

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CHILDREN'S  
ANIMATED CARTOONS OF AFRICAN ORIGIN**



**A thesis in the Department of Communication Instruction,  
School of Communication and Media Studies, submitted to the School of  
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**of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
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## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Joanita Naa Shika Okuley, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Christiana Hammond

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my beloved husband, David Atidepe-Agbesi and my cherished children;  
Juanita Elikem Atidepe-Agbesi, David Atidepe-Agbesi II and Willard Atidepe-  
Agbesi.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ACES - Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
- AKP - Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi's (Justice and Development Party)
- AMAA - Africa Movie Academy Awards
- APA – American Psychologists Association
- BSI - Brand Strength Index
- CDA - Critical Discourse Analysis
- CN – Cartoon Network
- CSWE - Council on Social Work Education
- DA - Discourse Analysis
- FCDA - Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis
- GAM - General Aggression Model
- MGT - Muted Group Theory
- OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- SCT - Social Cognitive Theory
- TV - Television
- UEW – University of Education, Winneba
- UNCRC - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- USA – United States of America
- WSA - World Summit Awards

## ABSTRACT

Animated cartoons are one of the most popular tools of popular culture which do not only provide entertainment for children but also serve as agents of socialisation capable of shaping, changing and influencing the perception of children. Using Thompson's modes of ideology, this study provides a critical discourse analysis of power, hegemony and ideology in some selected children's animated cartoons of African origin. Data is gathered through document analysis and analysed textually and thematically. The findings revealed that animated cartoons are embedded with themes such of violence, dynamism of culture, social values, belief in superstition and the supernatural, power imbalance and discrimination. The study further shows that animated cartoons are mediums for the dissemination of ideologies and the enactment of relations of power and hegemony. This study concludes that animated cartoons contribute to the sustenance of relations of power and hegemony and the spreading of certain ideologies. The outcome of this study leads to an understanding of how language can be used in children's media to foster positive social change through the development of animated cartoons with appropriate messages capable of moulding the attitudes and mindsets of children. This study therefore recommends the critical analyses of content creation by producers and regulators of children's media for their appropriateness in terms of embedded ideological and hegemonic tendencies.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Animated cartoons are an aspect of media programming mostly enjoyed by children. Although some adults enjoy animated cartoons, Kidenda (2018) asserts that animated cartoons have been associated with children since time immemorial. Generally, children value animated cartoons because of the entertainment and pleasure they derive from them. Imik (as cited in Ayyildiz, 2021) regards animated cartoons as one of the most influential tools of popular culture. Originally, cartoons were used to refer to drawings of pieces of art during the Middle Ages but in the 19th Century, it was used to describe humorous graphics or illustrations in magazines and newspapers (Pryor, 2004). With advancement in technology, cartoons have moved from merely describing drawings to comic strips and animated films from the 20th century onwards (Pryor, 2004). Rankin (2022) describes animated cartoons as colourful short films that feature anthropomorphised animals, superheroes and adventure which are intended to be humorous and appeal to children. This means that, animated cartoons are designed in a manner to attract children and hence, the contents of animated cartoons are targeted at children.

Technological advancement has made the media extremely powerful in everyone's life and children are no exception from this phenomenon (Ahmed & Wahab, 2014). The United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (1989) defines children as individuals or persons below the age of eighteen years. Casey et al. (2008) assert that childhood is a phase of life which is open to learning and shaping especially, through imitation. Reich (2017) argues that aside sleep, the media is the second leading activity or engagement for children. This could be explicated that, although the media

provides information, entertainment and education for children, it also serves as a socialisation agent in the lives of children (Bandura, 1986). In effect, the ways of thinking and acting of children could be fashioned by a number of factors within the environment in which they grow and key among these factors include animated cartoons. Through socialisation, children acquire knowledge, skills and experiences that contribute to their integration in society, their understanding of laws, rules and societal norms and morals (Derzyan, 2019). Derzyan (2019) further adds that socialisation is very important especially during childhood because children are able to build their character, personality, preferences and behaviours through imitation and persistent observations and practice. Although socialisation is carried out by parents, family, peers, teachers and churches, television is considered the most effective agent in the spreading of certain ideas, knowledge and information to the child (Ahmed & Wahab, 2014). Television is thus, considered a ‘third parent’ to the socialisation process of children (Biswas, 2013). Diverse exposures from animated cartoons help to shape the actions, thoughts and behaviours of children (Biswas, 2013).

A growing body of literature (Acheampong, 2017; Ghilzai et al., 2017; Rai et al., 2016; Ramesh, 2021) demonstrates that animated cartoons provide children with the opportunities to learn and relearn new things to transform their attitudes and behaviours especially, from the colourful and captivating imageries with which messages are conveyed or portrayed. Parents, guardians and teachers resort to animated cartoons to entertain children and keep them occupied (Ramesh, 2021; Udayangani et al., 2015). Animated cartoons are seen as puerile and thus, the best entertainment for children most especially in an era where the media is flooded with adult content of sexual immorality, insipid language use and indecent exposure which are deemed inappropriate for the consumption of children (Acheampong, 2017).

Animated cartoons according to Acheampong (2017), give children worldwide exposure and offer them the opportunity to catch a glimpse of other people's cultures and to learn new things and ideas that they could not encounter in the environments within which they find themselves, hence the need to identify how issues of power, ideology and hegemony are enacted by conducting a CDA of some selected children's animated cartoons.

In analyzing the relationship between language and ideology in media discourse, Fowler (1991) prescribes the use of CDA as a suitable method for examining the enactment of power since ideology is a significant theme in language use (Fairclough, 2013). Blommaert (2005) proposes that CDA could be used to examine the impact of power on society and how that impact is attained and manifested. Catalano and Waugh (2020) define Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an interdisciplinary approach or theory to the study of language that examines language as a social activity and concerns itself with determining the relationship that exists between language, relations of power, ideology and social structure. CDA is therefore interested in the enactment of ideology and power relations through language which could result in manipulation, domination, oppression, underrepresentation and inequality.

Ghassemi and Hemmatgosha (2019) argue that through the media, language is used to manipulate and control. Animated cartoons as a media discourse contain ideology and legitimise power relations (Bobrowska et al., 2019). This is also in line with the assertions of Buckingham (2001) who states that animated cartoons are social constructions primed for children by an overriding ideology and are sometimes used as tools to promote certain interests. Animated cartoons aside from entertainment,



serve as vehicles for communicating ideologies and values capable of stimulating social change, either positively or negatively (Alshurafa et al. 2021).

According to VisikoKnox-Johnson (2016), fairy tales including animated cartoons are important to the development of children as they influence values and beliefs of the child. Derzyan (2019) furthers this argument and asserts that children are attracted to animated cartoons because they are able to learn from them through the use of visuals and simple language. Animated cartoons therefore, influence children's perception of the world, formation of values and their upbringing process (Rai et al., 2016). Sudha (2011) in another perspective emphasises that media is a learning medium for children because it influences them negatively and positively. Some studies (Ghilzai et al., 2017; Ramesh, 2021) have shown that animated cartoons aid brain development, language acquisition, learning skills, team work, creativity, problem solving skills as well as the development of moral values. In spite of the enormous benefits that children derive from the viewing of animated cartoons, Acheampong (2017), Amoah and Ampong (2020), Turkmen (2016) and Wiafe –Akenten (2009) are of the opinion that they could be detrimental to children since their contents carry subtle levels of power or control which in turn influences the behaviour of children in a negative manner for which scholarly attention should be given to inform censorship.

Goziyah et al. (2018) aver that movies including animated cartoons are as a result of human culture which represents the views and ideologies of a certain group or community. Further, Kaya (2021) argues that exposing children to animated cartoons plays a vital role in their construction of social norms. A study by Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (2017) indicates that when creating a message to educate, inform or persuade, cartoons are the most appropriate because of their

persuasiveness in changing behaviour. Children are the main target of animated cartoons and hence, certain ideologies (McPherson, 2020).

Laskar (2021) contends that children's cognitive development is influenced by a plethora of factors which include the identification and adoption of social behaviours through animated cartoons. Thus, during the formative years of children, they tend to develop positive sexual and gender constructions and also gain stereotyped and negative understanding of the world depending on the conditions under which they obtain their education and training which includes exposure to animated cartoons (Laskar, 2021). Likewise, Cherland and Edelsky (1993, p.42) also state that, "reading fiction is one site in which children can confront culture and construct its meanings for their individual lives. Reading fiction is a social practice through which children seek to understand their own places in the world". This confirms the assertion by scholars (Acheampong, 2017; Derzyan, 2019; Ghilzai et al., 2017; Rai et al., 2016; Sudha, 2011) who argue that animated cartoons contribute to shaping the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of children. In creating children's animated cartoons, the language used should therefore be of utmost concern because of the ability of the embedded power to persuade, influence and appeal to all the senses of children (Şenocak & Ayyildiz, 2021).

Like all other discourses, animated cartoons contain strategies which include ideological underpinnings, persuasive elements and power relations which are utilised in driving home the intended message to the viewers or audience (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2005; van Dijk, 1996, Wodak, 1996). Creators and developers of animated cartoons therefore use language and employ strategies that are capable of appealing to their target audience (Ersan, 2016). Scholars (Acheampong, 2017; Amoah &

Ampong, 2020; Ghilzai et al., 2017; Ramesh, 2021; Turkmen, 2016) have argued that animated cartoons can be used to train, educate and cause positive social change as well as negative change.

Gerbner and Gross (1976) assert that human beings are influenced greatly by what they watch in the media and more often than not re-enact what they watch. This means that the more individuals consume media messages, the more likely they are to accept that social reality aligns with the reality portrayed on television. Notwithstanding the fact that Gerbner and Gross's (1976) assertion is dated, it is still relevant in modern times. This assertion has been tested by Levinson (2020) and Turkmen (2014) in recent times who all confirm that media messages influence the perception of viewers or audiences either directly or indirectly. Kellner and Share (2007) hint that the media mostly changes the point of view of individuals to an extent that they are unable to realise the change. Children, regarded as vulnerable, are able to learn faster than adults and this implies that their rate of processing and reproducing what they consume from the media is higher than adults (Bandura, 1986; Levinson, 2020).

Several studies have attested to the fact that language has the power to exercise control on people and also shape their attitudes and behaviours (Fairclough, 2010; Nartey & Mwinlaaru, 2019; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This attribute of language is worth all the attention for scholarly analysis because power is often enacted through discourse. This is an affirmation of Rozzaq and Ratnadewi's (2016) assertion that language can be used to control and manipulate people by virtue of its latent attributes of power. Individuals have used the power embedded in language for diverse purposes which include sharing ideas, information, thoughts and feelings, building

relations and controlling others (Supardi, 2016). Thus, through language, individuals are able to reveal their ideas, express happiness, share jokes, command people, convince people and advance their course. According to Fairclough (2001), language is used to dominate others particularly in the line of ethnicity, race, gender, culture, among others. This means that language is used by all kinds of people including politicians, pastors, journalists, advertisers, movie directors, marketers, teachers and animators to pursue their agenda and advance their interests. More often than not, politicians and journalists are tagged as taking advantage of the power of language to manipulate their audience and to also promote their ideologies (Ahialey, 2011). Similarly, producers of animated cartoons also further their ideologies through the use of language.

Through language, individuals deliver their thoughts from one person to another (Supardi, 2016). Hence, language is important in daily communication as a medium of transferring and receiving meaning. Language is used to communicate ideas, ideology, information, and meaning and to show power (Ahialey, 2011). When children continuously consume an animated cartoon in which a group is portrayed as weak and powerless, they subliminally process the information and accept that as the reality (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Although Naghy (2010) argues that the influences of ideological and power underpinnings in discourses may not be direct, Van Dijk (1995) asserts that ideologies are significant in regulating the growth, change and the organisation of socially shared attitudes, which in effect, contribute to shaping the views, perception and opinions of individuals and direct their social practices. If “language is a powerful tool for social manipulation and seduction” (Wagner & Chen, 2011, p.1), then the language of children’s animated cartoons and other media programming should be of utmost concern because of their ability to influence

children either positively or negatively. For this reason, it is necessary to ensure children's animated cartoons and other programming offer vital lessons capable of causing positive social change, a goal Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seeks to achieve.

Every human being seeks to make meaning of who they are and what they do. This is reflected in “how they use their bodies; integrate objects, artifacts and technology; use gestures, time, and space; adjust their tone of voice when they speak; choose the words they use; and interact in particular ways with others” (Rogers, 2011, p.5). CDA, according to Rogers (2011) concerns itself with the negative uses of power which are expressed through discourse that results in manipulation, domination, oppression, underrepresentation and inequality. Richard and Nwizug (2017) describe CDA as a theory which mostly studies the enactment, sustenance and resistance of power abuse, inequality and domination via text in the socio-political context. Catalano and Waugh (2020) postulate that CDA is interested in exploring the relationship between language, ideology, power and social structure. Like Fairclough (1995), scholars of CDA such as Van Dijk (1996), Wodak (1996) and Van Leeuwen (1996) view language as a type of social activity and concern themselves with bringing out the concealed power relations and hidden ideologies (Johnson & McLean, 2020). Wodak and Meyer (2015) suggested “non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects of interaction and communication: gesture, images, film, the internet and multimedia” (p.2) as proper target of CDA.

This current study critically analyses how children's animated cartoons of African origin enact instances of hegemony, power and ideology among others. Africa is the second largest and second most populous continent in the world and currently has the youngest population with over five hundred and eighty million children (United

Nations Children's Fund, 2023). The African animation industry is also thriving (Nunis & Treanor, 2020, October 15) with the production of animated cartoons that portray African beliefs and culture. Owing to the fact that animated cartoons are capable of shaping the thoughts and actions of children (Raja et al., 2020), it is important to investigate the values and lessons animated cartoons of African origin offer children. Nevertheless, animated cartoons of Africa have not received the needed scholarly attention. The aforesaid make animated cartoons of Africa worth all the attention for scholarly analysis. This study investigates how the content of animated cartoons enact instances of power, inequality, hegemony and ideology using three animated cartoons of African origin namely; '*The Secret Princess*', '*Mark of Uru*' and '*Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters*'.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The motivation for this study stems from my interest in animated cartoons and their impact on the development of the child. Upon reviewing literature comprehensively, it became evident that animated cartoons which appear puerile and safe for children are also embedded with certain ideologies and concepts (Alshurafa et al., 2021; Bobrowska, 2019; Kazanoglu, 2016). My background in CDA as a student of communication inspired me to conduct a CDA of some selected children's animated cartoons with the aim of filling a gap in literature in an area which appears to be under-researched in Ghana and Africa. The focus of this study is to conduct a CDA of children's animated cartoons and to identify how the manifest and latent use of language are used to enact power, inequality, hegemony, ideology, control and ethnocentrism among others.

Owing to the assertion that animated cartoons advance ideology, power inequality and hegemony (Bobrowska, 2019; Kazanoglu, 2016), they have the propensity to shape the thoughts and actions of viewers who are mainly children (Raja et al., 2020). Although animated cartoons can positively assist in nurturing a balanced child with a right mental state, they are also capable of negatively affecting the child through the exposure to unacceptable contents (Habib & Soliman, 2016). A CDA of children's animated cartoons of African origin is therefore important in order to unearth the latent ideologies, relations of power and hegemonic themes among others.

Although several studies have been conducted on children's animated cartoons, most of these studies have focused on violence and its effects on children who watch animated cartoons (Acheampong, 2017; Amoah & Ampong, 2020; Hassan & Daniyal, 2013). Despite the growing body of literature on children's animated cartoons, minimal attention has been given to the aspect of CDA researches, especially, from the context of Ghana. In Asia and the Western world, some studies (Alsarairh et al., 2021; Alshurafa et al., 2021; Lemish & Johnson, 2019; Raja et al., 2021; Rozzaq & Ratnadewi, 2016) have focused on children's animated cartoons. For instance, Alsarairh et al. (2021) analysed gender representation in animations whilst Lemish and Johnson (2019) also examined underrepresentation, inequality and stereotypes in children's television programmes in general but not limited to animated cartoons.

The gap for this study stems from the fact that the aspect of CDA involving children's animated cartoons of African origin has not yet been explored. Available works on CDA in Ghana have mainly been on presidential speeches; (Ankrah et al., 2018; Danquah, 2020), political cartoons (Ohemeng, 2020); and courtroom discourse (Ahiale, 2011) among others. Although Ohemeng (2020) conducted a qualitative

CDA of cartoons, the focus of the work was on 'Akosua' Political cartoons and not animated cartoons.

Lemish and Johnson (2019) analysed children's television programmes in USA and Canada through a quantitative study to compare the results of a previous international study (Gotz et al., 2008) conducted ten years earlier which discovered that gender stereotypes and hegemony existed in children's media. Lemish and Johnson's (2019) study sampled a total of one thousand seventy-one (1071) children's television programmes targeted at children below the age of thirteen years from fourteen (14) television channels; seven each from USA and Canada. The study showed that character traits were differentiated on the basis of gender; there were less female characters than male characters and females were portrayed as thin, weak and sexualised. Male characters were however portrayed as strong, brave and intelligent. The researchers emphasised the absence of characters with disability in children's programmes and advocated that disability should be portrayed in children's media as part of normal life. The study further revealed that children's programmes were dominated by characters within the middle class and recommended that more characters living in lower economic conditions should be included in children's programmes. The aforementioned study is different from the current study in terms of the methodology and the context. Lemish and Johnson's (2019) study was approached quantitatively whereas the current study is approached qualitatively using CDA. The aforementioned study was conducted in Canada and USA to compare an earlier study by Gotz et al. (2008) which discovered that hegemony and gender stereotypes exist in children's media in eight countries including USA and Canada. However, the current study is conducted using three selected children's animations of Africa to explore how



power, ideology and hegemony are enacted in animated cartoons as a media discourse.

Alshurafa et al. (2021) in a qualitative CDA studied a Saudi animated YouTube sitcom called '*Masameer*' using Barthes' semiotic theory of signification. The findings revealed that '*Masameer*' is not merely an animation for entertainment but a medium for the propagation of ideologies and to instigate social change. The current study shares similarities with the work of Alshurafa et al. (2021) with regards to the methodology of a CDA of a media text. However, the difference is in the focus because theoretically, this current study is underpinned by Thompson's Modes of Ideology (1990) which is aimed at examining the construction and transmission of meaning through symbolic forms of power, hegemony and ideology (Thompson, 1990).

Rozzaq and Ratnadewi (2016) also employed the CDA to explore the existence of power relations in the movie "*The Judge*" to understand the underlying meanings of the movie. Van Dijk's model was used for the analysis and the findings revealed that the language of the lead character of the movie was dominantly embedded with power or control. Thus, language was used to dominate and suppress in both manifest and latent ways. Although the current study shares some similarities with that of Rozzaq and Ratnadewi (2016) in terms of using CDA, the point of departure is that whereas that study focused on a movie, the current study seeks to explore the hidden ideologies and power relations in children's animated cartoons.

Also, Alsarairh et al. (2021), in a qualitative study, sought to explore the representation of gender in the Disney animated cartoon, "Frozen" with a focus on gender representations as depicted in the movie. Using the Gender Theory as a

framework, the outcome revealed equalities between the female and male characters, where in this instance, the lead character who was a female was portrayed as powerful and domineering. This current study, aside using Thompson's Modes of Ideology is in a way an extension of Alsaraireh et al.'s (2021) study as it explores the critical issues of power, hegemony and ideology among others.

Furthermore, Raja et al. (2021) studied animations and how they aid in building children's ideology and childhood memories. Raja et al. (2021) employed a qualitative study using CDA with the purpose of investigating the subtle messages used in Disney animated cartoons which they contend results in the exploitation of the cognition of the child. The scholars drew on Van Dijk's Ideological Square Model as the major framework through dialogue and visuals. In their findings, Raja et al. (2021) concluded that Disney animated cartoons lead to a disturbance of ideological schemas in Pakistani children. The similarities that exist between Raja et al.'s (2021) study and that of the current study lie with the methodology or approach. The contrast however, is in the focus as well as the theoretical frameworks used. Whereas Raja et al.'s (2021) study focused on Disney animated cartoons and the issue of schema disturbances, the current study is on animated cartoons of African origin and how their content enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology.

This study, therefore, argues that given the fact that animated cartoons could advance ideology, power, inequality and hegemony (Kazanoglu, 2016) and children could also interpret what they watch (Raja et al., 2020), their thoughts and actions may follow the patterns of the content messages of animated cartoons (Amoah & Ampong, 2020), creating the need for a scholarly attention on how the enactment could be made possible as recommended by Atabey (2021).

Consequently, the current study investigates how the content of animated cartoons enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology among others, using three selected animated cartoons of African origin.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives guided the study:

1. To identify the dominant themes embedded in the selected children's animated cartoons.
2. To examine how the content of the selected children's animated cartoons portray the enactment of power and hegemony.
3. To investigate the ideologies projected in the content of the selected children's animated cartoons.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the dominant themes embedded in the selected children's animated cartoons?
2. How do the content of the selected children's animated cartoons portray the enactment power and hegemony?
3. What are the ideologies projected in the content of the selected children's animated cartoons?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It is believed that animated cartoons play an integral role in the socialisation of children as they contribute to their understanding of social norms, ideas and

perception of life (Derzyan, 2019). However, Studies (Goziyah et al., 2018; Bobrowska et al., 2019) have shown that animated cartoons could be embedded with cultural ideologies, power and hegemonic themes which enact stereotypes and inequalities in society. A research on children's animated cartoons is therefore important not only for scholarship but also for other stakeholders.

First and foremost, the findings of this study is an addition to the existing literature on CDA and children's animated cartoons because it will be a reference material for researchers and students who desire to conduct a CDA of children's media content. Researchers and students who are interested in the subject matter can refer to this current study as a guide to test results of other studies or replicate the study in different contexts using different methodological approaches and theories. It is therefore a contribution to knowledge.

Also, a research on children's animated cartoons is important because of the influence it has on children. An awareness of the existence of manifest and hidden themes in children's animated cartoons and other media will provoke critical thinking among viewers to deconstruct critical themes embedded in discourse. A CDA of animated cartoons is therefore important as it contributes to shaping the perception and the future outlook of children.

In addition, the study reveals the modes through which power, hegemony and ideology are enacted in discourse especially, children's animations. In effect, this will generate an interest in content creation to be critically analysed for its appropriateness in terms of embedded ideological and hegemonic tendencies.

Finally, the outcome of this study leads to an understanding of how language can be used in children's media to promote positive social change by developing animations

with suitable content capable of shaping the attitudes and mindsets of children. This is because CDA is not only interested in probing social power abuse, ideology, hegemony, inequality and resistance which are entrenched in language (Fairclough, 2001; Fowler et al., 1979) but also in provoking transformation in the exercise of power in social relations (Basturkman, 2009; Fairclough, 2001). This could in turn lead to the formulation of policies that would guide the development and creation of appropriate content for children's media to promote positive social change in society.

### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

In exploring the phenomenon of the manifestation of power, hegemony and ideology in children's animated cartoons, the study focused on the analyses of three selected children's animated cartoons; *'The Secret Princess'*, *'Mark of Uru'* and *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'*. The selected animated cartoons are of African origin; this means they are of African origin, inspired by African history and mythology and portray African beliefs, customs and values. *'The Secret Princess'* and *'Mark of Uru'* and are available on YouTube whereas *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'* is accessible via Netflix. The three samples have been selected because animated cartoons of Africa have not been given the needed scholarly attention. The focus is on the content (ie. linguistic and the paralinguistic features, facial expressions, visuals, gestures and intonation of the characters) of the animated cartoons to uncover how the content is used to enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology.

### **1.7 Organisation of the Study**

The current study is organised in five interrelated chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and it presents the background to the study, statement of the problem,

research objectives, research questions, significance, scope and the organisation of the study. Chapter two encompasses a review of the relevant literature on children's animated cartoons and CDA. The chapter also presents a review of the theoretical framework of the study and their relevance to the study. The chapter three discusses the methodology of the study and comprises the research approach, research design, sampling and sample size, data collection procedures and the data analysis plan. Chapter four presents the findings and discussions of the study and chapter five, is a presentation of the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, recommendations for further studies and limitations of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter offers an extensive review of literature on the relationship between language and society and how children's animated cartoons as a media discourse enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology. The concepts of discourse, critical discourse analysis, power, hegemony and ideology, are also discussed. The chapter further gives consideration to related studies in the area of children's literature and a review of studies in CDA. Finally, the chapter reviews the theoretical framework of the study, Thompson's (1990) Modes of Operation of Ideology and the related discursive strategies.

#### 2.1 Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

##### 2.1.1 Discourse

Van Dijk (2009) avers that the word 'discourse', just like the word 'language' has a myriad of definitions. 'Discourse' originated from the Middle English word "discours", meaning, 'process of reasoning' and was derived from the root word 'discursis' of Medieval Latin origin with the meaning, 'a running about'. Today, discourse is used in diverse ways to refer to diverse things depending on the perspective of the language user. Burr (2015) defined discourse elaborately as:

"a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light" (pp. 74-75).

Gee (2001), on the other hand distinguishes between discourse with a little 'd' and discourse with a big 'D'. Gee (2001) describes language with the "little 'd' as "language-in- use or stretches of language in use" (p.17) and describes Discourse with a big 'D' as language plus "other stuff".

In the views of Fairclough (2001), Van Dijk (2006) and Wodak and Meyer (2009), discourse entails more than just an analysis of text. Discourse therefore transcends the boundaries of the analysis of text. According to Fairclough (1999), discourse involves the entire social interaction process including the text itself, the text production process and the processes of interpretation that texts pass through. Fairclough (1999) views "language as social practice determined by social structure" (p.14). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) place emphasis on the constitutive nature of discourse because through discourse, the social status quo is reproduced, transformed and sometimes challenged. In another perspective, Fairclough and Wodak (2009) argue that since discourse is a social practice and therefore socially consequential, issues of power are inevitable and as a result, always come to play as far as discourse is concerned. For the aforementioned scholars, discursive practices may have ideological effects and these ideological effects are capable of producing and sustaining power imbalance or inequality among members of a social class. For instance, power imbalance can arise through discourse between children and adults, teacher and students and between men and women; as a result of how things are portrayed and how people are depicted.

