



CREATING FOLKLORIC CONTENT THROUGH DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHICAL APPROACH: EXAMPLE OF *BEAUTIFUL PLATEAU PROVERBS* ON FACEBOOK PAGE (<https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>)

Manta G. Yadok

Department of English and Literary studies
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria.
Email; manta@fuwukari.edu.ng
Phone No. 08038065960.

Abstract

The question of modes and approaches to the theory and practice of digital folklore in Africa has remained a concern to both ethnographers and folklorists. Hence, this paper proposes a digital ethnographical approach to creating digital folkloric content in the new media using Facebook as a case in point. It should be noted that ethnography, being a way of practising research by a written description and narration of a people after observing their daily lives, also has a longing for adaptation in the digital space. Thus, with the example of Beautiful Plateau Proverbs a compendium of 2D animated proverbs from the myriad ethnic groups of Plateau State in North-Central Nigeria published on an eponymous Facebook Page, the study suggests how both digital folklore and digital ethnography research can become more meaningful when engaged through an inter-disciplinary mode. It is the mission of this research to identify key ideas in off line cultures such as language, music, semiotic symbols as a way of presenting actual cultures while also showcasing rhetorical aspects of folklore on the cyber space. Hopefully, this means of creating folkloric content will enrich virtual experiences of online audience.

Keywords; digital ethnography, proverbs, animation, folklore and Facebook.

Introduction

Proverbs are concise philosophical sayings among a given folk. Proverbs are oratory instruments for teaching, learning, and knowledge transfer from one generation to another. Nkansah-Obrempong, posits that proverbs also serve as a symbol of cultural heritage, cultural identity, and a signet of belief, politics, law, and social norms and values (38). As a creative oral expression, the proverb is integral in most African conversations serving the purpose of embellishment as noted by Adamo (3). In the same light, Arvo Krikmann also notes that proverbs

“serve to confirm opinions, make prognoses, express doubts, reproaches, accusations, justifications, excuses consolations, derision or malicious joy, regrets, warning, recommendations, etc. (107). Thus, proverbs become crucial in nearly every conversation.

Proverbs also encapsulates the indigenous discourse of a people thus. Fayemi avers that proverbs are “relics of cultural experiences”. Some of these proverbs are coined and expressed with pithy remarks and some level of terseness, thereby making the younger generation miss out on the intended cultural education (1).

These proverbs among the diverse ethnic groups in Plateau state, when they are not being performed or spoken are at the risk of vanishing away with time especially in the 21st century where most youths have abandoned their indigenous languages, culture, and tradition as a consequence of globalisation, modernity and language encroachment. It is in this regard that efforts to revive and preserve the vanishing status of proverbs should be put in place.

There are many studies on proverbs, but there are still areas that need to be addressed especially in terms of the place and function of proverbs in the digital age. Several studies have been conducted on various topics on proverbs with Ruth Finnegan leaning towards its function (379), Isidore Okpewho on the structural forms of proverbs (232). Wolfgang Mieder dwells on historical, political and social relevance of proverbs (22-33) and Kwesi Yankah emphasizes on rhetoric and context of proverbs (23). In recent times, scholars like Nicholas et al in a study of Dagaare and Waala proverbs from the people in the Upper West Region of Ghana decide to create images of proverbs with the intention of fitting proverbs into the contemporary academic picture-learning pattern (6).

In addition to merging proverbs to pictures, Makinde Olajide presents processed indigenous Yoruba proverbs into recognizable icons and symbols for art practices (textile, graphics, sculpture, ceramics) in order to resuscitate and sustain the Yoruba cultural heritage. (3). Furthermore, Kquofi et al adopted the visual iconography approach in creating a visual representation of 20 Akan proverbs (86). The researchers mentioned above, assert that they adopted these approaches to promote the use of visual communication which holds greater potential than oral or verbal communication which this study does not completely agree.

Rather, this study sees that both visual communication and verbal communication complement each other especially for cultural education among the youth. This paper agrees with Nicholas et al, Olajide, and Kquofi’s et al’s works on ideation and philosophy because the creative development of visual symbols to represent the proverbs, would bolster their preservation for posterity.

