

DECOLONIZING AFRICAN BROADCAST CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF NEO-COLONIALISM PARADIGM: A STUDY OF AIT AND CHANNELS TV PIDGIN PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

This study, "Decolonizing African Broadcast Culture in the Context of Neo-Colonialism Paradigm: A Study of AIT and Channels TV Pidgin Programmes" was aimed at investigating the use of Pidgin Language programmes on AIT and Channels TV to promote African broadcast culture. This phenomenon was investigated using the survey research method. Google Form instrument was used to administer questions to respondents who were students of Edo State University Uzairue. 280 respondents participated in the study. The findings of the study showed that AIT and Channels TV rarely present Pidgin programmes. This implies that their programmes are English-oriented. The researchers, therefore, concluded that African culture is far from being preserved by Nigerian broadcast media, particularly AIT and Channels TV stations. This also means that we are seriously in for cultural neo-colonialism through the foreign media. From the findings and the conclusion, the researchers recommended that: AIT and Channels and other stations should deliberately promote African culture by using Pidgin and African languages in their programmes.

Keywords: Decolonizing, African, Broadcast, Culture, Neo-Colonialism, AIT, Channels TV.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Broadcasting in Nigeria started as far back as 1932 with the colonial masters who through the British Broadcasting Service introduced the first radio broadcasting through a relay network system popularly known as Radio Distribution System (RDS) a network system that was transmitted from BBC, London to Lagos the then Capital City of Nigeria. (Ngonso & Okeke, 2016). By 1942, the empire network signal-receiving centres were extended to many cities in Nigeria including Port Harcourt, Enugu, Maiduguri,

Calabar, Kano, and Kaduna-Zaira. The main programmes of the RDS were centered on agriculture, and announcements bordering on the governance of the colonies under the British Empire. But in 1959 Chief Obafemi Awolowo brought the first TV station in Africa and was located in Ibadan called Western Nigerian Television (WNTV), precisely in 1960 Eastern Nigeria followed suit and in 1962, Northern Nigeria founded its radio/TV in Kaduna.

This development signalled the beginning of broadcasting in Nigeria. However, for many years

broadcasting was regionally based with few indigenous programmes since many Nigerians were not trained, broadcast programmers. This continued till 1994 when private individuals were allowed to apply for licenses to own and operate radio and TV stations. Powered by Degree 38 of 1992 which established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Following this degree, African Independent Television, Minaj System Obosi, Anambra State, Galaxy TV, Channels TV, and many others followed suit. As a result of this surging growth of the broadcast industry in Nigeria, the commission's responsibilities have been reviewed to regulate and control the broadcast industry in Nigeria. To receive, process, and consider applications for the establishment, ownership, and operations of radio and television stations. The Commission is to also ensure that all broadcast stations promote African rich cultural heritage in the contents of their programmes and the number of programmes aired by day. The Commission, therefore, gave a condition of 70% local and 30% programmes to all broadcast stations in Nigeria which include the language of the programme (Ndolo, 2005; Sambe, 2005; Ngonso & Okeke, 2016). Pidgin programme are programmes considered to be indigenous to Nigerians hence the programmes promote African culture. Broadcast programmes are judged by the ideas and philosophy of the project as well as the language used. Pidgin is peculiar to Nigeria and could be seen as a Nigerian thing. The benefits of the Pidgin language as a medium for promoting Nigerian culture are captured by Ndolo (1989, p.679) thus:

Nigerians are divided into splintered groups with separate loyalties that create internal strife, and sometimes even threaten the viability of the federal republic. They usually increase resistance to attempts to promote socio-political integration and mutual understanding, and often undermine effective inter-ethnic relationships. In the absence of a national language, one of Nigeria's most pressing needs is a common medium of communication (*Pidgin*)

