

Poetry as an Educational Transformative Agent: the Legacy of Ọlátúnjí Ọpádòtun's Ewì Àsìkò

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Abstract

Education stands as the foundational pillar of a nation's progress, tirelessly working to cultivate well-educated, informed, and morally upright citizens who embody personal and collective pride, honor, and a profound sense of identity rooted in their cultural heritage. In Nigeria, a nation marked by rich diversity and complex social dynamics, education is pivotal in fostering national unity, economic advancement, and ethical integrity. However, not all educational approaches are adequately equipped to uplift young people and adults in today's rapidly evolving, multifaceted society, where challenges such as social vices, economic disparities, and cultural erosion persist. Only purposeful, transformative education, designed with intentionality and cultural relevance can achieve these goals, as ignorance or flawed educational systems often lead to detrimental social, cultural, and economic consequences that undermine societal progress. This paper explores the critical and dynamic role of poetry as a powerful, accessible, and culturally resonant tool for transformative education, with focus on Ọlátúnjí Ọpádòtun's Ewì Àsìkò, a profound and impactful collection of Yoruba poems. The study reveals that poets, through their creative, insightful, and morally grounded works, consistently condemn pervasive issues such as immorality, corruption, and social vices while passionately advocating for ethical values, cultural preservation, and communal harmony. The paper recommends the systematic and strategic integration of age-appropriate poetry into educational curricula, from early childhood through adulthood, to nurture moral development, deepen cultural awareness, and drive societal transformation. The paper advocates that future generations should be equipped with the knowledge, values, and resilience needed to build a more just, cohesive, and culturally vibrant Nigeria, capable of navigating the challenges of the modern world while honoring its rich heritage.

Keywords: Education, Poetry, Social vices, Interrogation and Impactful.

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as the foundation of societal advancement, equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to contribute meaningfully to their communities. In Nigeria, a nation distinguished by her vibrant cultural heritage and diverse ethnic composition, education plays an indispensable role in fostering national unity, promoting economic development, and cultivating moral integrity. It serves as a bridge across cultural divides, empowering individuals to participate in nation-building while preserving their unique identities. The introduction of the 6-3-3-4 educational system in the *National Education Policy* of 1978 represented a bold initiative to enhance the quality of education and produce well-rounded citizens capable of addressing the multifaceted challenges of a rapidly changing global landscape (FGN, 1981). This system, structured to include six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary, three years of senior secondary, and four years of tertiary education, aimed to balance academic learning with practical skills. However, persistent challenges have hindered its transformative potential. Inadequate funding has led to deteriorating school infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and limited access to learning materials. Outdated curricula, often disconnected from modern technological and societal needs, fail to prepare students for contemporary demands. Additionally, the prevalence of social vices, such as examination malpractice and corruption within educational institutions, has eroded the system's effectiveness, creating a significant gap between its ambitious goals and actual outcomes.

In Yoruba society, literature, particularly the oral poetry known as *ewì*, has long served as a powerful medium for education and social reform (Ọlátúnjí, 1984). Rooted in centuries-old traditions, *ewì* combines rhythmic recitation with moral storytelling, delivered by oral poets who act as community educators and moral guides. Poets such as Adebayo Faleti, Olanrewaju Adepoju, Tumbosun Oladepo, Akinkunmi Isola, Arinpe Adejumo, Oluyemisi Adebawale, Atari Ajanaku to mention but a few have historically addressed pressing social issues such as greed, disrespect, or communal discord using their performances to critique immoral behaviors, promote ethical values like honesty and humility, and restore moral order while captivating their audiences with artistry. This dual role of *ewì*, to entertain and educate underscores its enduring significance as a tool for shaping individual character and influencing societal norms. Poetry's unique ability to blend emotional resonance with intellectual insight enables it to guide individuals from negative behaviors toward positive conduct, fostering personal growth

through reflection and empathy. Written poetry, building on the rich oral traditions of Yoruba culture, extends these transformative effects into formal educational settings, offering a creative and accessible means to engage students and reinforce ethical principles.

