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## **International broadcasting and propagation of indigenous cultural values: Implications for Nigeria developmental growth**

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### **Abstract**

International Broadcasting, one of the main arms of Mass Communication, has come with its unique goals and features. Among these are, to enhance national or organizational prestige, promote national interests, for ideological purpose, political indoctrination or propagation of religious beliefs, to foster cultural ties and for public diplomacy. To achieve these objectives, international broadcasts are transmitted through shortwave, relay on FM and lately satellite and internet facilities.

As a concept, it draws its support from multidisciplinary theories covering political science, international relations and media studies. For this paper, two theories, free flow of information and hegemony theories are used to propel this discourse. Voice of Nigeria, VON, was chosen as one the international broadcasting stations that has promoted indigenous cultural values through its news and programmes broadcast using Hausa, Igbo Yoruba and Fulfulde languages.

Despite these efforts, this paper recommended that funding, capacity building, cooperation and establishment of bureau in major African and strategic centers across the world will enable Voice of Nigeria, to effectively propagate indigenous cultural values of Nigeria and Africans in its broadcast.

**Keywords:** International broadcasting, indigenous cultural values, voice of Nigeria

### **1. Introduction**

The transformations of countries' political ideology, cultural values and foreign policy goals, among others have been the major driving forces for the establishment of international broadcasting outfits. Boyd (1986) [9] in Kamalipour 2008) put this in perspective by outlining five reasons as motives for the establishment of international broadcasting. These are, to enhance national or organisational prestige, promote National interests, for ideological purpose or political indoctrination or advancement of religious beliefs, to foster cultural ties and for public diplomacy.

This is noticeable in the establishment of British Broadcasting Corporation World Service, BBC World Service in 1938, US National Broadcasting Company, NBC, 1938, Columbia Broadcasting Corporation, CBC, 1939, which later metamorphosed into the Voice Of America, VOA in 1942, Radio Nigeria External Service 1961 now Voice of Nigeria, VON in 1991. Others are Soviet Union's Radio Moscow in 1929, Deuche Welle, DW, in 1929, Radio France International, RFI in 1931, Radio Netherlands in 1927, Iranian Press TV, 1979, China Central Television CCTV, 1958, and Aljazeera TV, set up in 1996.

The BBC World Service is owned by the British government, VOA by the United States government, VON by the Nigerian government, Radio Moscow by the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, USSR now Russia. DW is totally funded by German government, Press TV by the Iranian Government; China People Republic has the entire stake in CCTV and the Qatar government of the Middle East, owned Aljazeera TV. Each of these countries arguably positioned themselves as regional or continental or global power centre in politics, economy, social cultural and international diplomacy.

Interestingly, individual media owners have equally taken this path to establish an investment driven television stations across the world with an added aim of influencing global affairs through the international media. Prominent among these media investors are Rupert Murdoch, owner of BSB Sky TV in the UK, Ted Turner of the CNN News Network in the US, Bola Tinubu's Television Continental, TVC Nigeria and Raymond Dokpesi's Africa Independent Television, AIT Daarsat in Nigeria.

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### 1.1 Statement of Problems

Collectively and individually, the stakes of International broadcasting stations are clearly defined in the content delivery through news and programmes of different genres based on the Communication Systems and Policy of each country. Invariably these have impacted positively and negatively on cross border audience (listeners and viewers) through the process of “acculturation”. Boyd (2002) described this trend “as personal and group motivation to sell advertising for multicountry products and access to pay Television broadcasts driven by satellite and Internet broadcasts”.

While the traditional broadcasting countries of Europe and America are basking on these successes, non - traditional broadcasting countries of Asia, Middle East and Africa are equally establishing their presence on the international broadcast scene. Despite this trend, the flow of world information still favours the West. The Third World countries became the theatre of their social, cultural and economic competition. Every good news comes from the west and development initiatives in the third world countries are not given adequate coverage, except political upheavals, wars and devastation.

These negative impacts of bias, unbalanced reportage, especially from western international broadcasting stations have resulted in near erosion of cultural values of the developing countries. This will form the fulcrum of this paper. More emphasis will however be on Voice of Nigeria, Africa’s leading international broadcaster, with a view to effectively outline, the station propagation of indigenous cultural values and its implications for Nigeria’s developmental growth.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Paper

1. To establish the reasons why countries position themselves to establish international broadcasting outfits;
2. Examine content of broadcast of these international broadcasting stations in line with the Communication policy of their respective countries.
3. Find out the implications of international broadcast to developmental growth of these countries especially Nigeria.
4. Understand how Voice of Nigeria, VON, has responded positively to the challenge of propagating the indigenous cultural values for the country’s growth.

