

## PERCEPTION OF YOUTHS ON THE USE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN NIGERIAN HOME VIDEOS

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to find out the views of Nigerian youths on the use of indigenous languages in Nigerian home videos focusing on youths (undergraduates) of Covenant University and Olabisi Onabanjo University. The study adopted the survey methodology. The sample of the study was made up of 300 undergraduates randomly selected from both institutions. The research instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. Simple percentage and frequency tables were used to analyze the data collected. The finding of this study revealed youths perceive that the use of indigenous languages should be encouraged in the Nigerian home videos as it can help to disseminate our cultures to youths and also be an avenue for them to learn our indigenous languages. It was recommended that the quality of the indigenous home videos should be improved upon especially as regards subtitling to English for those not literate in the language.*

*Key words- Perception. Youth and Lanquaae.*

### INTRODUCTION:

Home videos in Nigeria have evolved and have become an integral part of the society. It started with producing films in Igbo language for example, Living in Bondage by Kenneth Nnebue. Now, movies are produced in different languages such as Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa and even Efik. Nollywood produces more than a thousand video films annually with an estimated one hundred and twenty films released weekly across Nigeria. Most of these films produced are viewed at home, and not in cinemas which qualifies them as home-videos [Ebewo, 2007].

Fosudo [2012] is of the view that many researchers have written about the Nigerian movie industry from different points of view: its capital base, the use of indigenous languages, the jobs it has created, the theatricals and so on but few have bothered about the views of youths concerning the use of indigenous language in home videos.

Some youths believe that indigenous language use in home videos is usually associated with negative messages such as ritualism, money rituals, voodooism, violence, witchcraft, idolatry and others which may be unpalatable for the younger generation. This is because films with such themes appear unreal if shot in English language, hence producers shoot films meant to convey such negative messages using indigenous languages [Ebewo, 2007].

The use of indigenous languages in home videos and not just the acclaimed Lingua Franca, English could be a platform for showcasing Nigeria's diverse culture and languages.

### Statement of the Problem

In recent times, Nollywood movies have gained ascending popularity among Nigerian viewers especially among young people who often watch these movies from different freely available media platforms in Nigeria such as television, satellite cable like DSTV and even on the internet. However, issues of concern and debate have been raised among scholars on how people feel especially youths on the use of indigenous languages in home videos.

Babajide [2001] as cited by Igboanusi [2005] posited that although there are indigenous language based home videos and films, studies conducted have revealed that many youths do not watch these films. They also do not access local stations where indigenous programmes and languages are utilized on television. They would rather watch English-based home videos or opt for foreign movies such as Hollywood (American film industry), Bollywood (Indian film industry) and even Chinese movies which are usually subtitled in English. They do this because of the social and economic values attached to speaking English language and the euphoria of been seen among peers and friends as watching foreign movies.

Youths are also of the opinion that indigenous language home videos lack quality. Rafiu [2012] asserts that most home videos shot with indigenous languages usually have poor storylines and are usually of inferior quality in terms of scene, effects and overall production. Such films also may not parade movie stars that can serve as a source of attraction for youths to watch them.

Advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in the country is one of the contributory factors to the way youths view indigenous languages generally. Youths are the major consumers of ICT facilities; they spend lots of time online exploring several chat rooms and social media like *2go*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, among others where English language is the major language of communication. This is why youths do not see the need for watching home videos where indigenous language is used as they rarely communicate in their local languages online.

This study therefore seeks to find out the perception of select Nigerian youths on the use of indigenous languages in Nigerian home videos.

### Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this research is to find out the views of Nigerian youths on the use of indigenous languages in Nigerian home videos.

The specific objectives of this research are to:

1. Ascertain youth perception on the use of indigenous language in Nigerian home videos.
2. Analyze the extent to which youths perceive the use of indigenous language in Nigerian home videos as a means of learning indigenous language and culture.
3. Determine the perception of Nigerian youths on the quality of indigenous language used in Nigerian home videos.