But, by reducing these proverbs to pictures, icons, symbols, written works and visual images without incorporating the aural aspect, these mental pictorial ideations will resort to inhibit performance of the proverb as a speech act. The paucity of digital ethnographical materials among the myriad minority ethnic groups across the state {Plateau state} also constitutes a problem that requires a solution to pave way for better understanding of proverbs in their native environments and at the same time propel further researches in digital ethnography.

The adoption of animation for the preservation of proverbs has not been given attention by scholars as a form that can stimulate interest in the younger generation and revive the vanishing voices of proverbs in Plateau state. The work examines the cohabitation of orality, literacy and technology as they play their distinctive roles in making proverbs live on, with digital technology, proverbs are not only revived but as well captured in unique animated ways that seems attractive to modern day generation.

These animated visual images, augmented by written subtitles and audio/ verbal communication will also aid the understanding of the proverbs when spoken in a given context. Although there may be losses, shelve offs of spontaneity, and traditional stylistics but technology retrieves the potential of proverbs in serving society. This study therefore intends to demonstrate how new technology like animation can aptly be applied to the study of the proverb as a creative expression and also to highlight on the methodological process of adapting the selected animated proverbs of the peoples of Plateau State Nigeria in to the digital ethnographic space through the social media platforms of the Facebook page.

The social media space as observed by Leonard flores is a third-generation computer that is characterize by randomness, internet culture and pop culture poetics (56). It is also populated by digital natives who create literature without knowing. As a result, scholars of the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) have created a divide between the second generation which align with the print literary tradition and refer to literatures created with the second-generation computers as highbrow literatures and that of the third generation as low brow literatures. Therefore, it becomes imperative that scholars experimenting with the third-generation computer should be strategic in their approach, thus this study adopts the digital ethnographical approach to tell an ethnographic story amidst the randomness that characterizes the social media space. Thus, this paper attempts to demonstrate how proverbs merge with animation can help revive and preserve the vanishing proverbs in the state. It also highlights key off line features that helps in creating digital ethnographic space and digital ethnographical method.

Literature review on digital ethnographical approach

It is important to note that with the emergence of technology, many scholars from different fields have attempted to find proper methodologies and concepts that tries to capture or rather defines each field

using technology in different ways. Varis is of the view that the differences in the terminologies might be in the different ways of the conceptualization of the different digital approaches ranging from limiting an on-line ethnography to a specific technique of as a more extensive and a complex technique. (23). Some of these methods include; Netnography introduced by Robert Kozinets a marketing scholar who developed Netnography in 1998 as a way to study on line consumer behaviour and communities. His methods were widely used in marketing consumer research and media studies. Virtual ethnography was pioneered by Christine Hine in 2008 as an on-line methodological approach. Hine emphasized that the internet is not just a tool for communication but a place where cultures are formed and can be studied ethnographically, her arguments require a rethink on the traditional ethnographic method with reference to the field and participants presence. Digital ethnography is one of the approaches commonly used in the humanities and social sciences such as anthropology, history, cultural studies, sociology, psychology etc and will be adopted as an approach for this study. Digital ethnography aligns with concepts like digitising literature, digital orature and Technauriture because these concepts like digital ethnography deals with the vigorous migration of context, mainly of traditional performances to the digital space. Kozinet and Hine's Netnography and virtual ethnography respectively does not fit as a method for this study because it is mostly limited to on-line study.

Hine, Paccagnella, Miller and Slater explore the effects of computer technology on human culture and posits that virtual spaces have their own cultures. It is in this regard that Miller and Slater argue that ethnographies need to revisit the notion of a placeless, cultureless, state of the cyberspace and focus their attention on the myriad ways new technologies have given because, in its actual sense digital technology is used by real people in diverse real world and communities (56) In a response to Miller and Slaters argument, it is pertinent that digital ethnography is adopted in this research because by definition, Underberg and Zorn defines digital ethnography as “ method for representing real -life cultures through combining the characteristics of digital media with the elements of story through interactivity and immersion.”(10) It is believed that digital media can enable anthropologists, literary critics,

folklorists to tell innovative, cultural stories and recreate aspects of methodology for a diverse audience .

Dhiraj Murthy is also a prominent voice in the field of digital ethnography, focussing on digital tools and the social media space. He is interested in the role of the social media in transforming ethnographic research, in his submission, the social media space allows researchers to study on line communities that might be difficult to access due to geographical or social barriers. (9).

