

**PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF NON  
AFRICAN LITERATURE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.18277.47848

**Abstract**

*English language is the official language of Nigerian university students, the study of the literature of the English people is of utmost paramount. By literary categorization, Non-African literature will cover the students desire in learning the literature of the non Africans. These non Africans cuts across the earliest beginnings of English literature to the present. Our research have surveyed the prospects as well as the impending challenges as problems thriving and stagnating alike the study of non African literature in Nigerian universities.*

**Keywords:** Non African, literature, Prospects, Problems, Teaching and learning.

**Introduction**

Literature, being reflected in man's life as physical and social phenomena has also been shared widely by different races and settings. Their varying races and settings come up with unlikely attributes when merged or compared with each of them. That is to say that literature in itself is diverse but in its diversity, accommodating. That is why it allows for a cross-study and sharing in the sense that it is able to study or share in the literary attributes of other geographical areas different from one another. The study of literature is the study of man and it entails all settings, not précised to a particular setting or area. Non-African literature in its study is one of the diversified nature or arm of studies because the student or researcher is sometimes, not from a non-African territory. It was Prof. Chinua Achebe who said to the Europeans that they do not have the right or what it takes to delve into the story line of Africans because in their attempt to do so they may end up changing the narrative or re-addressing a particular fact or situation from the untrue side of it. This he said, when these non-Africans

attempted writing works that portrayed the African man and his society. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is an example of these challenges.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is an example of Non-African Novel which also concerns Achebe's *Remark*. *Heart of Darkness* published in 1902 was inspired by Conrad's experience of the Russian colonization of his native country, Poland. Which he saw reenacted by England in his visit to Congo in Africa in 1890. The Novel, *Heart of Darkness* explores the evil of colonialism, rituals of civilization, savagery, barbarism, exploitation, cruelty, wickedness, heartlessness, Naivety, sabotage etc. it also portrays Africa as a land of disease that kills many of them and darkness, that the people were not exposed, a land of naivety- until the white men come and exploit Africa.

From definition, Non-African literature defines literary works that its authors, background and setting are not Africans or rooted in Africa. That is to say that any literary work that its author is not an African can be classified as a Non-African Literature.

The Novel is however, is clearly an extended narrative and it can be differentiated from the story by its longer length and from all elaboration and complexity. Joan Cockelreas and Dorothy Logan (1971)

Novel is a fiction in prose of certain extent. M. Abel Chabley in E.M. Foster's 'Aspects of the Novel' (1927; reprinted in 1973 by Pelican Books) There is no much difficulty in pointing out non-African literatures, but sometimes there are some confusion as for a literary work authored by a Non-African which has in its work, an African setting or events. It is pertinent to know that works are classified based on authors and owners, as such categorized from the background and identity of an area which the author is an extraction of. We should remember that it is believed that everyone writes from his or her background and so a writer can do more in writing form the ideas existing in his background of origin in as much that literature allows a wide sharing, there are problems and prospects in its regard. Just as my subject matter dictates, there are problems as well as prospects experienced in the study of Non-African literatures. Know that in the study of literature, literary works are not just scanned through for fun only, but there is a move to understand it in context and content, what it embodies in message. In doing this, you realize that a slight delve into a different background is taking place and you are required to assimilate into understanding that which you find in the work especially when an African picks up a non-African work and reads them. In our study of non-African literature

from its problems and prospects we will have to delve into a vast discourse which may reflect on the historical survey of English Literature. From the beginning to the modern period. That is to say that other literatures owned by diverse races may surface in this work. Students and researchers alike have studied Non-African literatures with its varying component and parts. This is because the subject matter, Non-African literature is not in any way precise. Note that Non-African literatures cuts across literary works that are not African and so you come to realize that Non-African Literature involves all ages periods and era of literature classical, dark age, renaissance, neoclassical, modern and others. We will also look into the non African poetry which s all about poems that have been written by non Africans

According to William Wordsworth Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings which takes origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity.

According to Samuel Johnson Poetry is the art of writing pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason.

According to P.B Shelley, poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds.

According to John Stuart Mill poetry is feeling, confessing itself to nearest possible representation of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind.

“A play ought to be a just and lively image of human nature, reproducing the passion and humors and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of mankind. – John Dryden.

According to Aristotle-Drama is a story acted out by people on a stage before an audience, who should better be described as percipients because drama is an expression from designed mainly for our perception.

According to Jacobus Lee Drama is the art of representing for the pleasure of others events that happened or that we imagine happening.

