

# SHORT COMIC STORIES IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA AND LITERACY

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## Abstract

*In this new age of computer, it is trendy to find short comic stories that border on hilarity, fun, obscenity, morality, virtue, etc that are circulated among subscribers of various networks. The quality of constructions, soundness of logical reasoning and seriousness of purpose of any such story vary according to their sources. The popularity of this trend is attested to by the vast number of responses/comments that trail each story that is published on-line. It goes to show that people read what appeals to them. As any reader of such comic stories is reading the story and the accompanying comments, more and more comments are likely to ensue. One does not need to subscribe to the publishers to be availed of such pieces. All one needs to do and be served the stories is to belong to a social network. This paper therefore seeks to point out the immense benefits derivable from the popular culture in which short comic stories published on Social Network Sites (SNS) like Facebook, Twitter, Google plus, WhatsApp, Flickr, 2go, Instagram, etc, and in particular the Facebook, can help to promote literacy. Using insights from the Social Network theory, the Social Interactionist and Behaviourist Language Learning theories, this study concludes that this practice is not only intended for joviality or conviviality but also promotes literacy - not only in the traditional sense, but also in the innovative graphology and evolving language resulting from the SNS technology.*

**Keywords:** *Social network sites; Cyber-joviality; Stimulus-response; Computer assisted language learning and New technologies.*

## Expectations

- **All arguments in this paper revolve round the following:**
- What is literacy? The new definition
- What is social media?
- What is a comic story?
- How can short comics in the social media facilitate literacy?
- How can students utilize these media (social network sites) for education purposes?

### 1. Introduction

Despite the fact, some scholars see literacy as synonymous to education; we tend to approach this study differently. We view education as an umbrella term where literacy is subsumed or is a part of. For us, to be educated does not mean to be literate; even though to be literate could mean to be educated; since educated people can still be illiterate in emerging areas, especially in technology. We also believe that literacy is not education because it transcends the ability to read and write to versatility in new/evolving socially constituted areas and/or technologies as constituted by society.

In this paper, mention shall be made of education from time to time but this does not mean that to be educated means to be literate. The term literacy is effusively used. It is ubiquitous; present everywhere, in all strata yet many are oblivious of it. Usually, when literacy is celebrated each year, so many people think it to be reading and writing; no! Rather we see it as a way of getting advanced in up-and-coming fields of study in science, information and communication technology, media and financial practices, language, etc.

On the one hand, the social media as a new technology is a networking process or platform for interaction via internet mediated means by the use of computer, phone or ipads, etc. The social media is one place out of a thousand places where literacy can be practiced and attained. Literacy in recent times has been made available to us, and can be attained or acquired anywhere, at anytime, with the advancement in information technology. So that nowadays, people can sit at the comfort of their homes and gain literacy and practice it.

Just recently, studies on literacy in Great Britain show that people, especially young people are not inclined to reading books outside of school; but are given to reading blogs, magazines, and so on. In fact, the studies by the National Literacy Trust posit that one out of five reads blogs; this invariably suggests that people are still reading, only that the means has been redirected from the traditional methods (books) to the trendy methods of social networking and blogging.

Comic stories, on the other hand, are hilarious or amusing pieces that are intended for humor and entertainment. Short comic stories now permeate the social media and one can easily be served them without directly subscribing to the

publishers. For all one needs to do and be served them is to have an account with a social network site where these are made available. Generally, the purpose of comic stories is basically to entertain but this study seems to differ from this opinion as we propose that short comics published on the social media are not only meant to entertain or amuse the reader as the publishers may think but go beyond entertainment to educate and provide literacy opportunities for its readers, hence the *edutainment* purposes of these pieces to the publisher and the reader alike.

### **1.2. Implications of the study**

- To show that social media practice is not only meant to entertain but to educate.
- To point out that, publishers of short comics on the social media can reach a wider reading audience than their counterparts who publish on print.
- To show that short comics on the social media can boost literacy.
- To show that literacy can be derived in two ways:
  - ❖ By publishing, and
  - ❖ By reading published works.