From the foregoing, it is evident that discourse is far more than mere conversation, interaction and the associated meanings. Discourse therefore transcends ideas, thoughts and beliefs of a particular group and includes the interplay of power, implantation of ideology and hegemony. This is buttressed by Jager and Maier (as



cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2009) who aver that discourse involves the exercise of power whereby particular ends or interests are served. Power is therefore embedded in discourse and plays an integral role in discourse.

### **2.1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical discourse analysis is seen as a relatively new approach to the study of language since other approaches to the study of language have long been in existence before CDA. As far as CDA is concerned, when individuals use language, they set out to achieve a particular purpose irrespective of whether the discursive choices are conscious or unconscious (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). CDA is a cross-discipline school of study which emerged in the early 1990's after a conference by a group of scholars; Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen, Teun van Dijk and Norman Fairclough (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). CDA is a multidisciplinary approach to the study of discourse with the primary concern and motivated by the quest to gain an understanding of critical social issues (Van Dijk, 2006). According to Ramanathan and Hoon (2015), "CDA is a branch of discourse analysis that goes beyond how and why discourse cumulatively contributes to the reproduction of macro-structures and highlights the traces of cultural and ideological meaning" (p. 57). CDA therefore studies the relationship between how language contributes to discourse and how it relates to social practice. Early proponents of CDA such as Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak and Teun Van Dijk believe that language has social implications and it is not just a medium of communication that is secluded (Fairclough, 1989). This implies that language and society are interdependent as linguistic expressions reflect social practice hence language cannot be separated from society. Blackledge (2005) advances that discriminatory practices and social inequality are more often than not produced and

enacted through language and also resisted through language. CDA views language as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1989) and so CDA is interested in how language reflects power, ideology and hegemony in discourse.

Wodak and Meyer (2008) sum up CDA as “fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (p.10). CDA therefore explores language with the aim of understanding the power structure that is established, reproduced, contested and the various interests served whether positive or negative when language is used. The influential work of Van Dijk (2001) described CDA as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). This can be explicated that, language is a social activity and involves an interaction with different kinds of people in society. This means, during social interaction through the use of language in discourse, a particular group of persons exercise power or control over others because of the imbalances which exist in society. Discourse therefore contributes to the control of a group over another or particular individuals over other individuals and this leads to domination and inequality in society. For this reason, CDA is concerned about probing the ways in which power; hegemony and ideology are enacted, reproduced and challenged or resisted through language in discourse. Since the focus of CDA is on the study of power asymmetry in social relations, the focal point of most researches in CDA has been on inequality “based on discrimination in race, gender, political views, ideologies, and social class, among other categories” (Duff & Zappa-Hollman, 2012, p. 2). According to Mogashoa (2014), CDA seeks to help language or discourse analysts to gain an understanding of the social problems that

permeate and pervade society which is as a result of the interplay of power and ideology, through the use of text. Insofar as CDA is concerned, hegemony, power, ideology, discrimination and manipulation among others feature as key terms and concepts (Fairclough, 2001).

CDA is not only interested in laying bare the latent ideology, power, inequality and hegemony that may be embedded in discourse but also to attain the goal of CDA. At the heart of CDA lies the objective of causing positive social change (Catalano & Waugh, 2020; Fairclough, 2010). For Lucke (1996), CDA is purposed at revealing to audiences the devices or techniques employed in discourse to manipulate and suppress them. McGregor (2010) avers that CDA acts as a challenge to society to progress from viewing language as mere abstract to seeing words as embodiments of meaning in historical, political and social contexts. As espoused by Flowerdew and Richardson (2018), CDA aims to “advance our understanding of how discourse figures in social processes, social figures and social change” (p.12). Likewise, Fairclough (2010) asserts that CDA “addresses social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them” (p.11). Fairclough (2010) furthers that CDA seeks to heighten awareness on how language leads to the domination of certain individuals by others since the first step to emancipation is consciousness. From the foregoing, it is evident that through CDA, language users or discourse participants attain enlightenment on how language is used in discourse to spread and entrench certain ideologies, establish relations of power or control, hegemony, manipulation and resistance among others.

Luke (1995) conducted one of the earliest CDAs since its inception as a methodology and theory for the analysis of discourse. Luke’s (1995) study examined how the

curricula of the home and pre-school orient or socialise children. The study also explored how the identity and social roles of children are constructed and the role the language of the primary school teacher plays in guiding these constructions. In addition, the study analysed how textbooks influence school children to reproduce, naturalise and accept certain cultural forms as the norm under the pretext of imparting neutral skills and knowledge.

## **2.2 The Concepts of Power, Hegemony and Ideology in Discourse**

### **2.2.1 Power and Discourse**

The term ‘power’ is a key concept in CDA which Wodak and Meyer (2009) describe as an examination of language use of influential participants culpable for the creation of inequalities. Fairclough (1994) argues that “power is implicit in everyday social practices” (p.50). Power is therefore embedded in discourse and permeates all aspects of human life. As far as power and discourse are concerned, Fairclough (1989) forcefully emphasises that discourse is embedded with power and this power is controlled by the powerful or dominant participants who are the ones “controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants” (p.38). For Fairclough (2001) “discourse is the site of power struggles” (p.61). This means discourse serves as a ground or forum for individuals to struggle for power. No discourse is devoid of power hence, power cannot be divorced from discourse because anytime individuals engage in discourses, they engage in a struggle for power. Again, Power is manifested through discourse in all domains of social practices including the classroom, office, hospital, surgical theatre, church and in media circles.

Although power is manifested in all discourses of life, Chaika (as cited in Negm, 2015) confirms that media discourses are effective ways of preserving relations of

power within society. Fairclough (2001) however warns that the concept of power is not absolute because of the tendency of subjugated groups to resist, accept, condone, or legitimatise such power. Similarly, Foucault (1998) asserts that “discourse transmits and produces power, it reinforces it but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart” (p.101). In essence, the power produced and reinforced by discourse is not outright because through struggle, it can be challenged and rendered impotent. All forms of discourses, including children’s animated cartoons, therefore serve as avenues or forums for the enactment, maintenance and the reproduction of power.

#### **2.2.1.1 Types of Power**

Four main types of power are distinguished and these include ‘power over’, ‘power with’, ‘power to’ and ‘power within’ (Starhawk, 1990). More often than not, power is understood as ‘power over’ (Mathie et al, 2017; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007). ‘Power over’ refers to power which comes about as a result of force, coercion, domination or control and comes about as a result of fear (Starhawk, 1990; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007). It is built on the principle that some individuals have power whereas others do not. ‘Power with’ is power that is built on mutual respect, solidarity and cooperation (Berger, 2005; Mathie et al, 2017; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2007) and results in collective action rather than domination and control (Mathie et al, 2017). The “productive or generative potential of power and the new possibilities or actions that can be created without using relationships of domination” (Mathie et al, 2017, p. 57) constitute power to. ‘Power within’ refers to the power which comes about as a result of self-worth and the ability to respect others despite individual differences. These

powers; ‘power over’, ‘power with’, ‘power to’ and ‘power within’ therefore come to play in discourse situations.

### **2.2.2 Hegemony and Discourse**

The term hegemony is attributed to Antonio Gramsci who suffered imprisonment for his stance against the ideals of hegemony. Hegemony has its origin from the Greek word “hegemonia” which according to Yilmaz (2010) plainly means the dominance and oppressive status of one element in a system over the other. According to Lull (1995), ‘hegemony’ literally refers to the control or influence one social group has over another group or others in a system. It can therefore be said that hegemony is typically a relationship between two groups of people which mainly include a superior group and a subordinate group. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) view hegemony as the control of ideology in a society by the dominant group who impose their ideology on the subordinated group by justifying the inequality and the marginalization that exists.

Gramsci (as cited in Yilmaz, 2010) avers that the powerful or ruling class’s domination and suppression of the subjugated class is achieved through the consent of the lower class and not through coercive means or force. Through the notion of “common sense”, the powerful class is able to win the approval of the grassroots by wooing the subjugated class to accept the false idea or worldview that social and economic structures exist for the benefit of all when in veracity, only serve the interest of the powerful or class. The subjugated class therefore accepts their domination and exploitation as normal and as such, do not register any displeasure.

Boothman (2008) places the blame at the doorstep of the media for the significant role media discourses play in legitimising the notion of “common sense” implicitly by teaching and portraying certain ideals and values as the norm. So, as people get

exposed to such ideas and beliefs through media discourse, either consciously or unconsciously, they accept media messages as the normal and the established status quo.

### **2.2.3 Ideology and Discourse**

The term 'ideology', often elicits a notion of negativity because of its root in Marxist and anti Marxist concepts. Although 'ideology' is used variously in different senses, Wodak and Meyer (2009) affirm that the negative connotation ascribed to ideology is inextricable from the new concept of ideology. Giannetti (2013) define ideology "as a body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual group, class and culture" and "a given set of values that are implicit in any human enterprise including film making" (p.10). Eagleton (1997) describes ideology in simple terms as "the general material process of production of ideas, beliefs, and values in social life" (p.28). Ideology can therefore be regarded as part of social life because social life is never devoid of the sharing of ideas, beliefs and values. This further echoes the assertion of Ayyildiz (2021) that "ideology is an indistinguishable part of social life because people practice ideology in life through culture" (p.2) and culture is part of everyday life or interaction.

In the light of CDA, Fairclough (1992) defines ideology as the "significations or constructions of reality which are built into various dimensions of the forms or meanings of discursive practices and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination" (p.87). Also, Van Dijk (2000) provides an operational definition of ideology as "the fundamental beliefs of a group and its members" (p.7). Van Dijk (2000) acknowledges that language use and discourse are greatly influenced by ideology which in turn influences the ways in which individuals

acquire, learn or transform their worldview. As a result, everyday discourses of a group of members express the ideologically based opinions of that particular group which might have been learnt from parents, peers, books and the media. Knight (2006), uphold that it is difficult to describe ideology as a system of beliefs and at the same time exonerate it from the negative connotation it has come to represent. This stance is furthered by Ahialey (2011) who asserts that although Marxist ideology constituted a system of beliefs which used brute force and was viewed as evil, a greater evil had emerged which is the “latent and hidden form of ideology that is embedded in discourses in the form of conceptual metaphors leading to the domination of vulnerable groups in the society” (p.13). Therefore, Wodak and Meyer’s (2009) assertion that CDA is not interested in the kind of ideology on the surface of culture but “rather the more hidden and latent type of everyday beliefs, which often appear disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies” (p.8) cannot be contested.

#### **2.2.4 Relationship between Power, Hegemony, Ideology and Discourse**

From the foregoing, a relationship can be drawn between power, hegemony, ideology and discourse. It is also evident from the above that power, ideology and hegemony are interrelated as one promotes the other and in some cases, they are interdependent on each other. Power which appears subtle is embedded in discourse and the power embedded in discourse is promoted through ideology. Likewise, power through ideology promotes hegemony by contributing to the domination and suppression of one group over the other.



## **2.3 Empirical Review of Literature**

Like all discourses, animated cartoons contain strategies which may include ideological underpinnings, persuasive elements, and power relations among others which are used to send home a purposeful message to the audience (Fairclough, 1995; Gee, 2005). According to Stamou et al. (2015), when children consume stereotypes presented to them through dialect choices in the media, they internalise the stereotypes. Moving forward, these stereotypes become yardsticks for children to pass judgement on characters. Coyne et al. (2016) aver that gender stereotypes in children's media have lasting impacts on the self-image of children and their views of the world. In line with the foregoing, Duff and Zappa-Hollman (2012) called for a careful examination of texts especially popular culture for children "because of how characters and contexts are discursively constructed, marginalised, commodified, or mocked, based on their social or linguistic characteristics" (p.3).

### **2.3.1 Evolution of Animated Cartoons**

An "animated cartoon refers to a motion picture consisting of a sequence of drawings, each so slightly different that when filmed and run through a projector the figures seem to move" (Random House Inc., 2001). Animated cartoons are colourful short films that feature anthropomorphised animals, superheroes and adventure which are intended to be humorous and appeal to children (Pryor, 2004; Rankin, 2022). According to Motioncue (2018), what is regarded as animation today came into existence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through inventions such as the magic lantern and the zoetropes, however Joseph Plateau's invention of a phenakistocope constituted one of the early attempts to create animations. In 1876, the praxinoscope, an improvement of Plateau's technology was developed by Emile Reynaud who added colour and

personality to animation (Motioncue, 2018). The period between 1900 and 1920 was classified as the silent era of animation because despite advancements made in the creation of animations, they were characterised by silence. James Stuart Blackton in 1906 also extended Reynaud's technology and released the animation *'Humorous Phases of Funny Faces'* and he is considered the father of American animation. Emile Cohl, a French caricaturist in 1908 released *'Fantasmagorie'*, the world's first hand drawn animated video. *'Fantasmagorie'* is considered as the world's first fully animated movie (Beckerman, 2003).

The transformational stage in the animation industry was set by Winsor McCay with his creation *'Little Nemo in Slumberland'* in 1911 and *'Gertie the Dinosaur'* in 1914 (Bukatman, 2006; Dirks, n.d.). For adding personality to his characters and a fluid motion, McCay is thought of as the pioneer in the animation industry (Motioncue, 2018).

The period between 1930 and 1960 marked the Golden era of animation and saw new entrants like Walt Disney with his debut *'Oswald, the Lucky Rabbit'* which had sound synchronisation that gave animated cartoons an element of life. Disney's *'Steamboat Willie'* in 1928 took the world by surprise as he added music and colour to his animations and this generated competition among animators to produce better. Disney introduced three-plane camera technique which added reality and naturalness to Disney animations. Disney's blockbuster, *'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'* hit the scenes in 1937 marking the success of his fully animated full length film and this set the stage for other jaw-dropping full length animated feature movies. The Fleisher Brothers of New York were not left out of the Golden Age as they adopted the use of more sophisticated techniques and provided competition to Disney. Warner Bros, also

contributed to the evolution during the Golden Age with the release of *'A wild hare'* in 1940. Today, animated cartoons have evolved with the introduction of more sophisticated technologies which include the use of computer and 3D technology.

According to Bobrowska et al. (2019), animated cartoons became common media for wartime propaganda during the Second World War. Disney and Warner Bros played significant roles during the period as they were contracted for several animated series aimed at propagating American propaganda during the war (Ting, 2000). Some of the animations used for wartime propaganda included *'Private Snafu'*, *'Victory through Air Power'*, *'Any Bonds Today'* and *'All together'* and the character *'Bugs Bunny'* became an ambassador of war bonds (Bobrowska et al, 2019).

Today, the production of animated cartoons is no longer the preserve of the Western world since Africa has witnessed the emergence of animation producers such as Trigger Fish, Hot Ticket Animation and Trans Tales among others who are being noticed by giants like Disney and Netflix as a result of their ingenuity (CGAfrica, 2021). Although animated cartoons of African origin are faced with enormous challenges with regards to competing with the Western giants, a few movies like *'Khumba'*, *'Zambesi'*, *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'*, *'The Secret Princess'*, and *'Mark of Uru'* have been able to hit the big screens and the international market to showcase African-made animated cartoons and also tell the African story from the perspective of Africans.

### **2.3.2 Animated Cartoons and Children**

Silverstein et al. (1986) assert that ideas, themes and characters portrayed in the media largely form part of social practices in the real life of children. Although this assertion may be deemed as outdated and relevant at the time, research has demonstrated its

relevance in modern times after several decades. Silverstein et al.'s (1986) assertion has been corroborated by recent studies such as Amoah and Ampong (2019), Atabey (2021) and Ayyildiz (2021) among others. Mostly, people are tempted to think that animated cartoons are for children hence, the indecent language and the negativities associated with general media are expunged from it. As a result, there is little or no concern about the content and the language of animated cartoons because they are widely considered safer for children (Batool et al., 2021). Ghilzai et al. (2017) aver that animated cartoons do not only serve as great entertainment tools but also effective learning tools for children especially, pre-schoolers.

In a study to find out the effects of animated cartoons in altering the mentality and behaviour of children, Habib and Soliman (2015) qualitatively investigated the influence animations have on the mentality of children in the context of Egypt. The findings revealed the display of high rates of aggression and low rates of pro-social conduct by children. The study concluded that animated cartoons are a double-edged sword because it could positively aid in nurturing a balanced child with an appropriate mental status through the development of problem solving skills, moral values and prosocial behaviours. On the other hand, animated cartoons are capable of ruining the viewer's childhood through exposure with regards to the influence of inappropriate ideas. The outcome of the aforementioned study confirms those of Rai et al. (2016) and Hassan and Daniyal (2013) who all admit that animated cartoons have both positive and negative effects on children. Habib and Soliman (2015) suggested the use of animated cartoons as channels of education to instill good morals and values in children hence, could be fashioned to instill morals and impact children positively to influence their mentality and behaviour positively.

Likewise, Ghilzai et al. (2017) conducted a quantitative study to find out the effects of animated cartoons on the language and behaviour of children. Findings from the study indicated that children who get excessively exposed to animated cartoons exhibited a higher level of language acquisition and cognitive development. Aside that, the study established that aggressive and violent behaviours are exhibited by children who get exposed to animated cartoons as confirmed by Greitemeyer and Mugge (2014). Again, Ghilzai et al. (2017) attributed the acquisition of moral and social values in children to animated cartoons and concluded that animated cartoons impact children both positively and negatively. This somewhat corroborates the findings of Turkmen (2016) that children's animated cartoons can have dire consequences on the mental health of children. Ghilzai et al. (2017) called on parents and guardians to monitor and offer guidance to children in their viewing of animated cartoons and not leave them on their own to deal with the psychological issues that may emanate from their viewing experiences.

In a related study, Atabey (2021) using a qualitative content analysis, conducted an evaluation of animated cartoons and found out that children's animated cartoons are not as puerile as they are considered as they are flooded with bad language, inappropriate ideology and scenes of violence. This notwithstanding, they were interspersed with positive social values and moral lessons. The outcome of Atabey (2021) is in line with those of Rai et al. (2016) and Habib and Soliman (2015) who all share the opinion that animated cartoons have both negative and positive impacts on children, however, the negative impacts overshadow the positive impacts. More so, the study advocated for age-appropriate and suitable animated cartoons for the cognitive development of children. Atabey (2021) further suggested a detailed and

longitudinal study on animated cartoons to highlight the importance of their impact on children and urged parents to control and regulate what their children watch.

In a quantitative descriptive survey, Kindenda (2018) investigated the pattern of animated cartoons on children in Kenya. The study, underpinned by the Social Cognitive Theory and the Cultivation Theory among others, confirmed that children consume lots of cartoons at home and on television with minimal or no parental guidance. The study concluded that children are influenced by what they watch and recommended that parents monitor and offer parental guidance to children to help the children understand and evaluate what they watch. Kidenda (2018) suggested the development of home-grown suitable and appropriate cartoons that will inure to the social and psychological welfare of children by animation producers and industry players.

### **2.3.3 CDA of Children's Literature**

Children's literature transmits messages about the world, people and cultures and these messages are capable of shaping, changing and influencing the perception of the generation of children. For this reason, Anjali et al (2022) believe that the way in which people of different identities are portrayed in children's literature stands a great chance of sending subconscious messages to children about how they should think; either positively or negatively. The enactment of hegemony, power and ideology in children's literature such as novels and other books have been of concern to some scholars hence, there have been CDA studies to that effect.

Children's literature since the 1970's have been accused of putting men ahead of women as women are usually underrepresented and portrayed as subservient to men, a

trend which is not only peculiar to children's literature but also, literature for adults. In order to examine the use of feminine language and uncover the discursive elements used in the novel, '*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's stone*', Ahmad and Ibrahim (2017) carried out a CDA, drawing on Fairclough's Triadic Model as the framework for the study. The focus of the scholars was mainly on the social model because they sought to address the social problem of feminism with the aim of resisting it and not just exposing it. The result of the study indicated that the novel has underpinnings of female underrepresentation, a phenomenon which has been raised and addressed by researchers (Coyne et al. 2016; Duff & Zappa-Hollman, 2012). The study revealed that whereas girls in the novel were depicted as brainless, weaker, emotional and fearful, boys were portrayed as brave, intelligent, strong and wise. Also, the results corroborated the beauty myth about girls or females which has been the narration since time immemorial. Females are depicted as characters who are overly concerned about their physical appearances, a notion which is highlighted in every aspect of media. Soares (2017) argues that the above leads to a situation whereby girls grow up with the mentality that outward appearance surpasses inner beauty. Other issues which came to play in Ahmad and Ibrahim (2017) was the idea of patriarchy, discrimination and the oppression of female characters for being smart. Females were presented as subservient to an overriding male society. The study called for the critical examination of messages of gender representation and sexism in children's literature because of the potential dire consequences such messages can have on children. Ahmad and Ibrahim (2017) caution that children who consume stereotypical content over time grow up to view the domination of one group over the other as normal, thereby entrenching the patriarchal nature of society.

In a related study to unveil the ideological representation and adult-child power relations in children's novels, Martens (2016) conducted a CDA of Roald Dahl's novel, *Matilda*. The CDA design was employed because it made it possible for the linguistic strategies in the discourse to be uncovered and also unearthed the writer's ideological standpoint. The study drew on three linguistic strategies which are Coercion, Legitimation / Delegitimation and Naming. Coercion and Legitimation / Delegitimation are part of Chilton's (2004) strategic functions of discourse and they function by exposing the practice of dominance and power in discourse whereby writers or speakers try to manoeuvre their audiences to accept their ideological views or stance. The study revealed that Dahl, through emotional or cognitive coercion, was able to establish either a positive or a negative image of the characters in the mind of the readers. Once Dahl succeeded at establishing an image of the character, he employed the strategy of legitimation to either justify or condemn the character's conduct. The names assigned by Roald Dahl to the characters in the novel further enhanced their positive or negative nature which created an image of them in the minds of readers. Martens (2016) further revealed that unlike most writers, Dahl used linguistic strategies to criticise the self-evident ideological adult-child relation through subversion, an outcome that contrasts the study of Techacharoenrungrueang and Wanchai (2017) who found out that adults are usually portrayed as more powerful and controlling over children.

Also, Techacharoenrungrueang and Wanchai (2017) studied linguistic manifestations of relations of power between children and adults in Thai children's literature through a qualitative CDA. The study sought to analyse only the verbal aspects exhibited implicitly and explicitly. As such, the study was underpinned by Halliday and Hassan's Choice of Lexis and Searle's Speech Acts theories. The study discovered



that linguistic manifestations of adult-child power relations represented the constructed reality of the Thai society such as the superior role and status of adults as powerful and children on the other hand as powerless and subjugated. The study revealed that the manifestation of power relations were realised through the use of address forms, modality, verb forms, connectors and speech acts. Adults were depicted as more powerful with the right to control children and power relations were exhibited through sentence structure. Adults used imperatives, conditionals and reason-consequence constructions which portrayed them as more experienced, wiser, knowledgeable and powerful than children. Results from the study indicated that society hails adults as more intelligent than children when the reality may be different as some children reason more intelligently than some adults. This leads to a situation in some cultures, whereby the views and ideas of children are seen as worthless and children are gagged and forced to keep their beautiful and wise ideas to themselves. Finally, they concluded that the age difference, socialisation, social roles and status perceived to be unique to the Thai society came to play in the production of children's literature. This may be to advance the ideology of the Thai society, a high context society, where age difference is of great concern and to implant in the minds of children that adults are superior and powerful and deserve to be respected. The findings of the study corroborate the study of Bobrowska et al. (2019) and Kazanoglu (2016) who all contend that animated cartoons are expedient conduits used to transmit ideology.

#### **2.3.4 Research on Children's Animated Cartoons around the World**

Today, media permeates all aspects of human life and affects every facet of their social lives in diverse ways. By this, the media shapes media discourses with their

ideologies thereby penetrating society with their ideologies and other goals (Hassan, 2018). Over time, consumers of media accept these ideologies and consider them as normal and rational without any resistance (Gaines, 2010). According to van Dijk (1988c, p.22), “whether intentionally or unwittingly, the press [media] ... plays a crucial role in the reproduction of racism in society”. The above assertion by van Dijk (1988c) indicates how language, a major tool used in communication and the media including children’s media can either be a positive or a negative force. As far as children’s media especially animated cartoons are concerned, various studies (Brous, 2020; Daniels, 2020; Lippi-Green, 2012; Soares, 2017) have demonstrated the existence of racist ideologies and inequalities. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is an established truth that animated cartoons whether advertently or inadvertently, establish, sustain and reproduce relations of dominance in society.

Consequently, as animated cartoons are enjoyed by children who learn from what they watch, the content, language and strategies in the production of these animated cartoons have the potential to influence their views of the world and how they appreciate things (Derzyan, 2019). Subliminally, children interpret what they watch and their thoughts and actions follow the patterns of the messages of these animated cartoons (Amoah & Ampong, 2020). When children are exposed to animated cartoons which portray one group as superior over the other, this portrayal is imbibed by children either consciously or unconsciously and they view life in that frame. This influences their perception of life and they grow up viewing the domination of one group over the other as what ought to be the norm as advanced by Zornado (2002). Hence, Zornado’s (2002) argument that people, including children “reproduce dominant culture as a result of the lived relations determined by the ideology imposed

on them” (p.4). The views of children are therefore, shaped by the use of text, strategies and the language of animated cartoons (Şenocak & Ayyildiz, 2021).

Ayyildiz (2021) describes children’s media including animated cartoons as a “medium of ideologies that are conveyed through discourses”. Following from Ayyildiz’s description, it can be said that children’s animated cartoons serve as forums for the dissemination of certain ideologies to children who are the future and through whom society is built, making them the “prerequisite for perpetuating dominant ideology” (Senocak & Ayyildiz, 2021, p.2).

