

Bakassi and Four One Nine (419) in Nigeria: Meaning and Description

John Arierhi Ottuh^{1*}¹Senior Lecturer, Department of Christian Religious Studies Obong University, Obong Ntak, NigeriaDOI: [10.36347/sjahss.2022.v10i12.004](https://doi.org/10.36347/sjahss.2022.v10i12.004)

| Received: 07.03.2022 | Accepted: 12.04.2022 | Published: 30.12.2022

***Corresponding author:** John Arierhi Ottuh

Senior Lecturer, Department of Christian Religious Studies Obong University, Obong Ntak, Nigeria

Abstract

Review Article

The conceptual and contextual study of the terms Bakassi and 419 in Nigeria are either scanty or even lacking in modern African scholarship. Although some scholars have written on Bakassi, they mainly focused on the aspects of the Peninsula and international conflict resolution. Also, literature on the contextual description of the numeric 419 is also very scanty in African scholarship except for a few who have approached it mostly from the perspective of cyber security. Using the exposition approach, this present essay, therefore, aims at showing various perspectives of the word Bakassi in Nigeria on the one hand and the local description of the numeric 419 in Nigeria, on the other hand. This will contribute to knowledge in the aspect of the conceptual and contextual meaning of Bakassi and 419 in the African lexicology.

Keywords: Bakassi, Four-one-nine (419), Nigeria, Bakassi Peninsula, Yahoo-boys.

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

INTRODUCTION

The conceptual and contextual study of the terms Bakassi and 419 are either scanty or even lacking in modern scholarship. Although, scholars, such as Harnischfeger (2003); Smith (2004); Konings (2005; 2011); Anyu (2007); Obodo & Akwen (2017); Opué and Usang (2020); Ogunnoiki (2020); and others too numerous to mention here have touched on Bakassi by focusing on the Peninsula and international conflict resolution aspect. Moreover, scholarship on the contextual description of the numeric 419 is also very scanty. Those who have done research on 419 as it relates to Nigeria did it mostly from the perspective of cyber security (Webster and Drew, 2017). Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to do a conceptual and contextual description of Bakassi and 419 as it relates to Nigeria. This is necessary in the sense that words can be defined generally and conceptually, otherwise, such word(s) may never be well understood. In most cases, words or concepts in Africa are sometimes, used in the public domain and forgotten soon or later especially after the generation that was familiar with such concepts is no more.

The words Bakassi and 419 are just two among many. These words are popularly used in Nigeria but have not been documented in the English dictionary or Encyclopaedia like other African-oriented terms. For

instance, voodoo or Vodou, juju, (Ikeora, 2016; Cbanga, 2009; Zivkovic, 2017; McAlister, 2020), etc, would have gone oblivion by now if they were not added to the English dictionary or in published articles. Although African terms are being used in several modern English dictionaries nowadays, many have either been forgotten or still dagglng in the public domain waiting for extinction. In Nigeria, while the term Bakassi has sociological, geographical, and religious meanings, the word 419 has a contextual or local meaning as well. These perspectives will be discussed here.

Using the exposition approach, this paper aims at showing various perspectives of the word Bakassi in Nigeria on the one hand and the local description of the numeric 419 in Nigeria, on the other hand. Expository/Descriptive writing according to Ataç (2015:622) is relatively simple in the sense that it is not meant to develop an argument. It is “merely setting the background within which an argument can be developed” (Ataç, 2015:622). As such, the researcher is required to represent “the situation as it stands, without presenting any analysis or discussion. The most characteristic features of expository/descriptive writing are that it will describe something, but will not go beyond an account of what appears to be there” (Ataç, 2015:622). In medical-related research, it is referred to

as a qualitative Descriptive Approach in which health care and nursing-related phenomena are described, though mostly in relation with a quantitative survey or other phenomena (Koh & Owen, 2000: 219-248; Kim et al, 2017:23; Seixas et al, 2018:778). Scholars have also referred to the expository/descriptive writing approach in the humanities and educational researches though, mostly from literary and textual points of view (Ronen, 1997; Lucas & McConkie, 1980). Although arguments abound as to the opposition that exists between the descriptive and narrative approach in literary genres and description and itemization in educational research in the above authors, recent research has also shown the appropriateness of using the descriptive approach depending on what the writer intends to describe [place, group, person, etc] (Ataç, 2015:622). Following (Ataç, 2015:622) definition of descriptive writing approach, the descriptive approach in the context of this paper has to do with the description (exposition) of the word Bakassi from various perspectives in which it is used locally in Nigeria. These perspectives include Bakassi as a trading name for a person; Bakassi as a geographical location; Bakassi as a Romantic expression; and Bakassi as security and religious connotations. Similarly, the description of the numeric 419 will also be discussed from historical and criminal perspectives. Specifically, this paper intends to answer the question: what are the understandings of Bakassi and 419 in Nigeria?

Bakassi in Perspectives

Here we intend to bring to the fore several understandings of the word Bakassi in Nigeria. The understandings are multifaceted. Here, four perspectives of the understanding of the term Bakassi in Nigeria will be shown. First, there is the perspective of the term Bakassi as a trading name for a person. There is a popular Nigerian comic actor known as Okey Bakassi. In this context, the person does not represent Bakassi as a place but he is addressed as Bakassi on the ground of nomenclature as a trading name. Although it is a trading name for the comic actor, it has become acceptable by so many as a name of an actor in the Nollywood film industry in Nigeria. The real identity of the comic actor is Okechukwu Anthony Onyegbule. He was born on October 23, 1969, in Owerri, Imo State in the South-East of Nigeria. He is a Nigerian stand-up comedian and actor.

