borrowed from the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure (1916). According to Ogunpitan 'it is centred on the idea that language is inherently unreliable and does not possess absolute meaning in itself'' (130). Post structuralists are of the opinion that all meanings dwell in intertextuality, which Merriam-Webster's *Encyclopedia of Literature* describes as, '…the complex interrelationship between a text and other texts taken as basic to the creation or interpretation of the text'. In other words, previous realities always weigh heavily on present and future events, just as messages in cartoons and video games can reshape the mind to affect the future of its consumers. Thus, the relationship between self and language, and the culture expressed by it, forms 'the heart of the matter' (593) in Post Structuralism. Derrida one of the proponents of the theory, holds that meaning does not tumble out from verbal jugglery, but resonates as, 'a self-existent, self-contained, or self-identical phenomenon' (52), which language only gives expression to. In other words, the meaning encoded in any communicative event is more of

individual choice than a collective bargaining. Jean Baudrillard argues that meaning arises from systems of signs working together and that an effacement of reality is the causality of excess signs and meanings which determines realities on the basis of globalisation.

In his theory of Cognitive Mental Development, Jean Piaget (1896-1980) holds that children try to establish functions, coherence and stability through the operation of the two processes called 'assimilation' and 'accommodation'. *Assimilation* refers to the processes by which new elements in the environment are incorporated in the child's experience. *Accommodation* refers to modification of concept and how children alter their responses to things. It is the process by which new experiences bring changes into existing schemas. When children assimilate and accommodate well, they establish organised pattern of behaviour and thought which may be intellectual or behavioural (Akinade 37). Although cartoons are regarded as artificial constructs thriving on simulations, children have been observed to decode their messages on a direct or one-to-one correspondence basis. This is probably why they are described as 'one track thinkers' by Akinade (38), who also stresses that, 'children operate on the plane of representation''.

Fairclough's Critical *Discourse Analysis (CDA*) (1995) angle to this study conceptualises discourse as a social practice that both reflects and constitutes power relations. It looks at how discourse is used to represent, produce and reproduce social and political power, inequalities and ideologies. Fairclough's three-dimensional model of textual, discursive and social practices fit into this study, especially in a society in transition, where socio-political communication is usually characterised by symbolic and pragmatic undertones. Van Dijk's (56) cognitive dimension to the framework of CDA argues that repeated representations shape collective mental models. This underscores the multimodal discourse notion that meaning is produced through multiple semiotic modes such as, language, image and sound, which Kress and van Leeuwen capture as 'composition, silence and framing' (177). Opeibi (173) stresses that Nigerian digital communication relies heavily on linguistic innovation, symbolic creativity, and compressed textual meaning in technologically mediated environments.

The fact that children hold on tenaciously to realities (people or objects) that appear to stand for real referents partly explains the likely outcomes of negative media on them in a digital environment, where content is rapidly circulated and reproduced. Enikuomehin (26) stresses that, 'AI Governance is a layered problem, where failure at any layer propagates upward and undermines the layer above it. Children have the right to be nurtured and properly brought up in a social media world where memories are stored in the cloud, decisions are influenced by algorithms, and knowledge is co-created with machines. It would be counter-productive to impose any burden capable of arresting or impeding the process of natural development on them. This study is, therefore, aimed at investigating how the 'twin evils' of 'artificial constructs' identified by Structuralism, and 'hyper reality', popularised by Post-Structuralism, 'conspire' to deprive children of their 'youthfulness' and, by extension, their 'usefulness' when they become adults, from the standpoint of CDA.

3. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Finings

Five cartoons which interest children are purposively selected as the data for this study. They include: *Doug, Beauty and the Beast, Tom and Jerry, Pinocchio,* and *Sleeping Beauty.* The following internet libraries serve as the sources of the cartoons: 'New Media Studies Syllabus', 'Multimedia Production Syllabus and Disney Movies' 'Nickelodeon Series', and 'Wikipedia'.

The samples are selected based on their emotional and intellectual appeals to the public, especially children, who are the target audience. In fact, most children are not only familiar with the *Tom and Jerry* series and other forms of video games, but

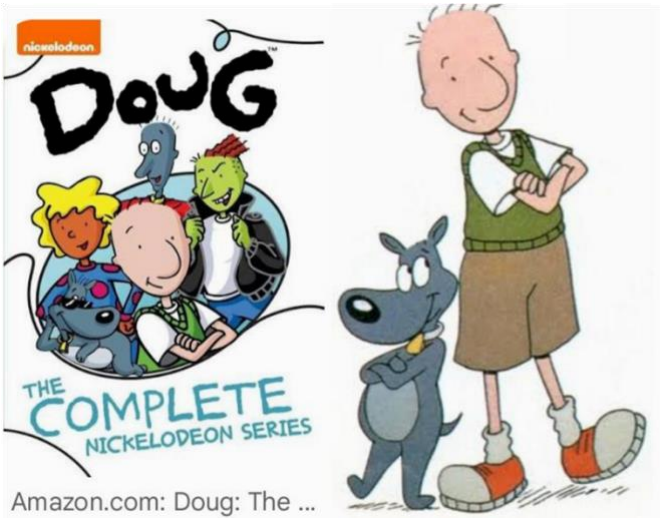
they also experiment with them in school, at home and in the public (Plante and Anderson, 18).

The content of each sample is summarised (in form of transcription), italicised and then given qualitative analysis according to their ideological underpinnings, drawing inspirations from the contextual variables of plot, subject matter/theme, characterisation, setting and the general atmosphere surrounding each story. Each sample goes with a pragmatically generated sub-title which indicates the *perlocutionary effect* (Austin, 101-103) of its content. Austin, who argues that words are used to doing things, identifies con*stative* and *performative speech acts,* which he further modified into *locutionary, illocutionary* and *perlocutionary acts. Locutionary act* is the act of saying or portraying something, *illoctionary act* is the message or impulse generated by what is said, while *perlocutionary act* or *effect* coincides with the reaction to what is said. If a mother, for instance, tells her toddler son, 'I won't by you biscuit', and the child starts crying, the *perlocutionary effect* of his mother's statement is at play. It is therefore not out of place to conclude that every human action or inaction are triggered by the contextual variables of *perlocutionary effects* of Austin's imagination.

Reference is also made to some cartoons outside the selected samples to balance the study's population and a well-grounded descriptive analysis. The above parameters are aimed at pragmatically bringing out clearly the possible negative connotations in the samples as they undertake to inform, educate, entertain and mobilise the audience. Also, to corroborate the analytical standpoint, references are made to emergent issues within the various contexts that surround the study. The choice of methodology is informed by the need to discover the various mistakes and delusions that underpin the mindsets of children for policy action. The analysis is also aimed at establishing the stark reality that exposure of children to cartoons and games with negative tendencies serves as a motivating factor for a number of vices displayed at adulthood.

Since we live in a multicultural world, *language implicature* cannot be minimised but people can control what they read, hear or see through conscious efforts. This is corroborated by Ogbulogo's position that, 'the effect of implicature would be minimised if the uniformity of context would be assured' (130). Discourse Analysis (DA) is an attempt to offer a systematic explication of any discourse beyond the text, while Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a deeper critique of relations and reveals the ideological underpinnings of a text. The choice of CDA is therefore informed by the need to probe beneath the surface the various currents generated by children's cartoon media in an attempt to arrive at the social, political and economic contradictions which come to play in the production, distribution and consumption of such products.

3.1. Sample One: 'DOUG'



Source: https://www.disneywikigallery.com

Summary of Plot: *Doug is listening to the radio and cleaning out his shoes in his room at home, while his best friend, Skeeter, looks on. Doug finds his old luck hat and immediately puts it on, claiming he would again be lucky because of the hat. In the process, the radio station announces a prize to the fifteenth caller and Skeeter urges Doug to call now that he has his luck hat on. Doug calls the radio station amidst grumbles of never winning these*

contests and he is announced as the fifteenth caller and the winner. Doug's mother enters the room carrying a pair of X-ray goggles she found in the laundry. Doug states he lost them two months ago, and it is because of the luck hat that his luck is on the rise. He explains how he feels his hat brings him luck. Skeeter discusses with Doug how every person makes their own luck by working hard and being honest. Doug tells Skeeter that he can keep the hat, but the wind again blows the hat away. When Skeeter asks Doug if he is going to catch the luck hat, Doug says it is someone else's turn to have the luck hat, he would make his own luck.