As far as children’s media discourses, particularly animated cartoons are concerned, the highly influential work of Lippi-Green (1997) is worth mentioning. Although Lippi-Green’s (1997) study is dated, it has implication for recent studies since it set the pace for research in children’s animations. Following from the work of Lippi-Green (1997), scholars such as Ellis (2012), Soares (2017) and Sønnesyn (2011) among others examined newer animations in an attempt to replicate the findings of her study. Lippi-Green (1997) studied how the use of oral English accents in twenty four Disney animated cartoons depict ethnolinguistic minorities (Jews, African Americans, Southerners) and argued that such representations lead to the reproduction of ideologies, social and linguistic stereotypes, and identities that lead to discrimination, among children right from the onset. The study identified that male African-American vernacular English speakers, for instance, were assigned awkward and unpleasant character such as jobless, aimless humans or creatures. Duff and Zappa-Hollman (2012) towing a similar argument as Lippi-Green (1997) argues that similar linguistic forms are also employed in movies where linguistic stereotyping is attained by the use of French or other European accents in English to indicate “the

sexual desirability and availability of female characters” (Duff & Zappa-Hollman, 2012, p.3). Lippi-Green (1997) concludes that :

“What children learn from the entertainment industry is to be comfortable with the same [accent or ethnicity as theirs] and to be wary about other, and that language is a prime and ready diagnostic for this division between what is approachable and what is best left alone” (p. 103).

Still interested in linguistic stereotypes and accent use in children’s animated cartoons, Lippi-Green (2012) extended her earlier study on accent use in animated cartoons by analysing thirty-eight Disney animated movies produced between 1937 and 2009. The study was aimed at discovering the patterns of stereotyping and the spread of language ideology within those animated cartoons. Findings from the study confirmed Lippi-Green’s (1997) findings that Disney Animations use accent or dialect to emphasise a character’s personality and motivations.

Also, Şenocak and Ayyildiz (2021) through a mixed-method approach carried out a study on the representation of ideology using the Turkish children’s cartoon ‘*King Shakir*’. The study evaluated episodes of ‘*King Shakir*’ and the findings revealed that the effects of animated cartoons on children were mainly positive. Although ‘*King Shakir*’ served as a source of entertainment for children, it was embedded with important lessons for children such as the development of critical thinking skills, family values, self-confidence and the promotion of moral and cultural values. The study concluded that a firm society can be built with sensitive and conscious children by the use of animated cartoons as agents. Şenocak and Ayyildiz (2021) believe that children are the clay with which society is built hence, consciously educating them on

societal values through animated cartoons will aid in achieving that goal. Although the purpose of the study was on the representation of ideology which is not devoid of the associated negative notion (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), the findings of the study did not reveal the negativities associated with ideology. Instead, ideology in the animation proved to serve a positive purpose and this can be attributed to the fact that *'King Shakir'* was a local content aimed at promoting Turkish worldviews, culture, ideals and values. Hence, the embedded ideologies were seen as inuring to the benefit of the Turkish society and was therefore seen in a positive light. The critical issue then is, whether *'King Shakir'* would be viewed in the same light or as instilling anti-Turkish values if it were created in a different context with the values of that context.

Children's media, especially animated cartoons have been largely criticised for instigating and reinforcing violence among children (Atabey, 2021; Bandura, 1986; Turkmen, 2016). Concerned about the various criticisms raised against children's media over the portrayal of violence, Yang and Jiwoo (2015) conducted a qualitative content analysis of children's animated cartoons from two studios with the purpose of examining the cultural differences that exist in how the main antagonists in Disney and Ghibli animated films are portrayed. The study was underpinned by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) as it was interested in how animations impact children upon persistent exposure. The analysis of animations from the two studios indicated that the main antagonists in both Disney and Ghibli animated films were mostly male and antagonists in Disney animated films always engaged in negative acts. Whereas antagonists in Disney animations were portrayed as entirely evil, engaging in negative acts throughout the film, antagonists in Ghibli animations were not only portrayed as initiators or perpetrators of negative acts but also initiators of prosocial acts. Disney was always focused at drawing a clear distinction between the protagonist and the

antagonist by labeling the antagonist as completely evil throughout the movies. Also prominent was the theme of gender representation whereby both studios depicted antagonists usually as male who were stereotyped as overly wicked and aggressive characters. This notwithstanding, Ghibli presented more female antagonists in their animations than Disney but the female antagonists were not portrayed as wicked and aggressive stereotypes as they engaged in pro-social activities. Also, their wicked and aggressive acts were presented as usually justified. More so, antagonists were portrayed as rich and noble by both studios creating the impression in the minds of children that rich or noble people are associated with wickedness. The study concluded that the differences that exist in how the two studios portray the main antagonists may be as a result of differences in holistic and analytic way of reasoning. These holistic and analytic styles of thinking may be attributed to their cultural inclinations and social practices. It can therefore be said that the context and culture of animators inform their storyline and character presentation. From the above, it is not farfetched that animated cartoons produced and churned out have ideological underpinnings which are propagated either subtly or overtly. Although Yang and Jiwoo (2015) met their goals by employing a qualitative content analysis, a CDA would have uncovered the myriads of hidden meanings in the animations analysed by bringing out the underlying ideologies of the two animation studios considering their social, cultural and contextual differences.

Likewise, Van Wormer and Juby (2015) in a qualitative study explored the existence of multicultural themes and how they can be used to reinforce critical thinking skills in students of social work using three Disney animated cartoons; '*The Lion King*', '*Pocahontas*' and '*The Princess and the Frog*'. The revelation that Disney animations have hidden ideological messages at a conference (CSWE, 2008) inspired the study

hence, it was limited to selected Disney animated cartoons. For Van Wormer and Juby (2015), Disney animated cartoons were worth investigating considering their ubiquity in the world and the power they wield over children and even certain adults. As social workers who were interested in promoting social equality and the welfare of children and humans at large, the scholars deemed it appropriate to raise questions about the values transmitted to children by Disney and also hold Disney responsible for the ways in which they shape the identities and perception of children. The study placed emphasis on the fact that insights from Snyder and Chadha (2008) revealed that critical issues such as stereotypical concepts in children's media can be tackled in the social work classroom.

Van Wormer and Juby (2015) emphatically revealed that most adults grew up watching and enjoying animated cartoons without realising the embedded ideologies and stereotypical concepts and as such, welcomed all the racist, sexist, ethnocentric content and ideologies without any qualms. The study found out that Disney animated cartoons contain both multicultural and gender role disparity capable of influencing the perception of children about minority groups in society. Although the study did not emphatically mention the qualitative design used for the study, the aim and goal for the study was achieved. However, the areas of analysis may lead one to classify their study as a CDA as they focused on spoken or verbal words, semiotics and accents use. The study employed the Bell Hooks theory which views social phenomena from the perspective of social justice and anti-oppression such as racism, classism, gender discrimination and inequality. By using bell hook's theory to investigate the storyline, images and the words, viewers are able to have a second thought about themes which hitherto were accepted on the surface without being questioned. Results from the study pointed out that Disney animated cartoons are

embedded with latent ideologies and stereotypical concepts. The study advocated that the hidden messages in children's animated cartoons should not be disregarded but given critical attention. Although the study focused on older animated cartoons, it concluded that stereotypical and ideological representations still persist in the most recent Disney animated films and are even more pronounced in some cases. The aforementioned scholars advised parents and guardians to monitor the animated cartoons watched by their children and as much as possible, prevent them from watching animations and other programming capable of ruining their childhood through exposure to multicultural stereotypes. Van Wormer and Jubly (2015) however recommended that educators of social work can use the multicultural ideologies, gender disparity, discrimination and stereotypical images transmitted in the media to promote critical thinking of students.

In another perspective, a qualitative study by Jimenez (2022) explored the representation of women in Disney animated films and the messages animations convey to audiences especially children using eight randomly selected Disney animated films produced between 1937 and 2021. The study centered on how the characters speak, behave and act in order to ascertain if they constituted stereotyping of women. Jimenez (2022) acknowledged that although society is construed by social norms and stereotypes, women have mostly suffered oppression, misrepresentations, stereotypes and unfair judgements and attributed this woe of women to the portrayal of gender division, sexism and gender discrimination in the media. The outcome of the study demonstrated a trend that represent women in the following ways: women are more concerned about their appearance than their intelligence, women are helpless and need protection, women as more domesticated beings and women who are not beautiful are viewed as ugly, old, overweight and unpleasant. The study however



showed that female stereotyping was more inclined between the 1930s and 1950s movies than the later ones because of the era during which they were created. Jimenez (2022) concluded that although there has been an improvement in the representation of women in the recent Disney movies, gender stereotyping still persists in Disney movies.

The effects of animated cartoons on children's behaviour have been well researched. Gotz et al. (2018) sampled the results of analysis of children's television programmes in eight countries around the world including USA, Canada, Cuba, U.K., Israel, Taiwan, Belgium and Germany in a quantitative content analysis. The above study was conducted in comparison to a related study (Gotz et al., 2008) carried out ten years earlier involving twenty-four (24) countries which revealed a vast gender gap in children's television programmes. Gotz et al.'s (2018) study attempted to find out the variety of children's television programming that reached children and the main characters of the programmes. The study also sought to examine the differences that existed between male and female characters, public and private channels, and between domestic and international productions.

Results from Gotz et al. (2018) showed results similar to Gotz et al.(2008) such as the continuous widening of the gender gap irrespective of the strides made in gender advocacy and campaign against gender inequality and racism. The findings also indicated that directors and producers of children's animated cartoons and fictions were predominantly male with very few females. More so, children's programmes were noted to be flooded with male characters portrayed as strong, leaders and powerful with few females portrayed as weak and unintelligent who resort to the use of magic and dialogue to solve problems. A comparison of results between Gotz et al.

(2008) and Gotz et al. (2018) revealed very little success with regards to gender disparity. Ten years after the previous study and also amidst the increase in advocacy and campaigns against gender discrimination and inequality, the story remained unchanged as male characters still dominated the screens.

According to Lehman (2007), “the early history of animation contains countless examples of outrageously racist cartoon images that belittled, desexualised, infantilised, and ultimately dehumanised African Americans” (p.3). Based on Lehman’s (2007) assertion, Daniels (2020) analysed race and diversity in children’s television in a quantitative content analysis using four animated cartoons; ‘*Doc McStuffins*’, ‘*Sofia the First*’, ‘*Sanjay and Craig*’, and ‘*Young Justice*’. Alluding to the assertion that animators have moved away from the display of overt racist messages in animated cartoons (Bonilla-Silva, 2015), Daniels (2020) studied how race was constructed, displayed and the role race played in children’s animations. Four animated cartoons which included at least two characters of colour were used as samples as the study sought to find out whether contemporary animations were free of stereotypes, had remnants of overt stereotypes or if overt stereotypes had been substituted by latent forms of racial misrepresentations. The findings of the study showed the existence of race in contemporary animations and was depicted by the use of phenotypical characteristics which included accent, skin tone, hair texture and racial self-identification. Race was also indicated by the use of cultural and linguistic markers. The findings further revealed a reduction in the display of overt racial stereotypes in contemporary animated cartoons than it was in the 1970’s which is consistent with the findings of Bonilla-Silva (2015). Daniels (2020) avers that fictionalised cultural amalgamations were used in contemporary animated cartoons to deliberately understate racial differences. The study furthered that although depictions

of racial stereotypes were not explicit in contemporary animations, there were subtle depictions of racial misrepresentations. Daniels (2020) argued that racist ideologies were still persistent in animated cartoons and simply increasing the number of characters of colour does not resolve the phenomenon of racial stereotypes in children's media. The study recommended that there was the need to tackle the reality of racism in a society that is still besieged with structural racist and culturally discriminating ideologies.

The dominant themes in two Disney animated cartoons were examined by Arnold et al. (2015) by comparing an old animated cartoon, '*Snow White*' with a recent one, '*Frozen*' through a quantitative content analysis. The aim of the study was to ascertain whether the messages carried forth in the old Disney animated cartoon ('*Snow White*') have changed over time by comparing it with a recent one ('*Frozen*') to bring to bear the developments and successes which have been chalked over the years. The study was centred on gender expectations, gender roles and social norms. In order for the scholars to be able to generalise, measure and analyse the occurrence and illustration of certain themes and concepts systematically, they chose quantitative content analysis as the approach for the study. The outcome of the study demonstrated that there had been minimum differences in gender roles portrayal although they termed it as insignificant. Again, findings also revealed that Disney's portrayal of overt gender stereotypes which hitherto was very obvious had also been removed from the recent animation. Findings from the study further indicated that Disney, in their recent movie attempted to minimise male dominance and gender role. This notwithstanding, the culture of gender stereotypes came to play in disguise as gendered messages were hidden in the animation and the lead female character though feminine, showed characteristics of masculinity through her speeches and language use. Arnold et al.

(2015) used the Muted Group Theory which shows how groups of lower power are surpassed by dominant groups in society because of Disney's portrayal of the lead female character in Frozen as taking on the attributes of men to show her prowess. The study concluded that Disney under the pretext of being progressive rather reinforced gender roles, stereotypes and social norms in Frozen than they existed in Snow White. Although the study was not a critical one, the scholars dwelt more on the critical themes that came up because of their interest in the social implications of such content on children and society. Also, it was evident from the study that the stance of feminists was pronounced, most especially in their conclusion where Arnold et al. (2017) remarked that "everything that young girls are seeing in this film about what women should be has been tainted by the male idea of what women should look like, what they should do, and what they should be" (Arnold et al., 2017, p. 18). The study advocated for a common and bigger voice for females in the society.

Drawing on the work of Signorielli (1990) that children's perception about life and socialisation are formed by animated cartoons and other media programmes they consume, Ahmed and Wahab (2014) also argued same. Ahmed and Wahab (2014) argue that animated cartoons watched by children play a crucial role in their behaviour and formation of gender roles in society. Grusec and Hastings (2007) put forward that the formation and reinforcement of gendered behaviours take place during childhood either consciously or unconsciously. Ahmed and Wahab (2014) contend that gender stereotypes and other ideologies are conveyed through animated cartoons to children. Consequently, children learn and adopt these stereotypes and ideologies as the norm. In a qualitative content analysis, using the Social Learning Theory which states that children gradually learn from what they watch or observe from society, Ahmed and Wahab (2014) studied ten animated cartoons shown on

Cartoon Network (CN) across the world. This was to explore how the female and male characters were represented on the basis of gender.

Results from the study indicated that animated cartoons shown on CN were mostly male oriented with very few female oriented ones. In addition, male characters were depicted as powerful, muscular and domineering while female characters on the contrary, were depicted as weak, powerless and attractive. The study indicated that such misrepresentations could send negative and misleading messages on gender roles and representations to multitudes of children in society. The study recommended the use of animated cartoons as mediums to purvey impartial images of female and male characters to children at a tender age because of the power of animations to appeal to their senses.

Concerned about the representation of orientalist and oriental stereotypes in Hollywood animated cartoons, Wang (2017) qualitatively studied the Hollywood animation '*Kung Fu Panda*'. Wang (2017) avers that previous studies (Frayling, 2014; Said, 1993) have revealed that Chinese characters in Hollywood movies are portrayed in bad light and presented as violent. In Wang's (2017) opinion, Americans in their quest to achieve cultural diversity in their production of animated cartoons end up presenting distorted images and stereotypes of non Westerners. The study used the Framing Theory to analyse the various frames assigned to Orientalists in Hollywood animations and Discourse Analysis was used to analyse the depictions, visual images and metaphors among others. The study advanced that there were three Chinese stereotypes perceptible in Hollywood animations: a) Chinese characters are portrayed as threatening to society (Frayling, 2014); b) Chinese characters are linked to martial arts; and c) Chinese characters are weak, inferior and non-masculine compared to occidental characters (Said, 1993). The findings revealed that while the

protagonist was presented as a Chinese on the surface, he was portrayed as occidental from within with an American accent which contrasted Chinese principles. Findings revealed that, although martial art is associated with Chinese society, completely exotic martial arts was presented to the world in the animated cartoon. Again, it was noted that the character presented in the animated cartoon as the orientalist was portrayed as subservient to the protagonist who had an occidental accent. Furthermore, the study found out that China was framed to the world as an exotic and a martial arts nation which was inferior to occidental cultural values and ideologies. Wang (2017) concluded that Hollywood animated cartoons with Chinese themes are interlaced with Oriental stereotypes and Western imperialism.

### **2.3.5 CDA of Animated Cartoons**

Although Soares (2017) acknowledges that animated cartoons are entertaining, previous studies prove that they are not unbiased as they are guilty of broadcasting certain societal linguistic ideologies. In a bid to ascertain if accent use contributes to linguistic stereotype and discrimination among children, Soares (2017) conducted a CDA of two Disney animated cartoons; *'Zootopia'* and *'Finding Dory'*. Methodologically, since CDA allows for an in-depth exploration of language use in discourse, it helped the study attain its goal of determining how the use of accent contributed to linguistic stereotypes and discrimination. Since previous studies (Lippi-Green, 2012; Lippi-Green, 1997; Sonnesyn, 2011) on the use of accent in Disney animations had focused on animated films between 1995 and 2009, Soares (2017) limited her study to two popular Disney animated cartoons released in 2016. Her choice of Disney was attributed to the wide-held notion that Disney, is the largest and most dominant animation company in the world (BSI, 2016) and contributes

significantly towards the socialisation of children. In the same vein, Tavin and Anderson (2003) classify Disney as a source of ideology of the dominant culture and describes Disney as “an evil capitalist machine that constructs identity through mass deception” (p. 23). The above therefore placed Disney animated cartoons in an influential position worth all the attention.

Results from Soares (2017) indicated that animated cartoons transmit linguistic ideology through the use of accent and in essence lead to the reproduction and sustenance of language-based stereotypes and discrimination of certain groups. This finding is consistent with that of Sonnesyn (2011) that accents are used in Disney animated cartoons to provide insight to viewers about the social standing and sophistication of particular characters. The study also revealed that accent was not only used in animations to depict the setting but also, to provide insight about the nature of the characters involved. In effect, Soares (2011) took stance with Lippi-Green (2012) who maintain that constant exposure to stereotypical accents in animated cartoons may instigate linguistic discrimination. Soares (2011) could not but agree with Van Wormer and Juby (2016) who argue that Disney animated cartoons are capable of perpetuating linguistic stereotypes. The study concluded that exposing children to language-based stereotypes consistently is likely to influence their linguistic attitude towards individuals who do not use the standardised English accent. The study called on teachers to cautiously take advantage of the accent used in animations to emphasise implied linguistic stereotypes in order to provoke critical thinking among children.

Garcia-Claro et al. (2022) explored issues of social representation, mockery and discrimination against people living with disability in the ‘*Family Guy*’ animated series using a combination of CDA and content analysis. The authors noted that

although the central theme of *'Family Guy'* animation was not disability, it was considered for the study because fifty three cases of disability were recorded in the first sixteen episodes which the researchers found striking. Although "*Family Guy*" is not an educative animated cartoon, the researchers put forth that the findings of the study would advance media education as a tool for the critical evaluation of the various representations the media provides in the endorsement of an inclusive society. Results from the study indicated the portrayal of pejorative and negative stereotypes which were prevalent in the direct interactions. The study showed evidence of mockery and discrimination against characters living with disability. Garcia-Claro et al. (2022) concluded by echoing López and Aguaded's (2014) assertion that media, including children's programmes, do not only entertain but serve as socialisation tools that guide identity construction. As such, developers of children's media should be cautious with regards to the messages and also the nature of characters portrayed. Though Garcia-Claro et al. (2022) emphatically stated CDA as one of the methodologies for the study; the study lacked an explicit theory or framework which is associated with CDA.

In a qualitative study, using the tenets of CDA, Baig et al. (2021) examined child rearing and socialisation with particular focus on gender construction in children's fictional movies and animations using the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) model. The study analysed the role children's animations play in the socialisation of the boy and girl using Disney's *'Cinderella'* and *'Tarzan'*. By adopting a qualitative approach, the study was able to analyse how children's fiction enact gender role stereotypes. Authenticating the findings of Arnold et al. (2015) and Gotz et al. (2018), the study revealed that children's fictional movies and animations serve as a major platform for the dissemination of certain ideas about gender



construction. By exposing children to gendered roles and ideology in children's fiction, children are able to mould and build their perception of what is required of the male and female gender. As children watch fictional movies and animated cartoons, they internalise the roles played and their actions follow the patterns of those roles created by the fictional animated cartoons. Children also accept the ideologies presented in fictional movies as the norm which guide their actions and perception of life.

The outcome of Baig et al. (2021) showed that animated cartoons as a media discourse, enact instances of gender stereotypes and inequality. Whereas men were portrayed as powerful and domineering over the female characters, female characters were depicted as domestic beings, confined to the performance of domestic tasks. Female characters were portrayed as people who needed to rely on men in order to have a successful life. Consequently, girls who watch these animations subconsciously adopt the mindset that without marriage, the attainment of a happy and meaningful life is elusive. This corroborates the assertion of Shapiro (2017) that media discourses, including children's animated cartoons provide a disparity of the role of male and female by denoting men as the standard of culture. Baig et al. (2021) concluded that the language of children's fictional movies plays an essential role in how ideology and gender are constructed, hence, should not be overlooked but given critical attention to curtail the phenomenon of gender stereotyping in society, which is very much rooted in children's media.

For Abdelwahab (2022), discourse contributes greatly to the construction or suppression of ideologies, hence, the need to unmask the crucial role discourse plays in the "process of decoding power, emancipating individuals from subtle forms of domination and consequently empowering them" (p.181). For this reason,

Abdelwahab (2022) adopted CDA as a research design in the analysis of the discursive strategies of legitimisation and ideological operation in *'Swastika Night'* novel drawing on Thompson's (1990) modes of ideology, Van Leeuwen's model of legitimisation and Althusser's (1971) power of Ideological State Apparatuses. The study sought to demonstrate the function of discourse in the construction of meaning, uncover how meaning is constructed in the interest of some ideological systems and also investigate how discourse engenders power through the production of knowledge. Findings showed the use of the strategies of legitimisation and ideological operations in the construction of male supremacy and the inferiority of women as a result of their biological makeup. Also, discrimination on the basis of race and gender were legitimised as indisputable and acts of discrimination against women were also naturalised and justified through the use of abstractions and analogies. The study gives a strong indication that linguistic representations are ideologically motivated to shape the perception and viewpoints of individuals to modify their behaviour in the interest of certain ideologies. The study concluded that linguistic representation plays an important role in ideologically conditioning the perception and mindset of people.

Utami and Harianto (2021) in a qualitative study investigated how *'Omar dan Hana'* animated cartoons construct Islamic values. By approaching the study qualitatively, the scholars were able to understand how the language and messages embedded in the Indonesian cartoon *'Omar dan Hana'*, propagate Islamic values. Premised on the assertion that animated cartoons are interlaced with violence, Utami and Harianto (2021) sought to ascertain whether *'Omar dan Hana'* animated cartoon offers Islamic values and education or solely provides entertainment for children. The study drew on Van Dijk's Model of CDA which espouses that analysis of discourse must include both the text and the process of production (Van Dijk, 2006). By analysing both the

text and the production process, an absolute understanding of the text is attained. Results from the study indicated that '*Omar dan Hana*' animated cartoon serves as a vehicle which transmits Islamic values and education. Utami and Harianto's (2021) findings somewhat contradict that of Acheampong (2019) and Atabey (2021) which show that animated cartoons reinforce violence in children. The findings show that animated cartoons do not only provide entertainment for children but also information and education that influence their perception and ideas about life. The scholars were of the view that even if children patronise '*Omar dan Hana*' for the purpose of entertainment and not for the values and information embedded in the animation, children are still prone to the influenced of the messages either consciously or unconsciously. Confirming the assertions of Mubasyaroh (2014) that musical animations are most appealing to children as they are able to memorise the songs and the accompanying lessons, '*Omar dan Hana*' through the musicals propagated Islamic morals and virtues. Utami and Harianto (2021) professed '*Omar dan Hana*' as a good programme for children because of the Islamic values and morals it teaches. However, when the same programme is analysed in a different context, there is likely to be variations in the results. For instance, the same values and morals taught by '*Omar dan Hana*' may not be appreciated in a Christian context and may be viewed as putting Islamic values or morals which may be inconsonant with others ahead of other religious groups and may be regarded as promoting a certain religious ideology. Bearing in mind the variation in culture and social settings, animated cartoons may be deemed as promoting a particular ideology based on the origin and the context. The outcome of the study indicated the use of very few rhetorical language styles and this made the text explicit for the children to understand and also retain the message of the

animation. The study provided insight into how cultures can use animated cartoons as socialisation agents to implant their values, morals and ideology in children.

To investigate the manifestation of Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi's (AKP) ideology in the first Turkish prime time animated cartoon series *'Pepee'*, Kazanoğlu (2015) conducted a CDA of episodes of the animated cartoon broadcasted between 2008 and 2015. The study resorted to the use of a qualitative CDA because such a methodology allows for a thorough and comprehensive analysis and illustration of the phenomenon. The *'Pepee'* animated cartoon was the first Turkish animated cartoon and was created for children between the ages of three and six years. *'Pepee'* came into existence around the time when the AKP Party, whose ideologies were predominantly Islamic despite Turkey's recognition as a secular country, was in power. Findings of the research revealed that *'Pepee'* had educational elements interspersed with AKP worldviews which were Islamic ideologies. The animated cartoon was embedded with Islamic teachings, patriarchal values and anti-westernised aspects which were all AKP ideologies. The results of the study also gave a strong indication of gender disparity; women were underrepresented and depicted as emotional and weak, home makers, mothers and unemployed who relied on the men. The outcome of the study indicated that notwithstanding the fact that there were no visuals to portray Islam, the episodes were interlaced with a high level Islamic expressions. The AKP's "Back to the Family" policy programme which offer support for women to come home and perform womanly duties was also entrenched in the animation thereby strengthening AKP's patriarchal values and ideologies. For instance although the mother of *'Pepee'* was a lawyer, she stayed at home. It can be argued that the animated cartoon *'Pepee'* was purposed at entrenching Islamic ideologies and fighting against westernised values and ideals, hence, preschoolers were targeted because of their openness to

learning and shaping at the childhood stage (Casey et al, 2008). Blackwell et al. (2008) can therefore not be contended when they argue that the general process of socialisation which involves the transmission of culture contributes to shaping the world views of individuals.