Digital ethnography is an outline of approach that invites researchers to consider doing ethnographical research in a contemporary digital, material and sensory environment. Sarah Pink et al, posits that digital ethnography also explores the consequences of the presence of the digital media in shaping the techniques and processes, and also accounts for how digital methodological practical and theoretical dimensions of ethnographic research are increasingly intertwined (2). It also invites researchers to rethink how pre- digital practices were understood and how digital methods and methodologies are redefining the practices. Thus, digital ethnography challenges the concepts that have traditionally defined the units of analysis that ethnography has been used to study. It goes to tell how old concepts are now being impacted by digital practices.

The term ethnography comes from the Greek word *ēthnos* which means, population, cultures and *gráphein* which means write, describe and therefore its literal meaning refers to the writing/description of cultures. Ethnography constitutes of people, societies, communities, groups and the purpose consist in the written description and narration of them after observing their daily life in their own time and space and in their own everyday lives in order to produce detailed and situated accounts, i.e., thick descriptions as cited by Geertz (1973). Thick descriptions originate in observational research, which is participatory and long term, carried out in a small-scale, even confined, contexts as posited by Delli A. and D'Auria, V. (4). Ethnography as a way of practicing research, becomes meaningful practice when engaged through a particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary paradigm and used in relation to other practices and ideas within a research process. following Pink's postulation, Karen O' Reilly defines ethnography as "an iterative- inductive research that evolves in design through study, drawing on a family of methods ...that acknowledges the role of theory, as well as the researcher's own role and that views humans as part object /subject". (3) Once an ethnography becomes digital, then conventional ethnographic practices begin to shift because ethnographic activities are to some extent transferable to the digital space. As new technologies offer new ways of engaging with emergent

research environment, it becomes obvious that practices as ethnographers begin to shift. O'Reilly notes that in digital ethnography, "we are often in mediated contact with participants rather than in direct presence". O'Reilly's definition is useful to this research because of its "openness", it allows for the relationship between ethnography and theory rather insisting on a particular disciplinary theory which this work sets to achieve.

Furthermore, this work will adopt the principle of "openness" in digital ethnography and as posited by Pink et al., it means being used to characterize design processes as open-ended. Implying that digital ethnography is not a research "method" that is bound nor a unit of activity or technique with a beginning or end; rather, it is "processual." The openness of digital ethnography therefore signifies that digital ethnography is a collaborative process as opposed to a distanced observational stance.

It is collaborative activity that produces knowledge and makes or creates ways of knowing with others, not as lone researchers. The concept of "openness" with regards to this research is clearly seen in the research design, which brings or integrates computer applications, animation, folk proverbs, music, and theories in an effort to produce knowledge. From the foregoing, using a digital ethnographical approach is an attempt to give or show an authentic representation of the lives of a given people in this case selected ethnic groups in Plateau State.

KEY IDEAS USING DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHICAL APPROACH IN CREATING BEAUTIFUL PLATEAU PROVERBS

The Environment and Its People

Plateau State, Nigeria is home to fifty-three languages and is located in the north central part of Nigeria, bounded by the states of Kaduna and Bauchi on the north, Taraba on the east, and Nasarawa to the south and west. The Berom, Ngas, Tarok, and Mwaghavul people constitute the largest autochthonous ethnic group in the state. The Berom ethnic group covers four local government areas: the Ngas two, the Tarok three, and Mwaghavul one. It is pertinent to note that the study does not limit the four largest autochthonous groups but makes references to other ethnic groups such as Mupun, Gaemai, Bace, Irigwe, Meryang and Bogghom. Bace and Irigwe ethnic groups like the Berom ethnic group are classified under Benue Congo – river language group and they share some level of mutual intelligibility as well as geographical space with the Berom people, the other ethnic groups are mainly from the Chadic language group. Some scholars in linguistics have gone further to classify languages like Mupun as a dialect under Mwaghavul. From an anthropological and historical perspective, most of the ethnic groups are predominantly farmers and hunters, which is evident in the festival's celebration across the state.