### 2.0 Theoretical framework of the study

Generally, media theories are the building blocks on which media practices or operations thrive. McLuhan, (1964) [23] Bugger (2003), Arjen (2004) [5] and Ajilore (2013) reinforce this position in their submissions. McLuhan argues that with media theories, “all media exists to invest our lives with artificial perceptions and arbitrary values”. Niles Brugger submits that media theories are outlets to better understanding the structure and operations of the media going by the accelerated changes in the world occasioned by the new communication apparatus and technology at our disposal.

Arjen Mulder on his own states that media theories describes the way in which the means of communication determine, what, and who we are, how we behave, what we do and do not think about, how our feelings develop and limited and who we can and cannot reach. Ajilore Kayode,

argues that media theory represents the essential features of a given phenomenon, the bedrock of rules and regulations for mass communication, as it organises and synthesises the knowledge in a particular field. These media scholars posit that the aim of media theories are to meant to have direct impact on the people - audience, listeners and viewers and the society at large based on certain cultural underpinnings. Against this background, international broadcasting is influenced by various theoretical frameworks. It has borrowed and adapted theories and paradigms from political science, international relations and media studies. These theories are Free Flow of Information Theory, Modernization Theory, Dependency Theory, World Systems Theory and Hegemony Theory, Dayo Alao, *et al* (2013) [4]. Two of these theories, Free Flow of Information and Dependency theories are chosen to appropriately situate the topic of this paper: International Broadcasting and Propagation of Indigenous Cultural Values: Implications for Nigeria Developmental Growth

### 2.1 Free Flow of Information Theory

This theory of International Broadcasting or Communication was a product of developments during and after the World War II and the Cold War Era. During these periods, the power of the media to change the course of events tremendously and ultimately win the war as deployed by the western powers came to the fore. The allied forces of Europe and the US use their external or International Radio and television stations to push out messages of propaganda and foreign relations to destabilise the opposing forces.

In another breath, for the developing countries the theory was meant to curb the imbalance in the flow of communication and information which were believed to pose threat to political independence and national sovereignty, cultural values and social economic development as posited by Ayish, (2001), Thussu (2000, 2005) [35, 36]. This submission led to the democratisation of communication and information under the aegis of New World and Communication Order, NWICO, enunciated by Brandt & MacBride Commissions slogan “Many Voices, One World” publication of UNESCO. In essence, the theory takes care of the state, media, individuals, and business interests.

The major components of the theory as enunciated by Carol Azungi (2007) [7], Dayo Alao *et al* (2013) [4] are:

1. Focusing on the impact of the media upon behavioural changes.
2. Emphasising a liberal, free market theory that the right of media owners to sell wherever and whatever they wanted.
3. It is the most effective ways or means to promote democracy, individualism and capitalism values of the western countries especially the United States.
4. Promote freedom of expression, ensures the role of the media as a watchdog of the society, and that media can assume global relevance.

### Against the background, its criticism includes

1. It is an assailable vehicle for the western media to take effective control of the International media space and dictate the rules of engagement.

2. It helps western government to dominate global markets and serve as battle gear against Socialism or communism of the Soviet Union and China.
3. A good reference for the call for the New Information World Order in the 1980s.

## 2.2 Hegemony Theory

The connotative meaning of the word clearly defined its scope, propounded by Antonio Gramsci 1981- 1937, cited in Thomas Bates (1975). According to him, *the basic premise of the theory of hegemony is one with which few would*

disagree: that Man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas.

He submits in his book "Prison Notes", that culture is a veritable tool of hegemony used by the capitalist state to maintain and legitimize its superior ideas on others.

In International Broadcasting or communication, hegemony theory focused on the importance of French Marxist Louis Althusser belief in the ideological state apparatus, where cultural hegemony describes the domination of a cultural diverse society by the ruling class, who manipulate the culture of that society in terms of beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values and mores, so that the ruling class world view becomes the world view that is imposed and accepted.

It states further that the state must own international media for the purpose of imposing its values on other countries. To this theorist, the aim is to transmit cultural and media imperialism to other countries.

In international communication, Thussu, (2000) [35] asserts that the concept of hegemony is often employed to refer to the political, social and cultural functions of the media. Gramsci's idea of hegemony theory of international communication is corner stone of political economy, cultural and media imperialism messages, broadcast through news and programmes by most international broadcast stations.

Furthermore, it was the submission of the hegemony theorists that the dominant social group/Nation has the capacity to exercise intellectual and moral directions over society or others and builds new system of alliances to support its aim. In line with this line of thought, Madikiza, Bornman (2007) [22], submits that the hegemony theory was used by great European powers to develop communication technologies, media and international news agencies to enhance their power globally acquire colonies, manage empires and foster westernisation and Europeanization around the world notably in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab societies.