McQuail (2010) emphasised the power of television as an agent in the construction and reproduction of gender through generic convention and stereotyping and '*Pepee*' can be accused of playing a similar role. The finding of Gerbner and Signorielli (1979) that gender roles and stereotypes are constructed and perpetuated through children's media is still consistent with the findings of Kazanoglu (2015) regarding the gender skewed nature of the animation '*Pepee*'. It can therefore be purported that '*Pepee*' was used as a tool by AKP to reinforce and reproduce the overriding ideology. Kazanoglu (2015) called for the state to be objective in the fight against gender inequality and the dissemination of ideological stereotypes. The study called on parents, teachers and other stakeholders to push producers to be objective about the content of children's media and advocated that importance should be given to the work on children's media by researchers and not be taken for granted.

### **2.3.6 Research on Animated Cartoons in Ghana**

In the Ghanaian context, literature on CDA of children's media and animated cartoons appear to be in paucity as far as this current study is concerned. However, minimal research attention has been given to children's animated cartoons and other children's media in Ghana. Existing studies within the context of Ghana, while limited, focused on the portrayal of violence and its impact on children. Acheampong (2017) in a quantitative survey examined the effects of animated cartoons on the behaviour of children in the Sunyani Municipality in the Brong Ahafo. The study was underpinned

by Bandura's SCT which explains learning and modeling of behaviour by children through observation. The study concluded that animated cartoons influence children both negatively and positively and called on parents to be cautious of the type of animated cartoons their children consume. The study recommended that in as much as animated cartoons promote violence, children should not be discouraged from watching animated cartoons because they provide entertainment and serve as sources of learning for children.

Wiafe-Akenten (2009) carried out a qualitative study to analyse the relationship between exposure to violent media and aggressive behaviour among children and teenagers in Ghana. Using the General Aggression Model (GAM), the study explained and provided an understanding of how violence is enacted through learning, activation and the application of violence-related awareness structures stored in the memory. The study indicated that animated cartoons and other programmes in the Ghanaian media are interlaced with significant amount of violence whereby perpetrators go unpunished. Children therefore, build their ideologies with the lessons from these animated cartoons with the mindset that they can perpetrate evil and would not be reprimanded. The study recommended that parents should monitor the TV programmes and video games their children watch and painstakingly control the watching of certain programmes on television due to the ability of the media content to influence their actions.

### **2.3.7 Synthesis of Empirical Review**

Following from the above review of literature, it is evident that animated cartoons aside providing entertainment and pleasure to children, serve as agents of socialisation. Also, animated cartoons are embedded with elements of power,

hegemony and ideology among others, capable of influencing the thoughts and actions of children. Although most of the studies reviewed used the qualitative approach, the theoretical frameworks varied from that of the current study which sought to examine how children's animated cartoons enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology using Thompson's Modes of Ideology as the framework. The most obvious finding from the review of literature is that, the studies mostly concentrated on animated cartoons of Western origin whereas a few analysed animated cartoons of Asian origin. This further establishes the fact that animated cartoons of African origin are under-researched.

Furthermore, although some of the studies employed the CDA design, the theories used differ from that of the current study. Yet again, the CDA studies on animated cartoons sampled Western and Asian animated cartoons. These clearly demonstrate paucity in literature with regards to CDA researches involving children's animated cartoons of African origin. The current study is therefore distinct as it sought to examine how the content of children's animated cartoons of African origin portray the enactment of instances of power, inequality, hegemony and ideology.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

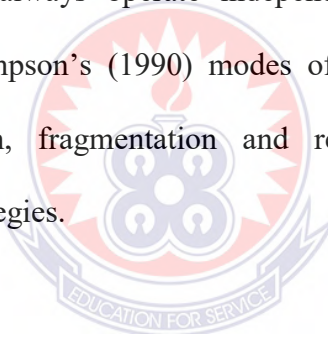
### **2.4.1 Thompson's Modes of the Operation of Ideology**

Inasmuch as Thompson is not a linguist but a social theorist, he has an interest in language which emanates from his critical theory of ideology that he described as:

“primarily concerned with the ways in which symbolic forms intersect with relations of power. It is concerned with the ways in which meaning is mobilised in the social world and serves thereby to bolster

up individuals or groups who occupy positions of power” (Thompson, 1990,p.56).

Thompson (1990) elucidates that an individual’s way of thinking and acting are shaped and influenced by the meaning of language which are not always explicit as some are emphasised whereas others are excluded in order to benefit the dominant party. This suggests that, the meanings given to discourses by audiences may not be as it appears on the surface. Thompson (1990) prescribes five modes through which ideology operates and admits that the operation of ideology is not limited to the five modes only but there are other ways of discovering ideology in discourses. Thompson (1990) referred to them as the “Modus operandi of ideology” (p.64) and emphasised that the modes do not always operate independently but different modes may sometimes overlap. Thompson’s (1990) modes of operation include; legitimisation, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation and reification and they each have associated discursive strategies.



#### **2.4.1.1 Legitimisation**

Legitimisation is the process whereby dominant relations are established or “whereby the producer of a symbolic form constructs a chain of reasoning which seeks to defend or justify a set of social relations or institutions, and thereby to persuade an audience,” (Thompson, 1990, p. 61). The producer of a symbolic form relies on the use of “reasoning” to persuade or convince an audience that certain social relations involving power are lawful, valid and justifiable. Hence, it is accepted as rightful and leads to a situation whereby disillusionments are rendered as pointless. According to Thompson (1990), legitimisation can be realised through three discursive strategies which include rationalisation, universalisation and narrativisation. Rationalisation



involves the use of logic or reasoning to justify or make an argument valid. In rationalisation, the producer constructs a chain of reasoning which rely on the establishment of cause and effect to establish the need for action which is aimed at defending or justifying social relations so as to convince an audience and win their support. Universalisation refers to the situation whereby “institutional arrangements which serve the interests of some individuals ... as serving the interests of all” (Thompson, 1990, p.61). In universalisation, a set of institutional arrangements which serve only a privileged few or particular groups are presented in a manner as though it is serving the interest of all persons or groups when in reality only a few are set to benefit from those arrangements. Narrativisation entails the use of stories as embodiments of universal truths and is usually presented as points of reference for an entire community. Thompson (1990) warns that these “traditions may be invented in order to create a sense of belonging to a community and to a history which transcends the experience of conflict, difference and division” (p.62). Sometimes, traditions and narratives are invented in order to make the people have a feeling of belongingness which may be non-existent. Thompson (1990) mentions folktales, films, novels and jokes are some mediums “narrativisation” uses to construct realities which represent the perceptible order of things.

#### **2.4.1.2 Dissimulation**

Thompson (1990) identified dissimulation, which pertains to the sustenance of power through concealment as the second mode of ideology. Dissimulation involves the practice of concealing relations of dominance by representing them in a way that makes them obscure or averts attention from or glosses over existing social relations or processes. Dissimulation is achieved through three typical strategies; euphemisation, displacement and trope. In euphemisation, unpleasant actions, events

or social relations are redescribed in a manner to make them appear pleasant and elicit positive implications or connotations. Unpleasant situations are described positively to evoke a feeling of positive valuation. Displacement refers to the situation whereby an expression or term usually used to refer to one thing is used to refer to another thing with the aim of conveying either a positive or negative connotation to the other object or individual. The third strategy associated with dissimulation, trope, involves the use of figurative language such as metaphors, metonymy and synecdoche.

#### **2.4.1.3 Unification**

The third mode of ideology, unification refers to the construction “at the symbolic level, a form of unity which embraces individuals in a collective identity, irrespective of the divisions that may separate them” (Thompson, 1990, p.64). In unification a collective identity is constructed which in reality may not exist. This is aimed at getting individuals to think or assume that they are a group of united people despite the differences that divide them. This elicits a sense of oneness which is capable of overcoming all forms of division be it ethnic, religious, social, gender, ideological or political. Unification is also typified by two discursive strategies which include standardisation and symbolisation of unity. Standardisation refers to the process whereby “symbolic forms are adopted to a standard framework which is promoted as the shared and acceptable basis of symbolic exchange” (Thompson, 1990, p.64). The use of a common or national language is a manifestation of using a social process to establish a collective identity. Using a national language fosters a sense of national identity within the nation state. Usually, the approved or standardised language is usually the language of the dominant group. However, the standardisation blurs the inequality and through the use of a common language, they view themselves as a

united group who identify with a standardised language. Symbolisation of unity involves “the construction of symbols of national unity such as flags, national anthems, emblems and inscriptions of various kinds” (Thompson, 1990, p.64) which are aimed at fostering a collective identity. Some non-linguistic symbols of unity include national flags, uniforms, currency and emblems. Linguistic examples are school songs, national anthems, slogans and the national pledge.

#### **2.4.1.4 Fragmentation**

Fragmentation is in sharp contrast to unification because it seeks to divide or sow seeds of discords among a group of people irrespective of the things they share in common with the aim to divide and rule. Seeds of discords are sown among “groups that might be capable of mounting an effective challenge to dominant groups” (Thompson, 1990, p.65) which are seen as threats or possible threats to the dominant group in order to break their front. Once fragmentation is achieved, the dominant group is assured of security as there is no longer a threatening force. Fragmentation is typified by “differentiation” and “expurgation of the other” (Thompson, 1990). In differentiation, there is emphasis on the characteristics that divide a group of people, usually who have the potential of becoming powerful (Thompson, 1990). This is done in order to prevent them from becoming powerful in order not to resist or oppose the existing power relations. Expurgation of the other involves the creation of an evil and harmful enemy and individuals are called upon to fight that threatening enemy (Thompson, 1990).

#### **2.4.1.5 Reification**

Reification involves establishing relations of dominance through the representation of “a transitory, historical state of affairs as if it were permanent, natural, outside of

time” (Thompson, 1990, p.65). In reification past events or history is presented to the people as though it was permanent and ought not be challenged or changed. Thompson (1990) identified four strategies which typify reification; naturalisation, externalisation, passivisation and nominalisation. Naturalisation is the process whereby socially constructed realities or past happenings are presented as innate and unavoidable (Thompson, 1990). These include division of labour, gender and sex roles. Externalisation presents a state of affairs as static or unchanging (Thompson, 1990). Customs, traditions and values are presented as fixed and ought to be adhered to without recourse. Nominalisation is a linguistic process which involves transforming an action into a thing or a state (Thompson, 1990). In nominalisation, a part of the sentence such as the words that describe actions and the actors involved are turned into nouns. For instance, a verb goes through nominalisation to attain the attributes of a noun to become a nominal. Closely related to nominalisation is passivisation which is also a linguistic process. Passivisation is the process by which an active voice is transformed into a passive voice (Thompson, 1990). Just like nominalisation, passivisation also aims at deleting the actor or subject of an action or activity by presenting the event or process as though the actor or subject was absent or nonexistent. In both nominalisation and passivisation, there is a deliberate attempt to delete the actor in order to draw the audience’s attention to certain themes at the expense of others.

## **2.5 Application of Thompson’s Modes of Ideology in Similar Studies**

Thompson’s (1990) mode of ideology has been used in various studies by researchers in various disciplines. The work of Hilary Janks in the 1990’s is one of the earliest studies to make use of Thompson’s modes of ideology. Janks (1998) in a qualitative study using the tenets of CDA analysed the advertisement ‘*Woman power*’ which

appeared in 1992 in 'The Press' in South Africa. The results showed that all the five discursive modes were employed in the advertisement. Legitimation was used through the strategy of rationalisation to portray increase in birth rates as the cause of the problems of South Africa to persuade the citizens to accept birth control as the solution while dissimulating the other causes of poverty. In some instances, certain discursive strategies overlapped. Janks (1998) found out that although Thompson's five modes were discovered in the text, the mode of fragmentation featured prominently, particularly, the strategy of differentiation.

In view of the notion that accounting education plays a major role in the construction of ideology among students about certain worldviews, Ferguson et al. (2009) carried out a study on the construction of power and ideology in six educational accounting textbooks. In a qualitative study using the tenets of CDA, Ferguson et al. (2009) used Thompson's (1990) ideological modes as the theoretical framework. The results of the study indicated that, all the five modes of ideology were present in the six selected textbooks with legitimisation as the most prevailing one. The discursive strategy of universalisation was prevalent in all the textbooks analysed which puts forth the notion that "a single set of financial statements aimed at shareholders would satisfy the needs of all user groups" Ferguson et al. (2009, p. 35). Furthermore, the strategy of narrativisation was prevalent whereby stories were used to recount the past. Reification was also frequently employed in the textbooks analysed. Although all the five 'modus operandi' of ideology were evident from the findings, dissimulation and fragmentation turned out to be the least used strategy. Ferguson et al. (2009) noted that the ideological modes identified in the six accounting textbooks were subtle and included "expressions of implicit or taken for granted assumptions" (p.36). The study

concluded that notwithstanding the assumption that textbooks are apolitical, there were manifestations of ideology and power although subtle.

Foshaugen (2004) applied Thompson's modes of ideology to two selected verses, Matthew 5:3 & 4 from the Sermon on the Mount. The study was aimed at uncovering the existence of ideology in the text, its symbolic forms and how they were constructed. The results indicated the existence of the relationship between symbolic forms of an oppressed society and relations of power who constituted the rulers. Foshaugen (2004) contends that the Sermon on the Mount is propagating the ideology of God hence it serves to establish and sustain a relation of God's dominion over His people.

## **2.6 Relevance of the Theory to the Study**

Although there are several theories and models by the early proponents of CDA as far as the analysis of discourse is concerned, Thompson's Modes of ideology was purposively selected. This is because it serves as a helpful tool in analysing and answering the research question on how the content of animated cartoons enact instances ideology, power and hegemony. Most CDA works on media texts have employed approaches such as Fairclough's Triadic model, Kress and Van Leeuwen's model and Van Dijk's model. However, owing to the fact that the traditional CDA models by early proponents of CDA have been widely used, this study adopted Thompson's modes for purposes of its ease of applicability to both linguistic and nonlinguistic texts. In the analysis of media discourses including visuals and audio, Mehdi and Jamaledin (2012) prescribe the use of a combination of Fairclough's Triadic model and Kress and Van Leeuwen's model as most suitable. Thompson's Modes, however, is applicable to visual, written and audio texts. More so, since the

current study is focused on exploring power, hegemony and ideology in children's media discourse, Thompson's Modes of Ideology was seen as the most appropriate as espoused by Janks (1998) that it is "a powerful machinery for understanding the relationship between language, power and domination" (p.3).



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed description of the methodological processes employed in this present study. It highlights the research approach, research design, sampling techniques and sample size, data collection methods and procedures, method of data analysis, ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach was adopted for the study in order to understand and wholly examine how power, hegemony and ideology are enacted in children's animated cartoons as a media discourse. In scientific research, three main approaches exist, namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches and each of these approaches comes with its own tenets and principles (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014) articulates that every qualitative research approach presents researchers with the techniques needed for gaining an understanding of the various meanings a group of people assign to social practices within a particular cultural context. In this study, some children's animated cartoons of African origin were examined to gain a thorough understanding of both the manifest and hidden meanings and how they enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology.

Again, Creswell (2014) prescribed the qualitative research approach for studies which seek to explore an understanding of a particular phenomenon rather than employ predetermined information from literature. Hence, the choice of the qualitative approach is to help explore elements of hegemony, ideology and power and examine how these elements are enacted in the selected children's animated cartoons.



### 3.2 Research Design

This study adopted the CDA design because the study sought to examine how children's animated cartoons as a media discourse are used to enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology. This is due to the fact that the CDA provides an opportunity to examine the obscure and visible structures of power, hegemony and ideology as manifested through language (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). This is also hinged on the fact that, CDA provides opportunities to “unveiling the unspoken and unacknowledged aspects of human behaviour, making salient either hidden or dominant discourses that maintain marginalised positions in society” (Morgan, 2010, p.4). This means, CDA brings to the limelight the actions and performances of human beings which are obscure and often considered unimportant that lead to domination, discrimination and power inequality. The CDA design also offers “a positive social psychological critique of any phenomenon under the gaze of the researcher” (Morgan, 2010, p.4).

Qualitative research is characterised by various research designs which range from traditional ones such as case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography among others (Creswell, 2014). In recent years, qualitative research has witnessed the emergence of non-traditional designs such as Discourse Analysis (DA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (Ahialey, 2011). Discourse analysis helps in drawing the relationship that exists between discourse and society and between text and context (Normaliza, 2018). However, CDA has an added advantage over DA and this includes the relationship between language and power in everyday discourse (Fairclough, 2001). Mogashoa (2014) prescribed CDA as a method of qualitative research and indicated that CDA can be applied to any text including visuals, audio, oral or written texts. CDA therefore draws a connection between language and power.

Some studies (Ahialey, 2011; Soares, 2017) have analysed how discourses contribute to the enactment of power, ideology and hegemony by using CDA as the research design. In exploring how the use of language in the courtroom contributes to power imbalances and domination, Ahialey (2011) employed the CDA as a design. In a similar vein, Soares (2017) demonstrated how the use of accent in animated cartoons contributed to linguistic stereotype and discrimination among children using CDA as a research design in order to allow for a deep examination of language use. The usefulness of CDA as a method of qualitative research has been recognised not only in the humanities, but also in the social sciences as espoused by Van Leeuwen (2006).

Wodak and Meyer (2009) sum up the distinguishing principles of CDA as having “the common interests in de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systematic and reproducible investigation of semiotic data” (p.3). Van Dijk (as cited in Amoussou and Allagbe, 2018) argues that, a CDA study must satisfy certain aims and assumptions to qualify as such. Amoussou and Allagbe (2018) further highlights that the centre of attention for CDA include relations of power, dominance, inequality and underlying ideologies in text and talk. In another perspective, Van Dijk (2001) argues that CDA studies focus on “social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination” (p.96). In tandem with the foregoing, this present study, therefore, employed the CDA as the research design and sought to examine how language is used in children’s animated cartoons to enact power, hegemony and ideology which are all central concepts in CDA. The aforementioned reasons informed the choice of CDA as the design for this current study.

### 3.3 Sampling Technique

This study adopted the purposive sampling technique. The homogeneous purposive sampling method was specifically used for the study. Palys (2008) argues that it is impossible to point to one sampling technique as the best because the context in which the researcher is working and the nature of the research objectives determines what is best. In existence are a myriad of research techniques such as simple random, clustered, convenience and stratified sampling among others (Berndt, 2020). However, when it comes to qualitative and mixed method approaches to research, purposive sampling is usually used (Berndt, 2020). According to Palys (2008), purposive sampling is synonymous to qualitative sampling as most qualitative researchers resort to its use. Purposive sampling or subjective sampling is a non-probability method of sampling where the sample is selected based on the objectives of the study and the characteristics of the population (Black, 2010). In purposive sampling, the sample size is selected solely per the judgement of the focus of the study. Schutts (2006) posits that the sample selection procedure includes the identification of concepts, themes and indicators through processes of observation and reflection. This practice is not different from that of Leedy and Omrod (2005), who assert that qualitative researchers usually resort to purposive sampling, when they “select only those individuals or objects that will yield the most information” (p.145).

With the present study, in order for the research to achieve the objectives of examining how power, hegemony and ideology could be enacted in children’s animated cartoons, the purposive sampling technique was deployed as it offered the researcher the chance to identify and choose information-rich cases relevant to the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). The homogeneous purposive sampling method was specifically chosen because the study sought to understand and describe

particular samples which share related and identical characteristics. Samples selected for the study thus, shared similar properties. For instance, the study was interested in animated cartoons that are children-centred, of African origin and full length. The three selected animated cartoons were all from the same context, Nigeria. Consequently, the three animated cartoons; *'Mark of Uru'*, *'The Secret Princess'* and *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'* were selected because they suit the criteria of the study. They thus, possess the characteristics needed to achieve the objectives of the study.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

Three full length animated cartoons of African origin; namely; *'Mark of Uru'*, *'The Secret Princess'* and *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'*, were selected for the study. Although there are a number of African animated cartoons for children, full length animated cartoons which suit the purpose of the study were considered paramount other than short episodes or series. Most studies (Bobrowska, 2019; Gotz et al, 2008; Lippi-Green, 2012; Soares, 2017) have focused on Western animations and it is important to give scholarly attention to animated cartoons of African origin. In exploring multicultural themes in Disney animated cartoons, Van Wormer and Juby (2015) used three full length Disney animated cartoons. Similarly, three full length animated cartoons of African origin were selected for this study because it is representative. Also, the three selected animated cartoons share similar characteristics and were accessible via authentic and verifiable sources.

### **3.4.1 Synopsis of the Selected Animated Cartoons**

#### **3.4.1.1 *'Mark of Uru'***

*'Mark of Uru'* is an award winning Nigerian full length animated cartoon by Mayhem Productions. It was created by Obinna Onwuekwe and produced by Segun Williams. *'Mark of Uru'* was released in 2009 and has a total running time of thirty-five (35) minutes. *'Mark of Uru'*, was purposively selected because it portrays certain African ideologies, culture and religious beliefs. The animated cartoon also received the World Summit Awards (WSA) in the category of Culture and Tourism in 2009 (WSA, 2009).

*'Mark of Uru'* tells the story of Azuka, a girl born with a mark in her palm, identical to the tattoo of the banished village sorceress, *Uru*. Azuka's mother makes efforts to conceal the mark in Azuka's palm from the community but the mark eventually gets exposed. Azuka becomes the target of the entire village and is sought after to be annihilated in order to protect the village from her curse. Azuka is rescued by two spirit-beings; Isi-Agu and Etido, who become her guardians.

#### **3.4.1.2 *'The Secret Princess'***

*'The Secret Princess'* is an African adventure and fantasy animated feature film set in Nigeria created by Trans Tales Entertainment. It was directed and written by Segun Williams and was released in Nigeria on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2014. It is a ninety-five (95) minute movie. The award winning movie, *'The Secret Princess'* has also been chosen because of the assertion by the African Glitz (2018) that it unveils many delicate topics about African culture in a subtle way and gives a reflection of the African ideology, lifestyle and culture. In 2017, *'The Secret Princess'* won the Best African

Animation Award during the London Movie Festival (247news, 2017, May 11). It is also an Award winning Amazon movie (EIN News, 2017, September 18).

*'The Secret Princess'* revolves around Sade, a princess who is secretly switched at birth with a farmer's baby boy to prevent her mother, Queen Atike from being sent away by the King for her inability to produce a son as heir to the throne, in a kingdom, where male children are considered more important than females. The king had sent his first two wives away for their inability to bear him a son after giving birth to six daughters. The king who is unaware of the secret exchange of the babies raised the boy as Prince Akin who lives a prestigious and luxurious lifestyle. Sade, who is unaware of her royal status encounters Prince Akin and they fall in love.

#### **3.4.1.3 *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'***

*'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'* is a Nigerian 3D animated feature movie with 4K resolution released on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2020. It was produced by Hot Ticket Animation, Nigeria and distributed worldwide by Trace. It was directed by Adebisi Adetayo with Blessing Amidu as the Executive Producer. The story was written by Stanlee Ohikhuare. *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'* is an eighty (80) minute full-length animation. *'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'* was selected because it is the first Nigerian Animation to make it to the big screen internationally and thus considered as a pacesetter in animation in Nigeria and Africa (Kolawole, 2022, April 21). It was adjudged the Best Animation during the 2021 African Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) and the 2021 AFRIFF Globe Awards. The animated cartoon was also nominated for the best Animation during the Pan African Film Festival in 2021 (Oluwatoye, 2021).

*'Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters'* centres on a precocious happy-go-lucky girl called Bukky. Bukky. After her parent's bakery is shut down, she blames herself and makes a wish to go back in time to avert the situation. However, she mysteriously ends up in the future as a bucket (Lady Buckit) among a band of strange characters. Although she is unhappy about her new state, she later finds joy among her unusual friends. Lady Buckit encounters Tamuno, a young school boy who is constantly humiliated, blackmailed and bullied by his classmate, Robo because of his inability to excel in mathematics. Lady Buckit resolves to help Tamu understand mathematics and makes the learning of mathematics easy for Tamuno. Eventually, Lady Buckit and her group of unusual friends, succeed in influencing Robo to change from his bad ways.

### **3.5 Data Collection Method**

This study adopted document analysis as the method of data collection. According to Carter and Henderson (2005), there exists a plethora of qualitative data collection techniques and are underpinned by various methodological and theoretical approaches. The data collection methods appropriate for qualitative researches include; interviews, focus group discussions, observational study and document analysis among others. This study used document analysis as the method of data collection.

Document analysis is a method of data collection which involves the systematic review of documents ranging from print to electronic such as journals, scripts, reports, newspapers, press releases and public records (Bowen, 2009). Documents are written or audio-visual texts which are not produced by the researcher (Karppinen & Moe, 2012; Love, 2013). Bowen (2009) describes document analysis is an iterative process

which entails “skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination) and interpretation” (p.32). The efficient, un-obtrusive and non-reactive nature of document analysis as a method of data analysis made it purposeful for the current study because it is not affected by the research process (Bowen, 2009). In this study, the data (document) collected for analysis were three full-length videos of selected children’s animated cartoons of African origin namely; ‘*Mark of Uru*’, ‘*The Secret Princess*’ and ‘*Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters*’.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

Relying on the techniques provided by O’Leary (2014) in conducting textual analysis, the content of the animated cartoons (text) provided the relevant information for the analyses. The research process started with a careful download of all the three selected children’s animated cartoons. ‘*Mark of Uru*’ and ‘*The Secret Princess*’ were downloaded from Youtube while ‘*Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters*’ was watched on Netflix. These sources are authentic and verifiable sources of movies. I watched the animated cartoons carefully scene by scene so I could familiarise myself with the content and gain an understanding of them. The next stage of the process was transcription. All the three animated cartoons were transcribed onto a Microsoft word page. The songs in the movies were also transcribed verbatim. In order to ensure accuracy and authenticity, the movies were compared with the transcripts for their authenticity. While watching the animated cartoons in preparation for the analysis, the texts were grouped into scenes with numbers to allow for easy identification and assessment. Also, I read the transcripts iteratively to familiarise myself with the data in order to identify patterns and occurrences in the data. While watching the movies and being guided by the research objectives and research questions, themes, concepts



and trends related to the phenomenon of interest were carefully noted for the purposes of the analysis.