Among the Berom people, Felix Olasike posits that the *Mandyeng* festival is celebrated to usher in the rainy season and to ensure a good harvest. It is usually celebrated around March/ April. The *Nshok* is associated with the hunting festival. The Berom people regard hunting as an occupation and a sport. They also regard hunting as a skill in which bravery and masculinity are tested. In recent times, the festivals have been collapsed into a whole festival popularly known as *Nzem Berom* (178). In a similar vein, the Ngas, Tarok, Mwaghvul, and many other ethnic groups celebrate festivals that mark the beginning of the farming season and hunting activities. Popular among the festivals include: Puus kaat for the Mwaghvul ethnic group, Pusedung for the Ngas people (Umaru Danfulani 35), and Illum O” tarok for the Tarok ethnic group (Roger Blench 6). It is important to note that these umbrella festivals celebrations across the state aim at unifying the people, teaching the young ones the customs, history, and traditions as a form of preservation.

The nomenclature “Plateau state” is derived from the geographical landscape which is a distinctive feature in the region. It reflects the prominent, mountainous area with its unique rock formations, along with the hospitable nature of the people endears the state the dictum “home of peace and tourism”.

In an attempt to describe the people of the state, for the cover design, the researcher chooses from six ethnic groups which include; the Berom, Tarok, Mwaghavul, Ngas, Gaemai, and Afizere. The masquerade represents the traditional divinities found in most of the ethnic groups in the state are considered.

The cover design of the animated video depicting the Plateau proverbs, has Riyom rock stationed behind the animated characters. The Riyom rock is one of the most enchanting scenes in Nigeria and taking a look at the way these mighty boulders are arranged on top of one another in that delicate position for thousands of years leaves one in awe.



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The rock formation is located in Riyom town 25 kilometres to the southwest of Jos, the capital city. The formation reported by some statesmen as that reflects the map of the State thus

this may account for its usage as emblem of state as captured by many ministries and content creators in the State. The Plateau state television station as well as many ministries and parastatals uses the Riyom rock as emblem in the state. Other environmental features used in depicting the background scenes for Berom proverbs is the *Assop falls* located in Riyom L.G.A. The *Shera hills* serves as background scene for Bace, Afizere and Irigwe Proverbs. The *Kerang volcanic mountain* serve as background scene for Mwaghavul, Mupun and Chip proverbs. The Pandam reserve serve as background scene for Gaemai, and Merniyang proverbs. The Wase rock serve as background scene for Tarok and Bogghom proverbs and lastly the *Kurra falls* serve as background scene for Ron and Pyem proverbs. Some of the physical tourist attractions are represented to enhance the beauty of the video, create a sense of realism and immersion which resonates with the people of the state. At the same time showcase the environment.



Shera Hills



Wase Rock



Pandam Reserve



Kerang Volcanic Mountain

Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

Language and Translation in Digital Ethnographical story

The use of an indigenous language is key to digital ethnographical approach. As earlier mentioned, Plateau state is home to about Fifty -three languages, thus, the beauty of the state lies in its diversity. The family language classification include; Chadic subgroup of the Afro-Asiatic language classification and the Platiod subgroup of Benue Congo family. Most of the Chadic languages in the central zone and most areas of the southern zone of the state such as he Ngas,

Mwaghavul, Mupun , Goemai, Chip, Mushere, Meryang , Dyeomak, share some level of mutual intelligibility. While languages like the Berom, Irigwe, Afizere of the Benue-congo group share some mutual intelligibility. Since the proverbs were going to be mounted on the social media space, about 14 out of the 53 languages were adopted to create an inclusive followership/viewership, also leaving room for work in progress.

This study harnesses computer animation, augmented by subtitles, and voiceovers to create a technological medium of expression for the proverbs and provide a new means of communicating meaning within the proverbs. the proverbs, animation and the digital media are all forms of preservation. Apart from preserving linguistic resources, animation can be augmented with written subtitles to accommodate audiences for whom the primary language of oral expression is not their first language, ensuring inclusive viewing. Below are some examples of proverbs in different languages depicting their customs and traditions;

The proverb *Mizeep teer, gwar kyen* is translated as “the bachelor benefits from the food cooked for the visitor”. is from the Mupun ethnic group published on 24/6/2022. The proverb is usually spoken in a context to mean “one can benefit from what is not originally his”. The proverb highlights the experience of singlehood especially that which is associated to men. The gender stereotypes associated to men is that they rarely cook and most often are hungry and as a result, a gift in form of food is a welcome idea. The animated image depicted below is that of a woman serving food to a bachelor outside the house.

