



A Visual Analysis of Structural Cladding in the University of Lagos, Akoka

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ABSTRACT

University of Lagos (UniLag) is synonymous with the municipality of Akoka. It is Nigeria's most cosmopolitan citadel of higher learning, established in 1962 alongside Universities in Nsukka, Zaria, and Ile-Ife, respectively. Her location in Akoka, which implies primacy in Yoruba philology, can be likened to divine providence or coincidence. Little wonder why the institution pitched itself as "The University of First Choice and the Nation's Pride" and its product "Akokite". This claim resonates beyond its student enrollment, staff strength, and academic visibility but is typified in architectural structures. Prevalent among such structures are the main gate, the senate house, the library, students' halls of residence, and lecture halls. Interestingly, many of these structures are adorned with cladding; suspended wall finishing, exemplified in paint, wallpaper, flex, wood, metal, stone, marble, glass, and plastic. Regrettably, there is an apparent dearth of literature on the institution's structural cladding, which supposedly is an oversight or oversimplification of its finishing and aesthetic roles. This research aims to highlight all that constitutes cladding on the Akoka campus of UniLag. As such, the study attempts visuality of Akoka structures, sixteen (16) of which were purposely shortlisted from the pool, each attests cladding representation of diverse typology. Findings attest to the plethora of diverse cladding media on physical structures on the Akoka campus. It further sheds light on the lexicological signification of Àkòkà as Ifá, justified in the conceptualisation and clarification of Ifáṣifiti, as a university. The study concludes that it hopes its findings will provoke further scholarship on Akoka and structural cladding in particular.

Keywords: Àkòkà, Cladding, Ifá, Structure, University of Lagos

INTRODUCTION

In the Yoruba lexicon, the word Akoka is trigonometry, observable in *Àkóká* “houses or building round another”, *Àkóká* “fruits first reaped”, and *Àkókà* “the first item to be counted” (Sowande, 2001). Of interest, however, is the latter, which philologically connotes geography, apotheosis, tutelage, and primacy. Geographically, *Àkókà* is the territorial space, housing the University of Lagos (Unilag), one of the foremost Nigerian citadels of higher learning (Times Higher Education, 2025; University of Lagos, 2023). Founded in 1962 alongside the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (T. E. Akinde, 2022; Akintonde et al., 2015; Ayodele & Akinde, 2008; Lawal, 1984; Times Higher Education, 2025). They are Nigeria's first-generation universities, including the University of Ibadan, whose commencement was in 1948 (Benjasco, 2024). The citadel has since demonstrated a sense of leadership in the commonwealth of tertiary institutions in Nigeria and the globe at large. The signification of *Àkókà* to this study made cursory clarifications on its taxonomic implications and connotations imperatively expedient.

To that end, insight into Yoruba cosmogonic philology to demystify *Àkókà* becomes imperative. Ogbè-Ka, a sub-Odu, doubling as the twenty-sixth (26th) book of *the Ifá* corpus (Adeoye, 2005; Odegbola & Faleye, 2014), comes in handy, and it reads thus:

Table 1 Ogbè-Ka Verses of the Ifá Corpus with English Translation

<i>A kì í yọ eyin adìẹ ninu omi,</i>	One cannot remove the egg of a hen from inside the water,
<i>Lati òwúrò kì ó d'álẹ k'ó tó gbẹ.</i>	From dawn to dusk before drying.
<i>Bi ọmùnú ọgèdẹ bá pẹ ninu omi</i>	When the endocarp of a banana stay long inside the water,
<i>Kì í gbẹ bọrọ-bọrọ.</i>	It will not dry instantly.
<i>A fọ aṣọ tán ninu eji,</i>	One washes fabric utterly inside the dew,
<i>Eji kò dá, a ò rí oòrùn sá a.</i>	The dew refused to stop; there was no sun to dry it.
<i>L'ó d'ífá fún Àkóká,</i>	It was divined for Akoka,
<i>Tí n kó gbogbo ayé ni Ifá.</i>	That teaches the entire globe Ifa.
<i>L'ó d'ífá fún Àṣẹdà</i>	It was divined for Aseda,
<i>Tí n kó gbogbo àgbà ni ìmọràn,</i>	That teaches the entire elders, wisdom.
<i>Wọ́n ni awọ́n méjèjẹ rúbọ àyalù,</i>	They were both charged to make sacrifices against confrontation,
<i>Kì wọ́n má baà jà ni 'lé ayé,</i>	So as to avoid fighting on planet Earth,
<i>Kì orukọ wọ́n má baà sì parun.</i>	So that their names will not be obliterated.
<i>Mo júbà Àkódá, mo júbà Àṣẹdà.</i>	I salute Akoda, I salute Aseda.
<i>Gbogbo ọmọ awo ni kì ó máa júbà yin.</i>	All offspring of initiates, must salute you

<i>Ìbà ni àà jú fún oníbà.</i>	Salutation is the regard worthy for the supreme salutatorian.
<i>Ọmọ awo ti kò bá júbà Àkódá</i>	Offspring initiates that do not salute Akoda.
<i>Bi ó d'ífá, Ifá rẹ̀ kò le sẹ.</i>	If he consults Ifa, his Ifa will not be fulfilled.
<i>Ọmọ awo ti kò bá júbà Àṣẹdà,</i>	Offspring initiates that do not salute Aseda.
<i>Bi ó rúbọ, ẹbọ rẹ̀ kò le dà.</i>	If he offers a sacrifice, the sacrifice will not be accepted.
<i>Ìbà ni àà jú fún oníbà.</i>	Salutation is the regard worthy of the supreme salutatorian.
<i>Mo jí, mo júbà Àkódá,</i>	I wake, I salute Akoda
<i>Mo jí, mo júbà Àṣẹdà,</i>	I wake, I salute Aseda
<i>Gbogbo ohun ti mo bá wí ni kí ó sẹ.</i>	Everything that I say must come to pass.