Second, there is the perspective of Bakassi as a geographical location between Cameroon and Nigeria. There are presently two understandings of the geographical location called Bakassi. One of them is the Bakassi Peninsula. The Peninsula “lies between the Cross River estuary near the city of Calabar (about 4 km) which is located in Nigeria in the west and the Rio del Rey estuary in the East. The Rio del Rey is a drainage basin located in West Africa within Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon” (Yerima & Singh, 2017:67). The Bakassi Peninsula according to scholars “is

estimated to be 1,600km long, bordering the area between Nigeria and Cameroon which extend from Lake Chad to the Gulf of Guinea. It has a rough population index that ranges from 150,000 to 300,000. The people of Bakassi are mainly from the Cross River State; now Cross River and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria (Yerima & Singh, 2017:67). There are some major ethnic groups identified in the area. Such ethnic groups include the Ibibio, Efik, Ekoi, Semi-Bantu, and the Bantu. One of the major occupations of the people of the area is fishing due to the coaster nature of the terrain. The Peninsula also has some deposits of natural resources like crude oil (Konings, 2005). History has it that “the kingdom of Bakassi was founded around 1450 by the Efik nationality and was incorporated into the political framework of the kingdom of Old Calabar” (Akonye & Nwapi, 2019:2). Moreover, Patrick Okon and Patience Abu succinctly describe the traditional ownership of Bakassi by the Old Calabar kingdom by explaining thus;

Until the eventual ceding of Bakassi to the Republic of Cameroon in 2006, the peninsula used to be a territory under the authority of the Obong of Calabar, the natural ruler of the Efik people in Nigeria. This fact was internationally documented on 8, 9 and 11 September 1884 when the Kings and Chiefs of Efut, Idombi (Bakassi) and Tom Shott (Effiat) in Old Calabar signed the Treaty to come under British Protection, with Mr Edward Hyde Hewett, Consul representing Queen Victoria, in which the following declaration was made: ‘We, our people and our country are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar. That we cannot therefore make any treaties with a foreign power ... but that any Treaty with the said Kings and Chiefs of Old Calabar will be binding on us’ (Okon & Abu, 2019:3).

This is why some scholars opine that the demarcations of boundaries between Nigeria and Cameroon by using European standards instead of the traditional standard of the kingdom were misleading, hence the land was erroneously ceded to Cameroon by the International Court of Justice (Obodo & Akwen, 2017). However, our focus here is not to look into the appropriateness of the decision to cede the Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon by the Nigerian government and the ICJ but to give a picture of what happened.

Another version of the history of the origin of Bakassi as a place inhabited by people is that “the Bakassi People (Efik nationality) are the Afaha people from Usak Edet in Cameroon who left their place around 8000 BC (Akonye & Nwapi, 2019:2). The Peninsula area called Bakassi was under the Obong of Calabar before the coming of the British colonialists. The Obong signed away his Kingdom as a British Protectorate in 1862 but became part of Nigeria in 1914 when the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorates was done by Sir Frederick Lugard to form one Nigeria (Yerima & Singh, 2017:67). As time went

on, history had it that “the British ceded the territory to Germany and then placed it under the mandate of the League of Nations and trusteeship of the United Nations through a series of bilateral treaties and other legal instruments” (Yerima & Singh, 2017:67). The obvious in the trends and trajectories of Nigeria versus Cameroon conflict over the territorial ownership of Bakassi Peninsula was the loss of lives on both sides over violent clashes (Aghemelo & Ibhasebhor, 2006). Continuous border incursions from either side had provoked shootings, which resulted in more casualties from both sides. On March 24, 1994, “Cameroon formally instituted a suit against Nigeria at the International Court of Justice, at The Hague, seeking an injunction for the expulsion of Nigerian troops, which it said were occupying its territory and to restrain Nigeria from laying claim to Sovereignty over the Peninsula” (Ariye, 2015:28). In recent research, E. C. Ariye, a Senior Lecturer in History and International Studies at the Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education at Sagbama captured a summary of the core arguments especially as presented in the International Court of Justice for adjudication by citing W.Ofonagoro’s publication in the Vanguard Newspaper (Ariye, 2015:28). The grounds on which the Cameroonians are laying claim to the Bakassi Peninsula are multifarious as captured in Ofonagoro’s analysis. First, it was based on the Anglo-German agreement of March 11, 1913, which related to the settlement of their Colonial Frontier between Yola and the Sea and the Regulation of Navigation on the Cross River. Second, it was also based on the ground of the Anglo-German agreement of April 12, 1913, which regarded the boundary of Nigeria and Cameroon from Yola to the Sea. The third, was on the ground of the Yaounde II Declaration of April 4, 1971, a fall out of Yaounde I of August 14, 1970 consensus. The fourth was on the ground of the Lagos Declaration of June 21, 1971. The fifth argument by the Cameroonian was on the ground of the Kano Declaration of September 1, 1974, which delimits a 4-kilometer buffer corridor; that is, 2 kilometers on either side of the line joining Fairway landing buoy to buoys No. 1, 2, and 3 of the Calabar Channel. And the sixth was on the ground of the Maroua Declaration of June 1, 1975, which extends the course of the boundary from point 12 to point G (Ariye, 2015:28). The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is one of the arms of the United Nations Organization which is saddled with the responsibility among other things for peacemaking, peace-building, conflict management, conflict resolution, and for the settlement of disputes between and among sovereign nations and states (Akonye, 2019). On October 10, 2002, the ICJ gave a judgment in favour of Cameroon stating “that the very important issue of sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula rested with Cameroon and not Nigeria. The Court hinged her decision on the same old colonial agreements and settlements between Britain and Germany” (Lacey & Banerjee, 2002; Ariye, 2015:28). As a result, “the Court directed Nigeria to withdraw all administrative, police and military