### **2. New technologies and literacy**

- New technologies have aided in the advancement of literacy in so many ways, so that one does not have to wait to be enrolled in a formal education setting to be literate.
- Many new technologies and emerging ones come with new education and knowledge, yet many people do not utilize them to their own advantage; as some see these “techs” as classiest and/or elitist, in spite of their proliferation in contemporary times.
- The Facebook, Twitter, Google plus, Badoo, Flickr, Palm chat, 2go, and many others are social network sites and especially the Facebook, that are used to promote literacy. For some scholars, these sites are rather a distraction to people than boost literacy. This study however debunks and deconstructs the opinion that social networking distracts people from gaining literacy or knowledge, and thus attempts to show how these various media practices can actually facilitate literacy with special attention on short comic stories in the social media.

### **3. Importance of social network sites to literacy**

Social network sites:

- Stimulate the drive to post and be published;
- Are interactive, which makes posts more appealing;
- Reach wider audiences that may have been;
- Have no editorial propaganda

- Allows freedom of expression, etc.

### 3.1. **The social media and literacy practice**

- The studies by National Literacy Trust in Great Britain opine that 20 percent of students never read fiction and nonfiction books, 67 percent surf the internet weekly, 55 percent read e-mails, and 46 percent read blogs. Looking closely at these findings, it is obvious that students or young people are still reading, even though there is redirection in focus from the traditional books to e-texts. Hence, we suggest that since the screens: TV, computer and phones are distracting, it is only proper to utilize them for a better use than the distraction they portend or are purportedly built for.

#### 3.1.1. **Can short comic stories in the social media boost literacy?**

- As pointed out earlier, advancement in information and communication technology (ICT) has revolutionized human activities, by changing lives and perspectives of many and availing same the opportunity to advance literacy and education in all aspect of human endeavour (Ushie & Ottoh-Agede, 2014). The answer to the question “can short comic stories in the social media boost literacy and literacy skills” is “yes” they can. As we proceed in the study, discussions on how literacy can be facilitated would be explained in detail. To continue this argument, it is only pertinent to explore some theories that are relevant to this case study. And these are discussed as follows.

## 4. **Theoretical orientation**

Three theoretical frameworks are considered relevant to this paper. These frameworks are eclectically considered, drawing useful insights from all to buttress our stance. These are the social network theory, the social interactionist theory and the behaviourist theory. Their relevance to the study is explicitly outlined in the segment below.

### 4.1. **Social Network Theory (SNT)**

Georg Simmel, the author of early structural theories in sociology was one of the first to emphasize the dynamics of triads and web of group connections or affiliations. Another scholar of note is Jacob Moreno who developed the first sociograms in the 1930s to study interpersonal relationships. Even though their approaches were mathematically formulated, the social network methods became relevant to and pervasive in the social and behavioural sciences by the 1980s. Social network theory (SNT) was later founded in the early works of Stanley Milgram, Mark Granovetter, John Barnes, and Clyde Mitchell- who was among others the first to experiment the SN theory in the field.

According to Kadushin (2004: p. 4), the theory of social network is one of the few or perhaps the only theory in the social sciences that is not reductionist. For Kadushin, the theory applies to a variety of levels of analysis from small groups to an entire global system. Thus, the relevance of this theory to our study stems from the idea that the theory views social relationships in terms of nodes and ties. Nodes in SNT are actors that could be individuals or organizations within the same network system. Ties, on the other hand, are the relationships, that bind the actors (nodes) to each other in the network.

Therefore, since our study focuses on comics published in the social media, particularly the Facebook, and the comments that ensue, it is important to see the actors of this network system as nodes and the ties that bind them as the relationship categorized as friends; whether these friends are family members or actual friends and acquaintances. There are different kinds of ties, identified by the level of operation within the network. These include a micro level, meso level and macro level; these levels are not explained in detail, because they are far beyond the study's purview. But note that, all these levels of social network have structure which is made up of a set of social actors.

