

PARADIGMATIC APPROACH TO THE REVIEW OF GERMAN STUDIES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA

by

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Abstract

The reform of German Studies in the curricula of tertiary institutions in Africa is long overdue. As a result of this delay, graduates of German studies find it difficult to find employment outside the teaching profession. In this paper the awareness of this problem is created and heuristic ways of learning and teaching German in tertiary institutions in the developing nations are suggested. This paradigm could also be applied to the curricula of the European and American tertiary institutions where the Middle Ages' models are still being implemented. Candidates should be given the option of acquiring smattering knowledge of selected and related disciplines that are needed in the global job market. The four year B.A. German should equally cover such areas as International Relations, Diplomatic Service and Business and Management Studies.

1. Preamble

Germany is the second world largest exporter of goods and services and is home to most world mega industries and business organizations. Most reliable products we use in Nigeria come from Germany. Studies and scholars in most fields of learning: philosophy, agriculture, medicine, music, physical, biological and natural sciences, computer science and engineering as well as the humanities cannot dodge that word GERMAN, since the philosophers, inventors, composers, books and products they deal with are German oriented. Hence we reckon with such names like Karl Marx, Beethoven, Kafka, Freud, Einstein, Kant, Mercedes, Bach, Hitler, Mozart, Goethe and Nietzsche etc. Hence German is the most widely spoken language in the European Union. German language is today sine qua non in the labour market, in science and technology, education, culture, tourism and business.

It will therefore be deficient for any emergent university in the third millennium to field courses in the humanities without the inclusion of the German studies. In fact the minimum expectation will be an introduction of elementary German as a four semester compulsory course for all students. Many universities and private secondary schools have already gone very far in this regard. Most importantly, most funding agencies, linkage organizations, NGOs, research centers and grants-awarding organizations are German based. Hence any university that offers courses in German language, culture and literature stands a better chance of getting her projects sponsored and executed by these numerous funding agencies. Moreover ample opportunities for staff and students' exchange and linkage programmes are available because Germany is one of the most famous countries in the world for studies and research.

In a nation like Nigeria where indiscipline, corruption, lack of productivity, lack of accountability and lack of credible leadership is the bane, our younger generation of students

and scholars have a lot to learn from the German spirit of hard work, accountability, strictness, thoroughness, efficiency and sincerity though we may not copy their reported phenomena of coldness, individualism, workaholism and racist tendencies. After Germany's experiences of the World wars and the genocide that were committed under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, Germans of the latter generation are turning a new leaf.

2. Targeted Students

It is important to specify the classes of students who shall benefit from these programmes and lessons:

- 2.1. Students preparing to read German and German literature in the University.
- 2.2. Students who did not offer German as a full-time course in the secondary school but who intend to read it at the university and other tertiary institutions.
- 2.3. Students who are already reading German in the University but whose coping abilities are problematic.
- 2.4. Students with individual difficulties in some of the courses in the German programme in the University.
- 2.5. Students in other departments/disciplines who need German as a subsidiary subject, German for the sciences and business German. Students of linguistics, business studies, law, mass communication, international relations, medical sciences, natural, social and physical sciences as well as engineering and agricultural sciences need to be German literate in order to face the challenges of the courses they are studying.
- 2.6. Students who need to take international university entry exams may be admitted into the special German programme. This preparatory programme lasts one or two years as the case may be. The university shall award the successful students the corresponding certificates. These students shall also receive the corresponding foreign certificates which will meet their entry requirements for universities in German speaking countries. Others will use theirs as entry requirement for German studies and international relations in Nigerian and African universities. There are also many business men and women as well as technocrats whose jobs require German. These are daily in search of places to learn this language while still pursuing their career. Others need these certificates for jobs in multinational corporations. So far there is only one center in the country that offers this service – the Goethe Institute in Lagos. The place has problem of space to serve the whole of Nigeria. We must also consider the distance to Lagos. This latter programme should be run as a consultancy venture and should be a source of income to the university.

