

# Communicating Indigenous Knowledge through Exogenous Channel : A Comparative Content Analysis of Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

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## Abstract

This study is a comparative appraisal of indigenous content in Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Findings show that the two books are rich in indigenous information/knowledge in varying degrees. The study reaffirmed that exogenous media can be a veritable complementary tool for the preservation of local or indigenous knowledge, culture and language. The study recommended that books and other exogenous media should continuously be utilized in the preservation and documentation of indigenous culture and communication systems. It was also suggested that the relationship between reading culture and the effectiveness of books to preserve indigenous knowledge should be investigated while more research light should be beamed on issues surrounding the access to such indigenous knowledge.

**Keywords:** indigenous communication, indigenous knowledge, exogenous media, Chinua Achebe, Abimbola Adelakun

## 1. Introduction

Indigenous communication has attracted attention from scholars of Communication, Sociology, Anthropology and Applied Linguistics (Adhikary, 2000; Odunlami 2006; Ogwezzu, 2008; Osho, 2010 and Guthrie, 2011). In fact, it has been defined in several ways by many communication experts who have been interested in how people communicated before the advent of western communication system. Ugboajah (1985:296) refers to indigenous communication system as *oramedia* which he describes as prime disseminators of culture. In Wilson's (1997) view, indigenous communication media are a "multi-channel communication system which is employed in most rural areas (villages, clans, towns and wards). Ojebode (2002:84-85) quoting Wilson (1987) says indigenous media are

Those medias that have defied all efforts by western media to cannibalize them and perhaps supplant them... the continuous process of information dissemination, entertainment and education used in societies which have not been seriously dislocated by western culture or any other external influence

He, (Ojebode 2002:85) however, concludes that indigenous communication is a "system and process of communication in use before external cultural influence. From the preceding definitions and descriptions, it could be inferred that indigenous communication is 'seen' relative to western media culture; that it is classified based on the perspective of each interested 'party'. Perhaps, this is why Ugboajah (1985) calls it *oramedia*; Wilson (1997) sees it as a multi-channel communication system and Ojebode (2002) refers to it as 'a system and process'. However, there is a subtle consensus that indigenous communication (in whatever name) belongs to the people. The striking point to be noted here is that indigenous communication emanates from, exists with, and is used by the people. This view is supported by Ojebode (2012) who concludes that:

African indigenous media are African in origin and have been in existence before the coming of the Europeans ... (these media) existed at a time in the past. Though still existing and being actively used in many societies, they cannot be described or discussed without active reference to their ancient origins. Also, these media are fixed within and derive meaning and relevance from a defined cultural and linguistic context.

From the point of view of many communication experts quoted above, it is an impossible task to define indigenous communication without identifying what exogenous communication is. In fact, Ogwezzu (2008) and Osho (2010) agree with this assertion by placing indigenous and exogenous communication side by side. The two scholars not only compare and contrast these forms of communication, but also highlight the problems of indigenous communication. While Ogwezzu (2008:33) posits that the exogenous media are alternatives to indigenous communication, she still maintains that "indigenous communication would continue to be relevant for as long as there are traditional societies or settings." The question now is how indigenous information or knowledge is being treated in the face of the incursion of exogenous media?

### 1.1 The Books : Under the Brown Rusted Roofs & Things Fall Apart

Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* is a story of traditional family life of Ibadan. It is a celebration of the rural-urban life of the city. It is a reflection of the pains, joys, travails and triumph of the women, wives, womanhood and the intriguing relationship that characterizes traditional family life. Like other books which portray people's life, culture, beliefs and practices, *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* really x-rays the politics of living in core traditional areas of Ibadan thereby throwing up a number of indigenous knowledge which is manifested in the day-to-day living of the people.

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe is a classic novel that documents the influences of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on a traditional Igbo community. *Things Fall Apart* is possibly the most popular and renowned novel that deals with Igbo and their traditional life. It is the story of an Ibo village and one of its great men, Okonkwo, who is a very high achiever being a champion wrestler, a wealthy farmer, a husband to three wives and a man with titles. Okonkwo's world is disrupted with the appearance of the first white man who tries to inflict his religion on the Umuofia natives. He later kills a colonial worker and eventually takes his own life. The two books are an exposition of the indigenous information that existed and still exists with the dwellers of the respective settlers.

### 2. Statement of the Problem

Indigenous communication has been described by many scholars as the communication system that exists with and emanates from the people. It is regarded as a means of showing opinions, views, thoughts, meanings, knowledge and even conflict resolution among a group of people (Mundy and Compton, 1995; Wilson, 1987; Ojebode, 2002; Ojebode & Owacgiu, 2015). It has always been seen as a means of mobilizing people for development purpose because of its internal value, high credibility and participatory approach to development (Mundy and Lloyd-Laney 1992; Ogwezzy, 2008). Perhaps, these features have generated a lot of scholarly interest in indigenous communication, especially on how it is documented, preserved or used to record stories, knowledge or experiences of the indigenous peoples (Ojebode, 2015). He cited Browne (1996); Salazar and Cordova (2008), Guathier, (2008) and Christie (2008) as different studies that have investigated the use of radio and television; video; cinema and digital media for the preservation or documentation of indigenous media. Apart from the fact that these are examples mainly from the West, they have failed to examine the use of books as a repository of indigenous communication. Thus, this study is doing a comparative appraisal of indigenous communication content of Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The guiding research questions include :

- (1) What kinds of indigenous media are employed in the two books?
- (2) What categories of indigenous information are portrayed in the two selected books?
- (3) What is the relationship between the geographical setting of the books and their cultural content?

