

## Towards Effective Use of Language for Experimenting and Realising Major Ideas of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Noetic Propaedeutic at Workplace

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### ABSTRACT

Without language use, nothing would be heard or known about Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Noetic Propaedeutic. Thus, to experiment and realise the major ideas of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Noetic Propaedeutic in any context, effective language use is imperative. To that end, this study makes a case for effective use of language, indigenous and alien alike, to experiment and realise the major ideas of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy and Noetic Propaedeutic theory at workplace. The study argues that workplace relationships and activities anchored on Ibuanyidanda are bound to seek solutions to problems caused by mind concealment. It also argues that workers' mind has to be (re)trained in the recipe of Noetic Propaedeutic so that diversity becomes tolerated as a means of attaining existential missing links among individuals. The work further argues that language has to be used effectively by both individuals and groups at the workplace to practically realise what Asouzu teaches, attain complementary rather than polarised realities and relations at workplace, and free the mind of concealment. As Asouzu informs, concealment causes various mind-rooted human problems. The study concludes that to put Asouzu's major ideas to fruitful test and use, and attain efficacious results that get rid of interpersonal and intergroup issues at workplace, language has to be used effectively to experiment with and propagate his major ideas for diversity, cohesion, employee performance and organisational productivity.

Keywords: Language, Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda, Noetic propaedeutic, Workplace, Experimenting, Realising.

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### INTRODUCTION

Poor understanding and negligence of existential complementary relation and mind fracture caused by concealment are two of the major factors behind the recurring relational/interactional problems faced by many at the workplace [1, 2, 3]. To that end, this paper seeks to demonstrate that the problems of interpersonal and intergroup relation faced at the workplace can be revolved as well as averted through Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Neotic Propaedeutic. It also seeks to demonstrate that with effective language use, the main ideas of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Neotic Propaedeutic can be experimented and realised at the workplace [4, 5, 6, 7]. Through the lens of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda, the paper argues that any workplace relations built on Ibuanyidanda is bound to

seek solutions to workers' problems caused by the mind and the polarisation of realities, existential opposites and relations, for which the 'missing link' (Asouzu; *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology* 329) between and among workers and employers is misunderstood, abused and bifurcated [8,9,10]. Also, the paper reasons that even the heaviest tasks/burdens at the workplace can be surmounted with Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda. The study will also prove its postulation that Asouzu's notion of Neotic propaedeutic is a resourceful mechanism for understanding diversity at the workplace and for attaining maximal cohesion, employee performance and organisational productivity. It will go to show that with Asouzu's experimented ideas in mind, workers would become

conscious of and bound by their self -acquired, -gained, -built, -imposed, -enforced and -sustained ideological and theoretical solution to diverse human problems rooted in and arising from the

### **Innocent Izuchukwu Asouzu: A Brief Biography**

An Igbo born 21st century African philosopher and Catholic priest, Rev. Fr Professor Innocent Izuchukwu Asouzu was born on 13 October, 1952 in the Enyimba, Aba, Abia State, South-East, Nigeria. He was born into the family of Mazi Charles Ijeoma Asouzu and Ezinne Juliana Anaezi Asouzu of Aro-ndizuogu, Abia State. After obtaining his BA in 1975, Asouzu moved to Austria and studied for MA in Theology in the Faculty of Theology and PhD in Philosophy and Sociology in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Innsbruck, under the auspices of the Jesuits at Collegium Canisianum (Asouzu, *Changes, Adaptation and Complementary* 17). While in Australia, he was ordained a Catholic priest in Austria in 1979. Innocent Asouzu is a talented, multidisciplinary and learned scholar, researcher, teacher and philosopher. He is remarked to be a sociable, jovial and philanthropic. Many of his students and fellow staff often testify this reality about the personality of Professor Innocent Asouzu [18,19,20].

Asouzu returned home in 1986, worked briefly in his Aba Diocese and soon afterwards took up a permanent teaching appointment with the University of Calabar (UNICAL) in 1988. So, he has been with UNICAL since 1988 till date (2022). It is at UNICAL that he became a renowned scholar, with numerous publications that have made him prolific. Beyond the curricular teaching, this great man has been researching and writing on theoretical preconditions of mutual coexistence between units within any given framework. His quest to work out

### **The Thrust of Ibuanyidanda**

Ibuanyidanda ontology teaches that there is a mutual dependence of all missing links in the unifying interrelatedness of things (phenomena) and all living creatures (humans and nonhumans) (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence* 102). Asouzu argues that reality presents itself in ambivalences. It is for

mind [11,12,13,14,15]. They would realise that and become bent on acting morally, since act morally requires acting to overcome the phenomenon of ambivalence, concealment [16,17].

and establish a complementary social theory for the resolution of conflicts made him championed his Ibuanyidanda ontological model. This philosophical model has gone far and wide, especially in the circle of philosophy. He has been able to model his idea into a system with its own principles and method of investigating reality [21].

