ILLUSTRATIONS FOR APPRECIATING TRADITIONAL STORIES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NYAKAYOJO DIVISION, MBARARA MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to improve the appreciation of traditional stories using Graphical Illustrations for Primary School Pupils in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara Municipality. The study used a Cross-Sectional Research Design; six teachers and thirty-six Pupils were purposively selected to participate. The schools that were used were Nyakayojo Primary school, Nyamiyaga Primary school, St. Boniface Primary School, Exodus Primary school, Bugashe Primary school and Katukuru Primary school. The story of the formation of Lake Nyabihoko in Ntungamo district was selected among the many stories told because of its popularity among pupils in schools. Using different approaches, a number of sketches were developed to reconstruct the story. The sketches capturing different aspects of the story were developed into illustrations and taken back to the population in the locality plus pupils and teachers in the selected schools. This population observed that the illustrations were clearer and explained the story well. It was concluded that the use of Graphical Illustrations to tell the stories clearly simplify and make the Traditional Stories more interesting than using and reading mere text. The conclusion therefore supports the researcher's argument that the use of graphical illustrations to tell stories is an ideal way of making traditional stories more interesting and understandable to the young people.

Keywords: Traditional stories, Illustrations, Primary schools, Graphics, Mbarara Municipality

Introduction

Traditional stories include Classical, Modern and Contemporary stories. They are those stories in which certain elements, the core theme in particular, remain unchanged and that are transmitted in a form of cultural inheritance, from one generation of kin to the next (Kathryn, Nancy, Craig, & Chris, 2005). Story telling is the art of having clear and distinct view of an idea. Since time immemorial stories have been told to people of all races including the children; formally and informally (Rochman, 1993 and Dominique, 2006). Even before modernity traditional stories had been told to people (Mercy, 1995). They are basically indigenous stories that have been told to people of all ages and of different forms such as folktales, legends and myths. Story telling helps in passing along core values or character traits. Poems, riddles, folktales, metaphors, music and proverbs as components of stories and oral literature generally, were central in informing the young about marriage, work, customs and how to behave in society (Vespia, Sauer & Lyddon, 2006 & Widyahening, C.E.T., 2020.) While story telling has been told to generations through oral literature and understood for so long, it can also be transmitted and made clearer with the use of visual illustrations today. According to Twinomuhangi, Munywa and Ajur,(2013: 46-48), the traditional stories, folk tales and myths serve as means of handing down traditions and customs from one generation to the next in Africa. The stories in this way help to tell the children out the distinctive and social organization based on culture and customs. For example, in the East African

setting, children are taught that the people were organised in social units of clans, lineages and communities.

In Uganda today, the methods of telling of traditional stories to children have significantly changed as most of the stories have been recorded down in books for example the stories of Ishe Katabazi (Katiti, 2004) and the story of Kintu; the first Muganda on earth (Nsubuga, G. Mujuni, E. and Kabonge, J. 2013). All of them with rich educative information.

Conversely other stories like 'Isaza the king of Hell' (Gumikiriza, 1967) have been put online /internet and accessing them by primary school children has been made very easy. Recently the Uganda International Cultural Fair, a fete that celebrates Africa's diverse heritage including poetry and storytelling, was held from 21st-28th September, 2018 at the Uganda Museum, in Kampala is also online now with illustrations to describe about what took place.

It is evident that most of these Ugandan Traditional Stories are told through written books to primary school children in Mbarara Area where Nyakayojo division is situated. The texts in the books are often times lengthy in terms of content and with complex vocabulary. They are scanty if at all illustrated with pictures. These kinds of books may be hard to appreciate for the young children.

Whereas there is abundant usage and relevance of traditional Stories in education for the children especially the primary school goers, there are minimal use of still graphical illustrations in written Traditional Stories for primary school children for example in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara District. This has led to boredom as the stories are being told to learners, lack of liveliness in class causing little interest and consequently leading to insignificant and sometimes no understanding of the message. Yet the content of the stories would be of great importance on children's development of communication skills. Therefore, there is a need to make the stories more real and meaningful through use of graphical illustrations so that learners can easily understand them.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives;To find out the traditional stories told to primary school pupils in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara Municipality.

