

The Rhetoric of Globalization and Communication Education in Nigeria: Issues, Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

This paper attempts an assessment of the various conceptual projections for the evaluation of the supposed derivations of globalization. The many scholastic discourses and some obviously identifiable fallacies are measured from rhetorical standpoint. The dictates of globalization suggest that every nation needs to participate in the global market. Only the nation with adequate manpower and communication expertise can comfortably participate, otherwise it would be left behind. The baseline is the restructuring of not only the socio-economic actualities, but communication education, especially ICTs in our tertiary institutions and the secondary education level.

Introduction

If prophecies are visions, then certainly the vision of Marshal McLuhan a Canadian scholar about the global village is a prophecy fulfilled. The notion of the world opening up, supported by Prof. Theodore Levitt in the sixties was no doubt dependent on the notion then, now, and impending global realities in communication, transportation technology and socio-economic and cultural trends. As cited in Kotler (2001:380). Levitt envisaged that “the world is becoming a common market place in which people no matter where they live desire the same products and lifestyles. Global companies must forget the idiosyncratic differences between countries and cultures and instead concentrate on satisfying universal drives”.

The shrinking of the world into the “global village” now referred to as globalization, is not synchronistic with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) alone but the general notion on global markets, global lifestyle, transportation and cultural relativism are serious issues for communication educators, curricular development and training of would be practitioners.

The proponents of globalization have indeed tried and still try to let the world know that the time is up for the countries of the world to “globalize” or be left out. Those who see no cause in it suggest that its academic values spell doom for developing countries and is meant to keep the “third world” development and growth.

Toyo (2004) insists that “globalizers through propaganda set up a demand for what they have. Africans like others, live without computers. Once, someone invented them, globalizers now make them look inevitable”.

Although there is growing global discontent with globalization, most of these discontent are lacking both logical and rhetorical values and are below dialectic projections. But, attempt is made in this discourse to assess global tendencies in order to see the tremendous gains by first examining the supposed fallacies so as to

enable a retailing of our education system, especially communication education, in Nigeria so that when the rest of the world is in the galaxies we will at least be in the moon and not completely left behind. The educational system as we have it now especially from secondary and most of the programmes at the university level do not support our attempt at globalization. This perhaps underlines the fear that Nigeria like any other developing country would tend to be a dumping ground because she is an unequal partner. Toyo (2004) quotes Joseph Stilitiz's discontent that "open capital markets, free trade and privatization is making developing countries less stable". For us to completely understand the propensity of the discourse on globalization, its technicalities and tendencies, it is necessary to have an assessment of the various conceptual projections, evaluation of derivations, identifiable fallacies and the base line for the restructuring of our communication education, because it takes man power and technological advancement to get there. And, as we know, advances in communication is a deciding factor.

Conceptual Projections

The known global realities: advances in communications, transportation, technologies and relative cultural tolerance, have made the world indeed a global arena for socio-economic, political and cultural activities. Awake (2002:3) sees globalization as the growing worldwide interdependence of people and countries but does not seem to explain the levels and areas of interdependence. The UNESCO (1981:62) expresses the view that "all sort of technological innovations have accompanied or had their knots in the explosion of mass media, which open doors to larger audiences, expanded sources and resources for information and entertainment and supported important cultural and social changes". This view corroborates Griffins (1991:296) insight into Mcluhan's global village. According to Griffins, "Mcluhan felt that all of us are members of a global village. The electronic media brings us in touch with everyone, everywhere instantaneously. Closed human system no longer exists".

These positions seem only to support the centrality of communication and information technologies as the driving force of globalization. Although this paper converges with these positions, globalization cuts across every fabric of human endeavour. Globalization connotes the process of making an issue, object, values, institution or practices "global", "worldwide" at the world stage or in the global arena (Fidler 1997). Fiddler explain globalization to entail universalization, whereby the object, practices, technology, values etc: transcends geopolitical boundaries, penetrating the hitherto sovereign nation-state and impacting on the orientation and value system of the people.

Fiddler's position supports the idea of a multidimensional process which heightens Mboho's (2005) submission that, "It is characterized by the intensification of linkage in the trade across national frontiers; a rapid flow of capital in diverse forms across national borders and most importantly, the interconnection of the globe through discoveries in micro electronics".

Although Mboho offers a liberal conception of the terms, it does agree with the centrality of communication as Sutz (2002) and McDowell (1997) have provided. These scholars opine that the concrete operational forms of globalization demand

instant communication, that is the possibility of working in the real time, in any activity that implies the exchange of codified information, independently of the locality of the source. It has been argued that the information society has taken over industrial society. Idemili and Maamaa (2005) argue that the technologies are with us and are spreading fast, swiftly moving the world from the industrial to the information society, which has brought new civilization, new knowledge and new approaches to every conceivable aspect of human lives. Hugh Mackay's assertion in *Awake* (1998:4) claims that "the world is being invited to get into the fast lane on the information super highway". These positions should not underline the fact that industrial and information age are complementary. Baran (2002:367) talks about globalization in terms of media and national economics.

Gates (2004) observes that the Wright brothers' vision of powered human flight in 1903, made the world a forever small place: "that 12 sec flight changed the world, lifting it to new heights of freedom and giving mankind access to places it had never before dreamed of reaching". Gates supposition supports the strong elements of advances in transport technology as one of the propelling forces behind globalization.

The many conceptual projections can be reduced into two blocs: opponents and proponents of globalization. Baran's (2002) summarizes it thus

Globalization opponents fairly asked the question, what Message has the boss just sent his employees... what stories will be untold, what questions unasked, what power unchallenged? Yet defenders of increased Globalization points to the need to reach a fragmented and widespread audience... The growing economic clout of emerging economies and the growing intertwining of the world's economies as additional reasons globalization is necessary for economic survival.