In the views of W.B Worthen, of the many kinds of literature, drama is perhaps the most immediately, involved in the life of its community. Drama share with such other literary modes as lyric poetry the epic and romance, the ability and challenge social, Political, Philosophical and as ethic attitudes.

According to M.H Abrams is the literary form designed for the theater in which actors take the role of the character, perform the indirect role or action and alter the written dialogue.

According to the online dictionary, drama is a prose verse, composition, especially when telling a serious story that is intended for representation by actors impersonating the characters and performing the dialogue and actions. It is the art or practice of writing or producing dramatic works it could also be a situation or succession of events real life hairy the dramatic effects and characteristics of a play.

Someone who studied the Shakespearean literature from infancy, studies a non-African literature or someone who majored in American literature also studies non-African literature.

When you talk about problems and prospects, it can only be defined as demerits and merit, challenges and benefits, others. Now, this work as it subject dictates will focus on the problems and prospects as evolved in the teaching of Non-Africa literatures in Nigerian universities.

One may ask if the Universities are not equipped enough as to how Non-African literature are being taught and learned in our Nigerian Universities. This work will tell us more and better. Obviously, the challenges and benefits experienced in this classroom teaching and learning in our various Nigerian Universities will be from the varying nature of the Non-African literatures of which we will x-ray with some of it like, the European literature.

Western literature also known as European literature is the literature written in the context of western culture in the languages of Europe, including the ones belonging to Indo European language family as well as several geographical or historical related languages such as Basque and Hungarian. Western literature is considered (Western literature, encyclopaedia Britannica, Retrieved 19 May 2014. Last edited on 24 January 2021 at 15: 50)

According to the Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, history of literatures in the languages of the Indo European family along with a small number of other languages whose authors became closely associated with the best, from ancient times to the present. (Encyclopaedia Britannica© 2021)

American Literature; Like other national literature, American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it.

American literature, the body of written works produced in the English Language in the United States of America. -Walter Blait professor of English, University of Chicago.

Asian Literature;Asian Literature encourages rich and widely, diverse, cultural and ethnic heritages found in such countries in china, India, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, and more.By its technical term it is basically the literary products made in continents of Asia throughout History- Course Hero INC. © 2021

In our contemporaries like the typical Nigerian society, which share African as a continent (African literature) with the African background, history, setting and ideas. We realize that in the approach or study of literatures with a Non-African extraction poses the greatest of challenges. Apart from the resulting challenges positive effects are yielded as well hence the need to research one of these two opposite evolutions.

Our Nigerian Universities share Africa not just as continent in which it is found, but in idea, setting, and background. All these possess great reflection in our livelihood and writing or creating and understanding a literary work. Now, there will be difference when compared to the non-African theories, setting and background. This means that the African setting is different from a non-African setting in all terms, impacts and ramification. Think of the non-African literature how it is being taught and learnt by students in our various Nigerian University, there are problems and prospects in that regard. This is why the researcher seeks in possible means within his capacity to discuss the problems and prospects in teaching and learning of Non-African literature in Nigerian Universities.

Identified Problems;

Background and culture

Poor exposure and experiences

Zero interest

From Fear of Eluding ones indigenous heritage or history

This research will investigate with discussions, the problems and prospects of teaching and learning of Non-African literature in Nigerian Universities.

Identify the methods used in teaching and learning of Non-African literature

Realize if the teaching and learning of non-African literature makes any impact on the Nigerian students

Understand the merits in teaching and learning of Non-African literature.

Observe the relevance and application of materials in teaching and learning of non-African literature in Nigerian universities.

### **Study delimitation.**

This study is delimited to one aspect of literature which is the non-African literature with its problems and prospects in Ambrose Ali University Ekpoma, University of Nigeria Nsukka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.

### **Research Questions.**

To guide this research, the following questions were formulated. These were invented from the purpose of the study. They are,

- a) What are the challenges or problems in teaching and learning of non-African literature?
- b) What are the methods used in teaching and learning of non-African literature?
- c) What is the impact of teaching and learning of non-African literature on students of Nigerian universities?
- d) What are the contributions of teaching and learning of non African literature to the human society?
- e) What materials are used for teaching and learning of non-African literature in your school.?

### **Materials And Methods**

The materials were realized during the 2021 field survey.