3. Levels of the Programme

German as a foreign language lessons are gauged according to the objective, content and learning methods aimed at a precise and quantifiable language level. They are also based on the global scale of levels of proficiency. This global scale is split into three overall levels which in turn, are divided into sub-levels. The table below sets out this system.

- i) A1 is for beginners who can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases. They are taught basic listening and comprehension, spoken interactions, basic conversation and writing.
- ii) A2 is for students who can already understand short sentences and frequently used expressions relating to areas of most immediate relevance. They are taught comprehension, writing, oral text analyses and serious interactions in areas of daily life (family information, shopping, local geography and employment).
- iii) B1 is for students who can understand the main points of clear standard German on familiar matters encountered at work, school, leisure, travelling etc. At the end of the programme, the learners shall be able to produce simple connected texts on topics which are familiar. Essay writing, long comprehension texts, oral productions and interactions, detailed German grammar etc. are taught.
- iv) B2 centers on complex texts both on concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussion in fields of specialization like the law, medicine, pharmacy, engineering etc.
- v) C1 students deal with a wide range of demanding and longer texts with implicit meanings. They can express themselves fluently and spontaneously in complex German. They can use the German language flexibly and efficiently for social, academic and professional purposes.

4. Examination

Local examinations are set for the students after each programme level. Admission into the next level depends on the performances of the students in the preceding levels.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Language, initiated upon the request of the Council of Europe organizes two international examinations annually: in June and in December. These examinations are managed by the German Embassy here in Nigeria through the Goethe Institute. However every institution that meets the required standard can as well organize and host such exams more frequently. Part of the obstacles to accelerated take off of home-grown German studies in Africa and especially in Nigeria is the question of paternalism which *inter alia* refers to a situation whereby everything has to be foreign for it to be genuine. The earlier the local institutions that offer German take the bull by the horns the better for the future of German studies in Africa. Just as we do not expect the francophone African countries to speak French like the mother tongue speakers, so do we not expect the African German speaker to render the language like the Germans.

The analogy of the various versions of the English and French languages in the world could serve as a good illustration.

3. Duration of Programme

The first two levels (A1 and A2) take six weeks each if the students receive lectures for three hours every working day. A total of 90 hours at least and 115 hours at most are required for these levels. The higher levels cover 180 hours per programme.

4. **Course-work for B.A. Hons. German and International Relations**

Course work for every discipline needs regular renewal so as to enable graduates be relevant in the job market. Hence apart from the teaching career every institution should endeavor to merge courses where the need arises so as to arm her graduates for emergent careers in the national and international job market. A student for instance who majors in German studies would need an additional input in political science or international relations for him or her to fit into a job in the foreign ministry or in the civil service. Similarly a student who majors in the social, natural, physical and human sciences may not fit in into his desired field of career unless he or she has additionally armed himself or herself with one or two international languages. Even the business and management sciences are ever in need of candidates who have one or two extra languages apart from their national or official languages. Hence with so many applicants knocking at the doors of corporate organizations for jobs, there is no doubt that a candidate with extra foreign language ability will tower above his peers. This situation arises as a result of the exigencies of Globalization and world information super high way.

Such career prospects as Intelligence career must be kept in view. Here one must reckon with the INTERPOL, DMI, SSS, SIB, CIA, KGB, MOSAD etc. The international NGOs and the public service such as the UNESCO, UN, AU, UNDP, UNICEF, OPEC, UNIDO, UNCTAD and COMMON WEALTH are likely targeted areas of graduates of foreign languages who have the added advantage of such courses as international relations and scientific/business German. Most Banking and insurance industries are going international as they reach out for customers and partner banks across the borders. Such banks as the NEXIM, ECOBANK, ADB, SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE, ZENITH are not left out. Insurance bodies like NICON, AFRICA-RE as well as Courier, Shipping, Airline and Expedition organizations are daily searching for graduates of foreign languages and ancillary courses. Candidates who are ready-made are preferred to those who learn on the job or in-service-training in areas of service such as air-hostess, ship chandelling services, clearing and forwarding and cargo freighting. In para-military careers too like the customs and immigration where the staff is expected to deal with foreigners, foreign language graduates who can double as literates in basic import-export know-how are readily sought after.