Source: Author's Analysis

The above *Ifá* verse is no doubt a true reflection on causality; the theory or principle of cause and consequence or action and reaction of matter as exemplified in positivism (T. E. Akinde, 2016). It touched on several issues with particular reference to mono-gastric, fruit, fabric, water, light, and man. This Odu recognised *Àkóká* as the foremost primordial being and *Àṣẹdà* as the next in line from the Yoruba cosmogonic order. It went further to clarify the personality of *Àkóká* as *Àkódá*, the legendary tutelary deity who was and is the very first to be saddled with the responsibility of teaching the world, the fundamentals cum complexities of *Ifá* writing and reading. The verse also acknowledges consultation of *Ifá* and veneration of *Àkódá* and *Àṣẹdà* as a remedy to human definitive terrestrial accomplishments.

Similarly, *Àkóká*, also known as *Àkódá*, is often referred to as *Ọrúnmilà* by devotees (Adeoye, 2005), an assertion entrenched and substantiated in his praise name or poetry as thus:

Table 2 *Àkódá/Ọrúnmilà Praise Poetry (Oríkì) in Yoruba with English Renderings*

<i>Ifá Ọrúnmilà Agbonmìrègún,</i>	Ifa Orunmila Agbonmiregun,
<i>Èlérù ìpín,</i>	Witness to portion allotment
<i>A r'ápá eran sẹgun,</i>	Buyer of the animal arm to strike
<i>Ajana ọtẹ</i>	Extinguisher of conspiracy
<i>Olore à á jí í kí</i>	Benefactor of waking salutation
<i>Ifá pẹ̀lẹ̀ o, Akunnu ni 'le Ido,</i>	Ifa I salute you, fuller in the home of canna seeds
<i>A bi itò ginniginni bi ejí rọ̀ pa imọ.</i>	Owner of the tiny salivation-like dew that rains on knowledge
<i>Ifá, iwọ̀ ni ará iwájú,</i>	Ifa, you are the pathfinder
<i>Ifá, iwọ̀ ni èrò ikẹhìn.</i>	Ifa, you are the latter pilgrim
<i>Ará iwájú iwọ̀ náà,</i>	Pathfinder, you are,
<i>L'ò kọ̀ èrò ikẹhìn l'ógbón.</i>	That teaches the former pilgrim wisdom.

<i>Akunnu ni 'le Ido,</i>	Fuller in the home of canna seeds,
<i>Ifá pèlẹ o, oko Ayangede,</i>	Ifa, I salute you, husband to Ayangede,
<i>Ayangede omọ Odùduà.</i>	Ayangede, the offspring of Odudua.
<i>Ifá pèlẹ o, oko Okinkinkin,</i>	Ifa, I salute you, husband to Okinkinkin,
<i>Ti je ki ehin erin kò fọn,</i>	That makes the tusk of an Elephant trumpet,
<i>O fọn, fọn, fọn,</i>	It trumpets, trumpets, trumpets,
<i>Ti ó tó eyin erin in fọn</i>	Worthy of blowing the tusks of an Elephant,
<i>Olówóò mi, okọ̀ mi,</i>	Owner of mine, husband of mine,
<i>Ti i fi awọ̀ ẹ̀kùn ẹ̀ ibòrí Olófin.</i>	That uses the skin of a Leopard to make headgear on Olofin.
<i>Ifá pèlẹ o, omọ Enire,</i>	Ifa, I salute you, offspring of a good person,
<i>Ifá pèlẹ o, omọ Enire.</i>	Ifá, I salute you, the offspring of a good person.

Source: Author's Analysis

The above poetry, apart from attesting Àkóká as Ọ̀rúnmilà, further chronicled his personality and capacities, giving credence to his other appellation as Àgbọnmìrègún, Èlẹ̀rìí ìpín, and including Ifá (Adeoye, 2005). The poem recognised Ifá as the dweller in time and space, the one who, at inception, witnessed human portion allotments. He is also acknowledged as the former pathfinder and latter pilgrim, meaning the first and the last responsible for teaching knowledge and wisdom to the world in Yoruba cosmogony.

A view Yoruba scholars corroborated (Abimbola, 2014; T. Akinde et al., 2022; T. E. Akinde, 2023; Bascom, 1969; Frisvold, 2016; Odeniyi & Akinde, 2012; Odukoya, 2024), noting Ifá as an embodiment of knowledge; a holistic spiritual and divination system, that underscores the erudition and techno-scientism of the Yoruba. Odukoya (2024) argued that a prismatic examination of the Ifá corpus revealed the Yoruba traditional worldview, representing different branches of universal knowledge; housing specialties such as legal jurisprudence, medicine, astronomy, architecture, and arts. He further argued that the coinage of university can be inferred from Ifá, substantiating his claim in rhythmic words “Ifa so ti ti, Ifa fi ti, Ifa so ti ti, Ifa fi ti, unifasiti” (Odukoya, 2024). His submission is no doubt inspiring but requires modification, which takes a chanted dimension below:

Table 3 Rhythmic Ifá Expressions with English Translation

<i>Ifá sọ tí tí,</i>	Ifa talks continuously,
<i>Ifá fì tì.</i>	Ifá concludes it.
<i>Ifá sọ tí tí, Ifá fì tì.</i>	Ifa talks continuously, Ifa concludes it.
<i>Ifáṣìfìtì.</i>	Ifa conclusively concludes it.

