

GSP2204 FOUNDATIONS OF NIGERIAN CULTURE, GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY

TOPIC: Media, Language and Culture

Musa Adamu Labaran

Department of Mass Communication

Bayero University, Kano

Topics:

- 1. The Concept of Human Communication**
- 2. Stages of Human Communication Evolution**
- 3. The Concept of Mass Media**
- 4. Culture and Cultural Values in Nigeria Ethnic Diversities**
- 5. The Question of National Language**

The Concept of Human Communication

- Human communication is as old as the creation of human beings.
- It has been in existence right from the creation of Adam and Eve.

Definition:

- Wilson (2006, p. 5) defines human communication as “that in which the interdependent participants are engaged in information dissemination, reception and processing and meaning exchange.”

Types of human Communication

- 1. Speech** – is the beginning of human communication. E.g. cries of nature (cry of a new born child). Intra-personal, interpersonal or at mass communication level. It could also be oral or written.
- 2. Sign** - is used to represent transmission, construct a phenomenon which possesses an 'audio image'. E.g.. moon (Islam), cross (Christianity), mathematical signs (+, -,) and traffic signs - red, blue and green

3. **Signal** - is a physical manifestation of a message which allows it to be conveyed. E.g. spiders, honey-bees, humans use gong, drums, flute, flags, car light flashing, car signals etc.
4. **Symbols** - represents something other than itself which could be an object, person or event whose meaning is generally shared among people in a community. E.g. white (unity, purity, spirituality); black (spirit, ghosts, dead); red (danger, secret society); green (nature); yellow (deadly disease – HIV, Lass fever, tuberculosis etc).

Types cont'd...

5. **Scribing/writing** – it gave birth to writing as it was ascribed to bad writing. It is a writing which represents thoughts. Scribing is considered as the early forms of writing before the creation or formation of alphabets.

Functions of Human Communication

Courtship and maintenance of relations;
Socialization; dissemination of Information;
Self-defense; establishment and
maintenance of territories; acquisition of
knowledge; Self-actualization; Promotion;
Publicity and advertising; domination of
others; Development; Liberation and
education

Stages of Human Communication Evolution

- 1. The Age of Signs and Signals** - Pre-historic humans were physically unable to talk. Communication was limited and determined by instincts. It was the age of signs and signals - drum messages, smoke signals, music, dance etc.
- 2. The Age of Speech and Language** – the beginning of communication through language. This paved way for the development of different languages and people can express their feelings, thoughts and experiences through the different languages.

Phases of Human Communication Evolution cont'd...

3. **The Age of Writing** - About 5,000 years ago, writing symbol was developed by the Mayans and the Chinese. They used pictures with a standardized meaning. Later, different form of writing that represented sounds by symbols was developed. Then, clay tablet, stone and later papyrus were developed and used as portable media.
4. **The Age of Printing** - In the 19th century, printing press was developed by Gutenberg which gave rise to print media – newspapers, books, letters and magazines.

Phases of Human Communication Evolution cont'd...

5. **The Mass Communication Age** - In the 19th century, communication was determined by several media forms. Print media, especially newspapers, were supplemented by telegraph and telephone. The introduction of radio, film and television in the 20th century saw the emergence of the Mass Communication era.
6. **The Age of Information Revolution** – The era of information revolution. Media convergence due to networks established from the development of digital communication technology. Super highway.

The Concept of Mass Media

Mass media are channels through which messages are flow. As the messages go through the channels, they are distorted. When people receive media messages they have no opportunity for immediate feedback with the producers of the message.

Types of Mass Media

Print media: books, newspapers, magazines, outdoor media, stickers, posters, handbills, pamphlets etc.

Broadcast media: radio, television, film, recording, video games, internet etc.

Another type of mass media:

Traditional media: newspapers, magazines, radio and television

New media or social media: the internet – facebook, twitter, google+, Badoo, whatsapps, 2go, youtube, instagram etc.

Functions of the Mass Media

Harold Lasswell (1948), a political scientist provided the functions of the mass media as:

1. Surveillance of the environment
2. Correlation of the different parts of the society
3. Transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next.

Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, sociologists suggested two other functions, thus:

4. Status conferral
5. Ethnicizing (enforcement of social norms)

Functions cont'd...

The above functions of the mass media can be simplified as:

Information, Entertainment, Education, Advertising, Public debate and discussions, Promotion of culture, Socialization, Motivation and mobilization and Integration

Culture and Cultural Values in Nigeria Ethnic Diversities

- Nigeria as multi-cultural society has more than 250 ethnic groups each with its respective cultural values.
- UNESCO (1994) defines culture as “the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes modes of life, human rights, values, norms, systems, traditions and beliefs.”

Culture and values cont'd...

- Culture is therefore an established pattern of behavior among people, an all embracing and heterogeneous concept that encompasses every aspect of a man's life and experiences.
- It comprises everything about man's ideas, behavior or anything relating to his needs as a social being.
- It is the totality of the historical experience as a people, the values, the traditions, the beliefs, morals and world view.

Culture and values cont'd...

- It could be said that culture and cultural values in Nigerian ethnic diversity is an important aspect of cultural preservation and development. Each ethnic group has its own cultural values, thus, tries to portray it to appreciate its uniqueness and values.
- If a society must function effectively by providing meaningful developments for its citizens, it must develop a set of common values, traditions and a sense of unity that are equivalent to national identity, irrespective of the people's originally held diverse ethnic and cultural identifications."

The Question of National Language

- Language as a means of communication is used to express ideas, views, opinions, feelings, motivations and experiences.
- Language is a very powerful instrument for development and unification. In Nigeria, there are more than 250 languages spread in the 36 states of Nigeria.
- Adamawa State has more than 70 ethnic groups each with its language entirely different from others.
- But, it is generally believed that there are three major languages – Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo.

The Question of National Language cont'd...

- Language plays a vital role in national development because it strengthens unity, peaceful co-existence, understanding and respect for one another.
- Considering the high number of the different languages in Nigeria, how do we compromise the question of national language?
- What is the possibility of adapting a national language in Nigeria? What is the possibility of Yoruba and Igbo people accepting Hausa as a national language or vice versa?

The Question of National Development Cont'd...

- Mass media should focus more on program of the 'Wazobia' style since it is very difficult to have an indigenous national language in Nigeria.
- In achieving this, the Federal Government of Nigeria established television and radio station across the 36 states using local languages to transmit programs.
- The media should be used to promote local languages, preach peace, unity and respect for the different ethnic and religious groups.