personnel unconditionally from Cameroonian territory including the Bakassi Peninsula” (Ariye, 2015:28). This led to the Greentree Agreement between Nigerian and Cameroon in 2006 in New York, the USA with the purpose of making Nigeria withdraw troops for the final takeover of the Peninsula by Cameroon. In this exercise, the UN Secretary-General (Kofi Anan), Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, witnessed the agreement (Bonchuk, 2014; Okoi, 2016).

Having ceded the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon, “Nigerian citizens in Bakassi, who opted to return to their fatherland had had to abandon their businesses and homes to start life afresh in entirely new and strange locations in Nigeria, with more than 4,000 of them sheltered in a makeshift Internally-Displaced Persons’ Camp at Akwa Ikot Eyo Edem in Akpabuyo LGA of Cross River State” (Okon & Abu, 2019:2). Those of them who decided to remain in the peninsula started to encounter more hostilities perpetrated by Cameroon gendarmes. They have continuously attacked, harassed, and maimed the people, for something that was never their fault (Okon & Abu, 2019). This has made many more of them return to Nigeria and they have become almost endlessly like refugees in their own Country. While we do not intend to focus on the appropriateness of the Nigerian Government ceding the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon, it is instructive to note that making the indigenes or inhabitants of the Peninsula become Internally Displaced Persons or refugees is not humanitarian enough both on the sides of the Nigerian Government, Cameroon and the international communities that were involved in the dispute resolution. Doing such things without considering the welfare of the inhabitants especially Nigerians is tantamount to solving one problem and creating another in the process. While Cameroon was rejoicing for gaining all the natural resources in the Peninsula, their Nigerian counterpart (the inhabitants) were left to lose their livelihood, properties, and investments without any forms of compensation. This is not good enough.

The other understanding of the geographical location called Bakassi is Bakassi Local Government Area in Cross River State, Nigeria which was created on December 12, 1996. It was carved out of Akpabuyo Local Government Area. Bakassi LGA is bounded in the East by the Republic of Cameroon, in the South by Equatorial Guinea and the Bight of Bonny, in the West by the Cross River Estuary, and North by Akpabuyo Local Government Area (Tripod, 2020). As we can see, it is a community sharing boundaries with Cameroon and the Gulf of Guinea. Part of this local government has been ceded to Cameroon by the then President Olusegun Aremu Obasanjor’s administration based on the existing diplomatic agreement which we already captured above.

Third, there is the perspective of Bakassi as a Romantic expression or encomium. The term Bakassi is figuratively used as either romantic expression or encomium on beautiful ladies with big butt and hips. It is used in Nigeria to express the beauty of a girl or a woman with nice curves or a big butt. It is locally understood in Nigeria as slang which is being used to describe a woman or a girl with a big or beautiful backside or behind. For instance, 'this girl has a wonderful Bakassi', is an expression that shows the girl has a big butt. This expression is usually associated with Nigeria's colloquial English popularly known as Pidgin English. In Pidgin English, it is referred to as big nyantch, big ikebe, meaning big butt. It is a colloquial form of the combination of big+ass (big ass). It is used mostly among Casanovas and playboys. It is also used as sarcasm for extremely big butts thereby expressing overload.

Fourth, there is the security and religious perspective of the word Bakassi. The socio-religious context of the word Bakassi has to do with a special vigilante security formation in southeastern Nigeria, which has some kind of African indigenous religious connotation. The origin of the term Bakassi as a local vigilante outfit in Nigeria, has not been documented. However, a police report which was reproduced in a weekly magazine, in which the original patron of the Bakassi Boys, the president traders association, was questioned about the group; ...said that the shoe market which the vigilante group first emerged was newly located and "situated at the to Osisioma Local Government Area and Aba North Local Government Area which most time caused conflict between the two local government mentioned above hence the name Bakassi" (Insider Weekly 2001: 28). In other words, the Bakassi Boys got their name from the market from which they originally emerged, which got its name from a local border dispute. Harnischfeger (2003) asserts that the Bakassi Boys were named for a section of the market that was swampy like the Bakassi Peninsula (Smith, 2004:449-450).