In view of the above exigencies, it might be full-hardy for any 3rd millennium university to be turning out graduates in the middle ages fashion of just grammar and literature on the one hand, and science and technology or business and management on the other hand. Hence in our context the under listed courses are being proposed as a balanced programme for B.A. German and international relations. This model can also be adjusted for degree programmes in other foreign languages. Further research could borrow our model to go into German and business studies, German and diplomatic studies, German and technological studies etc.

4.1. FOUR-YEAR STANDARD DEGREE PROGRAMME IN GERMAN AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

FIRST YEAR

FIRST SEMESTER

COURSE CODE

COURSE TITLE UNIT

Major Courses

GER 111: German Grammar 1	3
GER 121: Introduction to Composition in German 1	2
GER 131: Readings in German I	2
GER 161: Oral German 1	3

Required Ancillary Courses (All of the following).

Int. 101: Intro. to International Relations Mega Theory	2
Int. 121: IR. As an academic Subject	2
Int. 131: International Society	2
Int. 111: Social Constructivism	2
Electives	
FRE 101: Elementary French 1	2
Eng. 101: Elementary English 1	2

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SECOND SEMESTER

Major Courses

GER 112: German Grammar II	3
GER 122: Introduction to Composition in German II	2
GER 132: Readings in German II	2
GER 162: German Phonetics	2
GER 164: Oral German II	3

Required Ancillary Courses (All of the following)

Int. 102: International Pol. Economy 1.	2
Int. 104: International Pol. Economy 2	2
Int. 106: Methodological Debates 1	2
Electives (Any one of the following)	
FRE 102: Elementary French II	2
Eng. 102: Elementary English II	2

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SECOND YEAR

FIRST SEMESTER

COURSE CODE COURSE TITLE UNIT

Major Courses

GER 211: German Grammatical Structures	3
GER 221: Comprehension and stylistics 1	3
GER 231: German literatures in Perspective 1	3
GER 233: World Literature in German	3
GER 261: Oral Expression and Comprehension in French	3
Required Ancillary Course	
Int. 201: First Debate/Soc. Constr.2.	2
Int. 241: Second Debate/Int. Society2.	2
Electives (Any one of the following)	
Int. 201: Pol. Ideas of the French Revolution	2
Int. 201: Gender Studies.1	2

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SECOND SEMESTER

Major Courses

GER 312: Advanced studies in German Grammar II	3
GER 322: Essay Writing in German	2
GER 334: German Literature of the 18th Century	2
GER 336: Literature and Philosophy	2
GER 342: Introduction to Translation I	2
GER 364: Communicative skills II	2
Electives (Any one of the following)	
Int. 302: Advanced Int. Relations	2
Int. 302: Gender in Int. Relations 1	2

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FOURTH YEAR

FIRST SEMESTER

COURSE CODE COURSE TITLE UNIT

Major Courses

GER 411: Political Theory	2
GER 421: Essay writing in German	2
GER 431: 19th Century German Literature	2
GER 433: German Literature on Africa	2
GER 435: Poetics and Theory of Literature	2
GER 437: Literary Criticism in German	2
GER 441: Advanced Translation 1	3
GER 481: Research methods	2

Electives (One of the following)

Int 401: Gender in Int. Relations 2	2
GERM. 401: Business and Scientific German1	2

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SECOND SEMESTER

Major Courses

GER 412: Applied Linguistic I	2
GER 434: Contemporary German Literature	3
GER 436: African/Black German Literature	2
GER 442: Advanced Translation II	3
GER 454: World Literature in Translation	2
GER 462: Advanced oral German	2
GER 492: Project in German	4
Electives (Any one of the following)	
GERM. 402: German for the Sciences & the Humanities II	2
Int. 402: Social Constructivism II	2