Source: Author's Analysis

The above narrative recognised the tutelary responsibilities of *Ifá* as the professorial deity that declares, asserts, and affirms inquisitions. Its concluding appellation *Ifáṣìfìtì* is supposedly anglicised to University, significantly as *Ifá*

touches and talks on all branches of cosmic knowledge. *Ifá* no doubt, constitutes the totality of a university, demystifying all and every arising issue from the various disciplinary faculties (Odukoya, 2024). Corollarily, *Ifá* is Akoka, Akoka is University of Lagos, and University of Lagos is Akoka, and the primus inter pares among universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The territoriality of the University of Lagos is presently triptych, having three campuses, scattered within the Lagos Mainland. They are the former School of Radiography in Yaba, the College of Medicine in Idi-Araba, and the Main Campus in Akoka. The main campus in Akoka is, however, of concern to this study, having been associated with primacy in Yoruba philology, an assertion that can be likened to divine providence or coincidence. Little wonder why the institution pitched itself as “The University of First Choice and the Nation’s Pride” and its product “Akokite.” Interestingly, Akoka is a serenely plain space with green vegetation; largely surrounded by the Lagos Lagoon with approximately eight hundred and two (802) acres of land. The University is arguably the most cosmopolitan tertiary institution in Nigeria, considering its location in the nation's economic cum commercial nerve centre (University of Lagos, 2023).

Annually, her student enrolment is over fifty-seven thousand (57,000), shortlisting for admission only about nine thousand (9,000) fresh students yearly (Benjasco, 2024; University of Lagos, 2023). The institution is ranked among the top universities in Africa and by extension the globe, in terms of student population, staff strength, and academic visibility, as exemplified in the LSA conference and major global education ranking platforms, publications, and social media (Oamen, 2024). Much, however, has not been done on the artistic cum architectural structures of the University of Lagos, ditto their accompanying wall finish. Nonetheless, few of the available and accessible relevant literary studies are examined.

Mount (1973) recognised Nigerian tertiary institutions, significantly Art schools, as one of the foremost in West Africa to have transitioned from informal to formal education. A view corroborated by Filani (1998) and Onipede (2005), noting that the widespread of Pan-Africanist philosophy of Nigritude and African identity was a product of integration or admixture of tradition and modern ideology, otherwise known as “Natural Synthesis.” According to Oni (2004), formal education (particularly in the visual arts) would not have been without the forerunner efforts of Father Kevin Carol and Uli Beier, with the support of the Nigerian government. Nevertheless, Chukueggu (1998) and Egonwa (2011) classified Nigerian tertiary institutions into three tiers: Colleges of Education, Polytechnics, and Universities, with a specific preference to Art schools. The latter was corroborated by Ajadi and Akinde (2019), enlisting LAUTECH Ogbomoso, the Polytechnic Ibadan, and Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, as owned by the Oyo State government.

The duo of Chukueggu (1998) and Egonwa (2011) consequently argued thus: that the University creates in recipient's innovation, design, insight, and administration with universal competence in academic and practice sufficient to surmount life issues. Polytechnics are equipped to install technical skills in candidates to satisfy popular domestic and industrial needs. Colleges of Education, on the other hand, are designed to ground their graduates' competence in pedagogy, theoretically adequate for a trained trainer (Chsherbakova, 2024; Gryzaneva, 2022). In his study, Akinde (2014) examined the works of three master artists from the trio of Zaria, Ife, and Abrakka art schools as having an affinity with Potteryscape in some of their drawings and paintings. Similarly, Akinde et al. (2024) identified some Nigerian post-modernistic artists from Zaria, Ife, Nsukka, and Akoka art schools and their inclination and adaptation of waste in artistic practice.

Ogbeiche (1991) affirmed Yaba College of Technology and Ahmadu Bello University as two pioneering institutions in Nigeria to commence programmes in the 1940s and 1950s, though the latter began as a College of Art, Science and Technology in Ibadan. Similarly, Akinde (2023) mentioned Yaba College of Technology, recognising the outstanding contribution of Noserime Ufoma Rukeme to the School of Art, Design and Printing Technology. Chukueggu's (2010) work on pottery production of Ife Art School, developments, techniques, and innovations asserts that the ceramics sections of Ife Art School could best be described as a home of trado-modern pottery and is one of the best in Africa. Akintonde et al. (2015) analyse the outdoor pottery sculpture at Ife art school. Akinde (2002) attests to the transformation from Oyo State University of Technology (OSUTECH) to Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso (LAUTECH), giving credence to R. O. R. Kalilu's contribution to art and the University system at large.

Mac-Barango (2022) identified the wall as a principal component in building construction and sandcrete block as the conventional and predominant material used as masonry wall cladding material in Nigeria and other countries in the West African sub-region. It identified Timber as an alternative wall cladding material to sandcrete blocks (Hill et al., 2022; Muhammed et al., 2024). The research recommended further exploratory studies on alternative innovative cladding materials using functional and environmental parameters. Alegbe and Hammed (2024) investigate the energy performance, global warming potential, and thermal comfort aspects of carefully selected cladding materials. The study shortlisted 19 cladding materials selected based on availability and feasibility in the region. The study emphasized the significance of adopting a multi-criterion approach, selecting facade cladding materials, and prioritizing environmental and thermal considerations over aesthetics.

Iyasara et al. (2014) discussed ceramic raw materials from clay minerals in Nigeria, focusing on locations and applications. The work highlighted clay minerals as the most abundant in Nigeria, mentioning the significance of kaolin, feldspar, quartz, limestone, talc, silica sand, ball clay, and bentonite in industrial production

of pottery, refractories, chemical stoneware, electrical, porcelain (insulators), bricks, tiles, *etcetera*. The study conclusively encouraged the exploration, processing, and utilization of ceramic raw material as a booster to the nation's economy, changing the country's status from consumer to producer and creating employment opportunities. Contrariwise, Abiodun and Akinde (2024) touched on Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, significantly Ogbomosho Art School's visual and artistic contributions to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kaliku and Odeniyi (2024) appraised Nigerian universities from 1961 to 2021, with a preference for Art schools, identifying 28 in 26 universities across 23 states in the country. Their study noted the University of Lagos as having Visual Arts as a section of the Creative Arts Department.

