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# The Use of Modern Communication Technologies in Oko Aga

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### Abstract

Social events and situations are not static as modern communication technologies continue to witness rapid changes, which afford users better and optimal utilities. Literary writers being part of the society express their views on societal events and situations through the use of modern communication technologies in their works. This paper analyses the use of modern communication technologies in Oko Aga, a novel by Temitope Olumuyiwa. The study adopts sociological theory of literature and binary theory of complementarity for the analysis. Findings show that, given their quick access to news and information, there are various positive and negative uses of modern communication technologies, most especially the Global System for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) and computer, by literary writers. The study recommends that the use of modern communication technologies should be increased in the fight against crime and criminality by law enforcement agents in their bid to secure and ensure socio-economic development of the society.

**Keywords**: communication, socialization, techniques, technology, modern society

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# Introduction

Communication among human beings is very germane all over the world. It has been with human beings since creation. It is a natural and an indispensable tool with which humans express their thoughts in the society. Communication is paramount to human beings and other creatures. Language is the tool for human communication. Human communication is also distinct from other forms of communication because it is basically characterized by mutual influence (Adaja, 2007: 91). Communication, among other things, makes life worth living. Effective communication is based on the competence and accurateness of the speaker, listener, and the channel of communication. When one is affected, it affects the whole. Communication can be between two or more people. It can be between or within groups, states and countries.

The term communication has been defined in various ways. *Webster's New Explorer Encyclopedic Dictionary* (2006:363) defines communication as a process through which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour. Encyclopedia *https://www.britanica.com* sees it as "exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols". Schramm and Roberts (1972:3) define communication as

the great relating tool that relates individuals to each other, making it possible for groups to function and for societies to live together harmoniously.

They further added that communication relates an artist or entertainer to his audience, a teacher to his students, a leader to his people. Soola (1989:9) refers to communication as:

The process of conveying, receiving and acting on information, facts, idea, thought, attitudes and feelings which usually provokes the desired response when the persons involved in the communication exchange words, codes or symbols that are mutually understandable. Michael et al (1997) see communication as "the process by which information is exchanged between human beings, between machines, or between human beings and machines". For Rosengren (2000:3) "Communication is characterized by consciousness, inter-subjectivity and basically intentional. It is a willed-action by the parties involved". Oyewo (2007:136) claims that

> communication is responsible for creation, delivery or assessment of the impact of the messages that are intended to have an effect on one or more audiences.

From these definitions, it can be deduced that communication is required for human relationship and mutual understanding. The relationship might be economic, political, education or sport. From the definitions also, communication has a beneficial nature which may bring about change of attitude and behavior in the people concerned. The attitudinal and behavioural changes might be positive or negative. The most important thing that makes communication really useful is by helping the participants to achieve their sets goals or objectives. Individuals and societies develop through exchange of experiences, wisdom, knowledge and understanding which are used to solve societal problems. It is through communication that people socialize to evolve culture and literary arts. In line with this, the five major purposes of communication are to inform, to express feelings, to imagine, to influence, and to meet social expectation (*https://kids.britannica*).

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

This study therefore employs sociology of literature and binary theory of complementarity. Sociological theory was coined by a French philosopher, Hypolyten. It has to do with happenings in the society and the belief that researchers have the knowledge of happenings in the society. According to Marx (1955), literature evolves from the society, and so literature is part of the society. Adeyemi (2006:30) observes that sociological theory emphasises changes in the society although the change may be slow or rapid. From this, one can infer that the theory portrays society as not being static but dynamic. It changes as things

and situations in it change. Among the exponents of the theory is Escarpit (1971:10-12) who sees it as production, distribution, and consumption of works of arts. Relating this to literature, it means that the production and distribution of text books has great effect on the consumption of books and vice versa. Sociology theory is chosen for this study because it makes us realize that the emergence of a global culture has the capacity to bind the society and individuals together when works of other cultures are read. It also helps to categorise human behaviour into either good or bad as they make use of modern communication technologies in negative and positive ways.

