DIGITAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF SELECT IBIBIO SYMBOLS IN CLIP ART FOR COMPUTER APPLICATIONS: A FOCUS ON HUMAN GROUPING

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Abstract

Ibibio symbols appear not to be assembled in clip art packages. Therefore, there is obvious lack of Ibibio traditional clip art in computer applications. Thus, an Ibibio graphics designer does not have a ready-made repository of the symbols where they can be picked and used with ease as the need arises. This, therefore, constrains Ibibio designers to use images that are misfits in most designs that have traditional Ibibio themes. It is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken. The aim of the study was to create clip art in Ibibio symbols for computer applications. The objectives were to select Ibibio symbols in clip art for boys and girls category; to make digital illustration of select Ibibio symbols in clip art for culture category; make digital illustration of select Ibibio symbols in clip art for dance category; and make digital illustration for play category. The study gathered data from secondary and primary sources. Sketches, photographs and Adobe Photoshop Software were adapted complementarily for the illustrations. The study revealed that it is possible to create digital illustrations using Ibibio symbols for computer application in clip art. The study recommends that more digital illustrations of Ibibio and other Nigerian and African cultural background clip art should be created. Same should be profusely used by Ibibio designers, and others, in their design content so as to popularize Ibibio symbols. The study also recommends that Apps on Ibibio clip arts and emoticons should be created by software designers.
Keywords: Clip Art, Computer Application, Ibibio, Symbols.

Introduction

The practice of cutting images from pre-existing printed works for use in design gave birth to the term clip art. It involves a variety of files and formats. It equally involves photographs, illustrations, drawing, scripts and fonts or characters. Clip art can be summed up as a collection of different ready-made copyright free images, graphic or objects cut, compiled and arranged in a categorical format to aid a designer or user of the relevant environment in a work or works. Jared (2017) defines clip art as "a wide variety of files, professional photographs, technical illustrations, simple line drawings, even fonts". Clip art as a term has been used all over the world since 1968 (Merriam-Webster, 2018) as an effective repository of visuals for effective graphics service delivery. Since it serves this purpose and also ensures relatively fast delivery of design, designers have exploited it in a variety of ways. Artists and designers from different parts of the world have launched visuals of their respective cultural backgrounds on clip art environment. Unfortunately, among the Ibibio, this is not the case in spite of the prolific nature of clip art. Visuals of Ibibio culture appear not to be found in clip art environment. Undoubtedly, there are very many things in Ibibio culture that can be placed on the clip art environment which can make the culture compete favourably with others in the African continent and beyond.

The dearth of Ibibio clip art has resulted in many artists and designers using alien visuals for designs that should rather use local contents to communicate. The lack of ready-made visuals on Ibibio in clip art environment is a source of concern. It has reached a situation where, for instance, a designer of invitation cards for a Child Dedication uses an image of an English man's baby for the design of a card meant for an Ibibio, an African child. See figure 1.

Figure 1: Invitation Card", Image of an English man's child on Child Dedication of and African child
Source: Emmanuel Ndem's Collections, (2017).

The same scenario applies to, but not limited to, the use of visuals of drinking glasses, jars and decanters in place of gourds, calabashes and pots in designs of cards, programmes and brochures for Ibibio traditional marriages, coronations and other Ibibio traditional functions. It is against this backdrop that the writer undertook the creation of some digital illustrations of Ibibio symbols for clip art environment. Although there are Animal, Bird, Plant Groupings, this study was delimited to Human Grouping. Digital illustration was used. Boys and girls, culture, dance and play categories were illustrated for computer application. CorelDraw and Photoshop package were used to achieve the desired and necessary file formats of Scalable Vector Graphics (svg) for storage and retrieval. In order to set the paper in adequate perspective, the paper is organized under the following sub-headings: Ibibio People, Computer Application, Clip Art, Digital Illustrations of some Ibibio Symbols in Clip Art.