### Research Questions

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perception of youths on indigenous language use in Nigerian home videos?
2. To what extent do youths perceive indigenous language use in Nigerian home videos as a means of learning indigenous language and culture?
3. What is the perception of youths on the quality of indigenous language based Nigerian home videos?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is situated within the framework of Social Perception Theory, Cultivation Theory and Media Dependency Theory.

### **Social Perception Theory**

According to Triesman and Gelade [1980], perception is essentially the interface between the outer and inner worlds. They further explain the process of perception thus:

Social targets and the contextual stimuli of the outer environment create signals (visual, auditory, etc.) that can be sensed, and the perceiver receives these signals and converts them into psychologically meaningful representations that define our inner experience of the world. The process of perception is governed both by “bottom-up” sensory input and by “top-down” imposition of meaning based on template matching and other pattern recognition processes that allow for the structuring and interpretation of the input

This means that social perception is the process by which individuals interpret information about situations, persons or things. This implies that the way we perceive things or view other people’s attitudes and act is as a result of information available to us at a particular time about the situation. This means that on any particular situation individuals may have different views and opinions.

Folarin [2002] postulates that, ‘perception depends on various factors such as psychological disposition, previous experiences, cultural expectations and social relationships.’ Using the phases of perception which are selective exposure, selective attention, selective perception and selective retention to further explain this study; youths expose themselves to the video contents in order to be regarded as an audience. When an audience is exposed, selective perception theory process comes to play, as the individual focuses on the language used in the film, and may give selective attention to indigenous languages thereby enhancing his perception and understanding of the language. Retention of such indigenous language also occurs with subsequent interaction with others in the language learnt.

### **Cultivation Theory**

According to Demers, Saliven, Potter, and Hobert [2001], cultivation theory which was originally propounded by George Gerbner and expanded by Gerbner [1976] is of the belief that

TV has been the main source of storytelling in today's society. This theory classifies those who watch for four or more hours a day as heavy watchers and those who watch for fewer hours as light viewers.

According to the author of *Mass Communication from Theory to Practical Application* (undated), cultivation theorists posit that TV viewing can have long term effects that gradually affect an audience. The primary focus falls on the effects of viewing in the attitudes of viewers as opposed to created behaviour. Many times, the viewers are unaware of the extent to which they absorb media; often viewing themselves as moderate viewers when in fact they are heavy viewers. The theorists suggest that TV and media possess a small but insignificant influence on the attitudes, language use and beliefs of society about society. Those who absorb more media are those that are more influenced.

The home video can indeed affect the viewing audience to think in the manner in which the elements are portrayed. The home video is therefore an excellent platform for viewers to absorb indigenous languages actively and/or passively and to speak these languages effortlessly. Simply put, video influences its audience through the television screen in all facets of life.

### **Media-System Dependency Theory**

Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur [1989] originally proposed the Media-Dependency theory in 1976. This theory emerged out of the communication discipline. Dependency theory integrates several perspectives: it combines perspectives from psychology with ingredients from social categories theory. Secondly, it integrates systems perspectives with elements from more causal approaches. Furthermore, it combines elements of uses and gratifications research with those of media effects traditions, although its primary focus is less on effects than on rationales for why media effects typically are limited.

This theory predicts that youths depend on media information to meet certain needs and achieve certain goals, like uses-and-gratifications theory but do not depend on all media equally.

Ball-Rokeach et al further explains that there are two factors influencing the degree of media dependence:

one is that an individual may become more dependent on media that meets a number of needs than on media that provides just a few. The second source of dependency is social stability. When social change and conflicts are high, established institutions, beliefs, and practices are challenged, forcing an individual to re-evaluate and make new choices. At such times reliance on the media for information will increase. At some other times, media dependency may go way down.

According to Baran, and Correia [2009], Media-Dependency theory assumes that the more a person depends on having his or her needs met by media use, the more important will be the role that media plays in the person's life, and therefore the more influence those media will exert on the individual in terms of culture, languages and even history [p.273].

## Review of Related Studies

Writing on the movie-going habits of Lagosians especially youths, Nwuneli [1979] showed that more than half (53%) of the sampled population would prefer Nigerian-produced films and films from other African countries to imported foreign and non-African films. However, some years later Igbinedion [1985] studied youth's attitude and perception towards films on Nigerian television and found that nearly three quarters of the sampled population (70%) watch Nigerian film but most of the films with indigenous language were associated with negative scenes and messages such as witchcraft and idolatry with the propensity of passing across negative messages to viewers" [Igbinedion, 1985 p.104].