Although this could be regarded as information from a primary source, as someone who is familiar with the terrain, there are some doubts in the sense, that the term Bakassi does not in any way connect with Aba. It is most likely that the origin of Bakassi as a vigilante group may not have originated from the southeast because as the name implies, apart from the one in the Peninsula, the present-day Bakassi in Nigeria is located in Cross River State. A research was carried out by a group of scholars from the University of Calabar and showed how age groups form vigilante in Obudu communities. The research also revealed how the groups were aided by the community deity in fighting crimes (Ukwayi *et al.*, 2028). While this type of research could be helpful in probing, further about the nature of such vigilante groups in Obudu, the Bakassi concept of vigilantism was not mentioned in the above

research. However, a vigilante model which involves religious powers points to Bakassi boys. This form of vigilantism arose as a result of the failure of government security institutions in the local community, a situation that left the fate of residents and business owners in the hands of criminals who ravaged the market and communities unhindered despite the government security system (Baker, 2002). This situation led to the organization of Bakassi Boys in the commercial city of Aba. This vigilante group activated their juju and magical power of detecting crimes, such that when a crime has been carried out in the past, suspects can be easily made to confess their deeds in a jiffy when the lie detector is used on the suspect (Ajibade, 2006). This model of vigilantism was adopted in southeastern Nigeria in late 1998, in the Ariaria International Market in the commercial city of Aba in Abia State by shoemakers and traders who were angry over the incessant loses of their monies and properties to violent robberies perpetrated by some powerful criminal gangs (Smith, 2004: 431-432; Meagher, 2007:96). Some leather workers and traders even lost their lives during some of these robbery attacks. Consequently, these leather workers and traders organized a vigilante force known as the Bakassi Boys. They were at the beginning of the formation "made up of young traders and other young men paid with contributions provided by the traders' association" (Smith, 2004: 431). Their main purpose of organizing the Bakassi Boys in the Ariaria International Market, in Aba was for them to embark on a mission to rid it of violent criminals. The mission was successful for the traders as the vigilante group was able to get criminals and publicly executed dozens of them in prominent public spaces such as major intersections or market centres, attracting large crowds of observers. They sometimes dismembered the bodies of the alleged criminals with machetes and then burnt them at the site of the execution (Smith, 2004: 431). Their success in ridding the Ariaria market of these criminals became very popular making it spread to Anambra State in 2002 on invitation by the government. The Bakassi boys as they are popularly known "are usually armed with machetes and guns, and an array of black magic artefacts and Juju worn around their body" (Harnischfeger, 2003). The Bakassi-boys also fortify themselves through African indigenous religious means by indulging in charms of abstract bulletproof such that when they are shot at by the assailants they will say "odeichi" meaning it cannot enter, no leakage. The lie detector and *odeichi* charms make criminals dread them a lot. Being that these boys could do what the police and other government security agencies could not do in terms of security, they gained a lot of support from the locals. In September 2002, the Bakassi Boys vigilante formation was banned by the government due to their jungle justice system of executing criminal suspects without trials in a competent court of jurisdiction. Other allegations of murder of political opponents and other criminal activities made the government ban them.

Although the vigilante group has been banned, the name remains a household name in south-eastern Nigeria.

The Term Four-One-Nine (419) in Nigeria

Recently, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States of America has reported the names of some seventy-seven Nigerians who have been involved in financial crimes in the USA (Premium Times, August 23, 2019). This implies that what we have known locally as 419 or trickeries (outwitting) and pilfering by scam in Nigeria has dovetailed into an international complex swindling. This is an embarrassment to the good people of Nigeria. We are aware of the involvement of other criminals from other climes of the world in international swindling but our concern here in this present essay is 419 as it relates to Nigeria. Numeric codes are usually, used to mean or represent something. In most cases, such numerary are local and as such, have local interpretations. For instance, in the United States of America, the numeric 911 represents an emergency. That is, 911, is the “dialing sequence used in the United States for calls for emergency assistance from police, fire, and ambulance services. Calls to 911 are routed to a public safety access point (PSAP)” (Webster's New World Telecom Dictionary, 2010). This code is peculiar to the USA. Also, in the World Wrestling Entertainment industry in the USA, a supper star wrestler called Rey Mysterio uses numeric 619 to represent his finishing moves to win an opponent. The numeric 619 is an area code in San Diego, California in the United States which the wrestler may have adopted to mean his finishing moves. The numeric 419 is a household word in Nigeria that represents scamming or swindling. Although our concern here is to show the meaning and description of the numeric 419 in Nigeria's context, it is also important to explore the trajectory of its origin in Nigeria.

One of the scholars who had given useful information on the origin of Nigeria's fraudsterism (the act of financial scamming-419) was Stephen Ellis (13 June 1953-29 July 2015). Ellis was “a British historian, Africanist, human rights activist and Desmond Tutu Professor of Youth, Sport and Reconciliation at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the VU University, Amsterdam” (Adegbamigbe, 2019). His areas of research interest were “mainly concerned with contemporary Africa, such as developments in Liberia, Nigeria, Madagascar, South Africa, Sierra Leone and the global impact of Africa” (Adegbamigbe, 2019). In his posthumously published book in April 2016 titled, “This Present Darkness: A History of Nigerian Organised Crime”, revealed a lot about the history of fraudsterism in Nigeria (Ellis, 2016). In this book, Ellis showed that 419, a scamming business related to Financial crime in Nigeria dated back to the colonial era. The origin of the numeric 419 according to Stephen Ellis is derived from Article 419 of Nigeria's criminal