## 2.3 Relevance of The Theory to the Study

The theory fully underscore the uniqueness of and preponderance of the International broadcasting as an instrument for communicating the interests of traditional and nontraditional media states to influence the opinion, behaviours and values of people across the borders. Voice of America broadcasts its interests and values to Eastern Europe through collaborations of Radio Freedom Europe, Radio Liberty to fight Socialism and surreptitiously imposed Capitalism. Radio Sawa broadcast in Arabic to Middle East to achieve the same purpose. The American International broadcaster equally broadcast special English programmes to Africa and Asia.

The intimidating 24 hour broadcast of Cable News Network International, CNNI by Ted Tuner markets, the investment interests of the American owner and the country's goods and services. Conversely, Aljazeera, a Qatari based International television network responded with broadcast of Arabian values through English language broadcast to the western countries from four centers- Doha, Kuala Lumpur, Washington and London to over 100 million homes. The Arabic service has an audience of over 40 to 50 million as stated by Alao et al (2013) [4]. On this score, the Nigerian government established Voice of Nigeria, VON, as the authoritative choice of international broadcast for Nigerian, African and the world. Professor Jerry Gana, former Nigerian Minister of Information and Culture, cited in Abubakar & Labinjo (1994) [3] put this argument in perspective to justify the establishment of VON:

there is no doubt that Nigeria is a leader nation not only in Africa but also in the Third World as a whole...the shackles of cultural imperialism is the strongest of all shackles of bondage. When foreign broadcasting stations had the monopoly of the air, they presented us the way they liked and compromised our minds, our integrity and perceptions. But since the inception of Voice of Nigeria, the battle of mind had changed and we are happy to notice that VON is winning the battle visibly.

For VON to win the battle of the minds, news and programmes were from Nigerian, African and Third World perspectives broadcast in eight foreign and National languages ranging from English, French, Arabic, Hausa, Ki-Swahili, Fulfulde, Yoruba, and Igbo first with five 500 kilowatts transmitters strategically directed to West Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, Europe, and the Americas from its Ikorodu transmitting station in Lagos, Southwest Nigeria. This perhaps justify the hegemony of Nigeria over other countries in Africa and the Third World as force to be reckon with among its peers in international broadcasting.

## 3. Literature Review

The review of literature will cover the scope of International Broadcasting, National Communication policy, propagation of Indigenous Cultural Values and implications for Nigeria's developmental Growth.

### 3.1 International broadcasting

International Broadcasting is synonymous and used interchangeably with International Communication. It is a media concept that encompasses global scope, specific characteristics that are supported with unassailable technological developments from one generation to another. These developments are noted from Radio to Television platforms and social media networks. At inception International Broadcasting started with Radio, moved on to Television, the combination of the two and lately, with satellite and internet technology, social media networking tools are now used for global communication (Akinreti, 2012).

To Omenkukwu (2011) [28], cited in Alao et al (2013) [4], International Broadcasting is linked to International Communication as an

*ongoing process of transmitting messages or expressing one's groups, countries, and Nations feelings and value through both conventional and nonconventional channels to another country for the purpose or establishing mutual understanding and for peaceful co-existence in a social system.*

The definition is apt because it effectively takes care of the cross border transmissions messages, the channels of Radio and television and the new media occasioned by advancement in technology for specific purposes. Browne (1982) has earlier cover the scope and line of thoughts of Omenkukwu and others Media scholars, as it also analysed international broadcasting from six areas, an instrument of foreign policy, a mirror of the society, a symbolic presence, a converter and sustainer, a coercer and intimidator, an instrument for education, entertainment, and sellers of goods and services. This was based on the assumption that international broadcasting stations are owned and funded by the state, namely large western democracies such as U.S., Britain, France, Germany. others are single part state represented by Russia, China, Iran, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. International Non- governmental and religious organizations such as (UN Radio, Vatican Radio, Adventist World Radio, Muslim Television Ahmadiyya, MTA) are also major players in the international broadcasting arena. One of the features of this international broadcasting stations is long transmission hours as demonstrated by Voice of America, VOA, Voice of Nigeria, VON, British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC World Service, Duetche Welle, DW, Aljazeera, Press TV, CCTV among others.

The state ownership of international broadcasting outfits and their audience at inception informs Youmans and Powers (2012) [39], Onabajo, (2000) [26], to conclude that international broadcasting refers to state media aimed at foreign publics. This is quite instructive because over 80 per cent of states in Europe, America, Middle East, Asia and Africa ensures that they owned an international Radio and television stations at independence to push their leadership role and foreign relations agenda to the outside world. Britain, France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Russia, United States, China, India, Japan, Iran, Qatar, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa are good examples of these countries.

