

LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND RELIGION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Festschrift in Honour of

PROF. A. G. A. S. OLADOSU

Edited by
M. M. JIMBA
M. A. ADEDIMEJI
M. A. LAWAL
M. S. ABDULLAHI

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LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND RELIGION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Wale Babu
~~*Amos*~~

EDITED BY

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH YORUBÁ LITERATURE: A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH

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Abstract

Creativity is the act of originality, ability to do things in a way that is virtually different from the way other people do it. It is often said that it is good to do things creatively in order to know, while thinking is the ability to ponder deeply in order to find solution to a problem or to criticise it. It serves as a skill for survival in the vast challenging contemporary world. The purpose of this paper is to encourage individuals, especially learners of the Yorubá language, to develop the ability of or the skill of problem-solving. Also, it focuses on how individual students could use whatever they learn in Yorubá language and literature to liberate them from the problems they might run into and become critical thinkers. Creativity and critical thinking made us to appreciate literature and creatively compose a poem for our teacher, Abdul-Ganiyy Abdus-Salam Oládoṣù in both Yorubá and English languages. The poem actually eulogises the totality of Oládoṣù. In conclusion, language learners, specifically Yorubá language learners are therefore, encouraged to be innovative, creative, great thinkers and cultivate the ability to solve problem of whatever nature.

Keywords: Creative, Critical Thinking, Yorubá Literature, Problem-solving, Approach

Introduction

People tend to respect those who possess extra ordinary quotient of everything. The quotient varied from one kind to the other, it may be knowledge, intelligence, richness (having too much money), beauty, handsomeness, creativity, critical thinking, singing and dancing in musical industry. Thinking remains one of the major requirements for good quality life. Creativity on the other hand, is required from every child; this helps him or her in coping with various activities in his or her immediate society in particular and larger society in general. Literature, be it written or oral, encourages individuals to learn by discovering things by themselves and also helps them to solve problems by finding practical way of dealing with them, learning from past experiences. By implication therefore, knowledge acquired from literature could help individuals to solve one life problem or the other.

Through literature, children could learn that their future and that of the society depends largely on their understanding and perpetuation of the institutions, laws, language and values inherited from the past. In the same vein, knowledge of literature could prepare and equip children with the required

knowledge, skills, mode of behaviour and beliefs for playing their roles in adult life. In the Yorùbá society, especially in traditional society, for an individual to be regarded as educated, they should conform to the norms of the society; they must be of good character, obedient to constituted authority; and must have respect for customs, conventions, superstitions and laws of the Yorùbá society. However, someone who could not think deep may not see any virtue in such societal norms.

Young people and adults alike are, of course, constantly learning the basics of survival and being part of a community (society). As they study and apply what they acquire or learn in language and what they gain through literature, they would run into one problem or the other. The way they approach and solve this problem depends largely on their creativeness and critical thinking ability. Therefore, the focus of this work is to look into how creativity and critical thinking enhances originality and solving problems in education through Yorùbá literature hence, the production of a poem in both Yorùbá and English languages to acknowledge the work of Professor Abdul-GaniyyAbdus-Salam Qládoşù.

Concepts of Creative and Critical Thinking

Every individual is specially created and endowed to specifically accomplish a mission on earth. To accomplish this mission, one needs to be creative. Creativity is the ability to generate noble response to problems and challenges as well as the ability to generate and implement new ideas (Amala, 2016). It could also be described as originality in the way or manner of creating or inventing something. The ability of individuals to produce composition, products or ideas of any kind which are essentially new and novel could also be regarded as creativity (Iroegbu, Unegbu&Ndoh, 2016). However, without critical thinking one cannot be creative.

