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PERSPECTIVES ON CONDUCTING AND REPORTING RESEARCH
IN THE HUMANITIES

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FOREWORD

The pride and beauty of an academic exercise is a robust, inspiring, stimulating and penetrating research. In a world where there is a litany of complaints bordering on paucity of helpful materials coupled with unsavoury proliferation of substandard books on research, the need to checkmate the ugly development is imperative. Research is what gives meaning and life to individuals and societies. To consign research to the background is to divest humanity and the entire world of their essence. This volume falls within the ambit of research which is the acme of intellectual pursuit and academic attainment.

The world over, research remains the fulcrum around which knowledge evolves and revolves; and it is also the platform on which solutions are proffered to a myriad of problems and knotty issues. Research, especially an academic research, is the hallmark of the individual's scholarship as well as that of societal growth and development; hence, its indispensability in the quest for meaningful and positive change in all facets of human life is undoubted.

It needs to be stated unambiguously that this book is as a result of the collaborative effort of seasoned academics and scholars who have taken the task upon themselves in writing well-researched and quality papers in addressing some of the pitfalls that students and scholars, especially beginners, encounter in the course of their studies and investigations. It is indeed, a milestone and a giant stride in the promotion and expansion of the frontiers of knowledge. The book is actually a product of intense and painstaking effort; a product from which many student-researchers and scholars stand to benefit through a harvest of noble and useful ideas that are not time-bound. Going through the contents, one cannot but be convinced of the impressive degree at which the contributors have squared up to the globally acceptable standards that are expected in a publication of this calibre. It would therefore not be an overstatement that this book contains erudite contributions of scholars of like minds from diverse academic disciplines and experiences. Their chapters have opened the window of assessing issues from different perspectives, but on a common ground. It is my firm belief that this book will be an asset to students, scholars, academic institutions, research and corporate bodies, among others. I wish all its readers and users a fruitful and rewarding experience.

Professor Domwini Dabire Kuupole
The Editor-in-Chief

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is pertinent at this juncture, to salute the brain behind the birth of this book, Dr. Taofiq Adedayo Alabi, Department of English, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. His high sense of foresight, determination, doggedness, resilience and innovativeness have contributed in no small measure to the emergence of a book that is not just one of the numerous ones competing for space, but one of 'international' repute, and 'one that pooled scholars with distinction from the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana, and the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. All contributors to this book project deserve accolades for providing the opportunity and vista through which the robust contents of this publication are brought to the attention of a wider circle of scholars. Equally worthy of acknowledgement are all the assessors who took time off their heavy schedules to duly review all the papers. Their priceless contributions in this respect have helped to enhance the quality and scholarly stature of the book.

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OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1

This chapter sets the pace for this book. It provides a general introductory background to research as a concept and as a process. It explores the motivation for research in the humanities, broad typology of research and criteria for creating a valid context for research.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter discusses the four main features of research which are statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses and research questions. While postulating that among the four, the objectives should at all times be presented in an academic research work regardless of the methodology and discipline, the contributors submit that knowledge generation is strongly articulated around the four features. The chapter meticulously elucidates the significance of each of the four major characteristics of academic research work.

CHAPTER 3

“A Simple Guide to Writing a Research Proposal” gives a general template for making preliminary submissions about a study with a view to harnessing helpful inputs from stakeholders in order to make the end result more rewarding and better fulfilling. The emphasis is on developing prototypical structure of the final study as guide even from the outset.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter centres on components of a literature review, modes of organisation and structure of a literature review section of research report and general criteria for citing and acknowledging authorities like provenance, **methodology**, objectivity, persuasiveness and value. The chapter equally contains a discussion of technical clues that underlie a sound review of literature for the purpose of creating formidable context for research.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter examines the structure and superstructure of theoretical construct and its relationship to research methodology in the Humanities. The main thesis of the chapter is that, theoretical construct helps to guide, reflect, illuminate on, and intellectualise the universe of a concept or a critical researchable topic through a set of ideas or general principles. The text and sub-text of the chapter, if genuinely deployed, will lead to overall success of a research work in the Humanities.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter is titled: “Research Design: Research Paradigms, Population, Sample along with Sampling Techniques and Design Types”. Three out of the basic issues that effectively structure the design of a research study via the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research approaches are discussed in this chapter. These subject matters are the paradigms which inform the study design, the population, sample and sampling methods as well as diverse quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research designs including their population, samples and sampling patterns.

CHAPTER 7

This chapter discusses the main instruments which are used in data gathering in research. The chapter emphasises applicability and application of such instruments. It equally covers strengths and weaknesses of these instruments and provides advice pertaining to their suitability.

CHAPTER 8

This chapter discusses the types, qualities and usefulness of test relevant to research in the humanities.

CHAPTER 9

This chapter centres on data as the crux of research. Emphasis is on management techniques of different kinds of data, collation and processing of data, procedures

and approaches to data analysis. For application purpose, the chapter provides literary examples of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data analysis.

CHAPTER 10

This chapter contribution is on descriptive research statistics in the humanities. The approach is simple and easy to follow with an integration of the use of excel procedures for computations. The chapter thus introduces readers to simple use of the computer in statistics to further ease computational procedures some perceive to be difficult.

CHAPTER 11

This co-authored chapter contribution on documentation in research covers the essentialities in acknowledgement of various sources of information in research. In the chapter, emphasis is placed on the nitty-gritty of in-text and end-references using provisions in the 6th and 7th Editions of APA; and the 7th and 8th Editions of MLA Manuals as primary guides.

CHAPTER 12

This chapter offers an introduction to corpus linguistics as a methodology for studying language, literature, and other fields in the humanities. It defines corpus linguistics, explores its theoretical background, and discusses the steps and procedures involved in building and analyzing corpora. The benefits of the methodology are also highlighted in the chapter.

CHAPTER 13

This chapter examines some fieldwork techniques in oral literature and tries to problematise the process of ethnographic fieldwork by drawing on personal fieldwork experiences within the context of researching post-enslaved communities in Ghana. It is structured in four sections. The first section deals with a general overview of ethnographic fieldwork, followed by a more practical approach to ethnographic fieldwork practices, data gathering process and ethics. Post ethnographic fieldwork issues relating to transcriptions, translations, data management and peculiar challenges in fieldwork especially within a defined research context are also covered.

CHAPTER 14

This chapter contribution borders on the application of historical approach to humanities research. It highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the approach with a view to guiding researcher on its applicability. With ample illustrations, historical research types and a comprehensive guide on steps to be taken in the conduct of historical research constitute the focal points of the chapter.

CHAPTER 15

This chapter on “Ethical Issues in Contemporary Research” is a detailed exposition on ethical considerations that guide the conduct of research, ethical guidelines and importance, and how to achieve ethically sound research output with little or no social and legal encumbrances.

CHAPTER 16

This chapter explores the fundamental linguistic and stylistic resources that culminate in effective mediator between the researcher’s thought process and the ‘blueprint’. The essential stylolinguistic constituents that instil grammaticalness, appropriateness and effectiveness at different stages of the research report, as a thesis or dissertation and as a prose, are discussed.

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

Taofiq Adedayo Alabi

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This chapter provides a general introductory background to research as an ally to education and development in any academic environment. It begins with an exploration of the concept of research, its meaning and motivation for research in the humanities as a peculiar broad field of study. The chapter discusses types of research with particular reference to perspectives of focus. Prominent factors to be considered in creating a context for research via casting or wording a valid research topic are also covered.

Meaning of Research

The world we live in is such a complex space full of mysteries and undiscovered facts. Despite the age-long quest by humans to understand web of obscurities that underlie their existence, the understanding of their environment is still far from being exhaustive with respect to what they need to comprehend in ensuring better interaction with, and optimal utilisation of, the potentials that the environment has to offer. Hence, humans since time immemorial have been preoccupied with garnering efforts towards making the world, as a space, more habitable most especially by adding value to what is already in existence. Owing to the complexities that characterise human related phenomena, a probe into a given problem should be organised such that the investigation produces a commensurate antidote that will add value to the established reactions to challenges. More importantly, since knowledge has become synonymous with development in the modern world, the realisation of this need informs a quest for an end to satisfy the need. The underlying effort which translates into tangible growth and more meaningful social cohesion is research. In virtually all fields of

human endeavour, research is undertaken to troubleshoot emergent problems in order to move humanity forward.

A hallmark of scholars and academics is research. As the situation demands in the educational and other related circles, the need to conduct an investigation into an issue becomes very paramount. Thus, learners, researchers and academics involve themselves in rigorous research with a view to arriving at valid and reliable results and outcomes. Hence, research has become a commonplace term for investigative exercise that seeks better means of handling challenges. Kerlinger (1986, p. 10) defines research as a systematic, empirical and critical investigation of propositions and assumptions to discover new facts about certain phenomena. According to Osuala (2001, p.1), research is simply a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. A careful examination of this stance reveals that research does not operate haphazardly. In other words, to conduct research implies that there should be orderliness and procedure in terms of gathering, organising, analysing and interpreting data. This is what makes a research to be distinct, authentic and reliable.

In the same way, research is said to be a detailed, formal investigation into a subject with a view to arriving at findings that contribute to the growth and development of knowledge (Okesipe & Okolo, 2013, p.321). The inference drawn from this postulation is that research is conducted with the aim and objective of intensifying the knowledge of an individual or group. Therefore, research is an asset to the explication of knowledge. This means that research is a process that dove-tails into “an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement. It is...the search for knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution to a problem” (Kothari, 2004, p.1). In view of the foregoing, research is a generic term which captures the overall plan and structure, involving series of systematic activities conceived in providing answers to research questions; all in a bid to expanding the horizon of knowledge.

Research is used to refer to series of systematic activities which an investigator engages in to find solution to identified problem in a given field. It entails a systematic application of theories or proven procedures to problem-solving situation. It involves an objective search for a goal-ended knowledge in order to expand the latitude and longitude of knowledge. Since we are living in a dynamic world, there is a need to employ situation-sensitive approach to resolve human problems (as yesterday's solution may not resolve all emerging problems of today). In essence, a research may question already identified solutions to problems in order to verify and ensure their relevance to the ever dynamic situation in which they are applied. Additionally, a research may be intended to influence or guide beneficiaries in their decision-making process. Kumar (2011) maintains that undertaking a research study would subsume deploying a framework of a set of philosophies; using procedures, methods and techniques that have been tested for their validity and reliability; in order to arrive at unbiased and objective conclusion.

Therefore, in the broad spectrum of humanities, research would subsume the totality of activities involved in findings solutions to social problems so as to ensure social cohesion and development.

Need for Research in the Humanities

- ✓ Disciplines in the humanities are tools of social identity. Thus, research in the humanities is necessary to enhance awareness of social positioning of an individual or a group in a given superstructure with a view to improving human efficiency and performance levels for the overall development of the social system.
- ✓ In view of the social nature of humans, it is important that human beings of different socio-cultural backgrounds relate for achieving a common goal. Researches in the humanities help to discover better ways of enhancing social cohesion.
- ✓ As peace and security are non-negotiable components of a society that desires progressive change and development, the need to satisfy quest for modern means of security and peace interventions underlies research in the humanities.

- ✓ Language, information and communication, religion, history and entertainment, among others, are enterprising fields in the modern world. So, there is the need to ensure better ways of attuning them to human goals and aspirations in the emergent situations.
- ✓ Since researches in science and technology have applied contexts as their motivation, it becomes necessary that there is continuous search to discover key areas in the humanities that require further scientific and technological interventions. This helps to expand the frontiers of knowledge in both directions.
- ✓ Researches in the humanities help to discover, preserve and develop key aspects of the people's culture (e.g. language, religion, arts, music, etc.) in tandem with the fluctuating realities and demands of the dynamic world.
- ✓ The pressing need for self actualisation is a strong motivation for research. Apart from being a partial requirement for certification and placement, most especially with respect to rendering services to the society, people embark on research to command respect of others and by extension, to achieve a feeling of self-fulfilment.
- ✓ The need to inform, empower, liberate, emancipate and to make people more conscious of their roles and responsibilities, duties and obligations, rights and privileges, all in a bid to make the world a better place underlie researches in the humanities.

Types of Research

Research can be categorised based on three major stances. Each of these standpoints is largely informed by the overall design of the study. By design, we mean a set of logically packaged framework that guides the conduct of research. The nature of the design consequently determines the direction the study would take in terms of instrumentation, analysis and interpretation of data; which in turn are the 'variables' of the typology. In the words of Kumar (2011), the three broad perspectives to classification of research types are application, objective and enquiry mode perspectives. According to him, these classes are not mutually exclusive as a study classified from the viewpoint of application, for instance,

can equally be classified from the perspectives of the research outcomes or mode of study. This implies that overlapping can occur with respect to the perception of, and the techniques that are deployed in a study. From the perspective of application are pure and applied research types. While descriptive, exploratory, correlational and explanatory types fall into the objective category; quantitative and qualitative (and mixed) constitute research types from the stance of the enquiry mode. The figure that follows is a modified version of Kumar’s (2011) schema of types of research, which will guide our discussion in this section of the chapter.

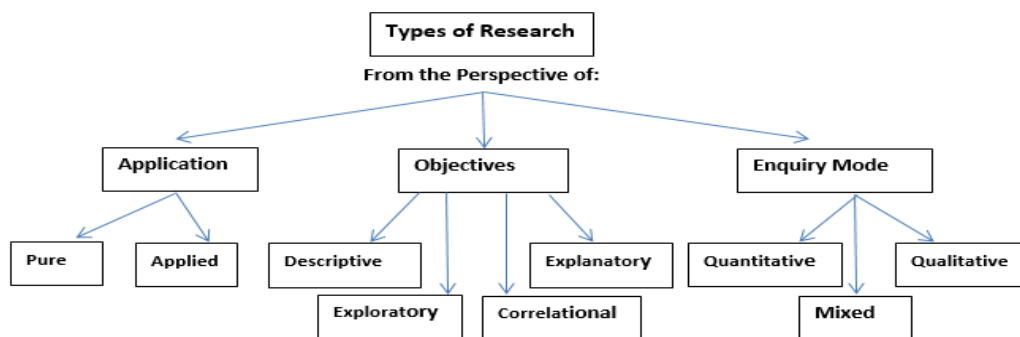


Figure 1. Types of Research (Adapted from Ranjit Kumar, 2011)

Research Typology on the Basis of Application

There are two classical broad divisions of research. These are pure and applied research. Pure research is also called basic or fundamental research. Research is pure if the exercise borders on expanding the frontiers of research methods as a means to an end. In other words, a pure research is such that seeks to examine, develop, verify and further refine already existing tools and procedures that culminate in research as a discipline. This is what Kothari (2004, p.3) describes as “gathering knowledge for knowledge’s sake”. For example, studies which are intended to develop an instrument for collecting research data samples or for interpreting results of investigations will fall into this category. Bailey (1978, p.17) puts this in the following words:

Pure research involves developing and testing theories and hypotheses that are intellectually challenging to the researcher but may or may not have practical application at the present time or in the future. Thus such work often involves the testing of hypotheses containing very abstract and specialised concepts.

Usually, the outcomes of pure research are intended to serve as inputs of others studies (which are applied in the sense of ‘application’).

Conversely, applied research exercises are studies that are designed to investigate problems using validated instruments and reliable procedures to arrive at dependable outcomes which can be in the form of solutions to identified problems. This means that applied research is such from where conclusions regarding solutions to research problems are drawn. Applied research are basically intended to help make informed decisions, enhance policy formulation direction, and for a better understanding of a phenomenon. This explains why the bulk of research in the social sciences and humanities falls into this group. Kothari (2004, p.3) compares basic and applied research in the following words:

The central aim of applied research is to discover a solution for some pressing practical problem, whereas basic research is directed towards finding information that has a broad base of applications and thus, adds to the already existing organized body of scientific knowledge.

Applied research may be empirical in orientation. Empirical research is a sub-genre of applied research in which practical observation (whether direct or indirect) or knowledge derived from experience rather than theory constitutes the basis of the study. It involves conducting a systematic study in order to give accurate, valid and reliable submissions about what is being studied as a product of observation and experience. Studies which are experimental in orientation either by establishing or evaluating relationship between variables in a controlled environment fall into this category. Empirical studies are required to raise authentic research questions to guide direction and generate relevant hypotheses as the navigating compass. Depending on the subject of the study, i.e. the type of

information being sought, empirical research can either be qualitative or quantitative.

Research Typology on the Basis of Objectives

This standpoint of research classification is largely informed by the objects and goals of the study. Research endeavours in this category can be descriptive, exploratory, explanatory or correlational. A descriptive study is intended to give a clear picture or positioning of the object of study. A descriptive study is also referred to as *Ex post facto* research in business, behavioural and social sciences. In this research, the investigator has very little or no control whatsoever over the inputs and variables. The researcher only reports the *status quo*. For instance, a study that investigates a socio-cultural problem of a community with a view to proffering solutions is descriptive. It should be noted that a descriptive study may necessarily incorporate any of the following techniques: (i) comparative (this is common in a study of experimental/ controlled variable(s) or group(s). For instance, one may want to find out the variance in performance of a group of learners for whom Mother Tongue is used as instructional language and another group for whom Target Language is used. In literature, a study of this nature may be interested in the convergence and divergence in the ideological constructs of poets. It could also be an examination of similarities and differences in authorial style or thematic preoccupation in selected literary works); (ii) contrastive (this method strives to bring out similarities and disparities between two (or more) established variables / subjects / phenomena and possible mutual effect of each on the other. A method as this is useful in handling a topic as: “A Contrastive Study of English and Hausa Morphological Processes”); or (iii) analytical method (which may also be used in conducting critical evaluation of a subject (e.g. literary work) from the standpoint of information available or facts on ground).

A correlational study is such that investigates whether there is a relationship between two or more complex variables. This provides a strong basis on which deductions and predictions are made. A correlational research is aimed at measuring the complexity of the pattern of relationships that exist between/among established variables; e.g. “Age” and “Language Learning” in the

topic “Psycholinguistic Effect of Age on Second Language Learning of College Students in Accra”. This topic, for instance, would require quantitative mode of enquiry as the variables involved can be quantified and subjected to statistical mode of analysis like Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Explanatory research is intended to give a detailed explanation about a state (of being) or phenomenon. Studies in this regard investigate why certain things are prevalent with a view to sustaining (and possibly boosting) or curtailing it depending on its desirability or otherwise in a social system. For example, a study on how appropriate early school counselling can facilitate accomplishment of career goals falls into this category. This type of investigation is done to instil better understanding of the cause and effect of phenomena as a basis of proffering appropriate recommendations.

Exploratory research, as the name suggests, is a study that is informed largely by dearth of earlier studies in the area. This type of research covers ground-breaking fact-finding activities in areas where little or nothing is known. Such studies could take feasibility or pilot form. The fact is that since the objective behind the study is “ice-breaking”, it is an investigation of the possibility of undertaking a given course of action. Some major research would require some preliminary investigation to ascertain attainability of the exercise before funds and energies are committed into it. Pilot studies may also be necessary to assess the utilitarian value of the expected outcome to be able to justify the inputs. Such endeavours are forms of exploratory research which may involve survey.

Survey is a generic term used to designate approach to research informed by objectives. It is usually based on large samples; however, it needs to be stated that descriptive research may not necessarily be a survey. Usually, survey research relies predominantly on responses to a set of questions garnered from population or subjects as target entities from where data for the research are obtained. It primarily deals with collection, analysis and interpretation of data in order to evaluate situation, worth of phenomena, attitudes, events, etc. Hence, it is based on information gathered through interview, questionnaire, self-report, rating scales (whether structured or unstructured), etc. The results gathered through

administration of any of these instruments can be statistically analysed. Survey research should be systematic regardless of whether the instrumentation (with the responses therefrom) is oral or written. This method is used when opinions, attitudes, feelings, etc. of a given population are crucial in the conduct of a research. Owing to the largeness of the research population, most times, representative samples are studied by making a segment of accessible population to respond to a set of designed question items. The result obtained from such an exercise can, thus, be generalised as characteristic of the total research population. For instance, the following topics would require the use of survey approach:

- The dramatic elements and significance of *Awon* Festival in Shao, Kwara State
- Attitudes of senior secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis to History and Geography

Research Typology on the Basis of Mode of Investigation

In this section, the three major approaches to research discussed are qualitative, quantitative and mixed modes of investigation. In qualitative approach, 'values' of the research subject or participant are measured via established standards. This does not mean that values are determined by impression; but rather by expressed and informed frame of reference. It is a kind of investigation that focuses on how solutions are proffered to specific social problems for better appropriation of human experiences, even though the procedures involved may not be as scientific as what obtains in the pure sciences. It should be stated that a qualitative study may not necessarily follow a fixed pattern. Research instruments in this wise are open-ended. The procedure could take the form of observational technique, interview, discussion, archival examination, narratology, visual and audio analysis, etc. Qualitative research methods include but are not restricted to phenomenological and archetypal studies; postcolonial and ethnographic studies; case and historical studies.

Historical research, for example, is a 'sub-genre' of qualitative research. This is sometimes called philosophical research. A research is historical if it involves investigation of past events or accounts with a view to making valid and reliable deductions that are intended to guide future course of action. To ensure a valid

outcome of a historical research, the spatio-temporal factor of the research, i.e. time, age or epoch, should be clearly defined. This would instil some level of objectivity in the thesis statements emanating from such studies. For example, whatever the researcher intends to prove or disprove would be better appreciated and validated. Sources of data here can be primary or secondary. Primary sources are original accounts of events distilled into diaries, autobiographies, journals, log books and other relevant documents. Primary sources will also include authentic clips of audio/video recording, first-hand interview reports and so on. Secondary sources are compositions of those who were not live witnesses of the events being reported. Secondary sources may include, but are not limited to, research papers, thesis and dissertations, journal articles, encyclopaedias, etc. Usually, historical research in language would take the form of diachronic studies – studies that investigate research subjects across ages. Such researches are aimed at investigating developments which characterise the subject of study over a period of time.

Consider the following topics:

- Ecumenical Thrusts in the Development of *Aladura* Churches in South-Western Nigeria
- Morpho-syntactic trends in the standardisation of Nigerian English
- Blacksmithing to Whitesmithing in Ilorin Metropolis: Implications for the Local Economy

Historical researches are aimed at obtaining a better understanding of the present realities through an evaluation of the past evidence and data so as to aid in the intelligent prediction of the future. A historical research refreshes what is already known and unfolds what is yet unknown.

Quantitative research on the other hand attaches numerical values to research variables and data. The analytic procedures in such studies would normally require hypotheses generated precisely to prove or disprove an informed position already taken right or wrong. In quantitative studies, instrumentation and analysis of data are based on predetermined close-ended procedure that the researcher is expected to comply with. Experimental design, correlational design and survey are key sub-genres of quantitative research. While commenting on the distinction

between qualitative and quantitative research procedures despite the fact that both are typical of empirical research, Rasinger (2008, p. 11) writes:

Qualitative research is inductive, that is, the theory is derived from research results. Qualitative analysis is often used in preliminary studies in order to evaluate the research area; however, it has to be emphasized that it is not merely an auxiliary tool to data analysis, but a valuable approach in itself! Quantitative research, on the other hand, is deductive: based on already known theory, we develop hypotheses, which we then try to prove (or disprove) in the course of our empirical investigation.

Stemming from the foregoing, it is clear that quantitative research relies heavily on mathematical or statistical indices as the basis of research analysis, discussion, finding statements and conclusion arising thereof, while qualitative research is essentially concerned with making thesis statements as derived from the application of theories and tenets which have become particularly influential on popular perceptions and established viewpoints in a given field.

Meanwhile, most researches in arts and humanities seem to give preference to qualitative mode; an approach which requires a researcher to solve a research problem from the standpoint of their truth value via conventional principles in a given discipline. However, this is not always the case. Owing to the need to imbue validity and reliability indices in the study, contemporary researches in the humanities are prone to more (and more) quantitative modes of analysis as the tool for interpretation and discussion. For example, a study titled “Stylo-statistical Study of Syntactic Peculiarities of Soccer Commentaries on Radio” is apt here. Also, a study which investigates the level of foregrounding in a literary piece using qualitative approaches may resort to quantification to substantiate claims being made with statistical evidence. Hence, to be qualitative without necessarily losing sight of the need for precise analysis and objective research outcomes has called for why some researchers are caught in the middle of both ends. To such researchers, mixed method is the preference.

As the word ‘mixed’ suggests, mixed method is an amalgam of the modes and procedures that characterise both qualitative and quantitative types of research. It is an approach that incorporates conventional and emerging theoretical and analytical bases in a given study. This method is more elaborate as it gives room for robust inputs; thus culminating in a more detailed analysis and comprehensive result. Kumar (2011) maintains that this middle course is gaining more recognition in the humanities and social sciences as both strategies, when used simultaneously, result in a good, comprehensive and credible study. When mixed method is used, the qualitative ingredients like the theoretical standards have the potential of increasing the rating of the study on the clines of relevance and usability. Similarly, the quantitative components like hypotheses and hypotheses testing, statistical modes of analysis, etc. instill objectivity and reliability as indices of validating an empirical research.

Consideration for Research Topic

More often than not, undergraduate and graduate students are embattled with the seemingly perennial challenge of casting a topic that will guide their quest in fulfilment of a mandatory requirement for course completion and certification. Some manage to compose titles which overtly appear ‘researchable’ but may not be enduring as the studies progress. Such individuals are caught in the middle of a collapsing bridge, or are at a labyrinth. Hence, to avert a research expedition in which the researcher would be stuck mid-way through, it is imperative that the following factors be considered from the outset; i.e. from the wording of the title stage; at least to ensure that the defined study is not only necessary but also accomplishable.

1. **Social Relevance:** The goal of any research should be satisfying an area of need; either felt or perceived. In prioritising a topic for a research, emphasis should be placed on the sensitivity of the subject and the impact of the envisaged outcome on the social system. This is born out of the fact that any research whatsoever, whether in the humanities or in the sciences, should be triggered by the urge to ease human existence and assure a better future in a

way. Meanwhile, the more pressing is the motivation for research topic, the more relevant, and the higher its index of sustainability. This is about an existing gap, lacuna or state of deficiency that the study is being conceived to fill or rectify. This means that a researchable topic should carry the potential of comparative advantage to justify the need for the exercise, either by engaging the stakeholders or by addressing an unmet need. Additionally, a research topic is socially relevant if the researcher has a good knowledge and understanding of the field of study vis-à-vis the utilitarian value of the research to the immediate or wider context.

2. **Focus:** The title of a research study should naturally define the coverage either explicitly or implicitly. Though the temptation of deploying unwieldy tools or using extra-large sample is high, care should be taken to delineate the subject of research to a manageable proportion. This will afford a detailed study. When the sample and research variables are unnecessarily large, so many issues will be competing for attention. This, quite often, culminates in non-cohesive shallow study. It should be emphasised that no single research is unilaterally inclusive and exhaustive at the same time. Hence, the choice of a research topic should be informed by the need to address a defined problem at a time. Hence, right from the outset, variables of the research, population and sampling procedures for data generation among others, should be clear to avoid conflation of issues.
3. **Originality:** It is worthy of note that any fresh quest for knowledge is determined from the standpoint of already existing bodies of knowledge. Researchers should be mindful of not doing anything that would project a duplication of a previous attempt or feat. Granted that corroboration of one's idea with the viewpoints and authoritative statements of previous writers is desirable, especially for cross examination and validation of claims being made, such citations should never go unacknowledged. Replication of an earlier study in a new context is permissible without necessarily duplicating it, especially when the latter study is driven by the need to validate the earlier one(s) for the purpose of decision making and charting policy direction.

With particular reference to the research topic, the wording should be a reflection of the researcher's perception of the subject matter and nobody else's. This will save the researcher's effort of being liable to plagiarism, whether patchwork or global.

4. **Feasibility:** This pertains to attainability of set goals as envisaged even in the face of limited resources and inputs. Researchers should be mindful of how accomplishable is the topic being proposed. The context of an investigative study is a major factor that determines the extent to which the research goal will be achieved. In support of the foregoing, Mackey and Gass (2005, p.19) posit that "any study should be designed with a full understanding of the fact that the limitations of the setting and the population might constrain the research". The allied components of research context include time-line, financial involvement and availability of input resources, both human and material.
- (i) Time-line: Feasibility of a research exercise is guaranteed when the research problem is such that it can be resolved within the set calendar as different university programmes have different durations. For instance, an undergraduate project researcher should be mindful of a maximum of twelve calendar months while choosing a research topic, which ultimately will create a context for interrogating the research problem that the researcher can resolve within the set time-line. For an M.A. or M.Sc. dissertation, the time-line may be between 18 - 24 months; while for a doctoral thesis, it may extend to about 30 - 50 months.
 - (ii) Financial Involvement: A conceived study is feasible if the cost implication of the exercise is within the range of financial capability of the researcher. Some researches may require aids from funding agencies to be executable. It would be ill-advised for an individual with average income to embark on such a study. Such a mission will hit the rock before it is concluded. In Nigeria for instance, FGN/Education Trust Fund (ETF) provides grants running into multi-millions of naira to support credible researches all year round. Conversely, a researcher who intends to accomplish the task via

private/personal funding should consider the cost implication of the project from the very beginning for a hitch-free study.

(iii) Availability of Human and Material Resources: The nature of some studies would call for hiring personnel, either skilled, unskilled or both. For instance, in a survey covering a wide area; probably in zones, administration of questionnaires to such large and unclustered samples would require more manpower. Additionally, technocrats, laboratory attendants, eye-witnesses, interviewees as sources of historical facts, among numerous others, provide necessary inputs for a credible, reliable and valid study. If such individuals are not available or accessible, it will spell doom for the study. Similarly, one should also consider accessibility to requisite materials whether book (e.g. library stock in form of books, journals, magazines, etc.) or non-book (e.g. laboratories, museums, geological and cultural sites, etc.) resources. So, right from the conception of a research problem, it is strongly advised that the researcher takes a 'feasibility' study of the requisite inputs to be sure of their availability and their accessibility.

5. **Researcher's Interest**: Given that a thorough research is born out of a rigorous process, a researcher requires more than being financially capable to be able to accomplish goals. Quite often, unmotivated or demotivated researchers discontinue the process because of its painstaking nature. Troubleshooting a credible problem of research requires unflinching tenacity. Such level of resilience is powered by the intrinsic urge; the passion; the unwavering interest that the researcher has in the chosen field in general and the research problem in particular. There is this popular psychological maxim which states that when one engages in an activity one enjoys, the outcome is rewarding and satisfying. Conversely, if the activity is such that one is disinterested in it, the outcome is unfulfilling and annoying. Essentially, this factor borders on incentives, whether extrinsic or intrinsic, that sustain the researcher's enthusiasm to accomplish the set goals. When all chips and chisels are down, it is the fervour one has for the defined area that fuels the study to completion.

Conclusion

In the humanities generally, attempts are being made to maximise human benefits in their relationship with the forces affecting their existence. In the same vein, just as the world is ever changing, human response to these changes is constant. This makes research a continuous activity. Little wonder then that a concluded study would normally prompt further investigation as occasioned by emergent needs. As such, the issue of social relevance cannot be severed from credible research. The context of research, in terms of the need to be fulfilled, the nature of the problem being investigated and the dimension of the study, is a major framework which determines the credibility of the ultimate outcomes. Hence, a researcher is expected to incorporate all of this in his/her design so that the orientation is clearly established from the outset. This will assist the stakeholders involved to understand and appropriate research contents and delivery respectively in the true likeness of the researcher's intentions.

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FOCUSING RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Engaging in academic research pivots essentially around contribution to knowledge and problem solving. This implies a build-up on or departure from existing knowledge to offer insights into a phenomenon. A researcher's contribution to knowledge is articulated in the statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses and research questions. Often times, the use of these sub-headings in a thesis or professional academic output poses a challenge to students and young researchers partly because of the thin line that differentiates these areas and also, the need to be succinct and unambiguous in articulating them. Quite importantly, it is necessary to ensure that the presentation of these areas of the introductory chapter do mimic each other, and at the same time achieve the purpose for which each of them should be included in academic writing. Of the four areas, objectives should at all times be presented in an academic research work irrespective of the methodology and discipline. With regard to the statement of the research problem, research questions and hypotheses, the decision to present any of them depends on methodology for knowledge generation (deductive and inductive), discipline and preference (need for emphasis).

The presentation of gaps in knowledge could be done either through a statement of the research problem, research questions or both. The choice depends on preference or need for emphasis. The option of articulating the gaps in knowledge through a statement of the research problem is preferred as it allows the researcher to contextualize the problem alongside existing literature and present the scope of issues that can be addressed in the current research. For the sake of

emphasis, the researcher, after stating the research problem, may distill the specific questions to which the research seeks to provide responses.

The choice between presenting the research questions and/or hypotheses largely depends on the discipline and to a lesser extent preference. Since statement of hypothesis engenders the need for statistical verification as part of the decision-making, quantitative researchers are more inclined with its use. Though a researcher can present both research questions and hypotheses, there is a high chance of being repetitive hence the need for circumspection.

As a matter of preference, presenting either two or three out of the four sub-headings is recommended. The statement of the objectives in addition to any one or two of the other three components is advised. The next sections present a guide on the content for each of the issues. The essence is to enable the researcher focus the research in terms of what the problem is, the agenda for undertaking the research and the position of the researcher.

Statement of Research Problem

The research problem is intended to help readers understand and assess the merits (contribution) of an academic research work based on researchers'/policymakers' lack of knowledge (inaccurate and/or incomplete) and/or appreciation of the issue under consideration. After reading the problem statement, the reader will know why the research is being undertaken and be convinced of its essence. In this section, the researcher considers clearly the works that have been done in a given area of research focusing on the existing debates and how these debates relate to the current research work. In furtherance, the research problem statement seeks to motivate the fact that the study must be done. Additionally, society or one of its institutions may have some pressing problems that need to be addressed. Against this background, the researcher provides evidence that this problem is critical and warrants investigation. In doing this, the researcher must know thoroughly the body of research and the techniques related to the chosen methodology. Thus, the statement should point out existing knowledge gaps, controversies to be resolved, what previous research in the area has not resolved, and so forth. In all, problem statement is

fundamentally a logical statement with structure, sequence, substance and rationale that can be sourced from practical experience, social issues, untested theory, brainstorming, and inconsistencies and gaps in literature.

Research problems originate from multiple sources. Creswell (2009, p. 98) stated that research problems may result from previous experiences of researchers, literature, policy issues and phenomenon occurring around the general environment of the researcher. In the view of Binford (2001), however, research problems come from a copious study of the subject matter of the science in question. According to Binford, scholars who think research problems originate from personal experiences do not advance the study of the particular science they studied. He said that “Science advances through the study of its subject matter and the invention of theories that guide further exploration of the subject matter in a search for additional clues to causal processes”. In another vein, Watson Todd (2011) thinks that problems in teaching are those that stimulate research. An earlier submission by DePoy and Gitlin (1998, p. 40) identified five sources of research problems as: professional experience, societal trends, professional trends, published research and existing theory. Professional experience according to the authors include the daily ideas and confusions that emanate from cognitive dissonance or professional challenges which often result(s) in areas of inquiry. Societal trends refer to governmental policies, legislation and funding priorities of agencies, foundations and corporations. Professional trends on the other hand are publications and newsletters which are frequently read by investigators to get fields of interest for professions. Research findings which are presented at workshops or as publications, etc. provide good research problems to researchers. Lastly, certain existing theories are subjected to verification inquiries and that process more-often-than-not presents a research problem worthy of investigation by researchers.

The following are two hypothetical examples of research problems. The first example of research problem is extracted from Arndt et al. (2014) study on “Multi-dimensional poverty analysis for Tanzania”. Substantial empirical evidence supports the thesis that economic growth facilitates significant poverty reduction

(Atkinson & Bourguignon, 1982; Filmer & Pritchett, 1998; Gordon, Nandy, Pantazis, Pemberton, & Townsend, 2003). Accordingly, countries that have achieved rapid economic growth like the East Asian countries, have also achieved significant poverty reduction (Alkire & Roche, 2012; Arndt et al., 2012). However, Tanzania has attained rapid economic growth accompanied by only marginal reductions in poverty. This mismatch warrants concern as to how growth and poverty are measured and reconciled in the country.

The second example is taken from Imai et al. (2010) with the title “Microfinance and Household Poverty Reduction: New Evidence from India”. A portion of the problem reads, “The relationship between microfinance and poverty is still in question and this paper provides some new empirical evidence on the poverty-reducing effects of MFIs. The existing studies on the impact of microfinance provide inconclusive results ranging from a substantial positive impact in Bangladesh to “zero” effect in northern Thailand (Cull et al., 2009). This study argues that the future innovations in the microfinance sector will be reflective of the fresh understandings of the financial lives of the poor households.

Research Objectives

Research is an organised investigation of a problem with the view of finding solution to the problem. The objectives provide precise description of individual actions to be taken in order to achieve the aim of the research. Research objectives guide the research endeavour. Developing objectives is one of the foremost critical steps in the research endeavour. It must be borne in mind that clearly defined objectives are very important. They enlighten the way in which the researcher has to proceed. The objectives are series of short statements indicating how the purpose of the study will be achieved. That is, research objectives are the purpose /aim of the study expressed in simple achievable statements. Research objectives must be concise and comprehensible. They should mirror the research topic, problem statement and hypotheses or questions. Research objectives are the results sought by the researcher at the end of the research process, that is, what the researcher intends to achieve at the end of the research study.

The formulation of research objectives helps the researcher to avoid the collection of data which are not strictly necessary for understanding and solving the problem that has been defined. Properly formulated specific objectives will facilitate the development of the research methodology and will help to orient the collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

There are two types of research objectives, namely general and specific objectives. A general objective is a broad goal to be achieved. The general objective is a broad statement of what the researcher expects to achieve by the end of the study. It is worth mentioning that general objective is usually one. Specific objectives on the other hand, are short and narrow in focus. Thus general objectives are broken into small logically connected parts to form specific objectives. A general objective is realised through accomplishing all the specific objectives. The specific objectives are more in number and they systematically address various aspects of the problem as defined under 'the statement of the problem. Examples of general and specific objectives of a research topic titled "Effects of illegal mining on water bodies and farm lands in Ghana" are illustrated below. General objective states "The general objective of the study is to examine the effect of illegal mining activities on the environment in Ghana". The specific objectives are two: (1) Examine the effects of illegal mining chemicals on river bodies in Ghana; (2) Investigate the effect of illegal mining activities on farm lands in Ghana.

Another example of a general and specific objectives for a research titled "The effects of school feeding programme on the performance of deprived schools in Ghana". The general objective: Examine the effect of the school feeding programme on deprived schools in Ghana. The specific objectives address the following: (1) Determine the effect of school feeding on class attendance of deprived schools; (2) Assess the effect of school feeding programme on enrolment of deprived schools in Ghana; (3) Determine the effect of the school feeding programme on mathematics test scores of students in Ghana; (4) Identify the effect of school feeding programme on English test scores of students in Ghana. Against the backdrop of the foregoing, it is worth stating that the choice between hypothesis or research question depends on the nature of the two variables in the

specific objectives. In the situation where the two variables are quantitative in nature, the study will align with hypotheses, however when the variables are qualitative in nature, research questions are appropriate.

Most workable specific objectives must be SMART: **S** - Specific; **M** - Measurable; **A** - Achievable; **R** - Relevant; and **T** - Time bound. The definition of each of the components of the SMART objective is presented below:

Specific – The research objective must indicate what exactly the researcher is committed to achieve. A research objective must give a clear definition of what the researcher intends to do. Thus, an objective must begin with a specific action word: determine, evaluate, estimate, assess, identify, compare, verify, calculate, describe, analyse, establish, etc. With these action words, whereas some are at the basic knowledge generation level, others surpass this level to consider comprehensive, applicable, synthesis and evaluative objectives. The basic knowledge generation level includes action words such as identify, describe, define, tabulate, show, and state. In contrast, higher level objectives are expressed with action words such as investigate, assess, evaluate, explain and appraise. For example, to investigate a phenomenon is to study the phenomenon with the attempt to gain a deeper understanding which usually involves scientific inquiry. This process of scientific inquiry to gain a deeper understanding may not be the case for the basic knowledge generation objectives such as identify, describe and define.

Measurable – Measurability of objectives under the umbrella of “SMART” objectives stipulates that the objective must be quantifiable. Measurable implies the ability to quantify an activity or its results. That is, a research objective must be stated in a way that one should be able to determine whether or not the variables/concepts in the specific hypothesis can be measured. An example of a measurable objective is to: Identify the effect of free SHS policy under the current administration of Ghana on school enrolment across the senior high schools in the country.

Achievable – This borders on whether the research process is feasible taking into cognisance the time and resources available. Thus the objective must be attainable with the available resources. Example of an achievable objective is to: Examine the effect of free SHS policy under the current administration of Ghana on school enrollment across the Senior High Schools of the country by 2020.

Relevant – This asks a question as to whether the stated objectives have any effect on the society/discipline. Relevance relates to the relationship between the objective and the overall goals of the study. That is, since research is premised on an identified problem in a particular area, the objectives of the research must be such that their achievement will provide a solution to the problem under study. That is to say that the research objective, if achieved, should be of help to society, individuals and the discipline of inquiry. An example of a relevant objective is to: Investigate the effect of free SHS policy on the overall literacy level in the country.

Time bound – When will this objective be accomplished? The specified time frame of the study should be considered when setting the research objectives. This implies that since a particular research study cannot take forever to end, the objectives should be achieved within a particular time limit. An example of a time bound objective is to: Assess the factors that will enable the Super Eagles of Nigeria to qualify for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Research Questions

These are the questions that the study seeks to address. These questions are not independent but emerge directly from the objectives of the study which are also informed by the research problem. Research questions can take varied forms owing to the differences in disciplines and interests of potential researchers, and very often an appropriate research question depends on what is being studied. Research questions can take any of the following forms. They can be descriptive in design. Research questions in this regard are solely exploratory. For instance, a question in this domain can be: ‘what are the characteristics of the respondents in a given study area?’ The demands of such types of questions are very basic, and as such they rely heavily on univariate analysis or one-way tabulations.

Another form that research questions can assume are relational which is designed to analyze the relationships between two or more variables. Relational research questions take a higher order compared to that of descriptive in terms of scope of work since it allows for bivariate analysis, and are usually cast in the format of hypotheses. These types of hypotheses employ inferential statistics such as chi-square, pairwise correlation and even simple regression analysis. A causal research question is the third and highest type of question compared to the descriptive and relational types of research questions. Similar to relational questions, hypotheses are more suitable for causal questions.

Other types of emerging research questions include theoretical, predictive, policy and argument questions. Policy and argument research questions connote their literal meaning. These types of questions argue whether one policy is better than the other or argue about the feasibility of a particular policy. Thus, research questions in this regard scrutinise the cost/benefit, side effects and feasibility of any given policy. An example is: Is the four-year Senior High School Education better than the three-year Senior High School education in Ghana? Predictive research questions are questions that ascertain the likelihood that an event will occur. An example of this type of question is: Will the Super-Eagles of Nigeria qualify for the 2018 world cup in Russia? What are the factors that will underlie their qualification? Theoretical questions are exploratory in nature by seeking factors that cause an event/process to occur. An example of this type of question is: why does global warming occur? The foregoing illustrates that the types of research questions are varied and by no means has this write-up exhausted all the types.

Research Hypotheses

Research hypotheses have a more scientific basis and are deployed only in quantitative analysis. They are propositions about a group of phenomena that serve as the basis for further interrogation. It involves two principal components: the null and alternative hypotheses. Whereas the null hypothesis conjectures the absence of statistical significance/variation/relationship between a set of given

observations, the alternative hypothesis presumes the presence of statistical/variation between a set of observations or phenomena. Since the null hypothesis attempts to show no variation/relationship between the set of given observations/phenomenon, the alternative hypothesis is actually the testable hypothesis. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is fundamentally the research hypothesis. Examples of null and alternative hypotheses are: (1) Null hypothesis (H_0) - Fertiliser application does not affect crop yield; (2) Alternative hypothesis- (H_1) Fertiliser application affects crop yield.

There are four levels to hypothesis testing: the nature, the direction, magnitude and causality. The nature of hypothesis testing is the basic form of hypothesis testing which can either be one-sided or two-sided. It is one-sided when a particular departure from the null hypothesis is expected, viz., either to the left or to the right. This one-sided alternative hypothesis is also known as the one-tail test. In contrast, it can be two-sided when the interest is in any departure from the null hypothesis. In this case it is known as the two-tailed test. An example of two-sided hypotheses are: (1) Null hypothesis (H_0): Fertiliser application does not affect crop yield; (2) Alternative hypothesis (H_1): Fertiliser application affects crop yield. In contrast, an example of a one-sided hypothesis is: (1) Null hypothesis (H_0): Fertiliser application does not increase crop yield; (2) Alternative hypothesis (H_1): Fertiliser application increases crop yield. The second level of hypothesis testing is the directional hypothesis testing. This hypothesis predicts a positive or negative relationship between two variables of a population. This level of hypothesis testing is either based typically on extensive past research or accepted theory. This means that the nature of the relationship between the two variables is known. An example of a directional hypothesis is: (1) Null hypothesis (H_0): Farmers who apply fertiliser to their crops will have the same crop yield compared to farmers who do not apply fertiliser; (2) Alternative hypothesis (H_1): Farmers who apply fertiliser to their crops will have higher crop yield compared to farmers who do not apply fertiliser.

The third level of hypothesis is magnitude hypothesis testing. At this level, the nature and the direction between the two variables are known and a threshold is

tested to ascertain whether the threshold holds or not. An example is: (1) Null hypothesis (H_0): Farmers who apply fertiliser to their crops will not have more than 50% crop yield compared to farmers who do not apply fertiliser; (2) Alternative hypothesis: Farmers who apply fertiliser to their crops will have more than 50% crop yield compared to farmers who do not apply fertiliser.

Causal hypothesis is the highest level of hypothesis testing which aims to determine whether changes in one variable lead to changes in another variable. An example of causal hypothesis: (1) Null hypothesis (H_0): Fertiliser application does not increase crop yield; (2) Alternative hypothesis (H_0): Fertiliser application increases crop yield.

In a nutshell, the types of hypothesis include simple, complex, empirical, null, alternative, logical and statistical (Hulley *et al.*, 2007; Farrugia *et al.*, 2009). Simple hypothesis expresses the relationship between only two variables – an independent variable and a dependent variable. A complex hypothesis has many relationships existing among variables due to the fact that the independent and dependent variables are many (more than two) in each case. Empirical hypotheses are based on evidences from observations and experiments. Null hypothesis states that there is no association between the independent and the dependent variables in the population. The null hypothesis is the formal basis for testing statistical significance difference that exists between the independent and the dependent variables. The alternative hypothesis is a direct opposite of the null hypothesis stating that there is an association between the independent and the dependent variables. The alternative hypothesis is not directly tested but normally arrived at when the test of statistical difference rejects the null hypothesis. Statistical hypothesis is the one that can be tested statistically.

Conclusion

Generally, this section of the research output illustrates the contribution that the study will make to the existing literature in the discipline of inquiry. The significance of the study should also show clearly how the current research extends the available literature, methods and data employed. In addition, the potential beneficiaries of the study and how they will benefit from the study should be elucidated in this section of the work. This section also addresses the overall impact of the research work.

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SIMPLE GUIDE TO WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

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INTRODUCTION

For many young researchers, writing a research proposal can be a daunting task. As a requirement for admission into postgraduate programmes, many candidates fail to understand the reason for drafting a proposal and often have no clue about what it should contain. This paper is meant to clear the myth around the writing of a research proposal by providing fresh postgraduate students practical steps to overcome the related challenges. The surest way to achieve this objective is to define what a research proposal is and bring to the fore its components and their significance.

What is a research proposal? A research proposal is an outline of your proposed project. It is a document where you seek to *persuade the 'client' that you know what you are getting into in terms of academic research*. Importantly, it is your opportunity to communicate your research intention to your supervisors and other researchers in the subject area and to make a persuasive argument about what your project can accomplish. It is also an opportunity to establish the attention of readers and convince them of the importance of your project.

The purpose of the proposal is to ensure that the candidates have done sufficient preliminary reading/research in the area of their interest; that they have thought about the issues involved and are able to provide more than a broad description of the topic, which they are planning to research. Logic and reason are therefore the most important ingredients in persuading your readers about your intended goals. Your ability to explain the nature, context and scope of your project should be demonstrable in the way you structure your proposal.

Prior to writing a project proposal, candidates should discuss their research interests with faculty members so that they can be helped to identify a research topic that is feasible. You should identify a prospective supervisor with whom you can discuss your proposal informally, to ensure it is of mutual interest and to gain input on the design, scope and feasibility of your project. You can also conduct preliminary literature review that can guide you to develop your research proposal. Faculty members can easily direct you on what to read in order to refine your ideas about the proposed topic. The proposal should discuss problem statement, objectives, research methodology, research activities, and a time schedule to submit the work. It is normal for students to refine their original proposal in light of detailed literature reviews, further consideration of research approaches and comments received from the supervisors (and other academic staff). It is useful to view your proposal as an initial outline rather than a summary of the 'final product'.

Generally, your proposal should:

- define a clear question and approach to answering it;
- highlight its originality and/or significance;
- explain how it adds to, develops (or challenges) existing literature in the field;
- persuade potential supervisors and/or funders of the importance of the work, and why you are the right person to undertake it;
- define the scope of your research and be prepared to explain how you will complete it within the relevant timeframe.

You need to demonstrate that you have thought through the issues involved and that you are going to deliver. You have to convince members of the scientific community that you have identified a scientific problem as well as that you have a theory background and a methodical approach to solve the problem within a realistic time frame and at reasonable expenses. With your research, you will add a new aspect to the scientific discourse. *“If you can persuade experienced and disinterested judges that what you are proposing looks interesting and do-able within the*

constraints of resources and time that you have available, you should take heart” (Robson, 2011, p. 388).

Potential supervisors use research proposals to assess the quality and originality of your ideas, your skills in critical thinking and the feasibility of the research project. Proposals are also used to assess your expertise in the area in which you want to conduct research, your knowledge of existing literature (and how your project will enhance it). Moreover, your proposal would be used by the Academic Department to assess and assign appropriate supervisors. If approved, you get the licence to get on with the research.

Structure of a Research Proposal

There is no fixed structure and length to research proposals. But generally speaking, the structure of your proposal should be simple and self-evident. It helps to have a consistent system for indicating headings and sub-headings. The expected style is usually standard paragraphing and continuous prose. About the length, you should write not more than 2,500 words; 2 to 3 pages are normally sufficient. When your first draft is ready, have it reviewed first by your colleagues and secondly by your research advisors before submission.

What are some of the characteristics of a good proposal?

Main Features of a Research Proposal

A good proposal has certain distinctive features that need highlighting:

- Your topic for research should have scientific roots: A topic for research needs not be too ambitious. It should be feasible and have scientific basis; otherwise, it is bound to fail. But you should make sure to include important ‘keywords’ that will relate your proposal to relevant potential supervisors.
- It should be direct and straightforward: It tells what you are proposing to do; and why you are proposing to do it. Make sure that your proposal is clear and explicit. Avoid the use of too many technical words and jargons that are left unexplained. It is neither appropriate to write the proposal in a very easy language. There should be a balance in the choice of words since you have to show the ability to use correctly the concepts and theories of the research

area. Good research demands clarity of thought and expression in the doing and the reporting.

- A good proposal communicates well: The basic purpose is to communicate your intentions. Anything that constitutes a deviation from the core ideas you are developing should be left out. It is very important to present your ideas clearly and concisely because, if you did not present your ideas neatly, reviewers will ignore your application. Complex mega-sentences illustrating the complexity and subtlety of your thought processes should be avoided. Unless it is specifically asked for, you do not seek to impress by gargantuan book lists illustrating what you have read or hope to read. If the reader gains the impression that you are stuffing it with references for effect, you are in danger of losing their sympathy. The few keywords central to your proposal are more appropriate.
- A good proposal is well organized: Don't produce a minutely sectionalized, note-form proposal. Remember that research demands organization above virtually everything else. A poorly organized proposal does little for your cause (Adapted from Robson, 2011, pp. 388-389).