Social networks in general terms are organized, evolving and complex; emerging from interdisciplinary methods of different academic fields. The theory first emerged from social psychology, sociology, statistics and graph theory for analyzing the structure of whole social entities. In a nut shell, a social network is a map of all the relevant ties between nodes in a network. The theory is also relevant to this study because, like Kadushin opines, a network is a set of relationships that contain a set of objects called nodes- in mathematical terms, and the mapping or description of relations between the nodes. Say nodes A and B for instance, what are their ties- relationships to each other? Our paper looks at the ties and the nodes that operate them, that is, the comics posted online with their interactants. A reaction of one node to a comic is automatically reported to his myriad of e-friends on the same network site, hence readership of a comic get widened.

#### **4.2. Social Interactionist Theory**

The theory, Social Interaction was founded by Vygotsky, a psychologist and social constructivist, who argues that social interaction, plays an important role in a learning process. Thus, he proposed the zone of proximal development (ZPD) where Vygotsky believes learners construct new language through socially mediated interaction. Vygotsky's social-development theory became popular and was adopted in the Western world by Jerome Bruner, who laid the foundations of a model of language development in the context of adult-child interaction.

The social interactionist opines that child's construction of the world serves the context for language development. The theory seems to provide a compromise between the nature-nurture continuum of language development of the Psycholinguistic and Behaviourist Theorists and takes a stance that language development is a product of both nature and nurture; that, language behaviour is actually developed through interaction, with one's innate ability (to acquire language) intermingling with the external language environment (caregivers).

In sum, the theory suggests a social or pragmatic function of language development which is our emphasis in this study. We believe that through computer mediated communication (CMC), people who subscribe to social network sites can employ computer assisted language learning (CALL) techniques to acquire literacy and thus develop their language behaviour. On a more irrefutable way, social interactionists suppose that social interaction enhances language behaviour and development; hence, learning a language is overall, socially related.

Therefore, to corroborate with these theorists, we conclude that literacy is socially constructed and construed. Thus, going by Copper's (1986) definition of literacy as "an activity through which a person is continually engaged with variety of *socially constituted systems* (italics ours), then we are right to assume that literacy is being au fait or up-to-date with societal systems, new ideals and evolving technologies.

#### **4.3. Behaviourist Theory**

The behaviourist theory was founded by J. B. Watson and promulgated by B. F. Skinner in his work *Verbal behaviour* (1957) where he labels language learning as an operant behaviour. The behaviourist school believes that language is basically behavioural and is learnt through imitation, reinforcement and control of the environment. For these theorists, language behaviour is viewed as being controlled by external sources such as parents and caregivers; which stems from a stimulus and results in a response (stimulus-response pattern). The theory contends that language learners (usually children) are encouraged to learn a language when they articulate sounds and are positively reinforced by a reward, but on the other hand, when the learner gets punished or a negative reinforcement for his language behaviour he/she is most likely to decrease and eventually stop making sounds. Hence, users of a language, who are encouraged, usually attempt to use language more by imitating more complex words and sentences produced by their parents or adult models and on the contrary those who are reprimanded become hushed and rarely attempt to make more sounds.

In the view of the study, we have pointed out that short comic stories on the social media facilitate literacy in many ways, in the sense that, people who are subscribers on social network sites see and read pieces of comics that are published online and the comments that ensue. This can just be a training ground for them to read other subscribers' (who may be older in the practice) reactions or responses to a literary pieces published online and this way they learn by imitating them, and by imitating, they may be commended (positive reinforcement) or rebuked (negative reinforcement). Thus, the study proposes that through the social media, subscribers get to learn language through a Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) process.

Also, in social media practice, new subscribers (actors) do interact with other nodes (actors) which the behaviourists see as caregivers and thereby improve on their language behaviour or literacy practices. Even though, Computer Mediated Communication emphasizes mutuality, new comers (actors) do benefit more through the use of complex terms or new terminologies and/or possible abbreviations in the process of exchange (see Ushie & Ottoh-Agede, 2014).

#### **5. Research methodology**

This is a digital writing research, and so cannot rely on same methodologies as did other studies on digital writing. On this note, our method for data collection is based on downloaded short comic stories that capture our intent posted on a contributor's wall in a Facebook account. We randomly sampled the short comic stories and the authors, and the story lines, even though most of which is centred on Akpos, a Nigerian comedian and short comic story writer on Facebook. The methodologies concentrate more on local digital environments where writing takes place with comments, likes and shares that trail any post. While our concentration is bordered on the social media and literacy practices, attempts are made to collect data that are apt for the study by reviewing relevant literatures on social network sites and literacy.