code, which concerns fraud (Ellis, 2016). Moreover, the first properly documented 419 letter dates back to 1920. This letter is said to have been written by one P. Crentsil to a contact in the British colony of the then Gold Coast (Ellis, 2016). Crentsil who signed himself as Professor of Wonders claimed to have some kind of magical powers in his possession which could, on payment of a fee, be used to the benefit of his correspondent. Crentsil was alleged to have “written a number of similar letters [to other people], each time offering to provide magical services on payment of a fee” (Ellis, 2016). As a result, he was charged by the police in December 1921, with three counts under various sections of the criminal code, including section 419, but was lucky to be discharged by the presiding magistrate with a caution on the first count and acquittal on the two others for lack of corroborating evidence (Ellis, 2016). According to the report by the then Chief of Police in Onitsha Province, the acquittal of Crentsil made him boast that he got off the hook as a result of his 'juju' powers (Ellis, 2016). This same police Chief testified to Crentsil's several slippery escapes from the hands of the police, such that the Chief had no other option than to begin to believe in his magic powers (Ellis, 2016). The trajectory of the origin of 419 as it concerns Crentsil has shown that the index case was not convicted nor was he made to face any punitive punishment. So, we cannot say for sure, that Crentsil was the first person to have been convicted for advance fee fraud (419) in Nigeria but at least, he was the first known exponent of modern Four-One-Nine (419) fraud in Nigeria who was tried by the Article 419 of the criminal code of Nigeria.

In terms of meaning and description, the numeric 419 in Nigeria means a swindler or the act of swindling. That is, those being referred to as 419 are scammers who collect people's monies or properties by treachery. Another word that is synonymous with the term in Nigeria, is 'yahoo yahoo (yahoo boy[s]).' The term *yahoo* (yahoo boy[s]) is coined from the popular yahoo mail. It suggests easy accessibility and simple manipulation of the computer through the internet with the intention of swindling people of their monies through business email compromise (BEC) schemes, spoofed e-mails, phishing, and coated words. It describes how smart or clever boys or people with criminal intents in Nigeria can manipulate the computer to swindle people (their victims) locally and abroad of their monies. In modern security system profiling, 419 or *yahoo yahoo* in Nigeria falls into the category of cyber crime (Akanle, Adesina & Akarah, 2016). The *yahoo* (yahoo) boys do their fraudulent acts through electronic and diabolic means by way of deceit and hypnotisation. It is believed that some of these swindlers usually join secrete cults and work with witch doctors locally called Juju priests to unleash spiritual hypnosis on their victims who eventually lost their

hard-earned money to them [1]. There are rumours in the public domain as to the activities of such persons involved in the cult of 419 and how they use female panties and killing of humans especially females to get their sensitive body parts such as vagina, breast, eye, and heart for rituals in order to be successful in 419 business [2]. Some call it “advance fee fraud” (Chang, 2008); because they usually use the internet to pose as if they are into real business for which they want their victims to advance payment for the purported higher-value goods and services which they will never deliver after the payments. Some of them can be easily identified by their dressing and hairstyles. They usually carry artificial dreadlock hair style and sagging is their hobby. Most of them drive expensive cars and live extravagant and ostentatious lifestyles. They cannot prove the sources of their income. Some of them are graduates of reputable higher institutions who have no meaningful jobs upon graduation from school.

The *yahoo yahoo* fraudulent business has been taken to another level called yahoo-plus. These groups of fraudsters are associated with high-profile ritual killings and diabolism. They illegally acquire firearms to carry out their nefarious acts. They kidnap their victims either by trick, hypnotization, or outright

¹In my interview with victims of 419, most of which are my parishioners confirmed this. The interviewees chose to be anonymous. The incidents took place at different times in Effurun, Nigeria but their narrative corroborate. In their revelations, the victims narrated how they were hypnotized by charms and some unknown substances on their ways to the bank to deposit money. How the swindlers got to know about their money and the intention to go to bank remains a mystery. They suddenly found themselves in a Juju Shrine located at a small town Ugolo, a town in-between Osubi and Okwokoko near Effurun. They were told to go and bring more money and were made to swear by the juju that if they tell anyone, they will die. This made the victims to be crazily afraid and led some to serious psychological problems and some to their early graves. The issue was reported to the Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) in Jeddah under the leadership of Mr. Andrew in August 2010.

²Eyes witnesses especially residents and community leaders in Jeddah community in Okpe-land near Warri in Delta State. Confirmed the story of a yahoo boy who killed his girlfriend, butchered and kept her body in the refrigerator to supply those who need them for rituals in exchange for money. This incident and others, made the traditional monarch of Okpe kingdom to ban yahoo boys from Okpe communities. Landlords were also restricted by the monarch not to rent their houses to such persons. Another incident of ritual killing by a yahoo gang was also reported in Abraka community in Delta State, Nigeria of how a young girl was killed when she was looking for a house to rent. Some people in the community who pleaded anonymous confirmed the story. The young lady who became their victim was 22 years old. She was a Delta State University Student who was looking for accommodation. The yahoo boys pretended to be an estate agent unknowing to the victim they were yahoo boys who are involved in rituality. She was killed in November 2018 and her body dismembered.