Ibibio People
Geographically, the Ibibio people are located in South South Nigeria between longitudes $7^{o}25`$ and $8^{o}25`$ East of the Greenwich meridian and between latitudes $4^{o}33`$ and $5^{o}33`$ North of the equator. They share a

common boundary in the North and North East with the Ekoi in the West and North West bounded by the Igbo of Abia State. In the East they are bounded by various ethnic groups of the Cameroons while Bight of Bonny washes the Southern border (Ukpong, Akpan and Akang, 2001). Many authors and researchers have given varied meanings to the word, Ibibio. The name Ibibio means 'children or followers of Ibom' (*Mbio* or *Ndito-Ibom*). Ibom the father of the Ibibio founded Ibom village in Arochukwu. Ibibio is a name derived from the fusion of the Western Ibibio word *Ibi* and the central Ibibio word *mbio, Ibi-bio*, which means people or children or followers of Ibom (*Ndito Ibom, Ikot Ibom* or *Nung Ibom*) (Ukpong, Akpan and Akang, 2001). Ibom literally means mighty, limitless or supreme.

Udo (1983) asserts that the meaning of Ibibio suggests something that is short, brief and precise. The source adds that Ibibio people do things in direct, precise ways; even their language is brief; one Ibibio word may stand for two, three or more than five different things depending on the usage or pronunciation. The source gives an example of Ibibio word, *Obong* which stands for five different things. The word *obong* depending on pronunciation can mean mosquito, shouts, cane, chief and pimple. The source observes that Ibibio words are short, precise and are phonetically spelt and pronounced. The Ibibio think of their name as meaning the people who do things in precise and brief manner (Udo, 1983).

Computer Application

Computer application is a software programme that runs on ones computer, such as, web browsers, word processors, games and other applications in a computer. The earliest form of computing device is Abacus that was developed more than 5,000 years ago. According to Umoh and Inyang (2005) computers have now taken virtually every field of human endeavour. Computer is an electronic device that is capable of solving problems especially in the area of manipulation of data. It accepts data, processes the data using mathematical and logical operations and releases the data when needed. Computers are able to store huge quantities of data in such a way that they can easily be made available for further processing. In the olden days, data were stored in files that could easily fill the storage rooms. If one wanted to use the data, one needed to look for the correct file in the storage room. Now

data is stored in computers and can easily be accessed by typing in the corresponding instructions.

Computer graphics increases range, versatility and flexibility of graphic design. Computer application is essential to human development. There is no area of discipline that computer is not relevant. The speed and accuracy of data processing and other functions with the computer are enormous. In all directions, computer as a tool in contemporary design serves in ceramics, graphics, painting, sculpture, textiles, multimedia, theatre and architecture. Its software application to designs remains the most important tool for accomplishing effective designs and communication. Computer plays a vital role in providing different softwares that make presentation less tedious and more effective. The different softwares that are relevant to digital illustration include, but not limited to, Anima-Pro for animation, Adobe Illustrator for illustration, CorelDraw for graphic design, PageMaker for typesetting and layout of books, Publisher for publishing of business cards, cards, letter-head papers, brochures, fliers and; Photoshop for editing and modifying pictures. Most of these softwares were used to enhance the digital illustrations of Ibibio symbols in clip art in this study.

Clip Art

Clip art is the practice of cutting images from pre-existing printed works for use in design. It is a ready-made package that contains visual symbols and images which are designed professionally for ease of graphic design. It also ensures suitability of images in a given work. It is a collection, compilation and arrangement of different images, photographs, illustrations, drawings, and or fonts in a categorical format to aid a user. Thankgod (2015) sees clip art as not just for graphics convenience but as bits and documents of history, that has to "contain cultural values which have an origin and could be commoditized globally". According to Deals (2010) in Thankgod (2015) "the term clip art originated through the practice of cutting images from existing printed works for use in other printed projects". Before the advent of computers for desktop publishing, clip art was used through a process known as paste-up. In this process, the clip art images were cut out by hand, and then attached via adhesives to the medium. Since the 1990s, nearly all publishers have replaced the paste-up process with desktop

publishing. Little wonder Adewunmi (2002) states that computer has brought about development by stimulating every facet of creative design to explore new vistas. There has been a rapid development and modification intended to facilitate and ease designers of all sorts. Every minute something new is added to the available computer graphics tools.

Classification/Keywords of Digital Illustration of Ibibio Symbols
The classification/keywords of digital illustration of Ibibio symbols on Human grouping – boy/girl, culture, dance and play. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.
Boy/girl: This is a male/female child. A person between the ages of 0 and 18 years according to the law of Federal Republic of Nigeria is a child. Longman (2010) sees a boy as "a male child or a young man" and a girl as "a female child".