In the assessment of Staubhaar & Boyd (2008) [10] international broadcasting, is a broadcast across borders, spill over to highly globalised systems that reach almost worldwide in various languages. It has a receptive audience, with similar or different languages and cultural dispositions on the other side of the border. Examples of these international broadcast stations are Radio Luxemburg in Europe broadcast to US, Britain, France to Middle East from Cyprus. US Sponsored Radio Free Europe meant for Eastern Europe, Radio Liberty aimed at Former USSR, Radio and TV Marti, broadcast to Cuba, Radio Free Asia focusing its transmission to China, Al Hurra TV and Radio Sawa targeted to Middle East. Others are BBC World Service broadcast from London to former British colonies and globally, Radio France International, RFI based in France and focusing messages to its former colonies and globally. Aljazeera TV and Press TV located in Qatar (Doha) and Iran tilting broadcasts to the US, Europe and globally. Voice of Nigeria, VON, in Lagos and Abuja and Nigerian Television Authority, NTA

International broadcasts to Africa, Middle East, Europe, Asia and Americas, while CCTV, Chinas International television station located in China ensures that its signals reaches US, Europe, Africa and Middle East.

And for global evangelism, the Vatican Radio in Rome broadcasts religious message to Catholics and other adherents. Adventist World Radio in the US preaches salvation across the globe. Conversely, the Muslim Television Ahmadiyya based in London ensures that the teachings of Islam gets across to the members of the Ahmadiyya Community globally, Muslims and numerous people globally. In other to enhance the US military prowess in Asia and Pacific, US Armed Forces Radio –Television Service (AFRTS) is established in South Korea.

On the Business front, The Arab- American Oil Company, (ARAMCO) Television service in US broadcasts to its North American employees in Saudi Arabia. Time Warner, Cable News Network International, (CNNI) in the US transmits Cable Television news and programmes to the Caribbean, Western Europe, Central America and Japan. Rupert Murdoch News Corporation, Sky News TV from London has also shown remarkable progress in Cable Television service across the world. In Nigeria, Bola Tinubu's Television Continental, TVC Nigeria and Entertainment located in Lagos has dominated the African landscape and the world with its CONSAT Cable TV operations, just as Raymond Dokpesi's, African Independent Television, AIT, founded in Lagos, Nigeria, equally registered its business interests through DAARSAT, across the world.

With the increasing number of International broadcasting stations to over 80 across the world, Head (1985) defines International broadcasting as official international radio and television services aimed at other countries based on the long hours of transmission, starting from 2000 hours per week to 24 hours lately. According to his analysis and BBC Annual Report (1983), in 1982, the Soviet Union Radio Moscow, VOA, has the largest transmission hours of 2000 per week, followed by China 1,300 hours, West Germany 800 hours, and UK 200 hours. Voice of Nigeria transmits for 18 hours daily since 1980 till the last quarter of 2014.

The languages of broadcasts and frequencies have been used as indices to define International broadcasting since its inception in the 1920s. Head (1985) [17], Boyd (1999), BBC (2005) [11] in Kamalipour (2008), Abubakar (1994) [3] and BBC Annual Report (2005) [11], reinforces this position appropriately. By 1929, Radio Moscow established to promote soviet revolution to Eastern Europe and China broadcast in 80 languages and dropped to 32 languages in 2001 when it changed to Voice of Russia. Italy began its own international broadcasts in 1935 in Arabic to the Middle East.

The US National Broadcasting Corporation, followed with its transmission in 5 foreign languages in 1938. Voice of America, VOA commences broadcast in Portuguese targeting Brazil, and its Arabic language service was meant for West Bank, Gaza and Iraq. BBC maintained 43 languages till 2005. Voice of Nigeria, VON started with 6 international languages of broadcast in the 60s and added 2 national languages – Yoruba and Igbo in 1999 at the inception of the third republic. In all, the most international languages of broadcast are English, French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hausa, Ki-Swahili, Fulfulde, and Farsi

### 3.2 National Communication Policy

National Communication Policy encompasses the National Communication Systems of a country as the main artery or central to the dissemination of information in any country, because it sets out the framework, rules, regulations and entire operations of all forms of communication with a view to inform, education and entertained the populace either internally or externally. Akinreti (2012). In the words of Allan Hancock, a National Communication Policy “is a set of principles and norms established to guide the behaviour of Communication systems with the overall socio-economic, political and cultural development goals of the society”.