Similarly, Kalilu and Odeniyi (2024), in a biographical study, examined eleven (11) Nigerian artists from the University extraction. One name, however, stands out, and that is Layiwola Aiyemierovbiye Adepeju of the Creative Art Department, University of Lagos. Borgatti (2021) further corroborated their view by highlighting Adepeju's contributions to the Visual arts, emphasizing her personality and efforts on the revival of the resist-dye textile of the Yoruba, simply and popularly known as Adire. The reviewed literature attests to a dearth of scholarship on the University of Lagos and significantly cladding, a development that may be likened to scholarly oversight or oversimplification of its aesthetic signification in structural beautification. Cladding, nonetheless, is anything and everything that constitutes suspended covering on a structure's exterior or interior wall surfaces, serving protective and aesthetic functions. It is by no means the same as floor finish, known as paving (Ayodele & Akinde, 2008). Wood, stone, and brick, aluminum, metal, vinyl, glass, polystyrene, and paper are cladding remotest and immediate typologies, which often provide opportunity for creative experimentation on structures (Dabous et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Structurally, the University of Lagos is endowed with several magnificent edifices, exemplified in its main gate, senate house, library, students' hall of residences, staff quarters, cafeterias, banks, filling station, stadium, faculty buildings, lecture halls, security posts, church, mosque, garages, and bus stops. Many of these structures are passively and actively clad in paint, wood, metal, stone, marble, glass, plastic, and tiles. As such, this study attempted a critical visualise of selected clad structures in the Akoka campus (Hall & Dávila, 2023; Liu & Ning, 2023). Coincidentally, sixteen clad structures like the sixteen major Ifa Odu's were shortlisted from the pool, each representing one section of the campus. The institution's Main Gate, Femi Gbajabiamila Hall of Residence, Multi-Media Television Stand, Education Bus Stop, Chapel of Christ Our Light, Central Mosque, Nord Building, AP Filling Station, New Hall Cafeteria, Zenith Bank Building, Electric Bus, Faculty of Art, Senate House, Adetokunbo Babatunde Sofoluwe

Cenotaph and Guest House made the list (Plates, 1-16), giving a sense of tour dialogue. As such, a sequential discussion of the shortlists became imminent.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION



Figure 1 Front view of the Main Gate

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Elebute Pita Tiren (2024)

The gate of any corporate entity, significantly a university, is not just a passageway into the interior contents of its space but the emblematic image and symbol of such entity, attesting to the formidable and indomitable qualities of the institution as exemplified in the University of Lagos. The main gate of the Akoka campus is not just a beauty but a masterpiece both in design and the artistic sense of the word. It is a culmination of gates and walls, though seemingly simple, but a complex art engineering technology. It was newly renovated and commissioned to its current state in 2023. The main gate is located at the south wing of the campus, welcoming staff, students (freshers and stalites), and visitors (tourists and commuters) en route to Yaba and Bariga into the Akoka campus. The walls of the gate play host to four solid pillars, two on each side of the divide, and a centrally built structure, serving as the security office and checkpoint.

The pillars hosted a total of four slim beams and motored projectiles, made from cylindrical metal pipes, stretching from the pillars' source on both sides of the divide. The projectiles are suspended with a total of eight long chains (two on each side of the pillar), extending to the top flank of the central security post. The projectiles are clad in black gloss paint and covered at the top with aluminium sheets, serving momentary shade for residents and visitors within their perimeter. The post, apart from being an abode for security officers and a checkpoint, is clad in light cream and dark wine hue, designed to serve as a solid base and an imaginary institution's torch, doubling as host to the University logo, clad in white, green, blue, and black pigments. The walls, pillars, and central posts are clad in light orange and

reddish brown. The gates are made in a simple, adjustable rectangular form with metal pipes, coloured in white and black gloss paint. Holistically, the imagery of the University main gate gives the illusion of a bird in motion and a burning torch stand, attesting to the citadel's solidity and grandeur in intellectual capability.



Figure 2 Side View of Femi Gbajabiamila Hall of Residence
Source: Author's Data Analysis – Dr. Akinde Toyin Emmanuel (2024)

The Akoka campus, considering its student population, required and had numerous halls of residence scattered within its space. Prominent among these residences are Queen Amina Hall, Jaja Hall, Moremi Hall, and New Hall, to mention but a few. Femi Gbajabiamila Hall of Residence: FGHR for students is one of the newest additions to such projects on campus. FGHR is a massive project numbering about ten blocks of four-storey buildings, situated in one of the most conspicuous spaces on campus, where passer-by and visitors en route to Bariga and Yaba can have a glimpse of its beauty and majesty even before entry into the institution. FGHR is donated by an Alumnus, Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila CFR, a former Speaker of the 9th House of Assembly and incumbent Chief of Staff to the President Ahmed Bola Tinubu-led government, as a token of support to his Alma mater.

The buildings, no doubt, are a multi-million Naira project, clad in shade and tint of blue emulsion paint. Also evident is the neon sign cladding of his name, Femi Gbajabiamila Hall of Residence, boldly written in Gothic lettering with white flex plastic on a rectangular aluminium board, suspended on the wall of the most prominent block of the project and lit with several solar-powered panels. This student's residence is accessible through the Faculty of Education, which doubles as the Postgraduate School entrance from the right side of the University Main Gate. As of the last count, the project is almost completed, awaiting commissioning. It is therefore hoped that its completion and eventual commission will help alleviate the students' accommodation shortage.