Creative and critical thinking is needed from every learner of Yorùbá language at every level of education, be it informal, semi-formal or formal education. This could be the reason some of the set objectives of teaching and learning Yorùbá at the basic and senior secondary education level centre on learners' creativity and critical thinking. Being creative involves having and using original or unusual ideas to accomplish something (Halpern, 1996). Creativity is a highly desirable attribute since micro and macro societies increasingly needed members who can solve problems in innovative ways in the face of an uncertain future. There are particular traits and conditions needed for creativity and problem-solving to flourish. Some of these include: a spirit of inquisitiveness or curiosity and adventure; an ability to respond intuitively to visualise possibilities, a willingness to consider ideas in divergent ways; and the provision of a safe but challenging learning environment that enables individuals to take risks, make mistakes without the fear of ridicule, and feel free to solve problems in their own ways.

One of the skills needed for success and survival in this complex 21st century is critical thinking. In sciences, most people equate critical thinking with problem-solving and apply their understanding of basic concepts to a task for which the solution is not known in advance (Johnson, 2018). By grappling with a challenging problem, children extend their learning. Critical thinking about literature is not so different. If someone wants children to engage in higher order thinking as they read, perform and discuss literature, the following some important elements could be included in problem-solving activities.

One of such key elements is genuine-intriguing questions. Before individuals can be creative and think critically, there must be something to be creative in and think critically about. Everything in this ever-challenging world needs to be thought about and the thinking should not be a mere one; it should be critical. Another one is divergent answers. Just as genuine problems in science allow for multiple strategies and solutions, a discussion-worthy question about a piece of language or literature should invite multiple interpretations or answers. In shared inquiry discussions, considering divergent ideas could drive children to find deeper meanings in a given task (text) problem. Another major element that should be followed is ample evidence. As in sciences, for an answer or a solution to be sound, there must be relevant reasons behind it. Likewise, ideas about the meaning of literary text (i.e.

drama, poetry or prose) must be supported with evidence from the work itself. Evidence and reasoning make ideas valid and debatable; this is because without evidence, ideas are simply guesses.

The Yorùbá encourage their children to make conscious choices and find solutions to any given problem through creative processes. The Yorùbá children learn by working on problems, this enables them to acquire new knowledge while solving problems. The children are expected to observe, understand, analyse, interpret, find solutions and perform applications that lead to holistic understanding of any given concept. Tackling or solving problems in an imaginative, innovative and creative ways involve critical thinking.

Critical thinking is used to describe the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome, thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal-directed; the kind of thinking involved in solving problems. Halpern (1996) equates critical thinking with desired thinking. This, according to him, is because both concepts focus on desired outcome. Critical thinking involves a wide range of thinking skills, leading to a desirable outcome. Modern society is becoming more complex and information is becoming more available and changing rapidly, prompting users to constantly rethink, switch directions, and change problem-solving strategies. This is because the world itself is a changing phenomenon. Hence, many things experience changes in this ever-changing world.

Thinking creatively helps every child, irrespective of the society he or she belongs to develop higher-order thinking skills by prompting him or her to relate new knowledge to prior understanding; think in both abstract and conceptual items; apply specific strategies in solving tasks; and understands his or her own thinking and learning strategies (Dáramólá, 2004). In the face of this complex society, it is important to prompt creative thinking in children to support them in their transition from childhood to adulthood. Doing this is to shape their (children) own thought processes, because this period is an ideal time for them to begin to develop thinking, learning, and metacognitive strategies. Creative and critical thinking provides children and adults alike with the skills to mentally process learning experience and identify what they learned, and modify their understanding based on new information and experiences.

The Concept of Problem-solving

Everyone is bound to make mistakes at one time or the other. This is because mistake is part of life. Once the youth (children) realise that they can solve problems and no one will punish them for making a mistake or tease them, they will look forward to tackling more problems and become self-reliant in all areas of their lives (Zock, Francopaulo & Laroui, 2018). Building confidence in the children in their quest to solve problems will definitely be a big feather in any society's hat. The children that are exposed to Yorùbá literature would know that they can make an impact in the world and solve problems and resolve issues with the knowledge acquired from Yorùbá literature. Armed with knowledge gained from literature, the Yorùbá children can forge ahead to new problems to be solved in creative ways.