Having discussed things that make the research proposal stand out for reviewers, we can now tackle the more specific issue of content, that is, sections that should form the general outline of your research proposal and their development.

The Content of a Research Proposal

In this section, we will talk about the general research framework of your project. We shall discuss what the candidate is required to provide as information under each of these sub-headings of the research proposal. But before we deal with the general outline, let us spend a little time on two important elements of the proposal, which are the title and the abstract.

Title

The title is the most important element of your proposal since it is the first thing that appears on the proposal document. The title should depict the content of your whole research plan. Therefore, great care needs to be taken in phrasing the

title. Remember that at this stage, it can only be a working title. As you will notice later, the title can be reframed when you decide the focus of your research, as stated in the purpose of the study. While the title should be brief, it should be accurate, eye-catching, descriptive of the focus of the study and comprehensive, clearly indicating the subject of the investigation. It should be unambiguous and concise. Note that you will only be ready to formulate a title when you are clear about the focus of your research.

Abstract

In this section, you should provide a summary of your proposed research in a language a common reader (a non-specialist in your field) could understand; summarise the aims, significance and expected outcomes of the research. You should focus on the new, current and relevant aspects of your topic. Remember, the most important aspect of a research proposal is clarity on the research topic. The abstract consists of 150 to 250 words in a single paragraph.

The abstract should comprise the following sentences:

1. One to two sentences covering the general context of the research topic
2. One to two sentences regarding the specific research problem
3. One to two sentences regarding the research methodology
4. One to two sentences regarding the expected outcomes

After the abstract, on the same page, provide a list of keywords in italics to assist others in researching scholarly work related to your topic.

Now, let us look at the general outline of the research proposal. It comprises subsections such as background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, hypothesis and objectives, significance of the study, synoptic literature review and theoretical framework, research methodology, delimitations, research timelines and the organization of the study into chapters.

Outline of Your Project

This is the central part of your research outline. It may well fill half of the space of your proposal. You should give detailed information about your intended

research procedure during the given time. Anyone who reads your proposal will want to know the sources and quality of evidence you will consult, the analytical technique you will employ, and the timetable you will follow. Depending on the topic, suitable research strategies should be defined to ensure that enough and adequate empirical data will be gathered for a successful research project. You will describe the intended methods of data gathering, the controls you will introduce, the statistical methods to be used, the type of literature or documentary analysis to be followed and so on.

Introductory Background

This part of the proposal provides readers with the background information for the research project. It presents and summarises the problem you intend to solve and your solution to that problem. “Its purpose is to establish a framework for the research, so that readers can understand how it is related to other research” (Wilkinson, 1991, p. 96). A well-written introduction is the most efficient way to hook your reader and set the context of your proposed research. To do so, you need to place the study within the larger context of scholarly literature in such a manner that your readers can understand the specific problem of your research (Creswell, 1994). In writing this section, ensure that you create your reader’s interest in your topic by not wasting time with obvious and general statements.

The introduction is developed as a preamble in one to two paragraphs discussing the general context of your research topic. The introduction should present the problem under study in a general way; why the problem is important, how the study relates to previous work, and the practical and theoretical implications of the study. Consider the latter as a highlight of concepts and theories that you will discuss in the literature review segment. Therefore, remember to justify their relevance to your topic and acknowledge authors and theorists as referred to in the text. Then, you should provide one to two paragraphs of more specific context within which the problem occurs. The context may be historical, political, cultural, linguistic, organizational, industrial, etc. You may also talk about your personal motivation to conduct the study. To identify a problem that is feasible,

you should have a good background of the field you are working in. You should know what has been solved, what is solvable and what interests you. For instance, if the problem is about the teaching and learning of French as a Foreign Language in Ghana, you may need to describe the political, linguistic and educational context within which the language is taught, the educational system of reference, the policy framework of teaching the language in Ghana, etc. In real-life, whenever you report a problem for elders to address, let us say that your friend has insulted you, listeners would want to know the circumstances or events leading to the insult which is the main problem. Likewise, the descriptive account of events or situations that you provide prepares your readers to appreciate and accept the statement of the problem. Constituting the background of your study might require a period of 6 to 12 months of exploratory reading and consultations with researchers of the field to state the specific problem of the research. How then do we proceed in stating the problem?

Statement of the Problem

In scientific research, the problem is usually defined as a gap in knowledge that the researcher intends to fill by undertaking a research work. A problem exists whenever a researcher identifies a situation (of learning/teaching) that is unsatisfactory, that he intends to change into a desirable situation. Scientific research is conducted to fill that gap (Mace & Petry, 2000). Thus, a linguistic study may be conducted on a previous research that leaves some issues unanswered or on a research whose conclusions are debatable. A study can also be done to explain in better perspectives, an existent study in the light of contemporary facts. In order to deal with the issue at hand, you need to fully understand the problem in all its dimensions and the first step to such understanding is by unravelling the meaning of key terms in the right context.

Here again, you start by an introductory paragraph where you point out existing knowledge gaps, controversies to be resolved, what previous research in the area has not been able to resolve, and so forth. It may also be necessary to define the central ideas or concepts that feature in your topic. The concepts are useful tools for the statement of the problem. In two or three paragraphs, carefully define

each concept or variable in context, citing other research studies as much as needed, to improve your readers' understanding of issues in your research. In these preceding paragraphs, you let your supervisors know that you are aware of different dimensions and facets of the problem you are investigating. The purpose of the study will tell which facet of the problem you wish to tackle in your research.

Purpose of the Study

In this section, you will write a concise paragraph that reveals and explains what you will do in the research. This is a brief statement of the way you intend to investigate the specific research problem. *“The purpose statement should provide a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study”* (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987, p. 5). Whenever people inquire about your research project, the simple answer you provide that convinces them is the purpose of your study. Therefore, if the purpose is not clear to you, it cannot be clear to any listener and for that matter, your readers. According to Campenhoudt and Quivy (2011), it represents the researcher's theoretical perspective or approach to the problem. That is to say, the view-angle one wishes to use in investigating the problem identified. For example, in dealing with a problem of performance in a teaching and learning environment, you may opt to investigate it from the teaching perspective, that is, how effectively the course is taught in the classroom; you may rather opt to investigate the problem by studying the nature of test items proposed to students. Another way is to investigate the problem from the students' perspective, that is, how they apply the knowledge or skills taught in class during examinations. Also, you may look at the problem from the angle of the marking schemes designed for the test items. Therefore, a singular problem may be tackled from different perspectives. State the purpose of your study in broad terms.

Under this section, it is appropriate to precede the purpose with a sentence saying, *“The purpose of this study is...”* Clearly identify the goal of the study in one precise sentence. For example, if there is a perceived low performance of students in a component of the French paper of the Basic Education Certificate

Examination (BECE), the following statements can indicate the purpose of the study:

1. “*The purpose of this study is to analyse the picture description component of selected papers proposed to French students at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)*”; **OR**
2. “*The purpose of this study is to evaluate how teachers teach picture description in preparing students for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)*”; **OR**
3. *The purpose of this study is to analyse the proposed marking scheme for the picture description component of the French paper vis-à-vis the written production of candidates during the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)*”; **OR**
4. *The purpose of the study is to assess the quality of pictures provided for description during the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE).*

When the purpose of the research is clearly stated, you should then take a second look at the topic to check if it reflects what is stated as the purpose of the work. Do keywords or concepts of your project feature in it? A cursory reading of the topic should reveal the purpose of the research and vice versa. Taking for instance statement no. 4, the topic will read: ***“Assessing the quality of pictures provided for description at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) for French: a critical study of examination papers from 2010 to 2015”***.

You should keep in mind that the purpose you declared for your study will, from this stage, inform all other sections of your research such as your research questions, hypotheses, objectives and the methodology of the research. Preliminary research questions should be revised to suit the chosen purpose of the study. How do you deal with this aspect of the proposal?

Research Questions

This section should explain the research question(s) and their importance for the researcher.

Research questions can provide the key to planning and carrying out a successful research project (Robson, 2011, p. 58). A *research question* poses a relationship between two or more variables but phrases the relationship as a question (Kerlinger, 1979). The process of developing research questions is one that

requires a lot of thinking. Stressful as it may be, developing a set of carefully thought out questions to which the project will seek answers is a worthwhile exercise. Even though some researchers do not view research questions as central or necessary to the process of research, others have clearly “*demonstrated the advantages in keeping the search of answers to research questions to the fore throughout the journey through the project*” (Robson, 2011, p. 59). Research questions help to:

1. define the project – A good set of questions summarizes in a few sentences what your project is concerned with.
2. set boundaries – This stops you from spending time on things not relevant to the questions (but, particularly in flexible design research, be prepared to modify the questions in the light of your findings).
3. give direction – Helps you to focus your efforts (searching literature, data gathering, method selection, analysis).
4. define success – Your project should result in credible answers to the research questions (O’Leary, 2005, p. 33; Robson, 2011, p. 59)

Research questions should have a direct link with the purpose of the study. They should be real questions (identified by the question mark (?) at the end). They should be clear, concise and transparent (i.e. not give room for other possibilities of answers). They should either lead to quantitative or qualitative answers. They should provide answers that reveal much information about the processes of things (i.e. close type questions that attract Yes or No answers are not appropriate). Blaikie (2007, pp. 6-7) suggests a simple ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ typology. In his view, ‘what’ questions require a descriptive answer while ‘why’ questions suggest an interest in explaining or understanding something; and ‘how’ questions indicate a concern for change. In the same light, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006) contrast quantitative research questions seen as mainly ‘descriptive’, ‘comparative’ or ‘relationship’ in type and very specific in nature, with qualitative research questions which are more open-ended and tend to address ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions. So, in a nutshell, it is a list of general questions that determine what method you will use and the type of data you will gather about the problem. They are bound by your theoretical perspective and

research methodology. Generally, 1 to 3 research questions should suffice so that the focus of the research is manageable. For example, for statement no. 4, the following research questions could be considered:

1. *What is the nature of pictures provided for description at the BECE?*
2. *What are the characteristics of the pictures proposed for description?*
3. *How do students perceive and interpret the pictures proposed for description?*

Note that your research is expected to provide answers for questions you asked in this section of your proposal. However, for the meantime, you are allowed to provide tentative answers to questions above, pending their confirmation with valid data. We shall now discuss how such answers are identified and formulated.

Research Hypotheses

What are hypotheses? In simple language, one may refer to them as suspicions or doubts about something or someone. But in scientific research, they are not any kind of doubts; they are guesses generated from a deep analysis of issues and backed by some amount of provisional evidence or clues. A hypothesis is a statement of what we expect. It is a calculated guess that you intend to confirm with the data you will gather. It is a declarative statement of the relations between two or more variables (Krathwohl, 1988). As the research questions ask what relationships exist between the different variables in the study, the hypothesis predicts the relationship between variables. Punch (2005) defines it as the predicted answer to a research question. For, it constitutes the provisional answer to the research question you intend to answer at the end of the study. It becomes the torchlight that brightens your path or guides your steps towards the fact. Hypotheses are generated through a careful self-introspection that is informed by the set of knowledge the researcher has about the problem. In fixed research design, hypotheses allow one to make predictions about the outcome of the research even before data are gathered. Like the criminal investigator who arrests a suspect based on some well-founded assumptions, the researcher needs to determine from the panel of research hypotheses those that can help him/her secure a favourable judgement in the law court, which is with the scientific audience. Therefore, just as the research questions, good research hypotheses should:

1. set up a testable proposition
2. identify the variables of importance
3. give direction to research
4. be grounded in theory
5. be brief but have clarity
6. be realistic and achievable.

In the case of low performance at BECE considered above, the hypotheses could be stated as follows:

1. *Pictures provided for description at the BECE do not depict the situation the examiners seek to elicit from candidates.*
2. *Pictures provided for description at the BECE are not the work of professional cartoonists.*
3. *Candidates have different perceptions of the pictures provided for description at BECE. These perceptions are at variance with the descriptions proposed by examiners in the marking schemes.*

These are only suggested hypotheses, which may not necessarily be informed by facts gathered through observation and exploratory reading (i.e. Chief Examiners' Reports) about the problem. However, they provide you with a framework to set up your hypotheses in a manner that provides responses to your research questions. But, in stating them, ensure that they are aligned with your research questions and the research objectives.

Research Objectives

The research objectives directly emanate from your research hypotheses. Though some studies use only research objectives, having both hypotheses and objectives stated in the proposal improves the understanding and general acceptability of the research plan. What do you want to know, prove, demonstrate, analyse, test, investigate or examine? List your aims in a logical sequence. In our view, the research objectives define 'how' you are going to carry out the research in order to provide answers to your hypotheses. In the way they are formulated, we expect to see the practical steps that would lead you to the expected results. Though they

are not stated explicitly in all studies, it is quite relevant to let them come out as they help to operationalize one's hypotheses (initial assumptions). The following could be research objectives for the case under consideration:

1. *Discuss the characteristics of pictures provided for description at the BECE.*
2. *Analyze candidates' descriptive productions on the pictures vis-à-vis the marking schemes provided by examiners.*

The research objectives should provide a concise and clear outline of the academic (or non-academic, i.e. social or political) goals that you want to achieve through your project.

Now, let us focus on another important section of the research proposal, where the researcher should demonstrate his knowledge of existing literature concerning the research problem.

Synoptic Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The literature review is presented differently from the introductory background. This is not expected to be extensive for a research proposal.

“The review of the literature provides the background and context for the research problem. It should establish the need for the research and indicate that the writer is knowledgeable about the area” (Wiersma, 1995, p. 406). It shows the unique approach of the study and how it adds to the body of knowledge and informs the scholarly or practitioner communities. It includes the theories that will inform the research study.

Before you set out to write this section, you should do some exploratory readings and discussions with potential supervisors in your field to come up with a reading list that can inform the direction of your research project.

In two to four paragraphs, set the context for your literature review and discuss what you will cover or accomplish in this section. Recap what the study is about and what this particular section is about. Then, outline the boundaries of your literature review and how the elements are organized.

The literature review accomplishes several important things:

1. It shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being reported (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990).

2. It relates a study to the larger, on-going dialogue in the literature about a topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).
3. It provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study, as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of a study with other findings.
4. It “frames” the problem earlier identified.
5. It demonstrates to the reader that you have a comprehensive grasp of the field and that you are aware of important recent substantive and methodological developments.
6. It delineates the “jumping-off place” for your study. How will your study refine, revise, or extend what is now known?

The literature review must:

1. Explore the key concepts/theories around which the study is built; clarify your interpretation of these concepts/theories in relation to your study
2. Organise your review in a structured manner, from broad to focused, and make sure you cover all important aspects of the problem under investigation
3. Give your readers a clear idea of what the various authors you cite are saying;
4. Critique the literature and not merely report the literature (very important for theses writers); and,
5. Summarise the main points that have emerged from your literature review and their implications for development of your own research.

For your proposal, you need to keep the literature review brief and straight to the point, limiting your references and citations to very pertinent and relevant texts that are directly connected with your study. Avoid chaining citations after each other. You have to make your points clearly and succinctly through your own sentences rather than citing others. Your research review should indicate an open problem, which then will be the motive for your project. Declare the theoretical framework and demonstrate how your study fits into that construct. Also, review the methods others have used to explore topics similar to yours and discuss how they inform your perspective and your research project. Additionally be certain to include critiques of the works you cover in this section. These develop the

readers' understanding of the context of the research problem and lead to the discovery of the theoretical construct or theoretical framework, the research problem and the research questions. Most importantly, do not forget to fit in the discussions your own arguments that establish your theoretical orientation.

Significance of the Study

In this section, you should justify the project from a review of literature on the topic. You should discuss how the proposed study would influence or affect future research, theory, policy, practice, etc. Therefore, you should discuss the texts which, you believe are most important to the project, demonstrate your understanding of the research issues, and identify existing gaps in the literature that the research is intended to address. Address how well the study will do in terms of internal and external validity. In other words, the focus of this section should be on how the results of your study could be used and how it will benefit your readership, the educational, academic or scientific community.

Delimitations

Most research topics cover areas that are far too multitudinous, multifaceted, complex, or inexhaustible to be addressed in a research study of any scope. There are research directions and research questions suggested by your research topic but are not addressed in this research study. Describe what your research design cannot accomplish owing to the scope of the project, limitations of time and resources. The scope may concern the variables included and excluded, the geographical coverage, a section of the population, etc.

Research Methodology

The “Methodology” section is the most important section in the entire proposal. In this section, it is important to explain why it is the most appropriate methodology to effectively answer the research questions. The researcher should provide the step-by-step approach that will lead to the expected results of the study. It is vital to provide much detail on the research design, the sampling techniques, the instruments for data collection, the methods of data collection and analysis.

Research Design

In this section, remind your readers of the scope of your study and articulate your chosen research design, whether it is a survey, experiment, observation, field work, interview, etc. and justify it in terms of your research questions, hypotheses and objectives. Point out the strengths and weaknesses of the design. Then, describe the processes of the design that will help generate the results. Your research design should provide answers to the following questions: Who?, What?, When?, How?, Why?, For What? In other words, the “who” refers to the target population and its sampling; the “what” would determine the type of information needed (quantitative or qualitative) and for that matter, the instruments to use to collect data; the “how” would refer to the methods of collecting and analysing data and “when”, the prevailing or adequate conditions for data collection; “for what” would refer to the expected outcomes; and finally, the “why” would establish the reasons for the researchers’ methodological choices. Briefly discuss how the instruments will be administered and data collected, including how the subjects will participate in the study. Whichever research design you choose is acceptable provided your faculty approves of it. Therefore, get the consent of your supervisors before you invest your time in the activity of collecting data.

Sampling

This section should include an expanded discussion of the sample. First, discuss the target population and its background characteristics such as location, age, sex, academic level, choice of programmes, professional status, etc. Who are the respondents? Are they children, adult learners, teenagers, unemployed graduates, a 5-star Chef, etc.? Second, discuss the sampling method you will use to select participants for your study. What is the rationale for selecting the participants? Which specific sampling method will be used to select participants? Discuss the literature relative to the sampling technique and illustrate how it is applied. Lastly, justify how the sampled population can provide the data needed to confirm the research hypotheses and the limitations of that group.

Instrumentation

In this paragraph, briefly outline the instruments that will generate the needed data, including questionnaires, interviews, fieldwork, experiment, and observation grids. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your instruments? How do they complement each other in case you are using different instruments? Discuss how the instrument(s) will measure the study's independent and dependent variables. Each instrument should be discussed in more detail under separate subheadings.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Explain the general plan for how the data will be collected, especially the procedures you will use to ensure ethical practice, validity and reliability. If our interest is in studying how nurses relate to patients in the Out-Patient Department, how do we apply observation techniques? Would an open observation with the consent of the nurses provide the true information we need? Wouldn't the nature of the investigation rather require the use of covert techniques of observation as used by the celebrated Ghanaian ace investigator, Anas Aremeyaw Anas? The failure to determine the appropriate technique of collecting data can give us anything other than the information we expect. Identify any incentives for students participating in the study. Describe your data editing, data coding, and data analysis procedures. Describe measures taken to minimize errors in data entry and other aspects of data processing. Also, include what statistical or analytical tools will be used for analysing the data, such as ANOVA, SPSS, and Atlas.ti, if applicable. Finally, explain in detail how data would be analysed for each research question or hypothesis.

Limitations of the Study

In this section, you should describe the factors that may hinder the use of the target population for the exercise and any expected challenges during the collection and analysis of data. However, remain practical in acknowledging your limitations as a young researcher. Do not exaggerate issues.

Project Timeline

Give information about your estimated timetable (if possible in table form),

indicating the sequence of research phases and the time that you will probably need for each phase. This does not need to be a day-to-day list but depending on the length of your project, provide a monthly/quarterly outline of how you will complete the work within the time scheduled. A full-time Ph.D. normally takes 3 years and a Research-based Master's degree 2 years. In your timeline, you should indicate the date the project starts and when it ends. You can decide to structure your project in phases for various aspects such as the review of literature, data collection and data analysis. Then, provide the anticipated dates or number of weeks you will take to complete each phase and section. You can even describe specific activities that will characterize each section of the project. Be sure to include time to review/synthesize your data or to reflect on the experience. You should also include time to write the final report.

Organisation of the Study

In this section, you describe the sequence and the focus of proposed chapters of the dissertation. How many chapters compose the dissertation? In one or two sentences, provide details of what each chapter will discuss.

Summary and Conclusion

To help your reviewer identify the important information in your proposal, provide a succinctly well-written summary at the end of each section or at the end of the proposal. Note that for want of time, some reviewers may read only the summary to grasp the main idea expressed in each section. Make sure these are concise, clear and informative. Since reviewers are busy people, this may speed up the assessment of your proposal. As a result, each proposal will only receive a short time. Your proposal has to stand out!

Reference List

Here, you will list those academic works which you have mentioned in your research outline as well as a number of other important works to which you will refer during your research. Your references should provide the reader with a good sense of your grasp on the literature and how you can contribute to it. Remember to use the referencing style approved by your Faculty or institution.

Conclusion

Overall, your research proposal should have certain qualities that make it acceptable by all standards. Much attention needs to be paid to the content of the proposal to ensure that:

- the research title is informative;
- the research idea, question or problem are clearly stated, persuasive and addresses a demonstrable gap in the existing literature;
- the background and significance is pertinent;
- the specific aims are clear and concise;
- the scope of your project is reasonable;
- the methods are appropriate for the experiments;
- the project is well-organised and concise;
- the timetable is realistic;
- the reading list provided at the end is relevant and current.

When the write-up of your proposal is ready, go through a careful editing stage to make sure your proposal does not contain any grammatical/orthographical mistakes or typos. Once again, make sure the title, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the stated objectives and the methodology for gathering data are all aligned. If possible, ask someone within the academic community to proofread your proposal in order to make sure the proposal conforms to international academic standards.

Candidates should always consider their proposal as a working document that could be revised at any time. You should therefore modify aspects of your proposal (i.e. purpose, research questions, hypotheses, objectives, etc.) as you get new insights from the literature or your supervisors. Once you have a useful working hypothesis, concentrate on pursuing the project within the scope of the study.

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LITERATURE REVIEW AS AN INDISPENSABLE COMPONENT OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a systematic approach to literature review as a significant component of research in literary studies for both undergraduate and graduate students. It is a practical explanation on this crucial aspect of scientific research for both students and researchers in the field of literary studies in the Humanities in tertiary institutions. The Chapter gives an overview of what literature review is, and its relevance in literary studies in the Humanities.

Considering the fact that literature review is an integral aspect of scientific research method, it is expedient to establish what research is from the onset. Following that, the Chapter explores various stages that precede and justify the need for literature review in literary research in the Humanities. These include the identification of problem, formulation of a research topic from the identified problem, statement of the research problem, research questions, definitions of literature review, reasons for literature review, components of a literature review, modes of organization of a literature review write-up, structure of a literature review, issues for critical evaluation, and organizational issues in a literature review. Therefore, what is scientific research?

Scientific Research

Scientific research is a systematic investigative process employed to increase or revise current knowledge by discovering new facts. It is divided into two general categories: Basic research and applied research. Basic research is inquiry aimed at increasing scientific knowledge, whereas applied research is effort aimed at using basic research for solving problems or developing new processes, products, or

techniques. It can also be done quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Quantitative research involves a systematic process of collecting and analyzing statistical or numerical data for the purpose of revising existing knowledge through the discovering of new facts, or validating such knowledge. Qualitative research on the other hand, is founded on the interpretation of empirical or textual data geared towards the revision or validation of current knowledge by discovering new facts. Literary studies are a scientific process for the interpretation and analysis of empirical data from literary genres. The primary source of data for literary studies is literary works in the form of novels, drama, poems, essays, short stories which define literary genres. The scientific research begins with an identification of a problem. In Literary Studies in the Humanities, research problems can be identified through the study or reading of literary works. Considering the characteristics of literary genres as aesthetic use of language in the production of texts, they are opened to interpretations. Such interpretations are linked to research topic formulated from the identification of problem or problems. The formulation of a research topic is a sine qua non for the start of scientific studies.

Formulation of a Research Topic

The primary objective of research is to investigate the “whys” of something. The “**something**” in this case can be considered as the point of interest that instigates the investigative process called “**research**”. The ‘something’ is a problem which has been observed or identified, and for which one decides to look for solutions or to understand. The first step to research following the observation or identification of problem is the formulation of a topic on the problem.

Statement of the Research Problem

Having formulated a research topic, the researcher must reorganise the problem as captured in the topic into a researchable issue through a process known as *problematics*. This process helps to redefine in a concise and concrete terms the subject matter of the problem. The ‘problematic’ is a summarized outline of the problem in the form of a statement which captures the immediate attention of the reader as to what the research is about. For example: “Cyberbullying: How Physical Intimidation Influences the Way People are Bullied” (Tyler, M., n.d.) and

“The Effects of Communication Styles on Marital Satisfaction” (Yager, H., n.d.). Research questions are then formulated based on this statement.

Research Questions

These are a set of interrogative sentences on the subject matter as evoked in the “Problematic”. They are meant for systematically eliciting or adducing facts to elucidate or validate the problem raised in the topic and subsequently in the subject matter. To discuss the issue of Cyberbullying in the first of the two topics given as examples above, Tyler (n.d.) formulates the following research question: “How does the lack of the physical intimidation effect people’s inclination to cyber bully?” With regards to the second topic, Yager (n.d.) on her part asks: “How do differences in communication styles between married-couples married five years or less affect marital satisfaction?” Both research questions are crafted from the summarized statements in the form of the two topics cited as examples in the previous subtopic. In both instances, Tyler and Yager put their research questions at the end of the literature review sections of the papers. The positioning of the research questions, by both authors in these instances, brings to the fore the role of literature review in so far as bringing authors’ mind to focus on the subject-matter of their research topic is concerned. What then is the literature review and what roles does it play in research in the Humanities undertaken at both undergraduate and graduate levels?

Literature Review: Definitions

Literature review is a critical study of the scholarly articles, essays, books, and critical commentaries that provides insight into different opinions on the problem that is the major concern of scientific research. It entails a rigorous identification, selection and analysis of such documentations in the field related to a research topic. A literature review is an objective, critical summary of published research literature relevant to a topic under consideration for research. It is a discursive essay that critically surveys existing scholarship on a particular topic in the field. A literature review essay is a required part of an academic writing and a scientific research report at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

A literature review is an evaluative report of information found in the literature related to your selected area of study. The review should describe, summarize, evaluate and clarify this literature. It should give a theoretical base for the research and help you (the author) determine the nature of your research. Works which are irrelevant should be discarded and those which are peripheral should be looked at critically. A literature review is more than the search for information, and goes beyond being a descriptive annotated bibliography. All works included in the review must be read, evaluated and analyzed (which you would do for an annotated bibliography), but relationships between the literature must also be identified and articulated, in relation to your field of research.

"In writing the literature review, the purpose is to convey to the reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. The literature review must be defined by a guiding concept (e.g. your research objective, the problem or issue you are discussing, or your argumentative thesis). It is not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries.

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>

"A literature review is a report on what has been published on a topic by ascribed scholars and researchers" Taylor, D. & Procter, M. (n. d.)

www.advice.writing.utoronto.ca

The purpose of a literature review is "to create familiarity with current thinking and research on a particular topic, and may justify future research into a previously overlooked or understudied area" (Fry, n. d.). Reviewing the research literature means finding, reading, and summarizing the published research relevant to your question (Adair & Vohra, 2003). These authors suggest that it is important to review the literature early in the research process for the following reasons among several others:

- It can help you turn a research idea into an interesting research question.
- It can tell you if a research question has already been answered.
- It can help you evaluate the interestingness of a research question.
- It can give you ideas for how to conduct your own study.

- It can tell you how your study fits into the research literature.

Components of a Literature Review

A literature review essay comprises various components needed to structure the thinking of the researcher and knowledge of theories and concepts relating to the topic in specific field of study. What are these components?

In structuring a literature review essay, the following components should be systematically woven in as needed:

- Criteria for selecting and excluding sources for your literature review;
- Citations to the works under review;
- Summary of the main ideas, arguments, theories, or methodologies of each work under review;
- Critical evaluation of how each work fits into the development of scholarship on the topic at hand, whether it breaks new evidentiary or theoretical grounds, or provides notable nuanced reading. In academic papers and dissertations, critical evaluation constitutes the bulk of the literature review essay.

Modes of Organisation of a Literature Review Write-up

A literature review write-up can be organized in many common modes. It can be done following historic (chronological), thematic, and theoretical modes.

Historic mode

The historic mode should determine if the history of publishing sheds important light on the trajectory of scholarship on the research topic. If it does, it may be useful to organize the write-up chronologically by date of publication. The historic mode also leads to the determination of whether earlier authors are cited in subsequent publications, and if so, which ones?

Thematic mode

From the thematic mode of organization, the researcher should find answers to the following questions: Has my topic undergone thematic reinterpretation, and how have the themes been treated by the works under review? Is there a

methodological context, such as iconographic, sociological, political, and religious? Do any of the works offer a methodological re-evaluation or re-contextualization of evidence? It may be worthwhile for the researcher to check the bibliographies of the sources being reviewed to see who else is cited, and whether there are previous authors and works that are commonly cited by the literature under review.

Theoretical mode

Adopting the theoretical mode, the literature review write-up would seek to establish whether the topic has been influenced by theoretical developments, such as structuralism, feminism, historicism, Marxism, etc.? How do the works under review contribute to, amplify on, or reorient the theoretical discourse? In doing so, it is useful to check the references of the sources being reviewed to see who else is cited, and whether there are previous authors and works that are commonly cited by the literature being reviewed.

In the light of the multiplicity of the existing styles, it is often found out that literature review write-up comprises a mixture of a number of the existing approaches in the form of a hybrid. Taking cognizance of the centrality of a literature review write-up presented as a written chapter of a dissertation or thesis, it ought to be as exhaustive as possible, given the parameters of the dissertation or thesis topic. The researcher writing a literature review should be clear in stating the criteria for including and excluding sources.

As an academic essay, the literature review should comprise a theme that is reflected in the opening paragraph or section, a body that provides a well-constructed critical summary and synthesis of works under review, and a conclusion that may reflect on the current state of scholarship, and, if need be, highlight developing scholarly trends.

At this point, one must bring to the fore what has been identified as an eventual gap in scholarship and what would be done in the present write-up to bridge that gap. Besides, mention ought to be made of the theoretical or conceptual

approach(es) to be adopted for the study, and the relevance or pertinence of such a theoretical or conceptual approach(es) to finding answers to the research questions in view to affirm or refute the hypotheses.

Structure of a Literature Review

Writing a literature review in the Humanities, the researcher should structure the essay to include the following considerations:

- overview of the subject, issue, or theory under consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review;
- division of works under review into themes or categories [e.g. works that support a particular position, those against, and those offering alternative approaches entirely];
- explanation of how each work is similar to and how it varies from the others;
- conclusions as to which pieces are best considered in their arguments; which of their opinions are most convincing, and make the greatest contribution to the understanding and development of their areas of research.

In doing so, one ought to conduct a critical evaluation of the works. This critical evaluation of each work should consider: **Provenance, Methodology, Objectivity, Persuasiveness and Value.**

Provenance

On this, the researcher should consider in each work what are the authors' credentials? (Make sure that the person who wrote the item you are evaluating is qualified: what is the author's identity? is the author's education in the subject area in which they are writing? has the author written other books or articles on the same or a similar topic? is the book, article, Web site written in the author's field of expertise? what is his/ her ideological persuasion? etc.). Are the author's arguments supported by evidence (e.g. primary historical material, case studies, narratives, statistics, recent scientific findings, etc.?)

Methodology

Concerning the methodology, the critical evaluation should look for whether the techniques used to identify, gather, and analyze the data were appropriate to addressing the research problem; whether the sample size was appropriate; and whether the results were effectively interpreted and reported.

Objectivity

Objectivity is a fundamental ingredient of scientific reports. In this regard, the critical evaluation will seek to establish whether the author's perspective is even-handed or prejudicial; whether contrary data is considered or whether certain pertinent information is purposefully ignored to prove the author's point.

Persuasiveness

This is geared towards establishing which of the author's theses are most convincing or least convincing.

Value

In terms of value, the critical evaluation should determine if the author's arguments and conclusions are convincing, on one hand; and if the work ultimately does contribute in any significant way to an understanding of the subject, on the other. All these considerations within the framework of the critical evaluation will enable the researcher to position the particular study and justify the choice and pertinence of the research topic, theoretical approach(es) and methodology.

Having arrived at this stage, the researcher is certain on how to organize the literature review. This should be done keeping in mind the following issues: use of evidence; selectivity; sparing use of quotations; summary and synthesis; presence of the researcher's voice; caution in the use of paraphrases; and avoidance of common mistakes.

- **Using evidence**

A literature review section is, in this sense, just like any other academic research paper. Your interpretation of the available sources must be backed

up with evidence [citations] that demonstrates that what you are saying is valid.

- **Being selective**

Select only the most important points in each source to highlight in the review. The type of information you choose to mention should relate directly to the research problem, whether it is thematic, methodological, or chronological. Related items that provide additional information but that are not key to understanding the research problem can be included in a list of further readings.

- **Using quotes carefully**

Some short quotes are okay if you want to emphasize a point, or if what an author stated cannot be easily paraphrased. Sometimes you may need to quote certain terminology that was coined by the author, not common knowledge, or taken directly from the study. Do not use extensive quotes as a substitute for your own summary and interpretation of the literature.

- **Summary and synthesis**

Remember to summarize and synthesize your sources within each thematic paragraph as well as throughout the review. Recapitulate important features of a research study, but then synthesize it by rephrasing the study's significance and relating it to your own work.

- **Keeping one's own voice**

While the literature review presents others' ideas, your voice [the writer's] should remain in front and centre. For example, weave references to other sources into what you are writing but maintain your own voice by starting and ending the paragraph with your own ideas and wording.

- **Caution on using paraphrasing**

When paraphrasing a source that is not your own, be sure to represent the author's information or opinions accurately and in your own words. Even

when paraphrasing an author's work, you still must provide a citation to that work.

- **Avoidance of common mistakes**

These are the most common mistakes made in reviewing literature related to research in Humanities:

- sources in your literature review do not clearly relate to the research problem;
- lack of sufficient time on the part of the researcher to define and identify the most relevant sources to use in the literature review related to the research problem;
- exclusive reliance on secondary analytical sources rather than inclusion of relevant primary research studies or data;
- uncritical acceptance of another researcher's findings and interpretations as valid, rather than critical examination of all aspects of the research design and analysis;
- lack of description of the search procedures that were used in the identification of the literature to review;
- report of isolated statistical results rather than syntheses of them in chi-squared or meta-analytic methods; and,
- sole inclusion of research that validates assumptions and does not consider contrary findings and alternative interpretations found in the literature.

Below are two examples of literature review segments from Tyler's and Yager's papers respectively, based on the two topics cited earlier in the chapter.

Topic 1:

Cyberbullying: How Physical Intimidation Influences the Way People are Bullied
Cyberbullying is something that has become a new social phenomenon in today's society. It can often times leave students unable to escape their bullies and leave them feeling alone and helpless. Faucher, Jackson, and Cassidy (2014) performed a study on 1925 students across four Canadian universities that found 24.1

percent of students had been the victims of cyberbullying over the last twelve months. These shocking numbers show that nearly one in every four people has been a victims of this phenomenon. This statistics is interesting however because when compared to studies that were done amongst younger age students you see that the numbers are drastically different. Wegge, Vandebosch, and Eggermont (2014) found that among 1,458, 13-14 years old students that considerably less students reported being cyberbullied. This is very similar to what Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2009) found among 2052 students in the 12-18 ranges which concluded that 11.1 percent of students had been victims of cyberbullying. This research concludes that cyberbullying appears to be more prevalent in students as they get older. Wegge et al. (2014) also noted that 30.8 percent had been victims of traditional bullying. This raises the question as to why it seems to be less prevalent among younger students. Is it possible that they simply don't have as much access to the tools of cyberbullying that students at the university level have, or they possibly are not as technologically advanced as their older peers? It continues to raise questions about the issue of cyberbullying as well as what classifies the perpetrators as well as what are their reasons for harming others.

The types of people who bully. An important factor when analyzing cyberbullying is trying to understand the types of people who are the aggressors. The first thing that needs to be discussed when analyzing this is the simple matter of gender when it comes to who is generally the aggressor. Slonje and Smith (2008) found that when it comes to cyberbullying males are more often than not the aggressors with males being reported as the cyberbully far more often than females. Slonje et al (2008) also found that 36.2 percent of students were unaware of the gender of their aggressors. This is intriguing because for one it is the same percentage as the number of males who bullied, but most importantly because it shows that over 1 in 3 students don't actually know who is bullying them, which adds to the fear and stigma that is related to cyberbullying and not being able to escape the perpetrators.

The types of people who are victims. Researchers have also conducted various studies on the types of people who are cyberbullied, or what is often referred to as "cybervictimology". Abeele and Cock (2013) conducted a study, which concluded

that the gender of victims varied greatly depending on the form of cyberbullying. Abeele et al. (2013) found that males are more likely to be on the receiving end of direct cyberbullying while females are more likely to be the victims of indirect cyberbullying such as online gossip among peers. These findings appear to remain true to social social norms where males are viewed as more confrontational and females are often stereotyped as gossipers. While not many studies look at the gender of the victims many studies do research things such as the characteristics of the victims. Faucher et al. (2014) found that there were numerous reasons that people felt they were the victims of cyberbullying such as their personal appearance, interpersonal problems, as well as simply having discrepancies about their views. Davis, Randall, Ambrose, and Orand (2015) also conducted a study about victims and their demographics, which looked at the reasons people, were cyberbullied. Some of the results in the Davis et al. (2015) study addressed other reasons for being bullied in which they found that 14 percent of victims had been bullied because of factors such as their sexual orientation.

These are all very important because it fits the profile of the traditional bully that many people envision but it shows that it transfers over into the cyber world as well. This leads on further questions about the relationship between the two and how the cyberbullying is influencing where and how the harassment is continuing.

The relationship between bully and victim. The relationship between aggressor and victim is also something that has been heavily researched among professionals. Beran and Li (2007) conducted a study that involved 432 middle school students and concluded that just under half of the students had been victims of cyberbullying as well as traditional bullying. This is true across multiple studies. Wegge et al. (2014) also concluded that people who were bullied in traditional manners had a much higher likelihood to become victims of cyberbullying. Another interesting relationship between bully and victim is that studies have also shown that people who are victims are likely to become aggressors in the online world. Beran et al. (2007) confirms this by stating that, “students who are bullied through technology are likely to use technology to bully

others”. Faucher et al. (2014) also found similar results claiming that male and female students decided to bully people online because they were bullied first.

Research has also been done that looks at how the bullies find their victims. Wegge et al. (2014) studied the perpetrators preferences in victims and found that 27 percent were in the same grade, 14.2 percent were in different grades and a staggering 49.6 percent were not schoolmates of the bullies. This evidence somewhat contradicts that of the other studies that state victims are generally bullied at school and at home because it shows that nearly half of the bullies prefer to bully people they do not go to school with and possibly do not know at all. This continues to build and add to the idea of cyberbullying in that it allows bullies to create their own personas and images in order to try and intimidate and influence others without actually providing a physical intimidation factor.

Effects of Cyberbullying: The first part of this literature review focused on the demographics of the bullies and their victims, but now we will focus on the lasting effects and the trauma it brings to the victims as well as the different forms of cyberbullying. While the platforms used are different the lasting effects that the bullying has on the victims are very similar. Faucher et al. (2014) concluded that one of the main effects that cyberbullies had on university students was that they were unable to accomplish some of their school assignments. While many people think of effects of bullying to be simply depression or low self-esteem this study brought light to a much different more unexpected issues. Beran et al. (2007) also found similar responses from victims of cyberbullying claiming that they often did not achieve the same marks in school and had lower concentration. These findings indicate that the lasting impact that a cyberbully has on their victims is often more harmful than what most people can see on the surface.

Pieschl, Porsch, Kahl, and Klockenbusch (2013) found that cybervictims generally were less distressed during the second confrontation with a cyberbully. This interesting finding indicates that victims of cyberbullies may actually become desensitized to the aggression over time lessening the effects of the bullying.

Victims coping techniques: When being faced by a bully it is important that victims learn to cope and move on from their experiences in order to prevent them from suffering in their personal and professional life like some of the victims in previous studies. Davis et al. (2014) conducted a study on victim coping techniques where they broke the techniques into two distinct categories, which were behavioral and cognitive strategies. Davis et al. (2014) found that 74 percent of participants preferred behavioral strategies, and of 69 percent of those people found the strategies to be effective. These behavioral strategies included seeking social support, making a creative outlet, or ignoring and blocking the bully. Because of the growing trend of cyberbullying there have been people who have developed different programmes to help raise awareness for cyberbullying as well as offer help to the victims. One of these programmes is known as Cyberprogramme 2.0. Garaigordobil and Martinez-Valderrey (2015) conducted a study testing the effectiveness of this programme and found that it was effective in decreasing the amount of traditional as well as cyberbullying, but also and more importantly it raised empathy among classmates towards the victims of these actions. This is a big step in combating bullying because peers are constantly influencing each other. If the general consensus among the class is that bullying is not funny and not right because they empathize with the victims than it can go a long way in changing the social norm. If the attention is no longer given to the bully by classmates and victims it could potentially cut back on the frequency of this act.

With that being said it raises the question instead of trying to cope, why not just remove yourself from the situation all together and not give the bully what they desire? Arntfield (2005) discussed the risk associated with using social media and concluded that intrinsic rewards that were not tied directly to winning as much as they were to fantasies of power, celebrity, sexuality, and elevated social status that came with participating, win or lose. This conclusion is one that is very accurate and relevant to the way adolescence as well as university level students think in today's society. The fact of the matter is in order to fit in and be considered "cool" amongst your peers you need to be on social media to understand many of the things that are talked about amongst students. Whether it be trending

hashtags, viral videos, or popular memes these are all things that are commonly shared and talked about between peers. While students may run the risk of being bullied on these sites, they also run the risk of being bullied for not knowing the newest updates in our culture, it is truly a viscous cycle.

Forms of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying gives the bully a much larger spectrum to choose from when it comes to how exactly they want to intimidate their victims which may be why it is often easier for them to carry out the act. Of all the different ways to cyberbully Faucher et al. (2014) found the most common platforms for cyberbullying to be social media, text messaging, and email which were used to bully students about half of the time followed up by blogs forums and chat rooms which were 25 percent. It is not surprising that social media is the most common platform for cyberbullying because it can allow for the bully to remain completely anonymous to the average victim. This allows people who may not fit the mould of the average bully to create a fake account and build their own persona in order to bully others. Multiple studies also address a critical factor of using social media or the Internet to bully others, which is that; the photos or hurtful comments can remain in cyberspace virtually forever. Davis et al. (2014) mentions how they received and viewed several responses that talked about how their traditional bullying experience would have been magnified if they had occurred in today's digital era. Faucher et al. (2014) also talk about how cyberbullying has a longer "shelf life" than your average bullying. This plays such a huge role because, with the aggressive material on the internet, it can often be revisited and the pain can constantly be brought back to light for the victims, making the experience much more traumatic.

Social media is very prevalent among cyberbullies but there is also extensive research done on cell phones and the role they play in the act of cyberbullying. Abeele et al. (2013) studied various aspects of mobile phone bullying and found that the most prevalent type was gossiping via text message, followed by gossiping over the phone, and concluded with threatening others over text message. Abeele et al. (2013) also found that girls were more often than not the perpetrators of gossiping while boys made slightly more threats via cell phone. This numbers

tend lean towards the stereotype of females being more of gossipers and males generally being more aggressive and physical. This is also interesting because it shows that that society's stereotypes appear to remain true even in a cyberworld. [...]

Topic 2: The Effects of Communication Styles on Marital Satisfaction

Nonverbal Communication. To many, nonverbal communication may take a back seat to verbal communication. It is often overlooked and may be deemed unimportant. However, this aspect of communication speaks volumes. Nonverbal communication may consist of looking, smiling, frowning, touching, or expressions of surprise as seen in Weisfeld and Stack's research study (2002). Women have been found to exhibit these forms of communication more often than men. Weisfeld and Stack studied nonverbal behaviors related to the closeness of a couple and found that women looked at their partners for a significantly longer amount of time as compared to men. The average length of a wife's look was 7.5 seconds while the husband's was 4.5 seconds. However, while men express less emotion and nonverbal communication, this may not necessarily mean that they are not listening when their wives speak to them. For instance, Weisfeld and Stack theorized that men may show less emotion because they have been taught to dampen emotions such as anger. When a husband and wife have a disagreement, the situation can escalate quickly if the husband fully expresses his emotions by becoming violent. Therefore, it was suggested that many men fail to show emotion in general because they have trained themselves to be "emotionless" in these conflict situations. Sabatelli, Buck, and Dyer (1982) also suggested that this is true. In their study focusing on nonverbal communication and its relationship to marital complaints, they found that wives who had husbands who were good communicators tended to have *more* complaints about their husbands. Their hypothesis was that because men are expected to tone down their emotions, having good nonverbal communication skills may be seen as socially unacceptable to their wives.

It is important to consider who the more effective communicator is so that we can learn from each other on how to communicate better. Noller (1980) found that there is a connection between a couple's marital adjustment and their skill at

communication. She had each participant first take the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959) to determine their overall marital satisfaction. Then, after the couples' communication was studied, the results showed that those with low marital adjustment demonstrated considerably fewer good nonverbal communications than those with high marital adjustment. However, the question must be raised: Do couples have a higher marital adjustment because they have good communication, or do couples have good communication because they are happy within their marriage?

Women were found to be better nonverbal communicators across several studies (Noller, 1980; Sabatelli *et al.*, 1982). However, being an effective communicator involves both encoding and decoding messages. Women have a natural tendency to be more expressive. Therefore, men were found to make more errors than women when encoding messages (Noller, 1980). However, it was also found that women were not better decoders, or receivers of messages, than men. Though it is quite possible that this was due to the husbands' poor ability to encode messages effectively. The same was found in other studies (Sabatelli *et al.*, 1982; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Additional findings by Sabatelli *et al.* and Koerner and Fitzpatrick also suggest that familiarity plays a role in how effective nonverbal communication is. In both of their studies, participants encoded and decoded messages to their partners. The interaction was recorded and evaluated by judges who attempted to decode the same interactions. Both studies revealed that the spouses were significantly more skilled at decoding their partners' messages, implying that couples may become more successful at interpreting their spouses' nonverbal communication over time.

Communication Styles When Flirting. Flirting is often associated with the start of a couple's relationship. It is employed when one shows interest in another person or when one wishes to demonstrate sexual attraction. As demonstrated in Horan and Booth-Butterfield's (2010) study, receiving affection is directly related to relational satisfaction. While giving affection is connected to commitment in a relationship. However, many may wonder if the act of flirting continues in committed relationships such as marriage. Is there a reason to flirt within marriage, and if so, how do women and men differ in their flirtation styles? In

Frisby and Booth-Butterfield's (2012) study on the purpose of flirtation, they found that a major reason for flirtation within a marriage was to create a private world between the couple and to motivate sex. They also found that women were more likely than men to use attentive flirting, in which the woman shows a great amount of concern for her husband. However in a separate study on flirtation motivation, men were also found to utilize attentive flirting in order to make their wives feel beautiful (Frisby, 2009). In concordance with previous research, Frisby found that men typically flirt to encourage sex, and women often flirt to focus on attention, fun, and interest in their spouses.

Another difference in flirtation style may occur due to the differences in the amount of expressiveness between men and women. Weisfeld and Stack (2002) conducted a study on nonverbal communication related to the closeness of married couples. Their research shows that on average, women smile and laugh significantly more than men. According to the same study, 78% of the spontaneous touches that occurred during the experiment were initiated by women, demonstrating that women's flirtation style is much more animated.

Conflict Communication Styles. One inevitable aspect of any marriage is conflict. We as humans will always have disagreements that must be resolved, and as men and women, we have many differences in communication styles. It is possible that these differences are the cause of conflict situations within marriage. Hanzal and Segrin (2009) found this to be true in their study of negative affectivity, a personality trait that tends to cause distressing reactions to negative situations. They found that spouses' use of harmful communication styles during conflict was directly related to not only their own marital satisfaction but also their partners'.

During conflict, husbands and wives may demonstrate positive problem solving, positive verbal communication, compliance, defensiveness, stubbornness, conflict engagement, withdrawal from interaction, contempt, anger, fear, sadness, and whining, as revealed by Gottman and Krokoff (1989). In their study on what makes a marriage satisfying, they found that the use of these types of

communication by certain spouses may lead to dissatisfaction in a marriage. For example, defensiveness, stubbornness, and withdrawal were found to produce marital discontent over time, especially when exhibited by the husband. Based on this research study, it is evident that marital satisfaction is more related to negative communication than positive. It was revealed that, in particular, the wives' sadness and the husbands' whining, examples of negative communication, were both connected to overall marital dissatisfaction. Interestingly, it was also discovered that spouses were more content in their marriages when the wives expressed anger during conflict and less content when they expressed fear and sadness. One explanation for this could be that men respond better when their wives communicate in similar way as *they* do such as being direct when expressing frustration.

Another aspect of conflict communication is partner appraisal, or a spouse's perceptions of the other (Sanford, 2006). In Sanford's study, three types of appraisal were studied: expectancies for partner understanding, expectancies for partner negative communication, and negative attributions for partner behaviour. He maintained that based on a spouse's appraisal of the other, his/her behaviour will change. For example, if the wife expects her husband to be harsh and negative when a conflict arises, she will begin the argument already in a defensive mode. On the contrary, if she expects her husband to be accepting and kind, she will act in the same manner. Sanford's study found that wives' expectancies produced within-person behaviour change more so than men's, implying that women are more susceptible to the effects of their appraisal.

Communicated Perspective-Taking. One way to resolve marital conflict effectively is for both spouses to see things through the other's point of view. Kellas and colleagues (2013) referred to it as perspective-taking. It demonstrates that a person cares for his/her spouse and is making a conscious effort to resolve any issues. The research team found that the main way spouses sensed perspective-taking from their partners was through agreement behaviours such as confirmation, supportiveness, and taking ownership of faults. However, there were significant differences in how husbands and wives perceived perspective-

taking individually. When husbands observed negative or unsupportive behaviours from their wives more often, they were less likely to rate them as understanding their perspectives. When husbands observed attentiveness from their wives, they were more likely to see them as taking their perspectives. Conversely, negative behaviours, such as inattentiveness and disagreement, were the *only* factors that related to wives' perceptions about their husbands' perspective-taking, verifying the differences in communication preferences between men and women. Overall, this study demonstrates the great effects of negative communication on the perceptions of perspective-taking between spouses.

Communication among couples is a topic that has been thoroughly studied. However, further study of the differences in communication styles between men and women will lead to better understanding. Specifically, communication among newlywed couples should be studied in order to learn what may be causing strife early in a marriage and ultimately lead to better understanding of how to maintain a successful marriage. Therefore, the following research question is raised. [...]

These two examples give a clear orientation of a literature review, though not exhaustive. Depending on the nature and scope of the study being undertaken, the content of the literature review write-up can be a whole chapter on its own, or a section of the introductory chapter. In the latter case, it may go beyond the above examples. Nonetheless, the examples provided in this chapter are good enough to provide a guide to a more elaborate literature review write-up on case-specific basis.

Conclusion

As it has been shown throughout this chapter, literature review is an indispensable component of every scientific research. Research in Humanities being a scientific investigation into problems identified in the Humanities also derives its objectivity and credibility from a cogent literature review write-up. This write-up affords the researcher the opportunity to critically examine existing literature relating to the topic being researched. This critical examination helps in

the identification of existing knowledge gaps that justify the conduct of the current study. It also helps the researcher to identify the most appropriate and relevant theories and methodology to choose from in relation to a given topic. Considering its significance in the conduct of scientific research in studies in the Humanities, literature review requires rigorous and systematic approaches to data collection, identification of existing literature in the domain of study, selection and organization of the write-up. It is the cogent harmonization of all these processes that defines the credibility and objectivity of the conclusive findings on a given topic in studies in Humanities.