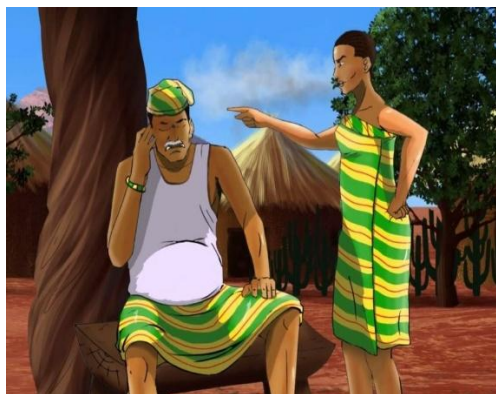


Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The Mwaghavul proverb *a naa mat dang a lap, tagi a lap ni kyak pee kass indar a wet nkoss paa*. “Observe a woman before you marry, lest you marry a troublesome wife, so you don’t always consult the chief priest” was published on the 17/ 5 /2022. The proverb, translated in a context to mean “ be observant lest you fall into trouble, " the proverb highlights decision-making. The proverb teaches that one should weigh decisions carefully before taking them,

drawing a lesson from a troubled home caused by a badly behaved wife. Homes that usually experience peace and harmony are attributed to a good wife and a good husband. Thus, a good decision is a result of careful observation.

When a newly married woman behaves badly, the husband, who is in shock, may decide to consult a chief priest who feels she may be hypnotized to cause him trouble, to avoid consulting the chief priest, one should always ensure that he takes time to choose a woman who will give him a peaceful home. The animated image depicts a woman standing and pointing her finger at her husband; the movement of her lips indicates that she is nagging, and her husband is seen trying to block his ears from the excessive noise coming from her. This gesture, as earlier posited, is accounted as disrespectful in most African societies. The woman is often expected to lower her head when speaking to her husband or elders as a mark of respect, rather than standing up to her husband, which shows disrespect and a contest for power by questioning the man's authority.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The Irigwe proverb “*ko shi ng`we hung kpe a nne ne ngwe bi nuue ngu we*” is translated “you cannot fall on a person who you are in possession of his needle” was published on 23/5/2022. The proverb is interpreted to mean “you cannot rebuke or challenge the one who has bribed you.” The proverb highlights the evil of bribery and corruption, it makes one a slave, an accomplice to the corrupt individual and is capable of stripping one of moral dignity. The animated image depicted below shows a corrupt transaction. This also evinces how our communities in pre-colonial times perceive bribery and corruption.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The Afizere proverb “*ki kubar tar nizham adang tari noo*” is translated “Untill the wall cracks before the Lizard can gain entry” was published on the 14/6 / 2022. This proverb is a metaphor on creating room for evil, it is translated with a tone of caution. It means do not create room for evil. The animated image below depicts a cracked wall and lizard trying to gain entry, the proverb conveys the virtue of building a bond of peaceful and harmonious living within a group, family, and community.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The Tarok proverb “*Iyam va unzmbgbak tem kang I ya te, uyen I ken apal te, I yak at*” can be translated as “what an elder sees while sitting cannot be seen by a child even if he climbs a tree” was published on 6/8/2022. This proverb teaches that an elder’s wisdom and experience by far supersedes that of a young man; thus, an elder’s counsel is to be taken seriously. This visual image of animation depicted is that of an old man with white hair and a white beards seating with a group of young people and with his hands raised up, which shows he is having a discussion. The animated image also includes a brief demonstration. This proverb teaches the virtue of respect for elders, which is highly valued in most African communities.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The proverb *Yibai khin bindi na pi ni guanghul* is from the Bogghom ethnic group. The proverb can be translated as “fighting in barns is done with elbows”. It was published 5/5/2022, is also interpreted to mean “do not broadcast family issues.” This proverb suggests that misunderstanding among family members should not degenerate thus the fight is with elbow not with fist. The proverb also draws on the significance of building barns, or rather architectural design as cited by Manta et al. (9). This barn, in particular, is a granary for storing grains such as maize, millet, guinea corn, and fonio. (acha).