Figure 3 The Digital Multimedia LED Screen at Unilag Entrance Gate

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Lawuyi Funmi Dorcas (2024)

The Mass Communication, Telecommunication, and Creative Arts (Visual Arts, Music, and Dance) departments of the Akoka campus are, no doubt, top-notch. Evident in the digital multi-media LED Screen system stationed at the left-hand side of the University gate, which doubles as the exit side of the main campus south wing entrance. The system is called diverse names, including digital billboard display, advertising LED board, advertising bill display, LED board, or LED screen. This outdoor display board or screen is rectangular with approximately 450 x 210 x 30 cm dimensions, clad in black aluminium sheets. This initiative is the brainchild of BIONOMICS Nigeria with info@bionomics.ng as its mailing address. The screen intermittently displays product adverts and content that are in tandem with the institution's philosophy and ideologies, exemplified in human resources, empowerment, creativity, fashion, cinema, and health, to mention a few.

Interestingly, the particular caption on the screen is an advert on Cancer awareness, sponsored by a professional organisation; conscientiously awaking and re-awaking the University community and passers-by on the need to know their status and do the needful to seek help from genuine professional physicians and not quacks. The ad plays down the dreadfulness of the ailment, cancer, by noting thus;

“Cancer is indeed a big name!”

“Yet there are things it cannot do!”

“Cancer is so limited...”

The organisation observed that cancer cannot cripple love, shatter hope, corrode faith, destroy peace, kill friendship, suppress memories, invade the soul, steal eternal life, or conquer the spirit. They went further to conclude that “Cancer is what we do! What we are! and what we live for!”



Figure 4 Side View of Education Bus Stop

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Elebute Pita Tireni (2024)

Education Bus Stop is the first point of stoppage by passengers or commuters plying the Akoka campus from Yaba or Bariga garage on entering the institution's south wing. The structure is a simple form or, better still, a wall, covered with asbestos roofing sheets and suspended with two galvanised metal poles, which were adjoined with horizontal railings, both clad in a black hue. The nomenclature Education Bus Stop, like many others, is derived from the host hall of residence, quarters, and faculty; but in this case, the Faculty of Education. This location is one of the largest, if not the largest, localities on campus, housing lecture halls, offices, and a cafeteria for the faculty of education. It equally plays host to the Postgraduate School, Queen Amina Hall of Residence, and the new addition, Femi Gbajabiamila Hall of Residence. The walls of the bus stop building are clad in light cream and dark wine emulsion paint on the inside and outside, respectively.

Apparent on the walls, both on the outside and inside, are flex banners of the Honeywell ad, framed in silver aluminium sheets, which may be mistaken for notice boxes. Their dimensions differ in size; the outside one is approximately 420 x 240 x 12 cm, while that of the inside is 248 x 120 x 12 cm. The ad on both cladding is Honeywell noodles, reading Honeywell is back, bam bam la la. The ads are designed to catch the fancy of commuters waiting at the spot to board a cab or bus to their destinations within the campus and ditto passer-by. The dominating red hue of the ad is interestingly intended to ignite in potential audiences the fire of desire and patronage. Worthy of note is the fact that this structure typified the bus stops on campus; however, not all have a functional cladding template.



Figure 5 Front View of the Chapel of Christ Our Light Church
Source: Author's Data Analysis – Dr. Akinde Toyin Emmanuel (2024)

The Chapel of Christ Our Light Church is a Protestant denomination situated on the left side of the campus's main road. It shared an imaginary boundary with the University Central Mosque. The church has a massively built auditorium and some adjoining structures, supposedly the parsonages and halls. The auditorium is, however, of interest, roofed and clad with silver aluminium sheets both at the top and at the sides, suspended with six sturdies, solid pillars, each giving an artistic impression of a torch. Two of the pillars are stationed at the front entrance of the church, while the remaining four are distributed in twos to the far left and near right. Its formative walls are clad in white and gray emulsion paints and suspended air conditioners, numbering an average of eighteen pieces. Also evident are notice boards, smart high definition televisions, and electronic woofers mounted on the walls. In addition, the auditorium is complemented by a massive projectile, towering into the sky at the center of the front entrance, making a total of seven pillars, the number of rest and worship in Christendom.

The tower is a Crucifix or, better still, a Cross, the symbol of life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, constructed with intersecting metal frames, giving a sense of architectonics, and clad with silver aluminium sheet. Directly behind the cross is a pyramid projectile, clad in translucent flex sheets numbering approximately forty-eight on the roof. The surroundings of this edifice are paved in concrete and complemented with concrete pots, housing varying flower types. The church goes by the slogan "Welcome to the headquarters of heaven..." emblematic in their choice of colour white and its variance, which signifies purity, equity, empathy, and tranquillity; beckoning worship to initiate faithful and non-initiates.



Figure 6 Side View of the Central Mosque and Zoom View Clad Projectile

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Balogun Temitope Toluwalase (2024)

The Central Mosque at the Akoka campus is a magnificent structure, made from concrete and clad in the University colour light cream and reddish brown or dark wine with a touch of ceramic tiles. It is located on the major road, directly opposite Nord Motors' showroom to the west. The beauty and majesty of the mosque are more appreciated and validated when appraised at right angles, which attest to the holistic broadness of the structure and that of its minaret, towering into the sky from the base foundation. The minaret's height is not just high but a testament to tile integration on the structure, distinctively gracing its exterior wall. The tile cladding and the multiple aluminium cladding of the mosque windows serve aesthetic purposes, contribute to the serenity and purity of the sacred space. The benefits of the tile cladding are multi-fold; it provides a durable and weather-resistant surface, ensuring longevity and reduced maintenance needs.

The intricate pattern on the minaret suggests a pixelated design achieved through tile cladding, which comes in shades and tints of brown, contribute to the visual richness of the mosque and creating an environment of serenity and beauty. Moreover, the tile cladding serves as a nod to traditional Islamic architectural styles, adding cultural significance to the structure. Also evident are two domes, one at the centre of the minaret and that of the main building, coloured in a green hue. Interestingly, the colouration, light cream or brown and green, is synonymous with the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria. Nonetheless, the mosque beckoned to all Islamic faithful for daily prayers, significantly Jimot prayers.