3.1.1. Gambling as Social Malaise

The above media narrative, which focuses on a school age boy and his daily experiences, invites children into picking interest in the fantasy of magical thinking and achievement of success without necessarily having to work for it. Any product that undermines success in hard work and personal embrocation is not likely to encourage the dignity of labour and perseverance. The cartoon wants children to associate the 'luck' cap with a happy, carefree, magical time which coincides with winning a contest as it was later announced by the radio station. Apart from lacing the mindset of children with the impression of 'royal road' to success, the idea depicted is also capable of encouraging vices such as laziness, ignorance and superstition which early childhood education is meant to discourage. Cases of examination malpractices are common in Nigeria today because many candidates and their 'permissive parents' are deceived to rely on 'special' or 'magic' examination centres, where they are charged extra fees and assisted to earn undeserved grades.

Okphewho, in *The Last Duty* (101), makes a sceptical reference to the delusion in the idea of magical thinking. In the narrative, he presents, in a ludicrous manner, the case of a gullible soldier whose leg was riddled by bullets against the false assurances of a herbalist who produced the fake 'bullet proof' charm. While laying emphasis on the ideals of stoic philosophers, Bolarin stresses that, 'a person can only get inner security by trusting his inner ability' (17). It is high time children's minds were disabused of animism and magical explanations about things and events.

3.2. Sample Two: 'Beauty and the Beast'



Source: https://www.disneywikigallery.com

Summary of Plot: Belle has two wicked sisters. The Beast allows Belle to travel home as long as she is only going for a week. Her sisters are extremely jealous to hear about her luxurious life.

They try to persuade Belle to stay with them longer than a week in the hope that the Beast will be infuriated with Belle and eat her alive upon her return.

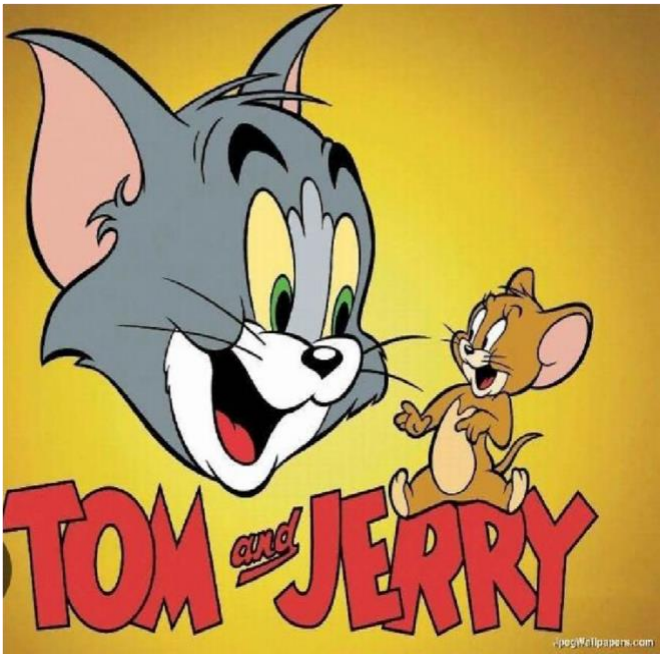
3.2.1. Sibling Rivalry as a Threat to the Ligament that Holds Families Together

The above 'fairy tale' recreates the corrosive effect of sibling rivalry. Many lives have been cut short and lofty dreams aborted to envy, jealousy, callousness and lack of scruple among siblings.

Contemporary societies are replete with evils as the idea of fellow-feeling has been relegated. It is a pity that the age-long ideology of ruthlessness and duplicity in political dealings propagated by Machiavelli in his popular book, *The Prince,* still holds sway in some societies. Among others, the theory, which informed Shakespeare's radical plays, holds that an aspiring prince must learn how not to be good, because a good man would be brought down in the midst of many who are bad. This is a clear invitation to a world devoid of scruple. Pope John Paul II stresses that, ''The greatest weakness of the world today is its lack of mercy'. The question is: Why do some individuals hate the good prospects of others?

It is sad to note that many parents do not help matters. In Africa, for instance, some parents pander to their whims of their children in the name of pampering, thereby encouraging them to dictate their developmental choices. Many of such children always become mal-adjusted and grow up to embrace savagery and bad denominationalism of life. This is equally the case in Euro-American civilisation where the rights of children and other classes of people are overstretched. The dwindling sense of moral responsibility stems from the lack of ethics and morality based on obedience to God's commandments, especially in societies where political, social and economic issues are subjected to the rule of expediency. Without mincing words, the above cartoon is capable of promoting savagery, cruel and barbaric murder. Any child exposed to it may not be able to correct his illusions against the primacy of love at adulthood. Looking at the harsh reality from thoughts and beliefs, a study conducted by Plante and Anderson revealed that, 'Those playing the violent game were quicker to identify violent words, suggesting that the violent game had increased the accessibility of aggression-related concepts'(12) . This is dangerous.

3.3. Sample Three: 'Tom and Jerry'



Source: https://www.wikipedia.com

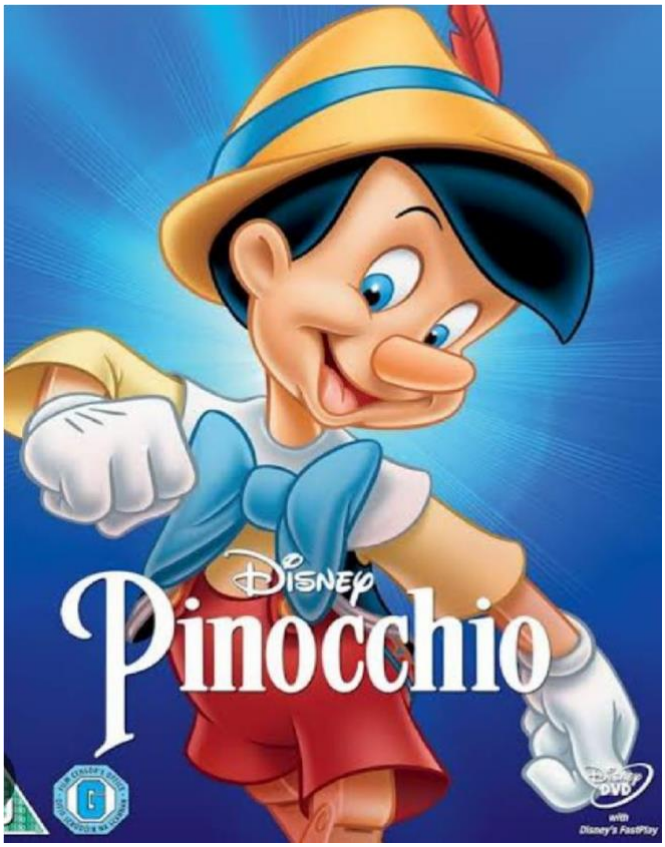
Summary of Plot: *This features a comic fight between two adversaries-- Tom, a house cat, and Jerry, a mouse. Several attempts are made by Tom at capturing Jerry's trickery abilities and luck. Out of desperation, Tom uses axes, hammers, firearms, fire crackers, explosives, traps and poison to kill Jerry, but all to no avail. Jerry, on the other hand, retaliates in more violent ways as he attempts slicing Tom in half, decapitating him, slotting his head or fingers in a window or a door, stuffing his tail in a waffle iron or a mangle, kicking him into a refrigerator, getting him electrocuted, pounding him with mace, club or mallet, causing trees or electric poles to drive him into the ground, sticking matches into his feet and lighting them, tying him to a firework and setting it off, and so on. However, in spite of all these gory displays of aggression, there is no blood spilling or gore emission in any of the life-threatening scenes.*