Binary Theory of Complementarity, according to Ribera (2017) and Plotnitsky (2014), Bohr (1885-1962) (who introduced the complementarity way of thinking), is based on physical science. Scholarly works on binary theory of complementarity in Yorùbá studies include Ilesanmi (2004), Familusi (2012), and Shotunde, Okoro and Azenabor (2016). These believe that binary theory of complementarity advocates interdependency rather than antagonism. On this, Ilesanmi (2004:108) says:

This is an off-shoot of the cultural theory for the analysis of Yoruba orature and literature ... While "the world" sees the binary system as being oppositional, the Yoruba see it as being complementary.

These scholars hold the view that the world is created in binary form in which two phenomena are put side by side for reciprocal strength. To this end, the theory of binary complementarity is used for this study because it is the positive use of modern communication technologies that nullifies and curb the negativity of crime for the development of the society.

### **Means of Communication**

The world is dynamic. As the world changes, everything in it changes and as things change, round pegs must be put in a round holes. In the beginning, apart from exchanging news and information by words of mouth, that is, face-to-face communication, the means of communication was through symbols like gun, drum beats, smoke, signals, gong and flute. During the post-colonial era, when reading and writing was introduced, communication developed to posting of bills and letters, dailies and magazines. According to Cole (2000:2), the advent of electricity brought about the means to send signals via telecommunications which was commercialized through the Telegraph System. The use of radio allows people to imagine images which cut across all nooks and crannies of the world. Its use is possible everywhere because there are types that can be charged by batteries. Therefore it has a very wide range of audience. Shortly after the radio was the invention of television which made communication less intense by the explicit appearance of images (McLuhan, 1964; Defleur & Balt-Rokeach, 1982).

Due to development of communication, Desktop Rotary phone came into use. After that was the use of satellite for communication through cellular phone like Thuraya. According to Pratt and Bostian (1986:2-3), Author Clearke invented the satellite in 1945 and it was modified and put into shape through the satellite known as SKORE, being the first commercial geosynchronous satellite by the U.S. Air Force on December 18, 1958. For Pratt and Brostian, in April 6<sup>th</sup> 1965, the satellite which is known as INTESAL also known as EARLY BIRD came into use. The cellular phone marked the beginning of GSM (Global System for Mobile Telecommunication) in Nigeria as she witnessed a huge development in the area of communication through that intervention. According to Smith (2009:41),

> The most significant and most positive innovation is the rapid proliferation of cell phones and the extension of cell phones coverage, which has greatly enhanced the free flow of information.

GSM is a powerful media tool for information that reaches and influences large number of people by transmitting voices through the conversion of acoustic vibrations to electrical signals. The idea of the use of GSM was conceived between 1947 and 1979. The need for it by the military was the motif behind its invention

(*www.idpass.com/telecomarticles/history of GSM mandmore.html*). Prior to the arrival of GSM in the Nigerian communication market, the then government owned NITEL (Nigeria Telecommunication Limited) which was already characterised by corruption, poor infrastructure, inefficient and inadequate telephone lines, and power supply failure (Udatchay, 2008). The arrival of GSM effects a transformational change in the Nigerian Telecommunication sector.

Modern communication technology is important to humanity because of its functions and uses. It provides job opportunities, which according to Cole (2000:23) are in the area of voice communication, data communication, and internet in the business sector.

#### Synopsis of the Novel Oko Aga

Oko Aga discusses various types of crimes in the society. It depicts nations such as Àjàpadá, Àlà, Olómi-méjì, Mòjò and Èbìtà where there are criminal activities, such as killing, stealing, robbery, kidnapping, adultery, human sacrifice, and duping popularly called 419. It described cases in which people live in fear, lives being lost, etc., and protests could not change the situation. At last, the president ordered the police to find solutions to the crimes. The investigation by DG Idowu, Orivomi and six other policemen revealed that the criminals were using GSM to perpetrate the evil acts. A character in the book, named Bayo, stole a car belonging to his brother, Bamidele, and ran away, when Bamidele and his wife were away for a night vigil programme. They went to the police station to report the case. At the police station, they witnessed members of the society coming to report cases of criminal activities of different types, magnitude, and dimension. They saw how four kidnappers were arrested and brought to the station. Another case was that of jungle justice where they saw a man carrying the severed head of his wife soaked with blood, whom he accused of adultery. There was also the story of bank robbers and Adegboyega, the Governor of Èbita, who was accused of using a nine day old baby for ritual to attain fame during election, and for riches while on the post as Governor. Nemesis caught up with him during the police investigation of the death of Kola, his security guard. With the use of modern communication techniques, all those who were involved in the crimes were brought to book while the innocent ones were set free.