### 3. Review of Literature

#### 3.1 Indigenous Communication System : Definitions

Indigenous communication has attracted scholarly attention from different experts in Communication, Sociology, Anthropology and Applied Linguistics (Adhikary, 2000; Odunlami, 2006; Ogwezzy, 2008; Osho, 2010 and Guthrie 2011; Ojebode & Owacgiu 2015). In fact, it has been defined in several ways by many communication experts who have been interested in how indigenous people communicated before the advent of western communication system. Ugboajah (1985:293) refers to indigenous communication system as *oramedia* which he describes as prime disseminators of culture. In Wilson's (1997) view, indigenous communication media are "a multi-channel communication system which is employed in most rural areas (villages, clans, towns and wards). Ojebode (2002:85) asserts that indigenous communication is 'a system and process of communication in use before external cultural influence'. Ogwezzy (2008:22) points to indigenous communication (which she calls African Communication System) as "that form of communication which has its root in the African environment". Adding his voice to the definitions of indigenous communication, the Ghanaian scholar Ansu-Kyremeh (2005: 16) describes indigenous communication as :

Any form of endogenous communication systems, which by virtue of its origin from, and integration into a specific culture, serves as a channel for messages in a way and manner that requires the utilization of the values, symbols, institutions, and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes

Citing Jussawalla and Hughes (1984), Ansu-Kyeremeh (2005: 16) goes further to define indigenous communication systems as

... those systems of communication which have relied historically on informal channels to convey information and which obtain authority from the cultural mores, traditions, and customs of the {the people} they serve

Olulade (1998) cited in Ogwezzy (2008:20) has a more clarifying definition of indigenous communication as “ an admixture of social conventions and practices that have become sharpened and blended into veritable communication modes and systems which have almost become standard practices for society”

From the preceding definitions and descriptions, it could be inferred that indigenous communication is ‘seen’ relative to western media culture; and that it is classified based on the perspective of each interested ‘party’.

Perhaps, this is why Ugboajah (1985) calls it oramedia; Wilson (1997) sees it as multi-channel communication system; Ojebode (2002) refers to it as ‘a system and process’. However, a subtle consensus the researcher can observe from the different definitions and descriptions of the experts cited above is that indigenous communication belongs to the local or indigenous people and that it emanates from , exists with as well as used by the people.

### **3.2 The Interface between Indigenous and Exogenous Communication**

It is an obvious fact that communication studies over the years have been dominated by the western model of communication. This assertion can be better pictured in Odunlami’s (2006:161) position that:

Until a few decades ago when the awareness struck some African communication scholars, mass communication was seen and interpreted essentially in a euro-centric perspective. Analyses of human communication phenomena was done against the backdrop of western, modernist and technological-mediated situations

Even in development communication, exogenous communication, which are external to the target audience, has been over-used at the expense of the indigenous media. This is well noted in Mundy and Lloyd-Laney’s (1992:1) submission that :

Media such as radio, television, newspapers and books are the most conspicuous methods of transmitting appropriate technology information to large numbers of people. A great deal of time and money has been spent promoting messages through them in attempts to reach technology users.... But we often forget another type of communication – the horizontal, or indigenous, exchange of information among people. Such communication does not take place through newspapers, radio, or extension organizations. It occurs within families, at meetings of village organizations, in the marketplace, or at the well. Much of this communication is informal and unorganized, interpersonal, oral rather than written, controlled locally rather than by outsiders, and uses no or low-levels, of technology

However, a closer look at African societies will reveal that indigenous communication systems have been in existence before the advent of modern means of communication or even colonialism that brought them. Ogwezzy (2008:22) argues that “Africa is a vast continent that is made up of diverse peoples. These peoples existed for centuries before their contacts with the colonial masters. Each had its own unique language and cultural patterns. Within each cultural setting, however, there existed well-established systems for information sharing, opinion formation and cultural values”. But, despite the negligence of these traditional media, they still exist alongside the exogenous media in modern African societies (Ogwezzy 2008:24). Osho (2010:187) submits that “the contemporary Africa (has continued to) witness the simultaneous use of indigenous and exogenous media”. This combination, he continues, “for dissemination of information, education, entertainment and socialization of the people make the African information system unique “. So, if the two systems have been deployed side by side, what is similar and different about them? And then what is the relationship that exists between them?