3.3.1. The Menaces of Aggression

The above popular American animated children's cartoon produced by William Hanna and Joseph Barberain in 1940 portrays a long running slapstick battle between a cat and a mouse, as they devise clandestine means to eliminate each other in

cruel circumstances. If weighed against Amfo's 2018 oral slide-based conference presentation that, 'Pragmatics is the gap between what is often said and what is often meant or interpreted', the cartoon has a tendency for promoting aggression in an unprecedented manner. For instance, Salah Abdel Sadek, the head of Egypt's information service, blamed the cartoon for Middle East violence at a conference held at the University of Cairo in 2016. In his presentation on *The Media and the Culture of Violence,* he said: 'The cartoon (Tom and Jerry) portrays violence in a funny manner and gives the impression that, 'yes, I can hit him' (Raghavan), and 'I can blow him up with explosives' (Raghavan). While blaming video games for violence and extremism in the region, he also condemned the rate at which children were addicted to them in the following terms: 'Video games are spreading…, it has become normal for a young man to sit for long hours playing video games, killing and spilling blood. He is happy and content with that' (Raghavan). Sadek's observations are not far from the truth, considering the frightening level of havoc terrorism has wrecked on the world in recent times. We should therefore not be surprised that the nefarious activities of insurgent groups like Boko Haram, bandits and violent Fulani herdsmen (or cattle rustlers) in some parts of Northern Nigeria keep soaring. They are always ready to kill at the slightest provocation. Also, the Rwanda genocide, Arab/Israeli and Syria wars, etc. are all avoidable cases of aggression if their sponsors were not victims of 'cultural erosion'. The utilitarian definition of communication by Adewoyin as, '…the process through which information, knowledge, ideas or messages are conveyed or transmitted from one source (end) to another'(73), leaves no one in doubt that it is possible for some wrong ideas to be embraced at a very deep psychic level by every succeeding generation if nothing is done to change the trend.

3.4. Sample Four: 'Pinocchio'



Source: https://www.disneywikigallery.com

Summary of Plot: *Pinocchio runs away as soon as he learns to walk. He is found by the police, who imprison Geppetto because they believe Pinocchio was abused. Pinocchio returns home and kills a talking cricket (Jimmy) who warns him of the dangers of hedonistic pleasures and disobedience. Geppetto is released and he insists that Pinocchio goes to school. Pinocchio sells his school books for a ticket to the Great Marionette Theatre. He encounters a fox and a cat who steal his money and unnecessarily try to hang him. Luckily, after saving Geppetto from the terrible dogfish, Pinocchio shapes up and eventually becomes a real boy, as he gets sold to evil circuses and makes it to the movie, surprisingly.*

3.4.1. The Imperative of Good Parenting

This cartoon was adapted from Carlo Collodi's 1883 Italian Classic titled, *The Adventures of Pinocchio*. If Austin's (101) *perlocutionary effect* of spoken or written

words is anything to go by, the weird collection has the tendency to invite children into the pursuit of undue pleasure and ostentation to the detriment of success in human endeavours based on hard work and determination in an age driven by technology. Cases of absconding from homes and schools are very common today, and they may not be unconnected with exposure to delicate media fantasies. The case of a thirteen-year-old teenager, who 'eloped' in questionable circumstances with her eighteen-year-old lover from Bayelsa to Kano State in 2015, is still very fresh. She was not only hurriedly converted into Islam and married off against her parent's consent but also 'gifted' with early pregnancy. She was however lucky to have escaped an eviscerated future as a result of the timely intervention of people of goodwill. Her parents probably denied her proper attention and consequently allowed her to be negatively influenced. Parenting must be taken seriously to discourage life-threatening tendencies that vulnerable youths' experiment with. When young children stray from home, they end up in the awaiting hands of hardened criminals who take advantage of their ignorance by recruiting them into crimes and weird habits like stealing, robbery, cultism, rape, drug addiction, assassination, kidnapping, terrorism and hostage-taking. The girls are usually trafficked and turned into sex slaves and prostitutes, if they manage to escape being used as suicide bombers as reported in *The Nation* of 25th April, 2016. Any society that worships physical vigilance over moral and intellectual vigilance will, no doubt, jeopardise the future of its youths. This makes it important to also discourage youth idleness to guarantee the security of all nations.

3.5 Sample Five: 'Sleeping Beauty'



Source:
https://www.disneywikigallery.com (17/09/26)

Summary of Plot: *A king happens to walk by Sleeping Beauty's castle and knocks on the door, but no one answers. He then climbs up a ladder through a window. He finds the princess and calls her, but she does not wake up due to unconsciousness. He carries her into the bed, rapes her and leaves. She later wakes up after she gives birth because one of her twins sucks the flax (from the spindle) out of her finger. The king comes back and they end up falling in love. Meanwhile, the king is still married to someone else. His wife finds out and does not only want the twins killed, cooked and fed to the king, but also tries to burn the princess at the stake. She is however unsuccessful. The king and the princess get married and live happily thereafter.*

3.5.1 Requiem to Justice and Fair Play?

The semiotic optics of the above episode is synonymous with emotional coercion of children to experiment with rape, which is common in Nigeria and other places today. Apart from abhorrent rape cases attributed to neighbours, siblings and 'strangers', some parents have also been caught having carnal knowledge of their children and even getting them pregnant in some weird cases. According to a 2013 report by *The Eagle Online,* six hundred and seventy-eight cases of rape were reported in Lagos State alone in one year, and twelve thousand one hundred and twenty cases in four years. This alarming rate of rape cases must have prompted the state to swiftly stipulate

life imprisonment for rape convicts in its criminal law on October 7, 2015 (Obgo). Worse still, many rape cases are swept under the carpet, not only because victims are afraid of having what is left of their personality sullied by stigma, but also because of the cumbersome process of establishing such cases in court. According to Agu the law specifies that for one to prove that s/he has been raped, one needs to show evidence of forceful entry and actual physical penetration without her consent and, of course, there must be a third party to corroborate (1777-178). Little wonder many victims simply accept their fate by being silent, and cases of rape, defilement and sexual harassment keep soaring across the country.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the general apparatus of cartoon-mediated media can be used by the political and business elites /s a vehicle for distortion, manipulation and oppression. This view is corroborated by Akinpelu's assertion that, 'The use of cartoons can also bring about political reformation and influence social and moral values' (119). The domination of falsehood as confirmed by the Structuralists' ideology of 'artificial construct' and the Post-Structuralists' idea of 'hyper-reality' appears to be the most potent force of the 21st Century information and communication-controlled globalising world. It is highly disturbing that the youths are 'emotionally coerced' to 'swing' in that direction in a sine qua non manner. It is also ironic that despite that the world preaches peace, majority of its youths are fed with products that promote aggression and all its attendant vices. Plante and Anderson make a case for the avoidance of messages with negative connotations in their observation that, 'Media violence is a risk factor contributing its own small, unique part to aggressive and antisocial behaviour' (17). They stress further that, 'The fact that 97% of American teenagers play video games and spend about seven and a half hours a day in front of some form of media means that these small effects can have significant impact when applied on a social scale, and can have important implications for social policy' (17). However, the findings reveal that the following cartoons have far-reaching moralising principles: *Arthur, Your New Journey with God, Mr Roger's Neighbourhood, Flintstones, Madeleine, Peanuts and The Pilgrim's Progress.*

4. Conclusion

Efforts have been made in this study to establish a link between exposure of children to media products with negative connotations and a number of anti-social behavioural traits traceable to adults. It has also been established that differences in social, political and economic circumstances call for differences in media choices. Given the fact that late capitalism with its attendant vices is packaged in a cultural way which approaches its target audience unawares, parents must be informed and very selective when making media choices for their children. Although cartoons and video games could serve as means of education, information and entertainment, a number of cartoons provoke negative tendencies, and common sense cannot prevail in a youth whose mind is cluttered with junks. It is common knowledge that a child's intellectual development is profoundly influenced by family configuration, which includes values cherished by parents and the immediate society, and the pattern of behaviour established in the home has a direct bearing on what happens in schools and in the general public. Children are gullible because they live on hope. The mist of ignorance must, therefore, be dispelled from their eyes by parents, surrogate caregivers and the media, so that they do not become unconscious victims of piteous circumstances. It takes the family and the community to raise a child, just as the ruination of a child can also result from the failure of both the family and the same community.

This study does not clamour for censorship of the media, or meant to indict authors of cartoons, but the concern is that programmes with deleterious effects on the moral growth of children are done away with as much as possible. Media exposure should aim at imbuing children with learning and character capable of meeting all reasonable economic, social, political, technological, physical, intellectual and aesthetic needs of society. Core values such as mutual love and respect, selflessness and sacrifice, sound morals

and transparent discipline, obedience and responsibility, sharing and fellow-feeling, willingness to admit faults and learn from mistakes, etc., should be pumped up. Priority should be accorded themes that promote intellectualism, personal character rather than pride, arrogance and self-plurality. The precarious balance calls for conscious promotion of transcendental values over and above contents that normalise violence and the propensity for thuggery and pettiness. Children should be discouraged from gambling as much as possible, while all pending rape cases are quickly decided to serve as a deterrent to other abusers of child's rights. The youth are the leaders and policy makers of tomorrow. They must not only be encouraged to grow but must be helped to grow right. Only then can the world be free from all avoidable social vices and the menaces of aggression.