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THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT AS SPINE OF RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES**AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye**

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rasheedmus2001@yahoo.com**INTRODUCTION**

One of the leading critical theorists of postcolonial studies, the cerebral Homl K. Bhabha who has devoted most of his works on the need for us to locate our culture also enjoins serious scholars to be committed to theory. Certainly, a commitment to theory is a commitment to genuine scholarship especially by scholars in the Humanities and related disciplines. Bhabha (2002, p.19) however, warns that:

There is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the elite language of the socially and culturally privileged. It is said that the place of the academic critic is inevitably within the Eurocentric archives of an imperialist or neo-colonial West.

Bhabha (2002, p. 19) equally raises some important questions in his attempt at wanting us to rationalise the relevance of theory or the hatred for it:

- i. Must we always polarise in order to polemicise?
- ii. Are we trapped in a politics of struggle where the representation of social antagonisms and historical contradictions can take no other form than a binarism of theory versus politics?
- iii. Can the aim of freedom of knowledge be the simple inversion of the relation of oppressor and oppressed, centre and periphery, negative image and positive image?
- iv. Is our only way out of such dualism the espousal of an implicate oppositionality or the invention of an originary counter-myth of radical purity?

Although the questions above are within the forte of postcolonial studies, their relevance to theoretical construct in the Humanities cannot be overemphasised.

One vital but essentially ignored aspects of research methodology in the Humanities, however, is the theoretical construct or framework. The hatred for theoretical postulation has indeed contributed to the seemingly low quality or mere rehash of research outputs especially in the African Humanistic Studies. This red side of research has also made the need to examine the omnibus essence of the theoretical framework in the proper construction and communication of research efforts imperative.

Flowing from the above, the main objective of this chapter is to examine the structure and the superstructure of the theoretical construct and its relationship to research methodology in the Humanities. This chapter also has sub-topics on the Humanities and related prototypes, the theoretical construct in the Humanities, suggestions and recommendations. These sub-topics allow us to be on the firmer ground for the concluding aspect of this study.

The Structure and Superstructure of Theoretical Construct

Since theoretical construct or framework is an offshoot of a theory, it is important to briefly discuss the essence and meaning of a theory. A theory is a germinated idea that has a clear identity, a force, a ripe imagination and with unmistakable rules, elements and features. It is a product of critical thinking from an individual who strongly believes in his or her thought(s). Some theories too are products of group ideas. A theory is about human knowledge, experience, intelligence and ideology. Indeed, a theory can:

- a) guide the society and its structure and superstructure;
- b) illuminate on or solve existing problem(s) in the society;
- c) stir controversy for human beings to think about *the unsaid* and reflect on *the undone* by creating alternative visions to existing visions for humanity;
- d) revolutionise the mind;
- e) support progressive ideas while repudiating conservatism or vice versa; and
- f) intellectualise the relationship between man and his environment.

Theory has two sides. This is known as the “Principle of simultaneity of practice as theory and theory as practice”. In fact, both practice and theory are “vested in the individual known as theorist or philosopher” and theory also signifies “the

fruit of analytical thinking over a subject-matter” (Mereri, 2014, p. 4). It is, therefore, important for us to accept the point of connection between the theorist philosopher and the philosopher as theorist which dates back to the Egyptian civilization and Greek Classical period.

Shovel (2007, p. 1551) also examines the structure of a theory. He submits that a theory is:

- i. one or more ideas that explain how or why something happens;
- ii. the set of general principles that a particular subject is based on; and
- iii. an idea that is believed to be true although you have no proof.

The structure of a theory is in its illustrative, imaginative, constructive and subjective voices all intellectualised for explaining, describing and analysing an idea or a principle. A theory remains a reflection waiting for implementation. This reflection can also be didactic or eclectic, articulating in the process, the ideology or the strong belief of the creator or the proponent of the theory. The interface between a theory and the society especially in the borderless social process is, in itself, pedagogical. The pedagogical context of any theory is an open-ended field, a sort of omnibus metaphor for scholars, critics, researchers, writers and so on to use in their search for the development of the human race through their research works.

The superstructure of a theory remains its reconstructive ability. In essence, a single theory within its superstructure can, through its creator or other proponents:

- a) produce another relevant or related theory;
- b) modify itself, within appropriate polemics; and
- c) multiply itself through the development of several forms, types or brands.

The second face value of the superstructure of a theory is its counter-discursive assertion. The point been made here is that a theory can lead to the formulation of another theory which can be a negation to, and a clear departure from an existing theory. This negation or paradigm shift can also be located within the shadow of the original theory. A relevant example is the contention in Classicism through Aristotle that the genre of tragedy is within the domain of a hero, who is

born noble and of royal blood. We can find this universally acknowledged theoretical formulation in the creative works of most of the three great Greek Dramatists; Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles. A negation to this submission is the critical reflection from Arthur Miller, the 20th century American playwright, who concludes that the poor or the lumpen of the society indeed bears the brunt of tragedy and its various trappings more than the noble or the rich man. His negation to Aristotelian prescription can be found in his play, *Death of a Salesman*.

The structure and superstructure of a theory transform into, and produce the theoretical framework for the projection, stimulation and ordering of a serious research work. In fact, Lourens (2007, p. 3) has appraised the theoretical framework's question by insisting that, "advanced study entails the implementation of the theoretical basis of a specific discipline and the use of methods specific to this discipline to generate knowledge that meets the requirements of scholarship".

Theoretical framework is a methodical chain, a reliable set of principles or rules that can be used to guide serious research work. As a guide in the night, when research is still unclear, cloudy and without direction, the theoretical framework helps a researcher to navigate and find a clear path for research to birth, breathe and live.

The Humanities and Related Prototypes

It is now subjective for scholars in the Sciences and related areas to doubt the importance of Humanities in the development of man and his society. This is because Humanities is used to refer to:

disciplines and /or subjects which concern themselves with the study and understanding of man in society and in all its ramifications...the Humanities engage in the cultivation/production, distribution/dissemination of knowledge about who we are (identities) as individuals, as groups and as nations with regard to how we relate as government and the governed (Obafemi, 2017, p. 83).

The contention on relevance between the Humanities and the Sciences can, however, be re-evaluated. That is to say: which discipline is more important; the Sciences or the Humanities? Notionally, even at face value, the 21st century man may want to accept the hyper-technological superiority of the Sciences and condemn to the dustbin, the Humanities. We should rationalise this contention and accept the reality of Humanities as the pioneer and moderator of all scientific studies. Thus, the Humanities will continue to be relevant in the making of the total man and the survival of the same man in his essentially complex and dynamically unpredictable environment. The Humanities and related prototypes in this chapter refer to Humanistic Studies in Faculty of Arts or Faculty of Humanities such as:

- 1) Religions and Religious Studies with branches extended to Christian Studies, Islamic Studies, African Religions Studies, Comparative Religions Studies and so on.
- 2) Literature and Literary Studies with prototypes extended to English Literature, French Literature, Arabic Literature and others.
- 3) Language with branches extended to English Language, Arabic language, French Language and so on.
- 4) Linguistics with branches extended to important indigenous African Languages (Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Kanuri, Twi, Ewe and so on).
- 5) Performing Arts or Theatre Arts with branches extended to Music and Musicology, Dance, Drama, Creative Arts, Dramatic Arts, Film Arts, Media Arts and many more.
- 6) History with prototypes extended to History and Diplomatic Studies, History and International Studies and so on.
- 7) Philosophy and Philosophical Studies.
- 8) Cultural Studies and Anthropology.

The prototypes above are expanding as the 21st century scholarship develops to reinvent itself. It is of equal importance to note that the Humanities or what is known as Humanities cluster, embraces disciplines in two other important Faculties. These are; the Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Sciences. Thus, the critical space of the Humanities and related disciplines include the Arts,

Education and Social Sciences. This chapter, however, concerns itself with the prototypes of Humanities listed in the preceding paragraph and the omnibus place of theoretical construct while carrying our research in them.

Theoretical Construct in the Humanities

Opinions are divided on the desirability or otherwise of theoretical construct in the Humanities. The first school of thought believes that we do not need theoretical construct or its second name, theoretical framework in the Humanities while the second school of thought believes that theoretical construct is indeed necessary for a serious intellectual work in the Humanities. Certainly, theoretical construct does more good to any research work in the Humanities and, it indeed has no harm. It philosophises the research work and places it on a sound footing while acknowledging the past work and the chosen theory as basics for critical interrogation of a new work.

Theoretical construct in the Humanities is often placed in chapter one or chapter two of any viable work in Humanistic Studies. It is seen, in some parlance, as an extension of literature review and as muse for philosophical foundation that will give clear direction to the chosen work. It also has foundation in history and the need to acknowledge the efforts of past researchers in a related field. Ideologies, expressions, criticisms, approaches, perspectives, concepts, movements, periods and so on, are the basic factors that have influenced theoretical construct in the Humanities. In fact, these factors are often interrelated because it has been proven that a theory will likely produce another theory either as complement or as a counter-discursive narrative to an existing theory.

Consequent upon the above, the following are some of the theoretical constructs that are available in Literature, Literary Studies, Language, Linguistics, Performing Arts or Theatre Arts, Cultural Studies, Anthropology so on: Absurdism, Expressionism, Formalism, Biographical Criticism, Historicism (New Historicism), Psychological Criticism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Surrealism, Sociological Criticism, Aestheticism, Marxism, Reader-Response Criticism, Mythological Criticism, Structuralism or Structuralist Criticism, Deconstruction

or Deconstructive Criticism, Cultural Studies Perspective, Transcendentalism, Alienation Effect, Anachronism, Realism (Magical Realism), Antifoundationalism, Archetypal Criticism, Avanguardism, Interculturalism, Multiculturalism, Humanism (Christian Humanism), Variation Approach, Primitivism (Chronological Primitivism), Practical Criticism (Applied Criticism), Impressionism, Judicial Criticism, Pragmatism (Pragmatic Criticism), Minimalist Approach, Mimetic Criticism, Cultural Materialism, Ethnographic Approach, Dadaism (Dadaistic Perspective), Environmental Criticism, Feminism (Womanism, Ecofeminism, Gender Criticism, Negofeminism, Snail-Sense Feminism and so on), Sociological Criticism, Euphemism, Freudian Criticism, Gender Criticism, Essentialism, Idealism, Antithetical Criticism, Intertextuality, Metatextuality, Modernism (Modernist Perspective), Postmodernism (Postmodernist Perspective), Postcolonialism (Postcolonial Perspective), Romanticism, Classicism, Neo-classicism, Textual Criticism, Symbolism, Socialist Realism, Sentimentalism, Rhetorical Criticism, Naturalism, Pragmatism (New Pragmatism), Phenomenological Criticism, Cultural Primitivism, Orientalism, Speciesism, Sycretism, Universalism, Manicheanism, Fanonism, Rastafarianism, Exoticism, Chromatism, Binarism and many more.

If a relevant theoretical framework has been chosen for a research work, the following stages should be followed by any committed researcher as necessary guide:

- 1) conceptualise the chosen theory;
- 2) discuss in brief, the proponent(s) of the chosen theory;
- 3) historicise the chosen theory;
- 4) list the moderated forms or variants (if there are) of that theory;
- 5) examine the principles or features of the chosen theory and itemise its structure and superstructure;
- 6) discuss the advantages or strengths of the chosen theory in detail and show how these will impact your research; and
- 7) review in brief, the weakness or disadvantage of the chosen theory.

For example, if Karl Marx's Marxism is chosen as a theoretical construct for a research, the researcher should be kind enough to admit and review the various forms of Marxism which include but not limited to Structural Marxism, Classical Marxism, Analytical Marxism, Libertarian Marxism, Western Marxism, African Marxism, Neo-Marxism, Post-Marxism, Cultural Marxism and so on. After foregrounding various forms or types of Marxism, he or she can also locate the definition of Marxism suitable for his or her work from several definitions available. It should be noted that, Marxist criticism has reflected by DiYanni (2002, p. 2089) "is concerned both with understanding the role of politics, money, and power in literary works, and with redefining and reforming the way society distributes its resources among the classes".

The next stage is the need for the appraisal of some dominant principles or features of Marxism which include class struggle and the imperative of social change, socio-political revolution of the mind, the base and the superstructure in constant conflict and disharmony, dialectical materialism versus the products of providence, that economic and social inequalities are man-made and can be changed by man through organized process, history as muse for socio-cultural rejuvenation and struggle, alienation and oppression as engine rooms for class consciousness and so on. These principles or features are seen to be peculiar to Marxism generally but the chosen variant of Marxism too should be intellectually grilled while the meeting point and point of departure that separate it from the main Marxism need to be clearly articulated. Interestingly also, Marxism alone can be chosen as a theoretical construct without picking from its various forms or variants if the researcher is convinced of its intellectual self-efficiency for his or her research work.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Theoretical construct is a formulated idea from a scholar or an authority that can guide a research or the thought process of life. Its beauty lies in its ability to validate a new research or reinvent it into a new discovery. It is hereby suggested and recommended that:

- i. researchers in the Humanities should not run away from the use of theoretical construct as they reinvent their research works;
- ii. researchers should attempt to read and understand the dominant theories prevalent in their fields. This will allow them to know the relevant theoretical constructs that will be most appropriate for their research works;
- iii. in choosing a theoretical framework, researchers are admonished to review the various forms or types of a dominant theory. Doing this will help researchers to pick a relevant theory from avalanche of available theories;
- iv. research is now in the 21st century which has been described as age of terror, war, conflict and that which celebrates various “posts” that can be found in postcolonialism, postfeminism, post-truth, post-humanism and so on. It is, therefore, important for users of theoretical constructs to be up to date in their fields of research;
- v. theoretical construct is rooted in philosophical foundation and it should be approached as foundation for research for sustainable development of man and his environment;
- vi. after a theoretical framework has been chosen, it is an intellectual crime or laziness for a researcher to abandon his or her theoretical framework at the conceptualisation level. He or she should attempt to use the chosen theory to interrogate his or her research as the research work grows to the final point of conclusion;
- vii. researchers can modify existing theories to suite their research works. Such modifications should, however, contribute to the original theories rather than destroy them;
- viii. researchers are implored to note that important theoretical constructs can be borrowed by them from the Social Sciences, Education or Sciences for use in the Humanities. This should be encouraged if those theories are relevant to Humanistic Studies; and
- ix. a researcher should have it behind his or her mind that his or her research work can also produce another theory that can stand the test of time, and doing this will lead to the ultimate development of scholarship.

Conclusion

It has come to the fore in this chapter that theoretical construct is a philosophical foundation that can lead to the overall success of a research work. It is a spine of research in which Humanistic Studies depends on and ignoring it should be interpreted as running away from an important component of academic research. This is because a theoretical construct is a complete metaphoric dossier for history, form or type, conceptual underpinning, procedure, scope or delimitation which can make a research work to succeed.

It is our contention in this chapter that researchers in the Humanities should be committed to the understanding of various dominant theories and their variants that have defined and re-defined Humanistic Studies. As much as we appreciate the essence of literature review in the Humanities, its second face value is the theoretical construct which should be used for a serious research output.

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**RESEARCH DESIGN: RESEARCH PARADIGMS, POPULATION, SAMPLE ALONG
WITH SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND DESIGN TYPES**

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The term ‘research’ is well known as the search for knowledge. Research is an ongoing and ever growing search for knowledge with regard to every sphere of human existence. Ideas, phenomena, things, literary and non-literary texts, people, and places, etc. are carefully studied with the aim of discovering new pieces of information or facts about them or validating /refuting proffered facts and pieces of information about them. In carrying out research, solutions are given to problems and questions are answered. Osuala defines ‘research’ as the “process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data” (2001, p. 1). Kothari (2004, p.1) records the word ‘research’ to be “a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic . . . an art of scientific investigation . . . ‘a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge’”. For Rugg and Petre (2007, p. 33), “The vast majority of research activity concerns questions of minute precision, the sort of detail that hones theory and drives controlled experimentation”. According to Creswell (2012, p. 3), research is “a process of steps used to collect and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue”. It follows therefore, that the new pieces of information or facts that researchers discover or validate would be dependable and scientific if the collection, analysis, and interpretation are planned, systematic, and precise.

Among some other writers, Kothari (2004), Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger (2005, p. 17) as well as Yilmaz (2013) submit that there are two basic approaches to research mainly quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, authors

such as Creswell (2012), Neuman (2014), and Creswell (2014), identify three approaches to research, for example, in education, social and behavioural sciences, as qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The qualitative and quantitative approaches “represent different ends on a continuum” (Newman and Benz 1998 cited in Creswell 2014, p.3). The mixed methods research lies in the centre of the continuum by combining elements of the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Creswell (2014, p.4), states that the quantitative approaches dominated “the forms of research in the social sciences from the late 19th century up until the mid-20th century”. Also, concentration on qualitative research increased in the latter half of the 20th century along with the endorsement of the mixed methods research as the third approach, which had however somewhat hitherto been employed through the history of research.

On the one hand, quantitative research is hinged on numbers and on the collection of quantitative data. It is the “measurement of quantity or amount” (Kothari, 2004, p. 3). Creswell (2014, p.4) avers that the quantitative research approach is used for “testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables” which “can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures”. As stated by Yilmaz (2013, p. 311) quantitative research is “a type of empirical research into a social phenomenon or human problem, testing a theory consisting of variables which are measured with numbers and analysed with statistics in order to determine if the theory explains or predicts phenomena of interest”. On the other hand, qualitative research is focused on the collection of qualitative data. It is, citing Yilmaz (2013, p. 312), an “inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world”. Creswell (2014, p.4), affirms that qualitative research is used for “exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. To obtain objective results, there is a distance between researchers and what is being studied in a quantitative research unlike in a qualitative research for which researchers, quoting Yilmaz

(2013, p. 313), are meant to “develop a close, empathic relationship with the subjects being studied”. Neuman’s (2014, p.176) comparison of the quantitative research and qualitative research is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Quantitative Research versus Qualitative Research

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research
i. Researchers test hypotheses that are stated at the beginning.	Researchers capture and discover meaning once they become immersed in the data.
ii. Concepts are in the form of distinct variables.	Concepts are in the form of themes, motifs, generalizations, and taxonomies.
iii. Measures are systematically created before data collection and are standardized	Measures are created in an ad hoc manner and are often specific to the individual setting or researcher.
iv. Data are in the form of numbers from precise measurement.	Data are in the form of words and images from documents, observations, and transcripts.
v. Theory is largely causal and is deductive.	Theory can be causal or noncausal and is often inductive.
vi. Procedures are standard, and replication is frequent.	Research procedures are particular, and replication is very rare.
vii. Analysis proceeds by using statistics, tables, or charts and discussing how what they show relates to hypotheses.	Analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalizations from evidence and organizing data to present a coherent, consistent picture.

(Source: Neuman, 2014 p.176)

For the mixed methods research, quantitative and qualitative data are collected and integrated thereby providing according to Creswell (2014, p.4), a “more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone”.

A research design shows what the research aims to achieve and how it can be achieved. It is usually compared to a building/house plan or road map (Kothari 2004; Gupter and Gupter 2013, Philips (cited in Gupter and Gupter, 2013)). It is

a plan for collecting and analysing the information needed to answer the research questions or to test the hypothesis. A research design also encompasses identifying the subjects or objects of study and describing the methods of data gathering and analysis. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000, p. 670) posit that a research design is “The overall plan for collecting data in order to answer the research question” and it is also, “the specific data analysis techniques or methods that the researcher intends to use”. Philips (cited in Gupter and Gupter, 2013, p. 59) describes the research design as a “blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data”. Kothari (2004, p.32) emphasises the significance of a research design as follows:

. . . we need a research design or a plan in advance of data collection and analysis for our research project. Research design stands for advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in view the objective of the research and the availability of staff, time and money. Preparation of the research design should be done with great care as any error in it may upset the entire project. Research design, in fact, has a great bearing on the reliability of the results arrived at and as such constitutes the firm foundation of the entire edifice of the research work.

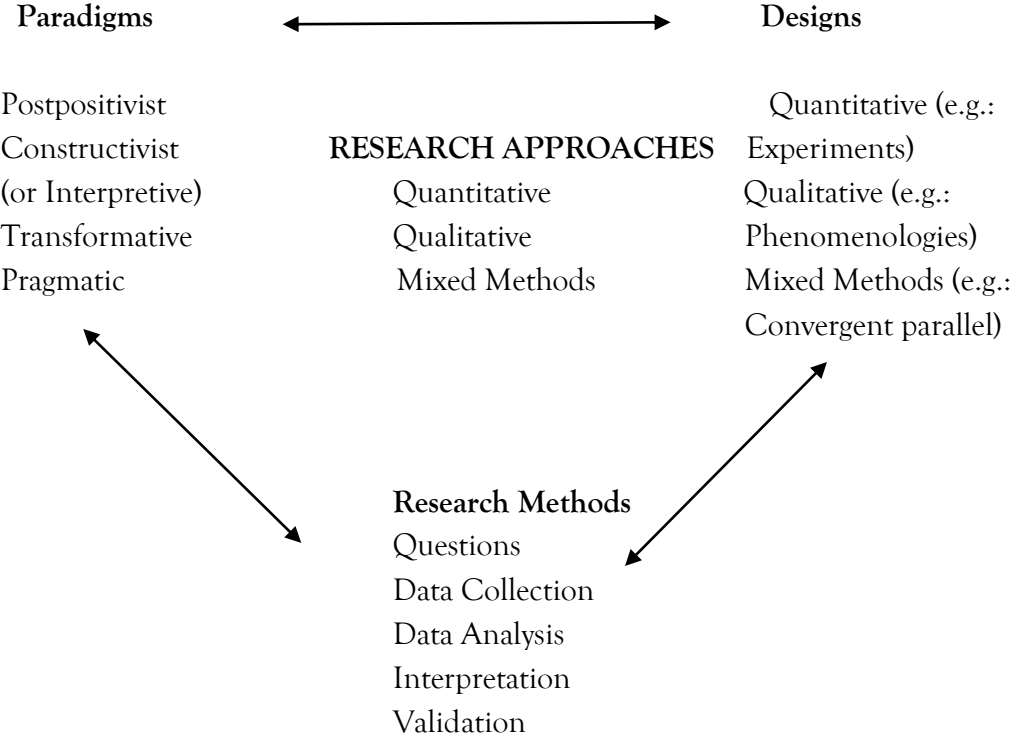
It is proffered by Denzin and Lincoln (1998) cited in Yilmaz (2013, p.312) that four basic issues structure the design of a research study as follows:

- (a) Which paradigm or worldview will inform the study design?
- (b) Who or what will be studied?
- (c) Which research strategies will be used?
- (d) Which research methods or tools will be used to collect and analyse data?

The assertion above is buttressed by Creswell (2014, p.5) that “researchers need to think through the philosophical worldview assumptions that they bring to the study, the research design that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods or procedures of research that translate the approach into practice”. Yilmaz (2013), Tracy (2013, pp. 36-63), among some other writers, call Creswell’s

philosophical worldview assumptions ‘paradigms’, and it is the terminology adopted in this chapter. Figure 1, adapted from Tracy (2013) and Creswell (2014), exemplifies the interconnection of Paradigms, Research Designs, and Research Methods.

Fig. 1: The Interconnection of Paradigms, Research Designs, and Research Methods



Research paradigms are clarified in section two, which follows this introduction. To underscore “Who or what will be studied?” population, sample and sampling techniques are examined in section three. Section four describes design types while section five contains the summary and conclusion. Research Methods is not discussed because it is outside the scope of this chapter.

Research Paradigms

Research paradigms are the diverse ways and theoretical approaches through which researchers view knowledge and reality. The paradigms, citing Creswell (2014, p.6), arise based on “discipline orientations, students’ advisors/mentors inclinations, and past research experiences”. He states further that the “types of beliefs held by individual researchers based on these factors will often lead to embracing a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach in their research” (Creswell 2014, p.6). The postpositivist, constructivist (or interpretative), transformative and pragmatic research paradigms listed in Figure 1 are briefly described next.

The postpositivist paradigm, which evolved after the era of positivism, is also referred to as the scientific method, empirical science, etc. and is tilted more towards quantitative than qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, p.7). Inherent in the paradigm is the measurement of variables and testing of hypotheses. Postpositivists, as pointed out by Creswell (2014, p.7) “hold a deterministic philosophy” whereby the problems studied “reflect the need to identify and assess the causes that influence outcomes such as found in experiments”. In addition, postpositivism is “reductionist” because ideas are reduced into “a small, discrete set to test”. For example, the variables that make up hypotheses and research questions. Further, vital to postpositivism is “careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists ‘out there’ in the world” and finally, theories are “tested, or verified and refined”.

With respect to the constructivist (or interpretative) paradigm, Creswell (2014, p.8) avers that it is “typically seen as an approach to qualitative research”. He observes further that the constructivist researchers frequently focus on the processes of interaction among people and on the specific contexts in which these persons live and work in order to understand their historical and cultural settings. The researchers’ determination, being also mindful that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, is to interpret the various meanings other people have about the world. Tracy (2013, p. 41) submits that the “Interpretivists would ask and gain insight from multiple points of view, from multiple participants, and

from themselves, to answer the question”. It is noteworthy that unlike postpositivists who start with a theory, constructivist researchers develop a theory. The transformative paradigm emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the feeling that the constructivist (or interpretative) paradigm has not adequately advocated an “action agenda to help marginalized peoples” (Creswell, 2014, p.9). The transformative paradigm proffers that research should be interwoven “with politics and a political change agenda” to challenge social oppression, discrimination, alienation, inequality, etc., at any level they surface (Creswell, 2014, p.9). The transformative paradigm houses a large group of researchers among which are “critical theorists; participatory action researchers; Marxists; feminists; racial and ethnic minorities; persons with disabilities; indigenous and postcolonial peoples; and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-sexual, and queer communities” (Creswell, 2014, p. 9). It should be noted that the transformative paradigm researchers collaborate closely with the participants.

The pragmatic paradigm researchers, as observed by (Creswell, 2014, p. 11), “agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts”. The researchers apply all the available approaches, methods and techniques to understand and find solutions to actions, situations, and problems. The pragmatic paradigm is in tandem with the mixed methods research because of the multiplicity of models and methods they both accommodate.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

Population can be finite or infinite. In a finite population, the number of items is definite but in an infinite one the number of items is inestimable. The population of the students in a university, the number of a country’s inter-ethnic wars, etc. are known and so they are examples of finite population. However, it is would be impossible to know the number of ants or hungry people all over the world, etc. These are examples of an infinite population. The term ‘Population’ in research, also called the universe or target population, refers to a finite group that a researcher is interested in questioning or observing and to whom the results of the research will apply. A group could include human beings such as lecturers, students, writers, actors, musicians, dancers, drummers, men, women, children,

etc. It should be noted that although much attention is given to the sample made up of human beings, the constituent of population is not limited to them. It could also be applied to locations, objects, events, etc. Robson (2001, pp. 135-136) notes that population “. . . isn't limited to people. The concept can be further stretched to include units that are not 'people-related' at all: for example, populations of situations (e.g. all possible locations in which someone might be interviewed), or of events or times”. Borg and Gall (1979, p. 179) assert that population refers to “all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events, or objects”. Cases in point of events or objects are if “the researcher wished to select a sample of class periods for systemic observation, or a sample of textbooks in order to do a content analysis” (p.179). Population would thus, also include school buildings, laboratories, offices, literary and non-literary texts, hurricanes, riots, wars, etc. Population is described by Fraenkel and Wallen (2000, p. 104) as “the group of interest to the researcher, the group to whom the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study”.

It is, however, not possible all the time to deal with a whole population, which may be very large or which may occupy an enormous geographic area. It would be expensive to cover very large areas. It would also be time consuming to investigate an entire population when allotted times to carry out researches are usually limited. Most of the times, researchers make use of a sample, which refers to a selection from an entire population. It is the group representative of the population from which research information is obtained and the findings therefrom will be generalisable for the entire population. The method of selecting a sample from a population is called sampling.

Sampling Methods are usually divided into probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, each member of the population has a theoretical equal probability of being selected as a member of the sample but in practice the probability varies with each method of probability sampling. Simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, single stage sampling and multi-stage or clustering sampling are frequently used probability sampling methods. (See for example, Robson (2001), Panneerselvam

(2013), and Gupter and Gupter, (2013). The common non-probability sampling methods are convenience (or accidental) sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling. These sampling techniques shall be briefly explained next.

Probability Sampling

Simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, stratified random sampling, single stage sampling, multistage or clustering sampling are highlighted in this section. Commenting on random samples, Tracy (2013, p. 134), says that they “are popular among researchers who desire to make statistical generalizations to larger populations”. For a simple random sampling, a sample of size (n) is drawn from the population (N) such that each of the ‘ N ’ members of the population has an equal chance of being included in the (n) sample. A selection is made at random to obtain the required number for the sample. The selection could be made through the lottery method if the population is not too large. For a very large population, a computer or a table of random numbers (available online in various sizes and shapes) could be used. Part of a table of random numbers is adapted below.

Table 2: Table of Random Numbers

Column	1	2	3	4	5
Row	01581	36001	15892	57621	85239
	02972	56177	87580	66794	48123
	97022	65380	91304	32853	99729
	67583	01277	77815	60558	75920
	26935	56306	38710	77239	47139
	21201	75983	35695	60517	14579
	02628	26124	68322	01436	85994
	93635	69404	76323	33459	70041
	08984	81320	03226	60959	78246
	04415	78662	28295	46513	92889
	13070	18401	14382	48262	53177
	53531	36891	29620	72532	47368
	87733	74995	61843	88472	15736
	47619	57452	92819	34401	48782
	94060	67951	28895	79309	91897

If a researcher wishes to obtain a sample of four hundred African praise poems from a total of one thousand African praise poems he or she would randomly

select from the rows and columns on the table of random numbers until the needed sample size is obtained. If the researcher starts from row one in the example in Table 2, and selects say, the first three digits that have a value of four hundred or less horizontally, only 015, 360, and 158 would be picked. The first three digits would be picked because the final number, 400, is made up of three digits. More numbers would then be picked from the other rows and columns to obtain a sample of four hundred members. These four hundred numbers would be the ones that would be chosen from a source list (referred to as sampling frame) of one thousand African praise poems that would have been obtained.

Systematic random sampling has a random start and then selecting subjects from a population list in a systematic rather than a random manner. The population (N) would be in a random order. Each 'nth' member of the population is then selected for inclusion in the sample. Creswell (2014, p. 158) explains the approach thus, "the researcher chooses a random start on a list and selects every X numbered people on the list. The X number is based on a fraction determined by the number of people on a list and the number that are to be selected on the list (e.g., 1 out of every 80th person)".

Stratified random sampling is useful when it is needful to compare subgroups. The population is divided into many groups or strata, where each group members share certain characteristics e.g., gender, age group, income levels, race, education. Stratum A could be women and Stratum B men. A random sampling then takes place within the strata. Care would be taken so that the proportion of women and men is the same in the population and sample. In single stage sampling, Creswell (2014, p. 158) states that the researcher "has access to names in the population and can sample the people (or other elements) directly". Multistage or clustering sampling, involves the researcher initially identifying clusters that is, groups or organisations. The names of the individuals within the clusters are taken and sampling is done within them. Cluster sampling is used when a population that should be physically observed or questioned is large and widely spread. Creswell, (2014, p. 158), following (Babbie, 2007), posits that "Cluster sampling is ideal

when it is impossible or impracticable to complete a list of the elements composing the population”.

Non-Probability Sampling, Convenience (accidental) Sampling, Purposive Sampling and Snowball Sampling are briefly described in this section. Convenience sampling occurs when a researcher selects a group of members of the population who (conveniently) are available for study. Convenience sampling is also referred to as accidental sampling because members of the sample are included by virtue of being ‘accidentally’ available for study. In purposive sampling, according to Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2000, p. 103), “researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. In this way, they build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs”. Snowball Sampling is relevant when there is a problem identifying members of population of interest. A few individuals are identified by the researcher. They are interviewed and used as informants to identify other would-be members of the population who are further used as informants, etc., to gather the required number of participants.

Design Type

Research designs are the “procedures of inquiry” in research (Creswell, 2014, p. 3). They are as pointed out by (Creswell, 2014, p. 12), “types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design”. The researcher selects a type of study contained within the quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods. The quantitative research designs according to Creswell (2012) and Creswell (2014) include experimental designs (e.g. true experiments and quasi-experiments) and nonexperimental designs (e.g. causal comparative research, correlational research and survey research). In line with Elliott & Timulak (2005, p. 147), Creswell (2012), Creswell (2014), it is established in the literature that the qualitative research design encompasses approaches such as empirical phenomenology/phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, protocol analysis, discourse analysis, narrative research and case study. The mixed methods research designs going by Creswell (2012) and Creswell (2014) include

convergent, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential and transformative embedded or multipurpose. Eleven of these designs made up of three quantitative research designs, five qualitative research designs and three mixed methods designs are discussed next starting with quantitative research designs.

Quantitative Research Designs

Experimental designs namely true experiments and quasi-experiments along with survey research in nonexperimental designs, all of which are connected to the postpositivist paradigm discussed earlier in this chapter, are expounded in this section as examples of quantitative research designs. Creswell (2014, p.155) maintains that in the postpositivist philosophical assumption, determinism “suggests that examining the relationships between and among variables is central to answering questions and hypotheses through surveys and experiments”. Also, “the reduction to a parsimonious set of variables, tightly controlled through design or statistical analysis, provides measures or observations for testing a theory”. Experiments are used to establish possible cause and effect between independent and dependent variables and when a researcher wishes to study two or more groups. Creswell (2014, p. 13) avers that experimental research “seeks to determine if a specific treatment influences an outcome”. For an experiment, the researcher decides on an idea, method or practice with which to “experiment” for instance, testing if a new teaching method would influence an outcome or dependent variable. Individuals are assigned to experience the new teaching method (the independent variable) while some individuals experience something different.

Meanwhile, the researcher attempts to control all the variables that influence the outcome minus the independent variable. The researcher then tests the two groups to determine an outcome based on the scores of both groups that is, if those who experience the new method performed better on some outcome than those who did not experience the new method. For both true and quasi experiments, two or more groups could be compared but true experiments entail the random assignment of subjects to treatment conditions while there is no random assignment of subjects in quasi-experiments. Quasi-experiments are used

when intact and not artificial groups should be used. The aim of adopting a quasi-experimental design, Singh (2007, p.67) proffers is to “assess causality. It analyses the difference in treatment and control group to look for causality in situations when . . . it is not practical or possible to have complete control over the subjects”. With respect to population and sampling, Creswell (2014, pp. 167-169) says that the following are required for experimental designs.

1. Specifying the participants in the study.
2. Signifying the population to which the results of the participants will be generalised.
3. Indicating the selection process for the participants which would be random sampling for true experiment and nonrandom sampling for quasi-experiment. Creswell (2014, p. 168) submits that in the random sampling for true experiment, the assignment of persons to the treatment group should be indicated for instance, from the pool of participants, “Individual 1 goes to Group1, Individual 2 goes to Group 2, and so forth so that there is no systematic bias in assigning the individuals”. He continues by cautioning that in many experiments, “only a convenience sample is possible because the investigator must use naturally formed groups (e.g., a classroom, an organisation, a family unit) or volunteers” (p. 168)
4. Stating the number of participants in the experimental and control groups along with “the systematic procedures for determining the size of each group” (Creswell, 2014, p. 169).

Survey research is used to describe developments, views, feelings, etc., among a population. Survey research in nonexperimental designs according to Creswell (2012, p. 376), “are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population”. It involves “a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2014, p. 13). A survey design could be cross-sectional or longitudinal. If cross-sectional, the data are collected at one time but it is longitudinal if data are collected over a period of time. The aim in a survey design is to use a sample to generalise a whole

population. With reference to population and sampling, the following, in line with Creswell (2014, pp. 157-159) are vital to a survey design:

- i. The population for the study would be identified.
- ii. The size of the population would also be stated if it can be ascertained.
- iii. The means of identifying the individuals in the population would also be stated for example, via sampling frames which could be published lists or mails.
- iv. In relation to sample size and the methods employed to compute the number, Creswell, (2014, p. 159) following Fowler (2009) declares that one first needs to start with determining the subgroups to be analysed in the study and then using a random numbers table to find the appropriate sample size. However, Creswell, (2012, p. 381) recommends that “it is important to select as large a sample as possible so that the sample will exhibit similar characteristics to the target population”.
- v. The sampling design for the population if single stage or multistage (clustering) would be identified.
- vi. Regarding the selection process of individuals, Creswell, (2014, p. 158) advocates the use of random sampling or otherwise systematic sampling if the list of individuals is long. Here, Creswell, (2014, p. 158) asserts that “less desirable is nonprobability sample (or *convenience sample*) in which respondents are chosen based on their convenience and availability”.
- vii. It would be indicated if the population would be stratified or not and the manner of the stratification if it is stratified.

Qualitative Research Designs

It should be borne in mind, as stated earlier in this chapter, that the constructivist (or interpretive) paradigm is linked to qualitative research. Constructivist researchers often focus on the processes of interaction among people and on the specific contexts in which they live and work in order to understand their history and culture. The transformative paradigm, which evolved to reinforce the constructivist (or interpretive) paradigm, also revolves around researchers' collaboration with the participants. Five popular types of qualitative research

designs, that is, phenomenology research, ethnography, grounded theory, case study, and narrative research are described in this section.

Phenomenology research design involves the researcher capturing how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon. Ethnography design centres on the study of the culture that is, the language, shared norms, values, attitudes, material possessions, etc., of a group of people in a natural setting over a period of time. A grounded theory design enables a general theory or explanation, which is grounded in the views of the participants to be generated. Creswell (2012, p. 423) defines a grounded theory design as a “systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic”. Creswell (2012, p. 423) explains further that grounded theory “*generates* a theory when existing theories do not address your problem or the participants that you plan to study. Because a theory is “grounded” in the data, it provides a better explanation than a theory borrowed “off the shelf,””

Case study research design provides a detailed account of one or more cases, which could be “a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). Narrative research design entails the researcher studying the lives of persons and asking one or more persons to provide stories about them. Creswell (2014, pp. 13-14) says this information “is then often retold or restoried (sic) by the researcher into a narrative chronology”. Creswell (2012, p.502) affirms that in narrative research designs, “researchers describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people’s lives, and write narratives of individual experiences”. As would have been observed in the description of the five common types of qualitative research designs above, the designs are researcher cum participants centred. The researchers using qualitative research designs collaborate with the participants experiencing the subject matter under study. They examine documents, observe actions and interview the participants. According to Creswell (2014, p. 185), a major characteristic of qualitative research is that it is “up-close information gathered by actually talking directly to the people and seeing them behave and act within their context”. Tracy (2013, p. 66)

supports this fact by asserting that “Qualitative researchers study *with* participants, rather than conduct research *on* them”. Commenting on the number of participants, Mackey & Gass (2005, p. 163) argue that “Rather than using a large group of (generally randomly selected) participants with the goal of generalizing to a larger population like quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers tend to work more intensively with fewer participants, and are less concerned about issues of generalizability”.

Mixed Methods Research Designs

Mixed methods research as said earlier, entails combining the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The mixed methods research is connected to the pragmatic paradigm as a result of the range of models and methods they both accommodate. Creswell (2012, p. 535) avers that the mixed methods research design is a “procedure for collecting, analyzing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem”. Convergent parallel mixed methods, explanatory sequential mixed methods and exploratory sequential mixed methods are the mixed methods design types discussed in this chapter.

Convergent parallel mixed methods design entails the researcher collecting both the quantitative and qualitative research data at about the same time that is, at a parallel period of time and then combining the findings in the interpretation of the total results. Creswell (2012, p. 540) posits that “The direct comparison of the two datasets by the researcher provides a “convergence” of data sources”. For the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the researcher conducts the research in a sequence by firstly conducting and analysing a quantitative research. Secondly, the results are explained in more detail by conducting a qualitative research. It is also sequential like the convergent parallel mixed methods but it is explanatory because the results of the quantitative data are elucidated further using the qualitative data. The exploratory sequential mixed methods entail the researcher starting with qualitative research. The data emanate from the views of participants. The analysed data are then used for a quantitative analysis.

It should be noted that with respect to population and sampling for the mixed methods design, there would also be a mixture of the guidelines for the quantitative and qualitative research designs.

Conclusion

The attempt in this chapter was firstly a discussion of the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches to research as well as the description of a research design as *sine qua non* in conducting a research. Secondly, based on the three approaches to research, the interconnectedness of research paradigms, the research designs and the research methods were highlighted. Next, some research paradigms were discussed and then eleven quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods design types were presented along with their population, samples and sampling patterns. It is hoped that this chapter would give researchers more insights into research design from the perspective of research paradigms, population, sample, sampling techniques and design types.

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**DATA COLLECTION IN THE HUMANITIES: A CRITICAL SURVEY OF THE
MAIN ASSETS**

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PREAMBLE

Data gathering is the foundation of research, and research itself can take several inclinations. Based on the kind of research one is embarking on –quantitative, qualitative or mixed method– data gathering for ultimate analysis is one of the first questions that come to the researcher’s mind. This chapter sets out to take a critical look at the process of data gathering itself, and also the various factors and processes that are involved in data gathering in research, through a thorough explanation of each of those steps; precisely observation, interviews and questionnaires.

INTRODUCTION

One essential aspect of scientific research is the procedure involved in gathering data for analysis. Based on the research design employed, a researcher may have quite a number of instruments to choose from, to collect data. Creswell (2012) asserts that for one to consider the instrument to use, there needs to be a consideration of what the research aims to attain, since the strategy involved in data gathering and the data itself go a long way to inform what is to be found. Mostly for those in the humanities, especially in literature (the area on which this write up focuses more), the qualitative design is the one that is often used, even in the field of oral literature where field work is often required. Studies in some of the above mentioned fields are somewhat more subjective and since their aim mostly stems from the need to study a population to make certain general claims, the instruments used differ from those in areas like the hard sciences. Data as used in this write up refers to facts about phenomena or organisms that

have been recorded for analysis (Zins, 2005). Although with the advent of approaches such as corpus linguistics among other computer mediated text analyses, there has been a shift in how data is gathered; the question as to how to collect data for any research is as important as the research itself. Data gathering requires instruments, and the main instruments used in that process constitute the thrust of this paper.

What do ‘Instruments’ mean in Research?

Instruments in research refer to the tools or means by which a researcher attempts to measure variables or items of interest in the data collection process. It is the generic term that researchers use for a measurement device in research such as questionnaire, observation, interviews, etc. ‘Research instruments’ relate not only to instrument design, selection, construction, and assessment, but also to the conditions under which the designated instruments are administered; the instrument is the device used by investigators for collecting data. The data collection section of any research is deemed highly essential since failure of the researcher to employ the more suited instrument or make out changes in the data or in the calibration of the measuring instrument(s) can lead to biased results (Chia-Chien & Brian, 2012). It is the responsibility of a researcher to describe thoroughly the instrument used to measure the dependent variable(s), outcome(s), or the effects of interventions or treatments. In addition, because research largely relies on data collection through measurement and instruments are assigned with operational numbers to measure purported constructs, instrumentation inevitably involves the procedure of establishing instrument validity and reliability as well as minimizing measurement errors.

What this chapter attempts to do is provide some explications on the processes involved in data gathering. The rest of the essay will attempt providing information on three main data gathering tools – observation, interview and questionnaire. The article will primarily focus on how such instruments may be used, their strengths and weaknesses and provide advice as to when these instruments may be more suited. The author’s discussion in this chapter was largely informed by his experience other than what mostly exists in the literature.

Observation

Observation is one of the key instruments for the collection of qualitative data. A basic means to find a response to questions about say animals, human or phenomenon is to observe them. This sort of observation however, is not synonymous with looking at the object, or phenomenon, but the observation herein mentioned is a scientific one in nature. Observation is said to be “the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” (Kawulich, p. 79). The systematicity of this instrument makes it distinct from any ordinary observation since it follows carefully laid down procedure. The use of the instrument then is born out of researcher’s interest in providing answers to some phenomena and thus the systematic recordings are held such that one can replicate the process to generate the same findings. This approach offers the researcher firsthand/ naturally occurring data which serves valuable purposes in research. Added to its relevance then would include its being a lot more objective since objects of study have no idea of their being studied. This way, they hardly feign or put up shows making the data gathered through observation a lot more objective. Before considering how to use this instrument and explaining the advantages and disadvantages involved in the use of such methods, answer(s) ought to be provided for what can be observed.

In the Humanities, mostly in the Arts, since that is where the author has carried out most of his studies, observation is most suited for anthropologists, linguists, among others, whose studies mostly rely on a certain degree of objective data to make their subjective interpretations well-founded and somewhat objective too. In language for instance, when one is troubled with the process of language acquisition, it will be more appropriate if the researcher then will subject children to a study to systematically observe how the acquisition process unfolds. Unless one intends to hypothesize or employ some educated guesses, the employment of observation seems the more appropriate instrument. The observation method is mostly not required for those in literature. Literary texts largely exist in creative forms which need not necessarily be played out. As such, the observation method is not a common instrument in this field. I must state though that when one considers the blend between literature and society, then the need may arise for

the researcher to consider observation of the society and how the phenomenon identified in literature plays out in society. Kawulich (2005) mentions the use of observation as having been particularly employed in anthropological and sociological studies and lately educational studies. Owing to the Labovian data collection methods, it is mostly difficult to mention the observation instrument without reference to how well it assists in the collection of data for the study of language(s). The question that comes up at this level therefore is ‘How are observations carried out?’

Types of observation

An observation may either be participatory or non-participatory. Bernard (1994) explains the participatory to be grounded on the researcher being deceptive in order to be accepted as part of a community and remain anonymous as to his /her being a researcher to pave way for him/her to collect data as it naturally occurs among the members of that discourse community. It is said that participant observation has existed for over a century (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). The earlier known study that made use of this instrument is the 1879 Frank Hamilton Cushing’s study that engaged for over four years in the study of Zuni Pueblo people (a group among Native Americans). Malinowski, later in the 1920s, employed the observation method to study Trobriands (inhabitants of an archipelago in Papua New Guinea). What is characteristic of both studies is the difficulty the researcher would have encountered should they have devised other means. Non-participatory observation then is a type of observation in which the researcher is not closely involved in the phenomenon or act being studied. Observation has also been grouped into three – participation, observation, and interrogation (Stocking, 1983). This classification adds to the earlier one an aspect that leads to the interest in how what is observed is recorded.

Data gathering with participatory observation as instrument requires anonymity which is suggestive of the need for one to engage in recordings in a manner that the observed would have no idea as to their being recorded, or as it were, observed. One way this is mostly done is to tape record them without their consent. The practice, however, is highly unethical and its consequences make it

not advisable to use. At best, one may have to record after which he shows the entire recorded data to the observants with explanations to why they have been recorded and that the recorded data will not be used to any end should they (observers) disagree with it being used. Even with this, the danger of possible disappointment or some sort of issue with the recording makes the path a hard one to tread. Inasmuch as the data collected with participatory observation is highly useful in attaining unmanipulated results, its ethicalness makes the approach difficult to use.

Observation is highly advantageous for its provision of high quality data but its disadvantages range from the question of ethics through to its being costly with regards to time. One may not know when the act/ phenomenon under study will be enacted and so ethnographers spend months and sometimes years so to monitor and observe. Added to its time constraint is the limited view of the observer. It is quite difficult for the observer to be everywhere at every time to observe. Aside questioning the objectivity of the data gathered, it also implies that the researcher or observer may lack the wherewithal to observe certain behaviours of the observants. This weakness is better captured by Kawulich (2005) who explicates that participant observation is conducted by a biased human who serves as the instrument for data collection; the researcher must understand how his/her gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation. This has also been well captured as a case of researcher's bias (Dewalt, Dewalt, & Wayland, 1998) whose effect questions the reliability of the results. Insofar as this weakness is a fact, it seems appropriate to sometimes have more than one observer or use more than one instrument to allow confirmation and strengthen the reliability of the claims that would be made from the findings.

It should be mentioned that studying some private behaviour, such as the language of prostitutes, will make participant observation very tedious. Also, predictions for certain events to occur for observations are difficult and in such cases, the when, where, and how to observe the behaviour become difficult questions to answer. In order to ensure the reliability of the data collected and

avoid observers' biases, the observer or the researcher may have to carefully prepare a checklist for what s/he wants to observe and match it later with what has been observed; settling for observers who are much well-versed in the purpose and/or aims of the study is equally of paramount importance.

In Linguistics and Literature, it appears different forms of observation are also employed. These are referred to as texts-oriented ethnography (Cresswell, 2014; Lillis, 2008). Here, texts – either literary or non-literary – serve as the primary data for interpretation and analysis. What makes this an observation is the idea that the text was produced in a natural manner; the producer had no intention of it being a source of data for the analysis the researcher aims at carrying out. The challenges present in the employment of the observation method make other methods preferred in studies in the Humanities. Mostly, the survey is seen as the less time consuming approach and used in data collection. The survey may either use interview, questionnaires, discourse completion task (DCT) among others as instrument for data collection. It is important for observed data to be managed. Mostly, the observed behaviour is stored in recording devices. The data stands at a high risk of being lost should it remain in electric form. It is advised that one first stores the data in a computer aside other means. Also, the researcher may have to transcribe the data into word form. This practice is quite common since it provides the researcher with a form of the text that s/he can work with (e. g. quote from) in his research. It is highly advantageous to have the document transcribed since the word format usually takes less space and can easily be stored on other media including keeping it in one's email box.

Interview

The interview is an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subject. Interviews are commonly used in survey designs and in exploratory and descriptive studies. There is a range of approaches to interviewing, from completely unstructured in which the subject is allowed to talk freely about whatever he/she wishes, to highly structured in which the subject's responses are limited to answering well prepared questions.

Hull (1985) posits that interviews are "...but of particular kind, where actors talk to a specific and conscious purpose." Cannel and Kahn (1968) view interview as "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation".

Kvale (1996, p. 14) presents interviews as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, that is central to human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social "situatedness" of research data. Interviews are ways for participants to get involved and talk about their views. In addition, the interviewees are able to discuss their perception and interpretation with regards to a given situation. It is their expression from their point of view. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) explain that the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable (p. 267).

In general, interviews can be conducted in two forms: person-to-person and group or collective formats. Merriam (1998) believes that both forms of interview are a kind of goal-oriented conversation. Johnson and Turner (2003) further provide a list of some strengths of an interview as follows:

- Good for measuring attitudes and most other content of interest.
- Allow probing by the interview.
- Can provide in-depth information.
- Allow good interpretative validity.
- Very quick turnaround for telephone interviews.
- Moderately high measurement validity for well-constructed and well-tested interview protocols.
- Relatively high response rates often attainable.
- Useful for exploration and confirmation.

On the other hand, they outline some weaknesses associated with this kind of research instrument as given below:

- In-person interviews are expensive and time-consuming.

- Perceived anonymity by respondents is possibly low.
- Data analysis is sometimes time-consuming for open-ended items.

Interviews are distinguished in terms of the various functions and purposes of a research. The decision to choose one over another depends on the purpose of the research, the type of data, phenomenon under study, etc. Merriam (1998, p.72) asserts that our choice rests on “determining the amount of structure desired.”

With this, Patton (1990) categorizes interviews into four major types:

- Informal conversation interview
- Interview guide approach
- Structured open-ended interview
- Closed, fixed response interviews

The informal conversation interview is usually conducted without any predetermined questions and without any order. The questions emerge from the natural flow of conversation. This type of interview is exploratory in nature and difficult for new researchers. Unstructured interviews do not reflect any preconceived theories or ideas and are performed with little or no organisation. Such an interview may simply start with an opening question such as 'Can you tell me about your experience of visiting a slave castle?' and will then progress based, primarily, upon the initial response. Unstructured interviews are usually time consuming since they often last for several hours and can be difficult to manage. Their use is, therefore, generally considered where significant 'depth' is required, or where virtually nothing is known about the subject area.