The application of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy to African philosophy has yielded positive results and brought to place remarkable positive changes. With his model, he has been able to carve a niche for himself and won many prizes (Asouzu, *Changes, Adaptation and Complementary*). Today, just as ancient Western philosophers have disciples, Asouzu has many disciples. Most of them have developed their own models from his, while some others have remained bent on developing and bettering Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda ontology and Noetic Propaedeutic theory. From his Ibuanyidanda came the following ontological models and theories: Ezumezu Logic, Variants of Tree Valued Logic, Compatibility Theory, Harmonious Monism, Integrative Humanism, Conceptual Mandelisation, Consolationism, and others (Asouzu, *Changes, Adaptation and Complementary*). Many essays and theses have been written on his Ibuanyidanda philosophy and Noetic Propaedeutic. His Ibuanyidanda philosophy, also known as Complementary Reflection, remains a work in progress, as he and his disciples continuously develop, improve on and diversify it [22].

this reason that there exist white and black, long and short, superior and inferior, wise and foolish, we and them, I and you, educated and not educated, strong and weak, rational and irrational and so on. These ambivalent pairs exist in complementary relationship, mutually serving each other. Regrettably, the

phenomenon of concealment prevents humans from seeing the complementarity inherent in these pairs. Concealment makes them to exalt one pair above the other. For humans to see the existential complementarity that harmonises life ambivalences, the phenomenon of concealment has to be expelled from the mind (Asouzu, "Changes, Adaptation and Complementary" 233). The elimination of concealment brings to place virtuous acts like peace, love, kindness, mercy, care, fellow feeling, honesty and the likes in human beings (Asouzu, "Changes, Adaptation and Complementary" 233). At that point in time, human beings who begin to see all reality as sharing the same complementary horizon, if they become fully conscious of the functioning of the constraining mechanisms and overcome them [23].

To Asouzu (*The Method and Principles of Complementary* 277), any relationship that is the like of Ibuanyidanda or that is anchored on Ibuanyidanda usually seeks to proffer solutions to 'the fracture in the

#### **The Thrust of Noetic Propaedeutic**

Asouzu's Noetic Propaedeutic theory is a model of his Ibuanyidanda philosophy. Noetic propaedeutic is an integral part of the whole Ibuanyidanda philosophy. It concerns the resetting and restructuring of the mind in a way that it becomes capable of accommodating the opposites of existence without polarising them. It is a philosophic system of pedagogy that teaches what transpires in the mind of the individual, as regard its conception of others other than itself. That is, the mind perceives others differently and unequally from self and too often than not polarise realities and existential opposites. Beyond explaining the nature of the mind in that regard and the existence of the phenomenon of concealment therein, Asouzu's Noetic Propaedeutic teaches the individual how to overcome the broken unity in human consciousness. Asouzu informs that 'the broken unity in human consciousness is caused by the challenges of the tension-laden human ambivalent existential situations and concealment [Ihemkpuchianya] (Asouzu, "Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence" 108) [25].

mind that makes harmony of differences difficult, if not impossible'. Humans are in complementary relations with one another and the non-humans. In all complementary relationships of all kinds, there is a moment of natural compulsion. The moment is that which each unit reaches out to others in joyous service, conscious of their limitations and fragility, in the hope of an all-embracing future (Asouzu, *The Method and Principles of Complementary* 277). It is at this point that the individual realises and upholds the dire need for complementary relations. Then, complementary relationship gets established. All modes of complementary relationship demand what is needed to mediate meaningfully the tension that mistakes contraries for contradictories, generated in the mind (Asouzu, *Changes, Adaptation and Complementary* 3). Be it so, the established complementary relationship is free of the tension, as the mind is already trained and made free from the phenomenon of concealment [24].