Figure 7 Angular View of Nord Assembly Plant

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Balogun Temitope Toluwalase (2024)

One of the things that stand out on the Akoka campus and by extension the University of Lagos among its peers is the hosting of an Automobile Assembly Plant, housing a showroom, research, and development workshop. The company goes by the name Nord and its plant is situated on the main way on campus. Its showroom is a striking example of modern architectural design enhanced by the thoughtful application and combination of glass and flex plastic cladding. The extensive use of glass for the exterior wall of the showroom creates a sleek contemporary aesthetic and justifies the purposes of the space as a display outlet for sales of brand-new vehicles to intending and prospective clientele. The glass cladding, suspended with rubber on aluminium sheets, allows for abundant natural light, fostering an open and inviting atmosphere within the showroom, contributing to the building's energy efficiency by maximizing daylight, and reducing the need for artificial lighting during the day.

This cladding feature is especially advantageous for showcasing vehicles, providing a visually appealing setting for potential buyers. While the flex plastic cladding coloured in blue and white is designed to tape the top and the side axis of the structure. In addition, a Neon sign was used to craft the name of the company, "NORD," in the Gothic letter, accompanied by its logo on the wall of the building. The transparency of the glass, interestingly, promotes a seamless connection between the interior and the surrounding campus environment, creating a dynamic experience for both visitors and passersby.



Figure 8 Front View of AP Filling Station

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Lawuyi Funmi Dorcas (2024)

AP filling station, also known as Unilag SS, is the only visible fueling franchise admitted and authorised to sell Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) on the Akoka campus. It is strategically located at an adjoining junction by the right, heading straight to the institution's International School (Unilag Staff School). The Staff School is easily accessible through the second gate at the east wing of the institution. AP filling station directly shares a boundary with Nord Motors to the south, the University Works Unit's yard to the west, the Access Bank building to the north, and a Bus stop to the east. The station comprises a trio of pump stands, a mall, and an alignment workshop, clad in a dominating white hue and complemented with green and yellow pigment. The pump stands are four in number and digitally powered. They are covered by a massive roof, taped with metal sheets at its top edge, giving the impression of open heavens, allowing for easy entry and exit of vehicular activities within its space.

The roof is suspended by rectangular pipes, two beams, and four pillars, painted in white emulsion. Its metal sheets and plastic flex are tinted green, yellow, and white. The name of the franchising company is crafted in lowercase “ap” and complemented with its logo, replicated on each side of the divide to give a logogrammatic impression.



Figure 9 Exterior and Interior Views of New Hall Cafeteria
Source: Author's Data Analysis – Lawuyi Funmi Dorcas (2024)

New Hall Cafeteria is one of the prominent eateries scattered within the campus residences, dedicated as the eat-out centre for New Hall residents, their visitors, and tourists. It is situated in a choice location on the major road of the campus, directly opposite the Access Bank building to the north. The structure is massive and simplistically rectangular, which may be confused for a bungalow, while indeed it is a story building. Its first floor is divided into two halves, where each half of the divide is shared by vendors of assorted foods, ranging from fast food to swallow. Apparently, one of the clad advertisements, suspended on the front entrance wall of the building, attests to the cost implications of fried yams, sweet potato, plantain, fish, sauce, and drink, costing one thousand five hundred Naira (1,500) only. Also evident on the exterior wall of the structure are embossed plastic and flex banner cladding advertising Coca-Cola products and imagery.

The building is supposedly branded by Coca-Cola as a result of the hot and conspicuous red coloration of its walls. Its interior or inner walls equally have attendant cladding representation of Coca-Cola products and are complemented with a high-definition television, centrally suspended on both sides of the cafeteria walls.



Figure 10 Angular View of the Zenith Bank Building

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Dr. Akinde Toyin Emmanuel (2025)

Zenith Bank building on the Akoka campus is, no doubt, the most outstanding both in elegance and visuality. It stands tall among its peers, some of which include Wema, Access, and Guarantee Trust banks, to mention the obvious. Zenith Bank is located adjacent to Moremi Hall of Residence, directly beside Guarantee Trust Bank to the right and Jaja Hall of Residence to the left. The entire building is clad with glass, aluminium, plastic flex, glass solar panels, and a digital Multimedia screen. The structure is a three-storey building, massively embellished with tinted or translucent glass cladding; playing host to banking services, the Unilag alumnae office, and the office of advancement. The building is officially known as Oyewusi Ibidapo-Obe House, written in Gothic lettering with white flex plastic and complemented with the Zenith Bank logo at the front topmost edge of the building.

The roof of the edifice is clad with solar panels to provide an uninterrupted power supply. Zenith Bank, Unilag Alumnae, and Office of Advancement were crested with white and gold flex plastic, complemented with the logo of the trio at the base of the first floor of the building. Additionally, the sleek and reflective surface of the glass adds a sense of sophistication and modernity to the bank's facade. Also evident on the building's front facade is a digital LED board, which often displays products relevant to the building. Beyond aesthetic merits, the glass cladding provides thermal insulation, helping regulate indoor temperatures and contributing to energy efficiency.



Figure 11 Stationed and in Motion Electric Buses

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Dr. Akinde Toyin Emmanuel (2025)

The University of Lagos, Akoka, is the foremost Nigerian tertiary institution to launch the adoption of electric-powered commuter buses with zero carbon emission, numbering about thirty as of the study's last count. The buses are solar powered with the rooftop clad with panels, which absorb maximum energy from the sun, enough to power individual vehicles through their daily routine. A development that was made possible, courtesy of the joint efforts of the University Management and the OGATA corporations. The buses were individually clad in white and black metallic paint. It conveys passengers from the main gate, takes off at the Education Bus Stop, and navigates through major bus stops: Stadium, New Hall, CIT (Center of Information Technology), and Campus bus stops. Campus bus stop is at the Zenith Bank Oyewusi Ibidapo-Obe House, it doubles as the main garage for commuters boarding from Moremi, Jaja, and its environs.