According to Ekwuazi [2008] in his work on Perception of University students' on Nigerian home movies in which he investigated students' understanding and views of home movies produced by the popular Nollywood industry. The study which employed the survey method and in-depth interview, had a sample size of 500 students, drawn from different departments of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, found out that undergraduate students are highly exposed to Nollywood movies and prefer these Nigerian films to foreign ones. However, these undergraduates see these Nigerian home videos as not depicting the cultural values of the society, although they are influenced by the lifestyle and dress codes of the actors/actresses in these films. In the light of the above, the study, therefore recommended that movie producers should understand that in a multicultural and pluralistic world, a modicum of respect and decency is very necessary in movie production so that the cultural sensibilities of the people are not assaulted in the overt inclination to parody western movies [Ekwuazi, 2008].

In a research conducted by Umezina [2012], it was concluded that students do not perceive the Nigerian home movies as a platform for promoting cultural values, learning indigenous languages, morals, and social good. 75.2% of respondents (youths) were of the view that Nigerian home videos do not make use of indigenous languages in telling their stories as most films are now produced with English language or pidgin English.

Usman & Abdulsalam [2013] carried out a study with the objective of examining the role of indigenous language in Nigerian movie industry in teaching and developing Nigerian languages. Six movies are used for the study. These movies are drawn from the three major indigenous languages in Nigeria viz; Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. It was discovered that the good subtitling technique in movies play a major role in teaching indigenous languages as actors dialogued in their native tongue, we could still follow the unfolding trends courtesy English subtitling and vice versa. Also, the indigenous language films consciously or unconsciously enlightened the society on indigenous language acquisition. The study suggests that this could be utilized as improvised teaching aids/materials in our schools. There is also the need to take up the campaign to give indigenous language films the international consciousness and pay more attention to the context and content of film practice in contemporary Nigeria.

Alawode and Uduakobong [2013] carried out a study titled 'Home Video as Nigerian Image Maker. For the purpose of this study, fifty (50) video films televised by television stations in Lagos and Africa Magic (a cable network station) were watched and content analyzed. The study was underpinned within the frameworks of agenda-setting and cultivation theories. The

findings of the study reveal that the video makers have undoubtedly done a great deal to portray the traditional settings, cultures and lifestyles, flamboyance and religious persuasions of the Nigerian people. The respondents feels that very little has been done to project the nation's natural environments, agricultural and mineral resources as well as monumental and historical centers; the nation's symbols like flags, coat of arms and currencies amongst others are also rarely projected. Negative attitudes like witchcraft, occultism/cultism, ritualism, violence, thuggery and hooliganism, corruption and get-rich-quick tendencies amongst others seem to be overrepresented and exaggerated in the films and could be contributing to the increasing embarrassing actions and attitudes meted to Nigerians (especially honest and decent travellers) outside its shore. This study however recommends that the indigenous film makers need to effectively play the role of the nation's image maker to rebrand and project the nation and its people in better light yet truthfully, pragmatically and affirmatively.

### **Research Design**

This study employed the survey method. The survey method is considered most appropriate for the study because of its strengths; according to Mertens (2005), surveys are good because they allow collection of data from a larger number of people. However, unlike most qualitative research approaches that involve direct observation of behaviour, surveys rely on individuals' self-reports of their knowledge, attitudes, or behaviours.

### **Population of the Study**

The population for this research consists of 59,718 students of Olabisi Onabanjo University in Ogun State as obtained from their Registry department, and 8,239 students of Covenant University also obtained from their Registry department.

Therefore having determined the population of the study, the sample size comprised 300 male and female students because they fall under the category of Nigerian youths who watch movies and home videos. 100 respondents were drawn from Covenant University and 200 students from Olabisi Onabanjo University all in Ogun State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was employed in the distribution of the questionnaire, to give almost every student an equal chance to give their own views on the topic. Descriptive statistics comprising frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data retrieved from the field.