S/N	NAMES OF UNIVERSITIES	LEVELS	NO OF STUDENTS	NO OF NON AFRICAN LITERATURE LECTURERS

1	Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka	400	106	10
2	Ambrose Ali University Ekpoma Edo State	400	524	21
3	University of Nigeria Nsukka	400	274	18
	TOTAL		904	49

Questionnaires were distributed and it received reliable answers in return. The results will be showcased for explicit comprehension.

The data collected was subjected to analysis.

For research question 1, 2, 3 and 4. The mean and standard deviation was used to determine the cut of points.

The mean is given with the following formula:

$$\sum fx/N$$

Where  $\bar{X}$  = mean rating

$\sum$  = Summation

$X$  = Nominal Value

$N$  = Number of each value

Numerical values were assigned to the response as follows and used as rating scales.

SA - 4 points

A - 3 points

D - 2 points

SD - 1 points

The mean of the rating scale was calculated as follows:

$$4+3+2+1/5 = 3.00$$

The standard deviation is equally given with the following formula

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{F(X - X_{\text{mean}})^2}{N}}$$

Where S.D = standard deviation

F = frequency

X = numerical value (number of respondents)

X<sub>mean</sub>

N = total number of respondents

Then for research question 5a, percentage is used to determine the cut - off point.

For 5b, the mean and standard deviation was equally rated as follows:

Very Great Extent - 4 points

Great Extent - 3 points

Poor Extent - 2 points

Very poor Extent - 1 point

The mean of the rating scale was calculated as follows:

$$4+3+2+1/4 = 2.50.$$

For research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4, the rating scale was used while 0.5 was added to the mean of the rating scale so that any mean response that is equal to or above 3.5 was accepted while those below 3.5 were rejected. For research

question 5a, a percentage of 50 were used, so that any mean response that is equal to or above 50 percent was accepted while those below 50 percent were rejected.

For research question 5b, the mean of the rating scale was used while 0.5 was added to the mean so that any mean response that is equal to or above 3.00 was accepted while those below 3.00 were rejected.

## **Results**

Following this research, findings have been made, and here's the results;

That insufficient materials and unavailability of lecturers are the challenges in teaching and learning of Non-African literature courses

That lecture method and Computer Assisted instruction are the methods used for the teaching and learning of Non-African literature courses.

That teaching and learning of Non-African literature courses have positive impact on students of Nigerian Universities

That knowledge advancement and overall awareness are the prospects in teaching and learning of Non-African literature

That Non-African literary texts and Literary works by Non-African writers; like novels, poems and plays are the available materials needed for teaching and learning of Non-African literature and Literary works by Non-African writers; like novels, poems and plays is the materials utilized in teaching and learning of literature

## **Discussion And Conclusion**

The objective of the study is to investigate and find out the problems and prospects in teaching learning of non African literature in Nigerian universities.

From the research question 1, it was realized that insufficient materials and unavailability of lecturers are the contributive factors to the problems experienced in the teaching and learning of non African literature. Also diverse ideology, poor interest and poor exposure were seen as not being problematic.

From the research question 2, the responses revealed that the teaching methods mostly employed by lecturers in teaching of non African literature are lecture method and group methods. The responses also revealed that lecturers mostly neglected the demonstration method, watch and learn method and

computer assisted instruction. It should be noted that the use of group method has the positive tendency of reducing the low interest displayed by students.

From the research question 3, the responses revealed that non African literature poses a positive impact to the students.

In research question 4, knowledge advancement and overall awareness were recognized as the min prospects realized in the teaching and learning of non African literature, while social enlightenment, psychological enlightenment and adaption were spotted to have less effects. This should inform us of the fact that students are yet to connect their learning outside their environment.

Research question 5a. shows the availability of materials and its extent of usage. It was revealed that non African literary texts and non African literary works like plays, poems and novels by non African writers are available while sites for the practice or performance of the contents in those works are on the low number.

On the other hand as spotted in 5a, it was understood that non African literary texts and sites for literary exhibitions are not used whereas literary works of non African extracts ere found and used properly.

## **Conclusion**

research- Problems and prospects in teaching and learning of non African literature in Nigerian universities is stationed to address the humiliating and reoccurring experiences and challenges as well as envisaged advantages in the study of non African literature..

From chapter one till now, several attempts have been made and reached. We cannot avoid the study of non African literature, considering the fact that Nigeria has English as an official language and her students of Nigerian universities mostly communicate in English. That is why, the literature of the English people must be studied and that is found in non African literature.

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IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities. Vol. 8. No. 3, (2022)  
ISSN: 2488- 9210 (Print) 2504-9038 (Online)  
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