We cannot therefore separate colonialism and neo-colonialism from broadcasting. Adejunmobi (1974) puts it thus, 'the history of Nigeria is inextricably linked with that of its broadcasting'. As broadcast media hardware's being imported into Nigerian shores with the language and culture of the

manufacturers, we, therefore, need to check its influence on our local culture by filtering them out through the use of our common language in our programmes dissemination.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Scholars of sociology, mass media, and political science have constantly accused the Western World of using their media hardware imported into Africa to recolonise Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, also described as an extension of neo-colonialism. It has been also observed that African culture has been greatly eroded by foreign (Western) media such as CNN, Zee-world, BBC, and Western movies. While some pundits believe in deliberate efforts by Western media to erode African culture through their programmes others believed that African media can correct the imbalance through programmes that are African-oriented in content and language of delivery as well as the target audience. It is not yet clear if AIT and Channels TV are aware of the problem of Western media dominance and African cultural erosion and if they do. How well do they position their media organizations to rescue Nigeria and indeed Africa from this dominance by their programme content and language of delivery?

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were raised for the proper investigation of this study:

1. To find out the preferred TV station for pidgin programmes
2. To determine the level of acceptance of preferred programmes by the Nigerian audience
3. To find out if Nigerian media audiences see Pidgin programmes as capable of preserving African culture.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following Research Questions were developed from the earlier stated objectives:

1. Which TV station is preferred by the Nigerian audience for Pidgin?
2. What is the level of acceptance of pidgin programmes by the Nigerian audience on AIT and Channels TV?
3. Do you see Pidgin programmes on AIT and Channels as capable of programmes of preserving African culture?

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Broadcasting

Broadcasting can be defined as the spreading of messages to a large unknown audience through electronic means such as television or radio, film, and new media (Ngonso,2021). It can also be defined as communicating or transmitting signals, messages, or contents such as audio or video programming, to the audience at the same time over a communication network. Broadcasting in Africa started in the early 1920s in Sub-Saharan Africa as a result of World War II, the programs were broadcasted in African languages and Dialects so that they could easily provide information to the people about the war (Ndolo, 2005, Ngonso & Okeke,2016).

Culture is seen as the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular group of people in society. African culture is unique and peculiar to Africans at home and in the diaspora. African culture varies slightly from country to country, region to region, community to community, and ethnic group to ethnic group. African culture can be showcased in dress patterns, food, songs, dance, drama, folktales, spiritual doctrine, or worship. Onwumere in Sambe(2005, p.62) sees culture as "shared attributes such as norms, values, behaviour, attitudes, music, dances, religion among members of a group of people" Due to the importance of culture and the powerful influence of media on culture, the National Broadcasting Commission(NBC) gave as a condition to broadcast organization to give 70% attention to local programmes and 30% to foreign programmes. This is in line with the mandate of the commission to ensure that, "broadcast media provide the entire range of sound and vision services that cater for and reflect the diverse range of the Nigerian cultures and communities through effective distribution of public, commercial and community broadcasting services. The mandate also states that NBC shall ensure services are at least 70% owned and operated by Nigerians" (Ngonso, 2022, p.4). African Broadcast culture can be seen as the Indigenous means through which information is shared with African audiences through the broadcast media in the context of this study.

Television

Television is a system used for converting sounds and signals into visual images with sound displaying them electronically on a screen. It is also the electronic delivery of moving images and sound from a source to a receiver. By extending the senses of vision and hearing beyond the limits of physical distance.

Television seems to be the most powerful medium due to its audio-visual impact (Uchenunu & Ngonso,2021). Television broadcasting has had a considerable influence on African society, starting in Nigeria in 1959 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Premier of then Western Nigeria who conceived the idea of establishing the station as a possible medium for education and entertainment and as part of his political party ideology, set up the first TV station in Africa known as Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) (Ngonso & Okeke,2016).

Today, television broadcasting is now conveyed in a diversity of waves as terrestrial radio waves, coaxial cables, and satellites held in geostationary Earth orbit (direct broadcast satellite, or DBS, TV), streamed through the Internet and recorded optically on digital video discs (DVDs) and Blu-ray discs.