To examine how primary school pupils in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara Municipality appreciate traditional stories. To produce graphical illustrations that clearly explain the selected traditional stories for primary school pupils in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara Municipality.

The pupils in primary schools will find the graphically illustrated stories (message) simplified, lively, enjoyable and interesting. Teachers will use the findings as references in classrooms and spend little time on telling stories to bring out the real picture into the minds of learners.

The primary school administrators such as the Head teachers, the Inspectors of schools, District Education Officers will use the findings as an instrument for reference and improving planning in education policies and implementations.

The researcher hopes that the study will form basis for further research by university students and other Researchers.

Methodology

The chapter presents the methodology that was employed. It gives a description of the research methods that were used in the study. It describes the Research design, Area of the study, Study population, Sampling procedure and Sample size, Data collection techniques, Reliability and Validity of the tools. It also indicates Data analysis and Presentation, and Ethics that were observed during the study.

Research design

Descriptive research was employed because it is relatively cheap and easy to implement, and yields results in a short period of time (Sarantakos, 2005, Dulock, Helen L. 1993). Visram, Z. (2015). Qualitative approach of the Research design was also exploited. This approach was considered to be particularly suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations. The qualitative approach provided insights into the setting of a problem.

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Nyakayojo Division, Mbarara Municipality in western Uganda. This was because the area has got enough primary schools that are deemed to have resourceful information about the phenomena under investigation. Too the area is in the proximity of the researcher. The area of interest on which the graphical illustrations were based was the Myth on the formation of Lake Nyabihoko in Rushenyi County, Ntungamo District Ankole region.

Study population

A suitable population of study was chosen (Casteel, & Bridier, 2021). It comprised of twenty six (26) Social Studies teachers and Nine hundred Seventy (970) pupils from the Twenty Six (26) primary schools in Nyakayojo division Mbarara municipality. This area has a total of Twenty Six (26) Primary schools with Primary three, Primary four & Primary Five classes that were all considered most appropriate after finding out that they learn traditional stories most (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2017).

Sampling procedure and sample size

The researcher used both Convenience and Purposive sampling techniques. The researcher selected units (teachers and pupils) that were convenient, close at hand and easy to reach (Amin, 2005, Barreiro, Paula & Justo, 2001, Ahmed, S. K. (2024)

Purposive sampling was used in the study to choose six (6) teachers who teach social studies to pupils in Primary three, four & five classes from the selected primary schools in Nyakayojo Division.
Conversely, Cluster Sampling was also used. The groups are termed clusters in this form of sampling and can be based on Geographical area, Size, and Classes. This method was appropriate for this study since Nyakayojo has different primary schools which could be grouped accordingly and then sampled using Simple random sampling. Data was then collected from every case within the selected clusters. The grouping of the target population into different clusters reduced on the biasness of data collected.

The sample size of respondents; teachers as well as pupils was determined after establishing the existence of Twenty-six (26) schools with Primary three, four and five classes. All the three classes were considered most appropriate after finding out that they learn traditional stories most (National Curriculum Development Centre, 2017). Random sampling was then employed to get the six (6) selected schools and consequently the respondents were purposively chosen because the researcher wanted only most useful cases and also to save time.

Selecting two (2) children from every class of the selected school would then be made that is three (3) boys and three (3) girls from a school making six (6) children and the sum total of thirty six (36) children. Only one (1) teacher was selected from a school making the total of six (6) teachers. The representation of one teacher per school was considered and ideally enough.

Methods and Tools of Data collection

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi structured interview was deemed the most appropriate form of interview since the key informants (pupils) needed to feel free to express their views. One way of achieving this was through the open ended questions that characterized semi-structured interviews. This method was expected to satisfy all the three objectives of the study.

Structured Questionnaire

The researcher used this method to collect data from both teachers and pupils. This method was expected to satisfy objectives one and two of this study. It was suitable because the population was both literate and large yet time was limited.

Observation

The researcher used observation to study the nature and character of the identified subject matter. The researcher used this method to collect data on illustrations being used on traditional storytelling in primary schools. The observation method was expected to satisfy objective three of this study because it allowed researcher to gain firsthand experience without informants and to record information as it occurred.