Accordingly, the policy covers the fundamental values which underpin the uniqueness of such society in its quest for a just and egalitarian society. It must therefore involve planning, coordination and processes. Alao, (2012) [35] says these variables of the communication policy are general principles which guide decision of authorities, usually government, about the functions of the mass media. This made Katz, (1977) to refer to communication policy as “a powerful allies of development forces in the society”. Going by this definition of National Communication policy, participants at the intergovernmental conference on communication policy in Africa held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in July 1980 recommended that each African country formulate and implement a national communication policy and planning based on four guidelines namely:

- a. Recognising the importance of communication to economic, social, education and cultural development.
- b. Ensures that communication policy key into vital sectors of the country.
- c. That communication policy should be the basis of information and education for all and give opportunity to individual participation in socio –cultural activities.
- d. That each participant should be provided with necessary facilities such as access to media, the right to self-expression and the right to make opinion known.

In his own submission, Sobowale (1988) [34] says various communication systems in the country namely radio, television, newspapers and other forms of media apparatus by the National Communication policy are empowered to translate and project Nigeria’s vision to become a stable democracy, vibrant economy, peaceful within its borders, capable of providing leadership in Africa and intervening successfully in the international arena.

These policy initiatives inform the establishment of Voice of Nigeria, first as external broadcasting arm of the National Broadcasting Corporation, NBC, in 1961, which metamorphose into the federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and later excised into an autonomous broadcasting organisation in 1991. Labinjo, (1994) [3] captures this accurately as the main purpose of external broadcasting “to disseminate culture to foreign lands so that people of those lands can comprehend and appreciate our culture”. Professor Sam Oyovbaire, former Minister of Information and Culture, cited in Abubakar & Labinjo, (1994) [3] amplify this task for Voice of Nigeria when he conclude that Voice of Nigeria “must show leadership in the propagation of values that will not only advance the Nigerian National interests but that of the African continent”.

### 3.3 Indigenous Cultural Values

The word indigenous literarily means home grown, something in use locally and cherish by the local people. It could be culture, language and norms associated with the development of a society. Specifically with language, every language is indigenous to particular set of people namely English to an Englishman in Europe and their colonies, Arabic to the Arabs; French Language is synonymous with French people and their colonies. Kiswahili is natural to the East African, Hausa and Fulfulde languages are spoken by Africans in West Africa, Central and North Africa. Yoruba is widely spoken in Nigeria, parts of West Africa, Cuba and by Nigerians in the Diaspora. Igbo is another indigenous language acclaimed to be spoken in the South East and some parts of South geo political zones of Nigeria, as well as Nigerians in the Diaspora.

In this respect, International Broadcast or communication has identified some of these indigenous language for its broadcasts. And with globalization, these language has become universal tool for communication, marketing and political persuasions. Indigenous Cultural values therefore are expressed in international broadcasting through the language of broadcasts in news and news programmes, music, variety shows, discussions programmes and advertising. Emenanjo (2002:4) describes culture as a system of symbols for the identification of a people and language is one of the most potent symbols in the network. Austin (2008:89) agrees with this submission, when he sees language as important repositories of history and culture. Onabajo (2005) [27] sums up this assertion by describing culture as a way of life of a people, demonstrated in their mode of dressing, marriage, religion, festivals, child naming, family life, economy and technology.

These are better showcased and appreciated through mass media as Laswell (1960) [20] asserts that a function of mass media is transmission of cultural heritage for social continuity. This invariably made Salawu 2006:89 [33] to conclude that African media will be fulfilling this function if they are actively involved in the promotion of African languages.

Olateju (2002) [9], took up this assertions focusing on radio as a mass media channel and examines how vocabulary from the media could help to develop reading skills. She concludes that listening to news items in an indigenous language after the English version had been rendered would achieve the following, word identification, limitation of possibilities of occurrence of words and ideas and the prediction of upcoming words which will help the individual with comprehension processes. Arguably, this has justified the broadcast of “Special English” by VOA to its listeners across the world and VON’s introduction of Yoruba, Igbo to complement Hausa and Fulfulde language service in 1999.

In other to accentuate this development, Adegbite (2002) [1] describes three activities in electronic and print media which are used to promote reading habits in south western Nigeria, finding that mother –tongue literacy programming generates a lot of excitement in an informal setting. He asserts “the content fascinates the audience because of the local issues that touch their lives individually”. Bello (2006) research findings also show that the use of indigenous languages could bring about sustainable development through enhancing literacy skills particularly reading.

Peterson (2006:1) argues that .... the influence of mass media is a factor in language choice in the contemporary

world. With regards to African situation, UNESCO asserts in (1995: 5) that electronic media have potentials for use of indigenous languages as tools for improving both formal and informal education in Africa. The report of the core working group on the Review of the National Mass Communication Policy (2004) also underscores the potentials of electronic media as immense and limitless. Salawu (2006) <sup>[33]</sup> vigorously argues that African language pedagogy should go beyond classroom activity and the space could be enlarged to include the media of mass communication, because they are generally accessible. He concludes that African media will be fulfilling those functions, if they are actively involved in the promotion of African languages.