This study focuses on *Ewì Àsìkò*, a remarkable collection of Yoruba poems by Olátúnjí Ọpádòtun, published in 1996. This work addresses a wide range of societal issues, from the complexities of family dynamics to the urgent need for cultural preservation in the face of modernization and globalization. Drawing on the oral ewì tradition, Ọpádòtun's poetry combines lyrical beauty with incisive social commentary, urging readers to embrace virtues such as integrity, respect, and communal responsibility while challenging harmful practices like dishonesty or cultural neglect. *Ewì Àsìkò* exemplifies poetry's potential to serve as a catalyst for educational and societal transformation, its clear and evocative language making it accessible to diverse audiences, from young students to seasoned adults. By analyzing the themes, language, and intended audiences of *Ewì Àsìkò*, this paper highlights poetry's critical role in shaping informed, morally upright citizens. The study advocates for the systematic integration of poetry, such as *Ewì Àsìkò*, into Nigeria's educational curricula from early childhood through adulthood. By embedding poetry into teaching practices, educators can harness its intellectual and emotional power to nurture moral development, deepen cultural appreciation, and foster analytical skills, thereby contributing to a more ethical, cohesive, and culturally vibrant society capable of addressing modern challenges while honoring Nigeria's rich heritage.

These poems address diverse societal groups, encompassing all classes, genders, and age groups within the framework of transformative education tailored to Nigeria's unique socio-cultural context.

Historical Context of Yoruba Poetry

To fully understand the profound significance of *Ewì Àsìkò*, it is imperative to delve into the rich historical and cultural context of Yoruba poetry, which has long served as a cornerstone of cultural expression and societal guidance in Yoruba society. Yoruba oral literature encompasses a diverse array of forms, including oríkì (praise poetry that extols individuals or lineages), rárà (narrative poetry that recounts historical or moral tales), and ewì (chanted poetry known for its rhythmic and performative qualities). (Olátúnjí, 1979a, 1984). These forms have functioned as a vital repository of cultural knowledge, preserving ancestral wisdom, historical narratives, and ethical principles. Oral poets, often revered as

custodians of tradition and moral authority, played a pivotal role in their communities. Through their performances, they addressed pressing societal issues, such as conflicts, moral lapses, or communal discord, while celebrating collective achievements and reinforcing core cultural values like respect, humility, and communal responsibility. Far from being mere artistic displays, these performances were deeply educational, imparting timeless lessons that shaped individual behavior and strengthened societal cohesion, fostering a sense of shared identity and purpose. The advent of literacy and the influence of Western education in the 19th and 20th centuries marked a transformative period for Yoruba poetry, as poets began to adapt their vibrant oral traditions into written forms (Finnegan, 1970). This transition, spurred by colonial influences and missionary education, enabled poets to preserve their cultural heritage while reaching broader and more diverse audiences beyond local communities. Written poetry retained the instructive and transformative qualities of its oral predecessors, blending traditional poetic techniques with modern literary conventions. Olátúnjí Òpádòtun's *Ewì Àsìkò*, published in 1996, stands as a modern exemplar of this evolution. The collection seamlessly integrates the rhythmic and moralistic elements of oral *ewì* with the accessibility and permanence of written literature, addressing contemporary challenges in Nigerian society, such as cultural erosion, family dynamics, and moral decay (Olátúnjí, 1979b). By bridging oral and written traditions, *Ewì Àsìkò* underscores the enduring power of Yoruba poetry to educate, inspire, and transform, making it a vital tool for navigating the complexities of modern Nigeria while honoring its cultural roots.

Theoretical Framework

Sociology of Literature

The sociology of literature provides a robust framework for analyzing the interplay between literary works and their societal contexts. The term “sociology,” introduced by the French philosopher Hippolyte Taine, draws parallels with disciplines such as history, language, and politics, emphasizing the study of social relationships. According to Moore (1967, 207-215), as cited in Ogunsina (2006: 5), sociology is defined as “the science of social relationships as well as the consequences of those relationships for ongoing social systems and the process of social change.” This perspective underscores the interconnectedness of individuals, groups, and institutions within a society.

Sociology examines human behavior in the context of social interactions, exploring how individuals relate to one another and how these relationships shape societal structures. Ogunsina (2006: 5) notes that sociology's primary aim is to recognize the inherently social nature of human life, as no individual exists in isolation. It studies a wide range of elements, which include values, beliefs, morals, and symbolic communication, such as religious symbols, language, and gestures that form the foundation of human society. By analyzing social institutions (e.g., political, economic, and religious systems) and both visible and invisible aspects of society, sociology seeks to understand how societies function, evolve, and maintain cohesion (Barber, 1979:1).