Photography

It was used because it is a quick and easy method of collecting data as well as a way of gathering information without any alterations (Hartel, Jenna, and Leslie Thomson, 2011) &   Alves, Rodrigues, Salvador & Fernandes 2021). The researcher used photography to capture relevant situations for the study research.   Photography was expected to satisfy objective three as presented in appendices.

Studio

Studio offers insights into making knowledge that is investigative and experimental; into the practices and skills experimentations visual artists need in order to transform initial plans, ideas into material work (Sjöholm, 2013). Studio experimentations was the method employed to obtain the studio based still graphical illustrations to arrive at illustrations of traditional stories for primary schools inspired by the formation of Lake Nyabihoko in Ntungamo District. Therefore, the researcher having explored the lake which is talked about in the selected story, went ahead to make a graphical representation of it. Experimentation with various tools and materials was done from the studio to find out how best the simple still graphical illustrations about the formation of Lake Nyabihoko could easily be produced for the Primary School children to understand; through development of variety of sketches, identifying texts, layouts and colours. These images were later subjected to respondents' opinions with regard to enquiry as to whether the children understand the *story through the images prompted by objective two of the study.*

Secondary Sources

Documentary Survey

The researcher used Library su20orvey as a method of data collection to get information about the traditional stories and illustrations. This was aiming at getting literature about researchers who had studied similar aspects at international to local scene to serve as a resource for the study (Mogalakwe, 2006 & Bigiotti, Santarsiero, Monaco, & Marucci, 2025).

Data management and analysis

The researcher cross checked and edited the data collected from the various tools used in order to eliminate errors and ensure consistency, uniformity, accuracy, completeness and comprehensiveness of information (Marra & Nielsen 2025). Data was then coded and labelled to various categories of respondents in the study. The selected themes were then subjected to studio experimentation. Different sketches detailing Nyabihoko were well developed.

Data validity and reliability

Validity

Content validity index was used in this research to examine the validity of the tools. Four research experts were served with the tools to get their opinion on the clarity of question wording and meaning. Their feedback was later incorporated into the final version of the instruments. The instruments were regarded valid when they scored 70% as recommended by Amin, (2005) & Christou, (2025).

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient to ascertain dependability and trustworthiness. 10% of the respondents were subjected to a pre-test of the questionnaire. Questionnaires were used to collect data on pupils through a pilot study and their responses analysed. This was to establish the reliability of the data collection tool. The researcher considered the questionnaire as appropriate (acceptable) and reliable as the coefficient generated was 70% and above as provided by Geroge 2003 & Bruton, Conway, & Holgate, 2000).

Ethical considerations

After the grant of permission from school administration, the researcher then proceeded for the data collection exercise. The researcher assured the participants that the reported information would not be manipulated in order to maintain the quality of data and to achieve the intended objectives of the study. The participants were then asked for their consent as indicated on the research tools. Anonymity and confidentiality were observed as the researcher would not reveal the names of the participants however the disclosure of identity was based on the participants' consent. Too, participation was based on voluntary basis and benefits of the study were clearly explained to all willing participants.

Results and Discussions

Findings based on objective one: Traditional stories told to primary school pupils.
All the forty-two (42) respondents said that the formation of Lake Nyabihoko was the most popular story among Primary school children. Thirty (30) pupils and all the six (6) teachers further said that the first king of the Abachwezi, Kato Kimera and Rukidi Mpuga, the spear and the bead, Isaza and the King of Hell, were second most popular to Nyabihoko.

Only fifteen (15) out of thirty six pupils and all the six (6) teachers said that they have ever heard of the following: the coming of the Iteso, the Stone Age Men, the tools of the hunters of the early men, the discovery of fire, and Man Makes friends with wild animals. The stories of Kintu and the story of the Ishe Katabazi were also known by all the six (6) teachers and twenty (20) pupils from the selected schools. Teachers also said that they know both formal and informal stories, which they normally tell to their pupils because they are important to children. However when the six (6) teachers were asked to tell the extent to which they used illustrated stories, they all admitted that it was not common. From the observation check list it was found out that only one school; Exodus Primary School had procured two

story books of 'Ishe Katabazi'. On the written songs about the traditional stories of Primary schools it was found that there was no single school with one.