The University had diverse evidence of land transportation, exemplified in buses (popularly called Danfo in local parlance), Taxis, and the latest intake, Electric buses. Each of these electric buses carries thirteen passengers at full capacity per trip. Apart from its zero carbon emission, it is the most affordable means of transportation on campus. On the bus's surface are carefully crafted impressions of the names and the logos of the investors and that of Unilag. Evident is the caption showing commuters boarding one of the buses and the one in motion.



Figure 12 Faculty of Art

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Balogun Temitope Toluwalase (2024)

Faculty of Art University of Lagos is arguably the largest single building block owned by any faculty on the Akoka campus. The building has an average of four hundred and fiftysix (456) rooms, housing lecture rooms, staff, students, and administrative offices of the faculty. This edifice is stupendously and massively built; its structure is not only intimidating but breathtaking, complemented by an auditorium that plays host to major events of the faculty. An aerial view of the building not only suggests Alpha but also gives an impression of a block letter, which is synonymous or, better still represents the acronym of the Faculty, which is Art. Interestingly, the faculty building and its adjoining auditorium are clad in fired brick tiles, dimensions of 16 cm x 8 cm x .5 cm, complemented with a light cream hue. Also apparent are white aluminium sheets cladding each of the window's external parts.

The structure, apart from its large staircases on both sides of the building, hosts a functional and dedicated elevator system for both staff and students. The elevators are clad in silver aluminium, allowing easy flow of human traffic within the building. Interestingly, the side edge of its decking roof on the right plays host to the clad university logo and the Neon sign of the faculty written in Gothic letters with a blue colouration.



Figure 13 Front View and Ground Floor Interior of the Senate House
Source: Author's Data Analysis – Dr. Akinde Toyin Emmanuel (2025)

The Senate House at the University of Lagos, Akoka campus, stands out as an exemplary example of an architectural masterpiece. The structure, though classical architecture, has a seemingly simple rectangular form with intricate facades cladding mosaic tiles, usually with dimensions of 30 cm x 30 cm or 40 cm x 40 cm square. It is simply vertical architecture, hosting the powerhouse of the institution, that is, the governing council office and chamber, chancellery offices, bursary, registry, and the like. Its exterior and interior walls are adorned in glazed tile cladding shades and tints of cream, wine, and brown colouration. The structure is not only situated at a strategic spot but intimidatingly built towering into the sky. It is indeed a skyscraper, housing a functional cum operational elevator system. The facades and walls of the Senate House are geometrically clad, giving a visual impression of rectilinear lines, exemplified in broken, zigzag, vertical, and horizontal lines, offering a timeless and authentic traditional appearance.

Also apparent on the front and side walls of the skyscraper are the term “Senate House” stylistically designed and impressed in blocked letters. An aerial view of the building gives a juxtaposition of the letters “U and L,” meaning the University of Lagos. The benefits of tile cladding on the Senate House include durability, easy maintenance, and resistance to environmental factors. The tiles act as a protective layer, shielding the structure from weather elements, ensuring longevity, and minimizing maintenance requirements.



Figure 14 Front View of Professor Adetokunbo Babatunde Sofoluwe Cenotaph

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Dr. Akinde Toyin Emmanuel (2025)

Adetokunbo Sofoluwe Park is a popular space on the Akoka campus, maintained by Alpha Morgan Capital. The park plays host to connecting foot parts, one to the Senate House packing loots, while the other links straight to the Hall of Fame, through to the Senate House. Also evident in the park are its neon signboard, statue, and cenotaph of Prof. Adetokunbo. The Cenotaph is however of interest, mainly for its cladding inclination adorned meticulously. The tile cladding, chosen deliberately for its aesthetic and functional qualities, contributes to the timeless elegance of the memorial. The benefits of tile cladding extend beyond its durability, offering easy maintenance and hygienic surfaces, ensuring the memorial structure remains pristine in the face of environmental elements. The Cenotaph is curvilinearly constructed and gives a concave and convex reality, depending on the side perspective of the divide from which the audience is appraising.

Apparent on the cenotaph is a portraiture of Prof. Adetokunbo, one-time Vice Chancellor of Unilag, adorned in the institution's ceremonial toga or regalia, comprising a gown and cap. The Cenotaph is approximately 155 cm x 450 cm x 30 cm in dimensions, partitioned into three of varying dimensions. It houses what can be likened to time scales numbering a total of six, three on each edge of the divide, and Adetokunbo portrait. He is positioned to the far left or east of the platform, facing his audience with the amiable smile of a true scholar and administrator of high standing. Below the portraiture is the christening of Professor Adetokunbo Babatunde Sofoluwe, boldly written in a black hue. The three time scales can be likened to the Yoruba time series that is lived in three seasons: morning, afternoon, and night. And in this case, one can say Adetokunbo's night pays more than the morning as he lives on.



Figure 15 Exterior and Interior Views of J. F. Ade Ajayi Auditorium

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Odeniyi Akinkumi (2025)

The Main Auditorium on the Akoka campus is no other than that of J. F. Ade Ajayi, a Professor of History and a former Vice Chancellor of the institution. The structure is a beauty to behold, an architectural cum monumental masterpiece, built with solid and pure concrete, massively situated adjacent to the University Senate House (Plates, 13a and b). It was constructed in conformity to the Rococo style or fashion, which suggests overly elaborate opulence in design and space. In this case, lavish taste is observable in the beams, columns, and pillars of the structure. Its exterior walls are a shared show of tiles, metals, and emulsion paint cladding, while its interior is clad in wood, segmented planks of 10 cm x 210 cm x 1.5 cm in dimension and painted in light brown. This auditorium has played host to several events, seminars, exhibition, and performances locally, nationally and internationally.