Literature, as an art form, is deeply intertwined with society, serving multiple purposes, including education, entertainment, and relaxation (Eagleton, 1976; Ogunsina, 1987). It acts as a societal mirror, reflecting values, critiquing norms, and aiming to inform and improve its audience. Literature enables a deeper understanding of human behavior, societal dynamics, and the lived experiences of communities over time. By recreating the social world, literature captures the essence of a society's challenges, aspirations, and transformations. Consequently, literature and sociology are closely related, both striving to illuminate the complexities of human society (Ogunsina, 2006: 7).

The sociology of literature specifically explores the connection between literary works and their societal contexts, arguing that art cannot be studied in isolation. Consequently, literary creations are inherently tied to the social, political, and economic conditions of their time. Writers, as members of their communities, draw inspiration from their surroundings, reflecting the values, struggles, and aspirations of their society.

Structuralist Approach

The structuralist approach emphasizes the underlying structures that shape literary texts, including linguistic patterns, cultural codes, and societal norms. In the context of *Ewì Àsìkò*, this approach allows for an analysis of how *Ọ̀pádòtun*'s poems reflect and critique Yoruba societal values while promoting transformative education. This is because the poems are structured to address specific audiences with each poem focusing on a particular group or issue. The use of simple, clear, and explanatory language ensures accessibility while the thematic organization, covering family, unity, morality, and culture, reinforces the poems' educational purpose. This study adopts a structuralist approach to analyze *Ewì Àsìkò*,

examining the relationships among the author, society, and the work itself. Òpádòtun's *Ewì Àsìkò* is a collection of instructive poems designed to transform society by addressing diverse groups, youths, students, women, parents, and elders across class, gender, and age.

Ọlátúnjí Òpádòtun was a renowned literacy writer known for his contributions to poetry, prose and drama. His notable works include *Àròfò Òpádòtun*, *Abéré Oró*, *Àròfò Eléwì Odò*, *Owó iyá* and *Àsegbé* among others. One of his poetry anthologies, *Ewì Àsìkò* which is the focus of this study consists of thirty poems dwelling on different themes and subject-matters. The poet who is renowned for his dexterous use of languages, explored different thematic pre-occupation ranging from domestic issues, environmental concerns, moral uprightness, unity among the people and so on.

Transformative Education in *Ewì Àsìkò*

The poetry of Ọlátúnjí Òpádòtun's *Ewì Àsìkò* exemplifies the potential of poetry to serve as a vehicle for transformative education. His poems aim to create informed, morally upright individuals who contribute to a just and harmonious society. Instructive poetry has historically played a significant role in reshaping societies by addressing moral, social, and cultural issues. As art seeks to educate and guide, Òpádòtun's poems in *Ewì Àsìkò* are organized by their messages and target audiences, addressing family members, youths, and society at large. The poems promote values that foster individual and collective transformation, condemning vices and advocating for unity, cultural pride, and ethical conduct. Òpádòtun's *Ewì Àsìkò* masterfully weaves moral lessons into engaging, accessible poetry, fostering personal growth, critical reflection, and societal reform across generations. By leveraging the emotive and intellectual power of poetry, the collection serves as a beacon for positive behavioral change and cultural revitalization.

Instructing Children

The opening poems in *Ewì Àsìkò* focus on guiding children, who are seen as the foundation of society. The first poem targets schoolchildren, offering advice on proper behavior at school, home, and in the broader community. In its opening lines, Òpádòtun highlights common misbehaviors among children and their consequences:

Gbogbo ọmọdé, ẹ wá gbórò ẹnu mi

Gbogbo màjèsín, ẹ wá gbòrò ẹnu mi
Ta ni baba rán níṣẹ tó ròjú?
Ta ni iyá pè tó yí kà ọrùn?
Ta ni olùkò nà tán, tó kàsò mólẹ
Tó n sọ kiri bí oyin àtá?

(All children, come and hear the words of my mouth
All young ones, come and hear the explanation
Who is the one father sent on an errand and he frowns?
Who does the mother call and he/she hearkens not?
Who is scolded by the teacher and he murmurs?
He/she murmurs around like a bee.)