At the other end of the continuum is the structured open-ended interview. In this type of interview, the questions are predetermined with almost fixed order. However, this form of interview is too rigid, as adhering to predetermined questions may not allow you to access participants' perspectives and understanding of the world (Merriam, 1998). Also, the closed or fixed response interview is similar to a close-ended questionnaire in which the respondent only answers the interviewer's questions in a fixed manner and order. In essence, the respondent is barely free to express himself/herself. This type of interviewing is usually mechanistic and results in boredom on the part of the interviewee.

Structured interviews are, essentially, verbally administered questionnaires, in which a list of predetermined questions are asked, with little or no variation and with no scope for follow-up questions to responses that warrant further elaboration. Consequently, they are relatively quick and easy to administer and may be of particular use if clarification of certain questions is required or if there are likely literacy or numeracy problems with the respondents. However, by their very nature, they only allow for limited participant responses and are, therefore, of little use if 'depth' is required (Gill, et al., 2008).

However, at mid position on the continuum is the interview guide approach. In this form of interview, the topics and questions are specified but they can be reworded in any sequence based on the situation. One of the advantages of the interview guide approach is that the collected information “can later be compared and contrasted” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 456). In this approach, data collection is rather systematic and conversational. Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored. This type allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. This interview provides participants with some guidance on what to talk about and what may benefit them. The flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team. Moreover, the purpose of a research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and /or motivations of individuals on specific matters. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires. Interviews are, therefore, most appropriate where little is already known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual participants. They are also particularly appropriate for exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to talk about such issues in a group environment (Gill, et al., 2008).

When designing an interview schedule, it is imperative to ask questions that are likely to yield as much information about the study phenomenon as possible and also be able to address the aims and objectives of the research. In a qualitative interview, good questions should be open-ended, that is, they should require more than a yes/no answer, be neutral, sensitive and understandable. It is usually best to start with questions that participants can answer easily and then proceed to more difficult or sensitive topics. This can help put respondents at ease, build up confidence and rapport and often generate rich data that can subsequently develop the interview further. As in any research, it is often wise to first pilot the interview schedule on several respondents prior to data collection proper. This allows the research team to establish if the schedule is clear, understandable and capable of answering the research questions, and if, therefore, any changes to the interview schedule are required.

Survey (for Qualitative Studies)

When one is faced with little time to collect a lot of data for analysis that aims at generalizing claims, the survey method is sometimes used as instrument for data collection. The largely employed survey method is the use of questionnaires as an instrument. Driscoll (2011) limits surveys to involve only the use of questionnaires to gather data from the behaviour of respondents. To him, survey is the process of asking participants about the opinions and behaviours through a short question. The data gathered via this instrument provides secondary sort of data since it is not observed. Surveys mostly have two components; the question and response. Since observations sometimes fail to account for hidden practices or behaviour, the questionnaire would provide the researcher enough room to interrogate the respondent in order to solicit for data that the researcher needs for her/his analysis.

When is survey a more appropriate instrument for data gathering? In instances of a large population but limited time for interviews, the questionnaire is seen as more appropriate. Driscoll (2005, p. 163) captures the more essential period for the use of a survey method by juxtaposing it with the use of interview. For him, the usefulness of survey method is in its assistance in unearthing small amounts of

information when one is faced with a huge population and has the objective of generalizing whatever findings that will come out of the study as in such a case, the interview which is more useful in investigating smaller population may not be quite useful.

Structuring of questionnaires leads to two main classes of questions. A questionnaire may either be open-ended or close-ended. A close-ended question has limited responses; a yes or no response is sometimes required or a list of options that one may have to select from as a response in this case. The open-ended method however gives the respondent room to provide response in a narrative or free flowing form. Close-ended questions seem more helpful since their analysis is not as complex as the open-ended ones. One should bear in mind that there is usually the need to consider ethical issues, to assure respondents of anonymity and indicate how volitional the exercise is. This should be among the first things you make the respondents become aware of before they answer the questions. Mostly, the questions are grouped. The grouping in several instances starts with *Demographics* of the respondents. These questions are meant to assist the researcher should s/he be interested in how variables such as age, gender, social status influence the responses provided.

To construct questionnaires, one has to first be aware of the general question(s) the entire research seeks to provide a response to. It is this question that will serve as a yardstick for structuring the others. For instance, in a study that seeks to investigate factors that affect the implementation of language in education policies in Ghana, the broad question for the study will be “what factors affect the implementation of language in education policies in Ghana?” It is then left for the researcher to carve questions around this broad question so that s/he will have enough evidence to state the factors that account for such difficulty in the implementation to the policy. For instance when the researcher is interested in finding the response to his/her question from teachers, the questions below might help:

1. Do you know Ghana’s language in education policy? Yes [] No []

2. Which one do you prefer to serve as the language of education?
Native language only [], English only [], Native language and English []
3. What language(s) do you speak in class when teaching? Kindly list them
4. What in your view makes implementation of the native language as a medium of instruction at the basic level difficult?

A mix of both open and close-ended questions help the researcher better in eliciting information from respondents. Krosnick and Presser (2010) add that the ‘close ended questions’ model has three types of questions. The first requires respondents to make choices from nominal categories (e. g., “what is the most important challenge to girl child education?”); the second most of the time aims at finding out numeric quantities. An example is “How many hours do you speak in your native language when teaching?” and the third is to ask of proof of factual knowledge, (e.g., “*who is Joseph Biden?*”). It is necessary to mention the need to ask opinionated questions; that is, questions that require respondents to indicate whether they know or do not know of a behaviour or phenomenon. In this case, the provision of rating scales that may either allow the respondents to choose from scales between strongly agreeing or strongly disagreeing or a numerical scale is required.

Driscoll (2005) advises that for this instrument, there is always the need for the researcher to write concise, clear and unambiguous questions. In order for the researcher to get the information s/he wants, the respondent ought to have a full understanding of the question, and thus even the wording of the question(s) should be simple and easy to understand constructions. Providing guidelines on how well one can structure questionnaires, Krosnick and Presser (2010) have outlined what is present in most literatures as what they term ‘conventional wisdom’. These are presented as follows:

1. Use simple, familiar words (avoid technical terms, jargon, and slang);
2. Use simple syntax;
3. Avoid words with ambiguous meanings, i. e., aim for wording that all respondents will interpret in the same way;

4. *Strive for wording that is specific and concrete (as opposed to general and abstract);*
5. *Make response options exhaustive and mutually exclusive;*
6. *Avoid leading or loaded questions that push respondents toward an answer;*
7. *Ask about one thing at a time (avoid double-barreled questions); and*
8. *Avoid questions with single or double negations.*

They even go to the extent of adding the guidelines on the ordering of questionnaires. As one can notice, it has been established that answering easy questions before difficult ones is the prescribed strategy, and the reason behind this process is that questionnaires may have to adopt this format in order to help the respondents first settle before moving further to more demanding questions.

Questionnaires, like other instruments, have a number of advantages and disadvantages. It has been found that for descriptive data, the use of this instrument is highly beneficial in that it allows the researcher to have access to details s/he would hardly have had otherwise. Added to this is its highly advantageous tendency for generalisability. In terms of cost, this approach is less expensive and far less time consuming. Unlike interviews that sometimes may have to be subjected to transcriptions with their attending weaknesses, questionnaires hardly pose challenges that affect the data collected and with handy statistical tools such as SPSS which supports analysis of questionnaires, data gathered with this approach is thus easy to analyze. Evaluators' biases are also quite minimal when questionnaires are used. The close-ended questions are also easy to analyze.

Despite these advantages, there are a number of disadvantages associated with the use of this instrument. Two major shortcomings of this instrument are worthy of our attention. The first is its tendency to focus on the provision of a more general view of happenings to the neglect of details. Questionnaires in language studies, for example, may be more appropriate for opinions on a linguistic phenomenon such as why people prefer one language to the other.

Although the researcher stands a great chance of gaining a fair idea as to why one language is preferable to others in some contexts, what actually is practised in those situations mostly remains hidden from the researcher. Added to the lack of detailed information is the tendency for the respondents to provide information that is not accurate. Also, because of the high tendency of questionnaires/questions being perceived as the same, the researcher may have to spend quite a long time on designing the questionnaire to eschew such ambiguities. Probing into and following up responses with other leading questions is also considered a challenge to this instrument. Since the survey is dependent on respondents, the study suffers when respondents fail to complete the responses. In communities where research is common, like the Cape Coast metropolis, there is the tendency for people to get fed up with having to provide response to one questionnaire today and another tomorrow. Such a case may make them unwilling to provide responses or even correct responses when they agree to participate in the study.

Data management for interviews is not markedly different from observations. It is essential, however, that one carefully adheres to a transcription system based on the focus of the study. In studies that are interested in paralinguistic features for instance, one may have to take into accounts features such as stress and intonation in their transcription. The Jeffersonian Transcription System may come in handy for studies of this kind.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed instruments employed in gathering, largely for studies in the Humanities. It has been argued that observation serves as a valuable instrument for data collection. Its provision of more detailed information for analysis makes it the most suitable one. But the weakness which largely stems from ethical issues coupled with the issue of reliability (as the observer's paradox might step in) suggests the use of other approaches in some instances. As an instrument, observation is uneconomical and time consuming. Unlike survey, it is not easily applicable in studying a large population. It was however mentioned that for studies in areas like literature and sometimes language, the text-oriented sort of observation is the ideal, since such cases require little ethical

consideration. The interview was also discussed; unlike the observation, this method allows the researcher ample time and space and its ethical issues are less difficult to handle. The more challenging aspect of this instrument is when the interview is recorded and the need arises for transcriptions. This transcription process may introduce some changes that are not in the original data. The questionnaire, a survey method, was also discussed. This instrument appears to be a very useful tool for gathering data from a large population. In this case, the researcher spends less time in gathering data from a large number of people or from different subjects. Despite its advantages, it was mentioned that it had some few disadvantages. Its main disadvantage lies in its inability to elicit detailed information from the respondents.

On a final note, it is not mandatory to use only one research instrument. Two methods may be combined to study a phenomenon when it becomes necessary.

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TEST AS TOOL OF RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

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In this chapter, attempt has been made to define test and explain some of the principles guiding its effective use in research in the humanities. Discussions have been centred on the following:

- Introduction
- Types of Test that may be Used in Humanities Research
- Attributes of Tests that may be Used in the Humanities
- Use of Test in Humanities Research
- Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Test is an instrument designed, produced and implemented to elicit information about an individual respondent in respect of his knowledge, attitude, skills, assumed values and preference. In the humanities, which include the arts, education, social sciences, and law (at times the social sciences are made to stand alone), test is used to evaluate teaching and learning, and obtain data for research.

Test usually takes place before, during, and after an instruction in the humanities. The teacher may wish to determine what previous knowledge his group of learners have before taking his instruction. And as the instruction progresses, he may test in order to find out if the learners have been sharing additional experiences. At the end of the lesson, the teacher would conduct a test to find out the general intellectual standing of the learners based on the classroom instruction he has just given. While the test before a lesson is “diagnostic”, the one holding as the class progresses is the formative; and that which takes place

after the lesson is the summative test. Being goal-oriented, test is purposive in nature; it is hinged on implemented educational activities. This may be why Lawal (2009) opines that in the context of schooling, test (like evaluation) is objective driven. Something cannot be built on nothing.

However, the utilitarian value of test makes it a tool that may be used beyond the confines of education. It aids research and researching in almost all disciplines. The systematic nature of test makes it a powerful tool of research, which is why the present paper is an attempt to show that research in the humanities can be made quite meaningful with the application of test.

Research has to do with probing into an existing situation or phenomenon relying on available evidences with a view to achieving a new and improved understanding of the situation. Denscombe (2001) describes research as “an activity that is significant in relation to current issues in society” (p.5). According to Denscombe, characteristics of good research include relevance, feasibility, coverage, accuracy, objectivity and ethics. Valid research is not haphazard. For research in the humanities to be of value, it needs to:

- be based on incontrovertible data;
- address genuine problems;
- avoid biases;
- reflect that the researcher is aware of the weakness of the methods/approaches adopted in the study;
- concentrate on the cardinal issues involved in the problem or phenomenon under investigation;
- contain appropriate and detailed answers based on the data obtained;
- cover all the issues pertaining to the topic under investigation;
- be properly funded;
- enjoy good timing (without sufficient time, the research may not be comprehensive and reliable enough); and
- be hinged on relevant theories.

As already explained, the humanities include disciplines in Arts, Education, Law, and at times the Social Sciences, even though there are scholars who believe that the Social Sciences have their distinct characteristics and may be allowed to stand apart from humanities (Nachias & Nachias, 2001; Denscombe, 2001).

While the task here is not to discuss the view as to whether the Social Sciences should be part of humanities, it may be pointed out that both groups of disciplines are as distinct as they are interrelated. One great thing they have in common is research; and another is that both share approaches to the conduct of research. Consequently, they employ test as an instrument for gathering data for research. And they are both amenable to the quantitative and qualitative strategies of analysing such data (Bazemer & Jewitt, 2001). In spite of the tendency for the Social Sciences to stand apart from the humanities in the grouping of academic disciplines, the present writer believes that both may better go together as the humanities. Nevertheless, applying test in the methodology of research in the humanities can be demanding. Apart from the general characteristics of test already highlighted, it has the specific features of validity and reliability - two attributes that make it a tool that can be used with confidence. Also, there are different types of test that may be used in the humanities with specific procedures for constructing and administering them.

Types of Test that may be Used in Humanities Research

Being a tool of evaluation (Ojerinde, 1986), test aids a researcher's judgement based on correct interpretation of data, but for the tool to achieve its usefulness, it has to be carefully designed, so as to fit into the nature, scope and rigour of the humanities. It also must be constructed by the researcher bearing in mind the attributes of the would-be respondents (the subjects) for the investigation. This is one consideration that makes test look like examination, although, as observed by Lawal (2009), both are two different things.

As there are types of examination, there are types of test, even when both may be administered under the same conditions. The researchers in humanities may

conduct an examination using the platform of testing, and official examination scores could be turned to data of immense value.

Discussing the meaning, nature and scope of evaluation, Lawal (2009) and Ojerinde (1986) are agreed that there are generally two types of test - the free response and objective type tests.

1. The Free Response Test

1.1 This is **the essay type** of test and it is common in the humanities. It usually allows more time for the respondent's response, and it permits the respondent's free use of words in the expression of thought. The essay test often involves items like the following. Question 1 is on Language and Linguistics, while 2 is on History:

INSTRUCTION:

Attempt the questions below. Good expression and clarity of thought will be rewarded.

1. **Describe** the manner and places of articulation. (Language and Linguistics)
2. **Account** for the fall of Ghana Empire. (History)

(Note that ordinarily Language and Linguistics may not be tested together as done above.) Grading responses in the test, here, can be somewhat demanding. For example, a testee's power of expression may lure the tester into awarding a mark that could be hard to link with the quantity and quality of testee responses. The researcher in the humanities that opts for the free response type of test as a means of gathering data needs to be aware of its nature, strengths and weaknesses.

In the free response test family are others like matching/pairing, cloze, problem set, concept mapping, and free response/constructed items types. Lawal (2009) views them all as test types requiring short sentences or paragraphs (p. 35).

1.2 Matching/Pairing

This is a kind of test where the researcher requests respondents to connect one set of suggested stimuli to the other correctly with a view to ensuring that the respondents really have the ability to link ideas correctly. Items may be listed on

the left-hand side of the page and respondents are directed to link them to their actual meaning on the right-hand by drawing lines.

Example from Language and Linguistics:

INSTRUCTION: Two sets of words labelled A and B are provided below. You should match each element in A to the corresponding one in B.

A	B
diligent	beautiful
arrogant	liberty
kindness	lazy
freedom	humble
ugly	wickedness

i. Weaknesses:

- The free response type, particularly the essay, is not easy to score.
- The respondents involved in the study may be tempted to guess questions ahead, thereby indirectly confounding the findings from the study.
- Different scorers may award different grades to the responses, even when the researcher-tester has provided a strong marking guide. And the researcher-tester, trying to ensure greater reliability of data by remarking the same set of responses, is most likely not going to give the same marks as those originally awarded by him to specific responses.
- Here, too, emphasis is more on the mastery of the cognitive aspect of the humanities content, whereas memorization may not yield data that would be indicative enough of the desired respondent behaviour.
- The free response test questions may not induce responses relevant to the critical areas of the study.

ii. Strengths:

- It is quite easy to prepare free response questions.

- Also, it does not allow the respondent to cheat. The seemingly clumsy corpus in the front of each respondent cannot be easy to decipher by a dishonest other respondent.
- Then the free response test helps to indicate the respondent's cognitive endowments. It reveals his knowledge, flow of thoughts and originality of ideas almost readily.
- It enables the researcher to determine the level of the respondent's dexterity at deploying supportive ideas to arrive at the revealed response.

The response items may also be represented with a space after each, for the respondents to provide in the correct letter; description or definition. The matching test may be prepared in a variety of other ways. One weakness of the matching test however is that it draws mainly from the testee's power to memorize facts (of spelling, meaning, sequence of time, and so on) ; another is that it hardly prevents the respondent from recalling unimportant information. Then it does not prevent the respondent from guessing.

1. 3 Cloze Test

This is a test where the researcher makes use of graded passages from which words are systematically deleted. Many aspects of the humanities content may be tested at the same time with the cloze procedure. The researcher in the humanities wishing to use the cloze method should decide on the ratio of words to delete from a passage, for example one word after every five (5) to seven (7) other words throughout the passage. The words that count here are the nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronoun, adverbs, and prepositions as they are the lexemes that have meaning and can call up specific images in the minds of respondents. It should also be noted that the further the deleted words are apart, the easier the test becomes for the respondent, because the greater the contextual aid they would receive. Also, the researcher should begin deleting words as from the second or third sentence into the passage. The rubrics (instructions) in the test must be clear, and tasks involved must be in the light of the time available for the test. Example (from Education):

INSTRUCTION: The following passage contains deletions that are represented with dashes. You should supply the deleted words by picking from the list of words provided after the passage.

Goal is an important characteristic of education. It is the – of education to propel itself further from Aim and – to desired functionality. Only functional education will make it – contribute meaningfully to society’s growth and progress. In other –, any education that is not goal-oriented will drift into a waste of resources and –. Hence, curriculum specialists and interested others usually determine and express – goal very cautiously. Goal has origin and direction (having – from aim, it leads to Objective.) It also has a – nature.

peculiar
arisen
curricular
time
words
recipient
closer
power

The cloze test, like all other test types considered here, has its weaknesses and strengths:

i. Weaknesses:

- There can be the temptation for the researcher to opt for a passage which readability may not have been determined suitably enough.
- It may be hard to determine the cognitive thrust that the context of the passage and mode of deletion place on the respondents, which may have implication for their performance, especially as they may be tempted to guess answers.
- It takes time to prepare a good cloze test.

ii. Strengths:

- The cloze test is easy to prepare.
- It is also easy to grade.
- It confers contextual support on the respondents, as the greater the spaces in deletion, the higher the number of words that give semantic clues to the respondents.
- The cloze procedure (as it is sometimes called) can give the researcher, especially in language, data that can be useful for determining proficiency level.
- It tasks the memory of the respondents very well.
- It is also useful for revealing their mastery of specific aspects of the topic under investigation.

1. 4. Problem Set

In this type of test, the researcher prepares two or more short-answer items related to specific illustrations, maps, graphs, charts, pictures, or passages. The questions require the respondents to utilize their knowledge of the media presented. Example (from Language and Linguistics):

An empty **chart** of the “places and manners of articulation” of the English consonants is presented to the testee who is now required to **supply** the different consonants in their properly **labelled** slots. The testee is also required to **explain** the concepts “places and manners of articulation”. He may be further directed to **draw** and suitably **label** the English vowel chart.

1. 5. Concept Mapping

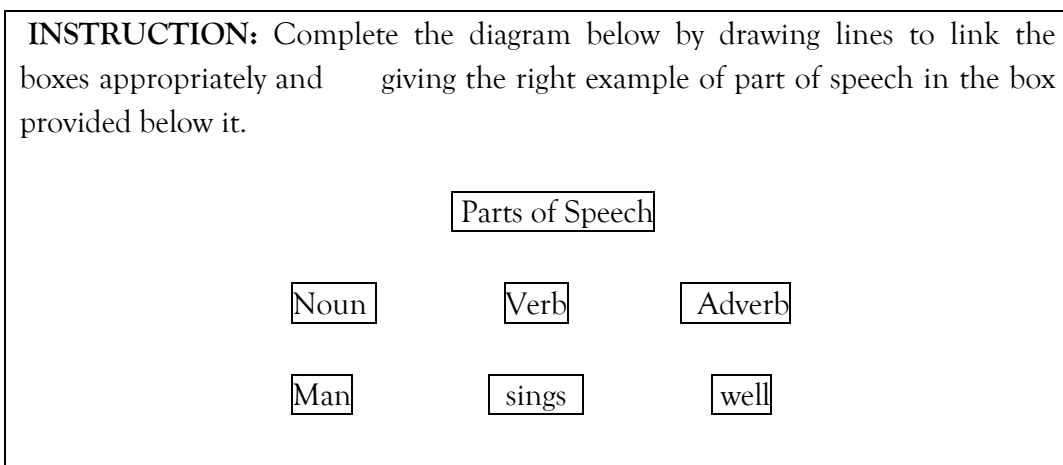
Concept maps are visual aids for thought and discussion, and can help the researcher to determine how much understanding the respondents have of basic concepts or terms. The researcher may, for example, wish to determine a population’s level of knowledge of basic concepts in History or some other discipline in the humanities. He then takes an appropriate sample from the population and selects his subjects to whom he would present a package of cards

relevant to the concepts or terms of concern. He subsequently instructs the subjects (respondents) to:

- Sort the cards to known and unknown concepts;
- Arrange the cards on a surface to show how the subjects think of the words in the cards and/or the relationships among them; and
- Draw and label the links among the concepts and terms'

Example (from Language and Linguistics):

INSTRUCTION: Complete the diagram below by drawing lines to link the boxes appropriately and giving the right example of part of speech in the box provided below it.



The Objective Test

To Ojerinde (1986, p. 228), objective test is that in which “.....there is no possibility of difference of opinions among scorers as to whether responses are to be scored right or wrong”. He describes a test as a behaviour that may not be easily displayed by other means, which implies that precision is the strength of the objective test. Researchers that are interested in ascertaining and describing human behaviour have a reliable tool in the objective test.

Across levels of education, and in different types of research in the humanities, it is used. **Example (from Economics):**

INSTRUCTION: Complete the following statement by picking from the list of options lettered A-D.

Demand holds when a desire or want is

- A. clearly expressed
- B. bottled up
- C. created
- D. backed with the ability to pay

However, popular as it is, the objective test has its weaknesses.

i. **Weaknesses:**

- Objective test is difficult to prepare.
- It can be costly to produce as it usually involves many questions.
- It somehow permits respondents to cheat.
- Also, objective test ignores problem-solving skills.
- It hides the respondent's thought processes.

ii. **Strengths:**

- a. The objective test allows the coverage of content as may be appropriate to the topics and intent of research.
- b. It reveals the respondent's mastery of facts, principles and trends of the ideas being investigated.
- c. It prevents respondents from guessing likely questions, especially in a study that involves teaching specific topics to respondents at the treatment stage in a semi-experiment to, say, determine the effectiveness of a method of teaching.
- d. It gives the result of the respondent's hidden thoughts - the result is concretised as the actual response made by the respondents or the score eventually indicated by the tester.

Attributes of Tests Appropriate to Research in the Humanities

Good tests have attributes, the most important two of which are validity and reliability.

a. Validity:

Validity is a research procedure by which the tool used is sure to measure what it has been prepared to measure. An instrument that performs unpredictably is not going to give reliable results. Validity also means the judgment made by a respondent or the researcher of the internal structure and content of the instrument or tool in use. Researchers have different statistical ways of determining validity (Rasinger, 2010).

Any interpretation of a test depends on the outcome of the test. In other words, the accuracy and relevance of test (its true value) depends on the veracity of all claims arising from the correct use of information provided about the development and purpose of the test; and as observed by Lawal (2009), there are six types of validity:

- Face validity, which makes a test look like what it should be;
- Content validity, if the test sufficiently covers the stipulated content;
- Empirical validity, whether the respondent will score as much as, more than, or less than he has scored on the test if he takes the same or an equivalent test sooner or later;
- Construct validity, where the tester establishes the theoretical basis of the test;
- Criterion-related validity, that shows that a respondent's performance on a set of objectives in a test can be repeated by him on a more standard test that has similar objectives; and
- Convergent validity, by which the respondent performs the same way when the skills or attitudes tested in one test are tested again in equivalent items in different but related contexts.

b. Reliability:

A test has reliability if it measures the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values it is supposed to measure consistently. Scholars are agreed that reliability has influence on validity (Chapelle & Brindley, 2010; Rasinger, 2010; Lawal, 2009; Ojerinde, 1986; Chastain, 1972).

c. Accuracy of measurement:

Test to be used in the humanities should also give true mental capacity of the respondents selected for the research, by which the tests would be deemed to possess the attribute of accuracy. The test that lacks accuracy would present strong respondents as being weak; the converse is also true. Inaccurate test is inappropriate because it is not discriminatory and data from it would not lead to valid findings that may be generalized.

d. Representativeness:

The good test does not deviate from the objectives of an investigation. If a test is meant to elicit data on attitude, it must not emphasize knowledge or skills, otherwise findings based on the results of such test would not be worth the researcher effort. The implication is that the findings would not extend the frontiers of knowledge in any way (Olajide, 2011; Abimbola, 1995).

e. Fairness:

The test designed for research is said to be fair if it gives the respondents equal chance to demonstrate their knowledge, attitudes and skills. Thus, the tester should pay attention to the content from where the items of the test are motivated as well as reflect the goals of the research.

f. Systematicity:

The researcher must ensure that his test ranges through existing syllabus, and the questions posed should not be ambiguous and vague. If the test items are haphazardly prepared and presented, it may be difficult to use the test on the respondents effectively. The haphazard test would not attract respondents. Even if it attracts them, their responses would not be adequate, and the data motivated would be inappropriate.

g. Variety:

One type of test may not be enough to avail the data required for a study. A combination of different types of test could be what would yield the envisaged data. Hence, the humanities researcher desiring to make use of test for gathering

his data should develop objectives in the light of research topic, and decide on the number of instruments to be employed for reliable results.

Use of Test in Humanities Research

Much as test is one instrument the researcher may use in the humanities, the test must not be poorly constructed. Which means the researcher should have a proper understanding of the topic to be researched (Abimbola, 1995). Unless test is amenable to the nature and thrust of research topic, it would be futile to use it. Based on his knowledge of the topic, the researcher delves well into the literature to background for the topic (Olajide, 2011). He ensures that all the dimensions of the topic are captured in the literature reviewed before indicating the problem being focused in the research. Olajide also stresses that the goals (or objectives) of the study should be in line with the problem.

All of the foregoing steps have implication for any test the researcher in the humanities will use in gathering the desired data.

Findings from the data gathered through test, if properly interpreted, may have far-reaching implication for the growth and development of the humanities. This compels the researchers concerned to make extra efforts at developing strong tests. Researchers and others interested in critical issues in the humanities could rely on data from test in making balanced judgment or decisions because the good test is a pragmatic tool of research.

Test data could indicate where problems lie in the humanities being investigated. Since the topics being investigated cannot pretend to be new, the researchers handling them must have, through appropriate review of available literature, ascertained the current states of the art regarding the topics. New things revealed from the data gathered through researcher made or adopted/adapted test could amount to some sort of solutions to the existing problems, and may throw up fresh insights in the disciplines. For example, test of knowledge, attitudes and skills among learners of English may provide data that will reveal new information about learner strategies. Findings from the data could also show how teachers of the language may handle materials to make learning better.

That data emanating from test could be used in drawing inference about individuals within and outside of groups has been elucidated by Lawal (2009) and Nachmias and Nachmais (2009). Their view is shared by Bezemer and Jewitt (2010) and Rasinger (2010). Rasinger additionally emphasizes that such comparison may be strengthened by the deployment of the right analytical (quantitative and/or qualitative) models.

Procedure in the Construction and Administration of Test

Researchers in the humanities wanting to use tests as their tool for gathering data should take certain steps in order to achieve success.

- i. They should define the objectives of their tests in line with the problems and purpose of their researches, as hinted elsewhere in this paper. Such objectives must also be behavioural, concise, and realistic. They should reflect the attributes of the respondents.
- ii. The researcher needs to define the topic and make clear the aspects of the content to be covered in the test. All items in the test will then derive from the target content.
- iii. There should be a blue-print (or Table of Specification) for the test, which would stipulate how many questions to be drawn on each aspect of the content. This would ensure that the questions are not skewed and that the content is properly covered. If the questions go beyond or are fewer than the required to cover the content, the data that would emerge would not be useful. The question should not just be targeted at the content. The researcher should watch the process of aiming at the content, letting questions induce the respondents to demonstrate knowledge, comprehension and analytical prowess, power of synthesis, and capacity to apply the knowledge gained in arriving at reasoned judgement.
- iv. The questions will have to be directed at the foregoing skills proportionately and judiciously, so that none is neglected, and in order that the respondent behaviour that is being investigated may be described comprehensively enough. This means that the researcher should weigh the content to be investigated in the light of the significance of topic and related objectives before constructing test items. It should be noted too, that unless the

respondents have been sufficiently exposed to the content being targeted for investigation, they may not be able to respond adequately. One other way the researcher could safeguard the allocating of questions to content is to use the percentage to indicate how many questions would test each of knowledge, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation, which are key concerns in the humanities and would make the research have relevance to the society.

- v. Then the researcher needs to factor the time that will be available to the respondents into loading the questions. Whatever the type of test, the time given for it to be taken must be appropriate, otherwise, respondents may encounter difficulties and the data to be obtained from the test may be grossly affected.

Conclusion

The humanities are rich disciplines. They have been able not only to preserve themselves individually and collectively but influence other areas of intellectual engagement through especially research. It may also be correct to observe that over time, the humanities have benefited greatly from practices in other disciplines, pointing to one thing: all intellectual activities result in knowledge, which itself leads to understanding.

Researchers in the humanities make use of test for amassing the data they require, but the nature, scope, process and outcomes of test make it a tasking matter. There are different types of test, each with its own weakness and strength. The process of constructing test is quite demanding.

The researcher in the humanities opting for test as instrument of data collection has technical and ethical issues to resolve, for a successful outing. He needs to understand the demands of the topic to be investigated. He also needs to appreciate that without correct methodology, it would be difficult to contribute to knowledge by researching into the topic. Appropriate methodology means the researcher is not only familiar with what has been done on the topic and the procedure involved, but also armed with the right knowledge of the content

relevant to the topic and the population (locale) to be involved in the investigation, especially the empirical investigation. If he elects to use the test for data collection, his knowledge would then guide him in constructing and administering the test and actually using the data generated. Only the appropriate use of test could lead to generalizable and enduring contributions in the humanities.

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**DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS IN THE HUMANITIES:
A LITERARY EXAMPLE****Abdullahi S. Abubakar**

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hibukar2004@yahoo.co.uk / hibukar2017@gmail.com**INTRODUCTION**

Management of pertinent information, often in form of facts or figures, in and around a specific area of interest is very paramount in the process of research. In such undertakings, the volume of information gathered, whether obtained from experiments, observations or surveys constitute what is regarded as ‘data’, which are managed and interpreted in the research process to yield specific results and/or findings. Data gathering and management have been regarded as integral parts of research undertakings (Griffee, 2012, p. 128). Data is a phenomenon that is germane to various fields of studies such as sciences (natural, social and formal sciences), humanities, etc. Data as aptly put here is not an end in itself. It is rather an object of further verification which does not necessarily undermine its significance vis-à-vis decision-making. Technologically based, data is exclusively confined to information already subjected to electronic process. In this wise, it is not only contentious but also contestable to posit that only information electrically processed is data. In all, data is factual information obtainable from surveys, observations or experiments. In critical decision-making, it is not only crucial but also indispensable; so, in the humanities, data constitutes all information from documents, periodicals, articles, books, test and examination papers, advertisements, graffiti, cartoons, correspondences, formal speeches, news, films, radio or television programmes, beliefs, attitudes, places, a group of people, object, etc. (Alabi, 2003, p. 53)

Types of Data

Two major approaches have thus been identified as information gathering or data collection methods in a research study – primary and secondary data. The primary data is that which is collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happens to be

original in character. The secondary data, on the other hand, is that which has already been collected by someone else and has already passed through the statistical process (Kothari, 2004, p. 95). This key task in a research is said to begin after a research problem has been defined and a research plan/design is outlined. Ranjit Kumar posits that

Examples of primary sources include finding out first-hand the attitudes of a community towards health services, ascertaining the health needs of a community, evaluating a social programme, determining the job satisfaction of the employees of an organisation, and ascertaining the quality of service provided by a worker are examples of information collected from primary sources. On the other hand, the use of census data to obtain information on the age-sex structure of a population, the use of hospital records to find out the morbidity and mortality patterns of a community, the use of an organisation's records to ascertain its activities, and the collection of data from sources such as articles, journals, magazines, books and periodicals to obtain historical and other types of information, are all classified as secondary sources. In summary, primary sources provide first-hand information and secondary sources provide second-hand data. (2011, p. 133)

Data Management

The Data Management Association (DAMA) defines data management as “the development, execution and supervision of plans, policies, programs and practices that control, protect, deliver and enhance the value of data and information assets” (Mark et al., 2009, p. 4). Generally, the focus of data management system is on the defining of the data element and how it is structured, stored and transposed to knowledge. The overall practices or activities of managing data involve what is called the entire life cycle of a given data. Soler et al. (2016, p. 7) describe the Data Life Cycle as a conceptual tool which helps to understand ten different steps that can be followed or incorporated in the management of data

from generation to knowledge creation. These involve planning and collection of data, quality assurance, metadata creation, submission, preservation, discovery, integration, analysis and publication. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health provides the following as five good steps for managing qualitative data in a research process:

- i. Choosing and following a clear file naming system;
- ii. Developing a data tracking system;
- iii. Establishing and documenting transcription/translation procedures;
- iv. Establishing quality control procedures; and
- v. Establishing a realistic timeline.

On the other hand, the following issues have been identified as that which must be essentially addressed in the management of the corresponding data before embarking on a quantitative study: data ownership, data collection, data storage, data protection, data retention, data analysis, data sharing and data reporting.

The section below briefly describes these processes.

Data Ownership	Concerns who has the legal rights to the data and who retains the data after the project is completed, including the principal investigator's right to transfer their data between institutions
Data Collection	Centres on collecting data in a consistent, systematic manner throughout the project (reliability) and establishing an ongoing system for evaluating and recording changes to the project protocol (validity)
Data Storage	Deals with the amount of data that should be stored - enough so that project results can be reconstructed
Data Protection	Dwells on protecting both written and electronic data from physical damage as well as damage to data integrity, including tampering or theft
Data Retention	Considers how long project data needs to be retained according to various sponsors' and funders' guidelines,

	and the importance of secure destruction of data
Data Analysis	Explains how raw data is chosen, evaluated, and interpreted into meaningful and significant conclusions that other researchers and the public can understand and use
Data Sharing	Describes how project data is disseminated to other researchers and the general public to share important or useful research results; also, when data should not be shared
Data Reporting	Concerns publication of conclusive findings after the project is completed

(Guidelines for Responsible Data Management in Scientific Research, Office of Research Integrity, US Department of Health and Human Services, p. 3)

Collation and Processing of Data

Collation of data denotes an act of collecting relevant data for study with a view to facilitating a valid decision-making. Collation of data is more often than not determined by the kind of study embarked upon. Also, the process of collating each type of data differs. While primary data has to be originally gathered, secondary data is only an assemblage of various data already gathered and interpreted. Primary data is gathered while carrying out experiments in experimental researches or investigation in descriptive or survey researches. In the humanities, primary data may be direct exchange of words with respondents, mere observations, personal interviews, administration of questionnaires or schedules. Other methods are pejorative techniques, content analysis, depth interviews and case study.

Given that secondary data is obtained from existing or already utilized data, it then suffices to say that the researcher has been saved from a chain of problems connected to collation of raw data. Hence, it is either collated from published or unpublished data or from both. Published data are obtainable from different

publications, books, newspapers, magazines, research reports made by researchers, experts, scholars, etc.

In another vein, unpublished data is gathered from autobiographies and biographies. Since the researcher is not the genuine or first discoverer of the information, the following factors ought to be considered while collating secondary data: its reliability, suitability and adequacy. On the whole, choosing appropriate method for data collection largely depends on how meticulous the researcher is. Thus, one would be on the safer side if one considers the following: (i) nature, scope and object of study (ii) availability of funds (iii) time and (iv) required precision (Kothari, 2004, p. 112) So, editing of data would ensure elicitation of most relevant information to the research problem.

The way in which the information collected in the course of a research is analysed largely depends upon two things: the type of information (descriptive, quantitative, qualitative or attitudinal); and the way you want to communicate your findings to your readers (Kumar, 2011, p. 23). Kothari (2004, pp. 122-4) describes this as data processing operations, and is categorised into the followings: editing, coding, classification and tabulation.

Editing is the process of examining the collected raw data to detect errors and omissions and to correct these when possible. It involves a careful scrutiny of the completed questionnaires and/or schedules purposely to ensure that the data collated is accurate, consistent with other facts gathered, uniformly entered, as completed as possible and has been well arranged to facilitate coding and tabulation. Coding refers to the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes. It is necessary for efficient analysis and through it the several replies may be reduced to a small number of classes which contain the critical information required for analysis. Classification is the process of arranging data in groups or classes on the basis of common characteristics. This can be done according to attributes or class-intervals. Similarly, when a mass of data has been assembled, it becomes necessary for the researcher to arrange the same in some kind of concise

and logical order. This procedure is referred to as tabulation. Thus, tabulation is the process of summarising raw data and displaying the same in compact form (i.e., in the form of statistical tables) for further analysis. In a broader sense, tabulation is an orderly arrangement of data in columns and rows.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is aptly considered as a process by which data is carefully gathered, systematically structured, thoroughly assessed, studied and interpreted with a view to arriving at a decisive decision on a research problem. Hence, data analysis is a scientific exposition and representation of factual information aptly conducted to make a conclusive decision or valid judgment. Generally, analysis of data involves “a number of closely related operations which are performed with the purpose of summarising the collected data and organising these in such a manner that they answer the research question(s)” (Kothari, 2004, p. 135). This is because data “does not make sense by itself; data only makes sense in the context of a research design, theory, purpose, and research questions” (Griffiee, 2012, p. 138). Thus, the term ‘analysis’ refers to the computation of certain measures along with searching for patterns of relationship that exist among data-groups (ibid. p.135). In the process of analysis, “relationships or differences supporting or conflicting with original or new hypotheses should be subjected to statistical tests of significance to determine with what validity data can be said to indicate any conclusions” (Giles, 1974, p. 44).

Kothari (2004, p. 130) categorizes analysis into the following elements or types: descriptive, inferential, causal, correlation and multivariate. Descriptive analysis is said to be largely the study of distributions of one variable. It provides the researcher with profiles of, for instance, companies, work groups, persons and other subjects on any of a multiple characteristics such as size, composition, efficiency, preferences, etc. Inferential analysis is otherwise regarded as statistical analysis. Correlation analysis studies the joint variation of two or more variables for determining the amount of correlation between two or more variables. Causal analysis studies how one or more variables affect changes in another variable. And, lastly, multivariate analysis is defined as all statistical methods in modern

times which simultaneously analyse more than two variables on a sample of observations. Observation is one way to collect primary data. It is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place (Kumar, 2011, p. 134).

Data Analysis Procedures

The followings are the most commonly used procedures for data analysis:

- i. Measures of Frequency: these are used to indicate how often, for instance, a particular behaviour or phenomenon occurs. These can be indicated or presented in several ways, but one of the most common ways is in table format. In addition, frequencies can also be represented graphically in such forms as histograms, bar graphs, or frequency polygons.
- ii. Measures of Central Tendency: these are employed particularly when data are obtained from different groups or categories to provide precise quantitative information about, for instance, the typical behaviour of second language learners with respect to a particular phenomenon. There are three commonly used measures in this regard – mode, median and mean. The mode is the most frequent score obtained by a particular group or category. The median is the score at the centre of a particular distribution; that is, the score that splits the group or category in half. And the mean, otherwise known as the arithmetic average, is the sum of all scores divided by the number of observations. It could also be represented visually through the use of graphics, including bar graphs.
- iii. T-test: this is used when a researcher wants to determine if the means of two groups are significantly different from each other. In other words, it is used to compare performance on two groups or categories.
- iv. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): this records the ratio of the amount of variation between certain specified groups or categories in a research to the amount of variation within the groups. The result of this is regarded as an F value and it provides information on whether or not the groups differ.
- v. Chi-square: the chi-square test is used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed

frequencies in one or more categories. It is often used to test whether sets of frequencies or proportions follow certain patterns.

Approaches to Data Analysis

One of the common ways of classifying research is via categorization according to the data collected and analysed. Accordingly, thus, research can be classified into two kinds: quantitative and qualitative research.

Quantitative	Qualitative
i. In quantitative research, data is usually analyzed using computer software (e.g. t-test) and presented in numerical forms (by using percentage, for example).	Analysis of qualitative data involves the production and interpretation of frequencies, tables, graphs, etc., that describe the data.
ii. Analysis of quantitative data is numerical.	Qualitative data analysis deals with words.
iii. Quantitative studies usually start with a (written) hypothesis that needs to be tested by conducting the research.	Qualitative studies often start with the assumption that the research topic must be understood “holistically”.

Softwares for Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis

The following softwares are available for computer analysis of qualitative and quantitative data: ATLAS.ti, NVivo, SPSS, STATA & SAS, among others.

- i. ATLAS.ti: it is a data analysis software designed to organise, manage, and analyze textual, visual and audio/video data for qualitative studies.
- ii. NVivo: this allows for structured organisation of imported files (e.g. audio or video data) into source folders of Internals, Externals and Memos in qualitative studies depending on the research and planned analysis.
- iii. SPSS: it is an acronym for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). It is a package of programmes in quantitative studies for manipulating,

analyzing, and presenting data widely used in the social and behavioral sciences.

- iv. Stata: it is a full-featured statistical programming language for windows, Mac OS X, Unix and Linux in quantitative studies. It is available in several versions with differences on the basis of the number of variables allowed in memory.
- v. SAS: it is a software package used for conducting statistical analysis, manipulating data, and generating tables and graphs that summarize specific data. It is the most widely used statistical analysis software for quantitative studies. Although it was originally intended for management and analysis of agricultural field experiments.

Qualitative Studies

Mackay and Gass (2005, p. 162) concisely describe qualitative research as a form of research that is premised on descriptive data. Hence, it does not favour constant use of statistical procedures. Analysis of data in qualitative research largely depends on how one intends to report one's findings. Ranjit (2011, p. 279) identifies three major ways of writing one's report. Firstly, the researcher can develop a narration to depict an instance, event, episode or a situation. Secondly, the researcher can as well identify the major themes observed from his/her field note or interview. He or she would write on them and make some necessary quotations. And thirdly, the major themes can be quantified so as to accentuate their prevalence and importance. It has, among others, the following qualities:

- i. Rich description: it affords the researcher ample opportunity to embark on detailed and meticulous description rather than quantification of factual information via measurements, scores, ratings and frequencies.
- ii. Natural and holistic depiction: the researcher is enabled to critically explore individual and other unnatural environments. It also involves socio-cultural context both at macro and micro levels.
- iii. Few participants: few participants are encouraged through intensive assessment other than generalization of randomly selected groups.

- iv. Emic perspectives: a researcher aims at interpretation of data in line with the original meanings the people under study attach to them. This is strictly averse to etic perspective which considers issues under special parameters.
- v. Cyclical and open-ended process: the research of this kind is open-ended in that its approach is more of observation of whatever happens as against deliberate moderation or streamlining of focus through hypothesis.
- vi. Possible ideological orientation: qualitative researchers are often critical in their discourse by giving room to ideological leaning of the people. This is different from quantitative study that strictly disapproves possible social or political goals under the guise of impartiality.
- vii. Research questions in qualitative research always appear general and open-ended. So, hypotheses are evolved as outcome of the research other than initial stage prediction.

Data Analysis in Qualitative Research

In an attempt to analyse data in a qualitative research, several approaches are usually adopted. Moreover, certain qualities are observed to be essential to all, irrespective of the mode of study. The essential features are credibility, transferability, dependability and methods.

Methods: qualitative research often adopts different approaches such as cyclical data analysis, grounded theory, and inductive data analysis. By cyclical analysis we mean a systematic way of collating series of data, several rounds of data analysis, test and re-test of hypothesis, whereupon certain refinement is achieved.

Watson-Gegeo (qtd. in Mackey & Gass 2005, p. 163) identifies three stages of cyclical data analysis:

- (i) comprehensive – all contexts are thoroughly explored
- (ii) topic-oriented – in the preliminary analysis, the topic is well explicated
- (iii) hypothesis-oriented – the hypotheses are evolved on data basis. Another method often adopted is grounded theory.

This emphasizes derivation of theory based on data that have already been collated and analysed. And for inductive data analysis, a researcher of qualitative study is required to embark on series of examinations and interpretation of data in line with the research objectives.

Credibility: this is often ascertained by a researcher when he/she personally collects the data. And in the process, he relates well with the respondents so much that they develop acquaintance with him. This enables the respondents to feel at ease and remain truthful while giving their responses to the questions raised by the researcher.

Transferability: It centres on context which is arguably considered to be the integral part of a given data. Indeed, findings of qualitative research can hardly be transferred to another context. Transferability therefore hinges on affinity of one context with another. So, what is crucial for determining closeness or similarity is the method of reporting. This is otherwise, according to Watson-Gegeo, known as “thick description”. This comprises the following: particular description, general description, and interpretive commentary.

Conformability: This implies that a researcher of qualitative study should thoroughly dwell on data on which his claim is predicated. The discourse should be detailed in such a way that no loophole is left in the work such that another researcher will have ample evidence to confirm, modify, or utterly reject the first interpretation. This is akin to replicability in quantitative research.

Dependability: To ensure dependability, the researcher should bring the characteristics of the context and the relationship of the participants to the fore. Adequate documentation or recording of the collected data may also be reviewed by the respondents themselves. This will convince other researchers of the dependability of the inferences elicited from the data of the same context.

Data Analysis in Quantitative Study

Data analysis in quantitative studies entails organization of quantitative data with a view to preparing them for analysis, and then analyzing them; that is, organizing

data into charts or tables, or using statistical methods to summarise them. Some of the primary purposes of quantitative analysis are to: measure, make comparisons, examine relationships, make forecasts, test hypotheses, construct concepts and theories, explore, control and explain. (Walliman, 2011, p. 132)

Accordingly, Nueman examines the fundamentals of organizing and analyzing quantitative data. These are: Data Coding, Frequency Distribution, Bivariate Relationship, Statistical Control, and Inferential Statistics. (2014, pp. 393-422)

- i. Data coding means systematically reorganizing raw data into a format that is easy to analyze using statistics software on computers. The coding procedure is a set of rules stating that certain numbers will be assigned to certain variable attributes. For example, males and females in a gathered data are coded as 1 and 2 respectively, or for a Likert scale, 4 is coded as strongly agree, 3 as agree, 2 as disagree and so forth. In this way, the coding procedure explains in detail how the non-numerical information is converted into numbers.
- ii. Frequency distribution is examined as a systematic way of generating, from the collated data, results with one variable. It is said to be the easiest way to describe the numerical data of one variable using descriptive statistical tools of analysis. Examples of these tools are graphic representations like bar charts, pie charts and histogram; measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode); and measures of variation (range, percentile and standard deviation).
- iii. Bivariate relationship is examined as a way of generating results with two variables using bivariate statistical analysis. It is significant in showing a statistical relationship between variables; that is, things that tend to appear together. For example, a play presents a scenario of people getting ill following the intake of an infected food substance. In this regard, a bivariate statistical analysis will show the relationship existing between the infected food substance and the fact that people who eat the food get sick. It is a statistical relationship between two variables: infected food substance and the health of the people who eat it.
- iv. Statistical control explains the results of more than two variables. This research design is used to physically control potential alternative explanations

for results (i.e., that threaten internal validity). The tool used is regarded as a control variable. Control variable is a third (or fourth or fifth) variable that represents an alternative explanation for a two-variable relationship.

- v. Inferential statistics are a precise way to talk about how confident we can be when inferring from the results in a sample to a population, relying on the principles from probability sampling by which we use a random process (e.g., a random-number table, random computer process) to select cases from the entire population. On this note, therefore, inferential statistics build on probability theory to test hypotheses formally, permit inferences from a sample to a population, and test whether descriptive results are likely to be due to random factors or to a real relationship.

Literary Examples of Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Data Analysis

Obafemi defines humanities as generally referring to “discipline and/or subjects which concern themselves with the study and understanding of man in society and in all its spheres and ramifications – existence, culture, sociality, and many sides of reality” (2017. p.11). To this end, literature is arguably one of the disciplines in the humanities which studies man in his society, hence it is used to exemplify both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. For qualitative research, Ogbeide’s review on Aidoo’s change is used while examples of quantitative approach are drawn from Abubakar’s (2010) survey on the effectiveness of dramatic society in public schools in Ilorin.

Ogbeide’s (2012) research focuses on marital relationships in the changing African societies with Ghana as the setting. The paper traverses the three categories of modern women in contemporary Ghana. The two extreme groups of women with patriarchal and anti-patriarchal inclinations, the third group mediates between their careers and marital demands. These groups are represented in Nana, Esi and Opokuya in that order. The reviewer adopts Womanism which accentuates socio-cultural context, to access specific data that addresses marital issues with the female characters in focus. He concludes thus:

What the appreciation of changes demonstrates so far is that in a changing African society, the modern career African women have become greatly empowered and independent, courtesy of her access to quality education and skilled jobs with good pay packet. But economic empowerment and independence have their own promises and problems especially at the micro-level, the family, if not well managed. Indeed, unless these changes at the smallest unit of the society are properly handled with a few compromises and concessions, the family is likely to run into a brick wall like in Esi's case... In a subtle artistic way while Aidoo asks the African man to appreciate the catalytic role of the modern African woman in the social reforms and economic progress in Africa and therefore redefined his hard-line patriarchy. She also cautions the privileged African woman to tread softly in her pursuit of total cultural liberation (p. 355)

Abubakar (2010) survey focuses on the performance of the Dramatic Society in public secondary schools in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The data is drawn from a total of 200 secondary school teachers and students evenly distributed in randomly selected schools in the metropolis. This is aimed at accessing the output of the dramatic society in the schools and factors responsible for their vibrancy or otherwise. He adopts the questionnaire method to collect his data from the two groups with each questionnaire focusing on the interrelationship between the groups and the feedback thereof to test their efficacy. The researcher uses the Snowball sampling technique and Statistical Package for Arts and Humanity (SPAH) as his method of analysis. The table below summarises his findings.

Factor	Degree of impacts of the various factors in the ineffectiveness of the dramatic society in the public secondary school in Ilorin	Total
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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Frequency
Lack of fund	28	18	1	0	47
Lack of interest on the part of the Coordinators	23	19	3	2	47
Lack of technical know-how	22	24	1	0	47
Poor attitude of the school administrators	24	22	1	0	47
Proliferation of substitute (Home video & Cinema)	19	17	9	2	47

Source: Abubakar, A. S. (2010)

Conclusion

There are several ways of collecting and understanding information and finding answers to one's or emerging questions - research is one way. It is an undertaking of which collection and analysis of data are very paramount. Hence, in this chapter, attempt has been made to examine data analysis, in qualitative and quantitative studies. In the following order, the study has focused on what constitute data, conceptualization of data analysis, data collection methods and processing, and data analysis procedures. Above all, qualitative and quantitative research methods, according to Zacharias (2012), are two ways of categorizing researches. While qualitative focuses on words, quantitative centres on numbers. Quantitative research is often analyzed with the aid of computer software or manually, presenting the report in numerical form. More so, it prioritizes hypothesis that would be tested and re-tested. Qualitative research instead favours assumption with a view to achieving a holistic study and critical examination which are possible only when other factors untargeted impact on the study.