### **3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

The study employed a combination of textual analysis and thematic analysis as the methods of data analysis. Textual analysis is a method used in scholarly research for examining text including animated cartoons (McKee, 2020). McKee (2001) advocates that in order to understand the functions of the media in the lives of human beings, as well as how media messages contribute to the construction of ideology or world view, it is important to understand the meanings and interpretations that audiences ascribe to media text. A textual analysis is therefore important as it provides the opportunity to deduce latent or obscure underpinnings based on the society or context. Textual analysis consequently relies on the use of the social context to provide explanation and interpretation of patterns and trends in media text including animated cartoons. Fursich (2009) argues that textual analysis serves as an important option for scholars and researchers in the area of media and communication because of the nature of media text as a potential spot for the negotiation and transmission of ideology. McKee (2020) argues that, compared to content analysis which has great reliability, textual analysis has a higher validity.

In addition to textual analysis, thematic analysis was employed as a data analysis method for the study because of its capability in allowing the researcher to identify significant groups or classes of themes in a data set (Fulcher, 2010). Thematic analysis was adopted as the method of data analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2014). Thematic analysis is a “method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns of (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). Mogashoa (2014)

also describe a theme as “a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings and usually emerges through the inductive analytic process which characterises the qualitative paradigm” (p. 109). Drawing from the aforementioned reasons and advantages of textual and thematic analyses, the researcher deemed them as the appropriate methods for the current study, which sought to examine how children’s animated cartoons as a media discourse enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology.

The unit of analysis was a scene which was categorised on a coding instrument. I prepared the coding instrument (Appendix A) and coding protocols (Appendix B) after prolonged engagement with the data. The coding for this study was done by two research assistants who were purposely trained for the study. Because of the different backgrounds of the research assistants, there was the need to ensure consistency and validity (O’ Connor & Joffe, 2020). I therefore conducted an assessment of the intercoder reliability in order to ensure consistency and validity. An intercoder reliability score of 90% was reached.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Although the current study did not involve the use of interviews or participants, issues of ethics were of high concern to the researcher. In the conduct of research, researchers are expected to be highly objective and sensitive in the selection and analysis of data in order to achieve credible and valid results (Bowen, 2009). Vanclay et al. (2013) asserted that researchers are obliged to fully divulge all the various steps, methods and procedures deployed in the study. This is to enable other researchers to replicate the study, appraise or critique the methodology and test the findings to promote scholarship.

The study was devoid of any attempts to manipulate the data to skew the analysis. Since CDA is a qualitative approach and involves critical analysis, there is the possibility of bias as the researcher becomes the main instrument of data gathering (Creswell, 2014). In examining animated cartoons of African origin, I did not allow my affiliation as an African to influence my objectivity and judgement in order to put African animations in a particular light. Aware of the academic implication of this study, I embarked on the study without any biases or preconceived assumptions. This is in line with O'Leary's (2014) assertion that the major issue to consider in research is bias and this has been duly bracketed or clarified by the researcher.

Again, although the study did not involve interview, I ensured anonymity of data by assigning alphanumeric codes to the selected animated cartoons. This is in tandem with Yu's (2008) statement on the use of pseudonyms in research to ensure anonymity of participants. In this case, the texts or documents (animated cartoons) were treated as the participants (O'Leary's, 2014). For instance, I used AC1, AC2 and AC3 to refer to the selected animated cartoons. Finally, the various steps and processes involved in this study have been outlined and described. Consequently, this study has met the requirements necessary for ensuring ethics in research and can thus be described as ethical.

### **3.9 Trustworthiness of Data**

According to Polit and Beck (2014), the trustworthiness of a research refers to the confidence in data, analysis and the various processes employed in the study to guarantee quality. Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Connelly, 2016) provided four criteria for trustworthiness and these include; credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability and these have been widely adopted in qualitative research. This

current study, being approached qualitatively, therefore applied the above mentioned criteria to ensure trustworthiness. Polit and Beck (2014) state that credibility constitutes the most important of the criteria for ensuring trustworthiness and described credibility as the confidence in the truthfulness of the data and the findings. To aid researchers check and ascertain the validity or credibility of qualitative study, Creswell (2014) outlined eight strategies and advised that at least two should apply to every qualitative research. These include clarifying researcher's biases, prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, member checking, rich, thick description and external audit. In tandem with Creswell's (2014) suggestion, the current study employed five of the strategies which included prolonged engagement and persistent observation, bracketing one's biases, member checking, providing a rich, thick description and peer review or debriefing.

First and foremost, I engaged the data intensively over a prolonged period of time by watching the animated cartoons several times to enable me gather in-depth data for the analysis. I engaged in iterative reading to familiarise myself with the data in order to identify occurrences and patterns. Secondly, I clarified my biases by distancing myself from any preconceived assumptions or prejudices. Acknowledging my susceptibility to the critical issues under my gaze, I went into the study visualising myself as a student undertaking an academic exercise. I therefore embarked on the study with a clear mind devoid of any preconceived motives and biases capable of influencing the results of the study. I also adhered to all the necessary ethical issues expected of the study. Thirdly, member checking and inter-coder reliability were employed to ensure credibility of the data. Member checking was done with support from my supervisor who also reviewed the data and interpretations critically. The

study involved coding, which was done by two research assistants trained for the purpose. There was therefore the need to ensure consistency and validity (O' Connor & Joffe, 2020) by checking the intercoder reliability. An intercoder reliability of 90% was attained. The fourth strategy involved the use of rich, thick descriptions in the analyses of the data to ensure transferability. I provided a detailed account, description and interpretation of the data. In answering the research questions, excerpts and images from the data were used to support the discussions.

Finally, peer review and debriefing were employed by opening the study up for discussion by colleague graduate students and coders. I also had a series of debriefing sessions with my supervisor at every stage. In addition, the study was presented at weekly seminars organised by the School of Communication and Media Studies (U.E.W.) where findings were subjected to constructive criticisms by both faculty and students.

Aside ensuring credibility by applying five out of Creswell's (2014) eight validation strategies, dependability was also established in the study by an unadulterated reportage of the findings of the study. Thus, the various steps and processes involved in the research have been carefully outlined and described to ensure confirmability. This is to ensure that others who may conduct similar studies could also appreciate the similarity in findings. Amankwaa (2016) avers that in order to ensure the trustworthiness or rigor of a study, the researcher should establish the necessary protocols and procedures clearly in the write-up. Having satisfied the aforementioned, it could be stated that this study is credible, dependable, transferable and confirmable.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter presented a detailed description of the research process and the method of data analysis. The study adopted the qualitative approach and used the CDA design to investigate how the content of children's animated cartoons of African origin could be used to enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology. Data was collected from three selected children's animated cartoons of African origin using document analysis and analysed both textually and thematically. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness of research data were also discussed thoroughly.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions on the data gathered in line with the focus of this study. In this analysis, the three selected animated cartoons; “*The Secret Princess*”, “*The Mark of Uru*” and “*Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters*” have been assigned alphanumeric codes and are referred to as Animated Cartoon 1, designated as [AC1], Animated Cartoon 2, designated as [AC2] and Animated Cartoon 3, designated as [AC3]. The analysis of data was underpinned by the tenets and explications of Thompson’s (1990) Modes of Ideology.

#### 4.1 Analysis of Data

##### 4.1 Research Question 1: What are the dominant themes embedded in the selected children’s animated cartoons?

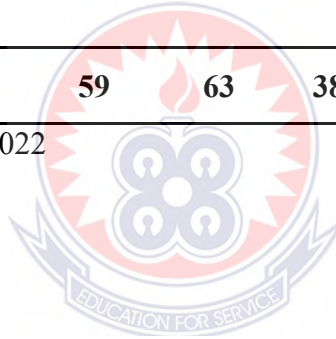
The research question one sought to explore the dominant themes embedded in the selected animated cartoons. With respect to this, it was revealed from the data that the animated cartoons are embedded with positive and negative themes which are context specific. A methodical coding of the three selected animated cartoons revealed the following dominant themes; violence, dynamism of culture, social values, belief in superstition and the supernatural, power imbalance and discrimination. It is worth noting that, aside the dominant themes, there were other themes such as the reliance of women on men and women as homemakers. Table 1 and Table 2 provide a breakdown of the dominant themes embedded in the three selected animated cartoons. Table 1 is a frequency table of the dominant themes embedded in the three selected animated cartoons. The themes are presented in descending order per the number of

occurrences in the selected animated cartoons. Table 2 is a summary of the dominant themes embedded in [AC1], [AC2] and [AC3] with excerpts.

**Table 1: Frequency Table of Dominant Themes in [AC1], [AC2] and [AC3]**

<b>Dominant Theme</b>	<b>AC1</b>	<b>AC2</b>	<b>AC3</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Power Imbalance	17	10	10	37	23
Discrimination	17	10	6	33	21
Belief in Superstition and the Supernatural	12	14	5	31	19
Social Values	5	11	12	28	18
Violence	4	17	4	25	16
Dynamism of Culture	4	1	1	6	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork data, 2022





**Table 2: Summary of Dominant Themes in [AC1], [AC2] and [AC3] with Excerpts**

<b>THEME</b>	<b>EXCERPT</b>
<b>Power Imbalance</b>	<i>Robo: And you cannot tell your dad and great grand dad because I will tell them that I caught you cheating last term. Then I will top it up with a lie. I will tell all our classmates that I caught you and Elsie kissing. You know they will believe me. Tiny, timid, twitchy Tam (AC3)</i>
	<i>Akin's dad: There is no but. The matter is settled. You will not bring shame to us. Akin: But Akin's dad: No but. I said, no but, the matter is settled. Go and see her now. (AC1)</i>
	<i>Chief warrior: Kill them all. What are you waiting for? She is just a woman (AC2).</i>
	<i>Robo's friend: I have waited, to be free like this like forever. Robo's friend: It feels good to be off the hook. (AC3)</i>
<b>Discrimination</b>	<i>Mr. Edwin: People say I'm cursed. That's why I can't get a job. Bukky: Why won't you move to a far place where no one knows you are cursed (AC3)</i>
	<i>Akika: Adisa was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. .... Mitai was rejected by her parents after she was born without hair. They believe she was a curse and left her to die in a jungle...(AC2)</i>
	<i>'She was a lonely, sad, childless woman. She had no friends' (AC1)</i>
<b>Belief in Superstition and the Supernatural</b>	<i>Chief Warrior: Protection, that child is an abomination. She bears the symbol of doom. If we kill her now, we will save thousands of lives. (AC2)</i>
	<i>There are several rumours about the mark of Uru. Many believe it has the mark of immortality...Many will hunt you down with the intent to kill you. Others will with the intent to capture you and use the alleged powers of the symbol for their selfish interest (AC2).</i>
	<i>Maybe the universe led you here for a purpose (AC3)</i>
<b>Social Values</b>	<i>Tortoise: It is up to us to do the right thing. Lion: It is the right thing to do and so we will do it (AC1)</i>
	<i>Bukky: I wish I could go back in time and fix what happened to my father's bakery. Take me to where I was before and I will right the wrong I did Lady Buckit: Yeah, we all make mistakes. I've made my fair share Bukky: I'm sorry about the bakery. It's all my fault (AC3)</i>
	<i>Akin: There's going to be a wrestling match... It involves two princes and one princess. Two princes will fight for the princess. (AC1)</i>
<b>Violence</b>	<i>Tari: Forfeit your weapons. Now get up and fight like a man (AC2)</i>
<b>Dynamism of Culture</b>	<i>King Adide: I was about to do something that had never been done before. Something that no living king in our time has ever done. (AC1)</i>

#### 4.1.1 Power Imbalance

Power makes it possible for some people to impose their will on others and this leads to a situation of power imbalance which generally refers to the unequal relations of power or power inequality among people (Fousiani, 2020). Central to the tenets of CDA is the issue of power inequality which involves the repression and intimidation of the less dominant group in discourse via text and language (Fairclough, 2001). Unequal power relations in discourse therefore lead to the control and dominion of the less influential participants by the powerful participants. Power inequality is operationalised to include domination, oppression, manipulation and resistance. In the study, power inequality was enacted in AC1, AC2 and AC3.

Blackledge (2005) argues that although practices of social inequality and discrimination are enacted through language, they are also resisted through language. Blackledge's (2005) assertion is affirmed in the present study where the powerful participants in some instances had to reassert their authority while the less powerful also resist the authority of the powerful. Fairclough (2001) identified resistance as one of the means by which the less powerful exercise power. This was shown in the animated cartoons where certain characters attempted to resist some practices of inequality and hegemony by dropping politeness markers, using harsh intonation, challenging authority and defying orders. Resistance proved to be a means of balancing the power inequality among the discourse participants thereby affirming Fairclough's (2001) assertion that power is a shared property of all discourse participants and not the sole prerogative of the more influential.

As a little girl, Azuka was under the control of Etido and Isi Agu. However, as a mature young woman, she began to challenge Etido and Isi Agu authority. As a young

woman, Azuka's intonation and gestures also constituted forms of resistance to her guardians as demonstrated in excerpt 12;

*Azuka: Are we just going to stand there and let them tear us apart*

*Azuka (in a harsh tone): Did you hear what I just said. Don't you have anything to say to me. Like an apology (AC2).*

In AC3, Bukky defied her parent's orders by refusing to dispose off the rubbish instantly as expected of her but rather at her own time as indicated in excerpt 13;

*Bukky: Trash, trash trash, everytime. I'll finish reading this first (AC3)*

Unfortunately, Bukky's act of resistance paid off badly as it led to the closure of Tea Kettle Bakery.

The traditional adult-child power relationship whereby adults wielded more power than children was evident in the animations. Parents or adults mainly resorted to the use of coercive power or 'power over' as a means of control. Prince Akin, though against his wish was forced to win a fight per the orders of his father, the king. Although Prince Akin, tried to show some resistance, he could not persist as his opposition was rendered useless by the King who gave a mandamus. The prince therefore had no choice than to oblige to his father's wishes as in excerpt 14;

*Akin's dad: There is no but. The matter is settled. You will not bring shame to us.*

*Akin: But*

*Akin's dad: No but. I said, no but, the matter is settled. Go and see her now.*

*She is in the guest house. (AC1)*

In AC1, Sade's mother brought her authority and power as a mother to bear through the exercise of 'power over' or coercive power. Nike did not only prevent Sade from expressing herself but also threatened to stop telling her stories. Despite the fact that

Sade attempted to drive home her point, she did so with an intonation of fear and quickly succumbed to her mother's control, lest she be tagged as disrespectful. This might have been influenced by the societal norms of her community which frown on children challenging their parents or adults. Excerpt 15 exemplifies the unequal mother-child power relations where children are gagged from expressing themselves;

Sade: *'But....., but.....*

*Nike : If you are like this, I will stop telling you stories (AC1)*

Irrespective of the asymmetry that existed in power relations especially among parents and children, Sade and Akin showed resistance against the powers of their parents in some instances. This affirms Foucault's (2008) assertion that power is not absolute but can be thwarted. Sade who was driven by love for Akin defied her mother's orders. Also, Prince Akin defied his father's orders which barred him from losing the match. As expected of the custodian of the kingdom to uphold the customs of the land, King Adide rather resisted the supremacy of the customs and traditions of Yemoja by crowning Princess Sade as King.

According to Fairclough (2001), there exists a visibly close relationship between request and power. Therefore the right to make a request for something from someone comes about as a result of power. Queen Atike was able to place the request of having the babies switched before Nike and her husband because of the power she wielded by virtue of being the King's wife. This unequal power relation between the two parties made it easy for the queen to place her rather absurd request before the couple. The couple who appeared powerless before the queen therefore obliged. Queen Atike's confidence to make that request was because of the uneven power relation that existed between the two.

Manipulation refers to the exercise of illegitimate power through discourse and is viewed as one of the central concepts of CDA (Van Dijk, 2006). In AC1, Although Queen Atike's intentions could not be read from the onset, she was successful in manipulating Nike and the farmer to agree to her selfish request.

In AC3, Tamuno was manipulated and blackmailed by Robo but Tamuno lacked the courage and temerity to stand up for himself because of the unequal power relations that existed between them. Although they were both classmates, Robo exercised 'power over' on Tamuno, hence, he always had his way of bullying Tamuno. The unequal power relations that exist among peers or co-equals were reflected in excerpts 16 and 17;

*Robo: Elsie isn't here to save you this time, weakling, weakling (AC3).*

*Robo: And you cannot tell your dad and great grand dad because I will tell them that I caught you cheating last term. Then I will top it up with a lie. I will tell all our classmates that I caught you and Elsie kissing. You know they will believe me. Tiny, timid, twitchy Tam (AC3)*

According to Frye (2019), oppression comes in a variety of forms including subtle forms which are embedded in language and ways of life. In the present study, women were mostly the oppressed and were dominated over by the overriding male society. Bourdieu (2001) refers to this as masculine domination and refers to it as a form of invisible and pervasive symbolic violence exercised through the everyday practices of social life. In AC1, through polygamy, women were oppressed by men who had the sole right to marry as many wives as they pleased without the consent of the other wives. Excerpt 18 depicts the oppression of women through polygamy as Prince

Azuka is hailed by his father for his gallantry and for taking the bold step to be a polygamist;

*King of Zatanda: You should thank my son for making this happen. You all have heard of his royal pure strength in the kingdom. My son wants to be like me. I was wondering, am I going to be the only one with seven wives. Hahahaha (AC1).*

The King of Zatanda boasted about being the only one in the kingdom to have married seven wives. Similarly, King Adide married three wives. Reminiscent of his father, Prince Azuka expressed his pride, bravery and heroism in having two wives which was showcased as glorious and fulfilling as in excerpt 19;

*Azuka: Before you what. Wait a minute, this will be a great opportunity to humiliate you again. What will they say, the prince of Zatanda; two wives, two battles, two humiliations (AC1).*

The events that led to the exchange of the two babies confirm the oppressive nature of King Adide, hence driving away his first two wives and six daughters. It can therefore not be doubted that Queen Atike was under oppression. The oppression of Queen Atike translated into her fear of being driven away from her marital home for bearing a girl and had to do everything possible to safeguard her marriage. This is demonstrated by the utterances in excerpt 20;

*Queen Atike: "What will I tell the king, what will I tell the king"*

*"You know what would happen to me if the king finds out that I had a girl".*

*(AC1)*

In AC1, women were portrayed as objects for men and they had no say over their choice of husband. Despite Princess Adaeze's lack of interest in any of the two princes, she compulsorily had to marry the winner against her will. As wife of Azuka,

Princess Adaeze was oppressed and maltreated by Azuka. Moreso, Sade was physically abused by Prince Azuka and his guards by virtue of their power as men. This reveals the oppression of women by men in society thereby corroborating the findings of Jimenez (2022) who acknowledge that women have mostly suffered oppression and domination in society as a result of the portrayal of gender division and sexism in the media.

Robo was presented as an oppressive boy who bullied his classmates aided by a gang of friends who cheered and condoned his bullying acts in AC3. The character of Elsie was indicative of a courageous, daring and confident girl who withstood Robo's villainous acts. This is a subversion of the boy-girl power relation that exists in most animated cartoons where girls are portrayed as helpless and subservient to their male counterpart (Gotz et al, 2018). Irrespective of the fact that Robo and Tamuno were all students and belonged to the same class, power asymmetry existed among them. Although Elsie made attempts to resist Robo's villainous acts, she was sometimes overpowered by Robo. Inasmuch as Robo's allies supported his bullying acts, they still feared him, hence their jubilation over their freedom after Robo's humiliation in excerpt 21 which indicate that they were under Robo's dominion;

*Robo's friend: I have waited, to be free like this like forever.*

*Robo's friend: It feels good to be off the hook. (AC3)*

#### **4.1.2 Discrimination**

The theme of discrimination was heavily embedded in the selected animated cartoons. Discrimination involves treating individuals or groups unjustly or prejudicially on the basis of age, class, race, gender or sexual orientation (APA, 2019). In this study, discrimination is operationalised to include patriarchy, underrepresentation, classism

and gender stereotyping. According to APA (2019), people face discrimination by virtue of who they are and the characteristics or attributes they possess.

The description of Olurombi in excerpt 22 in AC1 depicts discrimination;

*'She was a lonely, sad, childless woman. She had no friends' (AC1)*

Olurombi suffered discrimination and mockery because her childlessness was perceived as a curse. Again, King Adide's first two wives suffered humiliation and discrimination for their inability to produce male children. In AC2, discrimination was suffered not only by Azuka but also Akika, Mitai, Tari and Adisa who were all classified as outcasts on various grounds. Akika for instance, was seen as an outcast because of his facial deformity and was discriminated against. As a child, his only friend was Azuka. Excerpt 23 demonstrates the theme of discrimination;

*Akika: Adisa was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. .... Mitai was rejected by her parents after she was born without hair. They believe she was a curse and left her to die in a jungle... Unfortunately, the old woman later died and Mitai was left alone... I've been an outcast since childhood. You see Azuka, we are outcasts and we are going to stand by you until the end (AC2).*

In AC3, characters such as Mr. Edwin, Tamuno and Udume suffered some amount of discrimination. Mr. Edwin for instance, faced discrimination for being poor and jobless and was regarded as cursed. This is demonstrated in excerpt 24;

*Bukky: The man does nothing but papa rewards him with free food every day...*

*Bukky: Why do you live like a beggar? Sorry. Oh o, how will you survive?*

*Mr. Edwin: People say I'm cursed. That's why I can't get a job.*



*Bukky: Why won't you move to a far place where no one knows you are cursed*  
(AC3)

In addition, there was discrimination against women which was in the form of patriarchy. Rothman (2016) defines patriarchy as “any system of male superiority and female inferiority” (p.139). In AC1, only male children were privileged to succeed their fathers. King Adide therefore drove away his six daughters together with their mothers because their mothers were not able to bear him male children. The superiority and importance placed on male children drove Queen Atike to exchange her daughter for a son in order to maintain her dignity. The farmer's reaction to the news of the birth of a son reechoed the importance their society placed on male children. The farmer was overjoyed and knelt down to give thanks to God for the birth of a baby boy as captured in excerpt 25;

*Midwife: Congratulations, you have had a bouncy baby boy*

*Farmer: Ah finally, oh thank God*

*Midwife: Don't worry both the mother and the baby boy are fine (AC1).*

The farmer's joy was not merely derived from the fact that his wife had safely delivered but mainly because of the birth of a boy hence the emphasis on “baby boy”. The queen's lament in excerpt 26 stemmed from her birth of a baby girl when all she wanted was a son to succeed King Adide;

*Queen Atike: I am finished, I am finished, help me, help me, help me, oh. What will I tell the king, what will I tell the king (AC1)*

The birth of a girl was therefore a misfortune and bad news as far as the Kingdom of Yemoja was concerned.

In excerpt 27, the patriarchal ideology of the African society (Williams, 2019) is further advanced where male children are put ahead of female children;

*All he wanted was a boy who could take the throne after him according to the culture of the land (AC1)*

For King Adide and the people of Yemoja, only a son qualifies to be a successor of the throne, hence, it was unthinkable for a woman to ascend the throne. AC2 brought to bear the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. The theme of patriarchy was subtle in AC3 where Tea Kettle Bakery seemed like a family business where both Udume and his wife Iyaba worked. However, ownership was bestowed on Udume by virtue of his status as the man and head of the family. This result is consistent with that of Ahmad and Wahab (2017) that children's animated cartoons put men ahead of women.

One interesting finding in AC1 was the portrayal of class societies in Yemoja, Azinta and Zatanda; where individuals were treated differently per their social status. Classism, according to Limbert and William (2014) refers to the differential treatment or discrimination of an individual or a group based on their social or economic status. In class societies, some individuals are treated as more deserving of certain privileges than others. In AC1, it was revealed that King Adide's two sisters were all married to kings in other towns and not commoners as exemplified in excerpt 28;

*Both of his (King Adide) sisters were queens married to kings in other towns (AC1)*

Intermarriages between princes and princesses were also portrayed in AC1 as both Prince Akin and Prince Azuka were all tipped to marry princesses. It was therefore not surprising when Princess Adaeze got married to Prince Azuka against her wish. The enactment of classism is further demonstrated in excerpt 29 during an attempt by the kings of Yemoja and Zatanda to arrange a union between the two royal families;

*Akin's father: My son, I am proud of you. You are growing so fast and becoming a man. The King of Azinta is visiting and he has brought his daughter. I want you to show her around (AC1).*

There were deliberate acts to enkindle an amorous relationship between Prince Akin and Princess Adaeze in spite of their disaffection for each other. Consequently, a clear distinction is made between commoners and royals by Princess Adaeze who referred to Sade as '*just an orange seller*' and '*a commoner*' as demonstrated in excerpt 30;

*Princess Adaeze : What do you see in her anyway? After all, she is just an orange seller.*

*Princess Adaeze : This is cheating. She's not even a princess. She's a commoner. She's just an orange seller (AC1)*

The utterance in excerpt 30 reveals the derogatory designation assigned to Sade by Princess Adaeze as a result of the class disparity. To Princess Adaeze, it was unthinkable and unacceptable for a prince to get involved with a commoner. Sade's social status as a commoner was therefore enough reason to disqualify her from being Prince Akin's bride. Once more, Sade faces discrimination by being discredited by Princess Adaeze for being a commoner and unworthy to be fought over by the princes. Sade's classless status was seen as a stumbling block to disapprove of her marriage to Prince Akin. Whereas the royals were endowed with countless privileges, the commoners had limited privileges.

In AC2, the social status of outcasts (Azuka, Akika, Mitai, Tari and Adisa) and 'non-outcasts' created a class system with a distinction between the two. There was discrimination against the group of outcasts who were considered cursed and evil, hence were ostracised from society. Consequently, they formed their own class of outcasts. People who were believed to be cursed or evil were considered as outcasts

and were barred from mingling and cohabitating with the privileged class. The animated cartoons thus portrayed a lower class of rejected outcasts and an upper class of privileged people.

In excerpt 31, Bukky expressed her wish to belong to a class of royalty or queens;

*Bukky sings: All my life I've wished and waited for this moment. The moment when I'll meet someone whose just like me. A queen adorned in gorgeous clothes and pretty. Servants everywhere at my beck and call. It's so amazing. I feel so happy she's here with me. (AC3)*

This finding is a demonstration that animated cartoons generally portray classism as asserted by Streib (2016) that the content of animated cartoons aid in legitimising social class inequality or classism.