These lines identify behaviors such as disrespect, disobedience, and complaints, which undermine personal growth and societal harmony. Ọpádòtun advises children to respect their elders, emphasizing humility as a pathway to future success:

Ẹ jẹ ká tẹriba f' ààgbà
Ìwà àrífín ni kò súnwòn
Gbogbo ẹni t'ẹ rí tí wòn déru nílá
Wòn ti fidají ẹ isin f'ẹnikan
Ẹni tí kò sìn ni kì í f'ólùsìn

(Let's respect our elders
Disrespectful attitudes are not good
Those that you see that are great
They have served at the early stage of their life
Whoever cannot serve cannot lead)

This message aligns with Yoruba cultural values, which prioritize respect for elders and communal responsibility. The poet's use of direct address and vivid imagery ensures that the message resonates with young readers, encouraging them to internalize these values. Ọpádòtun further urges children to pursue meaningful professions, warning against the allure of criminal activities such as armed robbery:

Ìṣẹ ní í gbéní gá, ọlẹ èniyàn ní í jogún àdánù

Bí jagùdà tàbí arungùn l’o sì fẹ̀ yà láyẹ –
Àwọn ológun n bẹ̀ níbẹ̀, wón ò rẹ̀bì
Àwọn afilàṣẹ̀ dọmọ̀ lẹ̀kùn olẹ̀ jíjà

(It is work that elevates one, a lazy person inherits nothing
If it is an armed robber or plunderer you want to become in life
The military is there, they go nowhere
Those who use guns to stop one from stealing.)

By emphasizing the value of hard work and the consequences of crime, Òpádòtun seeks to shape children into responsible citizens who contribute positively to society. This message is particularly relevant in contemporary Nigeria(,) where economic challenges and social pressures can lead young people astray.

In “Omọ́gẹ̀ Mójú Tó Iṣẹ̀”, Òpádòtun shifts his focus to young women, addressing their role within the family and society. He critiques societal trends where women prioritize relationships over personal development, advocating for self-reliance and diligence:

Wúndiá tó ṣẹ̀ṣẹ̀ jí
Má tì í ronú ọ̀kọ
Iṣẹ̀ ni o kókó mójú tó
Ọ̀kọ̀ á máa kọ̀ ní
Iṣẹ̀ ẹnì ní kì í típa ẹnì

(Maiden who just woke up
Don’t think about a husband yet
Look after your work first
A husband might reject one
One’s work will not reject one)

This advice challenges patriarchal norms that define women solely by their marital status, encouraging young women to prioritize education and career development. Òpádòtun’s message reflects a progressive stance, recognizing the importance of women’s agency in a society where gender roles have historically limited opportunities. He also warns against manipulative relationships, highlighting the ulterior motives of men who exploit women financially:

Ọkùnrin iwòyí kàn ò ẹ́ é fẹ́ mí tí
B'ọkùnrin n dá bí ẹ̀dun bá'yí
Bó sì n rò bí òwè lójú rẹ
Palapàlà lẹran tí n fún ọ yí
Kì í ẹ́ ẹran tí kò ní lẹyin

(Men of nowadays are not reliable
If a man is taking care of you
If a man is spending on your needs
He is feeding you deceitful meat
It is not a meat that will not have a repercussion)

Through these lines, Ọ̀pádòtun empowers young women to seek independence and discernment, fostering their ability to navigate societal pressures and make informed choices. This message is particularly poignant in the context of modern Nigeria, where economic disparities and social expectations can place women in vulnerable positions.

Correcting Domestic Mistakes to Transform the Family

The family unit is central to societal stability, serving as the primary institution where values are instilled. Ọ̀pádòtun's poems address family members directly, offering guidance to strengthen familial bonds and, by extension, society. In "Ìyàwó Wón Yọ Sí Fún", he corrects negative behaviors among wives, such as neglect of personal hygiene and careless attitudes toward their husbands:

Ìyàwó ọ̀dẹ̀dẹ̀
Ọkọ gbé ọ dé ilé tán
Irun pàjàwìrì mó ọ lóri
Gbogbo abíyá n dọ̀sẹ̀ kiri
Gbogbo eyín ti máa wọ òsùn

(Housewife
After your husband took you home
Your hair is messy
Your armpit becomes rotten
Your teeth changed to camwood color)

Òpádòtun encourages wives to maintain clean appearance and hygiene to sustain their husbands' affection, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect in marriage:

Ìyàwó ilé wón yọ díẹ sí
Dírùn tó lè yán ọkọ lójú
Tójú eyín rẹ dáadáa
Má yọlódùn mó
Dákun, wè lásìkò
Gbogbo ìwònyí ò tún tó
Ó yẹ kí o ẹ yányánşe ọkọ
Ó yẹ kí o ẹ pépẹ fún un

(Housewife, add a little salt
Make good hair that will entice your husband
Take care of your teeth very well
Don't be dirty
Please take your bath on time
All these are not enough
Be of good behavior to the husband
Be of good attitude.)