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 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL PROCEDURES IN HUMANITIES RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces readers, in a manner made simple to understand and suitable for solving practical problems, to:

- information gathering approaches;
- meaning of statistics;
- need for statistics in the humanities;
- types of statistics;
- forms of descriptive statistical procedures; and
- practice of some descriptive statistics covered in v. with the Microsoft Excel software.

The approach adopted in this chapter is to describe each statistical method in a step by step manner that will take the use of formulae for granted through its direct implementation. The narrative method, without showing formulae, has been largely adopted. The use of Microsoft Excel for analysis was also integrated to facilitate understanding and easy application.

Information Gathering Approaches

The nature of data is generally used to separate information gathered into two. These are qualitative and quantitative approaches to data gathering.

Qualitative approach to data gathering indicates that information in the form of ideas, reasons, arguments, remarks, opinions, preferences, observations, records, desires, decisions, discussions and feelings or other such behaviours are obtained, collated and analysed for the purpose of drawing valid and reliable conclusions.

The data here are not in the numerical form but are mostly represented by words or some related symbols. They are essentially offering description or characteristics of the origin, nature and direction of the objects studied and analysed. Qualitative data are obtained without necessarily carrying out measurements. The qualitative approach in research has its methodologies for data gathering, analysis, interpretation and reporting and these have been in use, especially in the humanities, as old as research has been in these fields. It also has strengths and weaknesses compared with the quantitative approach.

Quantitative approach gathers data through measurements involving the use of numbers which necessitates computations. Measuring instruments like the questionnaire, checklist, rating scale, or observation scales are used for data gathering. As numbers and their manipulations are necessarily part of the quantitative methods, statistics play a key role. The measures represented as facts, figures, values, records or other such information are gathered, analysed and conclusions are drawn to guide policies and practices. The nature of quantitative data makes possible the presentation of summaries, tables, diagrams and graphs to convey different messages and make points for clarification, comparison, direction and inferences showing relationships, effects and differences.

Mixed Methods: This is a combination of the qualitative and quantitative approaches in a study. One is used to complement the other in such a way as to make for robust data collection and analysis and thus take the advantages embedded in the two approaches. Handling data arising from qualitative and quantitative approaches may sometimes result in triangulation. This chapter focuses on the quantitative approach and as such, procedures for handling values in the form of numbers, records, and figures as well as other responses obtained from measurement are discussed.

Meaning of Statistics

Statistics is the scientific method of gathering, organizing, analysing and reporting information. The information gathered could be in the form of facts, values or figures which are referred to as data. To gather data requires use of appropriate

techniques for obtaining valid and reliable data. Indeed, the terms validity and reliability have their statistical connotations, relevance and implications. The methods adopted usually require use of formulae for computations and most often lead to obtaining values which have specific meanings as applied to the data gathered and analysed. The methods of statistics also prescribe steps for presenting and reporting outcomes of the computations carried.

Need for Statistics in the Humanities

Some people have taken the position that there is little or no use of statistics in the humanities. This position looks acceptable on the face value when one considers the nature and structure of subjects in the humanities. Though the concepts and issues of concern in the humanities tend to be qualitative in their nature, structure and characteristics, a lot of the information dealt with could be represented with statistical values. What could have been presented with statistics are rather represented with words. The need for statistics thus arises because humanities deal with a lot of information in the form of numbers and measurements. It is instructive to note that measurements are carried out in aspects of history, creative arts, music, literature, anthropology, religion, archeology, language, philosophy, jurisprudence and other subjects in the humanities. As a result, the need for statistics arises out of:

- i. the search for and effort to gather information in the numerical form e.g. dates, people and their characteristics, places, events, experiences, materials, facts, artifacts, etc.
- ii. the steps to organize the information gathered through sorting, tallying, coding and summarizing. Long discussions, arguments, narrations or reports could be unnecessary when appropriate statistics are used.
- iii. application of appropriate and acceptable statistical methods to analyse such data.
- iv. subjection of analysed data to correct interpretation in a way to bring meaning, draw appropriate conclusions and through these add to knowledge in the respective specialisations.

v. application of knowledge gained and conclusions reached to practical problems and meet development challenges.

The humanities comprises subjects related to human experiences and how they are captured or represented. The umbrella subjects in the humanities include philosophy, history, literature, religion, music, arts, jurisprudence, ethics and language including anthropology. These all focus on the expressions of the human mind in their past and present forms. As a result of the evolution of the subjects in the humanities, statistics and especially the computations that go into them had been assumed to be irrelevant or not so important. It is however clear from the analysis of each of these subjects that statistics had been embedded through the use of words. Developments in the field have also shown the uses to which humanities have put the use statistics for learning, research and development.

Types of Statistics

There are basically two types of statistics:

1. descriptive statistics
2. inferential statistics

Descriptive statistics are the methods that manipulate data in a way as to reveal their nature, characteristics, trends, proportions, distributions or summaries. Types of descriptive statistics include frequency distributions, percentages, pictorial representations, graphs, central tendency and dispersion. This chapter focuses on commonly used descriptive statistics for research in the humanities.

Inferential statistics make it possible to test hypotheses and establish whether significant relationships exist between and among variables. The methods of inferential statistics are also used for establishing cause and effect relationships or significant differences between and among groups. Examples of inferential statistics include chi square, t-test, analysis of variance, correlations, regression and other advanced statistical methods.

Though researchers in the humanities need both descriptive and inferential statistics for balanced analysis and reportage and examination of issues under study, only descriptive statistics is covered in this chapter.

Forms of Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics refer to many procedures which include but are not limited to:

- i. frequency distribution
- ii. percentage
- iii. diagrammatic representation of data
- iv. central tendency
- v. dispersion

Other forms of descriptive statistics which are not covered in this book include skewness, kurtosis, standard error, deciles, quartiles, percentiles, etc. These unnumbered forms are not discussed in this chapter.

Frequency Distribution and Percentage: As the name implies, frequency shows how often an event, experience or behaviour occurs. Frequency could be obtained for different human experiences like regularity civil wars during particular centuries in the past, patronage of archives to obtain records, types of record that interest different categories of people, popularity of particular play, drama or music and adoption of certain philosophies or practices by countries in the different continents of the world, changes in government and international treaties signed at global conventions. These will require having frequency distribution tables to have summaries that could be easy to interpret and understand. Percentage helps to determine the proportion of one unit of the distribution to a hundred i.e. if the entire distribution is equal to 100, what proportion of this is the value of a single component of the distribution.

Example 1: Litigations entertained by law courts in a particular local government area could be represented on frequency distribution table on monthly basis as shown on Table 1. This distribution should normally be compiled from the

records of cases entertained in courts of law in that particular local government area. A monthly tally of entertained cases will lead to the results on Table 1 after compilation. Thus, we have a table showing months and the frequency of cases entertained in columns one and two. The third column contains the percentage of cases entertained per month i.e. the proportion of 100 formed by cases in each month obtained by dividing monthly frequency by total frequency and multiplying this by 100 e.g. for January as shown in Table 1, $15/183 \times 100 = 8.2\%$.

Table 1: Monthly Frequency Distribution of Litigations

Month	Number of Cases (f)	Percentage (%)
January	15	8.2
February	12	6.6
March	18	9.8
April	25	13.6
May	6	3.3
June	11	6.0
July	13	7.1
August	5	2.7
September	23	12.6
October	21	11.5
November	20	10.9
December	14	7.7
Total	183	100

This simple analysis will make it easy to identify the months with highest and lowest litigations. There may be factors responsible for this. The percentage takes the analysis further to weigh the frequency for each month. With this, it is also possible to arrange the months from the lowest to the highest. This may determine planning and execution of different activities relating to vacation

periods by law enforcement agents or staff of the Ministry of Justice and law firms. Getting details like these for five or more years will enable researchers to see trends in litigations.

Example 2: This is a table describing the nature of performances that appeal to people who patronize a particular theatre hall by looking at the records of their attendance during presentations of dance, music and drama:

Table 2: Distribution of Attendance at the Theatre

Type	Number watching in 2016	Percentage (%)
Dance	5,700	34.6
Music	7,520	45.7
Drama	3,250	19.7
Total	16,470	100.0

It could be deduced from Table 2 that the most patronized performance is Music while the least patronized performance by people attending the theatre in 2016 is Drama. Managers may use this as a guide to determine what nature of performances to host and the prices to fix for such.

Diagrammatic Representation of Data: Two procedures will be discussed in this chapter.

1. Pictorial Diagrams: They are also called the pictographs or pictograms and they connote use of drawings, symbols and signs to represent data. This is a creative aspect of descriptive statistics that permits the conversion of information in the form of figures, values or numbers generated through research into pictures and drawings. The researcher is free to translate the data into pictures that best represent the nature or characteristics of such data e.g. cases handled in different months of the year could be represented in pictures; and decades, centuries or millennial of history could be represented with pyramids. Similarly, heads could be used to represent population, books to represent institutions of learning or quantity of library acquisitions, weapons like gun or armored tank to represent

size of the ammunitions held by countries or instruments to represent types of music.

Example 3: Fully dressed soldiers are used to represent the hypothetical number of men in the armed forces of three countries: Nigeria (4 million), Ghana (2 million) and The Gambia (1 million). If one soldier stands for a million heads, then number of armed forces men for the three countries could be represented thus:

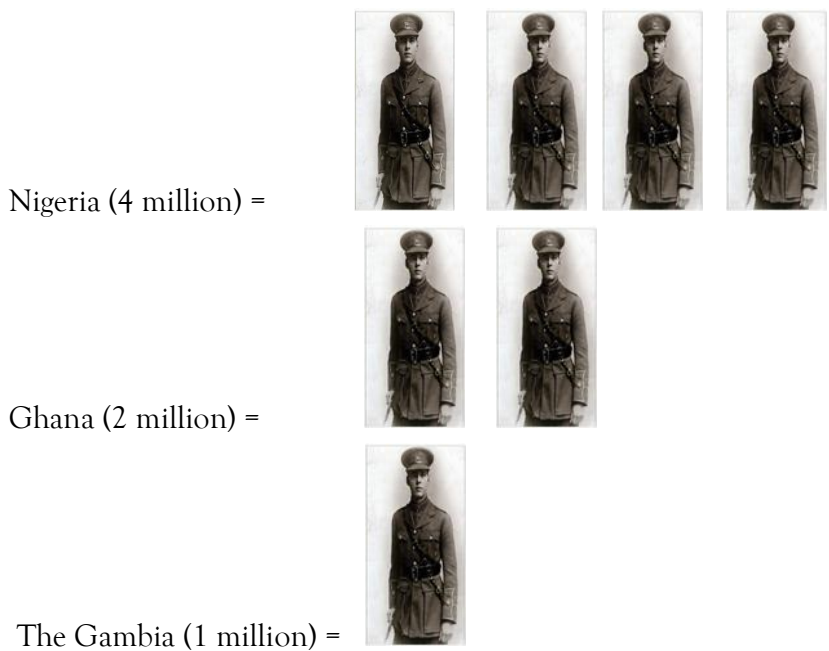


Figure 1: Size of Armed Forces of Selected West African Countries in Millions (Hypothetical)

Key: One Soldier = 1 million members of the armed forces

Pictograms: are creatively used by researchers to depict the message being conveyed by choosing and using the most appropriate picture. Where the value represented is a proportion of one million as in the example 1, then the appropriate equivalence of this is used to represent it e.g. half of a million could be represented by a form of half of the size of the soldier as shown below:



2. Pie Chart: This is a picture that represents data on sectors of a circle. The data on Table 2 could be represented on a pie chart by finding the number of degrees equivalent to the percentage obtained for each performance as shown in **Example 4**.

Example 4: The circle is 360 degrees (360°) and each performance could only be correctly represented by determining the proportion or sector of the entire circle in a pie chart it should occupy. Thus, the percentage is simply multiplied by 360° and the result shown on Table 3 will be obtained:

Table 3: Sector of the Pie Chart Occupied by Each Performance

Type	Number watching in 2016	Percentage	Proportion of the circle
Dance	5,700	34.6	125°
Music	7,520	45.7	164°
Drama	3,250	19.7	71°
Total	16,470	100.0	360°

The degrees obtained have been rounded up to the nearest whole number shown in column 4. Since the number of degrees shown in the last column of Table 3 has shown the sectors occupied by each performance, the next step is to construct the pie chart with the use of a protractor. **Figure 2** is the outcome of this exercise.

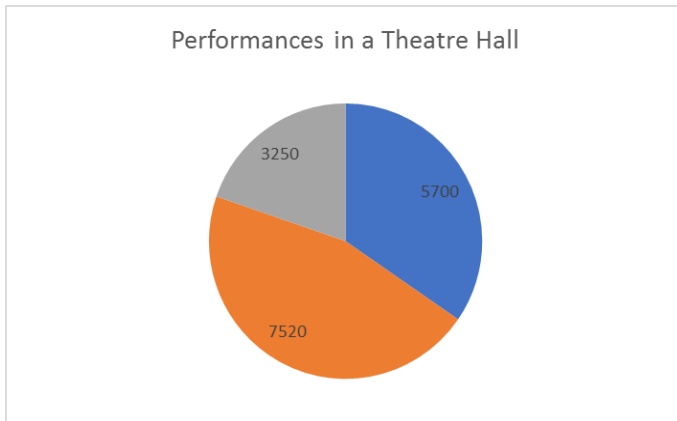


Figure 2: Pie Chart of Performances in a Theatre Hall

3. Graphical Representation of Data: Simple Bar Chart: The bar chart is a graph showing the frequency distribution in the form of a bars. This promotes understanding and strengthens the description given by reducing the words and values to bars that could be easily read off.

Examples 5 and 6: The data on Tables 1 and 2 could be represented on bar charts as represented on figures 3 and 4. The vertical axis has the frequencies while the horizontal axis shows the months. The bar for each month stands right and terminates at the value equivalent to its frequency. Reading off from the bar chart, April has the highest with 25 litigations and August has the lowest with 5. All the other months could be easily read off in similar manner.

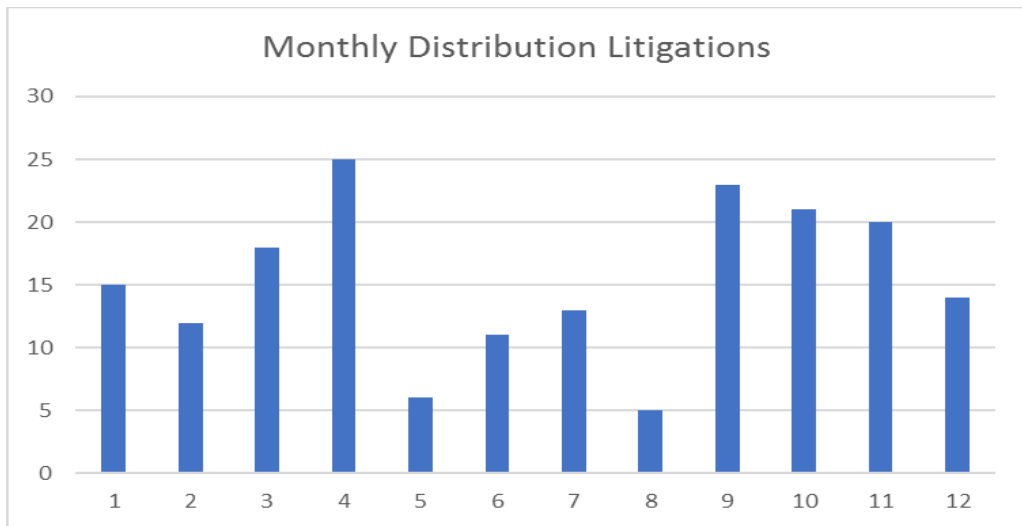


Figure 3: Bar Chart of Monthly Distribution of Litigations

This is a vertical bar chart. The same results could be presented horizontally so the months will be on the vertical axis while the frequencies will be on the horizontal axis. The bars will therefore extend from left to right but will give exactly the same information as we have in Figure 3. Figure 4 is the bar chart showing performances in a theatre hall.

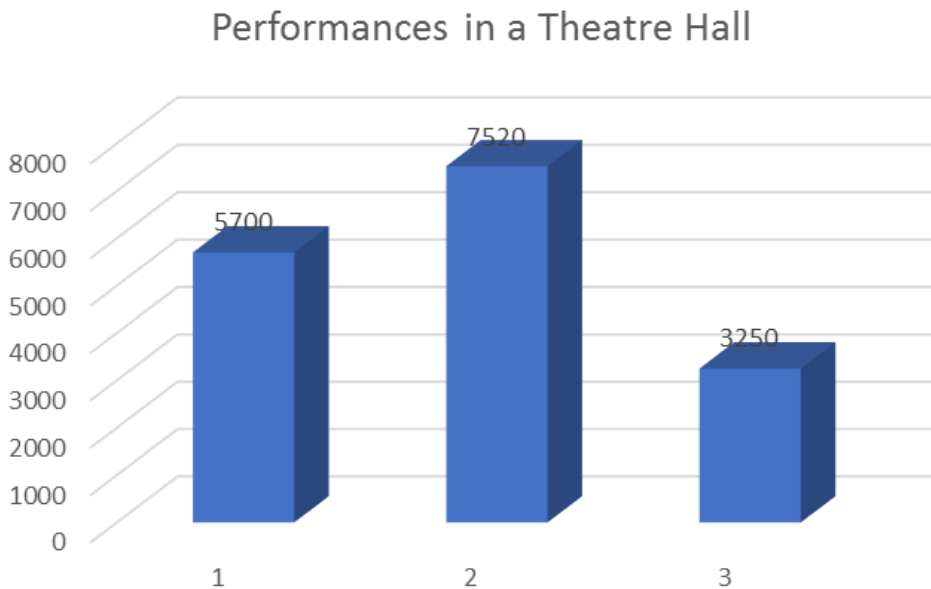


Figure 4: Bar Chart of Performances in a Theatre Hall

Central Tendency: This refers to statistical methods of determining one value that could acceptably represent all others in a given distribution by having characteristics or features that are dominant in or essential to them all. This is a way of reducing data with a view to drawing meaning out of them. By implication, this central value representing the others describes the entire distribution in a specific way. The three commonly used measures of central tendency are mode, median and mean.

The **mode** is the selection of the value that occurs most frequently to represent all the others. This implies that for a distribution, the researcher must collate, re-arrange the data in a particular order (descending or ascending) and take a count to determine the frequency of occurrence of the values in the distribution.

Example 7: Let us assume that the following are the years of the reign of monarchs in a particular country called Bayana. The Monarchs' names are A to G and the number of years of their reign are indicated in front of their names and arranged on Table 3.

Table 3: Years of Reign of Monarchs in Bayana

Name of Monarch	Years Spent
A	5
B	6
C	7
D	6
E	8
F	10
G	4

From the above, the longest monarch in office is F while G had the shortest years of reign. Rearranging these years from the lowest to the highest then, we will have 4, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, 10. The mode of this distribution is 6 because it came up twice while all the other values came up only once. There is a possibility that some distributions have more than one mode. In the example shown in Table 3, the distribution is called unimodal because only 6 occurred twice. A bimodal distribution will have two values with the same frequency in the distribution and a multimodal distribution will have more than two modes.

The **median** of a distribution is the value that divides the distribution into two equal parts. This median value therefore sits exactly at the middle of the distribution.

Example 8: Given that the arrangement of the frequencies has been made thus: 4, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, and 10, then the value occupying position 4 will have exactly three values before and after it and thus 6 is the median. It is easy to determine the median of odd numbered distributions, like this example has seven. Where the distribution is even numbered, the median is determined by adding the two cases that lie at the middle of the distribution and dividing them up by two.

Mean is the third and most popular measure of central tendency. It is the addition of all frequencies in a distribution divided by the number of cases.

Example 9: Values being used in Example 8 will have its mean calculated thus:

$$\frac{4 + 5 + 6 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 10}{7} = 46/7 = 6.57$$

The mean of 6.57 years of the reign of all the monarchs of Bayana was obtained and this is close to the mode and median. The major strength of the mean over the other values is that it is the most accurate measure of central tendency because all values in the distribution are used for its calculation. Its dependability is revealed in its use for further statistical computations like variance, standard deviation, analysis of variance and others.

These same simple procedures used for a set of data are also used when the researcher is handling grouped data. It may be necessary to have grouped data when the size of data handled by the researcher is large.

Dispersion: This is a statistical value derived for describing the spread of a distribution. The set of values in any distribution is thus described by this value. The higher the value, the wider the distribution. The measures of dispersion covered in this chapter are range, variance and standard deviation.

Range: The simple distribution used as example for measures of central tendency comprises seven values, which when rearranged in order of magnitude are as follows: 4, 5, 6, 6, 7, 8, and 10.

Example 10: By perusing the values in the distribution, the lowest and the highest values are identified to be used for computing the range. As shown on Table 3, G had the shortest reign of 4 years while F had the longest reign of 10 years. With this simple process, the range of years spent in office ($10 - 4$) by all the monarchs is 6. The range is thus the difference between the highest and lowest values in a distribution.

Variance: This is the mean of squared deviations from the mean. The natural first step in calculating the variance is to obtain the mean as has been done earlier in this chapter, take the deviations from the mean, followed with by calculating the square of each and adding all the squared means. The final step is to divide up the sum of squared deviations by the number of cases (total frequency) minus 1. These procedures are implemented in Example 11.

Example 11: This procedure involves use of the mean ($M=6.571428571$) and going through the following steps:

1. Obtain deviations from the mean for each case ($X - M$) as in column 3 on Table 4.
2. Square each deviation i.e. $(X - M)^2$ as was done in column 4 of Table 4.
3. Add the squared deviations i.e. $\sum (X - M)^2 = 23.71429$.
4. Divide the value obtained in 3 by the number of cases minus 1 ($23.71429/6$) = 3.952380952.

Further help for calculating these values is provided in subsequent descriptions of the use of Microsoft Excel.

Table 4: Years of Reign of Monarchs in Bayana

Name of Monarch	Years Spent (X)	X - M	(X - M) ²
A	5	-1.5714	2.469388
B	6	-0.5714	0.326531
C	7	0.42857	0.183673
D	6	-0.5714	0.326531
E	8	1.42857	2.040816
F	10	3.42857	11.7551
G	4	-2.5714	6.612245
Total	46		23.71429

Use of Microsoft Excel for Descriptive Statistics

A step by step approach is adopted to further an understanding of the procedures for obtaining the statistical values of interest. This is because the Microsoft Excel is capable of computing some of the statistics without showing the steps. A basic understanding is prerequisite to correct interpretation of results and as such, effort should be made to first understand the steps involved and follow them.

There are however other statistics that the formula will have to be supplied to enable the excel software carry out the computations.

Frequency Distribution Table: The first step is to type in the data to be analysed. Alternatively, the frequencies already typed in on the word document could be copied and pasted in the excel page where the calculations are to be carried out. This second option definitely saves some labour and must be preferred. At this first stage, the researcher will have the page shown in Figure 4.

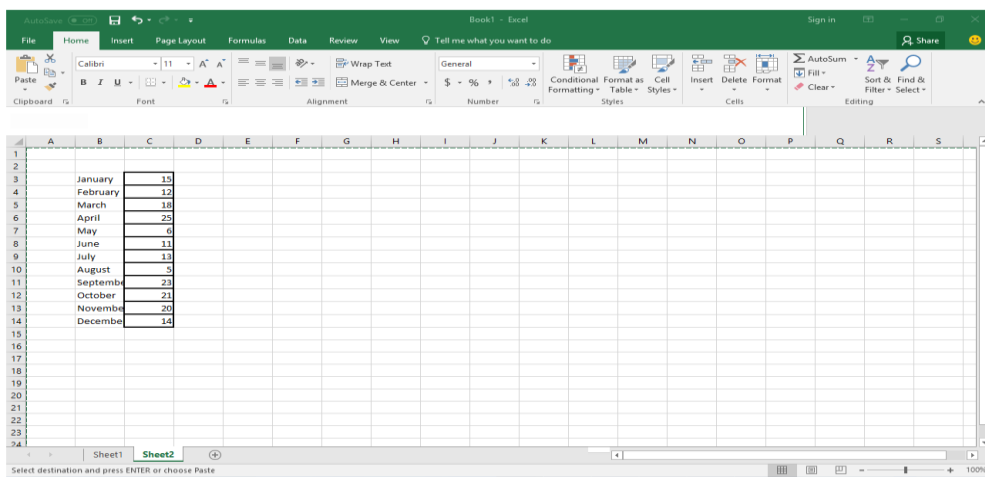


Figure 4: Excel data page showing the frequencies

Obtaining Total Frequency: Take the following steps to obtain the total number of cases entertained from January to December:

1. Type in below the table as last row where the total under the column for months where it is to add the entire column.
2. Click in the box under the frequencies column where the value to be totaled should be shown.
3. With the icon on this whole, click on the summation sign towards the far-right top corner of the excel page and it will automatically highlight the values in the column for frequencies.

4. Delimit the frequencies to be added for January to December from C3 to C14.
5. Press the enter key which will give the sum of all frequencies highlighted as shown in the Figure 5 with the total of 183.

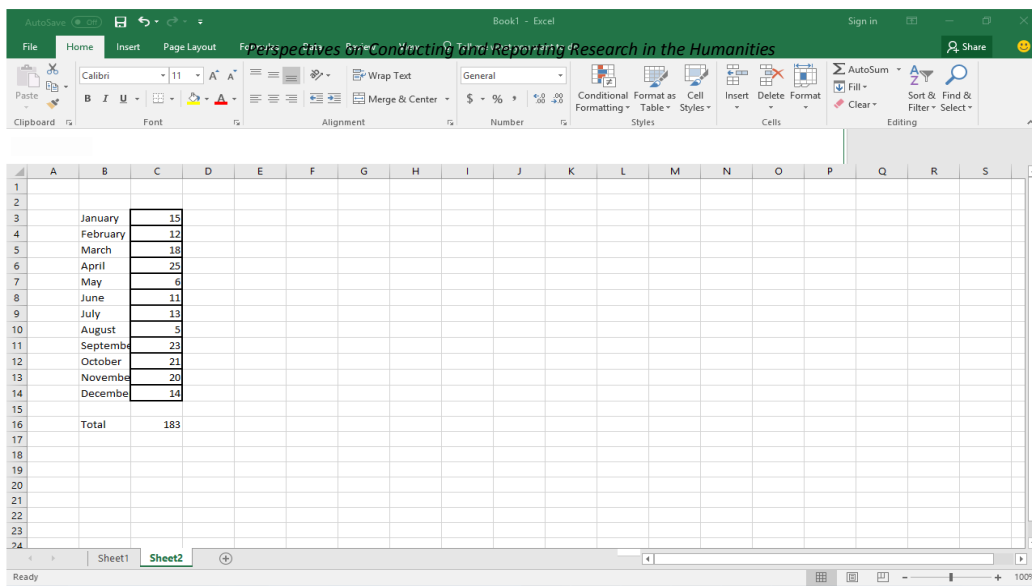


Figure 5: Excel data sheet showing total frequencies

Percentage: Obtaining the percentage for this monthly distribution of cases entertained throughout the year is a simple process. We may wish to have percentage in column E and so we could label it as such. After typing in the title of the column i.e. percentage:

1. Highlight the row for January to determine its percentage.
2. Insert the sign equal to (=).
3. Highlight the frequency for January (15) and slash (/) to indicate that division is intended.
4. Also highlight the total frequencies for the whole year (183) and the asterisk sign to show that this proportion is to be multiplied.
5. Type in 100 after the asterisk (*) sign.
6. Finally, press the enter key to have the percentage for January.

7. To have the percentage for the remaining eleven months, go back and highlight the 8.196721311% obtained for January and it will show the formula that was used to which the \$ sign is inserted between C and 16 to make way to have the percentage for all the other months without repeating the process (1-7). Once this is done and the enter key is pressed, the total for January will show appropriately.
8. To have the percentage for all the other months, only draw down with the plus sign icon from row E3 to E14.
9. Total for the percentage column is obtained through the same procedure adopted for frequencies. If the value of 100 is not obtained as total percentage for all the frequencies, then there must have been a problem with following these steps.

The results on Figure 6 will be shown as outcome of steps 1-9.

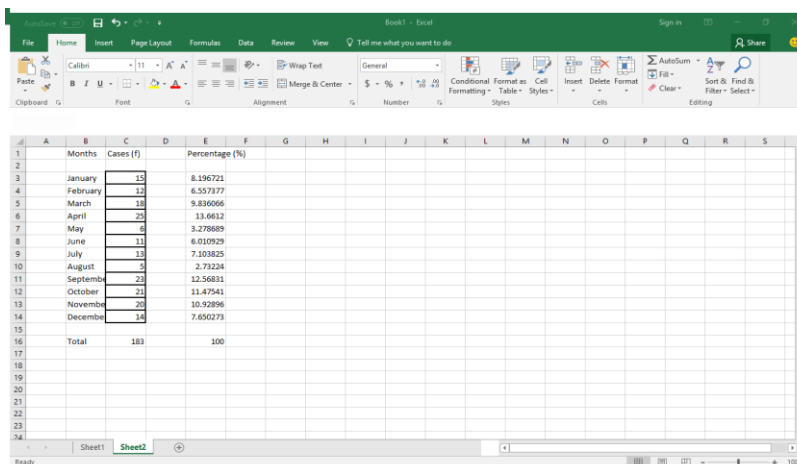


Figure 6: Results of percentage computation with Microsoft Excel

Mean, Variance and Standard Deviation: The mean as a measure of central tendency as well as variance and standard deviation are taken together due to their relationship computationally. These measures are obtained also for the same data in Figure 6 with the use of Microsoft Excel. Take the following steps for obtaining the mean of the distribution on Table 1:

1. Open the excel workbook page used in Figure 6 and click on M4.

2. Type in the word Mean and click on the next column to it, i.e. N4.
3. Type in the equal to sign (=).
4. Type in 183 which is the total, divide it by the slash key (/) with 12 being the number of months
5. Finally press enter and the value of the mean 15.25 will appear as shown in figure 7. This implies that there was a mean of 15.25 litigations per month for the distribution on **Table 1**.

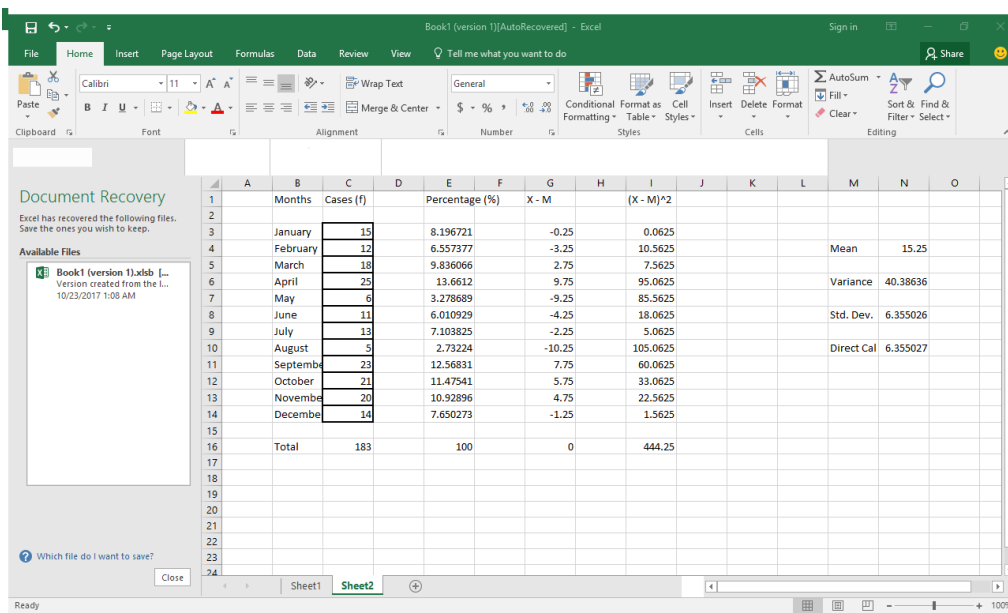


Figure 7:

To calculate the variance of the distribution, obtain the deviations of each X value (number of monthly litigations) from the mean (i.e. $X - \text{Mean}$) and this is shown in G3 to G14. For January therefore, $15 - 15.25 = -0.25$ which is obtained by following the same steps for manual computation are followed thus:

1. Click on G3, press equal to (=).
2. Click on frequency for January (15), followed by the minus key (-), then click on the mean (N4).
3. finally press the enter key and the outcome (-0.25) will appear on the G3 box.

4. To repeat this process for the remaining months, click again on N3, insert the dollar (\$) sign after the N in the formula shown in the formula box and press enter. The same value will appear again in G3.
5. Click on the G3 box, then drag down with the plus sign from N3 to N14 and the computation of deviations from the mean for all the months would show as in Figure 7.
6. To check whether the calculation is correct, click on the total box (G16) and then click on summation sign towards the top right corner of the spreadsheet and the value zero will appear. This is a proof the sum of deviations from the mean of any distribution equals zero.
7. Next operation is to square all the deviations from the mean and this is created in column I. From I3 to I14, these values are shown which are obtained by first clicking on I3.
8. Press the equal to (=) sign.
9. Then click on G3, followed by ^ for square and 2 to indicate to the power of 2.
10. Press the enter key and the value of 0.0625 will appear as the answer. The procedure for carrying out the same operation for February to December should be repeated as was done for the deviations from the mean (4 & 5).
11. The **sum of squared deviations** should be obtained by clicking on I16 and then clicking on the summation sign after which the 444.25 would appear.
12. The calculation of variance as was done in the manual process involves placing the cursor on N6 next column and box to divide the sum of squared deviations (444.25) by 11 i.e. number of months minus 1 ($12 - 1 = 11$).
13. From the variance of the distribution, **standard deviation** is obtained by simply finding the square root of the variance as shown in the steps following.
14. Type in standard deviation in M8 and in the next box in N8 where the value should be shown, click on the formula sign on top of the spreadsheet.
15. In the dialogue box that pops up, search for the SQRT formula.
16. Click on the SQRT formula and another dialogue box asking for the value to be computed will show.

17. Type in the variance (40.38636364) into the dialogue box or click on it in box N6 and the enter key then the square root of variance, which is the **standard deviation** (6.355026643) will appear.
18. The direct computation of standard deviation without going through this long procedure listed in 1-17 through the use of the function key could also be obtained by choosing a box in which the result should be displayed, clicking on the formula on top of the spreadsheet and searching for STDEV, S which stands for standard deviation of sample.

Conclusion

This chapter is introductory and it has adopted simple step by step explanation of the statistical methods covered. The examples only cover the procedures for obtaining measures of central tendency and dispersion for a set of data. The same principles are followed for group data which are not covered in this chapter. An understanding of the basics presented in this chapter will facilitate working on exercises relating to grouped data.

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**DOCUMENTATION IN RESEARCH: IN-TEXT CITATIONS AND
END-REFERENCING USING APA AND MLA FORMATTING STYLES**

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INTRODUCTION

Various types of research reports abound. These include journal articles, term papers, long essays, theses and dissertations (Okolo & Okesipe, 2013, pp. 322). A term paper refers to an academic paper which a student writes on a particular subject or topic and submits at a specific time during a programme. A long essay is a lengthy research report that is often presented by students in partial fulfilment of the course requirement that they undertake. It is usually more comprehensive than a term paper in terms of scope and depth of analysis. Thesis and dissertation are concepts that are often used interchangeably. Usually, they are detailed written reports of rigorous researches that are conducted at a higher level of academic plane. It could be at the level of master degree or doctoral degree. These written reports have many aspects. While some of these aspects are optional, others are obligatory. Among the obligatory components of a research report are the introduction, literature review, methodology, results, summary and conclusion as well as referencing (Fawole et al., 2006). Referencing could be internal or external: in-text citation or end referencing. Over the years, some of the researches that have been conducted by scholars and researchers have been adjudged to be inadequate or faulty on account of bad or poor referencing.

A study or investigation into a problem or subject could have been well conducted and could have addressed all its grey areas; however, if the in-text referencing and end referencing are not properly handled, it could impact

negatively on its quality. In a nutshell, some researches are replete with referencing challenges. As a means of checking the trend that is often associated with research writing, this chapter attempts to acquaint scholars and researchers with some hints on how in-text citation and end referencing should be written. The chapter will serve as an illumination to researchers and scholars who have difficulty with how to write acceptable and conventional in-text and end referencing. This will help to minimise the pitfalls and challenges which some researchers and scholars experience in the course of writing their research reports.

Referencing is a standard way of acknowledging the sources of information and ideas that a person has used in a study and which provides the basis and platform on which the sources are identified. In some way, referencing is not only significant on the basis of avoiding plagiarism but also instrumental to the verification of information used. In addition to these, it depicts a truthful and honest account of a research. In this chapter, some of the key words are documentation, in-text citation and end referencing.

For any type of research that is conducted, there is the need to put the references in a proper perspective. The process and procedure for doing this is documentation. Documentation in research is essentially the process of acknowledging the sources of information that a researcher has employed as the springboard and platform for his/her work (Arowolo, 2011, p.147). Documentation is a requisite component of research as it forms the basis on which originality of the study is predicated. In the words of Alabi (2011, p.108), in-text referencing deals with the process and procedure in one's research report where one refers to the works of others, particularly in critical areas such as fields of discourse or theories, data, among others. She stresses that it could be a paraphrase, a summary or a direct quotation. As its name denotes, in-text referencing literally means reference or acknowledgement that is made in the body of a text in a concise form. On the other hand, end-referencing is often situated at the end of a research report. It is a more elaborate and comprehensive information about the in-text citation of a research. It provides detailed information such as the name(s) of the writer, editor, association or body, year of

publication, title of the research, container (where the research can be found, possibly in a journal, edited book, etc.), place of publication, publisher, and so on.

Different kinds of reference styles exist (Okesipe & Okolo, 2013, p.335). Among them are the American Psychological Association (APA); Chicago Manual of Style (CMS); Modern Language Association (MLA); Council of Science Editors (CSE) and Modern Humanities Research Association (MHRA). Despite the fact that the list of styles given here is not exhaustive, attention will only be delineated to the discussion and exemplification of the APA and the MLA formats in this chapter. The APA style is often associated with disciplines in sciences while those in humanities are disposed to the MLA style. However, many institutions of learning and research have developed customised in-house styles which are variants, adaptations or modifications of these core styles. These variants reveal modification or adaptation of the contents and specifications in the 'original' documents to suit the nuances of the institutional peculiarities of the 'new' contexts. The fact remains that the derived style would still largely reflect the structural components of the parent stylesheets. For currency, the provisions in the 6th and 7th Editions of APA and the 7th and 8th Editions of MLA Manuals will be used as primary citation guides in this chapter.

American Psychological Association (APA) Formatting Style

In-Text Citation (APA Style)

The major constituent of the APA style is the use of writer and date format. When the views of a writer are used, whether as direct quotation, paraphrase or summary, details about him/her are referenced. In whatever form, it is proper to write the in-text citation close to the idea or view that has been quoted, paraphrased or summarised. This will make the reference meaningful and authentic.

Citing the Work of a Single Author

When referring to the work of a single author, his/her name, the year of publication and page where the information is located should be cited. If reference is made to an idea from a work without quoting directly from the source

book, article or other work, only the name of the author and year of publication will be cited. The following will serve as illustrations:

According to Egbe (1996), people write obituaries in the period of great distress and sorrow.

People write obituaries in the period of great distress and sorrow (Egbe, 1996).

When a direct quotation is used in a work, the author, year of publication as well as the page should be cited. For instance,

According to Egbe (1996, p. 153), “Obituaries announcing death ...are written at moments of great distress and sorrow but they also drive home certain realities across”.

“Obituaries announcing death ... are written at moments of great distress and sorrow but they also drive home certain realities of life as contained in the information being put across” (Egbe, 1996, p. 153).

Note that a direct quotation with less than forty words is to be included in the body of the text with quotation marks. However, when a direct quotation exceeds forty words, all the lines are to be indented and flushed to the right margin. This type of extract does not require the use of quotation marks.

Citing the Work of Two Authors

When a work is written by two authors, the surname (also known as the last name) of each of them should be written in the same order in which they appear on the title page. The conjunction “and” should be used between the names in the introductory part. For example,

Oladeji and Olabode (2006, p. 35) say “married couples in most human societies are expected to live together, cooperate with each other and with their relatives in the maintenance of the household.”

Surnames of both authors should always be used regardless of the number of times that they are cited. However, when the citation is placed at end of the view in a work, an ampersand (&) will be used in the parenthetical citation. For example:

“Married couples in most human societies are expected to live together, cooperate with each other and with their relatives in the maintenance of the household” (Oladeji & Olabode, 2006, p.35).

Citing the Work of Three to Five Authors

In a work involving three to five authors, surnames of all the authors should be cited in the first reference. When the same work is referred to subsequently, only the surname of the first author, followed by “et al.” which means “and others” will be used. This will equally be followed by the year of publication. It is instructive to state that the words “et al.” are accompanied by a full stop and are not italicised; for example:

1st Ref.: Syntactic rules that allow us to produce, understand and make grammatical judgements are unconscious rules (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2014, p. 81).

2nd Ref.: Every sentence in any human language is associated with one or multiple constituent structures. If a sentence has one constituent structure, the unit becomes susceptible to more than one interpretation (Fromkin, et al., 2014, p. 84).

Citing the Work of More than Five Authors

When a work is authored by more than five persons, only the first author’s surname will be cited; followed by “et al.” This applies to the first and subsequent mention of the authors.

Citing Group Work or Corporate Author

A corporate author could be an organisation, corporation or government outfit. The name of the organisation will be used in place of the author’s name. However, if the situation warrants the use of abbreviation, the name should be stated at the first instance, and the abbreviation could be used subsequently.

According to the Health Family (2013), physical activity is the exertion of muscles in various ways in order to keep fit.

More Than One Work in a Citation

At times, one could make use of more than one source of information, parenthetically, in a work. When this occurs, the sources should be listed alphabetically, according to the surnames of the authors and each entry should be marked off by a semicolon. However, if the works are written by the same author, arrange them chronologically, according to the date of publication. In addition to these, if there are works by an author in the same year, one could use the lower case “a”, “b” or “c” to separate the entries. The following examples will buttress these claims:

Bamigboye (2015) and Ogungbe (2013) maintain that the contextual triad: field, tenor and mode of discourse are feeders of metafunctional components: ideational, interpersonal and textual respectively.

Systemic Functional Grammar is a theory that takes into consideration three variables or parameters: field, mode and tenor (Bamigboye, 2015; Ogungbe, 2013).

A Nigerian has a difficulty when he has to express concepts that are alien to English and which are products of a different coding system whose meaning capabilities differ from those of English (Dadzie, 1985; 2009).

Citing Secondary Sources

A secondary source refers to the view of another author in a work that one has read. Since one did not have direct access to the primary source, one has to use expressions such as “cited in” or “quoted in”. The following is an example:

Alebiosu and Bilesanmi (2005) cited in Sadiq (2015) opine that the culture of peace cannot be achieved without the citizens being imbued with the skills of how to prevent and resolve conflicts constructively.

Work in an Anthology

If the work of an author appears in an anthology, that is, an edited collection of writings/works by various authors, the name of the author (not the editor) will be written. However, the name(s) of the editor(s) will equally appear in the end-reference list as would be seen shortly:

Stylistics, in the technical sense, is the study of the use of language in a text and its study of a text involves the use of linguistic tools for the appreciation of literary and aesthetic values of the text (Salman, 2013, p. 115).

Reference to an Entire Work

If a whole book is used such that the idea being used is not located on a specific page, only the author's name and year of publication shall be cited. The page number is not necessary.

The novel *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* by Ayi Kwei Armah (1988) reflects the pervasive influence of corruption in all spheres of national life.

Author with More Than One Work in a Single Year

If an author has published more than a work in a year and one has to cite them, one will designate them by adding lower case letters such as "a, b, c" and so on after the year of publication. For example:

(Babatunde, 2001a; 2001b)

Citing Electronic Documents

Web pages in text should be cited like any other source, using the author and date format. This is in line with the APA style. However, if required information such as page number, author, and date of publication are not available, the following guidelines should be followed.

No Author

If the material has no author, the title of text should be used. Determiners/articles at the beginning of such titles should be skipped. In the parenthetical citation, title should be shortened if it is too long.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight can be cited simply as (Gawain, n.d., p. 3)

No Page Number

The essence of citing page number is to make the reader locate the actual place where a piece of information is located. If the page number is not available, the paragraph should be cited. If the work is divided into chapters or sections marked

by headings, the heading and the paragraph should be cited. To cite a paragraph, write its abbreviation “para” and the paragraph number.

(Kumar, 2011, Chapter 2, para. 4)

No Date

If the online document does not have a date, use the abbreviation “n.d” in the place of the date.

Scriptural Texts

When special text such as the *Glorious Qur’an* or the *Holy Bible* is being cited, the number tag of the edition, name of the editor or the translator’s name could be used in the in-text citation. However, it is unnecessary to create an entry for such a source in the reference list or end-references.

End-References (APA STYLE)

To write an end reference for a work, it is instructive to note that materials are to be listed alphabetically according to the authors’ names or the book titles, if the author’s name is not available. The following are useful tips in writing the APA style reference:

- i. Write the author’s surname or last name in full.
- ii. The surname should be accompanied by a comma and the author’s initial(s).
- iii. Write the year of publication of the work in parentheses, that is, after the author’s surname and the initials.
- iv. For books, only the first letter of the title should start with an upper case; others are to be written in the lower case, except when they are proper nouns. For journals or periodicals, title case is used.
- v. If there is a colon in the title, the first letter after the colon should be capitalised.
- vi. Unlike the MLA style, title of articles should not be put in quotation marks.
- vii. Titles of books or journal titles and volume numbers are italicised; the title of an article is not italicised.
- viii. The town or city of publication of books should be cited.
- ix. A colon should separate the place of publication and the name of the publisher.

- x. References should be double-spaced, arranged alphabetically using hanging indentation for each entry.

Works that are not Included in the Reference List

Although, they are included in in-text citation, some major works and personal communication are often left out of the reference list. For example, *The Glorious Qur'an* and *The Holy Bible* are not reflected in the reference list. Others include personal communication such as conversations, interviews, communication, and so on.

Book by One Author

The surname and the initial(s) of the author is followed by the year of publication in parentheses, title of book will be in italics, followed by the place of publication and the name of the publisher. For example:

Banjo, A. (1996). *Making a virtue of necessity: An overview of the English language in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

If an author has more than one work cited, the works are to be listed chronologically with the name of the author repeated. In addition, if the reference contains more than a work of the said author in a single year, the works are to be lettered. For instance:

Soyinka, W. (1964a). *The lion and the jewel*. London: Oxford University Press.

Soyinka, W. (1964b). *The trials of Brother Jero*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Work by Two Authors

Write the names of the authors with the surname (last name) first, followed by their initials. The last name will be preceded by an ampersand (&). Then write all other details such as year of publication, title, edition (if available), place of publication and publisher.

Akindele, F., & Adegbite, W. (1999). *The sociology and politics of English in Nigeria: An introduction*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University.

Work by Three to Six Authors

Write all the names of the authors and their initials as well as all the necessary information that are needed.

Work by Seven or More Authors

If a book has more than six authors, the surnames of the first five authors as well as their initials will be written. This will be followed by a three-point ellipsis (...) and the surname and initial of the last author. The elliptical-dots implies that name(s) of an author or some authors have been removed.

Ademola-Adeoye, F., Adam, Q., Somoye, B., Omiteru, J., Macauley, J.,...

Dallas, D. (2015). *Nigeria primary English 3*. Lagos: Learn Africa Plc.

Edited or Translated Book

If a book is an edited volume, the name of the editor is written. If there are two or more editors, their names with their initials should be written as well. If a book is edited by a single individual, the name of the editor will be written, followed by the abbreviation (Ed.) in parentheses. However, if a book has two or more editors, (Eds.) will follow the initials of the last editor's name. If the work is translated, enclose in parentheses after the title, the translator's initial and surname, put a comma and the clipped word 'Trans'.

Ofuani, O. A., & Ofuani, F. N. (Eds.). (2014). *Modern business communication in English*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Ba, M. (2008). *So long a letter*. (M. Bode-Thomas, Trans). London: Heinemann.

However, if a work in an edited volume is being cited, the author's name, **not** the editor's, should be used for alphabetising. The title of a book chapter or journal article should not be enclosed in quotation marks. The word 'In' should be used to introduce the editor's name. For listing the editor(s), the initials should precede the surname(s); unlike the order obtained in the author's name. Additionally, page range should normally follow the title of the book just before the place of publication and publisher's name are given.

Adetunji, A. (2013). A critical-stylistic analysis of mind style and characterisation in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*. In A.

Ogunsiji, A. Kehinde & A. Odebunmi (Eds.), *Language, literature and discourse* (pp.195-214). Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.

Organisation as Author

If a book has an organisation as the author, the name of the organisation will be alphabetised. Articles preceding the name such as “the”, “a” and “an” should be skipped.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2010). *The association between school based physical activity, including physical education and academic performance*. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services.

Edition Other than the First

Supply relevant information about the text, but put in parentheses after the title, information about the edition.

Osisanwo, A. (2012). *Fundamentals of English phonetics and phonology* (2nd Ed.). Lagos: Femolus-Fetop.

Unpublished Dissertations and Theses

If the dissertation or thesis is unpublished, state the writer’s name and date, following the APA style. The title of the dissertation should be italicised. However, the type of dissertation/thesis should be stated, i.e. master or doctoral. This is followed by the name of the awarding institution and its location.

Akinjobi, A. A. (2004). *A phonological investigation of vowel weakening and unstressed syllable obscuration in educated Yoruba English*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Linguistics, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Journal Articles

Write the name of the author as well as year of publication. Do not enclose the article title in quotation marks or italicise it. The volume number (in Italics), the issue number (in parenthesis) and the pages will follow. Note that “pp.” is not used in indicating page location of journal or periodical article; unlike what obtains in designating chapter of an edited book.

Alabi, T. A. (2012). Towards the determination of Standard Nigerian English. *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association (JNESA)*, 15(1), 127-136.

Magazine Articles

An article in a magazine will comprise the following author's name and initial, year and month of publication and, possibly the date. Thereafter, the title of the article, magazine title, volume (issue) and the page(s) will follow. Note that the year and month of publication are to be in parentheses.

Adeosun, A. (2017, March 20). Still a divided house. *TELL*, 12, 34-35.

Newspaper Articles

An article in a newspaper contains the author's name, year, month and date of publication. In addition to these are the article's title, newspaper's title as well as the page(s).

Fani-Kayode, F. (2014, August 3). The time to say no more. *Sunday Tribune*, p. 47.

Online Materials

Books, articles, magazines, newspapers, etc. that are available online are to be cited appropriately. However, if they have websites or means of identification such as Digital Object Identification (DOI) and URL, such information should be included in the entry.

Online Journal Article with DOI

Write the same set of information for print journal article, but add the retrieved information in the form of the DOI.

Sofowora, S. A. (2014). Innovative method of teaching English language in primary schools using adaptive interactive animated cartoons. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 4 (6), 75-82. doi: 10.5901/jesr.2014.v4n6p75

Online Journal Article without a DOI

If the DOI is not available, write the URL as alternative retrieval information.

Lamidi, M. T. (2008). The structure and texture of English translations of Yoruba and Igbo proverbs. *Journal of Language and Translation*, 9 (1), 61-90. Retrieved on 02/26/2017 from www.unish.org/upload/word/913.pdf

Online Newspaper Article

All the information contained in the print version such as the author's name, year, month, day of publication, title of article and name of newspaper as well as the website should be supplied accordingly. The address of the site from where the information is obtained should equally be included in the entry, introduced by "Retrieved from".

Fani-Kayode, F. (2014, August 3). The time to say no more. *Sunday Tribune*. Retrieved from <http://www.tribune.com.ng>

Books in Electronic Version

All the basic information should be written with the inclusion of the URL.

Language, discourse and literature (1989). In R. Carter & P. Simpson (Eds.) Retrieved from an Intro Reader in Discourse Stylistics pdf-Reader

References (End-Reference / Reference List)

Adeoye, A. A. (2011). Documenting research: The Modern Language Association (MLA) style. In Z. I. Oseni, V. A. Alabi & O. C. Medubi (Eds.) *Writing up research: Current trends in the humanities* (pp.108-126). Ilorin: Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin.