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Multilingual African Digital Semiotics et E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
2025, Vol. 3(1), 28-41 | ISSN: 1115-5884
DOI: 10.17613/pj5sj703
Peer-Reviewed Article

FRANÇAIS ET OBJECTIFS DE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE : UNE ANALYSE LINGUISTIQUE SYSTEMIQUE FONCTIONELLE DE QUELQUES PATHOGRAPHIES INFOGRAPHIQUES FRANCOPHONES

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Résumé

Dans les espaces francophones d'Afrique, les pathographies infographiques constituent des outils de sensibilisation aux maladies tropicales négligées, de promotion des comportements préventifs et d'amélioration de la littératie en santé. Pourtant, leur potentiel linguistique et multimodal dans la promotion des Objectifs de développement durable (ODD) demeure peu exploré. S'appuyant sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle de M.A.K. Halliday et une approche qualitative d'analyse multimodale, cette étude examine *Ulcère de Buruli* de Mohamed Aouamri et *Juma et le Trachome* de Keline Fichter. Elle analyse les significations idéationnelles relatives à la maladie, au traitement et à la prévention, les ressources interpersonnelles mobilisées pour informer et persuader les lecteurs, ainsi que les fonctions textuelles et visuelles contribuant à la littératie en santé. L'étude montre que ces œuvres associent le français et la multimodalité pour promouvoir la sensibilisation sanitaire et le développement durable. Elle contribue ainsi aux recherches en études françaises, humanités médicales et communication sanitaire.

Mots-Clés : Pathographies Infographiques, Humanité médicale, Objectifs Développement Durables (ODD), Linguistique Systémique Fonctionnelle, Multimodalité.

Abstract

In French-speaking African regions, infographic pathographies serve as tools for raising awareness of neglected tropical diseases, promoting preventive behaviours, and improving health literacy. However, their linguistic and multimodal potential in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains underexplored. Drawing on M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and a qualitative multimodal analytical approach, this study examines *Ulcère de Buruli* by Mohamed Aouamri and *Juma et le Trachome* by Keline Fichter. It investigates ideational meanings related to disease, treatment, and prevention; interpersonal resources employed to inform and persuade readers; and textual and visual features that contribute to health literacy. The study demonstrates how these works combine French-

Multilingual African Digital Semiotics et E-Lit Journal (MADSEJ)
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language communication and multimodality to promote health awareness and sustainable development. It highlights the importance of linguistic and visual resources in communicating health information and encouraging preventive practices. The research contributes to scholarship in French studies, medical humanities, health communication, multimodality, and sustainable development.

Keywords: Infographic Pathographies, Medical Humanities, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Systemic Functional Linguistics, Multimodality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Les objectifs de développement durable (ODD) sont un ensemble d'objectifs adoptés par les États membres des Nations Unies afin de promouvoir le développement durable à l'échelle mondiale. En 2015, les Nations Unies adopté un cadre de référence pour le développement durable à l'horizon 2030, qui prend en compte les défis alimentaires et sanitaires mondiaux, l'amélioration des systèmes de santé, le changement climatique irréversible, la pauvreté et les inégalités entre les sexes. Ce cadre comprend 17 objectifs de développement durable (ODD), assortis de 169 cibles (Lakioti et al.; United Nations, *Transforming our World* 3). L'un des 17 ODD est directement lié aux problématiques de santé, à savoir l'ODD 3 : « Garantir une vie saine et promouvoir le bien-être pour tous à tout âge ». Il vise « la durabilité pour accroître le financement de la santé et le recrutement, le développement, la formation et la rétention du personnel de santé dans les pays en développement, en particulier dans les pays les moins avancés » (cible 3.8 et objectif 3.c). (United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020* 2).

L'Objectif de développement durable n° 3 vise donc à promouvoir une vie saine et le bien-être de tous, à tout âge ; il englobe certains des objectifs sanitaires les plus importants, tels que la réduction de la mortalité maternelle et infantile, la prévention des maladies transmissibles et non transmissibles, la mise en place d'une couverture sanitaire universelle ainsi que le renforcement des capacités nationales en matière d'alerte précoce, d'éducation aux risques et de gestion des risques sanitaires nationaux. (Lakioti et al. 1). Par conséquent, les soins de santé, l'éducation sanitaire et la sensibilisation aux maladies constituent des dimensions essentielles de la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable (Seshaiyer et McNelly 445). La langue joue un rôle primordial dans la sensibilisation aux questions de santé. Les programmes de langues modernes intègrent parfois les thématiques des ODD à l'enseignement du français langue étrangère (FLE), en s'appuyant sur des modules consacrés au bien-être et aux soins de santé pour développer simultanément les compétences linguistiques et le sens de la responsabilité sociale. La France et les organisations francophones internationales tirent parti de la langue française pour coordonner des partenariats médicaux transfrontaliers, favoriser le partage des résultats de recherche et élaborer des stratégies de santé mondiale. Des initiatives telles que le « SDG Book Club » de l'ONU la littérature destinée à la jeunesse afin d'inciter les nouvelles générations à réfléchir à la santé et au bien-être au sein de la communauté. Dans cette perspective, les pathographies présentées sous forme d'infographies dans les livres pour enfants constituent des supports de sensibilisation aux questions de santé et aux maladies.

2.0. Les pathographies infographiques dans le discours sur la maladie

L'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) a pris part à la création de bandes dessinées axées sur la santé, destinées à l'éducation thérapeutique des patients et des aidants dans le cadre de ses campagnes de sensibilisation aux maladies. La pathographie infographique associe le texte et l'image pour communiquer sur des questions de santé (Rakower et Hallyburton. 475). Cette combinaison permet de réduire la surcharge informationnelle propre aux textes denses (Lee et al. 101482), ce qui rend ainsi les données médicales

complexes plus faciles à assimiler et à mémoriser. Ce format répond aux besoins de trois publics principaux : les patients en quête de témoignages auxquels ils peuvent s'identifier, les professionnels de santé cherchant à développer leur empathie, et le grand public désireux d'améliorer ses connaissances en matière de santé. Lors d'épidémies ou de pandémies, le récit séquentiel a contribué à transmettre les protocoles d'hygiène, les messages de prévention et les connaissances scientifiques à des publics d'âges et de niveaux de lecture variés. Ce phénomène s'explique par la multimodalité propre à ces bandes dessinées. Le choix de la transmédialité ou de l'intermédialité comme manifestations de cette multimodalité au sein de la bande dessinée ou du roman graphique, repose sur les synergies narratives entre texte et image. Cette approche favorise l'intériorisation et l'assimilation du discours thérapeutique, alors même que les enfants comme les adultes peuvent être touchés par les maladies décrites dans ces œuvres relevant de la médecine graphique. (Ajah, "Graphic Medicine'' 231). La présente étude applique l'approche de la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle de Halliday aux bandes dessinées de santé *L'ulcère de Buruli* et *Juma et le trachome*. Ces textes médicaux imagés présentent une unité d'action thématique comparable à celle du théâtre classique français (Ajah, "Graphic Medicine'' 235), Car ils traitent tous deux du thème simple de la maladie et recourent à une approche fondée sur le jeu de « questions-réponses » pour en dévoiler les aspects essentiels.

