

NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES REVIEW

Vol. 1 No 1 October, 1992

Published by the National Association
of Social Studies Educationists

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS IN CURRICULUM MATERIALS: A STUDY OF LONGMAN SOCIAL STUDIES SERIES FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY CLASSES

M. E. NYANG —ABIA— University of Calabar, Calabar.

ABSTRACT

The Longman Social Studies Series (1983) for the Junior Secondary Classes constituting 352 pages were analysed in terms of cultural dimensions indicative of national character. 14 culturally symbolic variables were identified and used for the study. The nation was broken down into six Ethno-political Zones. Four research assumptions were proposed. Percentages and simple X^2 were used. Results indicate that a wide variety of these variables are used in the book. There is concentration of (38.6%) of the cultural variables in the Northern Zone as against 8.3% and 11.2% in COR and the Middle Belt Zones respectively. The national character is not therefore adequately reflected in the book. The X^2 computation shows a very significant difference in the distribution of the culturally symbolic variables. The $X^2_{cal} = 105.33$, $X^2_{crit} = 20.517$ at $P \leq 0.001$ and df of 5. It is recommended that Social Studies texts should better reflect Nigeria's cultural diversities particularly at the Secondary School Level. Local writers should rise up and reflect their local variables at the primary school level.

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS IN CURRICULUM MATERIALS: A STUDY OF LONGMAN SOCIAL STUDIES SERIES FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY CLASSES

Introduction:

Through formal education man is better equipped to function effectively within his total environment: by appreciating, challenging, modifying or subduing nature that he may live in harmony with her. But in order to enhance its leadership role, formal education requires good grounding in cultural dimensions which are normally expressed through the curriculum process to make man whatever he is, formal education (curriculum process to make man whatever he is, books constitute one of the most versatile and most widely utilized curriculum materials. Also, because of its inherent powerful characteristics and inexhaustible variety, books have been literally given the "magic wand" which compelling wave gives one an automatic upward social mobility, indoctrinates and brainwashes, or unites a people, a nation and a race with jet rapidity and meticulous precision. In Nigeria, one subject area that directly emphasizes national unity, national consciousness and democracy is Social Studies.

The wonderful values and powers of the book were originally appreciated by the ancient Egyptians in their search for a durable and portable means of keeping religious and other ceremonial records. By 300 A.D. the Chinese had already developed handcut wooden blocks as a printing process component; then within the next 500 years the first printed books were already circulating. But since the churning out of the first printed Bible following the discovery of the printing process by the German, Johann Gutenberg in 1445 ever increasing number and variety of books have "conspired" to expose the esoteric knowledge previously hidden in the monasteries, making them easily available to anyone who cares.

Although the teacher's monopoly of knowledge was dented, most learners were also

compelled to think convergently, except where provision was made for the divergent thinking. The colonial masters, having realized the convergent thinking dimension of the textbook use it, heavily loaded with their foreign cultural variables, to Europeanize the Africans. In that way the textbook, according to Inyang-Abia (1986), was used to enslave the nation, stifle African cultural consciousness and assault the national psyche of the Africans. This was done by polluting the minds of the colonized people. They continuously fed their victims with the diet of Eurocentric values and other exotic value systems using the subtle messages of the textbook reinforced by religion.

The textbook as an instructional instrument of political and economic control, featured contents (names, pictures, stories, comics, etc) loaded with foreign culture and directed at the human mind and soul. The foreign oriented textbooks as an instrument of manipulation indoctrinated and brainwashed the colonized victims with the desired precision.

In opposition to this phenomenon Waite (1975), Wall (1975), Rodwell (1978) and Akanbi (1982) while acknowledging the complexity of instructional situations emphasize that the learners' immediate environment should be explored for composition, design and production of culturally relevant instructional messages. Akanbi (1982) suggests that a wealth of instructional contents can be meaningful if the wide variety of indigenous foods, festivals, dresses, occupations and artifacts can be used to ensure "localness" of instruction.

If the foreign textbooks were so effective in the hands of the colonial masters as instruments of colonialism, political and economic control, indoctrination and enculturation then one wonders if the textbooks, particularly in Social Studies, could also be used to facilitate national consciousness and unity and to Africanize the Europeanized Nigerians. There seems to be no doubt about this, particularly because in Social Studies (as most other subject areas) indigenous writers have sprung up. These writers, although are not yet adequately encouraged by the government, to all intents and purposes, are expected to draw from local examples, names, housing patterns, family and community life among other variables, as suggested by Akanbi (1982), to illustrate, support or explain their write ups. If this premise is accepted then one may wonder what cultural indicators are mostly used in the Social Studies textbook and whether the national character is reflected in such writings.