search for them in their homes or the streets. The victims are mostly females and children. They are captured, killed and their bodies dismembered for sales with high tags to those who need such body parts for rituals. Apart from ritual killings, the ‘Yahoo plus boys’ are also involved in high profile cyber crimes in which they hack into organizations, government, and people’s electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets to get information about their victims for the purposes of defrauding them of their monies or properties. They send spam messages to email accounts owners such that when the recipient opens it or replies, vital information of the recipient will be accessed by the hacker. They sometimes impersonate the identity of the owner of the electronic device to defraud the cronies and relations of the owner of the account [3]. They also hack into people’s computer systems unknowing to the victim and then get the bank account information of their victims. When they get the victim’s information, they transfer the person’s money into their own accounts and flee elsewhere to stay. Some get the phone number of their victim, call such person by pretending to be their banker and then ask him or her for vital banking information. As soon as they get the information, they use it to do online withdrawals from the person’s account. In recent times, they use the bank verification number (BVN) of their victims to withdraw his or her monies unknown to the owner of the account. They also rob people of their phones at gunpoint with the intention of using the phone to generate the BVN of the victim, so as to empty his or her monies in the bank account such that the monies collected are untraceable and irreversible. Another aspect of 419 business that is trending among youths in Nigeria especially in southern Nigeria nowadays is called ‘Ghana Booger.’ These groups of fraudsters travel from Nigeria to Ghana in search of strong charms and big victims which eventually pay off sometimes. Some of them become very rich and when they return home, they build gigantic houses and procure expensive cars. While some of their mates are working hard to make money within their pace, the Ghana Booger believes in making quick money through fraudulent means by using diabolic powers [4]. These acts have drawn the wrath of

³I had an encounter in 2013 when one of my parishioners working in Chevron at Lagos called me to confirm if I called earlier to send N300,000 to any account. He my phone number called him unknown to me to send such money. When I said I did not call him, it dawned on us that someone hacked my phone number and my identity. In many occasions, when these issues are reported to the police, they request for money from citizens without which they cannot do anything in terms of trailing the criminals. Thanks to the EFCC for doing something about this in recent times, thereby reducing the larceny onslaught of 419 on citizens.

⁴The word Ghana Booger is popularly used among the Jesse and Oghara people of Nigeria to describe those who went to Ghana and return very rich as a result of 419 business. It is also noteworthy that not all who travel to Ghana from Nigeria are involved in 419.

the general public and it is being generally condemned by local and international communities. The law enforcement agents are seriously working hard to curb this menace in Nigeria.

Some have tried to justify 419 on the basis of the failure of the government for not creating enabling environment for job creation for the Nigerian youths. While we agree that the government has failed in creating employment for the youths through enabling the environment, the fact is that government cannot employ all its citizens. Individuals especially the rich in society should also do their parts in supporting those who are willing to engage themselves in meaningful business. While we also agree that the government has failed in creating enabling environment, it should be understood that some entered 419 business because of greed and they want to get rich quickly. This group of persons will never take up any meaningful employment because they fill 419 (*yahoo*) is a better business that brings bigger money than monthly pay job. Such groups of persons are not even willing to start up a business to grow gradually. They want everything big in a hurry.

Social Lessons and Conclusion

Is there any social lesson that can be learned from the various understandings of the term Bakassi and 419? As for social lessons, Bakassi especially in the aspect of romantic meaning should not be mistaken for looking at the opposite sex lustfully because such an act is maybe capable of leading to promiscuity or sexual abuse. As such, any immoral sexual meaning is never intended for the romantic meaning of Bakassi. Therefore, those below age 18 should not make use of such words, and adults should not imbibe or insinuate any sexual abuse. Moreover, looking at Bakassi from the perspective of local community security, it is instructive to note that the failure of government in providing adequate security of lives and properties and lack of or delay of justice can lead to jungle justice. However, local vigilantes should not carry out jungle justice but should adequately defend themselves and the community during attacks. Moreover, suspected thieves or criminals should be handed over to the police for prosecution. As for the aspect of the conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria concerning the Bakassi Peninsula, African nations should not always wait for the loss of human lives and the destruction of properties before learning to resolve conflicts. Moreover, governments in Africa should learn to put the interest

and welfare of their citizens at the centre of dispute resolution. That is, the government of Nigeria for instance should have prepared another land space for Nigerian citizens who were affected when the Peninsula was conceded to Cameroon. Also, the numeric 419 is a very shameful narrative and as such, all should be discouraged from being involved in such fraudulent acts. The numeric 419 represents stealing by trick. This fraudulent act is punishable by Nigeria's law. All should desist from the act of 419. Moreover, murdering a fellow human being for money or for any other reason is a very heinous crime against humanity. As such, youths and all are discouraged from taking part in such acts. Moreover, the financial sector of society must be more proactive in the cyber security system of the banking sector. While the government is using the BVN to track looters of public funds, the Central Bank of Nigerian and all commercial banks must collaborate to boost the cyber security system of the banking sector so that fraudsters cannot have access to people's accounts.