Culture: Generally, culture is seen as a way of life of a people; the food, attire, house, religion and behavioural pattern of a given people. Culture is more than just the way of life. It speaks identity just as one's name. When culture is mentioned, most times it refers to the work of arts – painting, sculpture and music. Linton (1955) as cited in Modo (1994:33) sees culture "as an organized group of learned responses characteristic of a particular society". Tylor (1871) over a century ago defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Modo (1994:33) avers that:

> *Culture can be in material or non-material form. … could be in the form of behaviours, beliefs, attitudes, value based on cumulative past experience and ideas. The products of such behaviour are artifacts, that is, the material products of learned behaviour, such as pots, hammer, clothing, hoes, and buildings.*

From the above definitions of culture, it can be said that human beings have the capacity to create and sustain culture no matter how simple that culture appears to be. Culture has its own characteristics. One of the characteristics is cultural relativity. Every society tend to see

their system of behaviour as good or normal while that of other people is seen as inferior, timid, barbaric, and unacceptable (Modo, 1994). It is important that one gains knowledge of other peoples' culture. According to Boas (1965) in Modo (1994) all cultures are good. No culture is more important than another. All cultures are useful to the people who practice them for they emanate both solutions to the people's problems and also keys to the people's advancement. Modo (1994) sees cultural relativity as "a society's custom, and ideas that should be understood in the context of its peculiar circumstances". In this category, culture and certain cultural activities were reviewed using Ibibio symbols for the development of clip art.
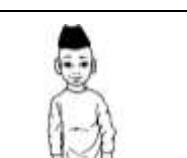
Dance: Dance is a rhythmic movement of one's body. This is usually accompanied, mostly, with any kind of music. According to Nkanga (2016) dance helps in physical co-ordination. It improves physical health and creates aesthetic experience among participants. The source asserts "It has always created physical sensitivity as it often makes participants alert and active in creating movement within a specified space and rhythm to the music". Dance and musical sessions have always created excitement and promote co-operation and team spirit among participants.

Play: Is seen as one being engaged in enjoyable activities. There are several plays in Ibibio-land such as: *ekoong, ekpe, ekpo, utuekpe, ababat, ekong nke, ekpaekpan, ndut ukpa, mkpiboribo, tinkoriko, mbok, ekpi'no ebot mmi.* This article selected some of the Ibibio plays for digital illustration.

Digital Illustrations of some Ibibio Symbols in Clip Art
Ibibio symbols which have long been in the history should be re-invented by artists for digital storage and retrieval. Traditional symbols of most tribes and cultures of the world are available in clip art packages. Corporate symbols of most organizations, groups and professional bodies are also made available in clip art. In spite of the popularity of clip art, the package is bereft of Ibibio symbols in computer application. Therefore, this work attempted a digital illustration of select Ibibio symbols in clip art. This was done under one

keyword namely; Human grouping. This was subdivided under boy and
girl, culture, dance and play. Plates 1 – 4 show the illustrations.

KEYWORD: HUMAN			
CATEGORY: Boy and girl			
Symbolic	**Ibibio name**	**English Equivalent**	**Manifest Meaning**
	Nsek eyen awowan	Baby girl	Meekness, restfulness, innocence
	Nsek eyen aworen	Baby boy	Meekness, restfulness, innocence
	Etok eyen awowan	Little girl	Innocence, growth
	Etok eyen aworen	Little boy	Innocence, growth

	Akpuum aboikpa	Girl	Growth, puberty, fertility
	Akpuum akparawa	Boy	Growth, puberty, fertility
	Akparawa awowan	Lady	Youthfulness, vigour
	Akparawa aworen	Gentleman	Youthfulness, vigour

Plate 1: Some Ibibio Symbols in Clip Art showing Human Grouping of
Boy/Girl Category
Source: Author's fieldwork, 2018

KEYWORD: HUMAN			
CATEGORY: Culture			
Symbolic	**Ibibio name**	**English Equivalent**	**Manifest Meaning**
	Abod oko	Potter	Industry, productivity
	Abop ufok	Builder	Industry, productivity
	Adok nkreng	Basket weaver	Industry, productivity
	Ako iyak	Fisherman	Industry, productivity

	Ata utop	Hunter	Industry, productivity
	Ato inwang	Farmer	Industry, productivity
	Ato inwang	Farmer	Industry, productivity
	Atuak ukot	Palm wine tapper	Industry, productivity
	Mbopo	Young maiden	Wealth, royalty, good health