Social Studies, a core subject in the new curriculum design as specified in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (1981), has a central place in both the policy and the curriculum, and the actual practice in the classroom. This fact is underscored by increasing need for national awareness, consciousness and unity. Social Studies more than any other subject in the new curriculum for Primary and Junior Secondary school levels emphasize national consciousness and unity within the context of the current foreign policy.

The Longman Social Studies series for the Junior Secondary Schools (Pupils) is one of the major book series that provides adequate curriculum content and strategies. It is also intended for use throughout Nigeria. Therefore in a study like this it is worthwhile analytically examining the cultural dimensions of a major book series within a critical subject area much publicized for national consciousness and unity, social justice and self-reliance.

The Problem:

In order for a social studies textbook designed for the federation to enhance the much

desired national consciousness and unity, social justice and self-reliance, it must use of a wide variety of cultural indicators which should equally reflect the national character. The problems posed by this study are expressed through the following questions:

- What cultural indicators are used in the Longman Social Studies: A Junior Secondary Course (1983) (books 1 — 3) designed for Nigeria?
- Given the six major ethno-political blocks in Nigeria as a representation of the national character, what is the rank of each in terms of the cultural indicators?
- Is there any significant difference in the use of culturally symbolic indicators among the ethno-political blocks?

Research Assumptions:

Based on the above research problems it is assumed that:

- A wide variety of cultural indicators (indigenous personal names, local expressions, symbolic visuals related to farming, religious, marketing activities etc) will be used;
- The national character as expressed by each of the six ethno-political zones (Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers, Western, East Central, Bendel, Middle Belt and the North) is adequately catered for;
- The ethno-political zones have equal rank in the cultural indicators; and
- There is no significant difference in the frequency of use of the culturally symbolic indicators to reflect the ethno-political zones.

Operational Definitions:

The following terms are operationally defined to facilitate a meaningful comprehension of this study:

Social Studies: This is one of the core (Curriculum) subjects provided for by the NPE (1981). As defined by Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) of the University of Lagos (1981:5) it refers to "the study of man in society with all the interplay between him, his environment and the effects of science and technology". The definition meets this study.

Longman Social Studies Series: This is defined by their International Serial Book Number (ISBN) for Books One to Three as follows:

Book Series	ISBN
1	0 582 65042 9
2	0 582 65043 7
3	0 582 65044 5

They are a series of three books contributed to by twenty-eight authors across the nation and religious boundaries, involving seven contributing advisers of professorial rank, coordinated by Ann Walmsley of Longman Nigeria. The series, according to Longman Social Studies (1983:3), follows the guideline of the National Educational Research Council (NERC) Social Studies Group Report (1977) and covers the syllabus of NERC and CESAC approved by the National Council on Education (NCE) in 1982 which is the currently used curriculum. See also National Curriculum for Junior Secondary School (1985:2—13).

Cultural Dimensions: These refer to the various aspects of cultural variables within the achievement of the objectives of the Social Studies Curriculum. It refers, in this study, to the textbooks under this study.

Cultural Indicators: They consist of the culturally symbolic variables and material

components which are indicative of a particular indigenous culture within the given ethno-political zone. For the purpose of this study they refer to indigenous names and linguistic expressions, farming and religious activities, housing patterns, indigenous means of transport, local craft and mode of dressing among others.

Ethno-Political Zones: They are the zones of Nigeria into which the ethnic and/or political regions constitute. See map in appendix.

The Sample:

"Longman Social Studies: A Junior Secondary Course" Pupils Books 1 – 3 constitute the sample for this study. The three volumes of the series book are among numerous Social Studies textbooks used in this country. Other recommended texts for the subject did not meet the demands of this study in terms of variety of contributors, their credibility and national character. That is to say some of the other Social Studies textbooks were written by either an individual or a small group of persons of local instead of international standing as in the Longman series. Moreover the contents of the Longman series reflect the national curriculum in this subject.

The Longman Pupils' series starts with behavioural objectives stated in question form for each unit. It has six units of study in Books 1 and 2 and ten units in Book 3. Each unit has, in addition, a case study with three to four scenes spread within two pages and another double pages of information, discovery and activity within each scene. Each book also has reference pages and glossary.