3.0. L'analyse linguistique systémique fonctionnelle de Halliday dans le discours de maladie

La linguistique systémique fonctionnelle est la théorie linguistique élaborée par Michael Halliday (Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic* 1; Halliday and Matthiessen, 1), pour permettre l'analyse du langage comme un système sémiotique, c'est-à-dire un système de significations qui est simultanément créateur de sens. Cette approche reconnaît ainsi la relation dialectique entre le contexte social et l'expression linguistique. Chaque usage du langage nous permet, tout à la fois, de construire notre expérience du monde, d'agir dans nos relations avec autrui, et de créer et de partager des messages. En linguistique systémique fonctionnelle, ces trois types de signification correspondent à la réalisation de trois métafonctions du langage : idéationnelle, interpersonnelle et textuelle (Halliday, *Linguistic Studies* 1; Martins et Rose 1; Ingold 1; Schleppegrell et Oteíza 156). La théorie décrit ces dernières comme réalisant, respectivement, le champ du discours (signification idéationnelle), la teneur du discours (signification interpersonnelle) et le mode du discours (signification textuelle). La linguistique systémique fonctionnelle se prête efficacement à l'analyse critique du discours, parce qu'elle est une approche transdisciplinaire permettant d'établir un dialogue entre des analyses détaillées, d'une part, et les théories critiques ainsi que les savoirs disciplinaires, d'autre part. Les théories et les outils de la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle ont été utilisés par des linguistes en collaboration avec des chercheurs issus de divers domaines, notamment de l'éducation, les médias, la santé, la mémoire, la justice sociale et la politique.

Les analystes du discours s'appuyant sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle (LSF) sont également actifs dans le domaine de la santé ; Halliday lui-même a abordé des questions de santé dans « On the Grammar of Pain » (1). Matthiessen propose une analyse institutionnelle du parcours des patients au sein des hôpitaux, mettant en évidence les risques sociaux et sémiotiques auxquels ils sont exposés lors de leur transfert à de nouveaux soignants, en raison de possibles pertes ou altérations d'informations ("Applying Systemic Functional Linguistics 437''). Groenewald et Armstrong (836) s'appuient sur la LSF ainsi que sur le cadre théorique d'Eggins et Slade (1) pour identifier les points forts de patients atteints d'aphasie.

De son côté, Magaña (1) illustre comment des psychiatres hispanophones appliquent les dimensions interpersonnelles de la LSF aux échanges informels (« small talk ») avec les patients. Également, Jérôme et Ting (57) démontrent que l'analyse fondée sur la LSF permet une compréhension plus nuancée des initiatives de communication sur les risques sanitaires en Malaisie. McDonald et Woodward-Kron (157)

s'appuient sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle (LSF) et sur des études de corpus pour examiner comment le langage des membres d'un groupe de soutien destiné aux personnes atteintes de troubles bipolaires évolue au fil du temps, à mesure qu'ils interagissent entre eux. Pascual (1) explore les configurations interpersonnelles des commentaires publiés par des patientes atteintes d'endométriose sur des pages publiques de Facebook. Ces études montrent que les analyses fondées sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle (LSF) appliquées aux pathographies infographiques sont peu nombreuses, mais elles sont pertinentes pour la présente étude, car elles montrent que la communication en santé peut être analysée à l'aide de la LSF. Néanmoins, tous ces œuvres au-dessus montrent que peu d'études ont appliqué la LSF dans les pathographiques infographies. Par conséquent, l'analyse textuelle est indispensable à l'application de la LSF au domaine de la santé, dans la mesure où, même au sein d'un bloc opératoire, le langage et les autres systèmes sémiotiques jouent un rôle central dans la réussite de l'intervention chirurgicale. (Pettinari, 1; Cartmill et al. A79 ; Matthiessen, "Applying'' 437). Ainsi, la présente étude mobilise la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle (LSF) de Halliday pour analyser les bandes dessinées consacrées à la santé, en considérant les éléments visuels et verbaux comme les composantes d'un système sémiotique social intégré qui construit le sens médical. La présente étude examinera *L'ulcère de Buruli* et *Juma et le trachome* sous l'angle de la LSF.

4.0. Analyse LSF de L'ulcère de Buruli sous l'angle de l'ODD 3

L'ulcère de Buruli est une maladie cutanée nécrosante causée par la bactérie Mycobacterium ulcérans, classée par l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (OMS) parmi les maladies tropicales négligées qui affectent la peau. L'ulcère de Buruli débute par une papule, un nodule, une plaque ou une lésion œdémateuse qui évolue et peut former une ulcération cutanée étendue. Fait remarquable compte tenu de l'ampleur de la perte tissulaire, la lésion est généralement indolore ou ne provoque qu'une douleur modérée. Contrairement à d'autres mycobactérioses, l'ulcère de Buruli présente une particularité : les lésions sont principalement dues à la mycolactone, une toxine lipidique produite par la bactérie. Tous ces termes médicaux sont simplifiés dans l'illustration graphique de Mohamed Aouamri, telle qu'elle apparaît sur la Figure 1 ci-dessous.



Figure 1. Explication Multimodale de l'ulcère de Buruli ***Source : Organisation mondiale de la Santé, L'ulcère de Buruli, ill. Mohamed Aouamri, p.5.***

Cette image s'ouvre sur une présentation simple de la maladie, introduite par la question : « Qu'est-ce que l'ulcère de Buruli ? ». Ce style narratif sert à éduquer et à sensibiliser le public. L'analyse de ce support graphique sous l'angle de la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle de Halliday révèle une stratégie multimodale coordonnée, qui traduit des concepts épidémiologiques complexes en un message de santé publique accessible. Sur le plan idéationnel, des processus verbaux simplifiés exprimant la causalité (ex. : « provoquée par un petit "microbe" », « provoque une plaie ») sont associés à des éléments décrivant un écosystème aquatique stagnant, reliant ainsi efficacement la transmission de Mycobacterium ulcérans à son réservoir naturel

en zone humide. Sur le plan interpersonnel, le regard direct des personnages au premier plan crée une un effet d'interpellation qui capte immédiatement l'attention du public ; parallèlement, le cadrage en plan moyen, le dialogue porté par un enfant et la présence d'une mascotte animée peuvent réduire les barrières affectives pour instaurer un climat de confiance propice aux échanges entre pairs. Sur le plan textuel, la hiérarchie stratégique de la mise en page place la question centrale en haut (le pôle « Idéal »), ancre les personnages humains à gauche (le pôle « Donné »), présente l'écologie du vecteur de la maladie à droite (le pôle « Nouveau »), et met en évidence les risques physiques liés aux ulcères non traités en bas (le pôle « Réel »). Les teintes magenta à fort contraste contribuent à orienter le parcours visuel du lecteur à travers l'image.

Cette architecture multimodale peut contribuer aux objectifs de l'Objectif de développement durable (ODD) 3, notamment à la cible 3.3, en améliorant l'information des communautés en matière de santé et en favorisant la prévention des maladies tropicales négligées. En communiquant explicitement que l'infection peut guérir en laissant des séquelles permanentes (« provoquant parfois des déformations »), le visuel peut servir d'outil de sensibilisation en encourageant le dépistage précoce et la prise en charge médicale rapide. De plus, l'utilisation d'illustrations accessibles, éventuellement humoristiques, associées à un contexte environnemental localisé, peut contribuer à réduire les barrières culturelles et celles liées à l'alphabétisation dans les régions endémiques. Cette conception sémiotique fonctionnelle peut ainsi faciliter l'accès à l'information sanitaire et contribuer à la prévention des complications à long terme.



Figure 2: Représentation multimodale de la localisation de la maladie ***Source : Organisation mondiale de la Santé, L'ulcère de Buruli, ill. Mohamed Aouamri, p.6.***

Dans la continuité du panneau précédent, la figure 2 s'appuie sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle pour décrypter l'habitat environnemental de l'agent pathogène *Mycobacterium ulcérans*. Sur le plan idéationnel, le panneau passe d'une causalité abstraite à des processus relationnels spatiaux de localisation (« OÙ VIT CE MICROBE ? », « Il vit dans l'environnement ? »), qui sont étayés des annotations descriptives définissant les milieux écologiques à haut risque (« EAUX STAGNANTES = ENDROITS OÙ L'EAU NE COULE PAS », « PRÈS DES BARRAGES »). Sur le plan interpersonnel, le panneau supérieur met en scène le jeune garçon qui effectue un large geste vers le bas et désigne les panneaux visuels suivants. Il agit ainsi comme un guide tout en maintenant un regard direct, qui peut être interprété comme une « demande » visant à interpeller le lecteur. Sur le plan textuel, la mise en page adopte une structure

verticale ; le panneau supérieur introduit la problématique (Idéal/Donné). Les panneaux inférieurs présentent des exemples concrets et empiriques (Réel/Nouveau) de zones à risque. Ces panneaux montrent des mares d'eau stagnante contenant des troncs en décomposition et des retenues d'eau artificielles ou barrages, mis en évidence par une couleur magenta très contrastée, (Yotsu et al. 247). Les panneaux suivants précisent que ces microbes vivent « sur les terres inondées, terres trop mouillées après de fortes pluies, sur les terres irriguées, terres où l'on a creusé des canaux pour acheminer l'eau destinée aux cultures ». Le texte va plus loin en prônant la lutte contre la déforestation, car celle-ci provoque des inondations.