Adetunji, A. (2013). A critical-stylistic analysis of mind style and characterisation in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*. In A. Ogunsiji, A. Kehinde & A. Odebunmi (Eds.), *Language, literature and discourse* (pp.195-215). Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.

- Akinjobi, A. A. (2004). *A phonological investigation of vowel weakening and unstressed syllable obscuration in educated Yoruba English*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Linguistics, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Alabi, T. A. (2012). Towards the determination of Standard Nigerian English. *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association (JNESA)*, 15(1), 127-136.
- Alabi, V. A. (2011). Documenting research: In-text references, abbreviations and symbols. In Z. I. Oseni, V. A. Alabi & O. C. Medubi (Eds.), *Writing up research: Current trends in the humanities* (pp.108-126). Ilorin: Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin.
- American Psychological Association (2011). *The publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Armah, A. K. (1988). *The beautiful ones are not yet born*. England: Heinemann.
- Arowolo, B. (2011). Documenting research: The American Psychological Association (APA) style. In Z. I. Oseni, V. A. Alabi & O. C. Medubi (Eds.) *Writing up research: Current trends in the humanities* (pp.147-158). Ilorin: Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin.
- Babatunde, S. T. (2001a). English in a changing world. In S. T. Babatunde (Ed.), *Contemporary English usage* (pp.87-117). Ilorin: Haytee Books.
- Babatunde, S. T. (2001b). English as a second language (ESL) phenomenon in Nigeria. In S. T. Babatunde (Ed.), *Contemporary English usage* (pp.105-150). Ilorin: Haytee Books.
- Bamigboye, O. (2015). Sentence as a stylistic choice in Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*. *Papers in English and Linguistics (PEL)*, 16(2), 103-118.

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2010). *The association between school based physical activity, including physical education and academic performance*. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services.
- Egbe, D. I. (1996). *Excellence in written and spoken English*. Lagos: Tisons Limited.
- Fawole, I., Egbokhare, F. O., Itiola, O. A., Odejide, A. I., & Olayinka, A. I. (2006). Definition, spectrum and types of research. In A. I. Olayinka, V. O. Taiwo, A. Raji-Oyelade & I. P. Farai (Eds.), *Methodology of basic and applied research* (pp.166-176). Ibadan: The School of Postgraduate, University of Ibadan.
- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2014). *An introduction to language* (10th Ed.). USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Healthy Family (2013). Acute coordinative exercise improve intentional performance in adolescents. *Neuroscience Letters*, 441(2), 219-223.
- Ogungbe, E. O. (2013). Noun phrase modifications in Nigerian newspapers. In A. Ogunsiji, A. Kehinde & A. Odebunmi (Eds.) *Language, literature and discourse* (pp.37-50). Ibadan: Stirling-Hordens Publishers.
- Okesipe, K., & Okolo, M. S. C. (2013). *Essentials of communication in English for Nigerian universities*. Ibadan: Rebuttal Books.
- Oladeji, M. O., & Olabode, B. O. (2006). *Sociology: The science of society*. Ibadan: Real Success Consult.
- Osisanwo, A. (2012). *Fundamentals of English phonetics and phonology* (2nd Ed.). Lagos: Femolus-Fetop.
- Osuala, E. C. (2001). *Introduction to research methodology*. Nigeria: Africana-Fep Publishers Limited.

Sadiq, M. (2015). The integration of peace education into the English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum in Nigeria. *Papers of English and Linguistics (PEL)*, 16(2), 216-227.

Salman, M. A. (2013). Language and style in Okot P'bitek's *Song of Ocol*. In A. Ogunsiyi, A. Kehinde & A. Odebunmi (Eds.) *Language, literature and discourse* (pp.113-124). Ibadan: Stirling-Hordens Publishers.

Sofowora. S. A. (2014). Innovative method of teaching English language in primary school using adaptive interactive animated cartoons. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 4 (6), 75-82. doi: 10:590o1/jesr.20`14.v4n6p75

Soyinka, W. (1964a). *The lion and the jewel*. London: Oxford University Press.

Soyinka, W. (1964b). *The trials of Brother Jero*. London: Oxford University Press.

Modern Language Association (MLA) Formatting Style

In-text Citation (MLA Style)

In-text citation has to do with the references made in the body of the essay or parenthetical citation within a work. It is different from "Works Cited" (otherwise called reference list in the APA format), which is the last segment of a research report. MLA employs parenthetical citation through which brief information about the source of one's information is documented and it is author-page centred. This is an illustration:

To try to determine the exact number of languages indigenous to Nigeria is a daunting task (Jowitt 2).

Whatever information is given in a parenthetical citation should be reflected adequately in the "Works Cited" section. Concerning the author-page reference that has been cited above, an entry for it in "Works Cited" will include the following:

Jowitt, David. *Nigerian English Usage: An Introduction*. Lagos: Longman Nigeria, 1991.

Author's Name Given in the Text

When the name of an author is stated in a sentence or expression that precedes the parentheses, only the page number appears in parentheses.

David Jowitt remarks that “*vulgar errors*” are those which show ignorance of fairly elementary rules; and typical of them are syntactic, morphological, and spelling errors (60).

First Mention of an Author's Name

The full name of an author is allowed for the first time in an in-text citation. The name should not be reversed or abbreviated.

Ayo Banjo observes that “the difference in policy between the North and the South was inevitable” (21).

However, when subsequent reference is being made to the author, only the surname should be used. For instance,

Banjo stresses that the English language would provide a rallying force in the southern regions...

More than One Work by the Same Author

When more than one work of an author is used, the titles should be differentiated through a shortened form in the parentheses.

Rather than expend energies on the non-existent clash of civilisations in the play, the playwright believes that competent producers should emphasise its “threnodic essence” (Soyinka, *Death* 144)

The play is a metaphorical representation of two warring worlds: age-long traditionalism and modern civilisation (Soyinka, *The Lion*)

In this case, *Death* is employed as an abridged form of *Death and the King's Horseman* and *The Lion* of *The Lion and the Jewel*.

A Single Work by Two or Three Authors

When a work is written by two or three authors, only their surnames will be supplied.

(Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams 36)

Work by More than Three Authors

Only the surname of the first author followed by “et al.” including the page location of the source material will be cited in the parentheses of a single work that involves more than three authors.

(Quirk et al. 105)

Corporate Author

The name of the organisation should be written in full. However, if the corporate name is long, it should be cited in the introductory sentence but the page reference will be in parentheses at the end of the citation.

According to International Labour Organisation, it is the duty of the employer of labour to ensure secure and safe working environment for the workers (55)

It is the duty of the employer of labour to ensure secure and safe working environment for the workers (ILO 55)

Citing Electronic Book

Page numbers in electronic books may not be stable as pagination of a document can vary depending on the e-reader being used to access it. Hence, it is permissible not to include page numbers if consistency across board cannot be guaranteed. However, title of the chapter or section can be used in place of page number where applicable.

(Kumar, The Research Problem)

Indirect Quotation

When one does not have access to an original text or source and there is a need to make use of a quotation from it as a secondary source, the source should be cited appropriately in the introductory sentence but one should include *qtd in* (short

form of quoted in) in parenthesis, followed by information about the indirect source (the text from where the quotation or information is taken).

“It has rightly been observed... that the identification of any particular number of varieties – or social dialects – of English spoken by Nigerian (or of any other language, for that matter is, in the final analysis, arbitrary” (qtd in Banjo 79).

Citing More Than One Work

If more than a work is cited to buttress a claim in the research, the two or more authors should be separated with semi-colon.

English is a second language to most Nigerians because majority of them had their indigenous languages already acquired before their contact with English (Jowitt 16; Banjo 28; Alabi 80).

The authors should be listed according to the date of publication, starting from the earliest. Note that the full bibliographical details would be supplied in the reference list of “Works Cited”.

Citing Literary Works (Prose)

Literary works are of different types. Some of them come in different editions and are divided into various sections. Concerning prose, the page number will appear first. The book number and the chapter will follow. These are abbreviations for the divisions: “ch.” for chapter; “bk” for book and “sec” for section.

Ayi Kwei Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones* captures the pervasive corruption in his domains by saying “Life gets very hard when veranda boys are building palaces in a matter of months” (93; ch.7).

Citing Literary Works (Poetry)

A poetry is cited by line, not the page number.

Tunde Olusunle’s “Message” admonishes that “The wise cripple forewarned never tarries to hear the crackle of cannons” (1. 5-6).

In a citation like the one above, “1” refers to the first stanza, while “5-6” refers to the lines of the poem quoted.

Citing Literary Works (Drama)

Like poetry, page number should not be cited. Instead, episodes, acts and scenes from where the citation is extracted should be given. An example is given as follows:

In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Mark Anthony's speech is not only overtly commemorative but also covertly persuasive. (Act 3, Scene II)

Citing Scriptural Texts

If reference is being made to a scripture, the book, the chapter and the verse(s) (as applicable) should be mentioned. Where there are versions of the scripture, the one in question should be identified at the first use. For subsequent citation(s) of the same volume, only the book/chapter and the verse should be listed in parenthesis. The following are illustrative examples of citations from the *Glorious Qur'an* and the *Holy Bible* respectively:

In the *Glorious Qur'an*, Allah says "Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried? But we have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars." (Surah Al-Ankabut [29] 2 - 30)

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed." (*King James Bible*, Proverbs 13. 20-21)

It should be noted that scriptural texts are not included in the end-reference, reference list or list of works cited as the case may be.

Guidelines on Works Cited List

- i. Entries should be arranged alphabetically with the authors' last names (surnames), or by title for sources that do not have authors. Both the first and the last names of the author or editor, as the case may be, should be written in full.
- ii. The first word as well as all other major words of the titles and subtitles should be capitalised. However, articles, prepositions, conjunctions, or the "to" infinitives should be rendered in lower case.

- iii. Publisher's name should be shortened; for example, omission of articles, business abbreviations (Co., Inc.), and descriptive words (Press, Publishers).
- iv. Where it is preferred, include the place of publication and mark it from the publisher using a colon (:).
- v. Where applicable, include all the names of publishers and insert a semi-colon between each of them.
- vi. If more than a city/town is listed for the same publisher, use the first one. Note that place of publication is no longer necessary. Where the researcher chooses to include it, consistency should be observed in all the entries in the list of works cited.
- vii. Use the conjunction "and", not ampersand (&), when multiple authors of a single work are involved. Note that only the first author's name is reversed, e.g. Crystal, David and Derek Davy (*Crystal* and *Davy* being the last names).
- viii. Abbreviations such as p. or pp. are used to mark off pages as single or multiple respectively.
- ix. The first line of the entry is flushed to the left margin and the second line and other lines (if available) are indented with (5 to 7 character spaces) to form a "hanging indentation" with right margin alignment.

Books by an Author

The name of the author should be written and it will be followed by the book title and publication information. In the current MLA stylesheet (8th Edition), it is no longer mandatory to specify place of publication and the version consulted (either as "Print" or "Web"). The publisher's name should be followed by the date. Compare the following:

****Former MLA Edition***

Soyinka, Wole. *The Interpreters*. London: Andre Deutsh, 1965. Print.

Current MLA Format (8th Edition)

Soyinka, Wole. *The Interpreters*. Andre Deutsh, 1965.

However, where the former is preferred, consistency of the style should be maintained throughout the list of Works Cited. It is important to note that just as

the surname, the other name of an author should not be abbreviated unless the full form is unknown or not identifiable with the author of the text being cited. Meanwhile, when there are two or more sources with the same author, the author's name will only feature in the first citation. In the second or subsequent citations, three hyphens will be used in place of the author's name, followed by a full-stop.

Soyinka, Wole. *The Interpreters*. London: Deutsh, 1965.

---. *The Trials of Brother Jero*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Note that the name of an author can only appear more than once in the list of Works Cited in case of co-authorship, e.g.

Halliday, Michael A. K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold, 1985.

Halliday, Michael A. K. and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976.

Halliday, Michael A. K. and Christian Matthiessen. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 3rd ed. London: Edward Arnold, 2004.

Books by Two Authors

Only the first author's name is reversed. Other information are constant as in books by one author.

Akindele, Femi and Wale, Adegbite. *The Sociology and Politics of English in Nigeria: An Introduction*. Ile-Ife: OAU, 1999. Print. **(Old)**

Akindele, Femi and Wale, Adegbite. *The Sociology and Politics of English in Nigeria: An Introduction*. OAU, 1999. **(New)**

Books by Three Authors

The name of the first author is reversed and separated by a comma from the second author's name and the coordinating conjunction 'and' is used to introduce the third author's name. Note that the order of names of the last two is left unchanged; just as the names appear on the title page of the book being cited.

Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams. *Introduction to Language*. 10th ed. US: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014.

Book by More Than Three Authors

In a work of more than three authors, simply write the first author's name in reverse order; add a comma, and write et al.

Quirk, Randolph et al. *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. Essex:
Longman Group Limited, 1985.

Book by a Corporate Author

A book published by an organisation without an editor will have the organisation's name as the author. However, article(s) preceding the organisation's name are to be deleted.

International Phonetics Association. *Handbook of International Phonetics Association: A Guide to the Use of International Phonetic Alphabet*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.

A Work in an Anthology/ A Chapter of an Edited Book

The name of the contributor, not the editor's name, is written first. The title of the work is enclosed in double quotation. A full stop is applied and then the title of the anthology/ edited volume follows (in italics). The name of the editor comes after "edited by". After the publishing information, the date and the page range of the cited chapter are included (separated by comma); not only the page that one has used.

Owolabi, Dare. "Linguistic Fundamentals in Literary Stylistics". *Studies in Stylistics and Discourse Analysis*, edited by Gbenga Fakuade. Language Contact and Language Conflict Study Group, 2014, pp.27-50.

Translated Work

To cite a translated work, the author's name, not the translator's name should be alphabetised, followed by the book's title. The word "Trans." will come after the title and the translator's name as it appears on the title page.

Ba, Mariama. *So Long a Letter*. Trans. Modupe Bode-Thomas. Heinemann, 1981.

Works Compiled, Edited or Translated by an Author

The name of the editor, translator or compiler is of priority in Works Cited list if his/her work is used (not a work by another author) in the anthology. After the editor's/translator's/compiler's name, a comma is applied, followed by "ed.,"/ "trans.,"/ "comp." as the case may be. The abbreviation will be in a lower case.

Soyinka, Wole ed. *Poems of Black Africa*. Heinemann, 1975.

Works in a Reference Book

Reference books comprise encyclopedias and dictionaries. If an encyclopedia entry contains an author's initial(s), the full name should be found and included. However, if the name is not available, the entry title should be used to list it. The publishing information should be added.

Wales, Katie. *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. Pearson Education Ltd., 2001.

Second and Subsequent Editions of a Book

The author and title should be cited. Information about the edition will follow. However, if the book has an editor or a translator, the information on the type of edition follows.

Holmes, Janet. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. 3rd ed. Pearson Education Ltd, 2008.

Multivolume Book

If one is citing a single volume in a multivolume work, the volume that one has used will come after the title or after the name of the editor, if the work has an editor. If a single volume is being used, the abbreviation "vol." is appropriate. However, if one is citing more than one volume, the total number of volumes used will be abbreviated, for example, "vols." (4 vols.)

Borchert, Donald M., ed. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2nd ed. Vol. 6. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006.

When Authorship of the Source Material is not Listed

Simply use the title of the book or non-book material as a reference for the author. For instance, the following is a reference entry for a motion picture in the list of Works Cited:

Twenty-Eight Days Later. Directed by Danny Boyle, Produced by Alex Garland, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2002.

Dissertation

If a dissertation is not published, the title of the work will be in quotation marks, after the author's name. The type of work should be stated.

Jubril, Munzali. "Phonological Variation in Nigerian English". Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1982.

Articles in a Scholarly Journal

Author's name is written in reverse order, starting with the surname. Supply the title of the article and publication information. Volume number, issue number (if applicable), date and page range will follow in that order.

Mika'ilu, Ibrahim. "Gender Sentiments in Nigerian Primary English Textbooks: A Critical Analysis". *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association (JNESA)*. Vol. 17, 2015, pp. 84-93.

Article in a Journal without Volume Numbers

If a scholarly journal uses issues numbers only, the issue number will be written after the title of the journal with relevant publishing information, pages and medium of publication.

Raji-Oyelade, Aderemi. "Posting the African Proverb: A Grammar of Yoruba Postproverbials or Logophagia, Logorrhea and the Grammar of Yoruba Postproverbials." *Proverbium*, No. 21, 2004, pp. 300-313.

For newspaper, magazine, and journal articles, the title of the article is placed in quotation marks and the name of the source is placed in italics. The same rule applies to other forms as well. Episodes of television shows are placed in quotation marks and the name of the television series is placed in italics. In addition, song titles are placed in quotation marks and the album names are placed in italics directly afterwards. Articles on websites are placed in quotation marks and the title of the website is placed in italics.

(Complete_Guide_to_MLA_8 (1).pdf Adobe Acrobat Reader DC, 10)

Newspaper Articles

As hinted in the extract above, the title of the article (in inverted commas) follows the author's names in reverse order. The name of the newspaper which should not include article or determiner is rendered in italic print. The date and the page follow suit. Note that the date should specify the actual day, month and year of publication. However, the issue number should be left out, even if it is supplied in the newspaper.

Fani-Kayode, Femi. "The Time to Say no More". *Sunday Tribune*, 3 Aug. 2014, p. 47.

Note that months like May, June and July are not abbreviated.

Editorial in a Newspaper

Financing River Basins. Editorial. *Nation*. 1 March 2017, p. 17.

Article in a Magazine

If a magazine is published monthly, the day should be omitted. If an article covers more than a page and they are numbered consecutively, write the first page and add the "plus sign"; for example, [16+].

Adeosun, Olusegun. "Still a Divided House." *Tell*. 20 Mar. 2017, p. 34+.

Editorial in a Magazine

Arik: Who Will Cast the First Stone? *Tell*. 20 Mar. 2017, p. 14+.

Online Materials

Article in an Electronic Journal

Some journal articles are published only on the Web. Such articles are to be cited in the same way as the print journal articles. However, it is important to state the date that the publication was accessed or "retrieved" as the material may be updated or removed.

Bernstein, Mark. "10 Tips on Writing the Living Web." *A List Apart: For People who Make Websites*, 16 Aug. 2002, alistapart.com/article/writeliving. Accessed 4 May 2009.

Online Article with no DOI

If the DOI is unavailable, write the URL as the alternative retrieval information.

Berntsen, Dorthé. "How is Modernist "Embodied"? *Metaphor and Symbol*, Vol. 14, 1999, pp.101-112.
<http://palimpsest.lss.wisc.edu/~danaher/coglit/publication.html>

Books in Electronic Version (i.e. E-Books)

The structure of a citation for an E-Book found on a web site or database is as follows: Author's last name, First name. "Title of Chapter" (if applicable), *Title of the e-book*, translated/edited by First name Last name, Vol. number (if applicable), Publisher, Year of publication, pages (if applicable), Web address / URL.

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Gold Bug." *Short Stories for English Courses*, edited Rosa M. R. Mikels. Project Gutenberg, 2004.
www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5403/pg5403-images.html.

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Adeosun, Olusegun. "Still a Divided House". *Tell*. 20 Mar. 2017, p.34.

Alabi, Taofiq A. "Language Contact: The Nigerian Experience with English". *Critical Perspectives on English Language and Literature*, edited by Olu Obafemi, Gabriel A. Ajadi and Victoria A. Alabi, Department of English, University of Ilorin, 2007, pp. 78 - 104.

Akindele, Femi and Wale Adegbite. *The Sociology and Politics of English in Nigeria: An Introduction*. Ile-Ife: OAU, 1999.

A Complete Guide to MLA 8. Adobe Acrobat Reader DC, EasyBib, A Chegg Service, 2016. *Complete_Guide_to_MLA_8(1).pdf* Adobe Acrobat Reader DC, 10

Arik: Who Will Cast the First Stone? *Tell*. 20 Mar. 2017, 14+.

Armah, Ayi Kwei. *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Essex: Heinemann, 1988.

- Ba, Mariama. *So Long a Letter*. Trans. Modupe Bode-Thomas. London: Heinemann, 1981.
- Banjo, Ayo. *Making a Virtue of Necessity: An Overview of the English Language in Nigeria*. Ibadan: University Press, 1996.
- Bernstein, Mark. "10 Tips on Writing the Living Web." *A List Apart: For People who Make Websites*, 16 Aug. 2002, alistapart.com/article/writeliving. Accessed 4 May 2009.
- Berntsen, Dorthe. "How is Modernist "Embodied"? *Metaphor and Symbol*, Vol. 14, 1999, pp.101-112.
<http://palimpsest.lss.wisc.edu/~danaher/coglit/publication.html>
- Borchert, Donald M., ed. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 2nd ed. Vol. 6. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006.
- Fani-Kayode, Femi. "The Time to Say no More." *Sunday Tribune*, 3 Aug. 2014, p.47.
- Financing River Basins. Editorial. *Nation*, 1 Mar. 2017, p.17.
- Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams. *An Introduction to Language*, 10th ed. USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold, 1985.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. and Ruqaiya Hasan. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. and Christian Matthiessen. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 3rd ed. London: Edward Arnold, 2004.
- Holmes, Janet. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. 3rd ed. England: Pearson Education Ltd., 2008.
- Jibril, Munzali. "Phonological Variation in Nigerian English." Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1982.
- Jowitt, David. *Nigerian English Usage: An Introduction*. Lagos: Longman Nigeria, 1991.

Mikailu, Ibrahim. "Gender Sentiments in Nigerian Primary English Textbooks: A Critical Analysis" *Journal of the Nigeria English Studies Association*, Vol. 17, 2015, pp.84-93.

Modern Language Association of America. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 8th ed. USA: Modern Language Association of America, 2016.

Okesipe, Kunle and M. S. C. Okolo. *Essentials of Communication in English for Nigerian Universities*. Ibadan: Rebuttal Books, 2013.

Owolabi, Dare. "Linguistic Fundamentals in Literary Stylistics". *Studies in Stylistics and Discourse Analysis*, edited by Gbenga Fakuade. Language Contact and Language Conflict Study Group, 2014, pp.27-50.

Raji-Oyelade, Aderemi. "Posting the African Proverb: A Grammar of Yoruba Postproverbials or Logophagia, Logorrhea and the Grammar of Yoruba Postproverbials." *Proverbium*, No. 21, 2004, pp.300-313.

Soyinka, Wole. *The Lion and the Jewel*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.

---. *The Interpreters*. London: Andre Deutsh, 1965.

---, ed. *Poems of Black Africa*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

---. *Death and the King's Horseman*. London: Methuen Ltd., 1982.

Conclusion

Conducting a research entails a systematic, methodical and organised procedure. Researchers are embodiment of works from different sources and it is proper to acknowledge the sources. Both in-text citation and end reference are crucial to the authenticity and originality of a research exercise. A research that does not ascribe importance to reference is a mockery of academics and that is why premium should be given to any research exercise, no matter its nature. It should be emphasised that credibility of a research will not be achieved if adequate and accurate acknowledgement of authoritative sources on which the study is based is not made. One serious crime in research is plagiarism which flouts the ethical framework for a credible study. Whether cited directly or indirectly, researchers

should be mindful of documenting all materials that have been consulted as accurately and as appropriately as possible.

Two standard formats of documenting research have been discussed in this chapter. These are American Psychological Association (APA) and Modern Language Association (MLA) formats. Effort has been made to cover major and commonly cited resources with a fairly high level of compliance to the provisions in the current APA and MLA documents. The reason for focusing on the two is because they are widely used in research writing. This does not imply that others are not useful. However, the use of any of the two is dependent on the nature of the topic and area of the research. At times, the choice of the stylesheet, or customised specifications, is at the discretion of the degree awarding institution, research institute or publishing organisation. It is hoped that this attempt will assist prospective researchers to key easily into any of the formats that is prescribed.

CORPUS METHODS IN LANGUAGE STUDIES

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rngula@ucc.edu.gh**INTRODUCTION**

For decades, beginning perhaps from the grammatical studies of Danish scholar, Otto Jespersen, in the 1920s, much of the empirical studies into language has been based on a manual analysis of a few texts. In these early studies, the analysts had – by necessity – been constrained by the small amounts of text they could gather, handle and analyse effectively. Corpus linguistics, in the last two decades especially, has brought a massive boost, and a significant turn-around, to the empirical investigation of language. Owing to corpus linguistics, not only are analysts now able to explore, with relative ease, texts running into millions of words, they have also become aware of the fascinating insights that can be derived from the application of corpus methods to textual analyses: insights which were missed in a human-only analysis. As Hunston (2002, p. 1) notes, it is not an exaggeration to say that corpus linguistics has “revolutionised the study of language”. What then is corpus linguistics? And what is its primary resource? According to Baker (2010, p. 93), “[c]orpus linguistics is an increasingly popular field of linguistics which involves the analysis of (usually) very large collections of electronically stored texts, aided by computer software”. McEnery and Hardie (2012, p. 1) say that corpus linguistics deals with “some set of machine-readable texts which is deemed an appropriate basis to study a specific set of research questions”. Corpus linguistics is therefore a methodology or an approach used to investigate linguistic phenomena rather than a sub field within linguistics, comparable to such areas as semantics, syntax, sociolinguistics, forensic linguistics, etc. Its primary resource is a corpus, whose definition can be safely gleaned from the corpus linguistics definitions offered by Baker (2010) and McEnery and Hardie (2012) above: a corpus is a large ‘body’ of texts stored electronically. For

any specific investigation, an analyst invariably works with a corpus or a set of corpora by first uploading it onto a corpus software, and then applying specific methods on the software, such as running frequency counts or concordance lists to derive results. It is clear, then, that the development of corpus linguistics has been facilitated by the role of computers. Indeed, the major advances in corpus linguistics are inextricably linked to advances in computer technology.

English is doubtless the language that has benefitted the most from the application of corpora for language studies and the reason is not farfetched: the field itself started and developed in English-speaking countries, primarily the United Kingdom and the United States of America (cf. McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Hence, tools were originally designed with English studies in mind. But there are now compilations and analyses of corpora in several other languages such as Chinese, French, Dutch, Danish, Maltese, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, etc. – a fact which has totally diversified the field and given its practice a truly global outlook. The focus of this chapter is to examine the role corpus methods and corpora play in language studies. In the remainder of this chapter, some of the key theoretical issues around corpus linguistics are discussed, how to design and build a corpus is explained, and how to analyse a corpus (using one or two examples of corpus research to explain the process) is highlighted. The chapter ends with a concluding remark that makes a statement on the field's prospects. As I have a background in English linguistics, my discussion will be based on English corpus linguistics, hoping that readers interested in working with other languages can still benefit from the issues discussed.

Key Theoretical Issues in Corpus Linguistics

Empiricism and rationalism are long-standing, yet opposing, philosophical positions that seek to explain how new knowledge is acquired by humans. With the former, knowledge (or reality) is evidence-based and thrives on direct observation, experience and experimentation. By contrast, rationalism takes a mentalistic and an innate view, and suggests that knowledge is acquired intuitively through reason. Corpus linguistics is hinged on empiricism, and as an approach, its strength lies in the evidence derived from what corpus data may help us

understand about real occurrences of language use. Interestingly, a major opposition to corpus work came from a linguistic theory that foregrounded rationalism: Noam Chomsky's *Generative Grammar*. Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (1957), and later *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965), virtually revolutionarised the study of language as it succeeded in shifting the focus of linguistic inquiry from an external description of authentic language use (*Performance*) towards an abstract cognitive model that stressed a speaker's tacit, internalised knowledge of their language (*Competence*). Chomsky argued that a linguist's primary goal should be to build a model of linguistic competence, and, in his view, performance data could not be relied upon to achieve this goal. Once the generative movement was embraced by the linguistic fraternity, it implied also that corpus work was to become unpopular. In the words of McEnery and Wilson (2001, p. 6), "[a] corpus is by its very nature a collection of externalised utterances and, as such, it must of necessity be a poor guide to modelling linguistic competence". Unsurprisingly, by the 1960s and early 1970s especially, corpus linguistics had virtually been subdued. The impact was so great that "many early corpus linguists almost felt as if they had to work in secret cells" (Lindquist, 2009, p. 9).

But it did not take too long for corpus linguistics to regain popularity among linguists. From the 1980s, the Chomskyan criticism of performance data was not only shown to be overstated, the idea of *communicative competence* from Hymes (1972), which highlighted the role of context for any successful communication, had reinforced the value of authentic (corpus) data in the study of language. The renewed interest of linguists in corpora is stated by Meyer (2002, p. 1) who observes that "[l]inguists of all persuasion are now far more open to the idea of using linguistic corpora for descriptive and theoretical studies of language". If for nothing at all, corpora - more than methods based on introspection - offer objective and speedy analysis of linguistic items, give reliable frequency information, and allow researchers to be able to verify and replicate studies.

In contemporary corpus linguistics, one issue that has generated considerable debate within the field is the *corpus-based* vs. *corpus-driven* divide, first argued for by Tognini-Bonelli (2001). It is with regards to the theoretical contribution of corpus

linguistics that this divide has gained prominence. While many linguists agree that corpus linguistics is a methodology, some others working from the Firthian (and Sinclairian) framework of linguistics think that corpus linguistics is more than a methodology: it has a strong theoretical status, they would argue. This is the basis of the *corpus-based* and *corpus-driven* distinction. A corpus-based analysis explores a corpus with the primary aim of testing existing linguistic hypotheses or theories, especially if these were based more on introspection rather than on corpus evidence, to ascertain, based on corpus data, whether such hypotheses or theories can be supported, or may have to be modified or refuted. On the other hand, a corpus-driven analysis approaches a corpus with a more open mind, without an eye on existing hypotheses or theories. It aims to allow the corpus itself to drive the research and for the analyst to observe what is salient to explore in the corpus. Approaching a corpus this way helps to arrive at much stronger, and sometimes entirely new, theoretical conclusions.

Not everyone supports the distinction between corpus-based and corpus-driven linguistics. McEnery and his team (e.g. McEnery & Wilson, 2001; McEnery & Hardie, 2010; McEnery & Hardie, 2012), for instance, think that all corpus linguistic work should be characterised as corpus-based. Generally, it seems the linguists in favour of this distinction, and who particularly have a stronger inclination towards corpus-driven analysis, have been the followers of John Sinclair's work – including Tognini-Bonelli herself, Stubbs, Hunston, Hoey, Krishnamurthy, Teubert, among others – at the University of Birmingham in the UK (see McEnery & Hardie, 2010). But perhaps the important point to note is that linguists on both sides of the divide have, over many years, healthily co-existed and worked together, sharing ideas at the same conferences and publishing research findings in the same journals. Indeed, recent corpus studies tend to apply key ideas from the two camps (e.g. Baker, 2014), where in some of Baker's chapters the analysis is corpus-based, while in others he follows a corpus-driven approach.

Corpus Design and Construction

Compiling a corpus when existing ones are not suitable

To start studying any linguistic item in a corpus, there must first be a corpus. Corpora (by their very nature as texts processed and stored in digital form) once compiled can be used by many other researchers under certain conditions. To work with an already-existing corpus, you should be sure that the corpus you have in mind is available and can be accessed for your study. Besides, the corpus should be one that is suitable enough to address your specific research questions. But these two conditions may not always be met, as not all existing corpora are publicly accessible, and not every corpus might usefully be able to address your research questions. So, you might necessarily be required to design and construct your own corpus for some specific research goal. What does designing and constructing a corpus entail?

First, it must be decided what type of corpus is to be constructed. There are a variety of corpus types which, due to the scope to be covered in this chapter, I am unable to discuss fully. Luckily, there are excellent introductory textbooks on corpus linguistics that offer detailed explanations on the various types of corpora (see, for example, Hunston, 2002; McEnery, Xiao & Tono, 2006). Here, I will simply explain the two most common types; namely, *general* and *specialised* corpora, and then focus on how specialised corpora are designed and constructed since they are the type individual researchers utilise quite often and can easily compile on their own.

A general corpus is one that includes a variety of text types in its compilation. It may contain written texts, spoken texts, or both, and very often it represents a national, regional or sub variety of a language. There are several general corpora of approximately a million words, such as the Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen (LOB) written corpus, and others of a much bigger size that include both written and spoken texts, such as the over 450 million-word Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA). Constructing a general corpus can be quite a task and therefore it very often requires a collaboration of researchers and/or institutions.

Designing and compiling a specialised corpus

A specialised corpus, in contrast to a general one, targets one text type (or genre), say, political speeches, newspaper editorials, master's theses, or business letters. Because of its narrowed text focus, a specialised corpus is usually smaller in size compared to a general one, yet some specialised corpora are quite large and have been compiled by a team of researchers as well (e.g. the 1.8 million Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), or the 5 million Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE)). Depending on an analyst's research aim and questions, a specialised corpus can be much smaller. For example, Handford and Matous (2011) compiled a 13, 000 -word (preliminary) corpus of construction industry discourse to study interaction features in that context; Stubbs (2005) compiled a specialised corpus of less than 40, 000 words (i.e. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*) for a corpus stylistic study; and Baker (2006) compiled a 130, 000-word corpus of debates in the House of Commons to study discourses around foxhunting. At first sight, it might seem unworthy to build (very) small, specialised corpora, such as the above examples, given that corpora are now becoming even larger. But as Koester (2010, p. 67) writes, the point of such small corpora is that 'they allow a much closer link between the corpus and the contexts in which the texts in the corpus were produced', noting further that '[w]ith a small corpus, the corpus compiler is often also the analyst, and therefore usually has a high degree of familiarity with the context'. So, what are the main issues and/or the stages in constructing a (specialised) corpus? The process usually involves designing, gathering and processing relevant texts, and possibly annotating the corpus.

Designing a corpus

For a start, you have to design the corpus by planning, deciding, and generally putting up a framework to guide the gathering and processing of texts for the corpus. Designing a corpus is thus much like designing a plan for a building construction. Design procedures for a specialised corpus trigger a few relevant questions to ask and to attempt giving tentative answers. What text type (or genre) and which author is involved? What would be the size of the corpus? For a

specialised corpus, you probably would be able to decide easily the text type your corpus would contain. But would the text collection be based on text excerpts or full texts? How many text samples would be included? Which publication dates for texts qualify to enter the corpus? Would the texts to be collected require any permissions? A corpus compiler should think of the answers to give to such questions before proceeding to collect the relevant texts for inclusion in the corpus. When I wrote my own PhD thesis (Ngula, 2015), it was based on a specialised corpus of research articles (RAs) I constructed, and I had to answer such design questions. In my PhD research, I set out to explore epistemic rhetorical resources of argumentation in RAs written in English by Ghanaian scholars based in Ghana in the disciplines of Sociology, Economics and Law, and to compare these RAs with similar RAs written by international scholars who are native speakers of English. When I discovered that already-existing RA corpora would not usefully address my research questions, I decided to construct my own corpus. It was obvious I needed a corpus of RAs in the three disciplines for the two groups of authors. I decided to build an overall RA corpus of approximately 1 million words to have sub parts for the three disciplines of the two groups of authors. Given that the linguistic items I wanted to study (i.e. epistemic modality devices) occur quite frequently in RAs, I thought that 1 million words would be sufficient to reveal useful tendencies and findings to address my research questions. I planned that I would include 20 articles for each of the three disciplines on the Ghana side and on the international scholars' side, so that I estimated 120 RAs in total.

Another decision I made was that I would collect full RA texts rather than RA excerpts. If I wanted to study specific sections of the RA – such as the introduction section or the discussion section – then it would have been ideal to collect only those sections of the RA for the corpus. In my case, I wanted to explore occurrences of epistemic devices in the entire RA, and to study disciplinary and discourse community variation. So, collecting the full texts was the way to proceed as I was not looking at the feature in specific sections of the RA. Furthermore, I planned that the dates of publication for all the RAs (of both groups) to enter my corpus would be from the year 2000 to 2010. Two reasons

informed this decision: the first was that I wanted my RA corpus to reflect contemporary usage and I thought this year range worked quite well; and secondly, my pre-design checks suggested that, for both groups of scholars, I could relatively easily obtain sufficient RA texts published in this period. And since published RAs are already in the public domain, I did not have to obtain any permissions to gather the relevant RAs for my corpus.

Certain kinds of texts cannot be obtained easily without (written) permission, and sometimes organisations and individuals are reluctant to release confidential textual material even when corpus compilers seek permission to use such texts. A good example is Handford (2010) who recounts how challenging it was to record business meetings for his corpus. He notes that companies were not easily “persuaded ... to allow recording, with roughly 95 per cent of companies who were approached refusing permission. Companies were especially concerned about confidentiality” (Handford, 2010, p. 4).

The design decisions just discussed above are important to the extent that the texts a corpus builder gathers for his corpus should be *representative*, *balanced* and *sampled*. Representativeness, balance and sampling are related features to consider in constructing a corpus. They are especially unavoidable principles in the construction of general and other types of corpora. But they may also be applied when constructing very specialised corpora. According to Biber (1993, p. 243), *representativeness* is to do with “the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population”. *Balance* is achieved if the full range of genres or text types is included in the corpus. The way each text excerpt or full text is selected for inclusion in the corpus is called *sampling*. Baker (2010, p. 96) is of the view that “[b]ecause a corpus ought to be representative of a particular language, language variety, or topic, the texts within it must be [sampled] and balanced carefully in order to ensure that some texts do not skew the corpus as a whole”. Representativeness, balance and sampling – in the building of general corpora – are not a simple and straightforward matter, and Biber (1993) and McEnery et al. (2006) offer detailed discussions on their nuances.

These principles can also be applied, more confidently, when constructing a specialised corpus. It is even possible to achieve total representativeness in some cases. If, for example, we wanted to construct a corpus of novels written by Chinua Achebe or Ayi Kwei Armah, we would simply have to include all the novels of these authors in wholes to achieve 100 per cent representativeness. In such a situation, there can be no skewing, and issues of sampling and balance will not even arise as the entire ‘population’, as it were, has been included in this case. However, if we take my specialised corpus of RAs once again, sampling and balance had to be carried out to ensure that the corpus was representative. As I designed my corpus, I knew it was not possible to include all RAs that met the collection criteria (i.e., the ‘population’). Hence, I decided I would choose equal samples of RAs in the three disciplines of Sociology, Economics and Law for the two groups of scholars I wanted to study. This meant applying the concepts of sampling and balance, in the hope of maximising representativeness. Overall, design decisions help the text collection process to proceed smoothly when it starts. But it has to be mentioned that when text collection starts, following the design put in place, practicalities on the field could lead to slight or even major changes to the design. These on-the-field realities and possible changes in original design reflect the fact that “corpus building is of necessity a marriage of perfection and pragmatism” (McEnery et al., 2006, p. 73).

Text collection and processing

I turn now to the collection and processing of authentic texts for storage in digital (or machine-readable) form. This is where the real corpus compilation starts. I will still focus on specialised written corpora and draw on my own RA corpus compilation to explain the process. But let me begin with a general point of note. Collecting and processing spoken texts is more arduous a task than doing same for written texts mainly because of the extra work of recording and orthographically transcribing speech, which sometimes may require detailed extra linguistic mark-ups. This explains why in most cases a corpus which includes both written and spoken texts has the written component being larger in size. A clear example is the approximately 100-million-word British National Corpus (BNC) which is made up of 90 per cent written and only 10 per cent spoken.

Text collection starts with capturing and having every relevant text in electronic form, if it is not already in that format. Indeed, a lot of texts are in print or non-print (handwritten) format only and for those you have to either scan the texts or simply key in the relevant texts by typing them out directly onto the computer. While this latter process of keyboarding can be time consuming and very tedious, it is recommended when especially you are collecting non-printed texts, such as student handwritten essays. This is because OCRs hardly capture handwritten texts when scanned. But a general problem with keyboarding texts (printed or non-printed) is the potential for typing errors to occur, especially when large amounts of texts are being typed. Post-typing editing is therefore often needed to ensure that typed texts mirror exactly the original texts. Scanning texts is a lot faster and preferred where large amounts of printed texts not already in electronic form are involved. Normally a page is scanned at a time, and depending on the effectiveness of the OCR being used, nearly every character is captured when a scan is completed. Thus, with OCR scanning too there may be the need for minor editing after the texts are scanned.

In recent years, however, a much more easy and effective approach to compiling texts for a corpus is made possible because of the existence of many text storage sites on the internet. If the texts to be collected are already in electronic form, it would be unnecessary altogether to scan or type texts. As Baker (2006, p. 31) has pointed out, “due to the proliferation of internet use, many texts which originally began life in written form can be found on websites or internet archives”. So, for example, when I constructed my RA corpus, all the relevant RA texts produced by the international scholars were already digitalized, as they were in E-journals that I could easily access online. I therefore downloaded the texts as *pdf* files for further processing. For RA texts produced by the Ghanaian scholars in Ghana, some of the texts were not available in digital form and for those I used a scanner and an OCR software to digitalise them.

The next important thing to do after text capture in digital form relates to the appropriate text file format and text filing name to use to store texts. With regards to file format, it is most suitable to save corpus text files as *plain text* on the

computer by clicking on the drop-down ‘Save As’ menu to select this option. This is because, as Reppen (2010) says, most corpus analysis software at present work best with this format, although other options like *Rich text* and *XML* can be used. It should be stressed that corpus analysis tools will not read digital texts in *pdf* or *word* format, and so when texts in these formats are downloaded from the internet, they ought to be converted to (or saved as) *plain text*. On text file naming, the compiler should decide on, and use, an appropriate naming system that considers the main features of the text, e.g., text number, genre, author name, speaker sex, etc. The importance of file naming is underscored by Reppen (2010, p. 33) who notes that file names should “clearly relate to the content of the file to allow users to sort and group files into sub categories or to create sub corpora more easily”. In my RA corpus, for example, I named the Sociology, Economics and Law texts produced by the international scholars who are native authors using file names as follows: *SOC NA01*, *SOC NA02*, etc.; *ECO NA01*, *ECO NA02*, etc.; *LAW NA01*, *LAW NA02*, etc. to respectively reflect the discipline, the fact that writers are native authors and the text number. Once proper file names are given to the texts of the corpus, the texts can be stored in a folder on your computer and used for the intended analysis.

3.5 *Raw or annotated corpus?*

A corpus is in its raw state once the texts it contains have been processed as plain texts and given appropriate file names. A raw corpus is in a good enough shape to be used for many kinds of corpus analysis. However, one further step can be added to the processing of a corpus before it is used for analysis. This is referred to as corpus annotation. Annotating a corpus means adding valuable linguistic information to the corpus. Leech (1997, p. 2) defines corpus annotation as “the practice of adding interpretative, linguistic information to an electronic corpus of spoken and/or written language data”. Different types of corpus annotation are possible, including syntactic annotation, pragmatic annotation and prosodic annotation (see Garside, Leech & McEnery, 1997 for a detailed discussion of the various types and importance of corpus annotation). But perhaps the most basic and utilised type is grammatical word annotation (also known as *part-of- speech*

tagging or POS tagging). Grammatical word annotation involves assigning tags or labels to every word in the corpus to indicate its part of speech or grammatical function. This can be done manually if the corpus is of a small, manageable size. However, there are now automatic tagging programs that do the job relatively easily although they may not produce a 100 per cent tagging accuracy. A good example of automatic taggers, which have been used to tag several (English) corpora including the BNC, is the Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System (CLAWS) (Garside, Leech & Sampson, 1987). CLAWS has been consistent in achieving a 97 per cent (or more) accuracy rate. This means that when the tagging is completed, post-tagging editing may be helpful to obtain total accuracy. Table 1 is a sample of the CLAWS tag set (version 5).

Table 1. Sample part-of-speech (POS) tagset (CLAWS, v.5)

Tag	Description	Examples
AJ0	Adjective (general or positive)	good, light
AJC	Adjective (comparative)	better, lighter
AJS	Adjective (superlative)	best, lightest
NN0	Common noun (neutral for number)	sheep, fish
NN1	Singular common noun	cat, light
NN2	Plural common noun	cats, lights
PN1	Indefinite pronoun	everyone, somebody
PNP	Personal pronoun	you, they
PNX	Reflexive pronoun	myself, himself
VVZ	The -s form of lexical verbs	sends, lights

POS tagging a corpus is often of great help to an analyst as it can simplify work in many instances. If, for example, a query (or corpus search) of the word *light* or *lights* is done on an untagged corpus, it will retrieve all instances of either of these words in the corpus. But the analyst might be interested in only instances of *light* as an adjective (not as a noun) or *lights* as a verb (not as a noun). In such a

situation, the analyst has to painfully inspect – especially if the query is done on a very large corpus – all hits (the query output) and delete all the unwanted noun uses. In a POS tagged corpus, however, the query can right away be restricted: the query for *light* as a general adjective will be *light_AJO*, and the query for *lights* as a verb will be *lights_VVZ*.

Analysing a Corpus

Corpus analysis software

Once compiled and stored electronically, a corpus can be subjected to all kinds of linguistic analysis. Corpus analysis is facilitated by corpus analysis software tools which have been improving by way of sophistication since the 1980s. Three of the well-known corpus tools in use now are *WordSmith* (Scott, 2013), *AntConc* (Anthony, 2005) and *ConcGram* (Greaves, 2009). These can be downloaded onto a researcher's computer either free of charge (e.g., *AntConc*) or at a subscribed fee (e.g., *WordSmith*). These tools are built in a way as to allow a researcher to upload his or her own corpus for analysis. A more sophisticated tool, *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff, Rychly, Smrz & Tugwell, 2004), is a web-based tool, and it has a good number of already-existing corpora of different languages on it, and a researcher can still upload his or her own corpus onto the tool. *Sketch Engine* allows a free trial version where a researcher is allowed access to a small set of corpora on the tool for analysis. However, to access the tool in its entirety and use all or any of the corpora on it, as well as upload your own corpus, subscription at a fee is required. The *AntConc* tool, which is freely accessible, is a popular tool for beginners.

Every corpus analysis tool comes as a package that has separate independent functions, each of which can be exploited for analysis. Thus, even though corpus linguistics is often said to be a methodology, in the strictest sense, it involves a variety of independent (analysis) methods, including frequency lists, keyword lists, concordance analysis, cluster/n-gram analysis, and list of collocates and collocational analysis. All these analysis methods are part of, for example, the *AntConc* or *WordSmith* package, and any corpus linguistic investigation may not make use of every method. When I looked at epistemic devices in RAs (Ngula,

2015), I used only two methods, frequency lists and concordance analyses, in the WordSmith package. I will, in the next section, briefly discuss the methods for frequency, keyword and concordance analysis.

Frequency lists, keyword lists, concordances

Generating raw frequency lists, keyword lists, and exploring concordance lines are perhaps the most fundamental kinds of analysis for any researcher using corpus methods. These methods often lead a researcher to examine more complex and exciting linguistic items and patterns in a corpus. The word list facility is mainly used to generate a list of all the words in a corpus, ranking them in order of frequency. Frequency is a very important concept in linguistic analysis, as researchers sometimes want to know the most frequent words in a corpus. A simple word list carried out on a corpus invariably shows, for example, that the most frequently occurring words are functional or grammatical words. For example, a simple word list run on my Economics RA sub corpus by native authors, using WordSmith’s Wordlist tool, retrieved the top ten words in Table 2.

Table 2. Top ten words in Economics RA corpus

N	Word	Freq.	%
1	THE	9, 829	6.63
2	OF	5, 590	3.77
3	IN	3, 857	2.60
4	AND	3, 668	2.47
5	TO	3, 306	2.23
6	A	2, 904	1.96
7	IS	2, 612	1.76
8	THAT	2, 012	1.36
9	FOR	1, 941	1.31
10	ARE	1, 201	0.81

While these functional words may not contribute much to telling what the Economics RA texts are about, their high frequency reveals their grammatical and

textual role: they make the grammar of texts. It is not surprising that *the* is invariably the most frequent word in any corpus. Calculating keywords is a related form of frequency analysis, but unlike a simple word list, a keyword list tells what the texts in a corpus are essentially about. Baker (2010, p. 104) defines a keyword as “a word which occurs statistically more frequently in one file or corpus, when compared against another comparable or reference corpus”. The results of a keyword list for the Economics RA sub corpus, in Table 3, show a markedly different list of words, compared to the simple word list in Table 2.

Table 3. Top ten keywords in Economics RA corpus

Rank	Freq.	Keyness	Keyword
1	713	2354.264	Price
2	472	1483.621	Model
3	289	964.984	Firms
4	383	932.154	Level
5	276	851.206	Growth
6	266	793.626	Effects
7	305	789.433	Changes
8	202	784.506	Inflation
9	275	765.243	Firm
10	261	737.095	Data

As Table 3 makes clear, the keywords give a sense of what the text is about. We can safely relate these words to Economics. The reason the grammatical words in Table 2 disappear in the keyword list is because they are not unusually frequent in the target corpus (the Economics RAs) when compared with the reference corpus used (the LOB). In other words, they are just as frequent in the target corpus as they are in the reference corpus. Keyword rankings are based more on the keyness values rather than on frequency values: the more the keyness value, the more key the word. As Table 3 shows, *price* is the most salient keyword with the highest keyness value. Exploring concordance lines is another fundamental corpus analysis perspective, and while concordances of specific words and phrases can be

generated, simple word lists and keyword lists can be further analysed in terms of concordance outputs. According to Baker (2010, p. 106), “[a] concordance is simply a list of a word or phrase, with a few words of context either side of it, so that we can see at a glance how the word tends to be used”

A concordance thus helps us to study words in context; hence it is also referred to as key word in context (KWIC). Corpus analysis tools allow for concordance lines to be sorted variously so that meanings and patterns associated with words can be more effectively arrived at. When I explored epistemic modal verbs in RAs written by Ghanaian and international scholars (see Ngula, 2015), one noticeable finding in the Law articles of the international writers is that the modal *may* very often co-occurred with *well* to mark ‘epistemic probability’, a slightly higher degree of epistemicity than when only *may* is used. The Ghanaian Law writers, however, did not use *may well* at all, although they used *may* alone to express ‘epistemic possibility’. It was after various sorting and a close inspection of concordance lines that this finding became apparent. Figure 1 is a sample concordance of the *may well* pattern in the Law RAs of the international writers.

N	Concordance	File
1	adhere rigidly to a formalist approach may well threaten to undermine one of	LAW NA14.txt
2	. From a nation-state perspective, this may well seem a defect, although	LAW NA17.txt
3	again of the eggshell skull rule). This may well represent an explicit higher	LAW NA16.txt
4	directly as moral issues. Then we may well not think that courts are the	LAW NA20.txt
5	distinction that economic transactions may well "involve a fundamental public	LAW NA02.txt
6	bonds of varying intensity. These links may well include ethnic, religious,	LAW NA17.txt
7	from one another. Indeed, they may well have contributed to the	LAW NA07.txt
8	litigation under the Hague Convention may well have been avoided had the	LAW NA07.txt
9	contractual claims. ICSID jurisdiction may well extend to purely contractual	LAW NA02.txt
10	allowing legitimacy-based claims may well entail defeat, at least in the	LAW NA14.txt
11	objectives, a legitimacy-based system may well ensure greater overall	LAW NA14.txt
12	return proceedings in the first instance may well be discouraged from	LAW NA07.txt
13	. Under such circumstances, pluralism may well be better served by dividing	LAW NA17.txt
14	arise in moral life. Such presentation may well be artificial compared to	LAW NA20.txt
15	that this is not always the case. There may very well be a growing consensus	LAW NA11.txt

Figure 1: Screenshot of the *may* + (very) *well* +V pattern in Int. Law RAs
 From concordance lines, one can effectively study how a word is used, uncover patterns associated with a word or phrase, determine discourses (representations

or meanings) around a word, and so on. The kinds of insight derived from a reading of concordance lines may be easily missed in a manual analysis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, corpus linguistics has been discussed as a research methodology for studies in language, addressing issues of its theory, methods and procedures, and practice. There is no doubt that corpus linguistics has brought a massive boost to the study of language. Its theoretical credentials are assured, its results are accurate, insightful and objective, and its applications are now attested in nearly every sub field of linguistics including lexis, grammar, discourse, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, stylistics, register linguistics, and many more. Even theoretical linguists, who before would have nothing to do with corpora, now see interesting ways the approach can enrich their work (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Considering the current trends of the approach, it is most likely that the future of corpus linguistics will see a greater sophistication of corpus analysis tools, the building of much larger corpora, and an expansion of applications, especially to many other languages. It seems an even more promising future awaits this versatile approach to language studies.