## 6. Findings 1: Students and the cyberspace: Finding a training ground

In a recent study carried out at the Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, Ushie & Ottoh-Agede (2014), sampled a group of 14 students, who share the same ties as classmates, to ascertain the students level of involvement in social media practice and the study revealed that out of the 14, the following are members of one social network site or the other:

Social network sites (SNS)	Number of students	Percentage
Facebook	14	100%
Twitter	1	7.1%
WhattsApp	1	7.1%
Other	2	14.2%

(Ushie and Ottoh-Agede, 2014)

From their study, Ushie and Ottoh-Agede created a Facebook chat group to understudy students' participation in social media practice and discovered that most students prefer activities online than their classroom activities; they comment free online than when in a conventional class lecture. Even though some are yet to understand the purpose for the pivotal study, more practice might just do the "magic" of getting them used to the system (2014).

However, there are students, especially in advanced countries, whose daily lives revolve round the social media and digital practices. A social media scholar, Buck (2012) underwent a study on his student, Ronnie, an undergraduate student at a large, Midwestern research university; and the study reveals that "for student's like Ronnie, everyday activity takes place in networked digital environments, which shape their literacy practices and their online and offline lives"(p.10). According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, "as of August 2011, 83% of 18-29 year olds used a social network site, (Madden, 2012 in Buck, 2012:p10) and their interactions online sometimes are more educating than one can imagine.

Literacy as defined by Copper (1986:p367) is an activity through which a person is continually engaged with variety of socially constituted systems. In the light of this definition, we have also opined at the beginning of this paper that, literacy is not only the ability to read and write as the UNESCO definition suggests, but it now transcends just reading and writing to acclimatizing and getting acquainted to new practices in society, especially the socially constituted ones. And this would mean, getting to know emerging technologies such as digital and computer technologies, science, media, financial practices, information and so on. For some scholars, living a literate life in the new age of information is being able to navigate spaces as listed above, managing identity and online data, and considering complex issues of privacy and representation (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010; Selfe & Hawisher, 2004 in Buck, 2012).

On the one hand, Buck (2012) argues that studies of social network sites with a focus on ecologies of practice should emphasize the continuous literate activity that takes place on these sites rather than focusing on the distinct texts created through them. Brooke's (2009:p.41 in Buck, 2012:p.11) presumption corroborates with Buck's view and adds

that studying social network sites would allow us to consider the strategies and tactics that are brought to bear on new media and those that our technologies constrain and/or empower us (paraphrased).

Conversely, we may tend to differ in this respect. This is because our paper considers these distinct texts created as means to acquiring literacy. We believe that even though these social network sites offer the opportunities to be published, if subscribers are not operating them the purpose is defeated. Moreover, the purpose for these sites is to enable actors within the networks interact with other nodes. This interaction is what the social interactionism sees as a way of developing self identity, language behaviour, etc.

### **6.1. Blogging as a form of literary space**

Literary practice has also gone beyond the traditional texts to e-texts. Many writers of literary works, in a bid to reach a wider reading audience, would rather publish online than on print. And even where there are prints, most authors still want their works published on the social media. Some authors get involved in serious social network sites like Linked-in, Academia.edu, etc. to meet a larger readership. Thus blogging like other literary spaces enables authors of literary texts to be critiqued and commended for their literary pieces; more and more comments come up from different critics in the network. There are various benefits that accrue to bloggers and those who maintain a profile on social network sites. These range from popularity to development and literacy as have emphasized in our introduction. The following points show some of the advantages that social network practice offer.