Most international broadcasting stations take a cue from this in their language of broadcasts to influence the lives of the audience both listeners and viewers. Bayer (2005) says communication through television is a significant mode to promote discourse in multiple languages because it is interactive. Justifying this Onabajo (2005:95) <sup>[27]</sup> states that enormous powers usually ascribed to this medium stems from audio-visual properties, which commands instant believability.

Aljazeera Network, an Arabian International television based in Doha, Qatar broadcast news, sports and movies in 7 languages – English, Arabic, Turkish, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and Farsi. It remains the largest producer of Arabic language children programming in the world. As part of effort to use Arabic to influence the minds and souls of the Somali people, and ensure the hegemony of Arabic language, Aljazeera produced Arabic programme “Somali Speaks” to the Somaliland during the outbreak of drought and famine in the country. Aljazeera staff Soud Hyder, said “the programme is aimed at sharing the perspective of normal Somalis citizens on how the famine affects them “. Interestingly too, the programme is in line with the free flow of information theory of the international communication and in response to VOA ‘s’ Middle East Voices “targeted for popular uprising in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Syria. VOA has used the period of the uprising in the Arab world to continue its cultural imperialism through international broadcast. To Youmans (2012) <sup>[39]</sup>, American policies and culture were explained and framed for foreign audiences through this programme. VOA presents the policies of US clearly and effectively on human rights and democratic ethos ...reliably, authoritatively through news, which to the Radio station is accurate, objective and comprehensive.

### **3.4 The Role of Voice of Nigeria in Promoting Indigenous cultural values.**

Voice of Nigeria, VON, is Nigeria’s International Radio station, established in 1961 as the External service of Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation, NBC and later Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN. It became autonomous in 1991. According to section 5(1) of the law setting up the radio station, the corporation have eight functions. Prominently, is to provide public service, in the interest of Nigeria, radio broadcasting services for global reception in such languages and at such time as the corporation may specify. Its vision statement is : “to become the international broadcasting station of first choice for anyone genuinely interested in Nigeria and Africa”. Against the background its mission was encapsulated as thus:

Reflecting Nigerian and African perspective in our broadcast, winning and sustaining the attention, respect and goodwill of listeners’ worldwide, particularly Nigerians and Africans in the Diaspora and making Nigeria’s voice to be heard more positively in the shaping of our world.

Yaya Abubakar (1994) <sup>[3]</sup>, the Director General of Voice of Nigeria, says for the international radio station to achieve this vision and mission, VON must be an instrument of foreign policy ‘serving as a veritable instrument of making its listeners think, act and respond almost accordingly to the dictates of the messages continuously received”. He was able to rally his postulation on Julian Hale (1975) <sup>[16]</sup> submission on the role of a radio as an unstoppable form of mass communication. Hale went thus:

*a radio is the only medium that reaches across the globe instantaneously and can convey message from one country to another ... it plays an indispensable role in international communication, and keep its place as the most powerful weapon of international propaganda.*

What stands VON out in the propagation of indigenous cultural values as stated above are language of broadcasts, the production of news and programmes, music, features and documentary, light entertainment programmes, and drama geared towards national growth and global acceptance. In this respect, VON languages of broadcast are English, French, Arabic, Hausa, Fulfulde, Kiswahili, Yoruba and Igbo. Surely this is a mixture of international languages and indigenous languages.

The philosophy and orientation of presenting /packaging the news on VON are based on four criteria. To promote the interests and aspirations of Nigeria nation to the international audience, reflect the most significant, current developments in line with objectives goals of Nigeria, serve its listeners with what is distinctively Nigeria, seek and find the Nigeria slant and angle, which alone can justify the inclusion of the items in a Nigeria news bulletin for an external audience. (Von House Style 2005) <sup>[13]</sup>.

#### **3.4.1 News**

The news on VON is divided into three, in ratio 80 -20 percent, covering News About Nigeria, Africa and the World. On the first line charge is authentic, accurate, concise, impartial and intelligible stories about Nigeria, followed by Africa and the world news. The news anchor must pronounced Nigerian and African names distinctly with local reflexes. It must sound original and not “anglised”. This is followed by news programmes like from “The Villa, News File, The President Speaks, and Africa Hour. Others are West Africa Today, Vonscope, and Sixty minutes. The Analysis of news are as follows:

##### **3.4.1.1 The Villa**

This is a 15 minute News programme from the Nigerian Presidency, with Correspondent’s Reports focusing on accurate reportage of issues, events and development around Nigeria, articulated and discussed at the seat of power.