Radio

The radio is an audio medium and can also be audio-visual when programmes stirred up visual imagination to fill in mental images around the broadcast sounds such as football commentary. The radio medium soothes listeners with comforting dialogue or background music that makes their day. Radio has several advantages over other forms of mass media because of the use of local languages, its portability, and the use of alternative power supply, (Ngonso&Nworise,2021, Ngonso & Chukwu,2021). These characteristics according to Ngonso (2021) placed radio in an advantageous position which makes it the preferred medium for an awareness campaign. Radio broadcasting provides great entertainment and information for listeners through the transmission of music, news, and other programmes from a single broadcast station to scores of individual listeners who tune in to the stations.

Radio broadcasting came into existence in Nigeria in 1932 through the British Colonialists as part of the strategies to rule Nigeria conveniently from, London, Britain (Ngonso& Okeke, 2016). But television broadcasting

Internet

The Internet is a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols. Sometimes referred to as a "network of networks," The Internet has provided avenues where users emulate or learn a new culture. Through constant exposure to the Internet, many users switch their cultures through Internet exposure. Most interesting is the availability of

social media platforms powered on the Internet. Social media greatly influence the social norms, values, attitudes, and behaviour of users.

The fascinating feature of the Internet is that it provides all kinds of information in audio-visual, text, and graphics that easily influence users' value orientation. Ngonso and Egielewa(2019) in their studies found that social media influences the values of the users. No media establishment today does not have an Internet presence, particularly social media platforms. AIT and Channels TV are all accessible on the Internet either on the Website, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram.

Neo-Colonialism and Broadcasting in Africa:

Neo-colonialism is a system of re-colonizing a colony. It is an indirect colonization of a previous colony. It is more of the economic dominance of a colony by the former colonial master. It is the continuation or imposition of imperialist rule by a state with an interest in the economy. It is otherwise known as economic imperialism. Neo-colonialism is a global phenomenon but with a greater impact on Africa being the most exploited under colonialism. Nkrumah, (1965) was the first to come up with this concept looking at Africans as being under the second torment of their colonial masters.

Sociologists and political scientists think that the Western media have contributed to neo-colonialism in Africa and cultural imperialism. For instance, one of the leading entertainment programmes, BB Naija reality TV show has been accused as a Western-imitated programme that has eroded African culture. Fasaanu, Akinwumi, Olarerin, and Olaniyan (2021, p.152) assert that the show, big brother Naija is "*un African*, the content of the show... constitute a deviation from African culture"

Nigerian broadcast media have also been accused of toeing or promoting Western culture in many respects; music, news delivery, and other entertainment programme. Broadcast media programmes are designed to educate, entertain, inform and influence the audience. The language of delivery is one of the key variables used by a media organization to deal with the subject of influence or impacts of the programme on the media audience. This study is aimed at looking at the level of usage of Pidgin English to promote African culture through the programming of AIT and Channels. Africa is used in a generic sense. It does not mean that the researchers are looking at all African countries or selected a few but rather Nigeria.

AIT Broadcast Culture

Africa Independent Television otherwise known as AIT owned by DAAR Communication as a private enterprise. DAAR Communications owners of AIT were amongst the earliest private broadcast media operators in Nigeria following the enactment of Degree 38 promulgated by Ibrahim Babangida military junta. This legislative initiative in Nigeria brought about the liberalization of the broadcast industry also known as the privatization of the broadcast sector (Ngonso & Okeke, 2016). Precisely, AIT came on the air on August 24, 1992, after about five decades of broadcasting. The license acquired by DAAR Communications also enable it to start commercial broadcast operations on September 1, 1994, on its high-profile radio channels, Raypower 100.5, the first private independent radio station in Nigeria.

DAAR Communications Limited broadcast stations are on air 24 hours daily providing services to Nigerians and Africans through its Satellite Broadcasting. AIT with a distinctive programming theme shares African values through its programmes. AIT's goals are to share the most interesting parts of the African experience with the nations of the world. This philosophy reverberates in AIT's corporate identity, "AIT Sharing the African experience".

Channels TV Broadcast Culture

Channels Television is one of the many TV stations in Nigeria but is based in Lagos, the commercial hub of Nigeria. This station is privately owned by Channels Incorporated established by John Momoh an Edo-born businessman. This organization, Channels Television was founded in 1995 with the main goal of producing news that is the news and acting as a watchdog on the government and its activities.