Problem-solving is everyday's life task. Once children accustomed to facing and solving problems through critical thinking, they become stronger and greater assets, not only to themselves but also to their family, as well as their micro and macro societies respectively (Shipley, 2003). Today's challenges are examples that involve immense problem-solving among many nations. From global warming to national security, the ability to solve problems, big or small, affects not just the problem solver, but the society as a whole.

Being vast in literature and applying precise and appropriate language could improve the rate at which Yorùbá children solve problems correctly. Children who are creative in their thinking would be able to recognise difficulties or complication, identify possible solutions, implement them and finally make follow-up to ensure they are successful. Problem-solving is perhaps, one of the most critical skills that a Yorùbá child can learn. In a world that is filled with information where work is done with the click of a button, problem-solving is a vital skill. Not only is creative thinking critical to solving personal problems, it is also critical when working on problems with others.

Solving a complex problem comes with a process (Elliot, 1997). According to him, this process involves taking a series of steps in a certain order. Knowing how to tackle a problem as a whole is an important life skill. Also, learning to look at things as a process and accomplishing them is a positive benefit of problem-solving. Solving problems takes time – seconds, minutes or hours depending on the complexity of such problems. Complexity in the sense that a particular problem may have different parts that needs to be completed.

To ensure that every Yorùbá child becomes a creative and critical thinker as well as a problem solver, three out of the seven broad objectives of teaching and learning Yorùbá at the senior secondary school level focus on creativity and critical thinking (NERDC, 2007). For instance, the third objective expects the learners to acquire the ability to read and appreciate major genres of oral and written literature as works of art, and as vehicles of culture and history of the people. Also, the fourth and the fifth objectives state that learners should be able to develop the ability to collect and transcribe oral literature and also to create oral and written literature; and manifest creativity through composition of short stories, plays, poems, etc. respectively.

Though individuals who are not creative and critical thinkers may be able to read literature, however, they may find appreciating it difficult. This is because appreciation of literature goes beyond the surface of the text. Similarly, for individuals to be able to collect and transcribe oral literature; they must have had an in-depth knowledge of this form of literature. Above all, creating and/or composing any form of oral or written literature requires individuals to be creative and critical thinkers. Therefore, critical thinking leads us to creatively compose the following poem on retiring lecturer of Arabic Education, Professor Abdul-Ganiyy Abdus-Salam Qládoşù.

Abdul-Ganiyy Abdus-Salam Qládoşù: Akọ Nínú Akọni

Qlórùn ibà Rẹ
Qba tó té sánmò-òn bí ẹni téní
Qba tó dáyé òun òrun
Ìbà nì fún Ẹ lójó gbogbo

Mo wá rí bà ọgáà mi pẹlú.
Abdul-Ganiy Abdus-Salam ọmọ Qládoşù
Ọsùpá juba fòòrùn
Ó tannmólè fàráyé
Ẹtu tó jí tí kò kò K'Ólúugbó
Yóó fẹsẹ kókùn ọde nì
Ọdẹ nì ó pa á
Onísònàni ó sífawọ ẹ ránndè
Káyé ó lè yẹ mí
Nì moşẹ wá rí fáyé
Kára ó lè tù mí
Nì mo şe şèbà èyàn

Ọmọdé kí í jìşẹ fún baba ẹ kó jiyà
Ọmọ kí í jìşẹ fún baba ẹ kòráre
Ọmọ ò sìgbòdò jìşẹ fún baba ẹ, kò ràninnù
Ìbà mí, ìbà

Ọkan lára Àràbà Mùsùlùmí tó so Fásitì Ẹlọrin ró
Torí kò sẹyẹ tó le se bí Ọkín
Bẹẹ kòsì gbẹdógbédó àkókó
Kẹkẹléréehorolóriipápá

Bẹẹ ni kò sólókùtì ìjímèrè
Kò sẹyẹ tó lè dorìkòdò bí àdán
Èdà wo ló lè bẹja wẹ láàrín agbami?