# Negative and Positive Uses of Modern Communication Techniques

Everything in the world is made in binary. Modern communication techniques can be used both positively and negatively. According to Ekeanyanwu and Edewor (2009:17), the type of media technology prevailing in a society at a particular point in time greatly influences how members of that society think, act and behave. Adagbada (2013:2) and Micheal (2013:5) are of the view that the type of events and situations of a particular time determines the themes of the literary works of the time. These assertions are true of the smart ways in which people use modern communication technologies nowadays and how such are reflected in literary works. The main ones that were made use of in Oko Aga are GSM, computer and its software. Apart from their being used for distant voice and video communication, they can also be used to send messages through the SMS (Short Message Service) and the MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service). Although controvertible, Kenneth (2013:76), thought that examples of negative use of GSM can be established when they are used to send messages through facebook, Twitter, 2go and You Tube, among others, to cause civil disorders and social unrests On other hand, Igbindu (2011:26) pointed out that GSM positively assisted Barak Obama in his struggle to become the President of America. Amaefule (2011:20) as well as Hamilton and Daramola (2011:14) also established a positive deployment of GSM for Goodluck Jonathan's election as President of Nigeria in 2010.

There are many applications in GSM which can be used to convey both positive and negative news, especially, when, in many occasions, it is not possible to ascertain the validity of the news, pictures and videos.

Various crimes are committed through electronic communications. According to Adebowale (2014:1), peace of mind cannot be found where there is chaos, anxiety and disorder. In *Oko Aga*, modern techniques of communication were used. GSM as well as computers were used to communicate through the internet web. These

techniques of modern communication were used via the cyberspace both positively and negatively.

# Negative Uses of Modern Technologies in Oko Aga

There are instances of negative uses of the modern techniques of communication in the novel. These include fornication, killing and jungle justice. Sunday Umoria beheaded his wife on the allegation that she was making calls to her concubine. He was taken to the police station with the head of the wife soaked with blood. Such immoral behavior, jungle justice, fornication, and killings cannot help the society. It was also the SMS messages that Gbonju, the manager of Tiwa-n-tiwa Company, sent to Damilola that made it possible for him to defile her. Taiwo (2013:115) observes that criminals are fond of bullying or threatening their victims, using modern communication technologies. This is evident in *Oko Aga* when a kidnapper was harassing Governor Sanusi to pay five hundred million naira each to free his kidnapped father and first daughter:

Hèló, sé Gómínà nìyẹn?	Hello, is that the Governor?
Hẹn ẹn sé ẹ ti bá mi rí bàbá mi ni?	Yes, do you have any information about my father?
Àwa ò rí bàbá òfò o	We did not see any stupid man
Mo kàn ní kí n sọ fún ọ pé	I just want to inform you that
Aşèsè jí Moróládé àkóbí rẹ gbé ni o	We have just kidnapped
	Morolade your first child
Bí o bá sì fệ rí òun àti bàbá rẹ	If you want to see her and your
	father
Tètè bá wa wá èédégbèta mílíònù náírà	Quickly pay us five hundred
	million naira
lórí enìkòòkan wọn.	on each of them.
Agídí ò ràn án	Stubborness will not solve it
Òtúbàntẹ̀ sì ni akitiyan àwọn ọlópàá	and there is nothing the police
lórí òrò náà.	can do on the issue
Se kánkán, ijáfara léwu o	Be fast, sluggishness can be
	dangerous
Má jệ ệ kí ộrộ náà dàbí ti Oníròwò o	Don't let it be like the case of
(p. 82)	Onirowo o
96	

Sanusi was the Governor of Mojo state. He wanted his people back. The kidnapper warned him to quickly pay the ransome and avoid a repeat of the case of Onirowo of Irowo. It was through telephone calls that the kidnappers were able to know that Onirowo, the Chairman of the council of Obas of Mojo state was coming back from one of the meetings he attended. He was kidnapped and nobody could pay for the ransome demanded. He was later found dead. Sanusi was disturbed as he talks with the kidnappers on phone because they the call rudely and abruptly. Sanusi called back, but 'not reachable' was what he heard.