Gotz et al. (2018) and Arnold et al. (2015) observe that ideological representations in children's media especially animated cartoons contribute to stereotypical representations of characters. Gender stereotyping involves arbitrarily assigning or ascribing preconceived characteristics, roles or attributes to individuals based on their gender or by virtue of belonging to the social group of women or men (Commission on the Council of Europe, 2015; Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Commission, 2013). Gender stereotyping is a result of the deep rooted norms and values which are used to validate and maintain superiority of men over women and attitudes of sexism that retard the progress of women (COE, 2015). Gender stereotyping was demonstrated in excerpt 32 where women were portrayed as gossips or working against their fellow women;

*And when other women were talking, she would feel it was about her. And most of the time, she was right. (AC1)*

This is a reinforcement of the notion that women are their own enemies and the perception that women are gossips. Gossiping was presented as the preserve of women. Women were portrayed negatively as being their own enemies, gossips and busybodies.

Gender inequality which involves uneven access to opportunities and resources including political, social, economic involvement and decision-making on the basis of sex or gender (Traversa, 2012) was widespread in the data analysed. According to Yao (2014), females have been at the receiving end as far as gender inequality is concerned. In AC1, King Adide's first two wives faced unfair treatment for bearing only girls and were thus, humiliated and sacked from their marital home together with their daughters as indicated in excerpt 33;

*Atike is the third wife of King Adide. King Adide had suddenly woken up one morning and sent his two wives packing after having six children, all girls. All he wanted was a boy who could take the throne after him according to the culture of the land (AC1)*

This portrays female children as worthless especially, as far as kingship is concerned. King Adide's daughters were seen as undeserving or unfit to ascend the throne by virtue of their biological makeup as females. The women were stereotyped for their inability to produce male children as though they were the determiners of the sex of children.

In excerpt 34, Sade and her mother were stereotyped as witches upon the disappearance of Nike's husband (the farmer);

*Three days passed, but it was not until the seventh day that the villagers declared Nike a witch and threatened to punish her and her daughter who they*

*say must also be a witch like her mother. As the village elders held a meeting on the most terrible thing to do to them (AC1)*

This resonates with happenings in most African societies where witchcraft is associated to women (Tenkorang et al., 2011). In Africa, most women especially, widows suffer such injustice and discrimination upon the death or misfortune of their spouses by being declared witches (Kunhiyop, 2015).

Females in AC1 were stereotypically defined as homemakers. The female hyena was portrayed as a homemaker relegated to taking care of her cubs at home while the husband had travelled far away in search of food for the family. This portrays women as homemakers who are duty bound to stay home and take care of children and all the domestic chores. Men were however considered as the bread winners hence, they engaged in works to earn a living. The role of women as domestic beings was also evident in AC3 where Iyabo's husband, dealt with the book keeping roles and the management of the bakery whereas Iyabo performed the domestic chores. This finding confirms the assertion by Lemish (2020) that animated cartoons provide children with lessons that shape their perception about gender roles and stereotypes.

In AC1, Sade was depicted as a helpless woman who needed the help and protection of a man. This finding is in tandem with the results of Jimenez (2022) who also found out that women are usually depicted as helpless beings who need the protection of men. Etido was referred to as "just a woman" by the chief warrior because of the mentality that women are underdogs and could not compare to men. Etido's powers were therefore underestimated because of the notion of male superiority. Isi Agu intermittently offered assistance to the female outcasts anytime they were engaged in warfare. The women however, showed their displeasure and dislike for those assistance which they deemed as unwarranted and uncalled for. Etido asserts her

power and refers to Isi Agu's assistance as unnecessary because she had the situation under control and did not need help. It is interesting to note that women in AC2 were portrayed as independent beings capable of making it on their own. This finding contradicts that of Baig et al. (2021) who revealed that animated cartoons portray women as dependent beings who rely on men in order to have a successful life.

The images of women in AC1 and AC2 were overly objectified to portray them as attractive. Although Sade, wore a cloth around her body to suit her background as a village girl, her curvature, body shape and cleavage were clearly drawn in the attire. Women were also presented as always conscious of their looks especially, Princess Adaeze who exhibited great concern about her physical appearance. This is an affirmation of Coyne et al.'s (2016) study which found out that girl, especially, princesses are portrayed as overly concerned about their physical appearance.

In AC2, the women; Etido, Mitai, Tari and Azuka were overly objectified. Little Azuka was however not objectified as she wore a long cloth unlike the other women. However, as a young woman, she was portrayed in revealing clothing. A possible explanation for this may be that, objectification is targeted at young women.

These findings are consistent with Baig et al (2021) who revealed that children's animated cartoons are forums for the dissemination of certain ideas about gender construction and what is required of the male and female gender. Ahmad and Wahab (2017) however warn that persistent exposure to messages of sexism and gender representation and stereotypes are likely to desensitise children on gender stereotypes into accepting gender representations as the norm.

Finally, a critical analysis of AC1 shows an underrepresentation of women. Though the females in the animated cartoons outnumbered the men, they were

underrepresented and excluded from decision making. The exploits of women were not showcased nor celebrated. In AC1, decision making entirely excluded the women. Even the queens who were expected to play leadership roles per their status were neither involved in decision making processes. Women were presented as second fiddle to men and this is seen in excerpt 35 where Sade handed over the rulership of the kingdom to Akin;

*Sade: Thank you very much for this great honour. But this is not what I want. All I want, all I have ever wanted is just have a family and friends and just be a normal girl next door. If not for Akin, who fought a great battle and won*  
(AC1)

Sade might have handed over the throne because of the belief that she was undeserving by virtue of her physiological makeup as a woman. Since the movie purported to project women as capable of taking over the reign of power, it would have been appropriate to have Sade as ruler of the kingdom to send the signal that females are capable leaders or rulers. AC1 rather enforced the gender stereotype of the domination and superiority of men and this time, it was perpetuated by the princess herself. Sade handed over the crown to Akin and this might perhaps be because she saw herself as unworthy to take up that responsibility. Sade probably saw kingship or leadership as reserved for men and not women. Unconsciously, that act of Sade advances and preaches the phenomenon of male dominance and superiority. Although the lead character in AC2 was a girl, women were underrepresented unlike men. For instance, among the multitude of warriors of Odike, there was no female representation despite the fact that the movie depicted some women as capable warriors. The warriors were all men depicted as brave and fearless.



AC3 also witnessed the high underrepresentation of both girls and women although the movie revolved around a girl. There was very minimal representation of women in the township of Oloibiri. In Tamuno's class, there were very few girls who were overshadowed by the boys except for Elsie and Yin. This observation is an affirmation of earlier results by Kazanoglu (2015) who affirm the strong existence of gender disparity and underrepresentation of women in animated cartoons. Such underrepresentation of girls and women in animated cartoons consequently teaches children that girls and women are predestined for underrepresentation and inequality.

#### **4.1.3 Belief in Superstition and the Supernatural**

AC1, AC2 and AC3 portrayed some African superstitious beliefs and the belief in the supernatural. Vyse (2013) define superstition as the expected consequence of a number of psychological processes. Tenkorang et al. (2011) assert that superstition is mostly prevalent in Africa. According to Vyse (2013), despite technological and scientific advancement, superstition remains widespread. In AC1 for instance, the superstitious belief that any child of a witch is also a witch could not be substantiated but was rigidly enforced to the detriment of the supposed culprits. Nike was declared a witch because of the disappearance of her husband. Sade, was also declared a witch because of the superstitious belief that the daughter of a witch is also a witch. Furthermore, attributing Olurombi's to a curse was also unsubstantiated and thereby based on superstition.

In AC2, the mark in Azuka's hands was believed to be the mark of *Uru* which possessed supernatural powers and the mark of immortality as exemplified in excerpt 7;

*There are several rumours about the mark of Uru. Many believe it has the mark of immortality...Many will hunt you down with the intent to kill you. Others will with the intent to capture you and use the alleged powers of the symbol for their selfish interest (AC2).*

Again, though humans, characters like Mitai, Etido and Isi-Agu possessed supernatural powers. Azuka was believed to be cursed for bearing the mark of Uru and so she had to be sacrificed to prevent her curse from spreading in order to save the lives of many. Mitai's alopecia (lack of hair) which might be as a result of a medical condition was considered a curse. These beliefs are reflected in excerpts 8 and 9;

*Chief Warrior: Protection, that child is an abomination. She bears the symbol of doom. If we kill her now, we will save thousands of lives. (AC2)*

*Akika: Mitai was rejected by her parents after she was born without hair. They believe she was a curse and left her to die in a jungle*

*I will kill you in order to set you free from the spell of Uru (AC2)*

It is interesting to note that, although AC3 portrayed a sophisticated and advanced society, it was also interspersed with some superstitious and supernatural beliefs. For instance, Mr. Edwin was believed to have been cursed because of his economic woes and inability to secure a job. The Motley Mopsters also believed that Lady Bukkit's presence in their midst was divinely orchestrated. These are reflected in excerpts 10 and 11;

*Mr. Edwin: People say I'm cursed that's why I can't get a job*

*Bukky: Why won't you move to a far place where no one knows you are cursed*  
*Excerpt 10 (AC3)*

*Maybe the universe led you here for a purpose. Excerpt 11 (AC3)*

This finding is consistent with Goldstein and Alperson (2020) who confirm the overwhelming existence of supernatural elements in children's media.

#### **4.1.4 Social Values**

Affirming Kidenda's (2018) assertion that animated cartoons offer vital and valuable lessons to children, it was found out that all the three animated cartoons were embedded with valuable lessons. Şenocak and Ayyildiz (2021) can therefore not be challenged in their assertion that animated cartoons do not only serve as sources of entertainment for children but also provide them with important lessons such as the promotion of moral and cultural values, development of critical thinking skills and self confidence. AC1 is embedded with social values such as remorsefulness, inclusivity and team spirit. In AC1, King Adide acknowledges his contribution to the mishappenings in his kingdom caused largely by the exchange of the two babies. Despite the fact that he did not play an active role in the act and was ignorant about the switching of babies, he accepted the blame. This was partly because the abuse of his first two wives and his yearning for a male heir at all cost contributed to the incident. King Adide acknowledged that had there been no law that only boys could ascend the throne, all those ill actions would have been forestalled. If he had not sacked his first two wives for bearing him only daughters, there would not have been any pressure on Queen Atike to produce a son as heir. Not only did King Adide accept his mistakes but also took steps to rectify those social constructions which had become entrenched customs. For the first time in the history of Yemoja, King Adide went against the norms of Yemoja by crowning Princess Sade as his successor as indicated in excerpt 2.

Similarly, in AC2, Azuka acknowledged her mistakes and apologised unreservedly to Etido and her other friends for allowing her rage take control of her actions. Likewise, when Bukky's inaction of failing to dispose off the garbage led to the closure of her father's bakery, she acknowledged her mistakes and showed remorse by wishing to go back in time to fix the problem as demonstrated in excerpt 3;

*Bukky: I wish I could go back in time and fix what happened to my father's bakery*

*Take me to where I was before and I will right the wrong I did*

*Lady Buckit: Yeah, we all make mistakes. I've made my fair share*

*Bukky: I'm sorry about the bakery. It's all my fault (AC3)*

The theme of inclusivity and team spirit was evident in AC1, especially, among the animals in the jungle. Upon hearing the story about the secret princess and their misfortunes, the animals teamed up and deliberated on the best way of informing the king. This is depicted in excerpt 4;

*Tortoise: We have all heard about the story of the princess and her mother...*

*They both live in the jungle, scared and lonely. It is up to us to do the right thing.*

*Lion: It is the right thing to do and so we will do it (AC1)*

The use of the pronoun "we" in excerpt 3 signifies the virtues; inclusivity and team spirit that existed among the anthropomorphised animals. More so, the theme of togetherness and teamwork was embedded in AC2 as it taught the value and importance of working together as a team. The outcasts remained united as a family irrespective of their different backgrounds and saved Azuka's life.

AC3 portrayed the success story of the Motley Mopsters as a result of the team spirit and togetherness that prevailed among them as exemplified in excerpts 5 and 6;

*Lady Bukit: We're all coming along. You can't do it alone.*

*Tam's Dad: You did all these alone.*

*Tamuno: My friends helped*

*Tam's Dad: I really appreciate this. Thank you son. I'm proud of you*

*Excerpt 5 (AC3)*

*Tamuno: We did a great job today. That's what family is about.*

*Motley Mopsters: Together we're the Motley mopsters*

*Dustee: Lady Bucket, I'm not sure where you came from but we are a family.*

*So we've got your back*

*Lady Buckit : Cheer up. Remember you taught me "It's our job to do all the cleaning with diligence. What we do is a service to humanity*

*Excerpt 6 (AC3)*

The use of the first person plural pronoun 'our' and 'we' in excerpts 5 and 6 depict the theme of inclusivity and team spirit, which are positive social values. This finding is in line with earlier observations by Habib and Soliman (2015) which assert that animated cartoons impact children positively, hence, could be fashioned to instill positive social values and positively impact the behaviour of children.

#### **4.1.5 Violence**

Following from the analysis of data, the theme of violence featured prominently in AC1 and AC2. WHO (2002) defines violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological

harm, mal-development or deprivation”. It can therefore be inferred from the above that violence has both physical and psychological effects. Most studies on children’s animated cartoons have attested to the fact that animated cartoons are heavily embedded with violence and have thus been largely criticised for instigating and reinforcing violence among children (Atabey, 2021; Turkmen, 2016).

In AC1, violence was used as a means of resolving issues as demonstrated by the two Princes who always resorted to wrestling. Wrestling, an act of violence (Philips et al., 2009), was portrayed as a way of life of the people of Yemoja, Azinta and Zatanda and mostly involved men. In AC1, wrestling was portrayed as a way of showing one’s bravado especially among the Princes as depicted in Figure 1. Figure 2 and figure 3 also depict the theme of violence in AC2.

**Figure 1: A Display of Violence**



Source: AC1

**Figure 2: A Display of Violence**



Source: AC2

**Figure 3: A Display of Violence**



Source: AC2

In AC1, culturally, wrestling competitions were held among princes of the kingdoms to determine the winner of an ultimate prize; a princess. In order for Akin to rescue Sade from Prince Azuka, wrestling was seen as the most appropriate and obvious form of making that decision. Violence was thus portrayed as an accepted norm among the people; hence, it was used as the decider. Violence was deeply rooted in the people's culture to the extent that King Adide saw wrestling as a way of uniting the kingdoms. Prince Azuka also used violence as a tool of control.

Again, AC2 was heavily embedded with scenes of violence. The introductory scene involved the warriors of Odike fiercely clad in warring attire, wielding spears and swords, chasing Little Azuka in order to kill her. Azuka was forcefully pushed down a valley by the chief warrior with the intention to murder her. Also, all the characters in [AC2], including the female wielded fighting weapons and were seen fighting their opponents. Excerpt 1 demonstrates the theme of violence in AC2;

*Tari: Forfeit your weapons. Now get up and fight like a man (AC2)*

Notwithstanding the fact that AC1 and AC2 were embedded with valuable lessons for viewers (children), they were heavily embedded with scenes of violence thereby confirming the assertions of Acheampong (2017) and Atabey (2021) who all contend that children's animated cartoons are embedded with violent themes. This has implication on the socialisation of children who are open to learning and shaping through imitation at the phase of childhood (Casey et al., 2008). Exposing children to animated cartoons embedded with violence can therefore trigger aggressive thoughts, insensitivity and violence among children as found out by Yousaf et al. (2015) and Zhang et al. (2019).



#### 4.1.6 Dynamism of Culture

Another dominant theme embedded in the selected animated cartoons was the non-static and changing nature of cultural values and customs. Cultural values and customs form an integral part of a people's culture and encompasses the norms, taboos and beliefs of a group of people (Idang, 2015). Idang (2015) furthers that in Africa, cultural values and customs are viewed as a heritage passed on from one generation to the other, hence are viewed as static and unchanging. The culture of Africans valuing male children over female children is an age old tradition which is considered paramount (Etuk, 2002) hence, male children are regarded as obvious successors to their fathers.

In AC1, the static and unchanging nature of African customs and traditions are brought to bear as only male children are eligible to succeed their fathers and this was evident in the animated cartoon. This stance however changed in the end as King Adide went against the norms and culture of the land by crowning her daughter, Sade as the king as expressed in excerpt 2;

*“I was about to do something that had never been done before. Something that no living king in our time has ever done” (AC1)*

The data demonstrated that culture, customs and traditional values are not static but dynamic and susceptible to change for the benefit of society. This is echoed in Idang's (2015) call for the elimination and amendment of the negative aspects of culture to facilitate progression and dynamism in the society.

#### **4. 2. Research Question Two:**

##### **How do the content of the selected children's animated cartoons portray the enactment of power and hegemony?**

Issues of power and hegemony among others are central to CDA (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018) since the focus of CDA is on social problems, especially, how discourse contributes to the production and sustenance of power abuse and hegemony, among others (Van Dijk, 2001). With respect to the second research question, the tenets of Thompson's (1990) Modes of Operation of Ideology were used to explore how the content of the selected animated cartoons could be used to enact power and hegemony. Authorisation, concealment, affiliation, alienation, entrenchment and appeal to emotion were identified as modes through which power and hegemony were enacted in the selected animated cartoons. Table 3 presents a summary of the findings on how the content of the selected animated cartoons could be used to enact power and hegemony. The summary table gives a breakdown of the modes, typifications, enactment and also provides excerpts from the data to substantiate the findings.

**Table 3: Summary of Findings**

Mode	Typification	Enactment	Excerpt
<b>Authorisation</b>	Justification	Power and Hegemony	<i>Robo: And you cannot tell your dad and great grand dad <b>because I will tell them that I caught you cheating last term</b> (AC3).</i>
	Camouflaging	Hegemony	<i>I promise I will take care of him just like you will take care of my daughter. Please, you know what would happen to me if the king found out that I had a girl.... Please, please, you can visit us anytime. Please... please...I will give you anything you want (AC1).</i>
	Oral Tradition	Power and Hegemony	<i>Sade: I had a dream. About the story you told me. It felt so real. I'm scared Nike (shouting): If you are like this, I will stop telling you stories Nike: It's just a story. You see, my mother told me all these stories and many people tell these stories in our village. (AC1).</i>
<b>Concealment</b>	Positivation	Hegemony	<i>With the pretence of <b>giving the farmer and his wife baby gifts</b>, the queen invited them to the palace (AC1).</i>
	Substitution	Hegemony	<i>Etido: She is under my protection now Chief warrior: You really want me to believe you are protecting the girl from the goodness of your heart? You can't fool me (AC2).</i>
Mode	Typification	Enactment	Excerpt
<b>Affiliation</b>	Similarisation	Power and Hegemony	<i>Akika: Adisa was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. ... Mitai was rejected by her parents after she was born without hair. ... I've been an <b>outcast</b> since childhood. You see Azuka, <b>we are outcasts</b> and we are going to stand by you until the end (AC2).</i>
	Inclusion	Power and Hegemony	<i>Dustee: Lady Bucket, I'm not sure where you came from but we are a family (AC3)</i>

<b>Alienation</b>	Otherisation	Hegemony	<i>Mitai was rejected by her parents after she was born without hair. They believe she was a curse and left her to die in a jungle (AC2).</i>
	Castigation of the Other	Power and Hegemony	<i>Chief Warrior: Protection, that child is an <b>abomination</b>. She bears the <b>symbol of doom</b>. If we kill her now, we will save thousands of lives (AC2).</i>
<b>Entrenchment</b>	Normalisation	Power and Hegemony	<i>Atike is the third wife of King Adide. King Adide had suddenly woken up one morning and sent his two wives packing after having six children, all girls. All he wanted was a boy who could take the throne after him according to the culture of the land (AC1).</i>
	Attribution to Innate Traits	Power and Hegemony	<i>Adisa: Forfeit your weapons. Now get up and fight like a <b>man</b> (AC2) Chief warrior: What are you waiting for? She is just a <b>woman</b> (AC2).</i>
<b>Entrenchment</b>	Inactivisation	Power and Hegemony	<i>As the village elders held a meeting on the most terrible thing to do to them. One <b>man</b> suggested that ... Another <b>man</b> said they should put them on a ... Another <b>man</b> said they should ... So many <b>men</b> came up with different wicked ideas (AC1).</i>
<b>Appeal to Emotion</b>		Power and Hegemony	<i>Queen Atike (crying): <b>I am finished, I am finished, help me, help me, help me oh</b>. What will I tell the king, what will I tell the king (AC1).</i>

#### 4.2.1 Authorisation

Authorisation was identified as one of the modes through which power and hegemony were enacted in the content of the selected animated cartoons per the focus of the present study. Authorisation involves the use of logical reasoning as grounds for the establishment of relations of dominance. The data revealed that authorisation could be achieved through three means; justification, camouflaging and oral tradition. This

revelation is in line with Thompson's (1990) mode of legitimisation which involves the use of logic to establish relations of dominance through the discursive strategies of rationalisation, universalisation and narrativisation.

#### 4.2.1.1 Justification

Justification employs the use of logic or common sense to justify social relations. Through justification, the actor of a symbolic form is able to appeal to an individual or a group's sense of reasoning as a way of gaining authority. Acceptable reasons are given for the existence or practice of an act or event and this makes it difficult for people to question. Thus, relations of power and hegemony are established through justification.

Excerpt 36 demonstrates the use of justification by Queen Atike to convince and influence Nike to accept her request of having the two babies switched;

*Nike: Is this why you invited us? I cannot, I cannot give you my baby*

*Queen Atike: I promise to take care of him just like you will take care of my daughter. Please, you know what will happen to me if the king finds out I had a girl. He will send me and my baby packing and I do not want this baby to suffer.*

*(ACI)*

Although Nike and her husband were angered and shocked by Queen Atike's request, the queen was successful in convincing the couple to accept her request by employing the strategy of justification to legitimise her request. The queen employed a series of reasoning to woo them into agreeing to her request.

Excerpt 37 demonstrates the use of justification by Nike to convince Sade to stay away from Prince Akin by recounting the events which led to their escape from Yemoja;

*Nike: Sade, I want you to stay away from their side of the stream. I don't want you to get in trouble. I am your mother. I know what is best for you.*

*Nike: You are old enough now to know the truth...They were going to do terrible things to us. I could not let you... let us suffer that fate. By staying here...You see, everything I did was for our own good.*

*Sade: Mother I'm sorry, I am sorry (AC1)*

Through justification, Nike was able to appeal to Sade's logical reasoning on the need for her to stay away from Prince Akin and the Kingdom of Yemoja. In excerpt 38, justification was employed by the Tortoise to get the animals to see reason in doing the right thing by telling them about the deplorable condition of Sade and her mother;

*Tortoise: We have all heard about the story of the princess and her mother. The villagers believe her mother is a witch since the day her father did not return from the farm and now they both live in the jungle, scared and lonely. It is up to us to do the right thing (AC1)*

#### **4.2.1.2 Camouflaging**

In the view of Thompson (1990), symbolic forms are not always explicit as some are emphasised whereas others are excluded in order to benefit a party. Through camouflaging, relations of power and dominance are created by concealing certain truths for the benefit of an individual or a few. For instance, a situation or idea is presented as advantageous to a larger group of people when in reality just a few stand to benefit. Beyond the façade or camouflage, lies a hidden agenda which is unknown to the audience.

Through camouflaging, Queen Atike was successful at authorising the swapping of the two babies by presenting it as an arrangement that will inure to the benefit of both parties when in reality, her aim was to safeguard her marriage by providing an heir to the throne as demonstrated in excerpt 39;

*I promise I will take care of him just like you will take care of my daughter.*

*Please, you know what would happen to me if the king found out that I had a girl. ... Please, please, you can visit us anytime. Please... please...I will give you anything you want. (AC1)*

Later, Queen Atike's selfish interests were made clear when she got rid of the farmer which also culminated into Nike and Sade's escape from the village. Unaware of the intentions of Queen Atike, Nike bought into her request thinking it was going to be mutually beneficial to them all. Likewise, Queen Atike's invitation to Nike and her husband to the palace was camouflaged as presenting gifts to the couple. By this act, Queen Atike is presented as a kind and generous woman especially, to the people in the palace who were unaware of the hidden plan. Nike also employed camouflaging to convince Sade to stay away from Yemoja as in excerpt 40;

*Nike: You are old enough now to know the truth...They were going to do terrible things to us. I could not let you... let us suffer that fate. By staying here...You see, everything I did was for our own good.*

*Sade: Mother I'm sorry, I am sorry (AC1)*

This might be to protect Nike's image and not necessarily for Sade's sake. In a similar vein, Mr. Tortoise also agreed to embark on the journey to inform the King about the plight of Sade and Nike because of his personal interest as the husband of Nike. The other animals who had no idea that Mr. Tortoise was Nike's missing husband thought his action was solely to protect Mr. Deer. Tortoise's expedition was

therefore for the benefit of his family and not for the welfare of Mr. Deer in excerpt 41;

*Tortoise: I said I will go. I probably will not come back but at least I will not become somebody's dinner. I cannot let Mr. Deer take that risk of becoming somebody's dinner (AC1).*

The strategy of camouflaging confirms Thompson's (1990) universalisation strategy which presents institutional arrangements which serve particular groups in a manner as though it is serving the interest of all.

#### **4.2.1.3 Oral Tradition**

Oral tradition refers to folklore, tradition, storytelling, songs and poems which are passed down by word of mouth from one generation to the other. Oral tradition, when transmitted from generation to generation transmogrifies to points of reference and influences the values and beliefs of individuals. In Africa, oral tradition is highly valued and Iheanacho (2021) assert that the diversity of Africa's oral tradition is the source of their indelible cultural identity as Africans. Storytelling was used as a way of passing down morals, traditions and customs down from one generation to another. Parents usually tell stories to their children as a way of socialising them into the accepted norms and performances of their society. Storytelling is therefore a way of authorisation because lessons from the stories told to children are used by children to build their ideology and perceptions about their culture. The story about Olurombi, the childless woman, provides insight about the humiliation and stigma associated with childlessness.