Findings based on objective two: Examining appreciation of traditional stories by primary school children.

All the thirty-six (36) pupils admitted that they appreciate illustrations if the teacher makes them on materials such as wood, metal, pencil, pen and ink, paint, charcoal, oil, fat, or wax as long as they are used on a smooth level plate. They also added that when the teacher uses colours and makes shades by adding water to the colour as well as when the teacher makes a piece of Art made from an assemblage of different forms such as collage to make a new whole. However, the researcher found out that no illustrations for traditional stories were found in the schools.

Findings based on objective three: Producing graphical illustrations for traditional stories

All the forty-two (42) respondents both teachers and pupils agreed that the images in the questionnaire availed to them, communicated the story of Mutuumo. The respondents were able to identify the people in as the wife and the children who were bidding the old man (Mutuumo) farewell; and that he looked to have been setting off for a long journey (going to Rwanda for trade). They added that the animal being slaughtered looked like the sacred and forbidden cow (multi coloured cow) that Mutuumo had warned them against eating even if it died of natural causes. Lastly the mass of water shown in the visual graphical illustration depicted Lake Nyabihoko that formed mysteriously immediately after the slaughtering of the cow. Through the observation check list it was found out that   illustrations were used on very few traditional stories, however the subject books such as Social Studies had some (scanty) illustrations of the local and traditional stories.

The following visual illustrations are sequenced by the stories of Mutuumo and the formation of Lake Nyabihoko.

Oku Enyanja ya Nyabihoko y'atandikire (The formation of Lake Nyabihoko in Ntungamo District)

P.5 and P.4 Social Studies (SST) teachers at Kitagata and Exodus Primary Schools had a similar oral legend which says that Centuries ago, a wealthy Muhima cattle farmer called Mutuumo who had hundreds of cows and many servants had a calf born to his herd, of multiple colours (Ente Ngobe) and he was then warned by the gods never to eat the cow as it was sacred, even if it died through natural causes. Mutuumo also had a secret son to one of his female servants, who was also neither supposed to touch nor to eat the same cow of which more later Mutumo revealed to him secretly that he was the father! Mutuumo took the advice seriously, however when he was later travelling extensively in Rwanda to trade his products, the cow fell sick helplessly and his servants, who were hungry, ignored the pleas of Mutuumo's wife not to eat the cow but insisted; slaughtered and feasted on the animal. A P.3 SST teacher at Nyakayojo Primary School and another SST teacher for P.4 at St. Boniface agreed with them where they added that Mutuumos' secret son, who lived amongst the servants also unwittingly ate the meat, breaking the family oath Mutuumo had made with the gods.

Graphical presentation of Lake Nyabihoko

Composition and description of the appearance of the Bachwezi to Mutuumo

The layout is composed of the Nimbus Clouds, the lightning, Mutuumo, the sacred son, herd of cattle, grass and the Bachwezi. The Bachwezi appearing to Mutuumo and his sacred son while they were grazing their herd of cattle. Their appearance (Bachwezi) was so mysterious that the speed was like

that of lightning. In Ankole it is believed that the appearance of the Bachwezi coincides with Lightning which comes amidst clouds. Colours were employed to visually portray lightning that is said to have occurred during the appearance of the Bachwezi to Mutuumo.

Figure1: Appearance of Bachwezi

Composition and Description of Mutuumo warning the family members against slaughtering the sacred cow

Mutuumo a wealthy Muhima cattle keeper is seen warning his wife and the children never to eat the sacred cow even if it died of natural causes. Through studio, a suitable picture of the husband, wife and children all wearing the bark clothes was graphically developed as a family and a herd of cows signifying Mutuumo's wealth was placed to be seen in the background. Both the choice and arrangement of shapes plus colours were vital in building this composition.
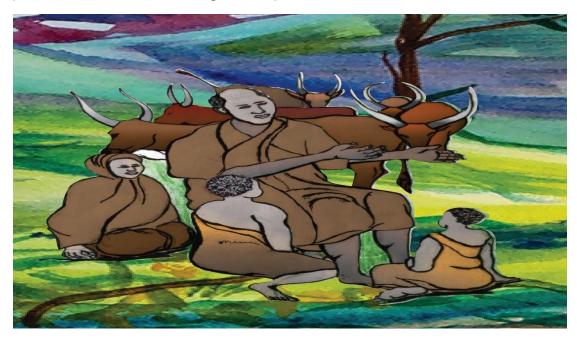

Figure 2: Mutumo warning Family members

Composition and description of Mutuumo being served milk by the wife.