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The Irigwe proverb *koo ti nne ye kpewe shwe rishi we* is translated as “you cannot tell a person that is eating *acha* and beans to drink water”. In a given context, it means that “it is unnecessary to tell a person what he knows”. The proverb was published on the 9/5/2022, and it depicts the visual image of a man-eating food without water. The food *Acha* is known as Fonio or hungry rice in English but is translated in Hausa *Acha* because it resonates with the people. *Acha* is a staple food of tiny grains commonly grown in the state, the different ethnic group in the state called it differently, among the Mwaghavul and Mupun people it is called *kusuk*.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

A Meryang proverb published on the 15/5/2022 says *pal lang goe song dawup* is translated “the fall of a *burgu* from a tree is regarded as a welcome idea” the proverb when translated in given context means “a disadvantage has become a blessing”. The word *burgu* is a Hausa name for bush rat in English but *burgu* resonates faster with the audience.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

The proverb *la ga dwoor kwam tong da wal nbet tumu* can be translated as “a child that does not listen to instructions will cry in the belly of a hyena” is from the Gaemai ethnic group, published on the 29/5/2022. The proverb when spoken in a context is warning to “a stubborn child who will always find himself in danger”. The proverb is meant to caution children on the need to listen and adhere to instructions, the proverbs also instils fear as a means to control a child’s excesses, thus, the animated image depicted is that of a child who is almost eaten up by a hyena.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com./profile.php?id=100083592271368&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

Going through the proverbs, the theme of peaceful co-existence runs through the proverbs and are expressed in different ways. Yadok and Okoli reviewed some of the proverbs that discuss the theme of tolerance as follows; An extreme depiction of tolerance is captured in Ngas proverb *Ngong khi shar bang* “the snake also has a friend” was published on the 21/5/ 2022. The proverb posits that no matter how bad or wicked a person is, he would always have a friend.

The Tarok proverb *Itula nyi ndzng Sang nggo te, I tar I kwak arijiya kat* ^is translated “no matter how much a duck can swim, it cannot swim in a well” was published on the 9/2022. This proverb teaches that one must learn to admit a limit to one’s abilities and competence. admitting to one’s limitation can help in accommodating each other’s strength and weakness.

The Mwaghavul proverb *grum kaa ting kir si, kat a naa njong be a nle ne a so a kaa, a so dang ni aso meer gha.* “ Humans are like silk cotton tree, when sighted at far, it looks easier when you come close, and you cannot climb” was published on the 3/5/ 2022.

The proverb has a tone of caution, it calls for caution when treating people generally. (97-99)

Adopting Animation for digital ethnographical story

Animation simply means the method in which pictures are manipulated as moving images. The effects of animation are achieved by rapid succession of sequential images minimally different from each other. Basically, we have two types of animation; the 2D and 3D animation. The 3D animation is the most recent of the 21st century and most common and compelling.

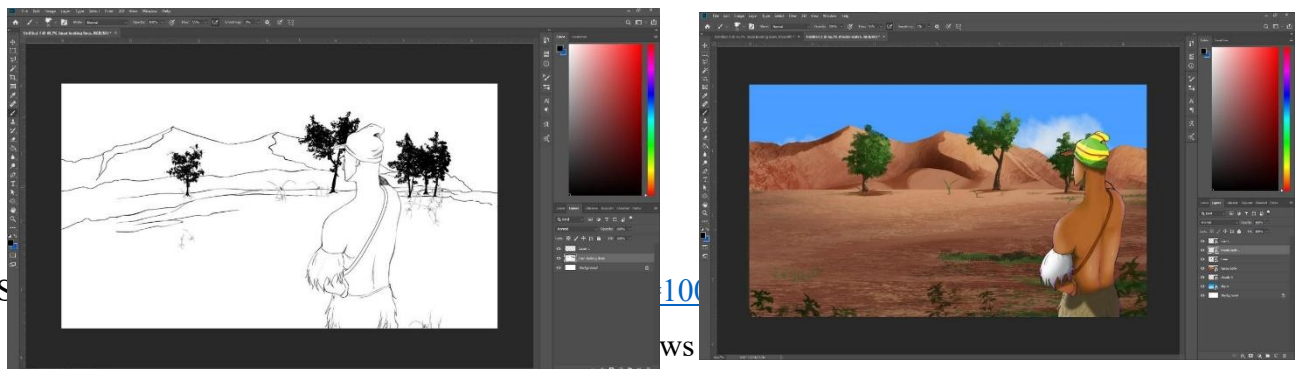
In recent times, the 2D animation has been made with computer-generated images (CGI). Thus, the 2D animation for this work uses Rafter and Vector graphics to create and edit animated images. Other software programs for animation include: Adobe Photoshop, Flash, After Effects, and Encore. The 2D animation employs other staff, including an art director, a graphic designer, a storyboard artist, a film editor, and a voice-over cast.