Abdul-Ganniyy ò gaga àlùsì
Abdus-Salami ò sì kùrú bilìsì
Omọ Qladosù o sanraà bàadi
Bí ẹni ilètútù n yọ lẹnu
Kò sì lóyún síkùn
Bí ẹni ó ti mi lùkùdì
AGAS ò tún-ín-rinbí ẹni ebi n nà nípaşán
Ọgá wa ò dúdú bànbànbà
Ìwọntún-wònsil' Adédàà sẹdà ẹ

Béré bá deré ọpọlọ
Qladosù èé wẹyín wò rará
Baba ní í se nínú onímọ
Baba ní í se nínú ka mohun tó yẹni
Ó kọmì níwèé, n ò leègbàgbé láé
Ó kọmì níwà tí ò seègbàgbé bọrọ
Èmi ò kuku rọhun tí bàbá ò mọ
Ò fẹràn ẹkọ kojáa yẹyẹ
Ò fẹràn ẹkọ kojáa kà-sí-n-kan
Ẹni baba bákọ níwèé tìkò bámọ ọn
Ó dájú onítọhún ló mórí ọpẹ wá sáyé
Ẹni tó sì kọ níwà tí kò gbọn
Báa bá fàwé eléyun-ùnya, kòlèèwọ

Omo Qladosù gbàgbọ bíi Muhanmọdu
Kíkẹẹ àtọlà ó máa bá a
Ojúlówó Mùsùlùmí tí kì í feruku síwájú ni
Ọgidi Mùsùlùmí tí kì í farahàn poun n gbààwẹ
Bóti n sẹsin, bẹẹ ló n sẹlú
Bóti n gbọ tẹrúlótún n gbọ tọmọ
Ó dóríta mẹta yà sí mètẹtẹta
Okúta bíi káhún ò sí

Kò sì sirúu iyọ lówùjọ èèpẹ
Àbí, ta ló réegun bí eyin rí?
Kò sọkùn múnran nígbó mọ
Báa bá tí mú kánránjángbọn
Táa sì mágba
AGAS níi ránmọ nísẹ tíi fà yàti í
Kì í sadiẹ tíi kọmọ sẹyìn
Tí kò ní mọgbà tàwòdi-òkè ó fí gbọmọlọ
Pẹpẹyẹ tí í kọmọ síwájú ni
Ohun tóbá fẹ sọmọ, a sojúu yẹyẹ ẹ

Báa dáso fọbùn
Pípa níi pasọ ọhún láró

Bó ba la ọlẹ níjǎ
 Yóo sìn in délé ẹ gbẹẹrẹgbẹ ní
 Ọladosù ẹẹ kánjú sọrọ
 Bí ẹni kóşu gbígbóná senu
 Agba tó bá lómi nínú kí í dún
 Ọfífo agbá lómaa hípariwo
 Ọladosù ló lẹbùn-un ká dákékọọ mọ dunjú
 Iye igbà tákékọọ kọọkan wá fúndalánílẹkọọ
 Kúkú nibà bámọ
 Bóo bá pa kíláási jẹ lẹẹkan; Baba timọ

Ọladosù ọ báwọn sí ní díí àbòsí
 Ọladosù ọ báwọn sí nídíí ọtẹ ọun tẹnbẹlẹkun
 Àkándá Elédúmarè tí kò seé farawé
 Ẹni Aálà báti se lógo
 Ọgo náà ní tiẹ lójọ gbogbo
 Igi tÁálà bà lọkan, kí í wájílẹ

Àwa tẹẹ kọ náà rée o
 A dupe pẹyin tẹẹ sàbá lé ọdòbu
 Ẹyin dadie ọsọrọ
 Ẹyin tí ń dákùkọ ọlọgàn lẹsẹ
 Àdúà mi nípé
 K'Ọba ọkẹ ọ mátì fíkú pàyá àkókò
 Títí táwọn ọmọ bíbí rẹ o fi le dági sọ
 K'Ọba ọ sọ ẹ délé
 K'Ọba ọ sì sọlé dè ẹ

To AGAS; the Proudly Prolific Pundit
 Homage to You, God
 The Lord that spreads the heaven like mat
 Who created the heaven and the earth
 At every break of dawn is Your homage due