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ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK TECHNIQUES IN ORAL LITERATURE: SOME PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I examine some fieldwork techniques in oral literature and try to problematize the process of ethnographic fieldwork by drawing on personal fieldwork experiences within the context of researching post-enslaved communities in Ghana. The overall aim is not only contribute to the generality of ethnographic research practices within the humanities, but also to shed light on the difficulties in researching emotive and controversial subjects like slavery and its legacies. For the past ten years, my major research has been focused on documenting memories of the slave experience in northern Ghana. The primary research methodology I have adopted was the ethnographic fieldwork approach through which I have had to interview clan elders, chiefs, and ordinary men and women as individuals and in groups. I have also recorded songs, festivals and traditional performances. The examples I use in this chapter are therefore drawn largely from this empirical data from my own field work experience and do not necessarily reflect the generality of fieldwork practices in oral literature. This kind of oral data I have dealt with are largely concerned with people describing situations and events their ancestors have experienced, that have become part of the collective memory of the group and passed on from generation to generation. These oral sources get passed on as songs, proverbs, names, and stories which are essential features of oral literature.

The chapter is structured in four sections. In the first section, I provide a general overview of ethnographic fieldwork with a brief discussion of the generality of fieldwork practices within oral literature and some theoretical underpinnings in order to provide an appropriate context for the discussion. In the second section, I try to provide a more practical approach to ethnographic fieldwork practices that

deal with design and preparation, negotiating entry into a research community, selecting and dealing with assistants, informants and participants and procedure for data collection. The third section of the chapter focuses on recording situations, handling equipment and ethics. In the final section, I examine post ethnographic fieldwork issues relating to transcriptions, translations, data management and peculiar challenges in fieldwork especially within the context of researching post enslaved communities.

Overview

Research within the humanities is multidimensional and indeed, some scholars have suggested that, “a [rather] quiet methodological revolution has been taking place in the social sciences” and this has invariably led to the blurring of disciplinary boundaries. The social sciences and humanities, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) for example, have intimated, “have drawn closer together in a mutual focus on an interpretive, qualitative approach to research and theory” (vii). A rich and varied body of literature thus exists on research methodology across the social sciences and humanities and some considerable level of attention has been given to ethnographic fieldwork as a methodological tool through which researchers have obtained and continue to obtain understanding of their social world. Although ethnographic fieldwork approaches and methods vary across disciplines, perspectives on fieldwork have in the past been dominated largely by perspectives from the social sciences particularly anthropology and folklore (see for example, Ellen, 1984; Fetterman, 1989; Sarantakos, 2012). Some of the earliest scholars to have defined the outline and general contours of fieldwork include, but are not limited to, the influential studies of Boaz, Mead, Benedict, Bateson, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliff-Brown and Malinoski (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Malinowski for example, is known to have advocated for its practice as a radical departure from earlier arm-chair approaches to data collection. The aim of fieldwork generally is to gain an intimate connection with a people, society or social groups and their practices through an intensive involvement in their natural environment over an extended period of time. Fieldwork is also conceptualised as

“a kind of enquiry and writing that produces descriptions and accounts about the ways of life of the writer and those written about” (see Denzin, 1997, p. xi).

Sarantakos (2012, p. 188) has, for example, suggested that fieldwork is “a form of social inquiry into real life situations and takes place in the field and in natural settings. (Also see Ellen, 1984; Fetterman, 1989). Sarantakos has further pointed out, that fieldwork is not just a method of data collection, but also a research model of social research which employs a number of techniques of data collection and analysis. He goes further to suggest that, “fieldwork is not characterized only by the place of its study but its most important element and its central design is the underlying theory, which integrates the field and selected methods into a meaningful tool of investigation”(p. 188). In fieldwork, the primary sources of data are what people say and do. Researchers in fieldwork are thus interested in recording the behaviours they observe by writing notes and audio visual recording. Much of what has come to constitute the bulk of data for oral literature research were gathered by anthropologists, who were mostly interested in how ‘primitive’ societies lived. Indeed, because of the often complex nature of African societies, some of the earlier studies of African peoples more often than not, exaggerated both their similarities and their differences and as such, earlier scholarship made too many broad generalizations often leading to misrepresentations and distortions about African cultures. The distinctive contributions of scholars such as Dundes (1965), Dorson (1972), Ben-Amos (1976), Bauman (1977), Vansina (1965, 1985), Finnegan (1970, 1992), Ophewho (1992), Wasamba (2015) to folklore and oral literature methodology is enormous. What animates these studies is the ways in which these scholars have contested the often Western and Eurocentric views and popular images of Africa as a land without “indigenous literary traditions” and oral literature, as not worthy of any systematic study. These scholars have indeed stressed the uniqueness and rich distinctive methodology inherent in oral literature. And as Finnegan (1970, p. 27) has reminded us, “... oral literature ... possess vastly more aesthetic, social and personal significance than would be gathered from most general publications on Africa”.

The oral historian Vansina (1965) was one of the earliest scholars to draw our attention to oral evidence as a rich source and goes further to provide a series of tests by which oral sources can be sifted and weighed for the purposes of reconstructing the past. Vansina has established the practical relationship between history and social anthropology and other disciplines which are relevant in collecting oral testimony. Scholars would later build upon Vansina's pioneering work to help us reflect on the nature of oral evidence. Much of what has come to constitute oral methodology in literature thus draws largely from this pioneering influence of Vansina, especially on the relations between oral literatures as a historical source.

Inspired by New Historicism critics like Stephen Greenblatt, the barriers that had hitherto sought to separate history and literature, literary and non-literary texts is becoming blurred. Overtime, people from varied cultures have given expression to their individual and collective experiences through songs, plays and memories of the past that have been passed down through the generations. All these forms of oral evidence often subsumed under the term 'oral history' overlap and are used interchangeably with personal testimonies, life stories and oral literature (Wasamba, 2015, p. 13). As Wasamba (2015, p. 13) has reflected, "the voices of people hitherto marginalized within the historical narrative are now recognized and illuminated as important sources of data".

Fieldwork and Ethnographic Practice in Oral Literature

Data within the context of oral literature is obtained through a variety of means but, by and large, ethnographic fieldwork informs much of the research on oral literature and folklore studies. In ethnographic fieldwork, researchers are basically interested in gaining an understanding of how people make sense of their world. The central organising principle in ethnographic fieldwork is, therefore, for the researcher to learn the points of view of those being studied and written about, by participating in behaviour from within and from observing from outside. Fife (2005, p. 1), for example has drawn our attention to the variables of *pattern* and *context* within which ethnographic fieldwork occurs. "The goal of ethnographic research, Fife has pointed out "is to formulate a pattern of analysis that makes

reasonable sense out of human actions within a given context of a specific time and place”. There seem to be a certain consensus of opinion that the period between six months to one year or more is considered ideal within the context of ethnographic fieldwork and within this framework, the researcher’s primary focus is to be immersed in a specific culture with the aim of learning the language and patterns of behaviour over this time (see Fetterman, 1989, p. 45 cited in Fife, 2005, p. 71). This cultural immersion is normally done through participant-observation and is significant because as Fife (2005, pp. 71-72) has suggested, it often involves establishing rapport in “a new community by learning to act so that people go about their business as usual when you show up; and removing yourself every day from cultural immersion so you can intellectualize what you’ve learned, put it in perspective, and write convincingly”. From my own ethnographic fieldwork experience, this cultural immersion and participant observation principle has helped me to attend funerals within the communities I was researching, in order to get a better social and cultural understanding of some of their oral traditions. Collecting data within the context of ethnographic fieldwork requires some background preparations.

Design and Preparations for Fieldwork

There is often no specific design with regard to most oral literature fieldwork practices. A researcher may adopt one that is suitable to specific needs and contexts. In my experience in the field, I have had to adopt a combination of methods-by the use of both personalized and focused group interviews in eliciting information from informants in addition to song recordings and performances. Indeed, scholars have pointed out the significance of background preparation in negotiating entry and exit from every research community (See for example Okpewho, 1992, pp. 334-341; Finnegan, 1992; Fife, 2005, pp. 18-31). Finnegan, (1992) has suggested that a field researcher should be familiar with three important issues as part of background preparations before embarking on fieldwork. These are, familiarity with the various theoretical debates, ethnographic knowledge of the research community and language. Knowledge of some comparative work and theoretical debates within the scope of study Finnegan has

suggested, would help to avoid either preconceptions, or reinvent the wheel or in other words re-discover what has already been discovered. This familiarity with major theoretical trends is necessary to create a personal theoretical orientation that will eventually guide the on-site study and also to facilitate the collection of evidence that is necessary for a proper ethnographic argument to be constructed even after the project is completed (Fife, 2005, p. 37).

In my own research experience prior to fieldwork within northern Ghana, I have had to spend some considerable amount of time at the University of Ghana's Institute of African Studies library and the Northern Regional Archives in Tamale getting familiar with what was published on these areas and their history with the slave trade in the late nineteenth century. Through my analysis of key documents, I discovered colonial records of slave dealing even into the twentieth century. This was useful in guiding the questions I went on to ask in the field regarding community memories of the slave trade. A careful consideration of these secondary sources a researcher assesses can create a platform upon which to generate an understanding of important trends affecting the specific area of research. Closely related to these specifics are the issues of negotiating entry into a research community and its related issues of identifying, training field assistants to help with data collection.

Negotiating Entry into a Research Community

The ethnographic field researcher should normally approach the research setting with respect for the privacy of the respondent. Place and time of an interview must be subject to the convenience of the interviewee. From my own experience, it often appears intimidating to tell your respondent you want to interview him/her. Such an approach while may be suitable in other contexts is usually not ideal for cultures that are largely rural. The best approach is to always avoid the use of your personal titles even if you are an accomplished researcher. Phrases and titles such as "I am Professor so and so, Dr. this and a PhD candidate and I am coming to conduct research or conduct interviews" from personal fieldwork experience, often appear intimidating to respondents. This is not to suggest that respondents are often completely oblivious of who you are. It is always useful to

begin an interview or discussion rather informally before narrowing down to your specific research. If your research setting is an agrarian community, for example, it might be useful to begin by finding how the previous harvest season was, how the crop yield was and how their animals are faring. Show interest in their daily routine and be genuinely concerned with their everyday lives. Be careful not to sound political and make government policy statements or promises that carry political undertones except your research has a policy intervention component.

Selecting and Dealing with Field Assistants, Informants and Participants

Close attention to selection of field assistants and informants is often very crucial to the quality of data a researcher obtains from the field. Because the field is often complex in terms of its geopolitics and cultural specificity, a researcher is often confronted with having to deal with cultures he/she is totally unfamiliar with. It is therefore important to identify field assistants who have intimate knowledge of the culture you seek to investigate. It is always useful to begin by first training your field assistants and have them know exactly what you are trying to achieve. In some cases, your field assistant may also serve as your interpreter if you do not have a working knowledge of the language of the cultures you are investigating. Even in cases where you are a native speaker you might still require help because as Finnegan (1992, p. 57) has intimated, “native speakers do not necessarily possess full mastery of all registers and vocabulary...” It is not in all cases, however, that field assistants can serve as interpreters. They may sometimes just help in administering questionnaire or help in conducting interviews. In some cases too, your field assistants, especially those who live within the setting of your investigation would help you identify informants. For example, when I began documenting memories of the slave experience within the Bulsa and Kasena in northern Ghana, my field assistants were often the people who suggested informants.

Data Collection Procedures

Every data collection situation is unique and the oral literature researcher may adopt one or multiple ways of obtaining data on the field. Some may adopt individual one-on-one or focused group interactions in which case the larger

group or community is often involved. Because oral genres are often not explicit in themselves, interviews- both individual and focused groups ones are often useful in helping throw light on issues that would otherwise be hidden. And as Connerton (1989, p. 37) has reminded us, “we situate what we recollect within the mental spaces provided by the group” and that, “our memories are located within the mental and material spaces of the group”.

Selection of informants on the field would sometimes have to be done on purpose. Not everybody within the community is often useful in providing information. The researcher would normally need to be guided in selecting people who have intimate knowledge of the traditions and history of the people. Some members of the research community often have what Vansina refers to as “encyclopaedic knowledge” and as such, are often more versed in the local history, customs than others. Upon entry into a research community, sometimes chiefs or clan heads are often the first points of call. This is because in most cultures in Africa, chiefs are often regarded as custodians of oral history and traditions. From my field experience, apart from the chiefs and clan heads, my participants and informants were mostly men. Women were often reluctant to grant individual interviews but were normally more comfortable in group interactions.



Fig.1. Photo showing a community discussion in Katiu, Ghana. Photo: Author (photo used with permission)

Instrumentation

Oral literature fieldwork interviews can either be structured or non-structured. Structured interviews are often very formal with a set of pre-determined or pre-arranged set of questions to ask an interviewee or respondent while the non-structured does not usually follow a pattern. When I was investigating memories of the slave experience within the research communities aforementioned, I used a non-structured interview protocol. The protocol was divided into five parts. The first part sought to establish the demographic profile of the interviewees and their communities. It also sought to establish the history of migrations, known historical figures connected to their history, political structure of the communities, their dominant culture and major economic activities. The second part of the interview protocol sought to establish if there had been significant historical events that have shaped their collective consciousness as a people, what the specific event was and how the histories of the events are passed on. Although I often avoided direct questions about slavery because of the emotive nature of the subject, informants most often mentioned the slave trade as an important historical event they will always remember. Anytime they themselves brought up the subject, I always then proceeded to ask about the specific story of slavery within these cultures. The next section of the interview protocol dealt with how events of this history are passed on. I also sought to find out if events about the slavery and the slave trade are found in songs, proverbs, and oral traditions and if there are specific songs, and, if so, who the people who sing these songs are. I also tried to establish the custodians of oral history and whether there were court historians whose duty it was to recount their oral history. The final part dealt specifically with the songs. It was often the case that I asked the singers what they thought the songs meant and to clarify certain allusions and linguistic structures. The art of singing in these communities is not a formal art. Most people learn the art rather passively or informally through their parents or during public occasions like funerals and festivals when some of these songs are performed (see Saboro, 2014).

Recording Situations: The Centrality of Performance

The impact and significance of performance in verbal art has been emphasized across time and space (see Finnegan, 1970; 1992; Bauman, 1977; Anyidoho, 1990; Scheub, 2002). The concept of performance, Bauman (1977) has reminded us, “has assumed some central importance in the orientation of increasing numbers of folklorists and others interested in verbal arts”. Finnegan has, for example, drawn our attention to the fact that the performance situation in oral literature “goes beyond mere definition” and that “the very nature of performance itself can make an important contribution to the impact of the particular literary form being exhibited. More often than not, the para-linguistic modes of expression such as facial expression, tone, vocal expressiveness, movements and dramatic use of pause, Finnegan has pointed out, are not “mere embellishments superadded to the already existent literary work, but are an “integral part of its full realization as a work of art” (see Finnegan, 1970, p. 3). Recording performance on the field should therefore be undertaken with great care and circumspection.

Although performance is crucial to the overall appreciation of oral art, the recording situation is often beset with a number of methodological constraints. For example, how does one convey to readers on texts the para-linguistic variants of tone, and facial expressions? The general tendency for earlier scholars was to rely on only written records of the oral literature they collected often omitting artistic elaborations and repetitions (Finnegan, 1970). But as Gunner (2004) has pointed out, “oral genres exist vigorously in the contemporary era as part of a new global culture and “orality has been extended into various configurations of modernity” (p. 69). These configurations of modernity can thus be seen in the ways various multi-media forms are now available for fieldwork. The use of modern technology is increasingly becoming common especially with the use of audio-visual recording devices that have the ability to capture both sound and performance. These multi-media forms have helped to a large extent in solving the problems of recording details of the performances. Okpewho (1992) has for example suggested that there are three methods of recording the oral performance: the traditional method or, the hand copying method. This method is however often considered as inadequate in representing the totality of the

performance. The second method which is the most common is the tape recording which ensures that sounds both vocal and instrumental are captured during performance and finally filmed recording which is a more recent development which captures word, music and movement.

A more practical way of going about ethnographic fieldwork recording is to begin by obtaining relevant biographical data from the participant such as name (or informant might wish to remain anonymous), clan, role in clan or family (for example, community elder, household head). A field researcher should also note the place of recording, time (season), by whom and type of equipment used. The setting and occasion and purpose of the recording is also important and should be noted down.

Recording Equipment

The place of multimedia forms of obtaining data from the field has become more varied and complex than was the case before. The situation is even more complicated given the availability of complex media equipment. In most oral literature recording contexts, the researcher is often not interested in texts alone but also the ‘performative elements’ which are crucial in appreciating the subtle nuances of the subject being studied. It is therefore important to pay particular attention to the recording equipment. Because recording situations are often varied, a researcher should be guided by the following in choosing equipment: cost, usability and convenience, portability and mobility, compatibility with other media forms and reliability (see Finnegan, 1992). Before recording performances begin, it is always useful to ensure that you have already tested your equipment and made sure they are in good working order. As already pointed out, it is increasingly becoming common to film performances. Although a field researcher is more often not a professional film maker, basic training in the use of cameras and other recording equipment is crucial in obtaining quality sound and images. Publishers are becoming particular about images with a certain kind of resolution. These days’ cameras come in digital forms with multiple storage devices and inputs, so familiarity with how these function is crucial to obtaining quality data. After each recording and interview session, the researcher should always

endeavour to play back the recording to participants for their appreciation. This is crucial because as Denzin (1997, p. xiii), writes “Those we study have their own understanding of how they want to be represented”. For ethical reasons, once respondents contest or become uncomfortable with some portions of the recording, you may as well delete or not use that portion of the data in your final write-up.



A group of Women performing at the Pikworo slave camp at Nania, near Paga in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Photo: Author (Photo used with permission)

A Practical Dilemma

Experience on the field has shown that recording both text and performances is often not a straight forward one. In the case of recording songs, for example, one is often confronted with two or more equally significant options especially in the contexts where the songs or oral genres are also performed and re-enacted during festivals or other communal ceremonies. The dilemma is often whether to isolate the songs for recording and pay attention to texts alone or to record the oral genre during live performances. The difficulty of isolating the songs alone for recording lies in the fact that much of the performative elements that are often

crucial to understanding the totality of the experience get lost and cannot be encoded. The other difficulty in recording live has to do with noise which most invariably interferes with understanding the texts. Words are often not clear leading to incoherent transcriptions and translations thereby sometimes compromising the validity of portions of the data. In my own fieldwork experience, I have had to combine recording live performances and also identifying singers and isolating songs for recording. In the latter case, it is often easier to follow up on individual cantors for clarifications.

Fieldwork and Ethical Considerations

Every research presents a number of ethical issues. In some Institutions of higher learning, it is increasingly becoming the practice for students and faculty to seek ethical clearance before going to the field. It is part of best practices now to subject the researcher's interview protocols and instruments to scrutiny by an ethics review committee for vetting. Part of the essence of the exercise is to ensure that the research does not pose problems to the subjects or respondents. In my specific case, researching post enslaved communities' raises a number of ethical issues. In Africa, the subject of slavery and slave origins is particularly sensitive and as such, on the field a researcher is minded not to be making direct references to it. This problem is sometimes further compounded by the presence of both descendants and victims as well as perpetrators and people perceived as collaborators and complicit in the slave experience.

As part of ethical considerations, the researcher is usually required to explain to participants the nature of the research and ensure participants and respondents fully understand what the researcher is trying to do. The consent of respondents must be sought before recording both audio and video. The researcher must also indicate if images and photos of informants and respondents will be used in books, articles or even on the internet. I have had to seek consent from my informants before posting pictures on-line and to also use them in articles. Permission was thus sought before the pictures in this chapter were included. Respondents must give either written or verbal consent which should be captured on the recording devices. There are instances where respondents object to their

images or voices being recorded, in which case, the researcher is obliged to respect their wishes.

Post Fieldwork Considerations: Transcriptions and Translations

Obtaining data from the field is often just the beginning of an entire research project. Managing post fieldwork issues are often crucial to the overall success of the goal or goals a researcher originally sets out to accomplish. In the section that follows, I deal with how to make sense of the data obtained from the field from transcriptions and translations to data management and its preservation and documentation.

A significant part of the field research process is for the researcher to make sense of the data obtained from the field. Reflecting on the centrality of presenting an objective, non-contested account of the people and cultures we write about, Denzin (1997) has reminded us that “... the worlds we study are created, in part, through the texts that we write and perform about them”. These texts, Denzin has argued, take “the forms of ordinary talk and speech, inscriptions of that speech in the form of transcriptions, written interpretations based on talk and its inscriptions and performances of those texts”. The process of making sense of the data thus involves a process of representing the data as faithfully as possible by transcribing the data from a source language (local or indigenous language) into a receptor language (more often English or French). Because more often than not, data is obtained from a language other than English, diligence to the transcription and translation process is critical in maintaining the integrity of the data. Debates on translation as a process have often been centred on whether one is able to truly and faithfully transfer meaning from one language to another or not. There have also been concerns as to whether one adopts a literal or free approach to the translation process or focus on just specific linguistic variants. The apparent confusion and lack of clarity regarding the process has led Hatim and Mason (1990, p. 3) to suggest that:

It is the nature of things that the target text displays only the translator’s final decisions. Readers perceive an end-product, a result of a decision making process; they do not have access to the

pathways leading to decisions, to dilemmas to be resolved by the translator.

Irrespective of the position a scholar adopts, the central organising principle in ethnographic fieldwork is that readers often consume a final product. More often, a translated text captures only in part the whole essence of the original material or data. Indeed, there are a number of methodological challenges in the translation process. Translation is both a linguistic and cultural process and as such, it is often very difficult to capture in exact terms certain cultural specifics. For example, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to capture the emotional and performance elements within a translated text. For example, from my data, it has often been difficult to translate cultural variants and exclamations like *wai*, *aba ba ba*, *eii*, *kai* and so on. Insignificant as these may seem, they sometimes constitute an emotional response to a question or a situation that words cannot adequately convey. Sometimes there may also be differences in linguistic variants even within the same language although in most cases mutual intelligibility remains the same. It might sometimes be useful for the field researcher therefore to engage the services of professional translators because the art of translation is a specialized activity. Translators should be people who have had a formal study of the language and who understand translation both as a linguistic and cultural process.

Field work and Data Management Practices

Data and its management in research is becoming a central issue. Indeed, most funding agencies now require researchers to include in their dossier how they intend to manage their data. Data management is important therefore for personal research, research collaboration, and sometimes to satisfy publication and donor support requirements and to also to make research findings useful and accessible to the wider scholarly community. The data management life cycle involves planning, collecting, documentation, preservation, discovery and use. Within the specific context of my research, I have had to manage my data through a number of ways. After collecting songs and oral accounts from various locations, I have had to organise the data into clusters. For example I had soft copy folders dealing with only interviews, others dealing with only songs, others dealing with images. Those with songs were further categorised into those by men and women.

I went further to have folders for photographs, and maps of the various locations. Photographs and visual representations add some evidential value to ethnographic field research and so should be managed well. Managing and preserving data through websites and blogs is also increasingly becoming common. A researcher may however, need professional help in developing and maintaining websites and blogs.

Challenges in Fieldwork within the Context of Post Enslaved Cultures

The general challenges to expect in field work may include but not in any way limited to the following. Natives and subjects of ethnographic research are increasingly becoming suspicious of people who enter into their communities under the guise of conducting academic research. Respondents are thus often very reluctant to cooperate until they are sure of the researcher's motives which normally take time. Sometimes, researchers are taken for government agents who are out to count people for the purposes of taxation. While there are indeed, government and other funded projects geared towards community intervention, sometimes, respondents are often unable to tell the difference. For example, in one of my field trips to Kayoro a community near the Ghana, Burkina fasso border, informants asked me to inform "the government to provide them with a bore hole".

The situation with post enslaved communities is often murky because of the emotive nature of the subject of slavery. Servile status in most communities in Africa is often a matter of shame and guilt. People are often very reluctant to talk about their slave ancestry. Sometimes, they become evasive and say "we don't remember these events anymore" or better still, "why are you interested in bringing up what we wish to forget". Scholars who have researched into slave or post enslaved cultures were often confronted with the "shame and guilt" associated with the slave experience and people's reluctance to confront their past history of enslavement or the slave trade. Klein (1989) is one of the scholars to have drawn our attention to the difficulty in dealing with oral data relating to people of slave ancestry. In his research among the Kaymor region of Saalum and Kajoor in Senegal and the Masina and Maraka of Mali, Klein (1989, p. 211) observed that informants of slave origins were often very reticent. "The most

striking conclusion from these interviews”, Klein has intimated, is that “in these societies those of slave descent do not like to recognize their servile origins even where the person’s origins are well known”. Researching into the legacies of the trans-Atlantic slave trade among Anlo Ewe community in Ghana, Bailey, (2005) discovered the often deafening silence on the subject of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade. The difficulty in dealing with this kind of past history of the slave trade within these communities, Bailey has alluded to, are the signs of regret, pain, sorrow, guilt and shame (see Bailey, 2005, p. 1). Holsey (2008), was later to encounter the same reticence in her research among the people of Cape Coast and Elmina where informants were often reluctant to admit that their ancestors dealt in slaves in spite of overwhelming historical evidence to the contrary. Patience and sensitivity on the part of the researcher eventually make people open up and sometimes reveal some intimate details of family history. In my experience, sometimes respondents only opened up when they realised I was either a native speaker or had some linguistic competence in Buli (language of the Balsa) and also had an insider perspective of the social and cultural ethos of their communities.

Conclusion

This chapter is premised on the basic assumption that fieldwork as a method of enquiry is multifaceted and that although its basic tenets is believed to have originated primarily from the social sciences notably anthropology, oral literature practitioners have within the last couple of decades used it a methodological tool to reflect on various issues within the discipline. This chapter therefore sought to examine some ethnographic fieldwork practices in oral literature by providing a general overview with particular reference to some theoretical studies within the broader field of fieldwork research. Particular attention has been paid to the specific issues of ethnographic fieldwork practices in oral literature by pointing to some background preparations before a researcher undertakes a field trip. Some practical approaches to ethnographic fieldwork practices that deal specifically with design and preparation, before negotiating entry into a research community, selecting and dealing with assistants, informants and participants and procedure for data collection were examined. Multimedia forms of data collection especially

within the context of ethnographic research is increasing becoming apparent and as such some considerable effort has been made to provide a synopsis on recording situations, handling equipment and some ethical issues regarding field research and data collection. In the final section, I examined post ethnographic fieldwork issues relating to transcriptions, translations, data management and peculiar challenges in fieldwork especially within the context of researching post enslaved communities.

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HISTORICAL APPROACH TO RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

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adeyemiolalere@yahoo.com**INTRODUCTION**

Research is a quest for knowledge through diligent search or investigation, experimentation aimed at discovery and interpretation of new knowledge. Research in the humanities involves inquiry into consciousness, values, ideas, and ideals in an effort to describe how experience shapes our understanding of the world. Research in the humanities could take diverse approaches, it could be interpretation and criticism of literary works, or reconstructing humanity's past – both the ideas (philosophical research) and the events that have occurred over time (historical research). In literary criticism, researchers use their own interpretations of a work of art or literature in critiquing it. Criticism is not just a string of personal opinions. The critical researcher builds argument to substantiate his or her interpretation using a particular theory. Such an argument is based on research involving a close reading of the text itself or analysis of the text. Literary criticism is both insightful and true to life. This is because the critic always takes into account social and historical factors that bear on the interpretation of the literary texts. In philosophical research, the researcher investigates the truth and principles of being, knowledge and human conduct. Historical researchers proceed in the same way as philosopher researchers, except that historical researchers investigate events as well as ideas (Altick, 1963, p. 100).

There is hardly any field/course/subject or discipline in the humanities which does not make use of historical research to document facts about its past. History is a meaningful and organized record of past events. However, it is not merely a list of events arranged chronologically, but a valid integrated account of social, cultural, economic and political forces that had operated simultaneously to

produce a historical event (Lokesh 2012, p.93). The inquiry into the previous age or past events with the aim of reconstructing or a faithful representation of such past events is called historical approach. Historical researchers investigate events as well as ideas. They research the events that have occurred in a person's life or at a particular period. They weave those events and ideas into a narrative that recounts and interprets the past. The research process used by the researchers in the humanities to investigate the facts and data available about an individual, event or a period of time is known as historical approach.

Historical research is not limited to core historians in History departments. Other researchers in the humanities could also embark on historical research or adopt historical approach to their disciplines. Once they understand the import of historical research and follow the procedures painstakingly, they will produce valuable research reports that would be relevant to the needs of the society. There are many kinds of approaches to research in the humanities but researchers hardly write on historical approach on the ground that only historians are interested in historical matters. The objectives of this study therefore are to: examine historical approach to research in the humanities; explain the type of historical research; identify the stages or steps for conducting historical research, or historical research design; list the sources of data in historical research, collection of data, internal and external criticism, interpretation of data and report writing.

What is Historical Approach to Research?

Bonaventure (2012) states that historical approach has been reduced to the procedure of collecting all kinds of data which is then ascertained in the course of reconstructing the past. Such data may be oral narratives, events or inscriptions. For example, a researcher in French department may be interested in how French language started in West Africa or the golden age of French language in Nigerian Schools' curriculum. A linguist might be interested in historical linguistics and decide to find out the historical relationship between one language and the other or the proto form of a particular word in two languages. In the Performing Arts, History, Religion, Languages, Culture and Literatures (both indigenous and foreign language and literature), researchers may embark on the systematic

inquiry into the past, by locating where to collect data, scrutinize and evaluate the evidence gathered in order to establish facts and draw reasonable conclusion about the past events so as to predict the future. Such process or approach provides knowledge of past events, clarifies present discussions with interpretation of the past with detachment, revises historical myths and creates a sense of common purpose.

Ndagi (1999, p. 93) asserts that historical research deals with documentation, evaluation, and explanation of events essentially for the purpose of gaining a better and clearer understanding of the present, and making a more reliable prediction of the future. Historical research involves critical and objective methods of inquiry with generalizations made from organized knowledge. Historical research differs from the researches in the natural sciences because it is not based on experimentations but on records of observation which cannot be repeated.

Historical approach to research is the search for and the application of a professional knowledge of established methods and techniques used for evaluation, of, and synthesis of historical evidence (Standard, 1987, p.5). In Standard's (1987) definition of historical approach to research in the humanities, there are some key words such as "search", "synthesis" and "evaluation" that must be understood. Search refers to the gathering of evidence pertinent to the particular study being undertaken, through search of files and records of government departments, private individuals and of library and archival collection, through excavation and field survey, through examination of physical objects, or through the conduct of interview with persons having knowledge of the event under study. Synthesis refers to the use of critical judgment and reason in analyzing the findings of research and evaluation in order to develop the hypothesis necessary to explain the factors, identify their casual relationships and explain their relative significance. Evaluation in historical approach refers to the critical assessment of historical evidence to establish its relative value. This requires the application of various analytical techniques to verify the reliability and authenticity of evidence and to determine which items of evidence may be

accepted as historical fact. The major focus of historical approach to research in the humanities is to recreate the past, through existing records and their interconnections. In this process, the researcher employs his/her knowledge, experience and intuition to decide which information to use and subsequently attempt to locate sources that contain that information. According to Sally (2006, p. 433), historical approach to research in the humanities allows researchers to make generalizations of the facts (who, what, where, and when), about an event and state interpretations and explanations that suggest multiple cases for any single event.

Historical research demands some qualities on the part of researchers namely, love of truth, an accurate production of history, a complete openness to the past, penetration into casual relations, impartiality, and the pursuit of an overall picture of the area of the past being studied. Historical researchers also have certain obligations. According to Lasky (1967, p. xxix) “they are to concentrate their powers on creation and reproduction and consumption of particular works of philosophy, art, science, literature or scholarship, to receive the traditions in which these works stand with a discriminating readiness to accept, elaborate or reject”. In doing these, they are expected to separate the past from the present, relate facts to facts and be an impartial evaluator of historical data gathered. The researcher deals with discovery of data that already exist; he/she does not need to create new data but has to locate relevant documents or events, analyze them and use logical induction to establish the facts. Historical research is not empirical in that it does not include direct observation of events or persons; the researcher interprets past events on the basis of records.

Advantages of Historical Approach to Research

1. The historical approach to research in the humanities applies to all fields of study because it encompasses their origins, growth, theories, personalities, crisis, etc. Both quantitative and qualitative variables can be used in the collection of historical information.
2. Historical approach creates awareness in the people of what has happened in the past in order to: learn from past failures and successes; apply them to

present-day problems and make predictions; test hypotheses concerning relationships or trends; and understand present educational practices and policies fully.

3. It stresses the relative importance and the effects of the various interactions that are to be found within all cultures.
4. It allows for reevaluation of data in relation to selected hypotheses, theories and generalizations that are presently held about the past.
5. There is no danger of experimenter-subject interaction.
6. Documents are located by the researcher, data are gathered and conclusions are drawn out of sight.

Disadvantages of Historical Approach to Research

1. The possibility of bias due to researcher's characteristics is always present.
2. Methods for its control are unfortunately not available to the researcher.
3. Much depends on the skill and integrity of the researcher- since methodological controls are unavailable; it is among the most difficult of all types of research to conduct.
4. Limitations imposed by the nature of the sample of documents and the instrumentation process (content analysis) are likely to be tedious.
5. Researchers cannot ensure representatives of the sample, nor can they check the reliability and validity of the inferences made from the data available.
6. Historical approach gives room for selective records and sometimes leads to inaccuracy of information.

Kinds of Historical Research in the Humanities

Lokesh (2012) identifies four kinds of historical research in the humanities namely:

Bibliographic research: Bibliographic research aims at determining and presenting truthfully the important facts about the life, character, and achievements of important people. A researcher may decide to study the contributions of great leaders such as Dr. Nkrumah of Ghana, Chief Obafele Awolowo, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe of Nigeria, Nelson Mandela of South Africa and their influence on African culture and politics among others. Literary critics may

like to examine the life and works of notable novelists, playwrights or poets. Scholars in the Performing Arts may identify important film directors and research on their life achievements, Church historian may locate people like Apostle Ayo Babalola and conduct a research on his contributions to the history, growth and development of Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria.

Legal research: Legal research deals with the study of legal basis of institutions.

Studying the history of ideas: Epochal divisions and terminologies such as “antiquity”, “baroque”, “the classical age”, “the renaissance,” or “post modernity”, the “long 19th” or “short 20th centuries are more than mere tools to arrange school curricula or museum collections. The use of these terminologies carries particular imaginations and meanings for the discursive construction of nations and communities. Scholars can embark on the research of such concepts and ideas. Studying the history of ideas involves the tracing of major philosophical or scientific thoughts from their origins through different stages of development. It also focuses on changes in popular thoughts and attitudes over a period of time.

Studying the history of institutions: This includes the study of history of growth and development of institutions, Universities, public organizations, commercial and non-profit organizations such mosques and churches among others.

Steps in Historical Research

The steps involved in undertaking a historical research are not different from other forms of research, but the nature of the subject matter requires the researcher to apply special standards and techniques. In general, historical research involves the following steps:

1. Selection of the problem;
2. Research Questions/ Formulation of Hypotheses;
3. Formulation of Objectives;
4. Collection of data;
5. Criticism of data;
6. Interpretation of data; and
7. Writing of the research report.

Selection of the problem: In historical research, the first step is to identify the problem and like other types of research, the problem must be clearly defined. Care must be taken in delimiting the problem in such a way that a satisfactory analysis can be made possible. The researcher must realize that a historical research must be confined to a penetrating analysis of a limited problem, thus, it must not be too broad. For a useful research to be taken, a problem must be identified and correctly stated. The researcher must make sure that the problem selected is historical, topical and of significance. Such topic must be amenable to available methods of research and by the available sources of data. Sometimes attractive topics of historical significance may have to be discarded when adequate data are not available.

Research Questions: The research questions usually mirror the stated objectives in question form (Fakuade, 2011). Research questions give order and direction to the study as a whole. According to Jack and Norman (2000, p. 30), good research questions must possess four essential characteristics. Research question must be feasible (i.e., it can be investigated without undue amount of time, energy, or money); it must be clear, most people must be able to agree as to what the key words in the question mean; the question must be significant (i.e., it is worth investigating because it will contribute important knowledge to scholarship); and the question is ethical, (i.e., it will not involve physical or psychological harm or damage to human beings or to the natural or social environment of which the researcher is part of).

Formulation of Hypotheses: Bruce (1978, p. 27) defines a hypothesis as an expectation about events based on generalizations of the assumed relationship between variables. Hypotheses constructed for historical research are useful in explaining events, conditions or phenomena of the historical period in question. Like other scientific investigations, hypotheses must be properly formulated. However, it is not in all cases that hypotheses may be formulated especially when a researcher is merely interested in concrete events, he can check the validity and authenticity of facts about past events and arrange them in a chronological sequence. In such investigations, the researcher may not formulate any

hypothesis, but can use research questions. It must also be stated that the hypotheses for historical research may not be formal hypotheses to be tested like in the natural science research. Rather, they are written as explicit statements that tentatively explain the occurrence of events and conditions. Van Dalen (1973, p. 177) asserts that:

An explicit statement or a systematic awareness of the hypotheses used in determining what facts were significant, clarifies the relationship between the investigator's ideas and the facts he reports, and it minimizes the possibility of employing trivial, biased, conflicting, faulty, or archaic hypotheses.

A good hypothesis must satisfy the following criteria: it should conjecture upon relationships between two or more variables; it should be stated clearly and unambiguously in the form of a declarative sentence; it should be testable. For example, the following hypotheses are clearly stated, unambiguous and they are rendered in declarative sentences:

H1. IQ and achievement are positively related

H2. The dropout rate is higher for white students of history than for black students.

Best and Kahn (2012) also remark that although hypotheses are not always explicitly stated in historical investigations, they are usually implied. The historian gathers and carefully evaluates its trust worthiness. "If the evidence is compatible with the consequences of hypothesis, it is confirmed. If the evidence is not compatible, or negative, the hypothesis is not confirmed, it is through such synthesis that historical generalizations are established" (p. 92).

Formulation of Objectives: Once the researcher has formulated the research questions and or hypotheses, he/she can now list the objectives of the study. The statement of objectives often constitutes a major basis for judging the likely contribution of a project. The objectives are listed serially and they should be directly related to the research questions. Research objectives must be as specific

as possible; they must be unambiguous; and the researcher must avoid complicated sentences.

Collection of Data: The collection of data is very important in historical research just like any other research projects. After the researcher has selected the problem to study and appropriate hypotheses and/ or research questions have been formulated, the next step is to collect the data available so that research questions and hypotheses can be thoroughly answered and verified. The collection of data in historical research is time consuming, rigorous and tedious therefore, the researcher must have patience. He has to sift through the vast materials of human activity that testify about the past events, and from these he identifies and selects data that are very relevant to his study. Sources of historical data are classified into primary and secondary sources and the researcher must be able to distinguish between them and have skills in locating them.

Sources of Historical Data

Primary Sources: Lokesh (2012) defines a primary data source as the “the testimony of any eyewitness or of a witness by any other of the search or of a mechanical device like the Dictaphone-that is, of one who present at the events of which he tells. These are tangible materials that provide a description of an historical event and were produced directly after the event happened. Primary sources may also come from direct observation. Examples of primary sources are as follows according to Lokesh (2012, pp.92-94):

1. Personal records: Certificates, dairies, autobiographies, affidavits, declarations, letters, wills, deeds, contracts and original drafts of speeches, articles, books and pamphlets.
2. Official records: Legislative, judicial or executive documents prepared by central or state governments, municipalities, local governments, constitutions, laws, charters, court proceedings and decisions, the data preserved by missionaries and other religious organizations such as financial records, records of meetings of managing or governing bodies, etc.

3. Oral testimony of traditions and events: Myths, folktales, family or lineage history, stories, ceremonies, spoken account of a witness of an event, interviews with administrators, teachers, students, parents or guardians among others.
4. Pictorial records: Photographs, movies, micro-films, drawings, paintings, coins and sculpture.
5. Mechanical records: Photograph records of events and tape recordings of interviews, meetings and speeches.
6. Remains or Relics: Fossils, skeletons, tools, weapons, clothing, buildings, furniture, utensils, art objects, teaching materials, samples of examinations question papers, samples of students' works and murals.

Secondary Sources of Information: Secondary sources of historical data are information provided by a person who did not directly observe the event, object or condition. The person may have directly contacted an actual observer and talked with him/her or read an account by an observer. Since the testimony of the person is not that of an actual participant or observer, secondary sources are subject to inherent danger of distortion and inaccuracy. It is therefore suggested that the researcher should rely on the primary sources and use the secondary sources only to bridge the gaps between the various pieces of primary data. In a situation where the researcher has no access to primary sources, he /she may have to rely on the secondary sources. In the location of source materials in historical research, the card catalog, periodical indexes, bibliographies, historical reviews, dissertations and research journals may provide helpful guides. The researcher should note that historical research involves more intensive bibliographical work and library usage than any other type of research thus, he/she should be careful while assembling full bibliographical information in note-taking system to ensure proper documentation. Other examples are textbooks, encyclopedias, newspapers, periodicals and review of research and other references such as running records which are documentaries maintained by private or non-profit organizations (Lokesh, 2012).

Criticism of Data: The researcher has to subject all the source materials to criticism so as to evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of source materials. There are two types of criticism in historical research; external criticism and internal criticism. External criticism is concerned with determining whether or not documents or remains are authentic. The researcher must establish whether the documents or remains are really what they are supposed to be or whether there is any forgery. To determine the genuineness of the historical data, a researcher must possess a rich fund of historical and general knowledge. Van Dalen (1973, p. 168) states that such a researcher also needs “a good chronological sense, a versatile intellect, good common sense, an intelligent understanding of human behaviour, and a good plenty of patience and persistence”. Lokesh (2012) notes that the problem of establishing age or authorship of a document may involve such techniques as authentication of signatures, handwriting, script, and type; chemical analysis of paint, carbon dating of facts, ink, paper, cloth, stone, metals, or wood. The researcher must be familiar with chemistry, archeology, cartography, art, literature, philology, anthropology, paleography and modern or ancient languages. If the researcher does not have knowledge of these fields, he may seek the help of competent experts in the fields or go for such special training in the fields that are most closely related to the problem.

External Criticism: This involves the questions of authorship and the criticism of the text to determine all conditions that they may have influenced the production of a document such as time, purpose and what part of document is true. In order to establish the authenticity of any document, the researcher must ask the following questions:

1. Who was the author – his personality, character, biases and position?
2. What were his qualifications as a reporter of the matter he treated?
 - What personal interest had he in the matter related?
 - Was he properly situated for observation of the event?
 - Had he the necessary training and skills for studying and reporting the events?
3. How soon after the event was the document written?

4. How was the document written, from memory or from notes made earlier; any evidence that the facts are cross-checked?
5. How is the document related to other documents in the field?

Internal Criticism: Internal criticism on the other hand is concerned with determining the meaning and worth of the data collected. It is also called higher criticism. Internal criticism is concerned with the validity, credibility, or worth of the content of the document. Is the data consistent with the known facts? The emphasis is on the statements within the document. The validity of a historical fact contained in a document can sometimes be evaluated by comparing it with the statements of other authors. When there is any disagreement among authors, the researcher must establish which one is correct. This he must do “on the basis of overall credibility, reputation, independent authentication and general consistency with other known facts” (Lokesh, 2012, p.99). The researcher must ask the following questions from himself or herself:

1. What is the real meaning as opposed to the literal meaning of the important statements in the document; especially, if the author’s source is in a foreign language?
2. Is there any evidence to show that the author was trying to deceive the reader?
3. Is there any evidence to show that the author was under pressure or was influenced by public opinion to make an untrue statement?
4. Is there any evidence of lack of training, experience and skill in observation, recording and writing?
5. If the author was not the original observer, how accurate is his source of information?

Interpretation of Data: The moment the data have been collected and subjected to external and internal criticism, the researcher turns himself to the task of interpretation of these data in the light of the problem. The researcher must be cautious while dealing with cause and effect relationship in historical research. Historical causes are complex and the researcher must accept the fact he is not

dealing with clear cut cases of cause and effect as it seen in the sciences. He must be careful in the use of analogy in the interpretation of the data. He must show an understanding of the sequence of events and must draw a vertical relationship of preceding facts with succeeding one along the time line. His goal must be one of synthesis and interpretation rather than mere summation.

Writing of the Research Report

After the rigorous collection and organization of evidence, and the verification of the authenticity and veracity of information and its sources, the writing of the report in a meaningful narrative is next. The researcher has to write a well-organized report of his study. The report of historical research like others must include the relevant chapters. Alabi (2011, p. 197) states that “the success or otherwise of a research exercise is hinged on how the varying inputs are cohered and packaged in a systematic manner such that the product develops into a network of sequential relation”. The researcher should write in such a way that readers would be able to make the following judgement: “The author knows exactly what he/she is trying to achieve. Everything is logical and easy to read”. Report should be written in a concise and objective style in simple language avoiding vague expressions; charts and illustrations in the main report should be used only if they present the information more clearly and forcibly; calculated “confidence limits” must be mentioned and the various constraints experienced in conducting research operations may as well be stated (Kotari, 2004, p. 348).

Conclusion

This paper has examined the historical approach to research in the humanities with special focus on the kinds of historical research in the humanities; steps or design of historical research; sources of historical research; collection of data; internal and external criticism of data; interpretation of data and report writing. Even though historical approach to research in the humanities is profitable, systematic and crucial to historical construction and reconstruction, is however tedious therefore, any researcher that wants to use the historical approach must have among other things, the ability and patience to read old and dusty files in which historical files are embedded and from which they are culled. Researchers

must be creative enough to use oral history strategies to avoid inherent limitations of residual and official evidence in documents.

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ETHICAL ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Ethical issues are worthy of much consideration in contemporary research. They are self-evident in all stages of the research process such as the planning, conduct and evaluation of the project. Ethical issues should therefore not be considered as an isolated response to a specific problem but are an integral part of the process of making effective choices throughout any research project involving people. However, in order to evaluate the need to discuss ethical issues in what we do on daily basis as researchers, we will contextualize “ethics” as a concept that cut across different disciplines of human knowledge; these include philosophy, theology, law, medical sciences, among others.

Ethics can simply be defined as general rules of conduct or principles that guide our actions. Ethical rules make us conform to a code or set of principles (Israel & Hay, 2006). They help us distinguish between right and wrong. They provide norms or standards to determine what the acceptable or unacceptable behaviors are on the part of the researcher. Every research exposes human or animal participants to potential harm, stress, anxiety, abuses of all kinds, and a lot more negative consequences within the environment of the study. It is in this light that research ethics would help the researcher balance the ‘good’, that is the social benefits of conducting a particular research or the resolve to solve a social problem, with the ‘bad’, that is the potential harm or injuries (physical, psychological, social or cultural) that participants could be exposed to in carrying out the research. The idea is to prevent or minimize as much as possible harm to participants in the pursuit of the good intentions of the project. For instance,

there is often a perceived conflict between the aims of research to do good to society (generation of knowledge) and the rights of participants to maintain their privacy, dignity, autonomy (physical, psychological and cultural integrity), truth and justice (Ford & Reuter, 1990). There are also issues of relationship and power between researchers and participants, especially in dealing with vulnerable groups (prisoners, patients, students, etc.). For example, in order to see their grades or marked scripts, students may be coerced verbally or psychologically to participate in an investigation conducted by their lecturer. In that respect, it cannot be said that participants willingly offered to share information or experience. In that perspective, ethics will determine the methods, procedures or perspectives that a researcher adopts when dealing with complex problems and issues that may arise in the course of the research. Indeed, the decisions pertaining to such choices should not be left solely in the hands of the researcher. This paper will cover a wide range of issues of ethical dimension in an attempt to create awareness in young researchers about permissible and non-permissible behaviors in conducting social research. Major ethical principles that characterize various institutional and professional codes will be discussed and illustrated. Other deviations that are also regarded as misconducts will be discussed. But, before tackling the real issues of research, we all need to appreciate the historical events that gave cause to ethical considerations in research. There is abundant literature on classical cases of unethical research involving people. Reference is often made to such cases to warn practitioners about permissible limits in the conduct of research. Hence, our decision to begin with a review of some landmark cases relating to unethical practices in social science research.

Background to Ethical Considerations in Research

Landmark cases of controversial studies such as Humphreys (1975) and Milgram (2004a, 2004b), provide the rationale to consider ethical issues as pivotal in developing and undertaking research of any kind.

Various research abuses occurred during different periods of human history. Notably, the unethical experiments conducted by German doctors during World War II on Jews, gypsies and political prisoners; and the American Tuskegee

Syphilis study (1932-1972) sponsored by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) where 400 black males were left untreated to study the illness, even though a cure was found shortly after the commencement of the research; the disclosure of the 40 year study caused public outrage (Caplan, 1992).

Humphrey's (1975) study was another classical case of unethical research which was widely condemned for his use of deception in studying how homosexuals committed impersonal sexual acts with one another in public toilets. His study was conducted to challenge the social stereotype beliefs of the period. He sought to gain a better understanding of who these men were and what motivated them to seek quick, impersonal sexual gratification, using participant observation. He offered to warn those who use the toilets for the acts of any stranger that approached the area. In doing so, he gained the confidence of hundreds of homosexuals before disclosing his identity as a researcher. He then persuaded some of them to talk about their personal lives and motives. "His findings that a majority of the men were married and that most of them were successful and well educated went against stereotypes" (Robson, 2011, p. 196); But this shocked American academics who wanted to revoke his doctoral degree (Punch, 1994). Charges included lack of initial consent to be involved, invasion of privacy and threats to the social standing of those involved. Humphreys' defence rested on the impossibility of obtaining the findings other than by the approach he took and their importance in challenging inaccurate stereotypes (Robson, op. cit.).

Capron (1989) also reports another case of unethical research experiment conducted between 1950-1952 in which more than 1,000 pregnant women were given diethylstilbestrol to prevent miscarriages. These women were subject to a double-blind study without consent. Only 20 years later, when the children of these women had high rates of cancer and other abnormalities did the participants learn they were subjects of these experiments.

Clarke (1996) used deception in a forensic unit, claiming that this approach was necessary to obtain "uncontaminated" data. She used participant observation over a period of 6 weeks while working as a nursing auxiliary. Clarke did not disclose her role as a researcher. She retreated to the restroom to take notes or to speak

into a small dictaphone. Clarke justified this method stating that some degree of deception is permissible when “*dealing with sensitive aspects of subjects’ behaviour*” (p. 38).

Some of the cases described above illustrate the ethical complexities associated with research involving people and the ethical dilemmas researchers come face to face with. For example, Milgram and Humphrey justified their approach by the fact that another ethically responsible procedure could not have obtained the same results. Such approaches to research have been often criticized. Despite this, some researchers view the use of deception as a necessary feature in collecting data in certain disciplines such as psychology. Their justification for deception is based on a cost-benefit approach to ethics on the understanding that it would not have been possible to carry out the study without using deception. Understanding the placebo effect (where patients were given a sugar pill instead of a ‘powerful painkiller’ showed that patients’ improvement was based on their high expectations rather than the pill) is one study that relied on the use of deception, but has received little ethical attention (Miller, Wendler and Swartzman, 2005). However, researchers need to put in place safeguards such as debriefing participants about the true situation and assuring them of all possible means of keeping them from harm. Miller et al. (2005, p. 856) discuss possible ways in which deceptive research can be made compatible with informed consent. They propose using ‘authorized deception’ where “*participants can be informed prior to deciding whether to volunteer for a study that the experimental procedures will not be described accurately or that some features of these procedures will or may be misleading or deceptive*”. This allows them to decide whether they wish to take part in research involving deception and appears compatible with the spirit of informed consent. However, this approach may lead to biased data if participants become suspicious or wary (Robson, 2011).

Total prohibition of risky research might itself be considered unethical. An approach which seeks to evaluate the relative costs (i.e. negative consequences) and benefits (i.e. positive consequences) of research is needed. The benefits should be judged to outweigh the costs before the research is carried out.