Dans l'optique de l'ODD 3 (cible 3.3), présente les facteurs de risque environnementaux liés à l'épidémiologie sous une forme claire et accessible aux populations vulnérables, contribuant ainsi à la littératie en santé. En illustrant visuellement des sites aquatiques spécifiques, tels que les eaux stagnantes et les retenues de barrages, le visuel peut aider les membres de la communauté à mieux comprendre leur environnement et à identifier les zones présentant un risque d'exposition aux agents pathogènes lors de leurs activités quotidiennes, qu'elles soient agricoles, domestiques ou récréatives. Cette cartographie contextualisée des dangers fait le lien entre gestion environnementale et médecine préventive, dotant ainsi les communautés rurales des connaissances nécessaires pour réduire l'exposition aux vecteurs et diminuer l'incidence des maladies tropicales négligées.

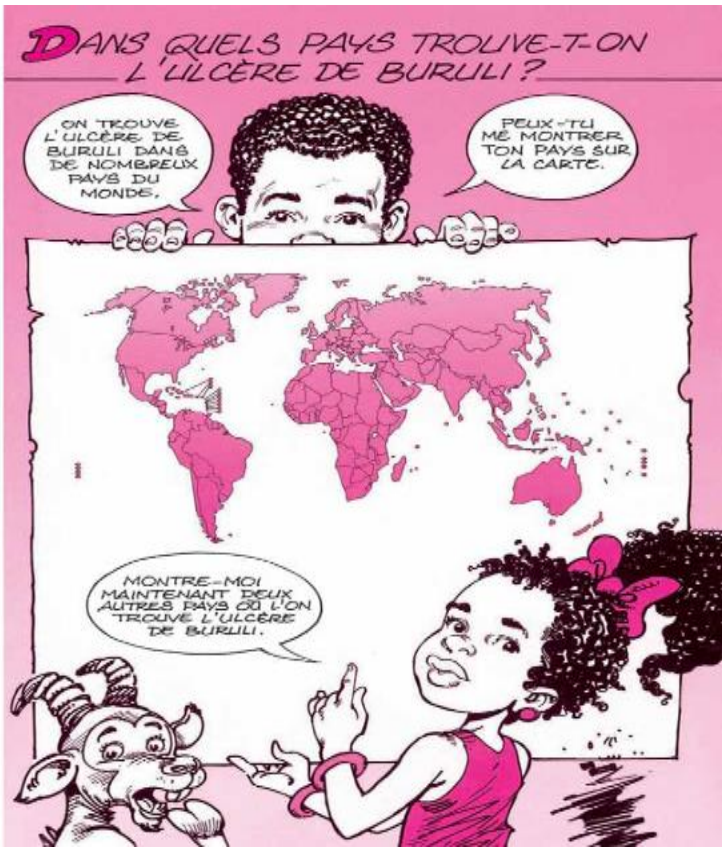

Figure 3: Représentation Multimodale de la Globalisation de la maladie ***Source : Organisation Mondiale de la Santé, L'ulcère de Buruli, ill. Mohamed Aouamri, p.9.***

La figure 3 déplace l'axe de la communication de l'écologie locale des vecteurs vers l'épidémiologie mondiale, en s'appuyant sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle pour examiner l'aire de répartition géographique de l'ulcère de Buruli. Sur le plan idéationnel, le panneau met en œuvre des processus spatiaux d'identification et des processus matériels, articulés autour de la question principale (« DANS QUELS PAYS TROUVE-T-ON L'ULCÈRE DE BURULI ? »). Plutôt que de présenter une carte scientifique statique, la composition visuelle intègre des actes de parole dynamiques, à la fois impératifs et interrogatifs (« Peux-tu me montrer ton pays sur la carte ? », « Montre-moi maintenant deux autres pays... »), transformant ainsi la transmission passive d'informations en une activité interactive. Sur le plan interpersonnel, le jeune garçon qui se penche au-dessus du cadre de la carte et la jeune fille qui fait un geste depuis le bas établissent tous deux un contact visuel direct, qui peut être interprété comme une « demande » adressée au lecteur. Le geste de la

fille, qui pointe du doigt, agit comme un vecteur visuel saillant vers la carte du monde. Il sollicite ainsi la participation du public et peut réduire la distance sociale grâce à une dynamique d'apprentissage entre pairs. Sur le plan textuel, la carte du monde occupe le centre (le « Réel » /le « Nouveau ») et se distingue par une couleur magenta très contrastée, qui renforce sa saillance visuelle. Les personnages humains et la mascotte qui l'entourent contribuent à faire de la carte un support pédagogique interactif.

La carte présentée ici corrobore les observations de Yotsu et al. (247) qui indiquent que la majorité des cas surviennent en Afrique de l'Ouest et dans d'autres pays tropicaux ; toutefois, la maladie a également été signalée dans des pays aux climats subtropicaux et tempérés. Des cas importés ont été rapportés dans des pays non endémiques, ce qui souligne la nécessité de sensibiliser davantage les professionnels de santé à l'échelle mondiale. L'ulcère de Buruli a été décrit pour la première fois en Australie par MacCallum en 1948 (Yotsu et al. 247 ; Makarenko et al. 119). À l'heure actuelle, plus de 33 pays à travers le monde, notamment en Afrique de l'Ouest, en Amérique centrale et du Sud ainsi que dans la région du Pacifique occidental signalent des cas de cette maladie. Fait intéressant, contrairement à de nombreuses autres maladies tropicales, l'ulcère de Buruli est également observé dans des pays situés hors de la zone climatique tropicale, comme l'Australie et le Japon. Dans le cadre de l'ODD 3 (cible 3.3), peut contribuer à l'éducation à la santé publique en sensibilisant les lecteurs aux enjeux de santé mondiale et aux risques à l'échelle locale. En invitant les lecteurs à repérer leur propre pays (« ton pays ») aux côtés d'autres régions touchées sur la carte du monde, le visuel atténue la stigmatisation régionale associée à la maladie car il présente l'ulcère de Buruli comme une préoccupation internationale plutôt que comme une malédiction locale ou une affection isolée. Cette conception interactive, fondée sur l'action, encourage une culture de la santé participative. Ainsi, en invitant les jeunes et les membres de la communauté à prendre conscience de leur propre vulnérabilité dans un contexte mondial élargi, ce support peut favoriser une surveillance précoce et des interventions de santé publique inclusives.



Figure 4: Représentation multimodale de la symptomatologie clinique et de la progression pathologique. ***Source : Organisation Mondiale de la Santé, L'ulcère de Buruli, ill. Mohamed Aouamri, p.12.***

La figure 4 oriente le récit éducatif vers le diagnostic clinique, en s'appuyant sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle pour analyser la manière dont l'identification des symptômes est construite, tant visuellement que verbalement. Sur le plan idéationnel, la planche établit des processus mentaux ou cognitifs de reconnaissance (« COMMENT PEUT-ON SAVOIR SI QUELQU'UN A L'ULCÈRE DE BURULI ? », « pour voir si tu sais reconnaître... ») parallèlement à des processus relationnels d'identification qui classent la progression des lésions cliniques : un nodule (« une boule sous la peau : on l'appelle nodule »), un ulcère ouvert (« une plaie ») et des dommages structurels avancés (« le bras est déformé... »). On sait que cette bactérie est de la même famille que celles responsables de la tuberculose et de la lèpre (OMS, *Ulcère de Buruli : Infection* 1). Sur le plan interpersonnel, la mise en page utilise un dispositif de cadrage méta-narratif dans lequel les personnages examinent ensemble un album photo

illustré (« Feuilletons cet album... »). Le point de vue du lecteur s'aligne sur celui d'un observateur à la première personne qui tient l'album et en tourne les pages, cet effet est souligné par le pouce visible au premier plan, en bas à gauche, en créant ainsi une proximité propice à un apprentissage concret et intime.