It is evident that storytelling is part of the culture of the people. The story told to Sade had an impact on her as she dreamt about it in the night. Oral tradition therefore plays a significant role in the lives of children and in society as exemplified in excerpt 42;

*Sade :I had a dream. About the story you told me. It felt so real. I'm scared'*

*Nike: It's just a story. You see, my mother told me all these stories and many people tell these stories in our village. (AC1)*

In AC1, storytelling was used as a means to pass down traditions and customs. It can therefore be argued that oral tradition can be engaged as a means of changing or influencing a child's ideology about life. Oral tradition was employed in AC2 to recount the stories of Uru and the other outcasts to Azuka. They were used as a mode to pass down the story of Uru to Azuka as part of a timeless tradition. In a similar way, Akika also narrated the story of Tari, Mitai and the other outcasts to Azuka to keep her abreast of those happenings and also for the outcasts to attain legitimacy in the eyes of Azuka.



#### **4.2.2 Concealment**

The data revealed the enactment of power and hegemony through concealment. In concealment, relations of power and hegemony are constructed by covering them up in order to make such relations appear pleasant. From the analysis, positivisation and substitution emerged as the two means of concealment. This result is an affirmation of Thompson's (1990) Dissimulation mode. However, whereas Thompson's is typified by three strategies; displacement, euphemisation and trope, Concealment is typified by two.

#### 4.2.1.1 Positivation

Positivation emerged as a mode of concealing relations of power and hegemony. Positivation entails the act of modifying or redefining actions or events in a positive light to make them appear pleasant. Through positivation, negative or unpleasant actions or events are transmogrified to take on positive qualities with the aim of evoking positive appraisal. The mode of positivation is in sync with Thompson's (1990) Euphemisation discursive strategy of dissimulation where unpleasant actions or social relations are redescribed to appear pleasant (Thompson, 1990).

In AC1, the idea of swapping the babies was concealed through the process of positivation. Queen Atike was able to convince Nike and her husband to agree to her demands by concealing the negativity associated with the act and making it sound good. The act of secretly exchanging babies was redescribed to take on a pleasant facet and to elicit a positive valuation. In excerpt 43, the word 'exchanged' was used to describe the swapping of the two babies;

*The queen's bouncing baby girl was **exchanged** with the farmer and his wife's baby boy (AC1).*

The popular saying, "exchange is no robbery", hence, exchanging two babies on mutual grounds is no robbery. The secret exchange of babies was thus positivised to seem pleasant. The Queen's intention of swapping the babies was initially concealed when the couples were invited. Her invitation was positivised under the guise of presenting gifts to the couple. This might have portrayed Queen Atike as a kind woman and thoughtful woman for extending a hand of generosity to the poor farmer and his wife.

#### 4.2.1.2 Substitution

Substitution emerged as the second means of concealment for the enactment of power and hegemony. In substitution, an action or event is modified to either take on a positive description or negative description. Whereas positivisation involves redescribing something to take on a pleasant connotation, in substitution, expressions or actions either take on a positive or negative quality hence, the name substitution. In some cases, positivisation could be classified as substitution. Excerpt 43 exemplifies substitution and also qualifies as positivisation where the negativity associated with swapping the babies was substituted. In excerpt 44, Etido's good intentions for protecting Azuka were substituted to connote a sense of negativity;

*Etido: She is under my protection now*

*Chief warrior: You really want me to believe you are protecting the girl from the goodness of your heart? You can't fool me (AC2).*

The strategy of substitution is a confirmation of Thompson's (1990) displacement discursive strategy of dissimulation whereby an utterance or event goes through transformation by either taking on a positive or negative description.

#### 4.2.3 Affiliation

Power and hegemony were enacted in the content of the animated cartoons through the process of affiliation. Affiliation involves the propensity to seek association or connection to an individual or a group irrespective of the differences that exist with regards to beliefs, values, language and class among others. Through affiliation, individuals are able to establish or maintain relationship with others by building a collective union. In this study, similarisation and inclusion were identified as means of affiliation, a finding which supports Thompson's (1990) third mode; unification which is characterised by symbolisation of unity and standardisation.

#### 4.2.3.1 Similarisation

Similarisation refers to the situation whereby a group of people or individuals who share like or related characteristics or attributes view themselves as one people as a result of the things they share in common. These characteristics or attributes may include class, language, ethnicity, religion, ideologies, among others. Oneness or unity is forged as a result of the shared or common attributes.

Hegemony was enacted in AC2 through the strategy of similarisation as indicated in excerpt 45;

*Etido: When everyone had forgotten about Uru, you were born with the same symbol that Uru had on her forehead. (AC2)*

As a result of the mark in Azuka's palm, believed to be the mark of Uru, Azuka was linked to the evil sorceress, Uru. The mark of Uru served as a symbol or feature that linked the sorceress Uru and Azuka. This affiliation was drawn as a result of the similarity they both shared. In spite of Azuka's ignorance of the symbol in her palm, a close association is drawn between Azuka and Uru.

The Mark of Uru also served as a symbol of affiliation that united Azuka and the band of outcasts who saw her as one of them as shown in excerpt 46;

*Akika: Adisa was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit. ... Mitai was rejected by her parents after she was born without hair. ... I've been an outcast since childhood. You see Azuka, we are outcasts and we are going to stand by you until the end (AC2).*

By virtue of the mark of Uru in Azuka's palm, the outcasts saw her as one of them, hence, embraced Azuka into their fold. They saw themselves as one people sharing similar or common traits, ie. being labeled as outcasts despite their differences with regards to ethnicity, gender and class. Although they came from different

backgrounds, one thing kept them united and that was the label placed on them as outcasts who were ill-treated and rejected. Also, through similarisation, the anthropomorphised animals in the jungle embraced themselves as one people or group. The language of the animals served to unite them although they had their different beliefs and opinions.

#### **4.2.3.2 Inclusion**

Inclusion involves the act of seeing and accepting other individuals as part of a group irrespective of their backgrounds, traits, language, class, etc. Inclusion embraces individuals as one people and this transcends their shared or different characteristics. In AC 1, Yemoja and Zatanda shared different characteristics with regards to ethnicity, language, etc. Despite the differences that divided them, the people of Zatanda were happy about the turn of events in Yemoja and celebrated with them to signify that despite the things that divide them, they are one people. Similarly, though the three kingdoms had their peculiar customs and traditions, they jointly participated in the annual festival and the wrestling matches.

Hegemony and power were enacted in AC1 during the wrestling match to rescue Sade. Irrespective of the benefits that accrued to the winner of the match and the associated privileges for the winning kingdom, King Adide viewed the competition as a means of uniting the two kingdoms and expressed his joy about the wrestling match in excerpt 47;

*King Adide : Though the reward is for the winner, it is a great opportunity to get our two kingdoms together (AC1)*

The first person plural pronouns ‘our’ and ‘we’ were also used to show unity of purpose and togetherness in excerpt 48;

*Our daughter is a genius*

*Motley Mopsters: Together we're the Motley mopsters*

*Dustee: Lady Bucket, I'm not sure where you came from but we are a family*

*Lady Buckit : Cheer up. Remember you taught me " It's our job. (AC3)*

#### **4.2.4 Alienation**

Alienation emerged as one of the modes through which power and hegemony were enacted in the animated cartoons. Alienation entails a feeling of being separated from a group or the lack of connection or association to a group or individuals. The feeling of a lack of belongingness may be as a result of certain differences although there may be common or shared attributes. The mode of alienation is akin to Thompson's mode of Fragmentation which is achieved through differentiation and expurgation of the other (Thompson, 1990). In this study, otherisation and castigation of the other were identified as the two ways through which alienation was achieved.

##### **4.2.4.1 Otherisation**

Otherisation as a typification of alienation places emphasis on the attributes or characteristics that differentiate a group of people despite the things they share in common. Otherisation is the act of treating or considering people as different on grounds of ethnicity, race, language and class among others despite their shared attributes. Power and hegemony were enacted through otherisation in both AC1 and AC2. In AC1, the use of facial marks as a way of identification and the use of flags by the various kingdoms demonstrated distinction among the kingdoms. Again, hegemony was enacted in AC1 through otherisation by the creation of class relationships where the kings, princes, princesses and queens formed the powerful and endowed class whereas the commoners with limited privileges made up the lower

class. In AC1, hegemony was realised through otherisation where emphasis was placed on the characteristics that divided the animals and the humans as in excerpt 49;

*How will that help? We don't even speak their language (AC1)*

Language served as a barrier between the animals and the humans despite the characteristics that united them. Language was therefore an instrument of otherisation between the humans and the animals.

The enactment of hegemony in AC2 was mainly through otherisation. In excerpt 50; Mitai was discriminated against and rejected even by her own parents for being bald;

*Mitai was rejected by her parents after she was born without hair. They believe she was a curse and left her to die in a jungle (AC2)*

In spite of the consanguinean relationship that existed between Mitai and her parents, her baldness served as a mark of differentiation which surpassed the bond they shared as a family and blood relations. In addition, there existed a clear distinction between the outcasts and non-outcasts who lived separately from each other.

#### **4.2.4.2 Castigation of the Other**

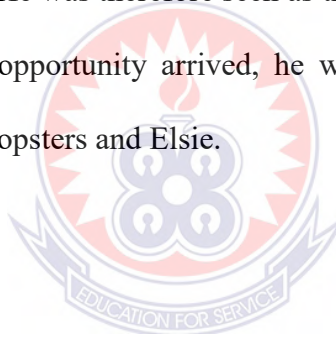
The second mode of alienation, castigation of the other involves the situation whereby the 'other', created through otherisation is vilified as a societal evil whose existence is inimical to society. In excerpt 51, Nike and her daughter were constructed as enemies (other) and declared as evil and harmful;

*Three days passed, but it was not until the seventh day that the villagers declared Nike a witch and threatened to punish her and her daughter who they say must also be a witch like her mother. As the village elders held a meeting on the most terrible thing to do to them (AC1).*

The community was called upon to unite and fight them by coming up with the most terrible things to do to them. Nike and Sade were castigated by elders and the entire village because of the belief that they were witches and responsible for the disappearance of the farmer. They therefore had to escape to another village for their safety. Excerpt 52 exemplifies the enactment of hegemony through castigation of the other;

*Chief Warrior: Protection, that child is an abomination. She bears the symbol of doom. If we kill her now, we will save thousands of live (AC2).*

Because of the mark of Uru, Azuka was projected as an enemy who has to be killed in order to save lives. Again, Robo was portrayed as the other or the enemy because of his bullying acts in AC3. He was therefore seen as the enemy who needed to be taught a lesson, and when the opportunity arrived, he was mercilessly dealt with by his classmates, the Motley Mopsters and Elsie.



#### **4.2.5 Entrenchment**

The data revealed the enactment of hegemony and power mostly through entrenchment. Entrenchment is the situation whereby ideas, habits, attitudes or ways of doing things become established or firmly rooted as the ways of doing things to the extent that modification or alteration become almost impossible. Over time, situations are seen as unchangeable because they become ingrained. The strategy of entrenchment is in line with Thompson's (1990) Reification mode which is typified by four discursive strategies; externalisation, naturalisation, passivisation and nominalisation. However, from the current study, three discursive strategies were identified in association with entrenchment and they include; normalisation, attribution to innate traits and inactivisation.



#### 4.2.5.1 Normalisation

Normalisation presents certain ways of doing things as the norm or the accepted standard. Relations of power and hegemony are therefore seen as the norm and people conform to these standards to the extent that change becomes impracticable. Normalisation is sometimes used as a way of manipulating people to achieve certain results. Normalisation was prevalently used in all the animated cartoons. Excerpt 53 shows the enactment of power and hegemony through normalisation;

*Both of his (King Adide) sisters were queens married to kings in other towns.*  
(AC1)

AC1 portrayed the existence of an entrenched tradition of intermarriages between royals since King Adide's two sisters were all queens married to kings. This was further reflected in the conversation between Prince Akin and his father about the age-long tradition where a princess is offered as the price for a wrestling match involving princes. Though an established tradition, it was presented as unchallengeable and static, hence Akin's participation in the contest despite his disaffection for Princess Adaeze.

Excerpt 54 demonstrates the normalisation of hegemony and power where only a male child (prince) was eligible to succeed his father (the king) per the culture of Yemoja;

*Atike is the third wife of King Adide. King Adide had suddenly woken up one morning and sent his two wives packing after having six children, all girls. All he wanted was a boy who could take the throne after him according to the culture of the land. (AC1)*

This custom was viewed as static and unchanging; hence, all of King Adide's six daughters were ineligible to succeed him. King Adide therefore had to marry a third wife to bear him a male heir as required by the traditions and customs of the land.

In AC2, hegemony was enacted through normalisation. Per the customs and beliefs of the people, the mark of Uru was considered a curse and abomination. Azuka was therefore seen as a threat to society and had to be annihilated. Mitai and Akika also suffered similar misfortunes because of the customs and belief system of the people. Superstitious and supernatural beliefs were entrenched through normalization by being presented as ingrained and as an essential part of the people's belief system as demonstrated in excerpts 51 and 54.

#### 4.2.5.2 Attribution to Innate Traits

Certain actions and events were portrayed as static by being attributed to innate traits. Innate traits refer to the qualities or traits of an individual which are inborn or intrinsic (Mitchell, 2018). Social realities such as gender performances and sex roles are presented as intrinsic, hence are deemed as unavoidable and attributed to nature. Hegemony and power were realised in AC1 when Nike used her role as Sade's mother to convince Sade to understand her actions and also earn her trust. Through attribution to innate traits, power and hegemony were enacted by portraying mothers as people who have the welfare of their children at heart; hence, mothers know what is best for their children. This is depicted in excerpt 55;

*Nike: Sade, I want you to stay away from their side of the stream. I don't want you to get in trouble. I am your mother. I know what is best for you (AC1).*

Excerpt 56 demonstrates the enactment of hegemony through the discursive strategies of both attribution to innate traits and normalisation, an affirmation of Thompson's (1990) proposition that the modes interrelate and sometimes reinforce one another;

*Akin: There's going to be a wrestling match. The winner is supposed to take a bride. It involves two princes and one princess. Two princes will fight for the princess. (AC1)*

Per the culture of the people of Yemoja and Zatanda, princesses were naturally viewed as trophies for princes, hence, it has become a normal practice as it is widely accepted by the people and considered unavoidable. Through attribution to innate traits, the socially constructed reality of princes wrestling over princesses was also presented as innate and unavoidable. And so the presentation of women as 'trophies' or rewards for wrestling matches had become naturalised and was widely accepted among the entire community including the princesses themselves who lacked the temerity to resist such hegemony. Likewise, AC2 portrayed the enactment of hegemonic masculinity through innateness as captured in excerpt 57;

*Isi Agu: They are warriors. In order to maintain their dignity they will go home and report that mission accomplished (AC2).*

The warriors of Odike, all men were presented as people who were naturally concerned about their dignity and ego. Masculinity was ascribed to upholding one's dignity and ego and so, the warriors would go any length to protect their dignity and ego even if it meant concealing the truth about Azuka's survival would be detrimental to the existence of the entire community. Though the warriors failed in their mission to kill Azuka, they were unlikely to inform their kinsmen about their failure lest they be classified as weaklings.

Excerpt 58 in AC2 shows the enactment of hegemony and power through attribution to the innate traits of Etido as a woman;

*Chief warrior: You dare to stand in the way of the warriors of Odike. Now woman, get out of the way.*

*Chief warrior: What are you waiting for? She is just a woman (AC2)*

Etido was regarded as an underdog because of her biological and physical makeup as a woman. Etido's strength and capabilities were therefore undermined by the chief warrior who referred to her as "just a woman". The role of women as home makers who were confined to the home and concerned about the performance of domestic chores was also attributed to their innate trait of being feminine.

#### **4.2.5.3 Inactivisation**

The data revealed inactivisation as a means of entrenchment through which power and hegemony operated. Inactivisation entails the establishment of relations dominance by presenting the actor or initiator of an action as nonexistent or absent. The actor of an event is deliberately deleted to satisfy an interest. In some cases, the activities of actors or initiators are also blurred. This finding resonates with Thompson's third discursive strategy of reification; passivisation. Excerpt 58 demonstrates how the actors of the baby swapping exercise or event were inactivised by blurring their identity;

*And so, in the dark of the night, the unthinkable happened. The queen's bouncing baby girl was exchanged with the farmer and his wife's baby boy (AC1).*

In AC1, there was silence on the exploits of women and this might be deliberate. The activities or contributions of women, including the queens who were traditional

figures were inactivated through underrepresentation. Excerpt 59 further shows the inactivation of women in decision making in Yemoja Kingdom as no ideas or suggestions were recorded as emanating from any woman but men;

*As the village elders held a meeting on the most terrible thing to do to them.*

*One man suggested that .... Another man said they should put them on a boat*

*and leave them in the middle of the river.... So many men came up with*

*different wicked ideas. (AC1)*

Similarly, in AC2, the women of Odike were also underrepresented through inactivation. Azuka's mother was never seen except Azuka and Akika's mention of her. The activities of women and girls were also underrepresented in AC3 through inactivation. In Tamuno's class, there were only few girls in the midst of plenty boys and they were overshadowed by the boys except for Elsie and Yin.

From the findings, it is interesting to note that entrenchment emerged as the most used mode in the enactment of hegemony and power. A possible explanation for this result might be due to the fact that Africans view customs and traditions as an essential part of their culture.

#### **4.2.6 Appeal to Emotion**

The appeal to emotion emerged as the sixth mode through which power and hegemony were enacted in the selected animated cartoons. Although Thompson's (1990) provided five modes, he acknowledged that the operation of ideology was not limited to the five prescribed but there could be other modes. In line with the above proposition, the appeal to emotion emerged as a sixth mode. Appeal to emotion is a means of persuading people without the use of logic or facts but through emotional

display. According to McCormac (2014), appealing to emotions rather than the sense of logic is sometimes more compelling than appealing to logic. It seeks to manipulate thereby leading to the establishment of relations of power and hegemony.

By appealing to Nike's emotions, Queen Atike was able to achieve her intent as indicated in excerpt 60;

*Queen Atike (Crying): Please, you know what would happen to me if the king found out that I had a girl. He would send me and my baby packing. I don't want this baby to suffer. I don't want to bring shame on my poor family. Please, please, you can visit us anytime. Please... please... (AC1)*

Queen Atike used emotional appeal to persuade Nike to accept her request of switching the babies. Although Queen Atike employed a chain of reasoning to get Nike and her husband to agree to her demand, her emotional outpour greatly influenced the couple's decision to accept her plea. By appealing to their emotions, the couple was emotionally moved and succumbed to Queen Atike. It could therefore be argued that the couple obliged to Queen Atike's offer out of sheer pity or sympathy and not necessarily because of the justification she made. Furthermore, Nike appealed to Sade's emotions by crying as exemplified in excerpt 61;

*They were going to do terrible things to us. I could not let you... let us suffer that fate. By staying here... You see, everything I did was for our own good (AC1).*

Queen Atike in excerpt 62 was able to convince the midwife to assist her exchange her daughter by appealing to her emotions with her cry and plea for help;

*Queen Atike (sobbing): I am finished, I am finished, help me, help me, help me oh What will I tell the king, what will I tell the king? (AC1)*

From the data, it was found out that the modes which emerged interrelate and reinforce one another. In some situations, one mode may at the same time operate as a different mode. For instance, positivisation could also operate as substitution and attribution to innateness as normalization and this confirms Janks (1998). The most obvious finding was the emergence of entrenchment as the most used mode. This could possibly be explained by the fact that Africans value and cherish customs and traditions.

#### **4.3 Research Question Three:**

**What are the ideologies projected in the content of the selected children's animated cartoons?**

Thompson (1990) explicates that the ways in which individuals think are moulded and influenced by the meaning of language which is not always explicit because whereas some are emphasised, others are excluded. This may be to benefit a dominant group by promoting certain ideologies. Discourses, including animated cartoons therefore serve to promote certain ideologies. An analysis of the data revealed that animated cartoons project certain ideologies. Patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, marriage and childbirth as the ultimate, parent-child power imbalance and sexualisation of women surfaced as the ideologies projected in the selected animated cartoons. Table 4 and table 5 provide summaries of the ideologies projected in the content of the selected animated cartoons. Table 4 and table 5 present the ideologies projected in the selected animated cartoons. Table 4 is a display of the projected ideologies and excerpts from the data depicting the findings. Table 5 is a frequency table of the ideologies projected in the animations. The themes are presented in descending order per the number of

occurrences in the selected animated cartoons. ‘Frequency’ as used in Table 5 indicates the number of occurrences of the theme in the animations.

**Table 4: Ideologies Projected in [AC1], [AC2] and [AC3] with Excerpts**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Excerpt</b>
<b>Patriarchy</b>	<i>All he wanted was a boy who could take the throne after him according to the culture of the land. (AC1)</i>
	<i>Chief warrior: Kill them all. What are you waiting for? She is just a woman (AC2).</i>
	<i>Bukky: I wish I could go back in time and fix what happened to my <b>father’s bakery</b> (AC3)</i>
<b>Sexualisation of Women</b>	<i>Refer to Figure 4 – Figure 10</i>
<b>Hegemonic Masculinity</b>	<i>Queen Atike: Akin, you must reduce your playfulness, you are becoming a man (AC1)</i>
	<i>“They are warriors. In order to maintain their dignity they will go home and report that mission accomplished” (AC2)</i>
	<i>Robo: And you cannot tell your dad and great grand dad...Tiny, timid, twitchy Tam Robo: Elsie isn’t here to save you this time, weakling, weakling (AC3).</i>
<b>Parent-Child Power Imbalance</b>	<i>Akin’s dad: There is no but. The matter is settled. You will not bring shame to us. Akin’s dad: No but I said, no but, the matter is settled (AC1).</i>
	<i>Iyabo: That’s not your homework. I have told you not to mess around with your father’s papers Bukky: I was only trying to help Iyabo (Hits Bukky’s hands): Hands off Bukky Iyabo (shoutin): Bukky, let’s go (AC2)</i>
<b>Marriage and Childbirth as the Ultimate</b>	<i>Please, you know what would happen to me if the king found out that I had a girl. He would send me and my baby packing. (AC1)</i>
	<i>She was childless and because of this, other women in the kingdom made fun of her. For them, having a child was the most important thing for a woman (AC1).</i>



**Table 5: Frequency Table of Ideologies Projected in AC1, AC2 and AC3**

<b>Ideology</b>	<b>AC1</b>	<b>AC2</b>	<b>A3</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Patriarchy	23	6	4	33	39
Sexualisation of Girls and Women	8	14	0	22	26
Hegemonic masculinity	5	6	4	15	18
Parent-Child Power Imbalance	5	3	4	12	14
Marriage and Childbirth as the Ultimate	3	0	0	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field data, 2022

#### 4.3.1 Patriarchy

Patriarchy refers to “any system of male superiority and female inferiority” (Rothman, 2016, p.139). Patriarchy therefore involves the subordination of females which according to Williams (2019) takes intricate forms grounded in African tradition. Williams (2019) further argues that gender advocacy with regards to female representation have failed to yield the desired results in Africa because of the entrenched patriarchal ideologies passed onto children through socialisation. This means patriarchy is pronounced in Africa as a result of the African culture and tradition which projects men above women. According to Facio (2013), patriarchy is a social construction that dates back to history and is interested in the unequal distribution of power between men and women to the detriment of women.

In AC1, only male children were privileged to succeed their fathers whereas girls were considered inferior and unimportant in society. The superiority and importance placed on male children drove Queen Atike to exchange her daughter for a son in

order to maintain her dignity. Also, the farmer's reaction to the news of the birth of a son re-echoed the importance placed on male children by society. The farmer's joy was derived from the birth of a male child, hence, the emphasis on "baby boy". The reaction of Queen Atike in excerpt 63 presents a dire and gloomy picture regarding the birth of a girl hence the queen's pathetic cry for help;

*Queen Atike: I am finished, I am finished, help me, help me, help me oh. What will I tell the king, what will I tell the king (AC1)*

All Queen Atike wanted was a male child; hence, the birth of a girl was a misfortune and bad news for her. There is a high preference for male children in most African countries and women who fail to produce male children are disregarded and rejected until they are able to bear boys (Williams, 2019). AC1 reflected the patriarchal ideology of the African society where male children are put ahead of female children as obvious heirs as expressed in excerpt 64;

*All he wanted was a boy who could take the throne after him according to the culture of the land (AC1)*

It was therefore unthinkable for the throne to be ascended by a woman. Excerpt 65 demonstrated the superiority of men over women as consented by women;

*Sade: Thank you very much for this great honour. But this is not what I want. All I want, all I have ever wanted is just have a family and friends and just be a normal girl next door. If not for Akin who fought a great battle and won (AC1)*

Sade declined from ascending the throne and handed over the crown to Akin whom she thought was more deserving than her.

Furthermore, absolute power and authority resided with the men who were involved in decision making. It is worth noting that the achievements of women in AC1, AC2

and AC3 were concealed whereas those of men were celebrated. Ownership of properties were bestowed on men although the women played a role. This scenario resonates with Sub Saharan Africa which has one of the largest gender gaps with regards to property ownership because women are less likely to own properties (Yao, 2014). The perception that leadership roles are defined by sex and only men are privileged to hold certain positions give men the upper hand. Patriarchy is deeply rooted in every aspect of the African society including the traditional and socio-political life of the people. In the views of Martin-Rojo and Esteban (2005), women in managerial leadership face opposition and negative appraisal from both women and men due to an entrenched prejudice of associating power and leadership with masculinity. This finding is consistent with Gotz et al (2018) that children's media portray male characters as superior and females as subservient.

#### **4.3.2 Sexualisation of Women**

Studies have revealed the pervasiveness of the portrayal of girls and women in sexualised forms than men. Coyne et al. (2016) aver that gender stereotypes, including sexualisation of the female gender in children's media have long-term effects on the self-image of children and their views of the world, hence, Duff and Zappa-Hollman (2012) called for a careful examination of texts especially popular culture for children. The idea of sexualising the female gender and projecting certain body types and shapes as the ideal in movies is capable of leading to body dysmorphia especially among children (Coyne et al., 2016). Such ideologies risk promoting sexualised body aspirations among girls thereby leading to negative body image and low self esteem (Zeven, 2019). APA (2007) warns that when girls learn that sexualised appearances and behaviours are consented by those who matter to them,

they are likely to internalise such values and hence, view women as sexual objects.