Before examining the similarities and differences between the two media, Osho (2010:188) identifies exogenous media as “the organs of mass communication through which messages are disseminated to a large heterogeneous audience to mould public opinion, educate , entertain, set public agenda, stimulate political, economic and socio - cultural development”. He includes newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, telegraph, telephone, cinematography, computers and internet as part of organs of mass communication. However, Osho (2010:189) and Ogwezzy (2008:33) agree on all the following but one criterion to compare indigenous and exogenous media:

- (i) Organization: Indigenous media are developed, and controlled locally; use local technology; and are not bureaucratically organized.. Exogenous media are bureaucratically organized and are foreign to the local people
- (ii) Structure: Indigenous communication system is owned by the society. The society has the copyright (Osho, 2010:189). Exogenous media are owned by the financier which may be government or private
- (iii) Reach: Indigenous media reach only few people while exogenous media reach a large number of people

- at the same time.
- (iv) Influence: Indigenous media has a great deal of influence on people. But, exogenous media do not have as much influence as indigenous media.
  - (v) Credibility: Indigenous media is more credible than exogenous media.
  - (vi) Investment : Exogenous media gulp more money than indigenous

### 3.3 Classification of Indigenous Communication

Classifying indigenous communication is a herculean task. Ogwezyy (2008:41) quoting Akpabio (2003) says “ since traditional communication processes and elements vary from one society to another, a neat classification of the indigenous modes and channels of communication in Africa is a tall order; and marginalization of modes and channels is not deliberate, but a function of the person classifying them”. Ibagere (1994) cited in Ogwezyy (2008:40) also argues that “there has been some confusion regarding what actually constitutes African traditional media (or rather), African traditional modes of communication. Ojebode (2002:80-91) raises three questions about the classification of indigenous communication. The first question has to do with stating what actually qualifies to be regarded as indigenous communication. The second question looks at the contradiction in the use of ‘media’ and ‘channels’ in indigenous communication study while the third question concerns the appropriateness of the word ‘folk’ in classifying indigenous communication such as festival , plays, puppet shows, dance, songs, story etc. Despite, the state of confusion as to what constitutes indigenous communication or what does not, this study agrees with Akpabio (2003) drawing from the classification of Doob (1966), Wilson (1998) and Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998) categorises indigenous communication into ten classes:

- (i) Instrumental communication;
- (ii) Demonstrative communication;
- (iii) Iconographic communication;
- (iv) Extramundane communication;
- (v) Visual communication;
- (vi) Institutional communication;
- (vii) Venue-oriented communication;
- (viii) Myths and legends;
- (ix) Folk tales, proverbs and parables; and
- (x) Natural phenomenon.

### 3.4 Communicating Indigenous knowledge: Current Approaches and Models

In examining indigenous communication, it is important to discuss approaches and models scholars have identified in the use of indigenous communication. Critical to this study is Mundy and Compton’s (1991) approaches to communicating indigenous knowledge. They raise four pertinent questions on the communication of this knowledge: How is indigenous knowledge communicated? How do people learn indigenous knowledge? Who is involved? And how is the communication organized? Answering these questions, Mundy and Compton (1991:3) examine four approaches to communicating both indigenous and exogenous knowledge. These include :

- (a) **Exogenous Communication of Exogenous Information:** This involves passing information to the people through the radio, television, newspaper, books etc.
- (b) **Indigenous Communication of Indigenous Information:** Indigenous information is transmitted through indigenous channels.
- (c) **Indigenous Communication of Exogenous Information:** This considers the transmission of exogenous knowledge through indigenous channels. This model makes use of diffusion of innovation strategies such as opinion leadership and inters personal networks. Folk media are veritable tools in this model.
- (d) **Exogenous Communication of Indigenous knowledge:** This approach looks at using exogenous channels to transmit indigenous knowledge. This involves using exogenous channels such as radio, television, newspaper, etc. to pass across indigenous knowledge.

## 4. Theoretical Framework

### Cultural Effect Theory

This as propounded by Vivian (2009:411) examines how the mass media (books inclusive) can be used to influence values in different cultures. In considering this, Vivian (2009:412) identifies two different perspectives through which the mass media can communicate values. The first is **Historical Transmission** which is the communication of wisdom from past generation to the future generation. Historical transmission fulfills the compulsion of people to transmit wisdom accumulated over the years to coming generation. In Vivian’s (2009:412) words “Human beings have a compulsion to pass on the wisdom they have accumulated to future generation. There is a compulsion, too, to learn from the past. In olden times, people gathered around fires and in

temples to hear storytellers. It was a ritual through which people learned the values that governed their community.” In modern times, books have replaced the oral tradition. They are said to be a major repository of culture. They play very crucial roles in preserving the culture of a people.

The second perspective is **Contemporary Transmission** which captures how values are transmitted among contemporary communities and societies. This manner of communication may lead to changes. It is reflected in a number of issues such as the role of mass media in the American Revolution.

## 5. Methodology

This study set out to do a comparative appraisal of indigenous communication/information portrayed in Abimbola Adelakun’s *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* and Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* with the aim of showing how these books were used as exogenous means to preserve indigenous information. Consequently, content analysis was adopted in this study. Since the focus of the study was on the content of recorded information, the use of content analysis is appropriate for the study (Wimmer & Dominick 2003) citing Walizer and Wienir (1978).