The illustration depicts Mutuumo and his wife, the milking guards and the pot in the background. Mutuumo was being served milk by the wife. After the hard day's work, Mutuumo would get back home for a rest. The major food was milk which would be served from the milking guards. Traditionally Banyankore women would not serve food to their husbands unless they were sitting down.

Figure 3:Mutuumo being served milk

Composition and description of Mutuumo departing for trade in Rwanda

The graphical illustration is composed of Mutuumo, his wife and the children. There is a tree in the background. Mutumo is seen carrying Ghee, butter, skins and hides.

As Mutuumo was setting off for trade in Rwanda; to sell the cattle products such as Ghee, butter, skins and hides, some of his family members led by his wife escorted him for some distance. Finally, they left him alone waved to each other and wished him safe journey as he headed for Rwanda.

Figure 4: Mutuumo departing for trade in Rwanda

Composition and description of the sacred Ente (cow) Ngobe being positioned well for slaughtering
The visual illustration portrays Mutuumo's servants, the sick cow and the vegetation. The Sacred cow was being positioned well for slaughtering after having been found helplessly sick. Mutuumo's servants could not withstand the famine at the time; ignoring the pleas of Mutuumo's wife of not to dare slaughter the cow. Colours were used to enhance the visual image of the **sacred cow being positioned well for slaughtering** were employed.

Figure 5: Ente Ngobe being positioned for slaughtering

Composition and description of slaughtering the Sacred cow at Nyabihoko

The layout is composed of the butchers, the sacred cow being slaughtered and some grass. Shortly after Mutuumo had left for trade in Rwanda, his sacred cow became helplessly sick. During that time, famine was hitting hard the entire community of Mutuumo. Much as Mutuumo's wife pleaded with them not to slaughter the cow, they insisted and went ahead. It was after the slaughtering of this cow that led to the formation of the present-day Lake Nyabihoko; the biggest lake in Ntungamo district, Ankole region.

Figure 6: Slaughtering Ente Ngobe

Composition and description of feasting on the sacred cow by Mutumo's family

The visual illustration includes the hut, the meat being roasted, the Nimbus clouds, the tree, the servants and sacred son. Jubilations during the feasting were in high gear. Normally when the family slaughters an animal among the Banyankore, the eating ends with the head; and so was Mutuumo's sacred cow. In the composition whereas one was adding firewood in the fire source, the sacred son was busy enjoying the already roasted meat as the female servant was playing the flute.
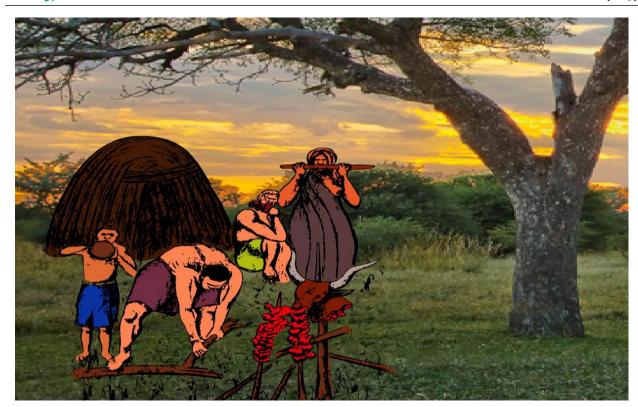
Figure 7: Feasting on the Sacred cow