I pay homage also to my master
 Abdul-Ganiy Abdul-Salam, the son of Ọladosù
 As the moon bows for the sun,
 It nocturnally lights the world
 The antelope that disregards the presence of the king of the forest
 Shall be trapped in the hunter's mantrap
 And has its last breath with the huntsman
 As amulet shall its skin be made by the craftsmen.
 For the terrestrial boons to be mine,
 I pay the due homage to the world;
 For me to have rest,
 I accrue homage to the rest.
 No son takes on his father's bidding and suffer;

No son takes on his father's bidding and be useless;
 Nor shall he take on his father's bidding and be lost,

I bow, I pay my homage.

We are one, the masthead that holds the poles of the University of Ilorin
As no bird can act as the peahen,
So is there no one that calves as the woodpecker.
As there is no sprinter as the hare on the field,
So is there no one that somersaults as the brown monkey
No bird flies headlong as the bat
Who can swim as the fish in the river?

Abdul-Ganiyy is not tall insanely
Nor is he short-demeaningly
The son of Qládoşù is not fat flatulently
As if infected by a dire ailment
Nor is his belly protruded like the Pregnant King
As the one who swallowed a trinket of talisman
AGAS is not ruefully slim
Qládoşù is not outrageously black complexioned
So perfect! The Creator created him as a creature

When it comes to intellectuality,
Qládoşù does not retreat
He is the core among the intelligentsias
The arch among those who know what befits someone
He taught me, I can never be forgetful.
He taught me morals that can't easily be forgotten
I have not seen what he knows not
He loves education above board
He loves education far beyond imagination
He, who is taught by him and understands not,
No doubt, such is with empty head
He who is taught morals by him and remains want of wisdom,
To tear the certificate of such person is not a felony

The son of Qládoşù believes as Muhammad
(Peace and blessings be upon him)
A devotee that does not engage in soothsaying
A true devotee that does not show off while fasting
A politico-religiously exposed person
He cares for both slaves and freemen
He who paths the three paths of a T-junction concurrently
The like of salt cannot be found in the midst of sands

There is no other rope in the forest
After the selection of *Kanranjágbón*
And of *Agba*,
AGAS sends and stands with his emissary
Unlike the carelessly forgetful hen
Who turns back against her chicks for hawk to prey on.
Like the duck and her ducklings,

What will betide his wards will be right before him

A cheerful and complete helper
A patient speaker like the Pacific Ocean
He is credited in being acquainted with his students
Enriched to know when one is present or absent;
When a student misses a class, he knows.
He is ever found missing in any hypocritical gathering
A special creature that cannot be imitated

He whom Allah has blessed,
The blessing is forever his
As the tree planted by God never shrinks.

Here we are, your students
We thank God that your hatched eggs are not wastes
The eggs that are now cocks
And hens to other chicks
My mantra is:
That the Time's mother should live longer
Until her offspring will become clock

Before the public service is performed to the virtual brim
To have taken on the public work to a restful degree
Without a blemish of ineptitude,
Glory is due to the Creator of man.
As you retire from the public service,
May the Good God and His angels be your company
Till on your restfully beckoning chair you reckon.

Conclusion

The researchers concluded that it is good to be creative and critical in one's thinking as it enhances great esteem and respect in the field of academia. This is so because people tend to respect those who possess extraordinary quotient of knowledge (intelligence). Creativity and critical thinking also lead to innovative ideas i.e. originality or things that have not been done earlier by somebody. Thus, the writers are the owners of this poem used to eulogise Professor Abdul-Ganiyy Abdus-Salam Oládoşù and it is relevant in the field of language learning and literary appreciation. Yoruba students, learners, tutors, instructors are therefore advised to be creative and critical in their thinking. This is because a teacher who is creative is bound to win the heart of his or her students and bound to be loved by them. Creativity and critical thinking could also minimise the act of plagiarism, otherwise known as literary theft and copying of other people's research projects, dissertations, theses and other creative and literary works.

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