#### **3.4.1.2 News File**

A 15-minute news behind the news of events. In 15 minutes daily Reporters share their experience with the listener in an informal but engaging style.

#### **3.4.1.3 Nigerian and Politics**

It is an ex-ray of political developments in Nigeria, broadcast for 15 minutes. The news programme, mirrors the vibrancy in the Nigerian political arena, while highlighting the progress towards sustenance of democracy in the country.

#### **3.4.1.3 The President Speaks**

This is the authentic pronouncement from the Nigeria President on national, regional and international developments, broadcast for 15 minutes. It is broadcast every Saturday of each month. Here, the Nigerian president articulates the policy directions of government on sustainable development, poverty alleviation and other issues of African and global relevance and consequences.

#### **3.4.1.4 Africa Hour**

On this one hour magazine programme, the true story / news on African view points on global issues, Music and sports as well as development –oriented events across the continent are featured. During the broadcast, only Nigeria music, African songs and proverbs, are broadcast to spice the news. News commentaries on African development are given utmost priority.

#### **3.4.1.5 West Africa Today**

It is the highlights of developments in and across Nigerian neighbours in the western regional grouping of the Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS).

#### **3.4.1.6 Vonscope**

A 30-minute news magazine programme of news, comments, analysis sports and economy, sets the agenda for the day. It contains reports and interviews, which explains issues and events in Nigeria and also project the country's viewpoint on world issues..

#### **3.4.1.7 Sixty Minutes**

This is another magazine programme of one hour of news, views, comments and analysis, broadcast daily Monday to Friday. It is designed to provide a comprehensive account of daily newsworthy events in Nigeria, Africa and the world at large to listeners globally. All these news programmes are translated and produced in Hausa, Igbo Yoruba and Fulfulde languages.

#### **3.4.2 Programmes**

This is the heart of VON's efforts towards promoting indigenous cultural values, unlike news where cultural issues are highlighted because of broadcast schedule. Programmes like The African Monarchy, Celebrations, Who are the Nigerians, African Integration, Our Festivals, VON Travelogue, Women and Development, kiddies Voices, Youth Forum, and Beyond Poverty Line, to mention a few are programmes which focuses in depth on the Nigerian and African cultures in all ramifications. The least duration for the programme is 15 minutes.

The interesting aspects of these programmes are, they are broadcast with translated versions with equal time schedules. According to the Deputy Director Programmes,

Linus Egbujo, listener's feedback focused more on the effects of these programmes on the better understanding of Nigeria and Africa cultural values in general. The Analysis of programmes are as follows:

#### **3.4.2.1 The African Monarchy**

This weekly 15 minutes programme series traces the history and enduring legacies of kings and kingdoms from the past, the modifications that have developed over the years and the struggle for relevance in the present time.

#### **3.4.2.2 Who are the Nigerians**

The Nigerian nation today consists of many diverse languages and cultural groupings. This programme traces their origins, way of life and the bond of relationship existing among the various groups. It is a fifteen minute programme.

#### **3.4.2.3 Celebrations**

This is a 15 minute, oral illustration of key ceremonies which mark special occasions in the life of an African, including cultural, musical and other special attributes which open up the totality of the uniqueness of the continent.

#### **3.4.2.4 VON Travelogue**

A regular feature on various tourist attractions and destinations in Nigeria and Africa with well packaged information on the hospitality industry. It is also a fifteen minute broadcast.

#### **3.4.2.5 Youth Forum**

Nigerian and African youths form the fulcrum of development and the next generation of leaders. A round table discussion among young people with a particular issue that affect them are broadcast on Voice of Nigeria for 30 minutes.

#### **3.4.2.6 Women and Development**

African women are making immense contributions towards the development of their continent. By featuring women in the vanguard of development, this programme sensitizes other women regarding their potentials and empowers them to seek improved leverage for the common good of African womanhood. It is a fifteen minute programme.

#### **3.4.2.7 Kiddies Voices**

This 15 minute programme is designed for children within the age of 3-10 to present short stories, recite poems and learn the rich cultural heritage of Africa through poems and songs. It is a programme from the children, about children and for the children.

#### **3.4.2.8 Beyond Poverty Line**

This is a weekly 15 minute feature on the activities and programmes designed towards poverty alleviation and provision of succour to the less privilege in Nigeria and the West African region.

#### **3.5 Relevance to Propagation of Cultural values**

In line with the arguments for the free flow of information of the hegemony theory of the international media, all these news programmes are translated into three Nigerian National languages namely, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as symbol of cultural growth and national development. It has

been imposed on the international radio community as an important aspect of Voice of Nigeria broadcasts.