Since the arrival of Channel TV, the broadcast media industry in Nigeria has received a boost. Channels have shown outstanding performance in news coverage and dissemination, political programme (Politics Today), and their Morning Show (Sunrise Daily) among others. Channel TV seems to fill the gap in broadcast news reportage in Nigeria by providing more reliable news information to Nigerians who have been wondering about the reliability of the news information they get from other news channels. This station now prides itself as an unbiased umpire in news information gathering and dissemination in Nigeria. Some pundits, however, believe that Channels Television has taken the lion's share of the Nigerian broadcast media market, as the station now holds 14

exclusive Nigeria Media Merit Awards (NMMA) as the best television station of the year. Channel Television enjoys popularity for its English-language content and flagrant news information. It is rare to watch programmes aired in Nigerian languages or Pidgin English on Channels TV, this makes Channels appear to be elitist TV channels in Nigeria. Despite this attribute, millions of Nigeria still tune in to Channels TV on mostly GO TV, a multi-choice cable network.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories are needed in research because they serve as the basis for the explanation of the phenomena being observed. Hence, this research study is anchored on Cultivation Media Theory (CMT)

Cultivation Media Theory

Cultivation media theory is a sociological and communications framework essentially developed by George Gerbner, L. Gross, M. Morgan, and N. Signorielli (Ndolo, 2005, Sambe, 2005) suggests that people who are constantly exposed to media content are more likely to perceive the world's social realities as they are presented by the media they consume, which in turn affects their attitudes and behavior. This position, therefore, tallies with this research study which is aimed at finding out how AIT and Channels TV use Pidgin English to redeem African culture from neo-colonialism attack by Western media.

7. METHODOLOGY

A survey research approach was adopted for this study. A set of questionnaires was developed as an instrument of data collection which automatically makes the study quantitative research. Data were collected using Google Forms and shared with students of Edo State University Uzairue, purposively selected. The population of the students also stood as the population of the study. The student population as of the 2022 academic year stood at 1500 according to the University's official source (The Registry). The sample was given at 280, using Philip Meyer's sample size table.

Table 1: Philip Meyer's Table for Sample Size

Population size	Sample
500,000 or more	384
100,000	383
50,000	381
10,000	370
5,000	357
3,000	341
2,000	322
1,000	248

Meyer's Sample Guide 2011

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: The preference of the respondents for a pidgin/ English programme

Table 1 above showed that 55(19%) respondents watched pidgin programmes on AIT and 30(10%) respondents watched on Channels TV. But when compared to other TV stations since the questionnaire was open-ended, the data showed that NTA was preferred for pidgin programmes. By implication, the data showed that Pidgin-oriented programmes are not common on Channels TV and AIT.

	AIT	Channels	NTA	TVC	ITV	LTV
Frequency	55	30	100	20	30	5
Percentages	19%	10%	34%	7%	10%	2%
	AIT	Channels	NTA	TVC	ITV	LTV
Frequency	55	30	100	20	30	5
Percentages	19%	10%	34%	7%	10%	2%
	EBS	Wazobia FM	MaxFM	DBS	BBC	None
Frequency	5	10	5	5	10	5
Percentages	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%
	EBS	Wazobia FM	MaxFM	DBS	BBC	None
Frequency	5	10	5	5	10	5
Percentages	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%