	Obong Ikpaisong	Chief of any given geographical area	Authority, royalty, government
	Atuak ukot	Palm wine tapper	Industry, productivity
	Okpoko mkpo	Town crier	Communication, transparency
	Abre ibit	Drum beater	Entertainment

Plate 2: Some Ibibio Symbols in Clip Art showing Human Grouping of
Culture Category
Source: Author's fieldwork, 2018

KEYWORD: HUMAN			
CATEGORY: Dance			
Symbolic	**Ibibio name**	**English Equivalent**	**Manifest Meaning**
	Ekombi	A kind of traditional dance	Entertainment
	Mbaya	A kind of traditional dance	Entertainment
	Itembe	A kind of traditional dance	Entertainment
	Abang	A kind of traditional dance	Entertainment

	Uta	Horn blower	Entertainment

Plate 3: Some Ibibio Symbols in Clip Art showing Human Grouping of Dance Category
Source: Author's fieldwork, 2018

KEYWORD: HUMAN			
CATEGORY: Play			
Symbolic	**Ibibio name**	**English Equivalent**	**Manifest Meaning**
	Ekong nke	Folk tales	Relaxation
	Mbok	Wrestling	Prowess and social co-existence, entertainment

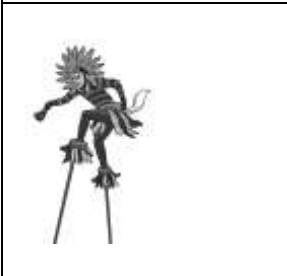|			
	Utue-ekpe	Spider man	It is a play that one climbs and rides a bicycle with a web designed and modeled after the cobweb. It is for entertainment.
	Ekpe	A kind of play – lion	Entertainment
	Ekpo nyoho	Masquerade	Entertainment
	Abiakpo	A kind of play	Entertainment

Plate 4: Some Ibibio Symbols in Clip Art showing Human Grouping of
Play Category
Source: Author's fieldwork, 2018

Manifest Meaning of Select Ibibio Symbols in Clip Art

Communication involves the sharing of information. It is a process which consists of communicative elements. These elements include encoder and decoder. For communication to be effective, the right visuals or tools must be properly placed. Adewunmi (2000) and Bassey (2004) cited in Bassey (2013) state that the aim of design is to communicate a message to its audience successfully through the organization of images and words. This article communicates side by side, to its audience, reader the manifest meanings of images and English equivalent as shown in plates 1 – 4.

Conclusion

Clip art is the practice of cutting images from pre-existing printed works for use in design. It ensures suitability of images in a given work. Traditional symbols of most tribes and cultures of the world are available in clip art packages. Corporate symbols of most organizations groups and professional bodies are also made available in clip art packages. In spite of the plethora of symbols available in clip art, the package is still bereft of some symbols. This work corroborates Thankgod (2015) submission that there is short supply of clip art that express the many Nigerian cultural design items in global circulation. Ibibio symbols are among those in short supply. The dearth of Ibibio symbols, images or visuals in clip art has constrained most Ibibio designers to use images and symbols which do not fit most designs with Ibibio themes. It is against this background that this study was set to select Ibibio symbols in clip for boys and girls category; to make digital illustration of select Ibibio symbols in clip art for culture category; make digital illustration of select Ibibio symbols in clip art for dance category; and make digital illustration for play category.

The study resulted in the provision of classification/keywords of digital illustration of Ibibio symbols of each image and manifest meaning for clarification. The outcome was a rendition of Ibibio clip art with the keyword – Human symbols. The resultant Ibibio clip art is absolutely editable in CorelDraw and any relevant working environment.

Symbols are beneficial to human existence. It constitutes the cultural background of any given society. Symbols convey meaning and are imbued with ideas. Ibibio symbols are not an exception to these

facts. This study therefore, recommends that: artists/designers should incorporate Ibibio symbols in their indigenous designs rather than using western symbols in traditional themes; more digital illustrations should be created by using Ibibio symbols for digital storage and retrieval; Ibibio clip art should be profusely used for designs with indigenous themes; more interfaces of other keywords and categories should be created for traditional Ibibio symbols for accessibility; the study also recommends that Apps on Ibibio clip arts and emoticons should be created by software designers.

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