- **Language development:** The emergence of social network sites introduced new terminologies and graphological designs into the English lexicon. People who surf the web often come in contact with new vocabularies and abbreviations, and usually get accustomed to them as such language gets developed in the process. New words like cyber, net, surf, upload, download, emails, blog/blogging, virtual community, online profile, offline, login, logout, cyberspace, etc, and abbreviations like, lol- lots of laughter, Uwc- you are welcome, IJN- in Jesus Name, Hbd- happy birthday, LLNP- long life and prosperity, U- you, and so on, now dominate the English language as a new language genre/variety used online, what is referred to as cyberlese, and users of these language variety can be nothing less than literate in social media practice. At some points, attempts in the use of these new forms are made by operators of SNS with the hope that their listener/reader is on the same page as they are. Where people who are not literate in SNS practice come in contact with the terminologies evolving from the new technologies, they get lost in the process, hence, their backwardness in the emerging techs and the language that comes with it. One interesting revelation is, students translate this orthography into various writing, to include their formal writing such examinations and class test. So, is this a good thing or not? Our forthcoming study would consider this aspect to ascertain the answer.

- **Freedom of self expression:** Writers become more confident in their writing skills as they develop a positive attitude toward writing via digital processes. Most bloggers see writing as an enjoyable task, since it is interactive; and seems more appealing than the print media. Research on social media practice shows that people who are active online are more likely to write (comics/short stories) than those who do not maintain a profile on social network sites. This assumption is true. As we can see on Buck's (2012) study on Ronnie, where Ronnie's personal data is reviewed, and his social networking and digital activities are discovered to be intricately woven into tapestry



of his daily literacy practices. For Buck, bloggers or online participants learn to negotiate interfaces, user agreement and personal data as well as rhetorical situations; thus online environments or virtual communities do impact on the user's writing practices increasingly.

## **6.2. Short comic stories as digital writing**

Reading comic short stories on-line is fast becoming an aspect of popular culture. Advancement in Information and Communication Technology has since enabled even the common man to join the virtual community. And a flurry of activities takes place in the cyberspace, especially in social network sites like the Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. Facebook, in particular, is characterized by posting of short comic stories daily featuring an archetypal comedian, Akpos Hot Jokes, others also like Veracruz, Naija.com, online news publisher that sometimes publish comics and other comic story writers. Facebook account holders access freely these sites. After each post, provision is made for readers to indicate whether they like the post. Provision is also made for comments and a privilege granted to share the piece. Readers therefore, comment freely. Therefore, the number of likes and comments help us to have a fair knowledge of the number that read such comics.

Readers of short stories read for fun but in the process, they learn morals, ethical values, customs and even spiritual truths, social and political lessons. They also develop and deepen "enjoyment of literature motivating [them] to read" (Makeba, 1991, p.187). Short stories according to her convey social, cultural, economic and spiritual meanings.

People engage more in doing voluntarily what they like, what gives them joy and pleasure and what is intrinsically self rewarding. And behavioural psychologists assert that an act that is intrinsically reinforcing is likely to spur a person to repeat it or do more of it. Such a sustained activity will result in learning. If we extrapolate this position to the reading habits of online readers of short comic stories, we will make bold to say that they not only enjoy reading the posts as long as they are online, they also gain a number of benefits from the reading. This type of reading is termed "reading for pleasure", which activity, according to some scholars affirm has positive effects such as increasing literacy skills, vocabulary mastery and academic achievement of students.

Bassey & Otu (2003) carried out a study to determine what type of novels students of the then Polytechnics, Calabar read for relaxation and found out that the students made sure "they select novels that appeal to them. They want to get as far away from what they perceive as 'academic' novel as possible. They found also that 40% of those who read novels claim they do so for sheer pleasure although they also gain new words, new sentence patterns and a variety of sentences. Bassey and Otu, therefore, recommend that "popular novels should be included in schools and departmental libraries, since their presence in libraries would encourage an interest in reading among users of such libraries"(p.74).

Moreover, the scope of literacy is even being expanded beyond the traditional concept of being able to read and write to include literacy in interpreting symbols and creative orthography in cyberlese – the language of cyberspace. The following segment presents the collected short comics from Facebook as written by different authors.

### 6.3. Retrieved short comics on Facebook

Akpos has been admiring his neighbour's wife. The neighbour's wife always gives him this seductive smile whenever they greet each other. Akpos didn't know how to approach the lady to tell her of his desires because she's married. So, one day the lady herself approached Akpos alone in his apartment and the following conversation took place:

#### TEXT 1:

AKPOS: Hi.