According to the APA (2007), sexualisation occurs:

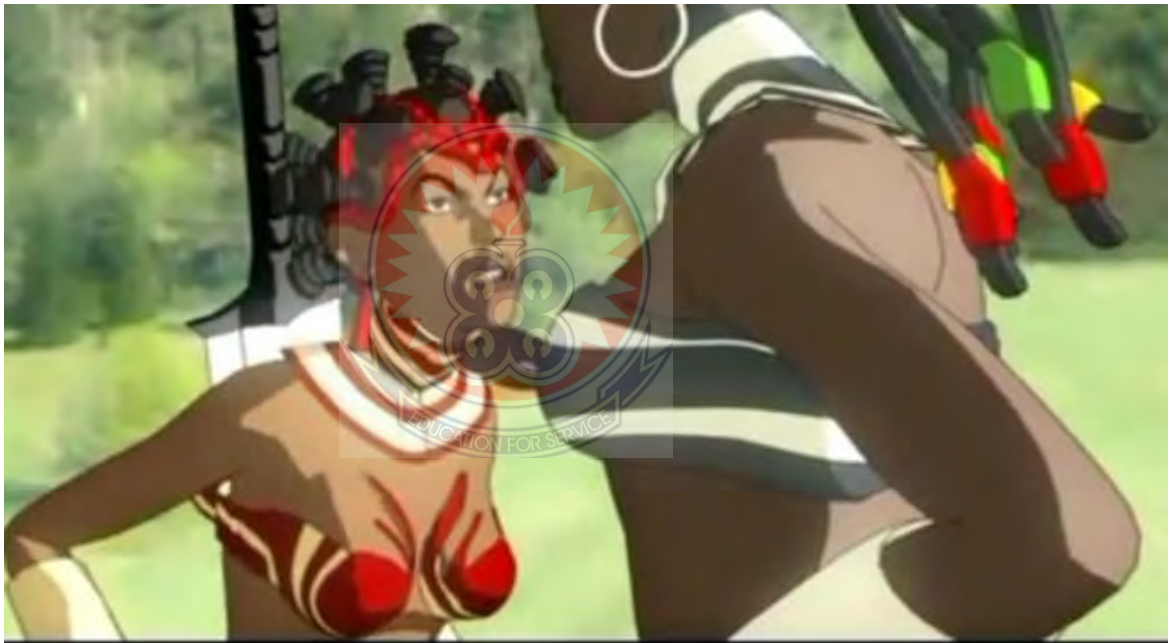
“when a person’s value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour to the exclusion of other characteristics; a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy; a person is sexually objectified – that is made into a thing for other’s sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making; and /or sexuality is improperly imposed upon a person” (p. 2).

A study by the American Psychologists Association found out that exposing children to sexualised media content sends the message that beauty and bodies are a girls only worth. Constant exposure to sexualised images on media does not only affect the viewers but also society (APA, 2007). In AC1 and AC2, women were sexualised (wearing of revealing clothes, showing of cleavages, etc) whereas AC3 portrayed certain body shapes as the ideal. The images of women in AC1 and AC2 were objectified to portray them as attractive. Although Sade wore a cloth around her body to suit her background as a village girl, her curvature, body shape and cleavage were clearly drawn in the attire. Women were presented as people who are always conscious of their looks especially, Princess Adaeze who exhibited great concern about her physical appearance. Although the women in AC2 were portrayed in sexualised forms, Little Azuka was however not objectified as she wore a long cloth. Later, as a young woman, Azuka’s was portrayed in objectified ways.

In AC1, Princess Adaeze who is overly concerned about her physical outlook attempts to seduce Prince Akin before she unveils a secret. Slim women were also

presented as the ideal body shape and this according to Endara (2021) has led to a situation of inferiority complex among children especially, girls who view certain body types as more ideal than others. This finding is an affirmation of Ahmad and Ibrahim's (2017) study that the beauty myth about the female gender is highlighted in every aspect of the media. It is also consistent with the findings of Lemish and Johnson (2019) that female characters in animated cartoons and children's media are portrayed in sexualised or objectified forms. Figure 4 to figure 10 demonstrate the sexualisation of women in the selected animations.

**Figure 4: A Demonstration of the Sexualisation of Women**



Source: AC2

**Figure 5: A Demonstration of the Sexualisation of Women**



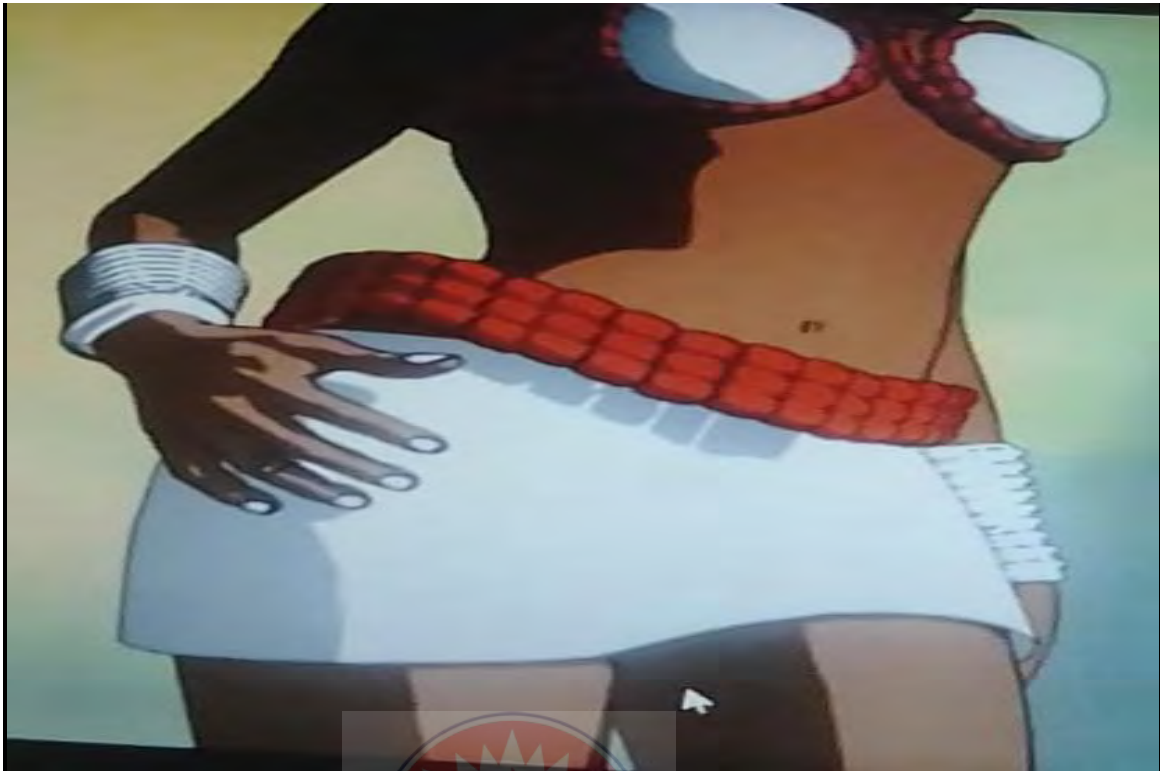
Source: AC2

**Figure 6: Demonstration of the Sexualisation of Women**



Source: AC2

**Figure 7: Demonstration of the Sexualisation of Women**



Source: AC2

**Figure 8: Demonstration of the Sexualisation of Women**



Source: AC1

**Figure 9: A Demonstration of Sexualisation of Women**



Source: AC2

**Figure 10: A Demonstration of the Sexualisation of Women**



Source: AC1

### 4.3.3 Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity refers to a particular set of practices and standards that are viewed as masculine which men should aspire (Chandler & Munday, 2020; McVittie



& Goodall, 2017). According to Chandler and Munday (2020) and McVittie and Goodall (2017), hegemonic masculinity attributes masculinity to personality traits such as physical toughness, emotional restraint, independence, competitiveness, muscularity, aggression, among others. Figure 12 to figure 15 depict traits of hegemonic masculinity.

The ideology of hegemonic masculinity was portrayed in the three selected animated cartoons. AC1 presents a group of male wrestlers who were all presented in forms that project hegemonic masculinity. Also, polygamy was attributed to masculinity and was showcased by the king of Zatanda, Prince Azuka and King Adide as a way of proving their manliness or masculinity. Playfulness was viewed as a defect of being masculine or manliness hence Queen Atike urges Akin to reduce his playfulness as in excerpt 66;

*Akin, you must reduce your playfulness; you are becoming a man (AC3)*

In AC2, the warriors of Odike were all men presented as brave, fearless, powerful and muscular to show their masculinity. Even when the warriors encountered Etido's spiritual prowess, though some were a bit scared within, they remained resolute, fearless and unshaken as depicted in excerpt 67;

*Chief warrior: Who is that lunatic. I do not care whether she is human or spirit. We will crash anything that stands in the way.*

*Chief warrior: You dare to stand in the way of the great warriors of Odike (AC2)*

In excerpt 1, men manliness was attributed to fighting without weapons as a sign of bravery and gallantry;

*Tari: Forfeit your weapons. Now get up and fight like a man (AC2)*

Men were also depicted as egoistic beings who would rather protect their egos than expose their flaws. As pertains to the norms of masculinity, the warriors were presented as men who were overly concerned about their dignity rather than being tagged as weaklings. The egocentrism associated with masculinity was portrayed in AC2 as seen in excerpt 57;

*“They are warriors. In order to maintain their dignity they will go home and report that mission accomplished” (AC2).*

In AC3, Robo, the school bully was presented as domineering, muscular, powerful, fearless, stubborn and stout. Although Tamuno was also a boy, he was portrayed as timid, thin, dull and weak, attributes ascribed to feminism. Tamuno was referred to by Robo as a *“Tiny, timid, twitchy Tam”*, *“dullard”* and *“weakling”* because he lacked the perceived traits associated with masculinity. The men of Oloibiri were also presented as possessing standard masculine traits.

Fizza (2020) asserts that hegemonic masculinity perpetuates violence against women and transgender, reinforces patriarchy and leads to gender disparity. As a result of hegemonic masculinity, boys and men who exhibit feminine attributes are looked down upon and abused as less manly as depicted in excerpts 16 and 17;

*Robo: Elsie isn't here to save you this time, weakling, weakling (AC3).*

*Robo: And you cannot tell your dad and great grand dad...Tiny, timid, twitchy Tam (AC3).*

**Figure 11: Traits of Hegemonic Masculinity**



Source: AC3

**Figure 12: Traits of Hegemonic Masculinity**



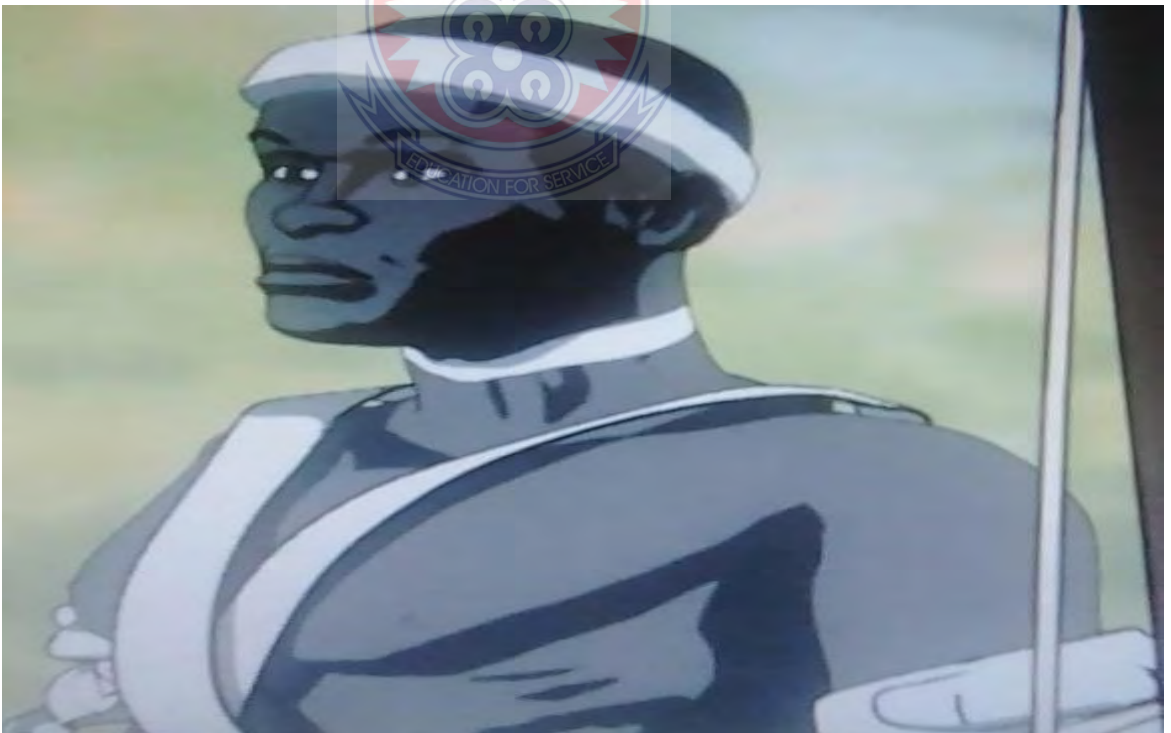
Source: AC3

**Figure 13: Traits of Hegemonic Masculinity**



Source: AC1

**Figure 14: Traits of Hegemonic Masculinity**



Source: AC2

The ideology of hegemonic masculinity has led to the situation where boys are socialised to be brave, unemotional, strong and insensitive. Myers (2012) affirms that

media plays an essential role in the identity formation of children and called for the analysis of children's media. This finding is in sync with Lemish and Johnson (2019) who argue that children's media depict male characters as brave, strong and muscular, all of which are traits of hegemonic masculinity.

#### **4.3.4 Parent-Child Power Imbalance**

It is believed that the relation between parents and children has become more democratic as a result of the increase in the understanding of child right advocacy (Sevon, 2013). In spite of this, when it comes to decision making in the home, the voices and ideas of children are suppressed. In Africa for instance, the right of the child as to when to speak remains the prerogative of the parent. This right is therefore used by parents to laud their authority over children as they are gagged from expressing themselves. The ideas of children are regarded as worthless and so non-assertive children are forced to keep their intelligent ideas to themselves.

The ideology of parent-child power imbalance was manifested in all the selected animated cartoons. The use of 'power over' or coercive power was mainly used by parents to stamp their authority as people who know better than their children. In AC1, Akin and Sade were gagged by their parents from expressing their views on certain issues. Similarly, in AC2, Nike used her power as a mother to impose her decisions on Sade. By virtue of being Sade's mother meant she knew what was best for Sade, hence, Sade's opinions were considered irrelevant. In AC2, Azuka's ideas were sometimes considered irrelevant by Etido and Isi-Agu who were her guardians. A similar relationship existed between Bukky and Iyabo in AC3.

Parents were depicted as more powerful and intelligent with the right to control their children. The animated cartoons witnessed the use of imperatives, conditionals and

reason-consequence constructions by parents to portray them as more experienced, wiser and more knowledgeable than their children. This is demonstrated in excerpts 69 and 70;

*Akin's dad: There is no but. The matter is settled. You will not bring shame to us.* *Akin's dad: No but I said, no but, the matter is settled (AC1).*

*Iyabo: That's not your homework. I have told you not to mess around with your father's papers*

*Bukky: I was only trying to help*

*Iyabo: (Hits Bukky's hands) Hands off Bukky*

*Iyabo (shouting): Bukky, let's go (AC2)*

These may be to project the ideology that adults are superior and wiser and ought to be respected without any challenge. An attempt by a child to challenge an older person is perceived as disrespectfulness. This leads to a situation where consciously or unconsciously, some children find it difficult to express their views for fear of being tagged as disrespectful. When children are exposed to such ideologies, they develop the perception that adults are superior and ought not to be challenged by children or younger ones. This affirms the results of Techacharoenrungrueang and Wanchai (2017) that adults are usually portrayed as more powerful and controlling over children in children's media to advance an ideology.

The findings from the data confirm Bobrowska et al. (2019) and Kazanoglu (2016) stance that animated cartoons serve as expedient channels for the transmission of ideology. The findings also affirm Brous (2020), Daniels (2020), Lippi-Green, (2012) and Soares (2017) that ideologies exist in animated cartoons. The ideologies projected

in animated cartoons have the potential to influence the thoughts and world view of children (Derzyan, 2019), thus, their thoughts and actions could follow the patterns of the messages of these animated cartoons.

#### **4.3.5 Marriage and Childbirth as the Ultimate**

Some societies in Africa and Asia perceive marriage as the most important thing in a person's life (Maponya, 2021). For most people in Africa, marriage and childbirth are the ultimate in life and the inability to achieve them constitute failure in life (Maponya, 2021, Williams, 2019). Women, especially will go any length to make these happen to avoid rejection and stigmatisation. The importance attached to marriage forced Queen Atike to exchange her baby in order to protect her marriage and avoid humiliation as exemplified in excerpt 36;

*Please, you know what would happen to me if the king found out that I had a girl. He would send me and my baby packing. (ACI)*

In excerpt 68, Olurombi faced rejection and stigmatisation because of her inability to bear a child;

*She was childless and because of this, other women in the kingdom made fun of her. For them, having a child was the most important thing for a woman (ACI).*

Because of the importance placed on marriage, Olurombi was willing and did everything possible including seeking spiritual help to have a child to redeem her dignity as a woman. In Africa, womanhood is associated with childbirth and once it eludes a woman, she loses her regard as a woman (Larsen et al., 2010). In Sub Saharan Africa, women suffer grief, social stigma and in some cases ostracism as a result of childlessness which is a ground for divorce (Larsen et al., 2010). Children

who watch animations that send the message that marriage and childbirth are the ultimate subconsciously adopt the mindset that without marriage and childbirth, the attainment of a happy and meaningful life is elusive.

#### **4.4 Summary**

The findings and discussions with regards to the focus of the study were presented in this chapter. Three selected animated cartoons of African origin were analysed using Thompson's (1990) Modes of ideology. The findings revealed that animated cartoons are embedded with both positive and negative themes. It was found out that animated cartoon as a media discourse enacts power and hegemony and also project certain ideologies. It was evident that power and hegemony were enacted through authorisation, concealment, affiliation, alienation, entrenchment and appeal to emotion.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of the study and draws conclusions based on the findings of the study. Also, it provides recommendations on how the language of children's animated cartoons and the enactment of power, hegemony and ideology can be tackled to produce positive social change. The conclusions of this study are made based on the textual analysis of three selected children's animated cartoons of African origin using Thompson's (1990) Modes of Ideology. In addition, limitations to the study and suggestions for future research are also highlighted in this chapter.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The study sought to investigate how children's animated cartoons portrayed the enactment of power, hegemony and ideology using three selected animated cartoons of African origin; *The Secret Princess*, *Mark of Uru* and *Lady Buckit and the Motley Mopsters*. It probed the dominant themes embedded in the selected animated cartoons and how the critical themes of power and hegemony were enacted using Thompson's (1990) Modes of Ideology. It also investigated the ideologies projected in the selected animated cartoons.

With regards to research question one (RQ1) on the dominant themes embedded in the animated cartoons, an analysis revealed violence, dynamism of culture, social values, belief in superstition and the supernatural, power imbalance and discrimination as the dominant themes. Though violence was manifested in all the selected animated cartoons, it was widespread in AC1 and AC2. Despite the portrayal of violence, all the animated cartoons were embedded with social values such as

inclusivity, team spirit, remorsefulness and other vital moral lessons. It is interesting to note that, superstition and belief in the spiritual was widespread in AC1, AC2 and AC3. The theme of power imbalance was portrayed in forms such as domination, oppression, manipulation and resistance. Also, discrimination was manifested through patriarchy, underrepresentation, classism and gender stereotyping.

Also, the content of the selected animated cartoons portrayed the enactment of power and hegemony through the modes of authorisation, concealment, affiliation, alienation, entrenchment and the appeal to emotion. The themes of authorisation, concealment, affiliation, alienation and entrenchment resonate with Thompson's (1990) five modes. In line with Thompson's (1990) assertion that the modes of operation are not limited to the five prescribed, the appeal to emotion emerged as a sixth mode from the analysis of data.

Furthermore, ideologies such as patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity, marriage and childbirth as the ultimate, parent-child power imbalance and the sexualisation of girls and women were projected in the content of the selected animated cartoons. The African society was portrayed as largely patriarchal and men were also portrayed in hegemonic forms where masculinity was characterised by certain physical traits. The unequal parent-child power relationship which largely pertains to Africa was also projected. Parents or adults mainly used 'power over' to dominate and to enforce their will over their children. Women and girls were also sexualised and projected stereotypically in objectified ways.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Results from the study demonstrated that children's animated cartoons as a media discourse enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology. This supports Van Dijk's

(2006) affirmation that discourse establishes and sustains certain ideologies, power relations and world views by normalising them as mental representation. Ideologies such as patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity and sexualisation of women among others were projected in the animated cartoons. This is a confirmation of Kazanoglu's (2021) assertion that animated cartoons are expedient channels for the transmission of ideology.

Also, the findings confirmed Thompson's (1990) assertion that the operation of ideology is not limited to legitimisation, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation and reification. The researcher identified a sixth mode; the appeal to emotion which is unrelated to the five prescribed by Thompson (1990). Again, it was found out that the various modes interrelate and reinforce one another and in some situations one mode may at the same time operate as a different mode thereby confirming the findings of Janks (1998). Through the modes, certain socially constructed realities such as gender roles, stereotypes, power inequality, discrimination, patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity among others were imposed and legitimised. It is interesting to note that entrenchment emerged as the most used mode. A possible explanation for this result might be due to the fact that Africans view customs and traditions as an essential part of their culture. This current study confirms Thompson's assertion that in every discourse situation, meanings are not always explicit as some are hidden whereas others are emphasised.

It is expedient to view animated cartoons as powerful agents of socialisation and not just sources of entertainment as far as children are concerned. Animated cartoons are thus, significant because of their ability to influence children, both positively and negatively.

Klemperer's (2000) assertion that, if language is used to shape the views, perception and conduct of individuals, then the poisonous elements of language can be swallowed unnoticed cannot be contended. The language of children's animations must therefore be of utmost importance in order to curtail the legitimisation and normalisation of inappropriate ideology, power inequality and hegemony.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The study recommends the critical analyses of content creation by producers and regulators of children's media for their appropriateness in terms of embedded ideological and hegemonic tendencies.

It also recommends the creation of animated cartoons as vehicles for addressing social problems in Ghana. This means, animated cartoons, could be used to propagate positive ideas and values and to create social awareness on ideological stereotypes to impact society positively.

Children should also be guided by parents and guardians on the animated cartoons they watch. Where necessary, they should offer explanation to children on the critical issues embedded in the animated cartoons and make them understand the reality on the ground to prevent them from accepting inappropriate and unacceptable ideas as the norm.

Finally, in view of the limited availability of full length animated cartoons of African origin, both the government and the private sector could encourage and support individuals in the animation industry to come up with more suitable and age appropriate animated cartoons for children. These productions can be promoted on the international front to portray a true and positive image of Africa.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

The researcher suggests a comparative study on the language and strategies used in African and Western children's animated cartoons to ascertain the similarities and differences.

A further research could also be carried out to find out how children's animated cartoons contribute to the construction of ideology among children in Ghana.

A comparative CDA could be conducted using children's animated cartoon of African origin and an African movie to explore the enactment of critical themes in order to ascertain the similarities and differences.

Future study on the current topic is recommended using a different research approach, design and theoretical framework.

#### **5.5 Limitations**

The study sought to critically examine animated cartoons of African origin and how they enact instances of power, hegemony and ideology. The researcher therefore needed access to children's animated cartoons of African origin and these were difficult to access. Access to full length animated cartoons of African origin was challenging since there are very few in the industry.

Although the animated cartoons were predominantly in the English language, they were interspersed with certain indigenous Nigerian dialects. I therefore had to refer to the subtitles to get the translation in order to understand.

Notwithstanding the above challenges, the researcher was able to conduct a credible study.

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## APPENDIX B

### CODING PROTOCOLS

#### Instructions

Please find below explanations and symbols used for the different items on the coding sheet. Please read each item carefully. Six coding sheets have been provided for you; two for each animated movie ie. one for each research question.

**Animated Cartoon:** Indicate the title of the movie.

**Date:** Write the date on which the movie was released.

**Duration:** Indicate the total duration of the animated cartoon.

**Number of Scenes:** Write the total number of scenes in the animated cartoon.

**Scene:** Write the scene number

**Category and Sub-category of Themes:** Record the total occurrences of each category and sub-category under the appropriate column. Realisations should be recorded accordingly. Indicate the categorisation of dominant themes under the appropriate column. Descriptions are as follows:

**PI :** Power Imbalance

**DC :** Discrimination

**VL:** Violence

**CD:** Dynamism of Culture

**PV :** Positive Social Values

**BS:** Belief in Superstition and the Supernatural

Other :.....

**Modes of Operation:** Indicate categorisation of modes of operation recorded from the animation under the appropriate column. Descriptions are as follow:

**AT :** Authorisation

**CM :** Concealment

**AF :** Affiliation

**AL :** Alienation

**EN :** Entrenchment

**AE :** Appeal to Emotion

**DS:** Discursive Strategy

**Other:** modes which do not fall under any of the specified modes should be indicated and recorded in the appropriate column.

**Ideologies:** Indicate the categorisation of ideologies projected recorded from the animation under the appropriate column. Descriptions are as follows:

**PA:** Patriarchy

**SL:** Sexualisation

**HM:** Hegemonic Masculinity

**PC:** Parent-Child Power Imbalance

**MC:** Marriage and Childbirth as the Ultimate

**Other:** Themes which do not fall under any of the specified descriptions should be indicated and recorded in the appropriate column.