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4.3. Combined Course Description of Selected Courses

This section is included here for the purpose of closer description of the courses on social constructivism in international relations mega theory that have been developed in the preceding tables. The goal of this programme is to study the Approach of Social Constructivism in International Relations and to anchor this examination to the emergent debate of Feminist Constructivism as an offshoot of Gender in International Relations. To market International Relations as a social construction is to underscore the importance of Interactions, discourse, change and sociality as opposed to Individuality, autarky, power, materiality, rationality and militarism. In this regard Social Constructivism ushers itself in, in the discipline of International Relations as a new alternative to the traditional theories that have hitherto monopolized the way political scientists have been viewing the inter - and intrastate events. Constructivism is the new approach to International Relations. It takes a middle course between realism and liberalism. Constructivism explores the role of ideas, images, symbols, norms, culture and discourse on social life. It stresses that ideational factors such as dialogue and exchange of ideas are more result-oriented in socio-political life than material factors. Constructivism is a social Theory that centers on social life and social change. Focusing on „social facts"(Searle 1995) like money, sovereignty and rights which have no material reality but are inter-subjectively made real by shared ideational forces among peoples, Constructivists followed the example of Foucault who opined that discourse is the root of all successes in human and social relations. Encompassing a broad range of

theories that tackle the questions of ontology (the science of being), Constructivism insists that actors are shaped by the social environment in which they found themselves. In this way it researches on how identities and interests are created. Just as we have earlier noted, it handles also epistemological enquiries such as the material versus the ideational debate. Distancing itself from Realism, Neo- Realism and other utilitarian and materialist theories, Constructivism is skeptical about most of their claims such as those bordering on historical and scientific accuracy. For no single observation and account is flawless. Constructivism argues that situations have to be approached and studied from different perspectives in order to grasp their full import, for it is not enough to describe events or situations of things; one needs to dissect the constituting parts of factors, things, Beings and situations with a view to knowing how and why they operate, behave in a given way. The constructivists' engagement to introduce the social into a discipline that has been unduly under socialized has earned Constructivism the appellation the jewel of International Relations. A school of the global feminist movement, borrowing from the example of the constructivists also developed the idea that Gender in International Relations should be seen as constructivist-oriented; hence the birth of Feminist Constructivism. The Third Debate or as some would have it, the Fourth Debate of the late 80s gave the Feminists the rare opportunity of also questioning the men-dominated positivist, materialistic and rationalistic theories. Encouraged by the Post positivist(which encompasses postmodernists, poststructuralists and conventional constructivists) critique of positivists' claim of engendering universal objective knowledge, Gender Scholars in International Relations sought as well to team up with post positivists' stand on ideational, sociological, interpretative and sociological methods of analyzing world politics; seeing this as a leeway to deconstruct sexism in International Relations. In spite of the above exploits of both Constructivism and Feminism in International Relations, there are very obvious shortcomings on either side. These weaknesses shall also be critically examined with some case-studies.

Conclusion

From the foregoing we have studied the B.A. German Studies as it is presently packaged by the tertiary institutions which offer it. From our findings we did discover that there is an urgent need to review this programme so as to bring it to an updated level in view of the demands of our globalized job market. Many graduates have namely passed through this programme only to find themselves virtually irrelevant in the job market. Others got jobs but have to be laid off due to one deficiency or the other. Hence the need for a reform of the German programme in the tertiary institutions is overdue. We took note of the fact that most secondary schools do not offer German in their curricula. Hence the only practical solution would be to introduce a special German pre- degree course. This course will as well serve the wider society, especially the business and professional class. Where there is need it may be necessary to increase the B.A. German and international Relations programme to a ten semester or five year degree programme. This will help the institutions to dedicate the first year period of the special German programme as a foundation course for beginners. The international Relations input should lay more emphasis on such areas of study as Gender

Studies, Social Constructivism and the basics of political theory. This approach will assist graduands to fit in easily into the diplomatic service and Foreign Ministry etc.

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