Princess Okon,(2015) Assistant Director Programmes – Cultural and Variety Unit asserts that these three key indigenous national languages in the country meant to inform, educate and entertain the populace through the mass media are now transformed into international language of broadcast on Voice of Nigeria. To underscore its importance language units in Programmes Directorate of Voice of Nigeria were established. In the Yoruba language Unit of VON, for example, news and programmes on cultural values are called “Asa ati Ise Awon Yoruba”- the culture and practices of the Yoruba people. According to Lagada Abayomi, (2015), Head Yoruba Language Unit of Voice of Nigeria, “Asa ati Ise Awon Yoruba”, focuses on the:

way of life of the Yoruba people of the southwest Nigeria and the Diaspora, highlighting their language, religion, fashion mode of greetings and other customs. The Yoruba programme are fifteen minutes features namely: Aye Obinrin (Women and Development), Ayoka (Literary Corner), Agbe Loba (Talking Agriculture), Isejoba Nile Adulawo (The African Monarchy), Awon Ewe Wa (Kiddies Voices), Ijoba Tiwa Ntiwa (Nigeria and Democracy), among others.

In Igbo Language broadcast, Christie Joseph (2015), Assistant Director Languages Programmes Directorate, VON says, a programme called Ndu Igbo”,

is a collection of Igbo language programmes in details highlighting the life of Igbo in social interactions, commerce, politics, education, burials, deaths and others. Listeners appreciate these programmes in their feedbacks to VON through listeners’ letters specifically noting the, topic, date, time and Producer of the programmes.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the beginning, international broadcasting was dominated by the super powers of traditional state broadcasters, in their aspiration to impose their socio-political and cultural imperialism beyond their borders. Interestingly, the entrants of non traditional state broadcasters and individuals have added value to the concept of International broadcasting, thereby creating a balance of power in the media space.

This balance of power in media space justifies the essence of the free flow of media theory analysed by the study. The penchant to broadcast in many languages no doubt has promoted some languages to global reckoning and nearly relegated other languages, fostering the hegemony of “preferred languages of international broadcast. Despite this, the study reinforces its claim that the growth of indigenous Africa languages as promoted by Voice of Nigeria has significantly contributed to Nigeria’s growth in terms of news and programmes broadcasts. This was done through the analysis of news and programmes on VON, broadcast in indigenous languages as part of strong efforts of Nigeria to impose her cultural hegemony of the global community. One of the indigenous languages, Hausa has become an international language of broadcast by the international broadcasters.

To reinforce the Memorandum of Understanding between VON, VOA, DW, Producers from the Hausa Service of VON undergo exchange programmes in these international broadcasting stations regularly.

It is very instructive too, as the Voice of America introduces mobile applications to download its broadcast with more emphasis on Hausa language. Similarly, BBC has concluded arrangement to start Pidgin English broadcast on its channels to further boost its external audience in Africa. Surely, the target is Nigeria.

#### 5. Recommendations

The Nigerian government must provide adequate funding for Voice of Nigeria to introduce at "Pidgin English" and two dialects such as Tiv, widely spoken in the North Central Nigeria, Ishon language spoken by the Ijaws in the Niger Delta. Pidgin English will be a replica of “Special English broadcast “on VOA. The people of Sierra Leone and Liberia according to statistics speak Pidgin English adequately. Through the broadcast of Pidgin English on VON, Nigeria would have succeeded in imposing its language hegemony on the Nationals of Sierra Leone and Liberia. More funding is also needed for travelling across Nigeria, West Africa and African countries as well as the Caribbean produce more indigenous programmes.

The memorandum of understanding with other international broadcasting stations in Africa should be strengthened to allow VON broadcast on the local FM stations in countries such as, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Cote D’voire, Botswana, South Africa and Sudan. There should be more capacity building initiatives for the young news and programmes staff of Voice of Nigeria outside Nigeria to give them much needed necessary exposures as was done to the first generation of staff.

More indigenous language staff should be employed to boost the current strength of staff in the Languages units of Voice of Nigeria.

Voice of Nigeria should commission studies or research on its audience reach as done by other international broadcasting stations and also employed more nationals of other countries as part of the international best practices in the international broadcasting industry. For example AlJazeera broadcast to more than 220 million households, has 4,000 staff from over 70 nationalities.

As parts of efforts to make voice of Nigeria truly Africa’s first and authoritative choice in line with its vision and mission, the station will have to expand its operations and presence in African countries, such as Harare, Nairobi and Egypt in North Africa, the middle East, Europe, America and Asia.

Lastly and as a matter of necessity Voice of Nigeria should be equipped with the latest broadcast equipment to meet up with the global trend and be competitive.

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