The term Bakassi and 419 are familiar terms in Nigeria, especially in the southern part. While that of Bakassi has been widely known in scholarship especially in the aspect of Bakassi Peninsula history between Nigeria and Cameroon and that of 419 has not attracted many scholarships. This essay may not have exhaustively done justice to the history of 419 but has at least given its description in the context of Nigeria. Further study on the history of and modern activities of 419 in Nigeria is recommended in this domain of research. More importantly, this paper has shown a multidimensional perspective of the word Bakassi by showing various usage of the word in Nigeria depending on the context it is being used. The paper has also shown, on the other hand, the local description of the numeric 419. The 419's communication style which aided them in the fraudulent act of scamming people has now metamorphosed from street trick, African mesmerism, letter writing through Post and Telegraphs, and scam emails, to high profile cyber crime which has also gone international. This calls for serious global concern to fortify cyberspace so as to make it uneasy for fraudsters to hack into. It should also be noted that the contextual or local studies of Bakassi and 419 in Nigeria are, therefore, worth studying because it is capable of provoking further scholarship that may become positively useful to the future generation and future scholarship.

Appendix 1

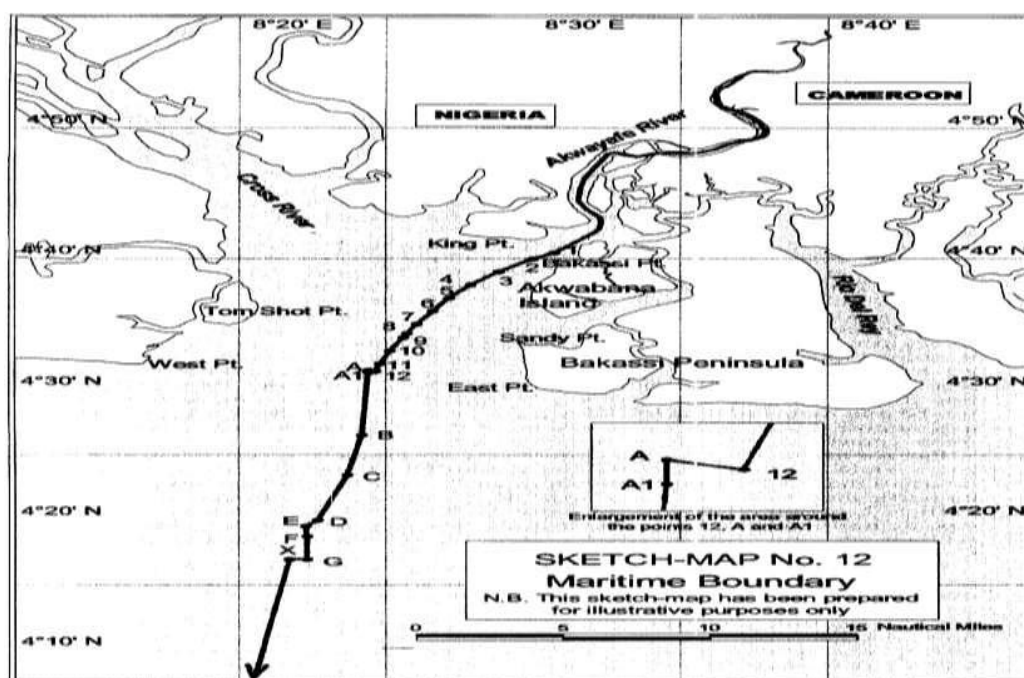


Figure 1: A map showing Bakassi area between Nigeria and Cameroon

Source: ICJ Judgment, Report 2002 pg 449 (Cited in Shaibu, Azom & Nwanze, 2015).

REFERENCE

- Adegbamigbe, Ademola. (September 18, 2019). 419 Cases, Other Scams in Nigeria Date Back to the 1930s. In: *PM News* Available online in <https://www.pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/09/18/419-cases-other-scams-in-nigeria-date-back-to-the-1930s/> [Accessed May 15, 2020].
- Aghemelo, A.T. and Ibhasebhor, S. (2006). Colonialism as a Source of Boundary Dispute and Conflict among African States: The World Court Judgement on the Bakassi Peninsula and its Implications for Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science* 13 (3): 177-181.
- Ajibade, Babson. (2006). Anti-Bullet Charms, Lie-Detectors and Street Justice: the Nigerian Youth and the Ambiguities of Self-Remaking. An Article presented at the International Conference, Youth and the Global South: Dakar, Senegal, 13-15 October.
- Akanle, O., Adesina, J. O., & Akarah, E. P. (2016). Towards human dignity and the internet: The cybercrime (yahoo yahoo) phenomenon in Nigeria. *Journal African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development* 8 (2): 213-220.
- Akonye, E. J. (2019). Bakassi Peninsula contestation; the failure of the Green Tree Agreement to resolve the Bakassi issue: 2006-2018. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 9(2): 485-499. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.9.02.2019.P8663>.
- Akonye, J. E., & Nwapi, R. O. (2019). Bakassi Peninsula Debacle: A Critical Analysis of the ICJ Verdict on the Issue, and Why Nigeria Lost Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon. *International Journal of Innovative Science, Engineering & Technology*, 6/11 (2019), 1-16.
- Anyu, N. J. (2007). The International Court of Justice and Border-Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Bakassi Peninsula Conflict. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 18(3), 39-55.
- Ariye, E. C. (2015). Nigeria, Cameroon and the Bakassi Territorial Dispute Settlement: The Triumph of Bilateralism. *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, 38, 24-33.
- Ataça, B. A. (2015). From descriptive to critical writing: A study on the effectiveness of advanced reading and writing instruction. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 620-626.
- Baker, B. (2002). When the Bakassi Boys Came: Eastern Nigeria Confronts Vigilantism. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 20(2), 223-244.
- Bonchuk, M. O. (2014). The International Court of Justice (I.C.J.) Judgment Over the Bakassi Peninsula: A Model in the Resolution of African Boundary Disputes. *Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, 11(4), 131-142.
- Cbanga, I. (2009). Juju. In: *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, Ed. Molefi Kete Asante & Ama Mazama. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412964623.n226>.
- Chang, J. (2008). An analysis of advance fee fraud on the internet. *Journal of Financial Crime*, 15(1), 71-81.