It takes the conscious training of the mind against concealment to hold on to unity in diversity and mutual complementary relations and interdependence, without polarisation and/or negation. Asouzu teaches that noetic propaedeutic is essential for a better understanding and sharing of meaning in a way that outweighs the artificial impediments the mind creates around itself (Asouzu, "Ibuanyidanda" *New Complementary Ontology* 81). Noetic propaedeutic is needed to save the self ego from shattered unity and to restore the subject (the person having the mind) to true self. It makes the individual to realise, confirm and remain conscious of the fact that 'to be' is to be in mutual complementary relationship with all missing links of reality (Asouzu, "Ibuanyidanda" *New Complementary Ontology* 81). To make the mind realise and be conscious of that, Asouzu insists on proper cleansing and restructuring of the mind. Given that the mind is lace and there is often no prospect, the mind has to be well trained consistently and be made to

attain the level of refinement expected of it [26].

With the training, the mind has to learn to view units 'as complements within a comprehensive universal setting' (Asouzu, "Ibuanidanda" *New Complementary Ontology* 83). He emphasises that to free the mind from the strong tendencies of becoming absolute and exclusivist in its commitments, it is imperatively urgent to treat the mind of this ill and thereby overcome the ambivalence of human interest and ihmkpuchianya - phenomenon of concealment (Asouzu, "Ibuanidanda" *New Complementary Ontology* 83). Therefore, Noetic Propaedeutic is the needed panacea for concealment, which informs us that when the mind negates itself against reality and against others through concealment, it rejects others and reality. In the context of this paper, concealment causes the rejection of various workplace realities and other fellow employees. Clearly, noetic propaedeutic can resolve the problems faced at the workplace, which concealment causes, for which concealed minds become locked against, envious of and unreceptive to others [27].

At this juncture, it is imperative to note that Asouzu's theory of Noetic

#### **Experimenting and Realising Asouzu's Main Ideas at Workplace**

The changes in work settings in the contemporary era have led to conceptual, theoretical and empirical studies aimed at finding solutions to the problems therein (Akwaji and Paschal 57). The contemporary workplace is characterised by diversity (Abdussalam; Ayat 85-92), job re-design (Hackman and Oldham; Etim-Robert; Hermina and Yosepha 69-73) and workplace revolution (Gee, Hull & Lankshear; Hull). Diversity, which is a workplace practice of having employees of various backgrounds, is aimed at and usually leads to group cohesion or cohesiveness (Vertoveç 1024). Language, culture and space are being recently theorised in relation to the question about language choice and mix (Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, and Spaces of Multilingualism). Descriptive rather prescriptive language use is now the tradition, unlike in the past linguistic eras.

Propaedeutic tallies extensively with Plato's Theory of Allegory of the Cave (Republic VII 514a, to 517a). For Plato, all that are given through the senses are inward reflections made manifest. Martin Heidegger (*Being and Time*) demonstrates same stance in his Theory of the Hidden Nature of Being. Asouzu rightly thinks in that direction, as he feels that human problems begin in the mind and so the solution to the problems ought to begin in the mind, for which mind training is imperative. For example, the problem of diversity at the workplace rises from what the mind of the individual worker conceives internally and causes the body to exhibit externally about and towards other workers. In the same vein, Francis Bacon demonstrates in his Theory of Idols that human vision is beclouded by idols of sciences, arts and human knowledge and so it is imperative to reconstruct sciences, arts and human knowledge (Brian 124-8), so as to do away with the idols and make human vision clear. For Asouzu, one has to act morally against the evils of these idols and those of the phenomenon of concealment by training and restructuring one's mind to be free from them [28].

What is also in vogue now is language use according to the context of the given interaction and the mutual resources of the speakers (Blommaert; Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck; Polycentricity and Interactional Regimes; Duff), rather than based on single domain [29].

As Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck (Polycentricity and Interactional Regimes 208) observe, "within a workplace there may be a constant tension between 'interactional regimes'." The tension is captured in Asouzu's thought-- 'tension that mistakes contraries for contradictories, generated in the mind' (Asouzu, Changes, Adaptation and Complementary 3). According to Asouzu, the inconspicuous accessory conditions of knowing, willing, judging and acting are the very mechanisms and phenomena responsible for illusions and deceit that characterise the human (*Ibuanidanda*

Special Edition 6). Through mind training, the tension is got rid of, as the phenomenon of concealment gets expelled from the mind. In their analysis of Asouzu's views on concealment as the source of human problems borne in the mind, Akwaji and Paschal (58) demand that human beings should, at all times, critically evaluate their actions, behaviours, decisions and judgments, and constantly strive to suppress those (actions, behaviors, decisions and judgments) that promote self-interests to the peril of others and rather allow those that (could) promote the common good of all in society. This noble demand applies to workers at the workplace. Their changed and sustained right or positive actions, behaviours, decisions and judgments would continue to be of the good of all workers and the employers.