Sur le plan textuel, la partie supérieure constitue le cadre pédagogique (l'Idéal/le Donné), tandis que les vignettes photographiques inférieures présentent les stades concrets et successifs de la gravité de la maladie (le Réel/le Nouveau), en utilisant des flèches en gras et des zones d'ombrage magenta à fort contraste sur les membres atteints pour mettre en évidence les altérations pathologiques. Dans le cadre de l'ODD 3 (cible 3.3), ce panneau peut contribuer à la littératie en santé en facilitant la reconnaissance précoce des symptômes, avant l'apparition éventuelle d'un handicap irréversible. En illustrant le continuum clinique, depuis le nodule indolore au stade précoce jusqu'à l'ulcère avéré et, à terme, à la déformation du membre, ce support visuel peut aider les membres de la communauté à reconnaître les symptômes et à rechercher rapidement une prise en charge médicale. La reconnaissance des stades précoces non ulcéreux, tels que les nodules, est importante pour permettre une prise en charge rapide, notamment par un traitement antibiotique lorsque celui-ci est indiqué. Cette démarche contribue à l'objectif de l'ODD 3 visant à réduire la morbidité liée aux maladies tropicales négligées et à prévenir les déficiences physiques à long terme au sein des populations touchées.

C'est pourquoi, après avoir abordé les symptômes, les pages suivantes posent la question : « Où aller si tu penses avoir l'ulcère de Buruli ». Le texte aborde ensuite la prise en charge hospitalière, qui relève de l'aspect clinique des soins, tandis qu'une autre section traite des mesures préventives. L'ensemble de ces informations est présenté sous une forme visuelle, constituant ainsi un support pédagogique clé pour favoriser un diagnostic précoce et un traitement adapté, tout en incluant des mesures visant à prévenir les handicaps (Ajah, "Graphic Medicine'' 231 ; Boleira et al. 281). Le texte emploie la stratégie de lutte prônée actuellement par I 'initiative mondiale contre l'ulcère de Buruli qui sont : « éducation sanitaire dans la communauté les plus touchées ; adoption de matériel éducatif adapté aux besoins des pays et surveillance à base communautaire… » (OMS, *Ulcère de Buruli : Infection* 1). Ce texte offre donc une synthèse des connaissances essentielles sur l'ulcère de Buruli et joue un rôle informatif important dans la sensibilisation des patients et des communautés.

5.0. Analyse LSF de Juma et le Trachome sous l'angle de l'ODD

Le trachome la principale cause infectieuse de cécité évitable. Il est provoqué par des sérotypes oculaires de *Chlamydia trachomatis*. Sa transmission est favorisée dans les communautés défavorisées, où l'encombrement est commun et où l'accès à l'eau et à l'assainissement est insuffisant (Mabey at al. 223 ; Ajah, "Graphic Medicine'' 231). Des souches spécifiques de *Chlamydia trachomatis* (types A, B, Ba et C) infectent la conjonctive, la membrane qui tapisse les paupières. La bactérie se transmet d'une personne à l'autre par l'intermédiaire de mains, de vêtements, de linge de lit ou de surfaces contaminés, ainsi que par des mouches attirées par les yeux et transportant des sécrétions oculaires ou nasales provenant d'une personne infectée. Les enfants sont les plus souvent touchés par ces infections, tandis que les femmes présentent un risque plus élevé d'infection au cours de leur vie, en raison de leur rôle de soignantes. La première image de ce document médical montre une femme atteinte de trachome.



Figure 5: représentation Rultimodale de l'éducation familiale sur le trachome. ***Source : Fichter, Keline. Juma et le Trachome, p. 2.***

L'analyse fondée sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle montre comment le texte français intégré inscrit le récit dans les réalités cliniques et sociales. L'encadré narratif présente une situation concrète de la vie quotidienne (« Juma, Mariam et leur mère rentrent chez eux, ils ramènent de l'eau puisée à la fontaine »), établissant ainsi un lien entre la collecte d'eau et les discussions sur la santé. Le dialogue utilise des processus d'identification relationnels pour définir le trachome ("Elle est aveugle à cause d'une grave maladie qui s'appelle le 'TRACHOME'!", "C'est une maladie des yeux...") ainsi que des processus matériels et mentaux qui mettent l'accent sur la vulnérabilité de l'enfance et l'orientation institutionnelle ("qui débute chez les petits enfants... demande à Monsieur Saouti, le maître d'école"). Sur le plan interpersonnel, la mère agit comme une médiatrice qui fait autorité tout en restant accessible et utilise la gestuelle ainsi que la parole pour s'adresser à ses enfants (« Maman, pourquoi Madame Usiku ne voit-elle plus ? »). Dans le dernier passage du texte, Mariam s'adresse au lecteur tout en exprimant un engagement concret pour l'avenir (« Dès demain à l'école, nous interrogerons Monsieur Saouti ! »), encourageant ainsi les jeunes lecteurs à rechercher activement des informations. Sur le plan textuel, le récit passe d'un aperçu du transport de l'eau en milieu rural (Donné) à une mise en avant de l'éducation à la santé au sein de la famille, puis présente l'école comme un lieu important d'acquisition des connaissances en matière de santé (Nouveau).

En cohérence avec l'ODD 3 (Cible 3.3 : Éliminer les maladies tropicales négligées) et l'ODD 4 (Éducation de qualité), ce panel met en lumière l'articulation cruciale entre la sensibilisation communautaire à la santé, l'accès à l'eau à domicile et la scolarisation. En attribuant explicitement la cécité de Mme Usiku à un trachome chronique contracté durant la petite enfance, le récit présente la perte de la vue comme une conséquence d'une maladie infectieuse évitable plutôt que comme une fatalité. Par ailleurs, le fait d'orienter la curiosité des enfants vers leur maître d'école illustre un modèle de promotion de la santé en milieu scolaire, où l'enseignement primaire joue un rôle important dans la prévention des maladies et à l'éducation à l'hygiène. Cette double approche peut encourager les enfants à devenir des acteurs de la promotion de la santé au sein de leur foyer, contribuant ainsi à une prise en charge précoce et aux efforts mondiaux visant à éliminer la cécité due

au trachome.



Figure 6: Représentation multimodale des symptômes précoces et de la dynamique vectorielle. ***Source : Fichter, Keline. Juma et le Trachome, p. 7.***

L'analyse fondée sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle examine comment le discours éducatif présente les voies de transmission du trachome et les principaux symptômes précoces dans un contexte de sensibilisation scolaire. Sur le plan idéationnel, les processus verbaux alternent entre des actions matérielles impliquant un contact physique (« les enfants se touchent mutuellement le visage », « lorsqu'ils dorment les uns contre les autres », « essuie le visage... avec son voile ») et la dynamique comportementale des vecteurs induite par les écoulements oculaires (« ce sont aussi les mouches qui sont responsables : attirées par les secrétions... »). Le panneau inférieur droit met en scène une interaction en classe où des processus relationnels d'identification permettent de classer les symptômes cliniques fondamentaux grâce aux réponses actives des élèves : « Ils ont les yeux rouges ! », « Leurs yeux coulent !! » et « Les mouches viennent dessus ! ». Sur le plan interpersonnel, l'enseignant (Monsieur Saouti) adopte un rôle pédagogique faisant autorité ; il se tient devant un chevalet présentant un schéma du vecteur mouche-œil tout en esquissant un geste de la main ouverte vers ses élèves attentifs. Ces derniers manifestent leur participation active en levant la main, tandis que des illustrations en gros plan, montrent des enfants qui présentent des écoulements et des amas de mouches autour des yeux. Cette scène établit un contact visuel direct et évocateur (une « demande » d'interaction) avec le lecteur, visant à susciter une reconnaissance immédiate des signes pathologiques. Sur le plan textuel, les informations présentées précédemment constituent des éléments déjà introduits dans le discours (l'information « donnée » ou connue). Ces panneaux illustrent le contact direct, le partage de vêtements et le rôle des mouches comme vecteurs, puis conduit à une synthèse de ces informations dans le cadre de l'apprentissage scolaire (l'information « nouvelle » ou « réelle »), qui synthétise ces observations en un savoir scolaire formel.