The storyboard director, in an attempt to create an animated story, derives the template from the translated proverbs and, in a few cases, uses the proverbs translated in a given context, which is known as "a lesson" from the video. The first stage in the animation process is determined by the line’s artist, who uses graphic software such as Photoshop to capture the story to be told in a cultural or ethnographic way. Having in mind the dressing of each character, which serves as identity markers for each of the ethnic groups represented, as well as the age differences of the characters. The environment is essential to enhance a realistic and immersive story. The next phase is the colouring stage, in this stage, the digital painting of the line art, drawn by the line

artist, is done by a digital paint artist using graphic software such as Photoshop, with each element, e.g., trees, houses, characters, painted in different layers.

Subsequently, voicing of characters is done in a recording studio for the various characters in the animation story, with proper timing of the animation as well as the tone of voicing for the characters in the scene to portray the emotion felt in the scene and create a sensory connection with the audience. The sound engineer edits the sound recorded to remove background noise and also other ambient sounds, and he synchronizes the voices with the movement of the characters' mouths, in addition to the sound effects used to make the scenes come alive.

Finally, coloured scenes by the digital artist and sounds recorded by the sound engineer are sent to the compositor, who integrates the voicing and ambient (sound effects) with the graphics. Colour grading is also applied to the scene, and the final output is exported to video formats such as MP4.



effects, music, and motion. The music does not focus on the lyrics of the songs, but mainly the drum rhythm pattern sounds, which resonate with the sensibilities of the different ethnic group, after every animated video image is played, different musical drums are played in the background. The music played in the background is mainly folk music, which uses folk drums and instruments derived from the different ethnic groups represented. For example, the musical background drum sound pattern for the Berom animated video proverbs is what is known as the *Kundung* musical instrument. The instrument can also be referred to as the English “xylophone”. The *Kundung* traditional instrument uses the tusk resonators, slaps as the notes, and mallets or hammers when playing the instrument.

It is usually played during festivals such as the *Nzem Berom*, and on listening to the drumming rhythmic patterns one can easily tell is of the Berom ethnic group.

Acknowledging sources

In an attempt to show rather than tell, a-in digital ethnographic story, is very important that actual information is put across. Forte argues that rather than focusing on research ethics as noted by Chritine Hine, on virtual ethnography, He opines that researchers need to reconceptualise research ethics as a collaborative effort between researchers and research collaborators rather than a simple procedure in researchers' "take" and participants 'give'. Such works may involve considerations of indigenous rights in relation to the use of digital technologies to represent indigenous culture (219). Thus, this study has enabled visibility to many research participants, which ranges from the animators, music artists, and voice-over casts, who were mainly those with the primary data source (proverbs). Their names were duly acknowledged, and the names of their villages, workspace, and the source of data, be it a book.

Conclusion

In conclusion, people, culture, tradition, and landscape are brought to lime light through digital technological means. Animation has proven to be an effective tool that can be harnessed to revitalize and preserve proverbs for future generations. The images, rather than restricting the performance of the proverb form, further enhance meaning-making as encapsulated in the proverbs. Animation, using a digital ethnographic method, explores the way of life of the people. Their superstitious beliefs, family life, flora and fauna, food, and anthropological images, such as the granary. The study highlights the importance of translating indigenous languages into English and observes that not every word can be translated into English. Thus, some words are either translated to other languages in this case Hausa which resonates with the audience. Cinematic elements such as sound and music set the tone for the work and enrich the audience experience, fostering interactivity and immersion. A digital ethnographic approach can further advance research on cyberspace and on theories such as diffusionism, which have been relegated but can be revived.