Deceit is also one of the negative uses of modern communication techniques in the novel. One of the robbers impersonated Chief Oyetoro, one of the reliable customers of Onirawo Bank, and called Mr Oworu, the manager of the Bank. He said he was coming to save four million Naira in the Bank. Having sustained the identity theft, he eventually robbed the bank together with his gangs. This is a usual occurrence in the society, especially where the bank officials have friends among their wealthy customers. In such instances, many official matters are settled on phone. The novel also depicts another instance of negative use of modern communication technique that engenders bad covenants, secrecy and ritual. The bad covenant between Kola and Governor Adegboyega resulted into the death of Kola. Adegboyega was the Governor of Ebita state and Kola was his personal security officer. Adegboyegea and Kola sworn to an oath of secrecy at Bamboo Cult (Awo Oparun) in the presence of other members of the cult, not to reveal the secret of Adegboyega's atrocities of using a nine day old child as sacrifice. In doubt of Kola's sincerity, Adegbovega gave him a huge sum of money using GSM to call him at 1.00a.m. to ensure he opened the box. Kola died in the process of opening the box containing the money;

Aago kan òru ni Adégbóyèga pè é.	Gboyega called him at 1.00a.m
Tòò Kólá, àsírí mi lo ti mò yẹn	Well Kola, you have known
	my secret
Ó dìmùlệ	It is now a covenant
Mílíònù méjo náírà nìyẹn	That's eight million naira

Bí àlá ni òrò náà rí. Ooto ní àbí iró?	It was like a dream. Is it true or
	false?
Ó gbé àpótí owó, o ní kí òun și wò,	He lifted the box containing
	the money, to open it,
À fi gbo a ! àwon ara ile Kólá fo	it made a loud noise! Kola's
dìde lójú oorun. O di gidigidi	neighbors woke up. It became a
	stampede
Wón já ilệkùn náà, òkú Kólá àti àwọn	They force the door open, they
àjókù owó ni wón bá (p. 53)	met Kola's corpse and the remnant
	of the burnt money.

# Positive Uses of Modern Communication Technology in Oko Aga

There are various instances in which modern communication technologies are used positively in *Oko Aga*. Its positive uses include swift news and gathering of information about criminals, their activities, and also finding ways to bring them to book. Immediately Bamidele and his wife noticed that their Toyota car had been stolen, they started calling their insurance company to help them track the vehicle. He was quickly given the information that the vehicle is in Sagamu. The Sagamu Police station was called and they eventually succeeded in recovering the vehicle.

Adeyemi dá èro ibánisoro pada	Adeyemi returned the phone.
Ó kọjú sí Bámidélé ó ní; Alàgbà	He faced Bamidele and said: Mr
Kú oríre. Àwon olópàá Sàgámù ti	congratulation. The police at
Bá yin gba okò yín.	Sagamu has helped to recover your
	your vehicle.
E sáà gbó bí a Se ń bára wa sòrò"	You heard our conversation. (p. 16)

Several text messages were sent to Bamidele about the movement of the vehicle. Also, it was through the GSM calls that Sanusi the Governor of Mojo state was able to quickly get in touch with the President, other Governors, Commissioners, and the Superintendent of police about his kidnapped father and daughter.

Messages were sent to police men at the boundary of Olómiméjì state in order to get the fleeing kidnappers. It was the miniature that ASP Kemi used as badge that made it possible for ASP Bunmi to know how one of the kidnappers, Òjóóró, was harassing and beating ASP Kemi. It was also through Bunmi's calls that CSP Adetunji knew how horrible the situation of ASP Kemi was. GSM enables the investigating officers in *Oko Aga* to easily arrange and execute meetings. ASP Kemi, ASP Bunmi and DCP Adejoke were able to communicate easily through GSM during their stay at Ijoka. ASP Bunmi invited ASP Adetunji for assistance because the phone with ACP Adetunji was an iPhone gun.