The major approaches include the realistic case study, in narrative, of persons in Nigeria faced with particular problems. The next approach captioned "Notice and Discuss" has ten questions designed for comprehension, discussion and inquiry. This is followed by an objective approach linking more specifically the objectives earlier generated to particular activities thus ensuring their achievement.

On the basis of the above analytical considerations the Longman Social Studies series was considered as having the expected qualities of a national Social Studies text. It was therefore accepted as being adequate for this study. A total of 352 pages was involved in the study. Forteen culturally symbolic variables were identified and used for the study.

The Instrument:

Since the cultural dimensions of the contents of the series constitute the variables to be investigated, the only instrument used was the proforma designed to collect the necessary data. It gathered data on the various cultural dimensions shown under Table One.

Procedure:

Each book was surveyed page by page for the required cultural variables. Care was taken to exclude variables such as the law court, the police, the map, educational and social institutions among others that did not carry the required culturally symbolic messages. The setting of the narration, in particular, provided much cue for selecting the relevant cultural symbols, so also did the indigenous names and pictures with cultural bias among other visual illustrations.

Each accepted culturally symbolic variable was counted once even if repeated; each accepted item received a score of one point under the relevant cell in the proforma. The scores (frequencies) were later summed up for computation.

Data Analysis and Results:

Percentage and Simple Chi square (χ^2) test were computed to answer the study questions earlier proposed and as guided by the study assumptions.

Assumption One:

From table one, it is evident that a wide variety of cultural indicators was used in the textbook analysed. The indicators were categorized, for the purpose of this study, into fourteen categories. See the categories on Table One. Assumption one is therefore retained.

Assumption Two:

The available evidence (Table One) shows that indigenous Personal names constitute the highest percentage (22.4%) of all cultural indicators as sampled in the three textbooks. Of this, names indicative of the Northern zone constitute the highest (38.8%) followed by names indicative of the Western zone (27.8%). It is ridiculous that the only name indicative of the Efik-Ibibio component of the (Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers) COR is only a mixture of foreign and indigenous names (Sunday Akpan), typical of this part of Nigeria. Even then the owner is only a police constable under a Yoruba in Lagos, Calabar, mentioned only once, is relegated to the position of an old slave port. Ridiculous! The Middle Belt and East Central zones are represented 9.3% times each.

Cultural evidences indicative of community and family life is the next highest (18.3%) with the Northern zone mostly represented too (29.5%). Closely followed is the Western zone (20.5%) and Bendel (15.9%). The East Central and Middle Belt zones are the least (9.1) represented here, while COR and Bendel zones are represented by 15.9% each. Symbolic evidences representing Kingship and royalty constitute the least (1.2%) represented in the text, of all the cultural indicators. The Northern and COR zones score 67% and 33% respectively. Indigenous transportation mode which scores only 1.7% and represented by the canoe had COR zone with 100%. Marketing activities which constitute 5% of the cultural variables concentrated in the East Central zone; it scores 83.3%.

Farming and religious activities are two major culturally symbolic variables studied. Only the foreign religions: Christianity and Islam, to the complete exclusion of African traditional religion are featured. Farming and religion constitute 9.1% and 6.2% respectively. Concentration of these activities is in the

TABLE 1: ETHNO-POLITICAL ZONES AND FREQUENCY OF SCORES IN CULTURALLY SYMBOLIC VARIABLES

Culturally Symbolic Variables	ETHNO-POLITICAL ZONES AND THEIR FREQUENCY OF SCORES						Summary
	1 COR*	2 East Central	3 Bendel	4 Western	5 Middle Belt	6 Northern	
F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %	F %
1 Indigenous Personal Names	4 7.4	5 9.3	4 7.4	15 27.8	5 9.3	21 38.8	54 22.4
2 Village Names	2 20	1 10	—	2 20	—	5 50	10 4.1
3 Indigenous Words	—	—	—	2 18.2	—	9 81.8	11 4.6
4 Images symbolic of Community/Family Life	7 15.9	4 9.1	7 15.9	9 20.5	4 9.1	15 29.5	46 18.3
5 Farming Activities	—	1 4.5	—	9 41	1 4.5	11 50	22 9.1
6 Religious Activities	—	—	1 2.3	9 40	—	6 40	15 6.2
7 Royalty/Kingship	1 33	—	—	—	—	2 67	3 1.2
8 Sculptures	2 9	7 26	4 15	7 26	7 26	—	27 11.2
9 Housing Pattern	—	—	—	2 23	2 10.7	7 38.3	12 5
10 Transportation	4 100	—	—	—	—	—	4 1.7
11 Marketing Activities	—	10 83.3	—	—	2 16.7	—	12 5
12 Local Craft	—	—	—	—	5 41.7	7 58.3	12 5
13 Dance	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14 Miscellaneous	—	—	—	2 11.3	1 0.7	12 50	15 6.2
Total Frequency (F)	20	20	18	22	27	52	241 100
As % of Grand Total	8.3%	11.6	7.3	22.8	11.2	30.6	100