### Population

The researcher adopted the purposive sampling method to enable the researcher pick books with content that have specific characteristics that were being considered. Purposive sampling was also adopted for the communication content that was studied. This choice was justified because it was the most appropriate for the work. The researcher was aware that purposive sampling was a non-probability sampling approach but the nature of this study was exploratory and was meant for investigating variable relationship between the two books (Wimmer & Dominick 2003)

### Content Category

The instrument for the content analysis was content category which helped in categorizing data drawn from the two books. The problem of classification of indigenous communication among experts constituted a hindrance to having a mutually exclusive and exhaustive content category. Nevertheless, the researcher aggregated opinions on the classification. The researcher thereby agreed with Odunlami’s (2006:160) definition of indigenous communication as “all forms of communication strategies, verbal or non verbal that are peculiarly African”. Thus, the content category was dichotomized. First, there were media of indigenous communication which were used in the books to communicate. They served as media or channels of communicating indigenous messages or information. Second, there was indigenous information or knowledge that was communicated in the two books. Thus, the following categories were used:

**(a) Media :** These comprised of Wilson’s (1998) six-point typology of indigenous media slightly modified by Ogwezzy (2008:44-45) which included the following

**(i)** Instrumental media comprised idiophones (wooden drum, bell etc.); membranophones (skin drum); aerophones (whistle, deer horn, ivory tusk etc.); symbology (tattoo, chalk marks)

**(ii)** Demonstrative media combined Music (songs, choral music); signals (cannon shots, gun shots whistle call)

**(iii)** Iconographic media were equivalent of objectifications such as charcoal, white dove, kola nut etc.

**(iv)** Extramundane media included incantatory (ritual, libation and vision) as well as graphic communication (obituary, in memoriam notices)

**(v)** Visual media dealt with colour (white cloth, red cloth and black cloth) and appearance (dressing and hairstyle)

**(vi)** Institutional media stood for social (marriage, chieftaincy) and spiritual (shrine, masquerade) communication

**(vii)** Games as communication media stood for the use of games to communicate

**(viii)** Performance-oriented communication combined ritual performance and dances

**(ix)** Venue-oriented communication covered communication that took place in selected venues like river side, market places etc.

**(x)** Names as communication had instances of the use of name to communicate.

The unit of analysis for this category was pages of the books as they could not be restricted to paragraphs, sentences or phrases due to their nature. Every page that has an instance of these media qualified to be included.

**(b) Indigenous information/message/knowledge:** These included component of indigenous communication not captured by the first category above. They were information, messages or knowledge that did not fall under the media described above. They include proverbs, myths, legends, taboos and folktales.

The purpose of this categorization was to capture the kind of indigenous information in the selected texts for appropriate comparative appraisal. The unit of analysis here were words, phrases and sentences.

For the content analysis, content category was critically constructed to enhance collection of the necessary data. Words, phrases and sentences which either contain indigenous information or describe indigenous media were used as the unit of analysis. The content of the selected texts were categorized into indigenous media and indigenous information. This became necessary because of the classification problems inherent in the study of indigenous communication.

The study adopted only content analysis method. This was due to the nature of the study which involved a comparative appraisal of indigenous communication in the selected texts. More so, the study focused on describing communication content which according to Wimmer and Dominick (2003:142) was one of the uses of content analysis. The data generated were converted to charts and simple percentages. The statistical analysis and prosaic description were used to make qualitative decisions and draw inferences on the research outcome.

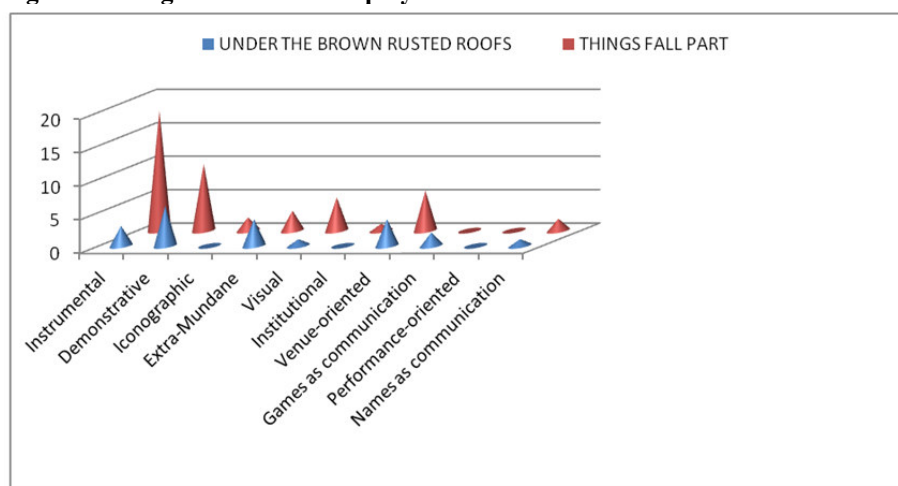
## 6. Findings & Discussion

### RQ 1 : What kinds of indigenous media are employed in the two books?

#### Use of Indigenous Media

This research question is meant to examine the classes of indigenous media used in the two selected books. This is to see how much indigenous media are portrayed in the books. As stated in the preceding paragraphs, ten classes of indigenous media were identified. It is interesting to note that while in *Things fall Apart*, Achebe makes use of eight out of the ten classes of indigenous media with all their subclasses used, Adela-kun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* features only seven of the classes. The description is shown in the figure below.