WORKS CITED

- Adamo, D. T. (2015). Ancient Israelite and African pro verbs as advice, reproach, warning, encouragement, and explanation. *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 71(3), Art. #2972 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2972>
- Fayemi, A. K. (2009). Deconstructing proverbs in African discourse: The Yoruba example. *Afroeuropa: Journal of European Studies*, 3(1), 1–18. Finnegan, R., & Oral Literature in Africa. (2012). Proverb
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral literature in Africa*. Open Book Publishers, 2012.
- Forte, M. (2004). Co-construction and field creation: website development as both an instrument and a relationship in action research. In *Readings in virtual research ethics: Issues and controversies* (pp. 219-245). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Geertz, C. (2008). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The Cultural Geography Reader* (pp. 41-51). Routledge.
- Hine, Christine. "Virtual ethnography: Modes, varieties, affordances." *The SAGE handbook of online research methods*, pp. 257-270, 2008.
- Kozinets, Robert V., Daiane Scaraboto, and Marie-Agnès Parmentier. "Evolving netnography: How brand auto-netnography, a netnographic sensibility, and more-than-human netnography can transform your research." *Journal of Marketing Management* 2018, 34(3-4), 231-242.
- Kquofi, Steve, Peace Amate, and Emmanuel Tabi-Agyei. "Symbolic representation and sociocultural significance of selected Akan proverbs in Ghana." 2013.
- Leonardo Flores. *Third Generation Electronic Literature "Electronic Literature as Digital Humanities Contexts, Forms, & Practices"* Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 1385 Broadway, New York, NY 10018, USA, 2021
- Mieder, Wolfgang. "Popular views of the proverb." *Proverbium* 1985, 2(1), 109-43.
- Miller, D., & Slater, D. (2020). *The Internet: an ethnographic approach*. Routledge.
- Nkansah-Obrempong, J. (2002). Visual theology – The significance of cultural symbols, metaphors, and proverbs for theological creativity in the African context: A case study of the Akan of Ghana. *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 5(1), 38–47.
<https://www.africabib.org/rec.php?RID=Q00040731>

- Okpewho, Isidore. *African oral literature: Backgrounds, character, and continuity*. Vol. 710. Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Olajide, Makinde David. "Iconography of Yoruba indigenous proverbs for sustainable art practices." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*
- Paccagnella, Luciano. "Getting the seats of your pants dirty: Strategies for ethnographic research on virtual communities." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 3,1 JCMC314, 1997.
- Paoli, Angela Delli, and Valentina D'Auria. "Digital ethnography: a systematic literature review." *Italian Sociological Review* 2021, 11(4S),243-243.
- Pink, Sarah, et al. "Digital ethnography: Principles and practice." pp. 1- 216, 2015.
- Scott Rettberg. *Electronic Literature*. Electronic Literature for the Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media, Lori Emerson and Merie Laura Ryan, Eds. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 1- 3, 2014.
- Sergi, Gianluca. "In defence of Vulgarity: the place of sound effects in the cinema." *Scope: An Online Journal of Film Studies* 2006, (5),13.
- Tetteh, Nicholas, Solomon Dansieh, and Dickson Adom. "Imagery of Dagaare and Waala proverbs: Visual eisegesis." *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 2022, 9(1), 208-513.
- Underberg, Natalie M., and Elayne Zorn. *Digital ethnography: Anthropology, narrative, and new media*. University of Texas Press, 2013.
- Varis, Piia. "Digital ethnography. Tilburg Papers in Culture Studies, paper 104." *No DOI* 2014.
- Yadok, M.G. & Okoli, M.O. (2025). Ethnicity, Tribe, and Diversity: A Quest for Social Cohesion through Animated Proverbs (A Study of Beautiful Plateau Proverbs on YouTube). *Tasambo Journal of Language, Literature, and Culture*, 4(1), 93- 103. www.doi.org/10.36349/tjllc.2025.v04i01.010.
- Yankah, Kwesi. "Proverbs: The aesthetics of traditional communication." *Research in African Literatures*, 1989, 20(3),325-346.