LADY: Hi.

AKPOS: Is everything alright?

LADY: Yes. Just need a little help from you (Smiling seductively).

AKPOS: Wow! Anything for the angel.

LADY: I...I...I... just don't know how to say this. I'll be so ashamed of myself if I ask and you say no.

AKPOS: Oh my lady. You don't have to. I am ready to do anything for you.

LADY: You know, it's been over 3 weeks since my husband travelled...

AKPOS: Yes! Yes! Yes!

LADY: And even when he's

around, he has some... (Pause for a while) he has some disabilities...

AKPOS: Oh poor you... You must have been going through hell!

LADY: I know you'll be stronger than him...

AKPOS: Sure.

LADY: Can you help me?

AKPOS: Wow! Now? Sure, I'm ready if you are ready.

LADY: Oh thanks goodness! That's why I came to you. Can you help me carry our deep freezer from our kitchen to the next street for repairs?

\*Immediately Akpos fainted\*

#### TEXT 2: Akpos, the counselor philosopher

One day a young lady was driving along with her father. They came upon a storm, and the young lady asked her father, what should I do?"He said "keep driving".

Cars began to pull over to the side, the storm was getting worse. "What should I do?" The young lady asked "Keep driving," her father replied.

On up a few feet, she noticed that eighteen wheelers were also pulling over. She told her dad, "I must pull over, I can barely see ahead. It is terrible, and everyone is pulling over!"

Her father told her, "Don't give up, just keep driving!" Now the storm was terrible, but she never stopped driving, and soon she could see a little more clearly.

After a couple of miles she was again on dry land, and the sun came out. Her father said, "Now you can pull over and get out." She said "But why now?"

He said "When you get out, look back at all the people that gave up and are still in the storm, because you never gave up your storm

is now over.

This is a testimony for anyone who is going through "hard times".

Just because everyone else, even the strongest, gives up. You don't have to...if you keep going, soon your storm will be over and the sun will shine upon your face again, know that God is always by ur side to make u prosper. Why not say Amen?

### **TEXT 3: Anonymous author**

A couple works in different cities.

The husband works in Abuja, while the wife works in Lagos. The husband goes home every weekend. Both have Facebook accounts. One day while bored at work he playfully creates a Facebook account with a fake pix, he sends his wife a request & she adds him. They chat regularly over 1 month, she finds him very exciting & is always looking forward to chatting with him, she began to hate weekends because he was never available to chat. They chatted about everything, recently their chats became very sexually explicit, she got turned on by the things he asked her to do, then one day he asks her to send a pix of her private part, she excitedly does that without hesitation, he then asks her to take other nude pics & she did & sent all to him. They later

arranged to meet in Nicon Hotel  
Abuja...  
Unfortunately for her, she came and  
saw her husband.  
If you were the husband, what would  
you do?

If I were the woman, I would shout,  
"APRIL FOOL! HONEY, I'VE ALWAYS  
KNOWN IT WAS YOU."

**TEXT 4: Anonymous author**

Post from [August 27](#)

Me: God, can I ask You a question?  
God: Sure  
Me: Promise You won't get mad  
God: I promise  
Me: Why did You let so much stuff happen to me today?  
God: What do u mean?  
Me: Well, I woke up late  
God: Yes  
Me: My car took forever to start  
God: Okay  
Me: at lunch they made my sandwich wrong & I had to wait  
God: Huummm  
Me: On the way home, my phone went DEAD, just as I picked up a call  
God: All right  
Me: And on top of it all off, when I got home ~I just want to soak my feet in my new foot massager & relax. BUT it wouldn't work!!! Nothing went right today! Why did You do that?  
God: Let me see, the death angel was at your bed this morning & I had to send one of My Angels to battle him for your life. I let you sleep through that  
Me (humbled): OH  
GOD: I didn't let your car start because there was a drunk driver on your route that would have hit you if you were on the road.  
Me: (ashamed)  
God: The first person who made your sandwich today was sick & I didn't want you to catch what they have, I knew you couldn't afford to miss work.  
Me (embarrassed): Okay  
God: Your phone went dead because the person that was calling was going to give false witness about what you said on that call, I didn't even let you talk to them so you would be covered.  
Me (softly): I see God  
God: Oh and that foot massager, it had a shortage that was going to throw out all of the power in your house tonight. I didn't think you wanted to be in the dark.  
Me: I'm Sorry God  
God: Don't be sorry, just learn to Trust Me.... in all things, the Good & the bad.  
Me: I will trust You.  
God: And don't doubt that My plan for your day is Always Better than your plan.  
Me: I won't God. And let me just tell you God, Thank You for Everything today.  
God: You're welcome child. It was just another day being your God and I Love looking after My Children...