Beyond physical care, Òpádòtun stresses the importance of good character, which fosters peace and harmony within the family. This aligns with the Yoruba proverb:

Bòdòdè ò dùn bí igbè ní ilú rí
(The city is not as pleasant as the forest if there is no peace.)

This proverb underscores the idea that peace within the family is essential for societal well-being, as the family serves as the microcosm of the larger community. Òpádòtun's advice to wives reflects traditional Yoruba values while acknowledging the need for mutual respect in modern marriages.

In “Ọkọ Ìyàwó”, Òpádòtun addresses husbands, praising their patience and urging them to maintain composure in their marriages:

Gbogbo ẹni tó láyá nílẹ

È kú sùúrù
È sì kú mímú ǹnkan m̀óra
Gbogbo ènìyàn tó ǹyàwó lóde
È kú àìbínú, ẹ̀ sì kú ifaradà

(Everyone who has a wife at home
Well done for your patience
And for your endurance
Everyone who has a wife outside
Well done for not being angry, and for your forbearance)

Through a narrative about a friend who transformed his wife through persistence, Ọ̀pádòtun illustrates the power of patience in resolving marital conflicts. This story serves as a practical example of how virtues such as patience and understanding can lead to positive change within the family. By addressing men, women, and children, Ọ̀pádòtun underscores the collective responsibility of family members in building a cohesive society. His focus on the family aligns with sociological theories that view the family as the primary socializing agent, shaping individuals' values and behaviors.

Unity as a Transformative Agent

Unity is a recurring theme in *Ewì Àsikò*, with Ọ̀pádòtun emphasizing its role in achieving societal progress. In “È Fọ̀wọ̀ Wẹ̀ Wọ̀”, he advocates for collective effort and collaboration:

È jẹ́ ká fọ̀wọ̀ wẹ̀wọ̀
K'ọ̀wọ̀ wá lè mọ́ dáadáa
È jẹ́ ká pèròpò
K'érò wá ó lè bàá jọ
È jẹ́ ká dìjọ gbà-mòràn
Ká má ba à rásìşẹ̀

(Let us work in unison
So as to achieve greatness
Let us deliberate together
For better decisions
Reason together
So that we will not see failure)

This call for unity reflects Yoruba communal values where collective decision-making strengthens societal bonds. Òpádòtun's emphasis on collaboration is particularly relevant in the context of Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious landscape where divisions often hinder national progress. By advocating for unity, he seeks to foster a sense of shared purpose and collective responsibility.

In "Ìrèpò Ẹranko", Òpádòtun uses the harmony among animals to highlight the discord among humans:

Ìrèpò ẹranko wù mí
Mo fẹ́ rí ìrú rẹ láàrin àdàrí omọ èniyàn
Igún àtádàbà n jẹun pọ, wọn ò bínú
Ẹyẹlé àtòriri n sìrè lọ
Wọn ò kúkú jà
Mo rí kẹtẹkẹtẹ tí n bẹ̀sìn sìrè
Kẹtẹkẹtẹ àtẹ̀sìn ò tori rẹ sọ ó dījà
Mo rí bùúkọ pẹ̀lú àgbò tó sí fẹ̀ràn ara
Màlùù àtàgùtàn n jẹun pọ ní ijù
N ò gbọ̀jà láàrin ara wọn

(I admire the unity of animals
I want such among humans...
Vulture and dove eat together, they don't quarrel
Pigeon and owl are playing around
They don't fight
I saw a camel playing with a horse
They don't fight
I saw a he-goat and ram that love each other
Cow and sheep graze together in the forest
I don't hear them fighting)

By contrasting animal harmony with human divisiveness, Òpádòtun critiques societal divisions based on ethnicity, religion, or class. His use of animals as a metaphor is particularly effective as it draws on Yoruba oral traditions that often employ animal imagery to convey moral lessons. This poem serves as a call to action, urging readers to transcend differences and work together for the common good.