**Figure 1: Indigenous Media Employed in the Two Books**



Source : Field Survey, 2015

#### Differences in the Indigenous Media Employed in the Two Books

As shown in the figure above, the selected books employ indigenous communication media in varying degree. For instance, Achebe features eight of the ten classes while Adela-kun's book contained seven of the categories. Achebe made use of instrumental, iconographic, demonstrative, visual, extra-mundane, venue-oriented, institutional and name as communication. Adela-kun, on the other hand, employs instrumental, demonstrative, extra-mundane, visual, venue-oriented, game as communication and name as communication. It is reflected from the analysis that Achebe employs one medium (8) more than Adela-kun (7). However, the difference does not end there. While *Things Fall Apart* features all the sub-categories of the **instrumental media**, *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* has only **membranophone** as a sub-category of the instrumental media. The fact that drum is common to the selected books is an indication of its importance and universality in African culture. This confirms Ogwezzu 's (2008:116) position that 'drums in every socio-cultural context are meant to entertain, though in the African context, especially among the Yoruba of Nigeria, drums not only entertain, they communicate, and stimulate.' Instances of the use of the drum in the selected books are instructive here. The first instance is in Achebe's book where the drum is used to signal the commencement of the wrestling contest (pg 30) as well as to bid Ezeudu (the oldest man in Umuofia) farewell to the land of the ancestors (pg 86). In fact, Achebe himself says that "the drums beat the unmistakable wrestling dance-quick, light and gay, and it came floating on the wind" and on page 84 he narrates "the ancient drums of death beat, guns and cannon were fired, and men dashed about in frenzy". This shows that the drums reflect the mood of the people at different times. They are used during festivals, wrestling contests, burials, marriages, egwugwu and new yam festivals. In *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*, the drum is deployed in a narrative on page 57, during the burial of Iya agba :

The traditional drummers were going around, beating drums and when they sighted Alhaji, began to beat the drums to say:

*A man with ten children  
 Does not yet know if he has children  
 Until death closes his eyes  
 It is only the one that is buried by children*

*That has not died barren  
Alhaji, your children will bury you  
Even as you have buried your mother*

(pg 57-58)

Another difference in the media employed by the two books includes the obvious absence of **iconographic media** in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* while it is present in *Things Fall Apart*. This is due to cultural difference in the setting of the books. For instance, *Things Fall Apart* is predominantly set among the Igbos who are renowned users of **iconographs**, especially, the objectified forms. The specific objects used are **kola nuts, alligator pepper, beads, brooms and cowries**. Kola nut and alligator pepper play a significant role in welcoming a visitor in Igbo land as “he who brings kola nut brings life.” Also, the use of Jigida beads, cam wood and brass anklets by brides which signifies purity and beauty is one instance of the use of objectified forms. Similarly, the use of Ezeani’s staff to sanction Okonkwo for breaking the peace week confers a status of an icon on the staff. Another instance is the use of bundle of broomsticks and cowries in engagement proceedings. These instances can be located on pages 22, 50, 81, and 82 respectively. The non-appearance of the iconographic media in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* is by virtue of its setting.

#### **Similarities in the Indigenous Media Employed in the Two Books**

On the similarities in the media deployed in the books, the following is observed.

#### **Use of Music as a Sub-Class of Demonstrative Media**

On the deployment of **demonstrative media**, the two books explore **music** to a great extent. For instance, in Achebe’s book, Unoka’s love for entertainment and the flute is mentioned on page 4. While on page 36, Okafo’s victory in the wrestling contest is celebrated through this composition:

Who will wrestle for our village?  
Okafo will wrestle for our village  
Has he thrown a hundred men?  
He has thrown four hundred men  
Has he thrown a hundred Cats?  
He has thrown four hundred Cats  
Then send him word to fight for us

Ikemefuna uses a song to resolve his confusion on whether his mother is still alive or not on page 43. Similarly, on page 83, the final marriage ceremony of Obierika’s daughter and the merriment that goes with it also demonstrate the use of music in the book. Other instances are on pages 93 and 141. In *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*, music is profusely employed. The songs used in the book range from call songs (ipolowo), praise poetry (oriki), to play time songs (orin isere) and political songs. The messages of the songs vary as their contexts. Instances are on pages 10,14, 53-55, 60, 78, 94,104 and 193, 204 and 206. From page 53 to 55, three songs are used by the women procession that moves around to celebrate the passing away of Iya Agba (Alhaji’s mother). One of them goes thus:

Iya wa lo, o rorun idera (2ce)  
Ko kuku moto, owo omo lo ku si  
Iya wa lo o rorun idera

Our mother has gone, gone to place of comfort  
She didn’t die in a car crash; she died in her child’s hands  
Our mother has gone to place of comfort

It is observed that the profuse use of songs in the selected books is a pointer to the universality of this sub-category of demonstrative media in African culture. This view is supported by Ibagere (1994) cited by Ogwezzy (2008:138) when he says:

Music is quite an important mode of communication in the cultural milieu of Africans, deriving its significance mostly from its entertainment value. Nobody hates [at least everyone likes a brand of music]. It most certainly attracts attention as soon as it manifests

#### **The Use of Name as Communication Mode**

Still on the similarities, the two books use **name as communication mode** with each treating the same issues in different ways. For instance, in *Things Fall Apart*, Ezinma’s extra-mundane connection makes her mother to give her different names as she is referred to as an ‘ogbanje’ (pg 54) while the death of Moriyeba’s daughter (pg 192) brings in the issue of ‘emere’ and ‘abiku’ in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*. In order to stop the ‘abiku’ or ‘ogbanje’ child from going and coming, the two cultural settings recognize giving names. Thus, in *Things Fall Apart* names such as Onwubiko -- death I implore you; Ozoemena – may it not happen again; and Onwuma—Death may please itself (pg 54) are used. In the same manner, names like Duroosike – stay and be cared for; Durosini--stay and bury me; Malomo—Please stay; Ekunsumi—I am fed up of crying; and Kosoko—no hoe to

dig the ground features in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*. These instances show the shared link between the two cultures. Achebe goes further to illustrate the belief in names when it is narrated that Okonkwo names the first child born to him in exile ‘Nneka—Mother is supreme’ to acknowledge the politeness of his mother’s clan. Then, he names his second son ‘Nwofia—begotten in the wilderness’.