#### 6.4. How short stories contribute to literacy and literary practices

The storyline of a script for a playlet about Akpos (TEXT 1) admiring his neighbour's wife shows that the archetypal Akpos has been admiring his neighbour's wife but lacks the courage to tell her of his feelings because she is married. The woman does not help matters with her seductive smiles at Akpos. She approaches Akpos and asks for an assistance, which Akpos initially mistakes for advances, to help move her freezer to the next street for repairs. Akpos faints. Seven hundred and thirty-nine (739) readers **like** this story. A varying degree of **comments** are posted. A survey of a cross section of the responses shows the following: SNS orthography= LOL(Z) (lots of laughter)=14, No p (no problem), Lmfao (laughing my fine ass out), (very) funny,=4, hehehehe =8. Others like, OMG- Oh my God etc. Unfortunately, it was not possible to retrieve old posts containing the responses, except recycled ones that of course would contain fresh responses.

A particular piece can be re-posted as many times as desired by the publishers. It is clear from these responses that readers need to be literate in the creative language and spelling pattern of writings that characterize social network sites technology, (Ede & Ushie, 2014). The story in TEXT 2 about a young lady driving along with her father in a storm has it that the latter kept asking the former to press on defying the storm in spite of the facts that it was heightening and other vehicles- even bigger ones, had pulled over. Surprisingly, he permitted her to pull over, disembark and look back when she had come clean of it whereupon a philosophical truth was pointed out to the effect that one should not give up trying simply because others, even if one's better have given up. Also, she learnt that those she had passed would still be in the storm for a longer period since they gave up in the middle of it.

The story shows that 77 people **like** it. An indeterminate number responded with "Amen" as solicited by the publisher. Indeterminate number, because from the time one of the teammates shared this on his wall (3 September, 2014) till 23 September, had been about 200 who typed "Amen". The number of readers who shared this post is indeterminate, not to talk about those that would read it from other people's walls. The publisher, drawing from this philosophical conclusion that assures the readers that prosperity is theirs, calls for the response of "Amen".

In another piece (TEXT 4) a conversation ensues between a man who had a lot of disappointments in a day and God. A barrage of questions reveals his apparent discontent with God. By the time God finished explaining the circumstances surrounding the seeming disappointments, all of which he was responsible for, to the effect that they were to the man's advantage in view of the dangers that were lurking by the corner, the man was full of apologies and appreciation. God then advises the man to learn to trust him in all things, good or bad, and that he God will do all things to the man's favour. A whooping 583,043 people indicated they **like** this on 2 September, 2014 when it was downloaded.

## 7. Observations and Conclusion

Empirical evidence has shown that it is not all times that a reader of the online comics comments after reading a piece. A reader may be constrained by time, available airtime (or internet services) and neutrality or even indifference not to comment on, or indicate if they like a piece. This means that more people than those that respond read the comics. A survey of the litany of respondents to each post indicates that people across races around the world that are literate in English constitute the readership. The fact that a number of people are bilinguals or polyglots and so can translate interesting pieces into their languages and share in their walls, helps expand the scope of the readership. The pieces that are very funny can be therapeutic in making the moodiest person smile or laugh and ease tension. Readers of those posts and the comment thread have a lot to learn. The benefits could include expansion of their vocabulary and expressions, development of *cyberlese* variety of the English Language, literacy in the writing system, and acquisition of social skills.

In sum, we have established that literacy is an ongoing process in any human being's life. The day one stops learning, s/he stops leaving as a relevant being in the new age of information, communication and technology.

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