- Ellis, S (2016a). The Origins of Nigeria's Notorious 419 Scams. *Newsweek* (September 5). Available online in <https://www.newsweek.com/origins-nigerias-notorious-419-scams-456701> [Accessed May 13, 2020].
- Ellis, S. (2016b). *This Present Darkness: A History of Nigerian Organised Crime*. London and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harnischfeger, J. (2003). The Bakassi Boys: Fighting Crime in Nigeria. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(1), 23-49. doi:10.1017/S0022278X02004135.
- Ikeora, M. (2016). The Role of African Traditional Religion and 'Juju' in Human Trafficking: Implications for Antitrafficking. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 17(1), 1-18. <http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol17/iss1/1>.
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2017). Characteristics of Qualitative Descriptive Studies: A Systematic Review. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 40(1), 23-42.
- Koh, E. T., & Owen, W. L. (2000). Descriptive Research and Qualitative Research. In: *Introduction to Nutrition and Health Research*. Boston, MA: Springer, 219-248. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-1401-5_12.
- Konings, P. (2005). The Anglophone Cameroon-Nigeria Boundary: Opportunities and Conflicts. *African Affairs*, 104(415), 275-301.
- Konings, P. (2011). Settling border conflicts in Africa peacefully: Lessons learned from the Bakassi dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria. In: *Land, Law and Politics in Africa*, Eds. Jon Abbink and Mirjam de Bruijn. Leiden: Brill, 191-210. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004218062_011.
- Lacey, M., & Banerjee, N. (2002). World Court Rules for Cameroon in prolonged oil-land border dispute with Nigeria. *New York Times* (October, 11). Available from: <http://www.gbalpolicy.org/wldcourt/icj/2002/1011bakassi.htm> [Accessed May 13, 2020].
- Lucas, P. A., & McConkie, G. W. (1980). The Definition of Test Items: A Descriptive Approach. *American Educational Research Journal*, 17(2), 133-140.
- McAlister, E. A. (2020). Vodou: Haitian Religion. In: *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vodou>.
- Meagher, K. (2007). Hijacking Civil Society: The inside Story of the Bakassi Boys Vigilante Group of South-Eastern Nigeria. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45(1), 89-115.
- Obodo, I. N., & Akwen, G. T. (2017). Nigeria-Cameroon Border Relations: A Historical Analysis of the Bakassi Peninsula Region. *Kaduna Journal of Humanities*, 1(1), 241-259.
- Ogunnoiki, A. O. (2020). Regaining Bakassi Peninsula from Cameroon: The Options Available to Nigeria. *African Journal of Law, Political Research and Administration*, 2(1), 16-21.
- Okoi, O. (2016). Why Nations Fight: The Causes of the Nigeria-Cameroon Bakassi Peninsula Conflict. *African Security*, 9(1), 42-65.
- Okon, P. E., & Abu, P. E. (2019). Public Relations Implications of the Challenges Facing the Bakassi Internally-Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria's Cross River State. *International Journal of Emerging Trends in Social Sciences*, 6(1), 1-11. DOI: 10.20448/2001.61.1.11.
- Opue, J. A., & Usang, P. M. (2020). An Analysis of the Implications and Consequences of Ceding Bakassi Peninsular To Cameroon. *IJO-International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 2(9), 1-19.
- Ronen, R. (1997). Description, Narrative and Representation. *Narrative*, 5(3), 274-286.
- Seixas, B. V., Smith, N., & Mitton, C. (2018). The Qualitative Descriptive Approach in International Comparative Studies: Using Online Qualitative Surveys. *International Journal of Health Policy & Management*, 7(9), 778-781.
- Shaibu, M. T., Azom, S. N., & Nwanze, E. S. (2015). An Appraisal of the Dominant Causes of Boundary Conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon: The Bakassi Peninsula Perspective. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(9), 25-47.
- Smith, D. J. (2004). The Bakassi Boys: Vigilantism, Violence, and Political Imagination in Nigeria. *Cultural Anthropology*, 19(3), 429-455.
- Tripod, (2020). Bakassi Local Government Area, available online in <http://kekerete.tripod.com/CRSG/bakassi.html> [Accessed April 13, 2020].
- Ukwaiyi, J. K., Igwe-Okomiso, J. B., & Angioha, P. U. (2018). Informal crime control mechanisms in Obudu local government area of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Sociology*, 6(3), 1-13.
- Webster, J., & Drew, J. M. (2017). Policing advance fee fraud (AFF): Experiences of fraud detectives using a victim-focused approach. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 19(1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461355716681810>.
- Yerima, H. M., & Singh, D. S. R. (2017). The Bakassi Dispute: People's Dynamics and the rise of Militancy. *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science*, 22(1), 67-70.
- Zivkovic, J. (2017). Entrepreneurship and Juju (Black Magic). *IOSR Journal of Business and Management* 19 (2): 118-122.