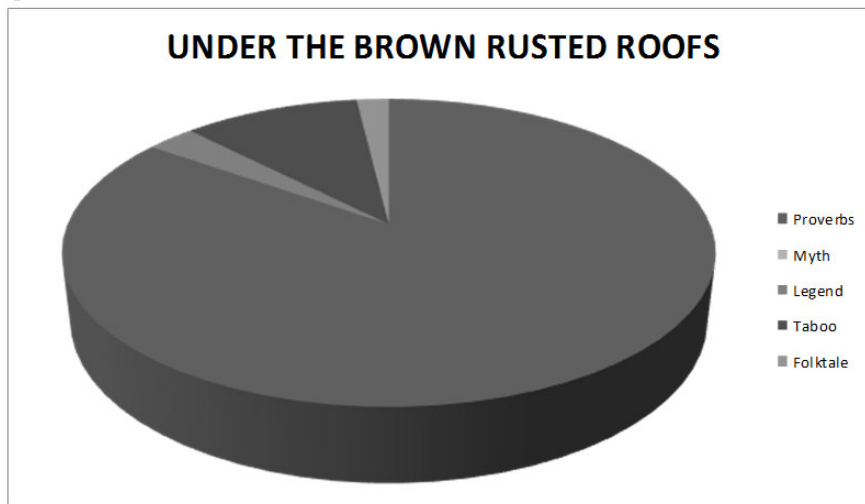
At another point, the use of venue-oriented communication mode by the two books is a pointer to the universal nature of the venue-oriented communication culture among the two cultures. The various uses of the market-place, the *ilo* and the *obi* in *Things Fall Apart* supports this position. The *obi* represents a place of important meetings and discussions in individual matters such as Obierika’s daughter’s engagement proceedings (pg 49). The village *ilo* and the market place are places of collective meetings and decisions. Collective decisions are taken in these places on pages 8, 33, 62, and 142. Achebe declares that “every village had its own *ilo* which was as old as the village itself and where all the great ceremonies and dances took place.” So, beyond communal meetings and decisions, the *ilo*, in Igbo land, hosts communal ceremonies and dances.

In *Under The Brown Rusted Roofs*, political meetings and conflicts are resolved in the parlour, a bigger and separate room, meant for the head of the family in a house. It is a sort of *obi* equivalent in Yoruba land. Instances of the use of the parlour are on pages 22, 31, 59 and 72. In conclusion, the two books deploy indigenous communication media to a large extent almost exhausting all the media.

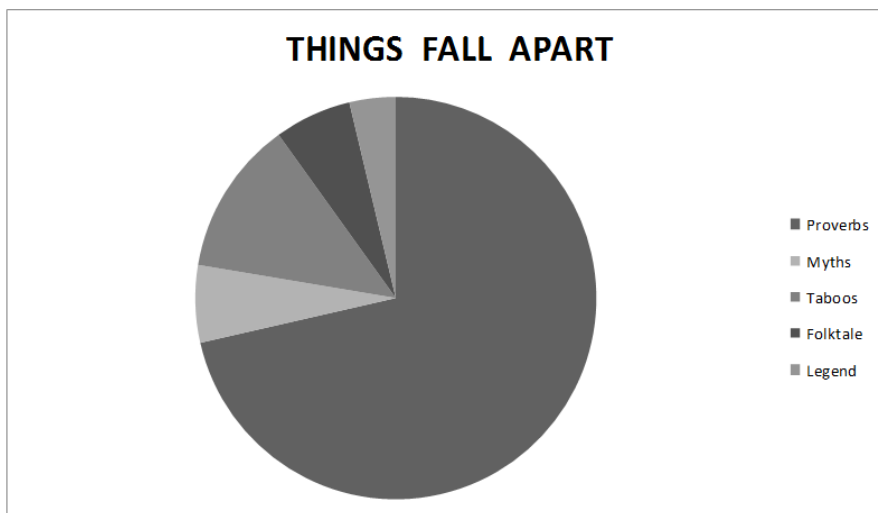
**RQ 2: What categories of indigenous information are portrayed in the two selected books?**

**Indigenous Information**

This is as different from the media identified in research question one. The data are graphically captured in the figures below.