Questions that then arise include: “Which costs and benefits are taken into account? On whom do the costs fall? To whom do the benefits accrue? Who makes the judgements?” (Robson, 2011, p. 196). These are valid ethical questions in their own right that call for decision making and responsibility. Hence, the importance of developing Institutional Review Boards (IRB) in institutions of higher learning and research.

Having reviewed some cases of ethical misconduct in the preceding paragraphs, we can better understand the importance of ethical guidelines for conducting social research. In the next section, we will highlight some rationales for considering ethical issues in research.

Importance of Ethical Guidelines

Ethical issues are important in all types of research. In qualitative research, ethical standards are enforced to ensure that research is carried out in an environment where high personal and professional standards are promoted. They are centered on protecting research participants against abuses of all kinds. These codes and policies provide basic guidelines for issues such as human rights, compliance with the law, conflicts of interest, safety, health standards, dishonesty, objectivity, fabrication and falsification of data, respect for intellectual property, social responsibility, integrity, confidentiality, accountability, discrimination, etc. Resnik (2011) sums up the importance of ethics in research in five key points: promoting the aims of research; promoting assertive values; helping to ensure researcher safety; helping to build public support for research; and helping to promote varied moral and social values.

1. Norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. For example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and minimize error.
2. Ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions. For example, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for authorship, copyright

and patenting policies, data sharing policies, and confidentiality rules in peer review, are designed to protect intellectual property interests while encouraging collaboration. Most researchers want to receive credit for their contributions and do not want to have their ideas stolen or disclosed prematurely.

3. Ethical norms help to ensure that researchers can be held accountable to the public. For instance, federal policies on research misconduct, conflicts of interest, the human subject's protection, and animal care and use are necessary in order to make sure that researchers who are funded by public money can be held accountable to the public.
4. Ethical norms in research also help to build public support for research. People are more likely to fund a research project if they can trust the quality and integrity of research.
5. Norms of research promote a variety of other important moral and social values, such as social responsibility, human rights, animal welfare, compliance with the law, and public health and safety. Ethical lapses in research can significantly harm human and animal subjects, students, and the public. For example, a researcher who fabricates data in a clinical trial may harm or even kill patients and a researcher who fails to abide by regulations and guidelines relating to radiation or biological safety may jeopardize his health and safety or the health and safety of staff and students.

Social researchers have argued that the ethical dilemmas that arise in social research are context-specific. The bases for ethical decision making in social research are commonly considered to include a commitment to participants' rights and to respect for participants; a commitment to knowledge (or the right for others to know, e.g., how specific organizations operate); a commitment to the promotion of respect for social science (e.g., to avoid 'spoiling the field'); and protecting the researcher (e.g. from litigation) (Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles, nd; c). Elements of all these approaches are enshrined in various codes and guidelines produced by Organizations in Ghana and abroad, whose members use social research methods. Examples include the code of ethics of the Ghana Legal Council (GLC), Ghana Bar Association (GBA), Ghana Health Service (GHS),

Ghana Journalist Association (GJA), Food and Drug Authority (FDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Health (MoH), Public Service Commission (PSC), Bank of Ghana (BoG), Social Research Association, British Psychological Society, British Sociological Association, British Association of Social Workers, British Educational Research Association, American Anthropological Association, Association of Social Anthropologists, American Psychological Association, American Chemical Society, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, among others.

Adherence to ethical principles greatly impacts the integrity of the research project and affects whether or not the project receives funding. It also protects the researcher from litigations (Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles, nd; a). Despite these guidelines, researchers may experience ethical dilemmas that may not have been anticipated in the research plan (Field & Morse, 1992) and this will require decision-making on the part of the researcher in ways fitting the needs of the specific research in order to avoid misconduct.

Like any set of rules, ethical guidelines or codes do not cover every situation of research and give room for considerable interpretations. It is therefore important for researchers to learn how to interpret, assess, and apply various research rules and how to make decisions and act ethically in various situations.

Ethical Codes and Guidelines

Ethical issues can crop up in every research, from selecting a topic through to reporting findings. For example, choosing a topic or a focus that can open up old wounds of a social conflict is deemed unethical. Or conducting qualitative research in an area where the researcher works or is already known raises ethical issues. In such settings, participants may feel coerced to participate and this may limit the information they give. This creates problems of validity, reliability and meaningfulness of the data (Field & Morse, 1992). These are partly ethical issues that need to be addressed in research.

Many questions often arise from research situations that demand sober reflection in order to avoid misconduct. Misconduct will refer to issues like abuse of rights

of participants, plagiarism, fabrication of data, bias analysis and reporting of findings, inducement or coercion of subjects, and any other acts that violate the basic principles of scientific research. Some of these questions are:

- Is it necessary to inform participants precisely about what the research will require them to do?
 - Is providing resources or cash rewards to participants an incentive or a bribe? Are they going to be treated fairly in the allocation of resources?
 - Are participants exposed to overt or covert penalties for non-participation?
 - Would the identity of informants be preserved when findings are published?
 - When inefficiency and malpractices are uncovered, does the researcher expose or shield the guilty ones?
 - Do researchers take responsibility for the knowledge they have acquired?
 - Do they do the bidding of the paymaster (that is the organization who sponsors the study)?
- (Adapted from Robson, 2011, p. 99).

Each of these issues is complex and context specific. However, they require careful judgements guided by the institutional codes of ethics. Researchers need to know a set of rules that inform their ability to make the right decisions when faced with ethical dilemmas.

At this stage, we will discuss major ethical guidelines that govern research in the social sciences. These ethical rules are centered on the issues of informed consent, beneficence, deception, respect for anonymity and confidentiality, privacy and justice. We shall discuss each of these principles in the light of best practices in contemporary research.

Informed Consent

Informed consent is one of the means by which participants' rights to autonomy are protected by researchers. According to Armiger (1997), it means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent. Capron (1989) considered that respect for people is the recognition of participants' rights, including the right to be informed about the study, the right

to freely decide whether to participate in a study, and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. It is for the latter reason why consent has been referred to as a negotiation of trust, and it requires continuous renegotiation (Field & Morse, 1992; Kvale, 1996; Munhall, 1988), just in case a participant threatens to pull out of the data collection exercise. The negotiation of the researcher's role in a research is also important in building consent. The researcher will not be identified as someone doing something dubious if his role is clearly defined to participants.

In other words, are researchers compelled to get the full consent of participants when undertaking research? Definitely, they have to respect the rights of participants to know what they are letting themselves into. Whenever judgement is made that prior permission must be sought, it is best practice to present all potential participants with 'an informed consent' form. However, as suggested by cases reviewed above, certain research situations do not allow full disclosure of procedures to participants.

Robson (2011, p. 200) explains the issue of informed consent in these terms:

Should people always be asked in advance whether they are prepared to take part and know in detail what it will involve? It may not be possible or practicable to do this. You may have good grounds for believing that telling them would alter the behaviour you are interested in. But not telling them means that you have taken away their right not to participate. There are several questions you can ask to help decide. Will the study involve them doing things they would not otherwise do? If not, it is less of an infringement.

For instance, I was criticized by a reviewer for unethical behaviour for not letting students know when and how they were being recorded during an oral test, even though they earlier consented in writing to participating in the exercise. The study was about uncovering compensatory strategies and behaviours that students display when they are linguistically challenged during the conversation aspect of

French oral examination. Though the video camera and Dictaphone were visible in the room, letting them know when they start running will alter their behaviour. In fact, I had to use diversionary conversations to take off their mind from the camera before we could start the real exercise. When explanatory notes on the situation were provided on the manuscript, the paper was eventually approved for publication. This example illustrates the problem of full disclosure of research procedure to participants even when their consent is sought. But generally, obtaining consent from vulnerable groups such as school children, mentally challenged or prisoners can be problematic. In that case, the consent is sought from parents or caretaker organizations who, for lack of understanding of the aims of the research, may put more impediments in the way of the researcher, or cause the termination of the exercise at any given time. However useful it is to explain the purpose of the study to participants in obtaining their consent, researchers need to make a reasonable balance between over-informing and under-informing them (Kvale, 1996). Even when procedures to elicit informed consent are scrupulously followed, there is evidence that participants may have only limited understanding of a project and their involvement in it. For example, Walker, Hoggart and Hamilton (2008) suggest that the amount of information that can be conveyed, and absorbed, prior to consent, is limited.

Another ethical dilemma in social research is whether researchers should always get the consent of people in every kind of research. Will judges of the law court give their consent for covert observation of their corrupt dealings if a journalist makes them aware of the aims of the investigation? However genuine the aims of the investigation are (i.e. the social benefits), it is difficult to get people to consent to participating in such studies. In such exceptional situations, an organization can commission researchers to undertake studies without the mandatory consent from participants. IRBs may also authorize the use of deception in order to get participants to give their consent when they are reasonably convinced that the researcher has put in place safeguards to protect participants from all forms of harm. Remember that you can be legally compelled with a subpoena to appear in court to disclose all research information including the signed consent forms.

Therefore, the consent from participants is vital to protect the researcher against lawsuits.

Free and informed consent needs to incorporate an introduction to the study and its purpose as well as an explanation about the selection of the research subjects and the procedures that will be followed (ANA, 1985). It is essential to describe any physical harm or discomfort, any invasion of privacy and any threat to dignity as well as how the subjects will be compensated in that case (Burns & Grove, 2005). In addition, the subjects need to know any expected benefits either to the subjects or to science by gaining new knowledge. A disclosure of alternatives is also required as for example in the Tuskegee study about syphilis (Jameton, 1984). The researcher must inform the subjects about the methods which will be used to protect anonymity and confidentiality and indicate a person with whom they can discuss the study. He must also provide a "Non-coercive Disclaimer" which states that participation is voluntary and no penalties are involved in refusal to participate (Davies, 1983). Moreover, the subjects must be told that some information has been deliberately withheld in order to avoid altered behaviours. The researcher must also take into account the fact that persons with physical, cultural and emotional barriers may require a very simple language in order to understand him. Finally, the freedom to withdraw must be explained (Burns & Grove, 2005). This is very important but raises the issue of how difficult the subjects can withdraw after developing a personal and sometimes friendly relationship with the researcher (Ford & Reutter, 1990).

With regard to withdrawal, a researcher may be in a dilemma in case many subjects choose to withdraw at an advanced stage of the study, because this can affect the validity of the results. The Declaration of Helsinki provides some help as it declares that the interest of the subjects must always prevail over the interests of society and science (Clarke, 1991). According to this, the will of the subjects must be respected at any cost for the research.

From what has been discussed, it becomes clear that disclosure, comprehension, competency and voluntariness are the four essential parts of a consent (Burn &

Grove, 2005). Since ethical guidelines have the ultimate goal of protecting human and animal participants against potential risk, this issue needs considerable discussion for researchers to appreciate the forms through which harm can be exacted deliberately or not on participants.

Deception

We have seen how deception was used by Milgram to study the behaviour of gay couples in public toilets. The use of deception has been widespread in social research, especially in experiments by social psychologists. Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) report a study on ‘cognitive dissonance’ where participants were deceived about the purpose of the study. They were told the study was over when it was not; they were encouraged to lie to someone about the experiment; and they were not told that this ‘someone’ was an accomplice of the researcher. The crowning deception was that, while they were told that they would be paid for their involvement, they were asked to return their earnings at the end of the study!

There has been no lack of criticism of such deception. Kelman (1967), for example, considered that it undermined what should be a mutual trust between researcher and participant, revealing a lack of respect by the researcher for those who were helping them with the research.

The only justification for the use of deception is based on the understanding that there is no other way to carry out the research. However, this decision should be supported by an intense analysis of potential risks and benefits of the situation, that the research will achieve positive outcomes for the social good. Also, researchers should have designed a careful approach that ensures that participants are protected from all forms of harm before, during the research procedure itself, and after the research is completed.

Beneficence (Avoid causing harm)

In qualitative social research, researchers have the duty to balance the benefits of the research with potential harm to participants and anticipate the possible

outcomes of their intervention with participants. The interview of victims of a natural disaster may trigger painful experiences that may cause emotional trauma to participants. I could recollect one such experience as an interpreter during visa interviews for asylum seekers in a refugee camp in Ghana. The interviewer (an official from the Australian High Commission) was trying to establish the identity of the candidates as true political refugees. The situation became traumatic when victims were asked to describe how armed militia abused them during the political turmoil in their country. In a situation like this, should the researcher continue the interview and gain more insight about the topic, stop the interview and give advice, or refer the participants to an appropriate treatment or counseling service? Deciding to continue would indicate that the researcher considers that the value of the data obtained from the distressing experience outweighs the participants' distress. Likewise, if a researcher discloses information of his AIDS subjects without their consent, this can lead to mental or physical stress.

Beneficence relates to the benefits of the research while maleficence relates to the potential risks of participation (Ford & Reutter, 1990). In this regard, maintaining the ethical principle of beneficence means that researchers should avoid anything that may cause physiological, emotional, social and economic harm to participants. It requires a high self-awareness of what constitutes harm on the part of the researcher. Researchers must consider all possible consequences of the research and balance the risks with the proportionate benefits. The type, degree and number of potential risks must be assessed as well as participants' value systems, which define what constitutes harm (Fowler & Ariff, 1987). An example of situation where the principle applies is when the researcher uses pseudonyms to hide the identity of the respondents or informants when there is enough ground to believe that witch-hunting may occur. Qualitative studies that use transcriptions of verbal data recommend the use of codes to mask the real identities of participants. But, even if codes are used, they are not sometimes sufficient safeguards to protect their identities. Quotations of informants, photos of places, leaked documents, or other data from participants, even though anonymous, could lead to their identification. Hence, researchers should discuss

and get the approval of their informants on how sensitive information is going to be published. A Turkish sociologist (who sought asylum in France) suffered political persecution in her country for refusing to reveal the identity and location of a Kurdish tribe that she investigated. She got the consent of the people on condition that no part of her study would reveal their identity, important landmarks and other information that can lead Turkish authorities to locate where they live. In a similar situation, two American journalists had to face prison sentence rather than reveal their sources. Another Ethnologist that I met during my doctoral research refused (even on the request of reviewers) to publish information about the location of Tupinambas, a tribe which was considered extinct in Brazil and Guyana. The people revealed themselves to her on condition that pictures and other information leading to their identification are not published in her thesis. The protection of participants becomes paramount in applying the principle of beneficence even in the face of legal threats.

Respect for Anonymity and Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality and anonymity is closely connected with the rights of beneficence, respect for the dignity and fidelity (Clarke, 1991). The anonymity of respondents is protected when their identity cannot be linked with personal responses. One sure way of preserving anonymity is to distort identifying details of interviews when transcribing the tapes used (Ford & Reuter, 1990). Confidentiality has to do with how the researcher manages information given by respondents so that their identity is not established. In studies involving big corporate organizations or government institutions, informants may not volunteer to participate if they feel that information they provide would unmask their identity. Confidential documents, such as papers or grants submitted for publication, personnel records, organizational secrets and other classified information need to be protected at all cost. Researchers must always bear in mind all psychological and social implications that a breach of confidentiality may have on subjects. The obligation of researchers to ensure anonymity of their subjects goes beyond the concealing of personal details of their respondents to include safe reportage or publication of sensitive information. There is however evidence that participants may not always want to be anonymized (Robson, 2011).

For example, for those working with children with special needs, some participants would have liked to have their own names used. It could also be argued that when the research has revealed some particularly praiseworthy conduct, it is churlish not to give personal credit. Grinyer (2002) provides a useful review of the issues involved in anonymization. Clarke (1996) addresses the ethical dilemma of the researcher when confidentiality must be broken because of the moral duty to protect society. Confidentiality and anonymity can be breached by legal requirements such as when researchers' data are subpoenaed for legal purposes. If legal reporting is required, such as cases of child or elder abuse, participants should be informed that this information would be excluded from confidentiality and anonymity. In order to protect participants, you have to inform them on their rights, and use all possible coding systems that you regard appropriate in each case. However, the deontological rules of the profession may compel the researcher to ignore his moral duty to society in order to preserve the anonymity of participants. In such sensitive and complex situations, the researcher may obtain a Certificate of Confidentiality (issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services if he is residing in the United States) to protect him from being compelled by law to disclose the identity of vulnerable participants.

Respect for Privacy

The giving of informed consent does not imply that participants' rights to privacy should be abused. According to Levine (1976), "privacy is the freedom an individual has to determine the time, extent, and general circumstances under which private information will be shared with or withheld from others". Privacy is invaded when private information such as beliefs, opinions, personal records and attitudes is shared with others without the prior consent of people (Kelman, 1977). A researcher cannot decide alone which information to share about his respondents. This ought to be discussed with the prospective participants and other colleagues of the research team before the investigation commences. Treece and Treece (1982) suggest that whenever subjects refuse to report personal information as they regard it an invasion of privacy, the researcher ought to

respect their views. This may include information about their age, income, marital status, and other details that the subject may regard intimate. They also imply that, privacy can be invaded when researchers study certain groups without their knowledge and without identifying themselves through covert observation. Covert observation is discussed below as one situation where researchers invade the privacy of people without their consent or knowledge.

Covert Observation

Observing people as part of a research project without letting them know what you are doing is clearly at odds with the principle of informed consent. It exposes participants to embarrassment, shame and the feeling of anxiety and guilt. Anas Aremeyaw Anas (a Ghanaian investigative journalist) recent undercover investigative work on corruption in the judiciary in Ghana dubbed “Ghana in the eyes of God” caused Ghanaian judges, judicial staff and their family shame and a lot of anxiety, especially when some of them who featured in the videos were dismissed and denied all their entitlements as a result of this reportage. Even though the use of such techniques of observation is widely condemned, many studies have used covert participation by researchers in gangs, religious cults and deviant communities (Lauder, 2003). Their attraction to researchers can be explained by the fact that they can provide access to information that is otherwise unavailable. They present researchers with an unobstructive opportunity of observing people, with less or no influence on whatever is being observed. With the widespread availability of smarter technologies such as mobile phones, CCTV cameras, tracking devices, electronic identification cards, microchips and other miniature gadgets for voice and video recording, it is increasingly becoming difficult to maintain people’s privacy at public places or even in the confines of their homes. Although the use of such technologies have considerable potential for research purposes (e.g. Diminescu, Licoppe, Smoreda & Ziemlicki, 2007; Evans, 2007), they give cause for concern about the erosion of privacy in public places (Nissenbaum, 1998). It has become the norm to record people at events without seeking their consent. The next moment, you see intimate information of people displayed on social media just to stimulate conversations or comments from other users. The attention of young researchers needs to be drawn to such

infringements, even where students think that recording the delivery of a lecture does not need consent from the lecturer. Some years ago, as a doctoral student myself, I was the convener for a roundtable discussion on 'ethical issues in the social sciences' where participants were drawn from different disciplines and professional backgrounds. A museologist who spoke on what visitors focus their attention on when observing paintings and artworks, was not happy to learn that participants' presentations were recorded on dictaphone during the event. Had he known that fact, he claimed, he would not have revealed some observation data about museum visitors. He calmed down only when he was assured that none of the information recorded was going to be published but would only be used for writing the internal report for the Doctoral Students' Association. Various arguments have been made to support the use of covert observation in research. Covert research is justified on these grounds:

- In some areas of social life, once people are told they are taking part in a study, they will alter their behaviour. It then becomes impossible to conduct the research. In such cases, researchers may gain consent but may not reveal the actual focus of the research. They may also seek the consent of 'gatekeepers' to conduct a covert study on a group.
- The research is of paramount interest for the general public in exposing wrongdoings or malpractices in some organizations or institutions, as in the corruption investigation against the judiciary in Ghana. In that case, the only way this can occur is through covert means.
- In some types of observational research, it is not possible to obtain consent from all participants, in that a researcher does not know who will enter the area that is observed.

Despite these reasons, covert methods are still viewed as contentious for the following reasons:

- Covert methods are generally not necessary and the same objectives can be achieved by open methods. It is argued that most groups will accept and

agree to collaborate with research once they know that they can trust the researcher involved.

- It violates the principle of informed consent and invades privacy for no good reason.
- It is a betrayal of trust and once participants realize that they have been used for research purposes (as they are likely to do when the research is published) that they will feel used and upset.
- It makes further research in that area or topic or with that particular group very unlikely (i.e. it 'spoils the field').
- It brings all social science into disrepute. It makes social science no different to journalism.
- It poses unique practical challenges, in particular in relation to the health and safety of the researcher. The researcher's life may be threatened if uncovered by the people observed (i.e. during participant observation of gangs, drug dealers, a mafia)

(based on Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles, nd; c; Robson, 2011)

In conclusion, covert observation (participant or non-participant) raises enormous ethical issues since it violates the principles of informed consent and invades people's privacy. However, if the research is of high benefit for society, important measures should be put in place so that such observation has no negative consequences (physical, psychological or social damage) for those observed during the study or after the publication of findings.

In the next section, we will deal with the principle of justice which defines the way researchers should treat, with fairness, participants, especially vulnerable groups.

Justice (Working with vulnerable groups)

The principle of justice refers to equal share and fairness. Justice requires that ethics review processes, involve methods that are fair and transparent, that established standards and procedures for reviewing research protocols are in place, and that the process is effectively independent. One of the crucial and distinctive features of this principle is avoiding exploitation and abuse of

participants, especially vulnerable groups. Children, prisoners, the mentally challenged, the poor, the elderly, and students are identified as vulnerable for their inability to independently decide to take part in a study. These groups are in a greater risk of being deceived, threatened or forced to participate. For that matter, presenting consent forms that are crafted in a language (i.e. either highly technical or a foreign language) that cannot be understood by such groups constitutes unfair treatment or injustice. An example was the situation in which the consent forms for a group of Ethiopians for a rabies vaccine trial were not translated to the local language (News in Brief, 1999). The researcher's understanding and application of the principle of justice is further demonstrated by recognizing the contributions of the vulnerable to the study. For example, if during analysis of the data, you consider that a concept or a heading of the report will be based on the contribution of one of your students, ethically you should request permission to use such a concept or discuss it with the particular student. In this way, the contributions of that student are acknowledged. Also, within any interview, researchers must demonstrate their awareness of the power relationship that may exist between themselves and their participants and take steps to ensure that this is overcome. According to Burns and Grove (2005), vulnerability increases the need for justification for the use of such subjects.

Justice is also about ensuring that no segment of the population is unfairly burdened with the harms of research and that no individual or group is neglected or discriminated against. Robson (2011, p. 199) puts the question in this manner:

Suppose we are looking at a new approach to the teaching of reading. It is likely that we start with the premise that, this looks like being a 'good thing', probably an improvement on what is currently on offer... Which schools are to be involved? Do you choose the fertile soil of a friendly, innovative school? Or the stony ground of a setting where there is probably a greater, though unacknowledged, need for something new? These are partly research issues but they have a clear ethical dimension.

Participants should be selected from groups of people whom the research may

benefit. Another way of implementing the principle of justice is listening to the voices of the minority and disadvantaged groups as well as protecting those who are most vulnerable. The principle of justice thus imposes particular obligations on researchers so that fairness prevails in all stages of the research.

All being said about the protection of participants from harm, researchers are themselves ethically bound to ensure their own safety in difficult environments and working conditions. The next section will deal with that crucial aspect of the topic.

Researcher Safety and Risk

Researching sensitive topics in difficult or dangerous environments can put researchers' lives at risks. Particular mention should be made of social scientists, health workers, journalists, criminal investigators, who constantly put their lives on the line for the sustenance of social harmony and safety, and the general advancement of knowledge. Belousov, Horlick-Jones, Bloor, Gilinskiy, Golbert, Kostikovskiy, et al. (2007) review the difficulties faced by fieldworkers in ensuring personal safety when working in conditions characterized by danger and crisis. For example, during the fight against the spread of Ebola in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, 815 health workers got infected with the Ebola virus between 1st January 2014 to 31st March 2015 (WHO, 2015). A similar report is made of 5 co-authors who died of the Ebola virus before their paper "Genomic surveillance elucidates Ebola virus origin and transmission during the 2014 outbreak" is published. While discussing ethical principles of research, it is quite appropriate to stress the need for researchers to ensure their personal safety when conducting research on groups that pose life threatening risks. Lee-Treweek and Linkogle (2000) include contributions from researchers who describe the risks they encountered while carrying out fieldwork, while Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen and Liamputtong (2008) and Craig (2004) provide helpful suggestions of ways of minimizing the risk for researchers when studying sensitive topics. Boynton (2005) provides a detailed and highly practical discussion of how to safeguard researcher safety and well-being. It is grounded in her experience as a community

researcher studying prostitution. Some of the practical questions and advice for risk assessment for researchers are below:

- Buildings – Access from the street/car park to buildings – Is it well lit? Are there clear paths, ramps or steps, etc., or any machinery or other features that could present a safety problem?
- Properties – Keep your bags and belongings in a safe place, even when visiting someone in their home. Ensure you know where your belongings are at all times. Do not take anything valuable with you unless you have to. Managers should be clear about staff safety when staff are responsible for equipment such as mobile phones or laptops.
- Well-being – Do you know where fire escapes, nearest phone or the security office/number is? (If you are directly at risk, call 999). If there are any risks posed to your physical or psychological health, have these been planned for in the project?
- Equipment – Have you been trained in the correct use of equipment and been given inoculations if appropriate? If you have to carry equipment for work, has it been checked so you avoid back strain?
- People – Anticipate and know how to respond to potential racist/sexist/homophobic remarks or abuse from participants and others. If you are likely to encounter participants who are drunk, on drugs or have severe mental health problems, are you trained in how to deal with them appropriately? Do you know the difference between someone who is ill and someone who is being inappropriate? Do you have the confidence to leave any situation that feels uncomfortable? Are other people around who could come to your assistance should you need it? Are you able to control and leave an interview? Do you have a policy on how to deal with participants who become a nuisance or who won't 'let go'? Managers should check that staff are aware of their boundaries and are not promising participants too much or overstepping their role as researcher.
- Environment – Are you likely to have to work or travel in adverse weather conditions? Can you plan your route and avoid getting lost? Is there any risk

of assault? Have you had, or do you require, training in self-defence or assertiveness? Do you know the area where you'll be working, or can you find out about it? Are you wearing appropriate clothing? Is there a place of safety you can go to if working in the field?

- Lone working – Can you summon help if necessary? Is the risk posed to you high, medium or low? If possible, work in pairs and avoid dangerous buildings/situations. Never allow a person to work in a dangerous situation without training or support. Ensure you record your location, route and expected time of return. Have a check-in system with your buddy. Train and empower staff in raising the alarm if necessary. Get advice from local services (police, council, etc.) on any dangerous locations.
- Set up – Have you designed your study to avoid cold-calling (visiting people without prior information)? Are researchers equipped with identification badges? Are you regularly on the training and emotional needs of researchers?
(Based on Boynton, 2005, Table 6.1)

Having discussed at length some major ethical principles that apply to social research, there are other specific rules that every researcher should know. Infringing such not-so-obvious rules are ethical deviations. Resnik (2011) provides a rough summary of such ethical rules that various codes address:

Honesty – You should strive for honesty in all scientific communications. Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status. Fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data as well as the deception of colleagues, research sponsors, or the public are acts of dishonesty.

Objectivity – You should strive to avoid bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research where objectivity is expected or required. Avoid or minimize bias or self-deception. Disclose personal or financial interests that may affect research.

Integrity – You should keep your promises and agreements to participants or members of your research team; act with sincerity (i.e. recognize the authorship of colleagues who equally contributed to the research); strive for consistency of thought and action.

Carefulness – You should avoid careless errors and negligence; carefully and critically examine your own work and the work of your peers. Keep good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design, and correspondence with agencies or journals.

Openness – You should share data, results, ideas, tools, and resources with other members of faculty and be open to criticism and new ideas.

Respect for Intellectual Property - You should honor patents, copyrights, and other forms of intellectual property. Do not use unpublished data, methods, or results without permission. Give proper acknowledgement or credit for all contributions to research. Never plagiarize.

Responsible Publication – You should publish in order to advance research and scholarship, not to advance just your own career. Avoid wasteful and duplicative publication.

Responsible Mentoring – You should help to educate, mentor, and advise students. Promote their welfare and allow them to make their own decisions.

Respect for Colleagues – You should promote collaborative values. Respect your colleagues and treat them fairly. Maintain intellectual property rights of fellow researchers, mentors and other scholars. This can be achieved by bestowing proper credentials to their contribution in the research. Respect the autonomy, decision-making and dignity of participants.

Social Responsibility – You should strive to promote social good and prevent or mitigate social harms through research, public education, and advocacy. Researchers put lives at risk when they fabricate data.

Non-Discrimination – You should avoid discrimination against colleagues or students on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, or other factors not related to scientific competence and integrity.

Competence – You should maintain and improve your own professional competence and expertise through lifelong education and learning; take steps to promote competence in science as a whole.

Legality – You should know and obey relevant laws and institutional and governmental policies. This will guarantee the researcher’s accountability towards the public. The researcher can gain public support for funding projects which requires huge finances and time.

Human Subjects Protection - When conducting research on human subjects, minimize harms and risks and maximize benefits; respect human dignity, privacy, and autonomy; take special precautions with vulnerable populations; and strive to distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly. Protect and respect the values and interests of the community as a whole.

(Adapted from Shamoo and Resnik (2015); Resnik (2011); Smith (2003))

Resnik (2003) identifies other activities that are not defined as “misconduct” by the various codes but which are still regarded by most researchers as unethical. These are sometimes referred to as “other deviations” from acceptable research practices and include:

- Submitting the same paper to different journals without telling the editors
- Publishing the same paper in two different journals without telling the editors
- Not informing a collaborator of your intent to file a patent in order to make sure that you are the sole inventor
- Including a colleague as an author on a paper in return for a favor even though the colleague did not make a serious contribution to the paper
- Discussing with your colleagues confidential data from a paper that you are reviewing for a journal

- Using data, ideas, or methods you learn about while reviewing a grant or a paper without permission
- Trimming outliers from a data set without discussing your reasons in paper
- Using an inappropriate statistical technique in order to enhance the significance of your research
- Bypassing the peer review process and announcing your results through a press conference without giving peers adequate information to review your work
- Conducting a review of the literature that fails to acknowledge the contributions of other people in the field or relevant prior work
- Stretching the truth on a grant application in order to convince reviewers that your project will make a significant contribution to the field
- Giving the same research project to two graduate students in order to see who can do it the fastest
- Overworking, neglecting, or exploiting graduate or post-doctoral students
- Failing to keep good research records
- Failing to maintain research data for a reasonable period of time
- Making derogatory comments and personal attacks in your review of author's submission
- Promising a student a better grade for sexual favors
- Using a racist epithet in the laboratory
- Making significant deviations from the research protocol approved by your Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research without telling the committee or the board
- Not reporting an adverse event in a human research experiment
- Wasting animals in research
- Exposing students and staff to biological risks in violation of your institution's biosafety rules
- Sabotaging someone's work
- Stealing supplies, books, or data
- Rigging an experiment so you know how it will turn out
- Making unauthorized copies of data, papers, or computer programs

- Owning over \$10,000 in stock in a company that sponsors your research and not disclosing this financial interest
- Deliberately overestimating the clinical significance of a new drug in order to obtain economic benefits

Source: (Resnik, 2003)

These actions would be regarded as unethical by most scientists and some might even be illegal in some cases. Most of these would also violate different professional ethical codes or institutional policies. However, they do not fall into the narrow category of actions that are classified as research misconduct.

Conclusion

Ethical codes do not just contribute to the quality of a scientific research, but can equally contribute to its legitimacy. They reassure the citizens who sponsor research that science develops its own tools to guaranty responsible research.

Clearly, issues of ethical dimensions will continue to lurk so long as researchers undertake research involving human participants. The situations that give rise to ethical decisions are often complex and often demand decisions outside what has been established by the various codes of ethics. But this paper tried to define major principles that feature prominently in issues of ethical concern. Such principles boarder around beneficence, deception, informed consent, justice, anonymity and confidentiality, privacy and researcher safety. Other acts that equally lead to ethical deviations have been discussed to provide researchers with an extensive list of unacceptable practices that may be considered normal in certain research traditions. Considering the impact that such misconducts have on science and the society as a whole, there is the need for continuous education of researchers on ethical issues particularly, the study of cases of ethical dilemmas that researchers face in contemporary research activities. The creation of awareness on such issues should be a continual exercise, since the resurgence of ethical violations can compromise the integrity of research and erode the public's trust in science (Resnik, 2003).

The administrative burden of ethical review and procedures is balanced by the protection of participants (Dresser, 1998). It is therefore recommended that IRBs' composition should reflect diversity in disciplines of research within the institution so that members can bring their expertise to bear on decisions concerning the safety of human subjects in research and ensuring that human rights are not violated. Its members should review the research methodology of all research proposals to ensure their conformity with approved ethical codes and practices of the institution. The use of an IRB also helps to protect the institution and the researchers against potential legal implications from any behavior that may be deemed unethical. Besides, governments should consider creating a body akin to the US Department of Health and Human Services that can provide legal covering for researchers who wish to undertake research of high societal benefits in risky environments.

Even though IRBs and peer review systems of respective research institutions define their own mechanisms to check misconducts, researchers still find their own way of going around ethical rules to satisfy personal goals. In fact, nothing much could be achieved through education and sensitisation on ethical issues if researchers do not develop a responsible attitude towards issues of research involving other people. In other words, the knowledge of these principles cannot ensure ethical research but they can contribute to an understanding that ethical responsibility in social research is an ongoing process. Research seminars, conferences and roundtable discussions should therefore create the platform for researchers to share not only findings but also report incidents and ethical issues encountered during their studies to ensure discussion, analysis and prevention of misconduct.

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LANGUAGE PROBLEMS OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS: FROM THOUGHT TO MEDIUM

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, postgraduate studies represent the last rung of the ladder in the search for academic knowledge. It is at this point that the highest level of intellection is expected and in fact demonstrated. Given the depth of reflection associated with postgraduate studies, there is a natural expectation that the language that will support this intellectual effort should be one that captures the fine recesses of the researcher's thought. Yet the language should not masquerade the depth of knowledge being pursued to make the information needed hardly attainable or accessible. Therefore, while the link between language and postgraduate studies cannot be gainsaid, there is a compelling need to bring the postgraduate effort to the doorstep of those for whom the studies are intended. In other words, the technical interest or exigency of a research report need not be sacrificed on the altar of clarity of expression, it is important that the language to deliver the report beams with incisive terseness and refreshing novelty of expression.

What is language?

Language is such an important part of human endowment that man can hardly do without it. In spite of the silently overbearing place of gestures in human expression of ideas and feelings, language still carves an imposing niche of prestige, honour and visibility for itself, the way other means of communication do not. If, according to most observations, more than 80% of human communication is via the non-verbal mode, the truth remains that language which occupies the tiny slot remaining is still enjoying universal influence and appeal,

perhaps more than non-verbal communication does. No wonder that there is hardly any human interaction that does not use language as the bedrock of verbal reference. If language is of great importance to us all, whatever may be our engagements, greeting, calling, describing, narrating, leading, cursing, congratulating, condemning, etc., its crucial value in research cannot be gainsaid. It is through language that our research is carried out in the first instance. In other words, even the preliminary question of what to research into is made easy by language. Is it not language that paves the way for understanding the goals and intimate meanders of our research? If we don't share the same language in which previous works/thoughts have been put down or put together, it is obvious that we will be at a loss knowing how to assess these works and thoughts.

So much for language in general terms. Let us now turn to language in terms of its specific suitability to research. Even before we do so, remember that whatever is the result of our research requires documentation without which information about our research efforts will be limited to ourselves. Now documentation requires language and language requires manipulation skills for special effect. Secondly, the assumption here is that the research language of the researcher is well beyond grappling with common infelicities such as mistaking 'a few' for 'few', 'on several occasions' for 'severally', or using 'on the other hand' without a prior use of 'on the one hand', 'themselves' instead of 'one another/each other', or common errors such as writing 'rented' instead of 'rent', 'be rest assured' instead of 'rest assured', etc. Meanwhile, let us do a simple survey of the classic stages of research engagement, for in doing so, we will be able to assign suitable values to the contents and style of language that is called for in delivering the results of the engagement.

Ordinarily, the research format has the following headings : topic/title, acknowledgements, introduction, body, conclusion, recommendation, references/bibliography. Some will simplify this by recognizing only 3 constituent parts: the Front matter, the Body and the Back matter, the front matter being all that comes before the body while the back matter encompasses all the

information provided after the body. For the purpose of this essay we shall rely on the multi-component profile.

Each component is guided by language. We shall see in some details how language has fed each component and to what extent disrespect to language norms (not necessarily grammatical errors) has negative effects on the overall quality of the presentation.

Sub-components

Topic/Title

By far the most salient key to the body of our research is the way the title of our research work has been couched. Just like the needle's eye is crucial to the passage of the thread, the title is critical to the readers' expectations of our work. Consequently, the title must say what it seeks to say. Put in another way, the title must carry what we expect readers to learn from our research. For that to happen, the title must be pithy, laconic and logical. Pithy so that it evokes attractive intelligence, laconic so that it says what it wants to say without wasting words, logical because the parts present a coherent meaningful whole. Consider the following titles, for **Example**:

- New Effects of Iron Deficiency in Mammals : Evidence from Goat
- The Structure and Contents of Nigerian Cartoons : A Post-Independence Survey
- Common Features of Terrorism in Nigeria : A Socio-political Account
- Warning Signs in Non-Verbal Communication : Illustrations from Africa
- The Struggle for Nigerian Independence : The Role of the Nigerian Elite

A quick look at them all shows that they have something in common: clarity of expression and scope. This quality would have been unattainable without the combination of pithiness, brevity and coherence. Of course, the language of presentation takes also into account the tradition of the discipline in question. We all know that disciplines tend to have their network of sensibilities and

stylistic heritage. For instance, in Education, the need to make the title recall details of the work scope is often cherished. The same remark seems to hold for clinical sciences.

Examples:

Fagbenro, O. A. & Jauncey (1994): Chemical and Nutritional quality of dried fermented fish silage and their nutritive value for tilapia (*Chreochomis niloticus*).

Omotoso, I. A. (2012): Problem Solving and Decision Making Skills for Dealing with Three Critical Problems Confronting Students on Campus.

In spite of this observation, the search for straightforward direction in terms of the main research objective is not compromised.

Acknowledgements

Having decided the language of the title, we now move to acknowledgments, which provide the opportunity to express gratitude to people who have been helpful at one stage or another of the research and to admit openly some other invaluable sources of assistance. What is of interest here is not so much the reliability of the contents of the acknowledgements but the coherence and subtlety of presentation. While the researcher is at liberty to choose the sources of his inspiration for the work, he should avoid boring details and obsessive attachment to emotions. The acknowledgements page is where readers know who and what contributed to making the work, what it is and not a prayer ground. The acknowledgements should be brief and minimally emotional.

The Body

The body of the work is the belly of the researcher's thought. It harbours the beginning and the end of the thought cycle of the researcher. It represents the what? where? why? how? and therefore of the academic engagement. It is the body that seeks to explicate the title, giving it its deserved expression, expansion and meaning meanders. This cannot be done effectively without the right language to midwife it. For this reason, the researcher's best tool of expression is his language. What are the major indices of an effective tool for midwiving our thoughts in this

regard? We will identify the following: grapho-prosodic resources, paragraphing, tense use, modal verbs, quotations and abbreviations.

Grapho-prosodic Resources

Punctuation marks, a key constituent of grapho-prosodic resources at the disposal of most users of the written language are among the most celebrated features in graphology. The marks are, in principle, meant to replace or recall the different roles assigned to the prosodic contours enjoyed by the voice in reading or in speaking. Among the most frequently used of these devices are : the dot (.), the mark for the full stop, the comma (,), the semi-colon (;), the colon (:), the inverted commas (‘ ’) the dash (-) [not hyphen], the marks for interrogation and for exclamation, i.e.(?) & (!) respectively.

Given that we are all quite familiar with everyone of the devices, we will concentrate on two extreme sets: those that are used correctly by practically every one and those that constitute a real challenge to a large number of student researchers. To the first set belong the devices that mark the end of a statement or sentence. The marks that indicate the end of the sentence are either a full stop (a dot), an interrogation mark or an exclamation mark, as the following will show:

Full stop: When we had finished talking, he smiled. Nobody realized we were in trouble already.

Interrogation mark: When will we ever get the money?

Exclamation mark: What a huge success! However, we need to be able to sustain it. To the set also belong inverted commas at the beginning and end of the quoted material. An example is provided:

“All languages are organized around two main kinds of meaning...”
Halliday 2000: 39.

While most often the researcher is not faced with any major problem in using or interpreting the marks we have just highlighted, experience has shown that the

semi-colon and the colon often constitute an embarrassing challenge to him. He either misuses them or mistakes them. The semi-colon is either mistaken for a colon or for a comma, whereas each of them serves a different set of purposes. The colon is for enumeration, the comma for inter-phrase or intra-sentence pause, the semi-colon is, however, used to introduce explanation, justification or development of a preceding idea.

- The boys need to be careful, the police are watching them.
- Let's forgive him; nobody is perfect.
- You should know my house; it's close to your brother's.
- The objectives of the research are different; the data concentrate mainly on the illiterate youth.

A second look at these examples will show that the semi-colon is used as if to replace conjunctions like 'because', 'for', 'insofar as', 'given the fact that', etc. Secondly, it should be clear that the semi-colon is never followed by a capital. Unfortunately, some students still disrespect this rule.

Paragraphing

As we all know, paragraphing is a graphological device to illustrate or demarcate units of thought. The paragraph usually contains an idea that is autonomous in expression but connected to immediately surrounding ideas which themselves have been expressed via paragraphs. What is at stake, therefore, is the interconnectedness of paragraphs in terms of thought units that are simultaneously dependent and independent.

The point of interest for us is indeed the language implications of paragraphing. It is in this regard, that we need to highlight the fact that between one paragraph and another there is not just the question of space and line-jumping, but there is also the matter of structures that sustain the cohesion between the paragraphs. Here are some of such structures: *moreover*, *however*, *given the preceding*, *on the basis of the above*, *in the light of the aforesaid*, *in spite of the above*, *be that as it may*,

meanwhile, etc. The structures give life and thread to the whole text and establish between the paragraphs the needed inter-dependence.

Given the above, it is no exaggeration to say that young researchers are still not very conscious of the place of language in the building of paragraphs.

Tense Use

Tense use is critical in the overall transmission style of the research report. In principle, the present tense is most often recommended. But, as you will see very soon, the use of tense(s) is a little more complex than it appears. This is principally because what tense to use at a particular point in the report depends very much on the context of the report.

Consider the following:

- (i) According to Awe (1990, p. 1), there is no evidence of any dire correlation between age and wisdom.
- (ii) Awe (1998) did not find any evidence of any correlation between quality and volume.
- (iii) In Ajiboye (2002, p. 1) there is no place for an argument along this line.
- (iv) It has been confirmed by Chukwu et al that women are more prone to certain illnesses than others.
- (v) Our position is based on Apple (2012) which lays claim to regional integration as conditional to the development of West African economy.
- (vi) At the end of the research, it was concluded/established that more yams were planted in the south than in the north of my country.
- (vii) The questionnaire revealed that there was higher school enrolment in 1999 than in 1989.

From the above, it is clear that the present tense is most preferred in reporting research references. However, there are occasions when the choice of a different tense is imposed by contextual constraints such as the nature of the message/information and/or the force of grammatical concord.

Referencing

The body of the researcher's documentation is not complete without appropriate referencing. We will discuss this from two perspectives: in-text references and post-text references. Both have basically the same objective: provide information about the sources used by the researcher for the work being reported. However, in-text references have added interest for us because of the room they make for abbreviations of all sorts. It is some of these abbreviations that we consider important for comments here. Below are some of the abbreviations and other usages: *op. cit.*, *inter alia*, *sic*, *circa*, *et al.*, *cf.*, *passim*, *ipso facto*, *i.e.*, *etc.*, *a priori*, *a posteriori*, *ad infinitum*.

Many of these usages (most of them *latinate*) are perhaps very familiar. But one wonders if all research students are at ease with their placements and meanings. For this reason, we will present below their meanings along with their illustrative uses:

ad infinitum- indefinitely, without limit

Example: The guest speaker praised *ad infinitum* the efforts of the first inventors of this drug.

a priori - without prior verification

Example: While waiting for the evidence from the data, we could conclude *a priori* that the present Mali is related to the Old Mali Empire.

a posteriori - drawn from or based on experience or prior verification

Example: The view can no longer be contradicted as it is expressed *a posteriori*.

c. (*circa*) pronounced /syRka/ - (usually used with dates) - approximately, about, around

Example: The Ijaye war occurred *c.* 1880.

cf. - compare

Example: The English language is not without French loan words, *cf.* *restaurant*, *rendez-vous*, *tête-à-tête*, etc.

et al. - and others (used in listing authors that number more than two)

Example: According to Ajiboye *et al.* (1997), The *Nouvel Horizon* series is a comprehensive learning manual for French in an Anglophone setting

ibid. (ibidem) – in the same place

Example: In Chepkwory and Hess (2000, p. 1), Dopamu’s claim that God hates monotony and likes variety is recalled. In other plane, there is a warning that African hospitality could have been mistaken by European as acceptance of Christianity (ibid).

infra – below (vide infra – see below)

Example: The same opinion was expressed twenty years later by a different historian (vide infra).

inter alia – (among others) usually suitable in selecting from a list of options.

Example: The scientist recommends, inter alia, that all efforts be made to encourage breastfeeding.

ipso facto – by the fact itself

Example: The first analysis of the data is ipso facto evidence that the hypothesis is verifiable.

mutatis mutandis – all modifications having been made.

Example: At the end of the report, we can then submit a draft mutatis mutandis.

sic. as it is This is the expression recommended for use after a quoted word known to be grammatically wrong but retained deliberately for fear of distorting the originality of the source..

Example: According to the author, ‘The upliftment (sic) of all members is crucial’ You will have seen that some of the expressions, largely latinate, are not abbreviations; they are, all the same, in common use in research documentation. It is, therefore, important to develop the skill in using them with the needed competence and appeal. Of course, what we have provided is not an exhaustive list but a chunk representative of what we find commonly in use. Now is the time to survey five of the most enduring language attributes of a research report.

Five Language Attributes of Research Report

In my view, while other attributes are possible, the language of the body of the research must demonstrate five indispensable qualities: politeness, modesty, tentativeness, clarity and objectivity.

Politeness

It is common knowledge that politeness is a universal phenomenon even though expressed differently from culture to culture. Language is an important carrier of politeness as it is through it that man's network of social relations (including those dealing with politeness) is expressed or conveyed. Here again, the mechanisms and apparatus for doing so may differ from language to language. In most European languages, a primary index of politeness is the personal pronoun. The French *vouvoient*, the German *Sie*, the English *thou*, the Italian *Lei*, the Russian *Vy* are all good examples of the weight of the personal pronoun in delivering politeness in many languages. But it is not only the pronoun that conveys politeness in the European or other traditions. The choice we make of (other) words generally does that too. There is perhaps no better area of the research report that imposes the need for the polite choice of words than in the literature review. Comments on authors of previous works or the works themselves are supposed to be sober, solemn and respectful. This does not necessarily do any violence to the true-value of our position in terms of what we think of the authors or works being assessed.

Compare

While we admit the author's view about the probable date of the discovery of that vaccine, evidence abounds that the trial test of the vaccine did not start with rats as claimed by this author, but with lizards.

While we may admit that author's view about the probable date of the discovery of the vaccine, the author could not have pretended not to be aware of the abundant evidence disclaiming the efficacy of the vaccine.

Modesty

Modesty is in a way a first cousin to politeness. While politeness attempts to reach out to interlocutors, preserving as much as possible their self-image, modesty is an attempt to 'cover up', 'bushel' self-worth or avoid self-adulation by the speaker or writer. Modesty of expression is often recommended in research report for the simple reason that research is, in principle, tied to humility. Expressing knowledge is prone to arrogance if not well handled, and arrogance is far from

being a cherished virtue in social interactions. Therefore, it is often recommended that to give our report a good measure of social acceptability, it should be couched in a language that is devoid of arrogance or pumposity.

A mark of modesty in language is the use of 'we', a pronoun that, when used appropriately in reporting research efforts, leaves a smooth taste of honourable self-effacement. It is thus considered to be in good taste that we use structures like:

- We are of the view (that loamy soil will mean more challenges for fish farmers).
- In our opinion, (Socrates could not have been a defender of woman's rights).
- We do not know of any earlier claim in this direction.
- As far as our scope is concerned.
- These conclusions, including ours, do not detract from the general hypothesis.

Another trait of modest language is found in the use of phrases like:

- We tried to...
- We have attempted to....
- We have endeavoured to....
- We hope to have succeeded in..... In brief, the language of modesty is the language that recalls the lack of finality in human knowledge and the ever challenging nature of the world of research.

Tentativeness

Closely tied, in turn, to modesty is tentativeness. The tentative language tends to hide all that an assertive language tends to exhibit. Unlike the latter, the tentative language suggests open possibilities and options, and accommodates review of variables to get same or different hypotheses and result. A tentative language is not imperiously definitive or unguardedly authoritative.

A language that has tentative tenor is conveyed via phrases like:

- e. It might not be too far from the truth to / that
- f. All other things being equal,
- g. Given the above scenario/conditions...

- h. Within the scope of this research...
- i. The following, among others, ...
- j. Not being unmindful of
- k. As far as we know

Clarity

Iss was gar ist, Sprich was wahr ist Denk was klar ist'. So goes the German adage. The adage has implications for clarity of language as a part of the adage says 'Think what is clear' Denk was klar ist. But then, clarity of language does not mean language without imagination or images. It does not mean uninspiring simplicity of language, one without colour or taste. Clarity of language means unbelaboured effectiveness of language. When a language is clear, it says what it wants to say with minimum ambiguity, if any.

For the research report to be credible, there should be no traces of ambiguity or shrouded or stunted intentions. It should be clear to the reader what the hypotheses are, how these hypotheses have helped in building a platform for the objectives of the research. When a research outcome is said to be vague, it is largely due to the absence of clarity of presentation and that of supportive or convincing exemplifications.

A research may not be classically original in the sense of its being strikingly innovative but it may win appeal all the same if the language is terse and not convoluted. Of course, the idea is not to promote plagiarism (lack of originality is not synonymous with "copying"). It is rather to ensure that the research efforts even when not novel beyond the topic are reported in a language devoid of meaning bottle-necks. Similarly, a language that is 'complex' is not necessarily transmitting deep intelligence.

Objectivity

An objective report is characterized by a language of sincerity, balance and fairness of judgement. It is easy to know an objective appraisal or assessment in a research effort through expressions such as:

- Without prejudice to

- In the light of the responses from our subjects ...
- Within the scope of ...
- This is not to say that ...
- Of course, other views are ...
- It would amount to sheer exaggeration ...
- To avoid self-adulation/hasty judgment of
- Relying only on ...
- Without going beyond the dates indicated ...
- By our own judgment ...
- With little variation here and there ...
- In relative terms, ...
- Only insofar as
- Leaving out ...
- Not considering ...
- In terms of ...

There are, of course, many others but the ones we have seen are enough, in our opinion, to illustrate the place of language in ensuring that the research presentation is devoid of bigoted impressionism or myopic subjectivity.

Conclusion

The main lesson to be drawn from what we have said so far is that the sole pillar capable of carrying the weight of our research report is language. If the language is apposite the research will carry conviction. Where it is the contrary, the result is predictable – dull, flat and unconvincing. It is to be noted here that this presentation has taken for granted students’ flowing mastery of the general grammatical structure of the language in use given that it is expected that students at that level should have acquired reliable proficiency in that language. Therefore, it will be appropriate to assume that our insistence on the right language in this paper excludes anxiety over students’ grammatical accuracy. If, alas, it does not, it means that all the precepts given so far have only amounted to gardening in a gale as the peaceful transition between thought and medium so

much treasured in a research report will have been aborted. Of course, where, on the contrary, stylistic infelicities and grammatical howlers are excluded from the students' anxieties or, at least, reduced to the barest minimum, the union between language and thought is secured.

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