COR = Calabar - Ogoja - Rivers. See Map in Appendix.

Northern zone with 50% and 40% respectively. The Western zone which follows is represented by 41% and 40% respectively. Sculpturing is another important culturally related variable investigated. Three zones: East Central, Western and Middle Belt had the highest (26%) representation each, while Northern zone had none. Two (7%) monolith carvings represent the COR zone.

Indigenous language is a major cultural variable. Of the eleven indigenous expressions used in the books, nine (81%.8%) are representative of the Northern zone while two (18.2%) represent the West. Indigenous expressions from other ethno-political zones were not used at all.

Of the 241 culturally symbolic variables used in the books, the Northern zone has 38.6%, Western zone 22.8%, East Central zone 11.6%, Middle Belt 11.2%, COR zone 8.3% and Bendel zone 7.5%. The implication of this finding is that all the ethno-political zones in Nigeria are catered for although some are emphasized more than the others. The assumption as stated is therefore retained.

Assumption Three

The total scores of each of the zones provided data for testing this assumption. See tables One above and two below.

TABLE 2: ETHNO-POLITICAL RANKING OF CULTURALLY SYMBOLIC VARIABLES IN LONGMAN SOCIAL STUDIES SERIES:

Ethno-Political Zone	f	%	Rank
Northern	93	38.6	1
Western	55	22.8	2
East Central	28	11.6	3
Middle Belt	27	11.2	4
Calabar-Ogoia-Rivers (COR)	20	8.3	4
Bendel	18	7.5	6
Total	241	100	

The assumption that the various ethno-political zones have equal rank in terms of the cultural dimensions as emphasized in the textbook is therefore rejected on the basis of the available data.

Assumption Four:

The total scores (frequencies) observed for each zone and their expected frequencies (scores) provide the data for computation of the simple chi square. Results at $P < 0.001$ shows significant difference in the use of culturally symbolic indicators among the ethno-political zones. The X^2 calculated = 105.33 but the X^2 critical = 20.517 at a degree of freedom (df) of 5. The available data dictates that the assumption as stated under section 4 above be rejected. That means there is a significant difference in the frequency of use of the culturally symbolic indicators to reflect the ethno-political zones in the textbook.

Discussion:

That a wide variety of culturally symbolic variables are used in the Social Studies textbook designed for the Nigerian child is in consonance with the cultural demands of curriculum materials. To this, Amadi (1987:141) says they can

bring the pupils face to face with the world that education is preparing them for....

This function also supports his observation that "recent emphasis on local production of

textbooks ... will promote cultural integration" (p. 141).

It is however regrettable that the NPE (1981) failed to emphasize the role of the textbook as a measure of keeping the cultural heritage alive despite their wide variety and ubiquity. In Section Four Sub-section 25 (2 - 3) only art, music and national festivals are specified avenues.

Language is a major expression of a peoples culture or what Essien (1986) calls the "the quintessence of humanity". In this study 31.1% of the observations made have linguistic dimensions and include Personal names and indigenous expressions. A Social Studies series meant for a nation which, according to Hansford (1976), has 384 languages and dialects, emphasizing two linguistic groups (See table One) seems to be diametrically opposed to the very essence of its objectives. One cannot say either that this observation reflects the language policy of the nation (if there is any). It is instructive to note Nida and Wonderly's (1971:65-66) warning that for a language to be nationalized it must be politically neutral. They point out that:

In Nigeria there is simply no politically neutral language. In fact the divisions into three major regions reflects the three language poles: Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. The political survival of Nigeria as a country would be even more seriously threatened than it is if any one of these languages were promoted by the government as being one national language.

The warning as expressed above tends to disagree with the *soft-sell approach* to cultural imperialism used in the text under study.