**Figure 3: Indigenous Messages Employed in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs***



**Figure 4 : Indigenous Messages Employed in *Things Fall Apart***

The answer to this question lies in the analysis of the kind of indigenous information portrayed in the books and their subsequent percentages of usage. It is interesting to note that proverbs top the list of the five



categories (proverbs, myths, taboos, folktale and legend) identified in the two books. The two books explore this indigenous information to a large extent. For instance, out of the 105 instances of indigenous information in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*, it accounts for 84.8% (89) while it takes 74.2% (23) of the 31 instances of indigenous information in Achebe's book. This, therefore, reflects the discrepancy in the usage of proverbs by the two writers. It further shows that the authors understand the important role of proverbs in African communication setting. Thus, they do not only reflect Achebe's position that "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" but also agree with Ugboajah (1985:296) that 'parables and proverbs are pertinent and effective in the course of discussions and during speechmaking (in African setting)'. These proverbs vary as their subjects. Each of them expresses the traditional wisdom of the people and some document their world view and experience. For instance, in *Things Fall Apart*, express a lot of local wisdom. The first proverb on page 6 demonstrates that there is need for orderly arrangement of issues when it says that:

*The sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them*

While the second one points out that achievement is as respected as age among the Igbo. It says that :

*If a child washed his hands he could eat with the elders*

The proverb on page 14 emphasizes the need for harmonious existence among different people when it says that

*Let the kite perch and the let the eagle perch too.*

In *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*, the list of proverbs is long too. They vary as their subjects vary as well. Talking about the equality of man, one of the proverbs says: *One sparrow is not higher than the other except one stands on ebe (mound)*. After proverbs, taboos come next. There is an extensive use of this indigenous message. It accounts for 10.05% (11 instances) of the indigenous information used in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* while it takes up 12.9% (4 instances) of indigenous information in *Things Fall Apart*. Taboos reflect that the people have a system that corrects, restricts, instructs and protects. For instance, in *Things Fall Apart*, it is stated on page 7 that:

Children were warned not to whistle at night for fear of evil spirits.

It is also reflected on page 29 in the same book :

'Ekwefi !' a voice called from one of the other huts. It was Nwoye's mother, Okonkwo's first wife.

"Is that me?" Ekwefi called back. That was the way people answered you for fear it might be an evil spirit. (pg 29)

Other instances are on pages 22 and 197.

In *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*, taboos are explored to a reasonable extent. For example, there are instances on pages 13, 93, 94, 117, 126, 140, 141, 173 and 175. Examples include:

*The placenta is buried the day a child is born*

*If anybody washes clothes at night, it will rain on that person's wedding day*

*If you stand at the doorway to eat, you can never be satisfied.*

*It is forbidden to cross over a pregnant woman's legs*

*If a boy is beaten with a broom, his penis will shrink*

*When you lose a tooth, you pick seven stones of the size of the tooth and seven goat's droppings. You throw that on the roof and you run inside before they fall. If such meet you outside, your tooth will not grow again*

*It is forbidden to look at the glass when it is raining.*

Folktales are not extensively used in the books. They take up to 1.9 % (2 instances) and 6.5% (2 instances) of the indigenous information drawn from the two books respectively. They are sparingly used in the two books. The two writers feature two folktales each. In Achebe's classic, the tortoise which is an archetype in African, especially Nigerian folktales is used as **the** in the following folktale:

'Once upon a time,' she began,' All the birds were invited to a feast in the sky. They were very happy and began to prepare themselves for the great day. They painted their bodies red cam wood and drew beautiful patterns on them with *uli*.

'Tortoise saw all these preparations and soon discovered what it meant. Nothing that happened in the world of the animals ever escaped his notice; he was full of cunning.....

The second one is on page 98-99.

In *Under The Brown Rusted Roofs*, a prominent folktale is on page 94:

"A long time ago," he began . "The animals went to God to complain about how wicked the sons of *adarihunrun* were. The horse complained that man was fond of riding him to and fro the surface of the earth. The dog said as

much as he is loyal to man, they still beat him and feed him with their child's faeces. The goat said man would flog him all the time and whenever man had party, he would slaughter him to feed his family and friends. All the animals had one complaint or the other so God had to ask them what they wanted.....

The second one in the book is on page 50.

Myths and legends are the least used of the categories of indigenous information unravelled in the selected books. Interesting enough, these two categories serve in substituting capacity to each other. For instance, myth is absent in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* while it is present in *Things Fall Apart*. In the same manner, legend is present in Adelaḱun's book while it is absent in Achebe's. These two categories account for 2.9%(3 instances) (i.e legend in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*) and 6.5% (2 instances) ( i.e myth in *Things Fall Apart*) respectively. For instance, the myth on page 53 unravels the mystery behind mosquitoes humming to human beings:

Mosquito, she had said, had asked the Ear to marry him, where upon Ear fell on the floor in uncontrollable laughter. 'How much longer do you think you will live? She asked.' You are already a skeleton.' Mosquito went away humiliated, and any time he passed her way he told the Ear that he was still alive.

A legend in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* is meant to enforce a particular behaviour. It explains why a bottle of palm wine must be turned by its side when it is empty:

"They said *Ogun* was going to his father's house in Ire... They said he was walking with a cutlass in hand and it was so hot. He was thirsty and when he happened to pass by a town, he saw a group of people in a drinking hut like this. They had a gourd of palm wine in front of them. They didn't greet neither did they wish him a safe journey. They just continued talking.....