En phase avec l'ODD 3 (cible 3.3) et l'ODD 4 (éducation de qualité), ce panneau illustre le rôle transformateur de la promotion de la santé en milieu scolaire pour l'élimination des maladies tropicales négligées. En intégrant la littératie en santé au programme scolaire, l'approche éducative peut contribuer à mieux faire comprendre les mécanismes de transmission des maladies et à renforcer les pratiques d'hygiène. Il est essentiel de noter que l'accent mis explicitement sur les premiers signes cliniques, tels que les écoulements oculaires, les rougeurs et l'attraction des mouches, avant l'apparition de cicatrices cornéennes irréversibles. Cela peut aider les écoliers à reconnaître certains signes évocateurs d'une infection chez eux-mêmes ou chez leurs jeunes frères et sœurs. En établissant un lien entre les comportements quotidiens (comme se toucher le visage, dormir à proximité les uns des autres ou s'essuyer le visage avec des vêtements partagés) et les voies de transmission du trachome, cette approche peut transmettre aux élèves des connaissances préventives concrètes et contribuer à promouvoir les piliers « propreté du visage » et « amélioration de l'environnement » de la stratégie SAFE de l'OMS visant à prévenir la cécité liée au trachome dans les communautés endémiques.

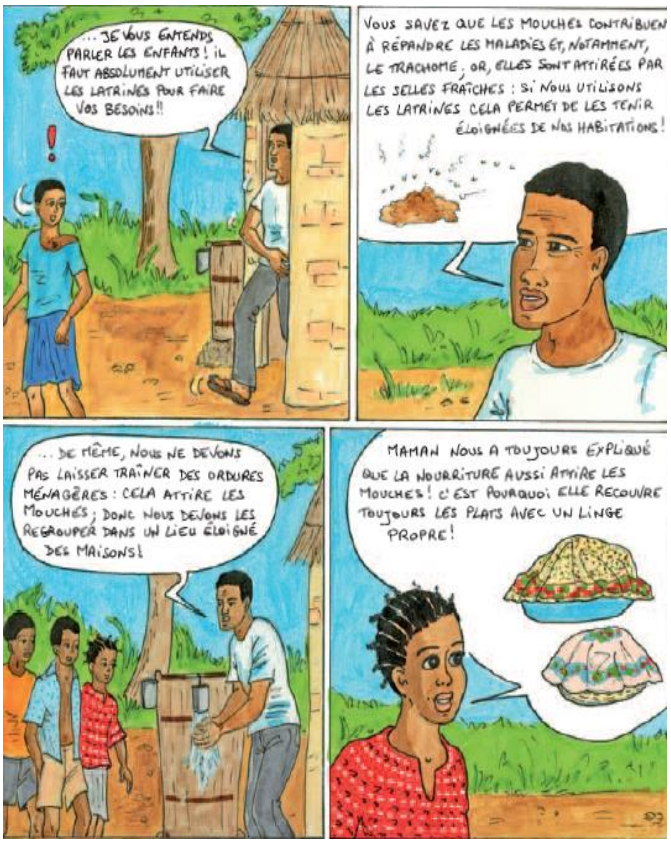

Figure 7: Représentation multimodale de l'hygiène preventive. ***Source : Fichter, Keline. Juma et le Trachome, p. 11.***

L'analyse fondée sur la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle examine comment les pratiques d'assainissement du milieu peuvent contribuer à interrompre le cycle de transmission du trachome. Sur le plan idéationnel, le discours verbal met l'accent sur l'obligation et les mesures préventives concrètes (« il faut absolument utiliser les latrines », « nous ne devons pas laisser traîner des ordures », « recouvrez toujours les plats d'un linge propre »), reliant directement le comportement humain à la lutte antivectorielle (« les mouches sont attirées par les selles fraîches... par les ordures... par la nourriture aussi »). Les éléments visuels illustrent des actions sanitaires concrètes : un homme sortant de latrines en briques, l'élimination ou le confinement approprié des déchets ménagers, le lavage des mains à un point d'eau dédié et la protection des plats à l'aide de linges propres. Sur le plan interpersonnel, le discours met en avant des figures d'autorité et des personnages qui s'adressent à la communauté, renforçant ainsi les normes sociales relatives à l'hygiène du milieu. Sur le plan textuel, la composition en quatre cases structure une liste de contrôle complète des mesures préventives (selon la dynamique « Réel/Nouveau »), en passant de l'utilisation des latrines (en haut à gauche) aux mécanismes de reproduction des mouches (en haut à droite), puis au lavage des mains et à la gestion des déchets (en bas à gauche) et enfin à la protection des aliments (en bas à droite). Avec des bulles de dialogue attribuent clairement ces mesures d'hygiène concrètes à des modèles spécifiques au sein de la communauté.

En cohérence avec l'ODD 3 (cible 3.3 : éliminer les maladies tropicales négligées) et l'ODD 6 (eau propre et assainissement), le texte met en avant des mesures relevant de l'amélioration de l'environnement et de l'hygiène du visage, deux dimensions associées à la stratégie SAFE de l'OMS pour l'élimination du trachome. En établissant un lien explicite entre la défécation en plein air, la mauvaise gestion des déchets et la prolifération des mouches (Musca sorbens), le visuel promeut l'utilisation de latrines et la gestion des déchets comme des interventions de santé publique essentielles pour éloigner les mouches des lieux de vie. Par ailleurs, l'intégration de pratiques domestiques quotidiennes, telles que le lavage des mains et la protection des aliments à l'aide de linges propres, démocratise la prévention de la maladie en transférant la responsabilité des établissements de santé vers les habitudes du quotidien. Cette approche multidimensionnelle présente l'assainissement de l'environnement comme un moyen de réduire durablement le risque de transmission du trachome et de contribuer à la préservation de la santé oculaire au sein des populations touchées par cette maladie endémique.

Ainsi, ces pathographies infographiques s'inscrivent dans la tradition de la non-fiction créative, car les informations sur les maladies y sont présentées de manière imaginative (Ajah, "Graphic Medicine'' 231 ; Ajah, "African Comics'' 1). Quant à la dimension graphique, la créativité s'y exprime par le recours à la perspective qui, à l'instar d'un objectif de caméra, permet à l'auteur de diriger l'attention du lecteur et de stimuler son imagination (Mazzeo 1). Ainsi, ces pathographies infographiques peuvent contribuer à réduire l'écart entre les connaissances médicales institutionnelles

et la compréhension du grand public, en encourageant les lecteurs à reconnaître les premiers symptômes cliniques et à adopter des comportements favorables à la santé.

6.0. CONCLUSION

Cette étude multimodale montre comment ces pathographies infographiques étudies dans notre corpus fonctionnent comme des outils sémiotiques importants pour la communication en santé publique dans les régions francophones endémiques. En mobilisant la linguistique systémique fonctionnelle de Halliday et la sémiotique sociale visuelle, l'analyse révèle comment des réalités cliniques complexes, allant de l'étiologie microbiologique et des réservoirs environnementaux de l'ulcère de Buruli aux mécanismes de transmission, aux symptômes précoces et à la prévention communautaire du trachome, sont traduites en récits accessibles et culturellement pertinents. Le déploiement stratégique de marqueurs linguistiques en français (tels que des verbes exprimant des processus causaux simplifiés, des actes de langage impératifs et des gloses localisées), associé à des structures visuelles dynamiques, crée un dialogue entre les figures d'autorité, les pairs et les lecteurs.

En définitive, l'architecture pédagogique de ces communications en santé peut contribuer aux objectifs de développement durable des Nations Unies, en établissant un lien concret entre la cible 3.3 (élimination des maladies tropicales négligées) et les objectifs ODD 4 (éducation de qualité) et ODD 6 (eau propre et assainissement). En ancrant l'éducation à la santé dans le cadre familier de la vie villageoise, des tâches quotidiennes et des programmes scolaires officiels, ces supports peuvent faciliter la compréhension des maladies infectieuses, contribuer à lutter contre la stigmatisation qui y est associée et mettre l'accent sur l'importance d'une prise en charge précoce visant à prévenir les handicaps permanents et la cécité. L'intégration de pratiques d'hygiène environnementale ; telles que l'utilisation de latrines, la gestion des déchets et le lavage du visage, souligne une approche durable et communautaire de la lutte contre la maladie. Ainsi, cette étude prouve que des pathographies infographiques sont des ressources sémiotiques multimodaux qui sont très importants dans la communication de sante. Donc, avec l'analyse de LSF, ces pathographies infographiques de notre corpus constituent des outils susceptibles de favoriser l'accès à l'éducation à la santé, de contribuer à la réduction de la morbidité physique et de promouvoir un bien-être durable au sein des populations vulnérables dans le monde francophone.

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