Gagne and Briggs (1979) also point out that attitude towards curriculum materials may differ with degree of urbanization and socio-economic level and that even "religious and cultural attitudes determine local reaction to various media" (p. 183). Heinrich, Molenda and Russell (1982) add to this. They emphasize that in visuals, the cultural background of the user has strong influence on the learning experience, particularly through iconic and symbolic connotations arising from indigenous cultural bias.

The instructional implication of the above is that the learner's immediate environment must be explored and exploited for the design of social studies textbooks. Where the text is designed for the whole nation the disparity in terms of the frequency of use of such iconic and symbolic connotations must be reduced to the barest minimum. It is also pertinent to point out that majority of the users of the text analysed are from the zones other than the one overstressed, that is if the assertion is true that the Western type education is yet to be adequately embraced by some sections of the country. Even if this is not true one may still question how the learners from the overstressed zones can learn about the culture of the understressed ones in order to help promote national consciousness, unity, equalitarianism and social justice.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

Although the structure, the calibre of contributors and contributing advisers of the book is highly commendable it is conclusive from the available data that the contents as expressed through the cultural dimensions are far from the major goal of Social Studies in Nigeria: national consciousness, unity, social justice and self-reliance.

The book is due, on the basis of this analysis, for a complete review to reduce the discrepancy existing in the cultural dimensions of the six ethno-political zones in the country. In this way the soft-selling technique of cultural imperialism and threats of ethnic

domination can be reduced. This may increase the probability of national consciousness, unity, equalitarianism and social justice. It is also suggested that writers of Social Studies textbooks should endeavour to reflect the national character. For the Primary School level, Social Studies texts must endeavour to emphasize the local environment of the pupils for whom the text is written; that is to say, a text must suit the cultural dimensions of the target audience by incorporating the culturally symbolic *images peculiar to the user's environment*. Local writers must arise.

Finally, it is hereby emphasized that the honest observations of this paper are made to de-emphasize unnecessarily unilateral ethnic emphasis of writers of textbooks meant to be used throughout the nation. The contents of this paper should therefore not be interpreted with political undertone.

REFERENCES

- Amadi, L. E. (1987) *Principles of Curriculum Development*. Uyo: Legacy Publishers Nig. Ltd.
- Akanbi, K. (1982). *Design and Production of Instructional Materials for Mass Literacy Campaign*. A Paper presented at the 12th Annual National Functional Literacy Seminar, University of Ibadan, August.
- Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) (1981). *Social Studies I* Lagos: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig.) Ltd.
- Essien, O. E. (1986) The Future of Minority Languages in Nigeria. Paper presented at the 7th Annual Conference of Linguistic Association of Nigeria, University of Maiduguri.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information.
- Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (1985) *National Curriculum Junior Secondary Schools* Vol. 5 Lagos: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig.) Ltd.
- Hansford, K. et al. (1976) "An Index of Nigerian Languages". In Hansford K. et al. (eds.); *Studies In Nigerian Languages*. No. 5 Ghana: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- Heinich, R. Molenda, M. and Russell, J. D. (1982) *Instructional Media and the New Technologies of Instruction*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Inyang-Abia, M. E. (1986) *Promoting Peace and National Unity Through Media Technology: Some Socio-Cultural Responsibilities*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of International Association of Educators for World Peace: Nigeria at University of Calabar, March 12 — 14.
- Longman-Nigeria (1983) *Longman Social Studies: J. A. Junior Secondary Course* (Books 1 — 3) Ikeja: Longman Nigeria Ltd.
- Nida, E. A. and Wonderly, W. (1971) "Communication Roles of Languages in Multi-Linguistic Societies". In W. H. Whiteley (Ed.) *Language Use and Social Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Waite, C. (1975) "Books and Other Print Resources" In C. Waite and R. Colebourn (Eds.), *Not by Books Alone*: Oxford, School Library Association, pp. 23 — 79.
- Wall, D. D. (1975). "Libraries as a Resources in Schools". In C. Waite and R. Colebourn (Eds.) *Not by Book Alone*. Oxford, School Library Association.

NIGERIA: THE ETHNO-POLITICAL ZONES



KEY	
ccc ccc	1. Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers Zone
mm mm	2. East Central Zone
ooo ooo	3. Bendel Zone
vvv vvv	4. Western Zone
	5. Middle Belt Zone
	6. Northern Zone