The GSM revealed the direction to the kidnappers' hideout in Omi Adiye through the aid of its compass. It helped the investigative officers to trace the specific location. Also, after ASP Kemi and ASP Bunmi had located the hideout of the kidnappers and ASP Bunmi had called CSP Adetunji, it took CSP Adetunji less time to get to Oriyomi's father, Majiyagbe who was surprised about the speed with which CSP Adetunji got to his place:

Èyin olópàá ti yára gbó? You police have quickly heard? Majiyagbe bèèrè lówó Adétúnjí Majiyagbe asked Adetunji (p. 12)

Furthermore, the use of GSM assisted the police to receive anonymous text message at 2.00p.m informing them that Sonde Umoria beheaded his wife. GSM gave inspector Adeyanju the confidence to assure Bamidele and his wife, who were victims of car theft that they should not worry about their stolen vehicle because he knew that the available communication technologies are there to help them out. Bamidele and his wife were relieved of the anxiety which could cause psychological imbalance. Inspector Adetunji said;

E ma wórì, mo ti bá ògá olópàá ìlú Sàgámù	Don't worry, I have spoken
	with the Divisional Police
	Officers in Sàgámù
Àti ti Ọ̀tà sọ̀rọ̀. Wợ́n ní kí ilệ tó sú, àwọn	and Òtà. They said before
Yóò gba okò náà sílè bí wón bá ti kófìrí rè ní	nightfall they will recover the
	vehicle if they notice it in
Agbègbè náà. E wá máa lọ sílé. Máà pè yín	the area. Go home, I will call
Bí mo bá gbộ láti ộdọ wọn (p. 15).	you if I hear from them.

The assurance given to Governor Sanusi by President Ogepawo when Governor Sanusi's people were kidnapped and the one given to Majiyagbe by CSP Adeyemi about his daughter, Oriyomi, allayed their fear. ASP Kemi had already called ASP Adetunji that Oriyomi was with them at Omi Adiye. With the support of the available communication technologies, relations and friends no longer have to worry about separation by physical distance because of the electronic communication made possible through the deployed gadgets.

Many bad acts and evil secret plots were revealed through the use of modern communication technologies in the novel. The same way GSM was positively used to expose the societal ills in the novel, so were computers. The webcam and the monitoring software used by Kola, the personal security officer of Governor Adegboyega, revealed everything that happened at Awo Oparun:

Wón fi èrọ Kámérà tí kólá so mó Bélìtì àti táì rè sínú kòmpútà	They put the software that Kola tied to his belt and connected it to the
Ketekete ni wón ń wo gbogbo ìsèlè tí ó ti selè ní ìlú Àkòlòlò, ní ìdí Oparun, ní ófiìsì Adegboyega àti nínú yàrá Kólá. Wón rí bí ó se ń sí àpò tí Adgboyega gbé fún un.	computer. They were seeing all the events that happened in Akólòlò town, beneath the Oparun, at Adegbiyega's office and Kola's room. They saw how he was opening the bag Adegboyega gave
Wón rí bí àwọn ọlópàá se ń gbé òkú rè	They saw how the police were carrying his corpse.
lórùn owó rè. wón rí bí sòkòpàù se t	<ul> <li>It was then they saw the police that</li> <li>ú removed his wrist watch. They saw</li> <li>how Sokopau removed Kola's belt.</li> <li>In all, they saw how Sokopau</li> <li>offed his cloth when he got home</li> </ul>

### Conclusion

This work has analysed the use of communication technologies in the novel *Oko Aga*. It applied sociology of literature and binary complementarity theories as theoretical frameworks through which it unpacked the synopsis of the novel. It identified the uses of the modern communication technologies in the narrative and submitted that there

are negative and positive uses of modern communication technologies in the society as evident in *Oko Aga*. It recommended that the positive uses of modern communication technologies should be adopted by the society, most especially the government through law enforcement agents, in curbing atrocities of perpetrators of evil in the society.

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