Composition and description of the mysterious formation of the lake

The Lake now forms as a result of breaking the Oath that Mutuumo had made with the gods. It is believed that it is only the land on which Mutuumo's homestead was situated that became an Island. Lake Nyabihoko formed; becoming the biggest lake in Ntungamo district and today it is one of the major tourist attraction not only in Ankole but Western region as a whole.
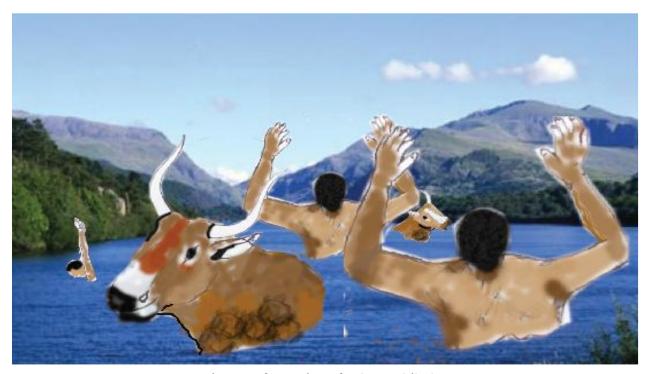

Figure 8: formation of Lake Nyabihoko

Composition and description of Mutuumo's return from Rwanda

The Layout is composed of Mutuumo, the Lake, trees, some shrubs and hills. Mutuumo had then returned from Rwanda and was wondering about what had fallen apart. Mutuumo returned only to find a lake instead of a home and is now crying, shouting, wailing and yelling to his spirits.

Figure 9: The return of Mutuumo from Rwanda

The lessons from the stories of the formation of Lake Nyabihoko

Avoid being Greedy

The respondents regarded the slaughtering of the forbidden cow as a sign of having been greedy. Mutuumo had warned every family member against the cow that it was not to be eaten even if it died of a natural death; but it was not long after he had left for trade in Rwanda that they slaughtered it! When famine hit the area Mutuumo's servants having little to depend on arranged to slaughter the cow little knowing that the temptation was soon catching up with them.

Learning to become Patient

The servants were unable to wait for the house head's return much as they were experiencing famine at the time.

Respect for the Will

The servants were incapable of holding onto the will that the head of the family (Mutuumo) had made. Therefore, the consequences that came after the failure to uphold the will; mysterious formation of the Lake were enough to teach all the generations to come to always respect the will made by the head of the family.

Clinging to rules and regulations; Obedience

People should be compliant with that which is required by authority. Therefore, had Mutuumo's servants taken heed of his words; and not become disobedient they would not have slaughtered the forbidden cow which led to the formation of the lake despite the fact that it had fallen sick.

Conclusions

Whereas Primary school going children have been told quite a number of traditional stories, both oral while others written of which some; such as the story of Kintu are on the National school syllabus, little appreciation by the children has been realised as the stories remain abstract and are too hard to understand yet the wisdom embedded within would be of great benefit to them. It is therefore regrettable to find that the educative stories with rich information, the wisdom entrenched that would otherwise be of great benefit is hardly understood. It was against this background that the study aimed at producing graphical illustrations about Lake Nyabihoko as a related story for easy interpretation by the primary school going children evidently proving that although a big number of stories are missing out on the graphical illustrations it is very much possible for story tellers, the Artists, the authors and the entire stakeholder community to develop them.

Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations:

Traditional stories should always be told to primary school-going children so that they do not phase out with the rich educational and cultural values embedded within. The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) should liaise with cultural leaders to do more documentation and keep proper records and literature of the traditional stories, especially those that are not yet published. The teaching fraternity should embrace the use of traditional stories more so that they may not phase out.

Museums should be established all over the country to help in the preservation of cultural values and awareness, and inform the new generation of their heritage.

Traditional stories should always be interpreted visually so that the primary school-going children can easily understand and appreciate the messages well.

Simple visuals for the narration of the message, especially in stories, should be highly used to cater for the understanding at an early stage of the learners' lives.

The study did not exhaust the power of the use of graphical illustrations therefore, the researcher recommends that more graphical studies about easing communication and interpretation be made.

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Appendix: Remains of Milking Guards and Pots

Remains of the milking guards and Pots that belonged to Mutuumo on Lake Nyabihoko