### **Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

Out of the 300 copies of questionnaire administered in this study, 283 (94.3%) copies were retrieved from the respondents.

#### **Section A: Demographic Data**

##### **Table 4.1.1: Respondents Distribution by Sex**

SEX	Covenant University		Olabisi Onabanjo University	
	Frequency	Percentage%	Frequency	Percentage%
MALE	32	34	83	43.9
FEMALE	62	66	106	56.1
TOTAL	94	100	189	100

Source: Field work, (February, 2015)

The table shows that there were more female respondents than males. Hence the result shows most of the respondents were females. It was found that in both schools females appeared to be the majority of respondents, maybe due to the fact that the researcher ran into more female respondents than males or probably that females were more willing to participate.

**Table 4.1.2: Respondents Distribution by Age**

AGE	Covenant University		Olabisi Onabanjo University	
	Frequency	Percentage%	Frequency	Percentage%
15 – 20	54	57.4	56	29.6
21-25	24	25.5	49	25.9
26 and above	16	17.1	84	44.5
TOTAL	94	100	189	100

Source: Field work, (February, 2015)

Table 4.1.2 shows that majority of students from Covenant University are within the age bracket of 15-20 years while majority of respondents from Olabisi Onabanjo University, are from 26 years and above.

**Table 4.1.3: Distribution by frequency of viewing Nigerian Movies**

LEVEL	Covenant University		Olabisi Onabanjo University	
	Frequency	Percentage%	Frequency	Percentage%
Everyday	18	19.2	39	20.6
Twice a week	12	12.8	60	31.7
Once a Week	42	44.7	6	3.2
Twice a Month	19	20.2	41	21.7
Once a Month	3	3.1	43	22.8
TOTAL	94	100	189	100

Source: Field work, (February, 2015)

The table shows that majority of respondents from Covenant University view these movies like once a week while majority of respondents from Olabisi Onabanjo University view Nigerian movies at least twice a week.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What is the perception of youths on indigenous language use in Nigerian home videos?**

**TABLE 4.1.4: Respondents perception of indigenous language use in Nigeria home videos**

	Statements	Covenant University					Olabisi Onabanjo University				
		SA	A	U	SD	D	SA	A	U	SD	D
1	indigenous languages are commonly used in Nigerian home videos	25 (26.6%)	34 (36.2%)	5 (5.3%)	10 (10.6%)	20 (21.3%)	17 (9%)	71 (37.6%)	11 (5.8%)	34 (18%)	56 (29.6%)
2	use of indigenous languages in Nigerian home videos is better than the use of English language	46 (48.9%)	24 (25.5%)	5 (5.3%)	9 (9.6%)	10 (10.6%)	59 (31.2%)	72 (38.1%)	7 (3.7%)	27 (14.3%)	24 (12.7%)
3	Indigenous language based Nigerian home videos are generally accepted and watched by youths	20 (21.3%)	15 (16%)	3 (3.2%)	48 (51%)	8 (8.5%)	86 (45.5%)	41 (21.7%)	11 (5.8%)	32 (16.9%)	19 (10.1%)
4	Youths can learn their native languages from indigenous language based home videos	44 (46.8%)	21 (22.3%)	9 (9.6%)	15 (16%)	5 (5.3%)	74 (39.2%)	49 (25.9%)	12 (6.3%)	30 (15.9%)	24 (12.7%)

Source: Field work, (February, 2015)

There were varying answers from both universities on the statements that were raised. From the first item in table 4.1.4, 59(62.8%) of Covenant University students agreed that indigenous languages are commonly used in Nigerian home videos. However, 90(62.8%) of Olabisi Onabanjo University students disagreed that indigenous languages are commonly used in Nigerian home videos.

The second item shows a consensus between both schools that the use of indigenous languages in Nigerian home videos is better than the use of English language.



From item three, it was found that 56(59.5%) of Covenant University students disagreed that Indigenous language based Nigerian home videos are generally accepted and watched by youths. However, 127(67.2%) Olabisi Onabanjo University students agreed that Indigenous language based Nigerian home videos are generally accepted and watched by youths. From item four, it was discovered that 65(69.1%) believe that youths can learn their native languages from indigenous language based home videos however, same goes for Olabisi Onabanjo University as 123(65.1%) are also in agreement.