### **RQ 3: What is the relationship between the geographical setting of the books and their cultural content?**

#### **Geographical Setting and Cultural Content**

The essence of this research question is to examine the impact of the geographical setting on the cultural content of the texts. The focus here is to look at the media employed in the books again and see if the culture they communicate is universal or peculiar to the cultural setting from which the texts emanate. Careful analysis and observation reveals that there are universal media and culture specific media used in the books. A good instance is the deployment of instrumental media in the books. While Achebe's book features all the sub-categories of instrumental media, Adelaḱun features only membranophone. The mutual use of the membranophone by the two books is an indication of the universal nature of the medium and its importance in African culture. Proverbs is universal indigenous information featured in the two books. According to the statistics presented in research question 2, proverbs carry a very significant percentage of information used in the books. The books reflect Achebe's saying that (in Africa) "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten". These proverbs not only express the traditional wisdom of the people, but also document their world view and experience. They contain a lot of local wisdom. Music in the texts also cut across the two cultures represented in the books. The two authors deploy this form of demonstrative media to an extent in the books. Ogwezzý's (2008:140) position that "the communication value of music is however more apparent in Africa where music forms a very important part of her rich cultural heritage" can be justified by the use of this veritable tool in the texts. The deployment of the extra-mundane media by the two books indicates a shared link between the two cultures discussed in the books. For example, the role of *egwugwu* body in Achebe's book is similar to that of *egungun* and *oro* in Adelaḱun's work. *Ogbanje*, *abiku* and *emere* are three words used to describe children that die young and are said to come several times to torment their parents. These phenomena feature in the two texts. This points to a shared point of view by the two cultures. Although the process of reclamation differs in the two cultures, the fact that they both believe that these children can be reclaimed is a pointer to common belief about these children in the two books. Consultation of the gods or the oracles in the affairs of the people in the two books shows African belief in the powers of the gods to guide them right. However, it is observed that there are culture-specific media and instruments used in the books. For instance, the use of *ekwe* and *ogene* under aerophonic media in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is an indication of this. It reflects the culture-specific nature of the instruments. It further manifests the setting of Achebe's book which is purely a village setting lacking in the trappings of the modern world. The fact that Adelaḱun does not feature any aerophonic instruments as well point to the urban setting in which her novel is set. Iconographic media employed by Achebe is another culture-specific media. This assertion agrees with Ogwezzý's (2008:83-84) citing Akpabio (2003) that "icons stand for or represent something. They do not uniformly communicate the same message and are culture specific since what they communicate is based on a society's history, experience and circumstance". So, the use of kola nuts, alligator pepper, beads, brooms and cowries in *Things Fall Apart* to perform one ceremony or the other shows their peculiarity to the Igbo people which the book talks about. The deployment of incantatory form of extra-

mundane media in *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* is another instance of culture-specific communication. Using incantation to bring about magical effect (pgs 85 and 91) and the use of *magun* to check marital infidelity in Adelokun's piece is peculiar to the Yoruba culture. The use of extramundane media to communicate what is shared as what is specific to the two cultures represented in the two books can better be captured in Wilson's (2005:58) assertion that

This mode of communication is significant from the point of view that there is no society where it does not exist in its different forms. On the surface, it usually seems unidirectional but participants at religious crusade, *Idiong* consultation prayer sessions, rituals and other religious and pseudo-spiritual activities know there is often a form of feedback which may come through intra-personal processes, physical revelations or magical, other-worldly verbalizations

From the analysis so far, there is an indication that exogenous media, especially books, can be used to communicate indigenous information to a large extent. This agrees with Mundy and Compton's (1991) model of exogenous communication of indigenous information.

The findings of this research work agree with Odunlami's (2006) position that Wilson's six-point typology is not enough to describe the array of rich indigenous media contained in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The combination of Akpabio's (2003) addition to Wilson's typology makes the classification more encompassing.

Even though the book *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* is set in an urban area, the use of indigenous information is still very high among the people in the narration. This indicates that both indigenous and exogenous communication systems could still exist side by side in African cities despite the heavy presence of exogenous media (Osho, 2010).

The research findings clearly indicate that the two books are rich in indigenous information, which is often times culture-specific. So, as there is general indigenous information universal to African culture, they also contain information specific to their region of settings.

The research buttresses the trans-cultural enrichment postulations as propounded by Vivian (2009). The implication here is that despite the heavy presence of technologically advanced instruments of exogenous media in African societies, indigenous information can still be documented, preserved and communicated using such technology.

This study confirms that both exogenous and indigenous forms of communication can be used to enrich and strengthen each other. This answers Osho's (2010) question of whether the two systems threaten or strengthen each other. The two in the words of Mundy and Compton (1991) "have much to offer. Both can be used to the advantage of the people- or their detriment".

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study shows that books which are exogenous media can be used to communicate indigenous information now that indigenous culture is being threatened by the invasion of new technologies. The books examined have shown that African culture and beliefs can be preserved and documented.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that books and other exogenous media should be further engaged in the preservation and documentation of indigenous culture and communication systems. Further studies in this area are hereby recommended. The relationship between reading culture and the use of books to preserve indigenous knowledge should be investigated while more light should be shed on issues surrounding the access of such indigenous knowledge.

Government, at the various levels, should also come up with policies that will promote the preservation and communication of indigenous knowledge in schools and other areas for the advantage of African youths. This will ensure that they are appropriately reached and impacted upon.

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#### Short Bio

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