It is affirmed that language use in work settings concerns transactional and relational communications (Kingsley; Pullin). Language is used for both transactions and relations or relationships at the workplace. Social interactions, such as small talk, are affirmed to be essential for appreciable performance and productivity in the workplace (Tange & Lauring; Pullin). Thus, social interactions impact on the goal of getting job done. Pullin shows that language use in the workplace for interaction helps in building rapport and solidarity. It also mitigates cultural barriers and possible misunderstandings (Pullin). The importance of language in the workplace is evident in the demand for language competence in language(s) of the workplace environment during recruitment. As Angouri and Miglbauer note, commonly shared native languages are important at the workplace because they make one to fit into the system and build team spirit.

The extent to which communication as well as communicative competence is needed at the workplace cannot be over-emphasised, particularly as the digitalised global society is becoming 'an increasingly competence-driven world' (Matthewman). Angouri examines language policy and language use in regards to the employees

multilingual realities. She reveals that the bottom-up language practices are highly influential, unlike the top-down regulations of language use in the workplaces. These expressed thoughts reflect what how Asouzu's thoughts could be experimented and realised at the workplace using language effectively. In the context of workplace language use, language function comes before the form. The consideration is language function, not necessarily its form. In practice, language is used for interaction at the workplace (Rönnlöf 15-16). That is the interactive function of language, in which form comes after function.

Organisational and individual goals, as in building report and team spirit, affects the choice of language at the workplace. With the tenets and pedagogic impact of Asouzu's Noetic Propaedeutic on workers, the mind of the individual worker gets freed from the phenomenon of concealment and holds on to complementary relations rather than the polarisation of relations and realities. To realise the foundational ideas of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Noetic Propaedeutic at workplace, the mind has to be trained in the recipe of Asouzu's theorised and ideological pedagogy. Once the workplace individual begins to experiment with his ideas, they would become realistic and conscious of the fact that workplace opposites are existential complementary missing links and not the otherwise, which should be harmonised for collective rather than individualised benefits. With the realities of what Asouzu's ontology and theory express, linguistic barriers at workplace would not be misunderstood and taken for what should cause division between and among workers, and workers and management.

With the narratives of what happened at the workplace, working parents un/consciously socialise their children into work practices. Also, with the practice of working at or from home on the internet, formal and informal socialisation, training and orientation about work get to even children right at home. Workplace linguistic (language) socialisation combines both formal and

informal phases and approaches (Vertoveç). Workplace socialisation of all phases cannot really be separated from professional training and socialisation that take place outside formal and physical workplaces (Vertoveç). The implication of the foregoing is that workers can experiment and realise Asouzu's ideas in and outside the formal work settings. First, they learn and socialise one another on the imperative of complementary reflections and relations and getting rid of

concealment from the mind and thereby freeing the mind from what polarises realities and opposites and congeals evils and negative tendencies and actions that characterise the human nature. Second, after experimenting and realising his ideas at workplace, working parents and older persons ought to socialise younger persons back home on how to imbibe Asouzu's ideas and put them to practice so as to realise them at workplace.

### CONCLUSION

So far, this study has demonstrated that the lead ideas of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Noetic Propadeutic can be realised at every workplace that imbibes, institutionalises and sustains them using language effectively. Through effective language use, these ideas are communicated to workers, who get well socialised on, influenced by, and conscious of them. As the workers get oriented and (re)trained with the ideals of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda and Noetic Propadeutic, they are bound to change and become transformed, receptive and tolerant to others, cease to polarise realities, and halt rupturing complementary mutual relationships in

the organisation. The study argues that the resourceful impact of Asouzu's ideas on workers exposed to his Ibuanyidanda ontology and Noetic Propadeutic theory results in newness that brings to place mutually built workplace diversity, group cohesion without any sentiments, employee performance and organisational productivity. The study concludes that to put Asouzu's major ideas to fruitful test and use, and attain efficacious results that get rid of interpersonal and intergroup issues at workplace, language has to be used effectively to experiment with and propagate his major ideas for diversity, cohesion, employee performance and organisational productivity.

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