The perception of youths on the use of indigenous language in Nigeria home video appears to be high, as the use of indigenous language in Nigerian home video is seen as a tool for learning cultural values. This shows that most students believe they can learn their native languages by watching indigenous home videos which they might not have the opportunity of learning at home.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 2: To what extent do youths perceive indigenous language use in Nigerian home videos as a means of learning indigenous language and culture?**

**Table 4.1.5: Showing youth perception of indigenous language use in Nigerian home videos as a means of learning indigenous language and culture**

	Statements	Covenant University					Olabisi Onabanjo University				
		SA	A	U	SD	D	SA	A	U	SD	D
1	Indigenous language use in home videos will make youths learn their native dialect	20(21.3%)	41(43.6%)	9(9.6%)	10(10.6%)	14(14.9%)	92(48.7%)	26(33.8%)	19(24.1%)	38(48.2%)	14(17.4%)
2	Use of indigenous language in Nigerian home videos will serve as a platform to teach youths the rich Nigerian culture and core values	18(19.1%)	30(31.9%)	3(3.2%)	31(33.3%)	12(12.8%)	59(31.2%)	72(38.1%)	7(3.7%)	27(14.3%)	24(12.7%)
3	Indigenous language in home videos can be used to pass across important messages about our values and culture to Nigerians both at home and in diaspora.	12(12.8%)	9(9.6%)	5(5.3%)	43(45.7%)	25(26.6%)	58(30.7%)	49(25.9%)	9(4.8%)	33(17.4%)	33(17.4%)

4	Indigenous language use in Nigerian home videos will foster peace and unity among youths in the society	5(5.3%)	45(47.9%)	39(41.5%)	2(2.1%)	3(3.2%)	77(40.7%)	28(14.8%)	9(4.8%)	53(28.0%)	22(11.7%)
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Source: Field work, (February, 2015)

From the first item on table 4.1.5, majority of respondents from both universities are in agreement that indigenous use in home videos will make youths learn their native dialect. Majority of respondents in both universities are also in agreement on item two which states that the use of indigenous language in Nigerian home videos will serve as a platform to teach youths the rich Nigerian culture and core values.

There was however a disparity in views from respondents of both universities on item three. Majority of respondents from Covenant University 50(53.3%) disagreed that indigenous language in home videos can be used to pass across important messages about our values and culture to Nigerians both at home and in diaspora. On the other hand, students of Olabisi Onabanjo University 105(55.5%) agreed that indigenous language in home videos can be used to pass across important messages about our values and culture to Nigerians both at home and in diaspora. From statement four, while majority of respondents from both universities are in agreement that indigenous language use in Nigerian home videos will foster peace and unity among youths in the society, it will be worthy of note that a good number of the respondents from Covenant University are unsure and could not make a decision.

It was discovered that the perception of youths on the use of indigenous language in Nigeria home video appears to be high, as the use of indigenous language in Nigerian home video is seen as a tool for learning cultural values. The findings by Ekwuazi [2008] also agrees with this findings in the sense that these undergraduates see these Nigerian home videos as not depicting the cultural values of the society, although they are influenced by the lifestyle and dress codes of the actors/actresses in these films.

The findings also agree with that of Umezina [2012] as it was concluded that students do not perceive the Nigerian home movies as a platform for promoting cultural values, learning indigenous languages, morals, and social good. This shows that most students believe they can learn their native languages by watching indigenous home videos which they might not have the opportunity of learning at home.

**RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What is the view of youths on the quality of indigenous language based Nigerian home videos?**

**Table 4.1.6: Showing Youth perception on the quality of Indigenous language home videos**

Covenant University						Olabisi Onabanjo University					
	Statements	SA	A	U	SD	D	SA	A	U	SD	D
1	Indigenous language based Nigerian home videos is often associated with poor storylines.	20(21.3%)	15(16%)	3(3.2%)	48(51%)	8(8.5%)	86(45.5%)	41(21.7%)	11(5.8%)	32(16.9%)	19(10.1%)
2	Home videos with indigenous languages are not well subtitled to enhance audience participation and learning	25(26.6%)	34(36.2%)	5(5.3%)	10(10.6%)	20(21.3%)	17(9%)	71(37.6%)	11(5.8%)	34(18%)	56(29.6%)
3	quality of home videos acted with indigenous languages is usually poor hence may discourage youths from watching	12(12.8%)	9(9.6%)	5(5.3%)	43(45.7%)	25(26.6%)	58(30.7%)	49(25.9%)	9(4.8%)	33(17.4%)	40(21.2%)
4	most indigenous language based home videos lack star actors that can serve as side attraction for youths	18(19.1%)	30(31.9%)	3(3.2%)	31(33%)	12(12.8%)	59(31.2%)	72(38.1%)	7(3.7%)	27(14.3%)	24(12.7%)

Source: Field work, (February, 2015)

As seen from the response of Item one on the table, respondents from Covenant University 50(52.3%) disagreed with the statement that indigenous language based Nigerian home videos is often associated with poor storylines. On the other hand, however, majority of Olabisi Onabanjo

University respondents 105(19.6%) believe that indigenous language based Nigerian home videos is often associated with poor storylines.

There is agreement in responses from the respondents of both institutions (Olabisi Onabanjo University 107(58.2%), Covenant University 84(89.4%)) on item two that home videos with indigenous languages are not well subtitled to enhance audience participation and learning. They are of the opinion that some movies are not properly subtitled in the sense that the language is wrong. Usman and Abdulsalam [2013] from their study assert that the good subtitling technique in movies play a major role in teaching indigenous languages; as actors dialogued in their native tongue, we could still follow the unfolding trends courtesy English subtitling.

This suggests that those who subtitle from the local languages to English language should be verse in the use of English and cross check the translations very well before the movie goes on air as it could enlighten the society.

From item three, it was discovered that more than half of the respondents from Covenant University 56(59.5%) disagreed with the statement that the quality of home videos acted with indigenous languages is usually poor and could discourage youths from watching. A large number of respondents from Olabisi Onabanjo University 73(38.62%) also disagreed that the quality of home videos acted with indigenous languages is poor and may discourage youths from watching. However, majority of respondents from Olabisi Onabanjo University 107 (56.6%) actually do agree with the statement that the quality of home videos acted with indigenous languages is poor and may discourage youths from watching.

From Item four, respondents of both institutions were in agreement that most indigenous language based home videos lack star actors/actresses that can serve as side attraction for youths.

The table shows varying opinions also from respondents probably because of the nature of each university, or maybe their orientation or family background. Whatever the case though, Rafiu [2012] is in agreement with the above finding that 'most home videos shot with indigenous languages are usually of inferior quality in terms of scene, effects and overall production'. This in turn lead the youths to find an alternative in foreign produced movies.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study centred on perception of youths on the use of indigenous languages in Nigerian home videos. Based on this, it is therefore concluded that: most young people believe that Nigerian home movies are not geared towards the promotion of cultural values which is in the use of indigenous languages. Most respondents believe that the stories conveyed by the Nigerian home videos are true depiction of what happens in society and most young people perceived Nigerian home videos as being capable of affecting behaviour and bringing about negative influence. Students' response showed that the quality of the Nigerian home movies is poor, as Nigeria movie producers seems to cut cost in producing movies.

The following recommendations suffice:

1. It is necessary for all who are involved in the Nigerian home video productions in the industry to know that collaboration with sections of the audience through studied feedback mechanisms is of utmost importance. Such collaboration with researchers and institutions will guide the movie industry so as to realize all the human goods they offer.
2. There is need for conferences, workshops and seminars for all the stakeholders aimed at improving the quality of works produced in the industry. Apart from the obvious cultural and indigenous language uniqueness of Nigeria, such activities will ensure that the technical know-how will borrow healthily from other movie industries. And of course content will incorporate the perception of young people so that even the developmental needs of young people are met.
3. Our indigenous movies should also tone down the use of negative themes in movies as there is the misconception that indigenous movies are tied to barbaric aspects of our culture and ritualistic practices.

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