One such event is Peju Layiwole's Indigo Reimagined exhibition, published by the Textile Museum Journal in 2021. The project is well appreciated when viewed from the angles, significantly the right side angle of the building.



Figure 16 Front View and Lobby of Unilag Guest House

Source: Author's Data Analysis – Odeniyi Akinkumi (2025)

The University Guest House is situated around the lagoon front, which often draws guests closer to nature, thrilling them with the beauty of the Lagos lagoon and providing them the opportunity to appreciate the Third Mainland Bridge. The structure is built in concrete and sand brick with a front elevation that is seemingly simple. The building plays host to a reception office on the right-hand side of the entrance, restrooms, and a hall on the left-hand side. Their walls are clad in red-fired brick tiles and complemented by white and light orange with reddish brown emulsion paint. Also of interest is its lobby wall, significantly its seatout area that is clad in glossy particle board frames with black inter-sectional stripes. Also of interest are the pictures of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the chancellor, HD television, and the vice chancellor suspended on the wall of the plywood cladding. The outfit is today privately managed, and it has played host to local, national, and international guests. One that easily comes to mind is the just-concluded All-African Universities Games, hosted by the Akoka campus in December 2024. The campus Guest House played host to sports crews and enthusiasts from North, West, East, Central, and South Africa.

Having made critical visual appraisal of the prevailing cladding typologies on the physical structures in Akoka campus in University of Lagos, the findings of this study affirm that the University of Lagos, Akoka campus, is richly adorned with a multiplicity of cladding typologies ranging from ceramic-based materials such as tiles, glass, and marble to flexible and metallic finishes, serving both functional and aesthetic roles. This aligns with Mac-Barango (2022), who identified cladding as a principal component in building construction, but goes further by situating these materials within their cultural, symbolic, and artistic contexts, thereby extending the discourse beyond cost and functionality. Similarly, while Iyasara et al. (2014) emphasized the economic and industrial value of ceramic raw materials in Nigeria, the present study demonstrates their aesthetic and architectural application in a university setting. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on material classification, environmental performance, or industrial potential (Alegbe & Hammed, 2024; Iyasara et al., 2014), this research provides a comprehensive visual documentation of cladding as an art-historical and cultural phenomenon, underscoring its connection to Yoruba philology and the symbolic identity of Akoka. The artistic affiliations and the emphasis on Nigerian art schools resonate with this study's recognition of the University of Lagos not only as a centre of academic primacy but also as a vibrant contributor to architectural artistry through cladding (Akinde et al., 2022; Akinde, 2022; Akinde et al., 2014; Kaliku & Odeniyi, 2024; Odeniyi & Akinde, 2012). Overall, this study not only fills a significant scholarly gap but also complements earlier works by broadening the scope of cladding research to include historical, cultural, and philosophical dimensions.

CONCLUSION

Like Wole Soyinka, who propounded "I dialogue with my legs" from a Yoruba phrasal preposition (*mo ba ese mi soro*), as a Yoruba contribution to the English language and his poetic licensing prerogative. In consonance with Soyinka's preposition, this study also dialogues with its legs by passively touring the Akoka campus. A development that was born out of scholarly volition to x-ray the philology of Akoka, its affinities with the University of Lagos, and the visualisation of its accompanying structural cladding. The study first established the phrasehood and parallelism of the word "*Ifasifiti*" as university in the Yoruba lexicon, taking inference from the Ifa corpus. Significantly, Ifa touches and talks on all branches of cosmic knowledge. It further asserted the connection between Ifa and Akoka, noting Ifa as constituting the totality of a university, observable in its demystification and stupefaction of all and every arising issue from the various disciplinary faculties.

The study consequently justified *Ifá* as *Òrúnmìlà*, *Òrúnmìlà* as *Àkódá*, *Àkódá* as *Àkóká*, and Akoka as the University of Lagos, first in rank among universities in Nigeria, Lagos State in particular. Suffice to say that the location of the University of Lagos in Akoka is not only by divine coincidence but providentially divine. Little wonder why her freshers, stalites, graduands, and graduates pride themselves as Akokites, that is "Primus inter pare," meaning first among equals. In the same vein, the institution, Akoka, which implies geography, primacy, and apotheosis tutelage, acclaims itself "The University of First Choice and the Nation's Pride." An assertion that is largely responsible for the institution's global academic acumen and performance, ever-increasing student enrolment population, and most importantly, structural artistry and splendour. The study, like Ifa major Odu, coincidentally identified sixteen structures as worthy of visualisation on the Akoka campus, and findings attest their cladding inclination.

The study consequently clarifies the similarity between paving and cladding, noting both as structural finishing embellishments. It went on to establish the difference between the two terms, stating that paving is synonymous with floor finishing. And consequently, demystifies cladding in its holistic sense as anything and everything that constitutes suspended wall finishing of exterior or interior surfaces, serving protective and aesthetic functions. It therefore identified wood, stone, brick, paint, aluminum, marble, metal, vinyl, glass, polystyrene, paper, plastic, and tiles as prevalent cladding material types apparent in Unilag structures. The aforementioned, except wood, are unequivocally ceramic, having undergone natural or artificial firing. These cladding materials, apart from their characteristic colours, patterns, and textures, are sustainable and durable as exemplified in Unilag Senate House. Conclusively, the study hoped its findings would further provoke scholarly inquisition on Akoka and structural cladding, generally from the art historical perspectives and ceramics standpoints in particular.

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