Figure 2: The rate of viewership of TV station pidgin related programme

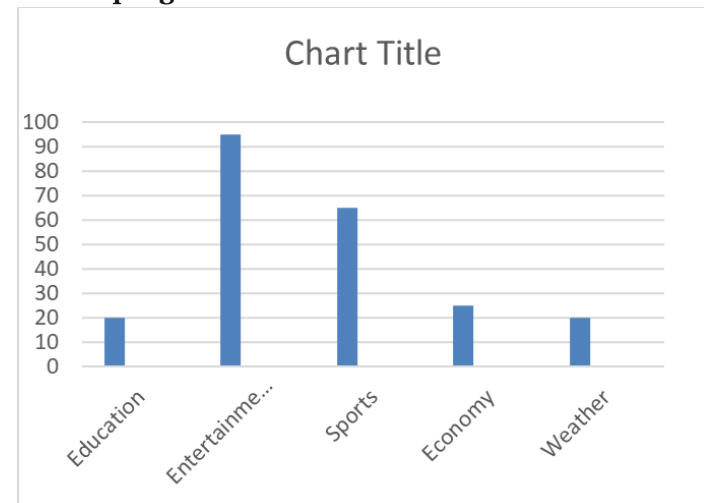
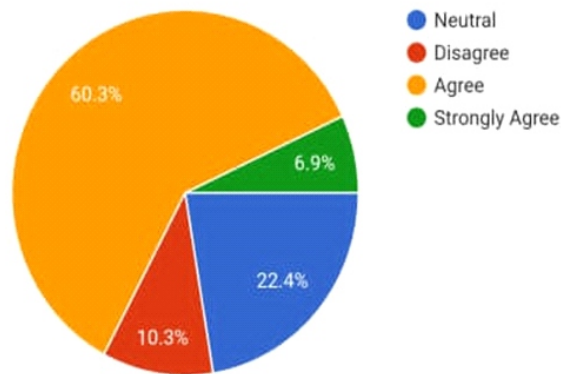


Figure 2 above showed the graphic representation of the kinds of Pidgin programmes Nigerian audiences like to watch. The rating showed that entertainment programmes were preferred followed by sports which is on its own another genre of entertainment.



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Figure 3 above also indicates that 60.3% of the respondents (168) agree that the Pidgin programme can positively influence African cultural values while 6.9%, approx. 7% (9.6 approx. 20) of respondents agree. Putting the two figures together a large majority of the respondents, 188 (70%) believe that Pidgin programmes on TV would enhance African culture.

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

1. Which TV station is preferred by the Nigerian audience for Pidgin?

Table 1 above showed that 55(19%) respondents watched pidgin programmes on AIT and 30(10%) respondents watched on Channels TV. However, the data showed that NTA was preferred for pidgin programmes. By implication, the data showed that English-oriented programmes are not common on Channels TV and AIT. This can further be interpreted that neither AIT nor Channels TV promoting African culture. More worrisome is the fact Channels TV is an award-winning TV and has taken the lion's share of the Nigerian broadcast media industry, while AIT pride's itself on African TV poised to promote African culture.

2. What is the level of acceptance of pidgin programmes by the Nigerian audience?

Figure 2 above showed a graphic representation of the kinds of Pidgin programmes Nigerian audiences like to watch. The rating showed that entertainment programmes were preferred followed by sports which is on its own another genre of entertainment. This also implies that Nigerian audiences are African cultural values

and norms that can be enhanced through Pidgin programmes.

3. Do you see Pidgin programmes on AIT and Channels as capable of programmes of preserving African culture?

Figure 3 above indicates that 70% of the respondents (188) agree that the Pidgin programme can positively influence African cultural values. This finding also collaborates with Uchenunu and Ngonso's (2021) research outcome which shows that television can reinforce an existing value. The majority of respondents agreed that colonialism has affected and is still affecting the broadcast media evidently since AIT and Channels TV have not promoted African culture through Pidgin programmes. It should be noted that Pidgin English as well as Pidgin programmes are more indigenous and can retain African culture better than English Language-oriented programmes.

9. CONCLUSION

This study "Decolonizing African Broadcast Culture in the Context of Neo-Colonialism Paradigm: A Study of AIT and Channels TV Pidgin Programmes" This phenomenon was investigated using a survey research method. An online instrument was administered to respondents who were students of Edo State University Uzairue. 280 respondents participated in the study.

The findings of the study showed that AIT and Channels TV stations rarely show pidgin programmes that promote African culture the researchers, therefore, concluded that African culture is far from being preserved by Nigerian broadcast media, particularly AIT and Channels TV stations. This also means that we are seriously in for cultural neo-colonialism.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusion, the researchers recommended that:

1. AIT and Channels and other stations should deliberately promote African culture by using Pidgin and African languages in their programmes.
2. The researchers also recommended that NTA should up their games since they are already promoting African culture through the use of the Pidgin programme.

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