Preaching Against Wickedness

Ọpádòtun’s poems also address the consequences of wickedness, reinforcing the Yoruba belief that evildoers will face justice. In “Kònílé Ẹwẹ́ Ó Sọra Kòníná”, he warns against associating with the wicked:

Gbogbo ológbón bérébéré inú wá
B’ó ba rí aṣẹbi kẹ̀è sùrè sésé
B’ó bá rí òsìkà ẹ̀dà kẹ̀è tẹ̀sẹ̀ mọ̀rìn

(All the wise among us
If you see the wicked, run
If you see the evil-doer, don’t wait...)

He emphasizes that “no sinner will go unpunished,” concluding with the proverb:

kí ilé tó pòsìkà, ohun rere á ti bàjẹ́
(Before the house harbors wickedness, good things would have been destroyed.)

This proverb reflects the Yoruba worldview which looks at wickedness as a destructive force that undermines communal harmony. Ọpádòtun’s warning serves as a moral deterrent, encouraging readers to uphold integrity and avoid harmful behaviors.

In “Bí Ilé Ní Gbòsìkà”, Ọpádòtun reiterates the inevitable downfall of evildoers, while in “Amòkùnsìkà”, he condemns hypocrisy, using the historical figure Basòrun Gáà as an example of hidden wickedness. Basòrun Gáà, a prominent figure in Yoruba history, is often depicted as a symbol of betrayal and deceit, making him a powerful cautionary tale. These poems collectively underscore the moral imperative to uphold justice and integrity, reinforcing the educational value of *Ewì Àsìkò*.

Cultural Preservation

Two poems, “Yorùbá Wù Mí” and “Ìgbéga Àṣà Ìbílẹ̀”, celebrate Yoruba culture, urging readers to preserve their heritage amidst foreign influences. In “Ìgbéga Àṣà Ìbílẹ̀”, Ọpádòtun laments the erosion of cultural values due to colonization:

Àṣà dikorita méta tí í fálejò sùyọnu
(Culture has gotten to a point of confusion)

He highlights the tension between indigenous and foreign cultures, challenging youths to take pride in their language, traditions, and identity:

Ñjé èyín òdò orílè-èdè yí
Bèbè kí lẹ ẹ látí gbàsà tiwa gá?
Ìyànjú wo lẹ gbà, látí gbàsà níyí?
Èyín ni ẹ lásà níkàaró
Ìgbà tiyín nìyí o
Kí lẹ fẹ́ẹ̀ fí gbà nàá ẹ?
(You youth of this country
What efforts are you putting to move our culture forward
What effort are you doing to make culture prestigious
You are the custodians of culture
This is your own time
What do you want to do in your time?)

These poems serve as a call to action, encouraging cultural pride and resistance to the marginalization of Yoruba heritage. Òpádòtun's focus on culture reflects broader concerns about globalization and its impact on indigenous identities, making his work relevant to contemporary discussions on cultural preservation.

Educational Implications

The transformative potential of *Ewì Àsìkò* extends beyond its literary value as it offers significant implications for educational policy and practice. By integrating poetry into curricula, educators can leverage its ability to engage students emotionally and intellectually, fostering moral development and cultural awareness. The poems' accessibility with their simple language and relatable themes, makes them suitable for learners at various stages of development.

For young children, poems like “Ìmòràn F'Ómọ̀ Ilé-Èkó” can be used to teach values such as respect and diligence, while older students can engage with poems like “Ìgbéga Àṣà Ìbílẹ̀” to explore issues of identity and cultural heritage. Teachers can use these poems as springboards for discussions, creative writing exercises, and critical analyses, encouraging students to reflect on their roles in society.

Furthermore, the integration of Yoruba poetry into education can help address the marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures in Nigerian schools where

English often dominates. By valuing Yoruba literature, educators can empower students to take pride in their heritage, fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

Conclusion

In this study, we have demonstrated that Olátúnjí Opádòtún's *Ewì Àsìkò* stands as a testament to the transformative power of poetry in education and societal reform. Through his instructive poems, Opádòtún addresses critical issues, family dynamics, cultural preservation, unity, and morality, offering guidance to diverse audiences. His work underscores the role of literature in shaping ethical individuals and cohesive communities making it an invaluable resource for educational systems. By integrating poetry like *Ewì Àsìkò* into curricula, educators can foster moral development and cultural awareness which can ensure brighter future for Nigeria.

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