Various lamentations will fill the air from the developing countries. Etuk (2005) laments that a great deal of globalization in trade, finance and investment in industrialization, local businesses and policy making, is hurting the small and the weak, the handicapped and the under privileged, while giving more powers to the already advantaged. This lamentation only re-echoes Martin Khor's fear that globalization is a very uneven process with unequal distribution of benefits and loses. Let us venture to say here that an examination of the characteristics of globalization is a need for adaptation.

The Rhetoric of Globalization

Characteristically, the starting point of rhetorical communication is that persuasion founded on truth has the power to induce predetermined goal. By rhetoric therefore we should neither be concerned with propaganda nor ideology. But, truth told in a dialectical manner with both the artistic and inartistic logic. Aristotle had in the 4th century B.C. defined rhetoric as the act of discovering in every particular case all the available means of persuasion. But, the means as suggested by Plato should contain the truth in such a way that its logic and philosophies should convince even the gods themselves.

This classical approach defends rhetoric against its modern conceptualizations and suggests that rather than artificial eloquence, hollow bombast and flagrant disregard for truth, rhetoric seeks to defend and present the truth through its principles. Burke (1953) had discussed the character of discourses to include two persuasive items, which themselves are great starting points - identification and consubstantiation - when the issues in a discourse are identifiable with common interest, we become consubstantial (one), we definitely will converge. But, when the reverse is the case, Thomspens (1971) contends, we will not be persuaded. We will understand the rhetoric of globalization by looking at its characteristics and assessing its fallacies. This will therefore enable us to know how truthful the propagators of this phenomenal concept are, and how practicable it is in the face of an unbalanced socio-political economic world, especially the world of the developing countries such as Nigeria.

Characteristics of Globalization

It is a multidimensional set of social processes that resist being confined to a single thematic framework and involves the creation of a new and multiplications of existing social networks and activities that increasingly overcome traditional, political, economic, cultural and geographical boundaries. It is reflected in the expansion and the stretching of social relations activities and interdependencies. Globalization processes involve the subjective plane of human consciousness (Steger, 2003 & Emmanuel, 2005).

The issues that arise from the character of globalization depend on the truth or otherwise of its principles. The issues themselves raise rhetorical questions. Is globalization multidimensional? Although it is a general supposition, Mboho 2005 after accenting to it, believes it has a perculiar axis. To Mboho. "Globalization is not unidirectional, but it does have a privileged axis ... as things stand, the privilege axis is north/north due to the fact that what is designed, manufactured and marketed on a world wide scale, be it goods or services, is for the most part "Knowledge Intensive"

Idemili and Maamaa (2005) support VOICES 21(Global movement for people's voices in media and communication in the 21st century) thus; "while technological progress and political and regulatory changes can potentially benefit many of those in need, the scales seem increasingly tipped in favour of the already powerful". The last four characteristics may have been the catalysts for supposed looming threat in the following areas. These are media diversity in form and content (infotainment and edutainment dumping), and multiplication of homogenized programming resulting to reduction of real content. Threat to the public understanding and democratic process - undue influence on news, current affairs and educational content, control of political slant by media mogul and growing global electronic surveillance by government and private interest. Threat to the global equity of access and economic development in the area of disparity to access to information and communication technologies and application, delivery of distorted messages of lifestyle expectations through global advertising and imposition of a single dominant set of cultural values. Threat to cultural and social norms in the subjection of sports and entertainment to purely commercially driven criteria, domination of a single language in new media content, ubiquity of advertising, interrupting and deforming other social and cultural information, visually

and aurally.

It suffices to say that globalization should entitle everybody, every nation to participate in communication and in making communication decisions. Idemili and Maamaa (2005) observe that the ongoing World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) a United Nations (UN) conference is a response to these threats to public interests. If this is so, then its submissions should be able to encourage a globalized world of equal opportunities for all people and all nations.

The Fallacies of Globalization

Fallacies generally constitute false reasoning in argument and since argument belongs strongly and strictly to the realms of rhetoric, orchestrated by logic and is used to galvanize dialectics, rhetorical fallacies would probably constitute attempts at falsification of “truth” of persuasion with great intents fanned by the embers of propaganda. Most of the idiosyncrasies of globalization are fallacies and Steger (2003) provides us with what he calls classical system of belief. Globalization is about liberalization and global integration of markets. Nobody is in charge of globalization. Globalization benefits everyone. Globalization furthers the spread of democracy in the world.

If we say that rhetoric is the convincing projection of truth that enhances the structuring and restructuring of man and his society then certainly, the above systems of belief about globalization are fallacious. Let us examine them together. If globalization is about liberalization and global integration of markets, how many markets are liberalized and who is liberalizing and integrating them? Joseph Stiglitz quoted by Toyo (2004:23) argues that globalization is not helping many poor countries, that adoption of market based policies such as open capital markets, free trade and privatization is making developing countries less stable. That globalization is inevitable and irreversible is a conception that needs dialectical inquiry. This is because in the world of phenomenon, changes in the physical elements of matter are usually characterized by changes in the character and disposition of human beings. But, how true is it to say that, globalization is irreversible if we agree that it is inevitable? Do you believe that nobody is in charge of globalization? Of course there are two types of globalization, the type promoted by the United Nations and its agencies and the type promoted by the so called Bretton Woods Institutions (Etuk 2005). Perhaps this is why Mboho (2004) talks about the north/north privileged axis. Kotler (2001:369) asserts that market entry and market control cost are high, product and communication adaptation are also high and dominant foreign firms can establish high barriers to entry.

Does globalization benefit everyone? This provides intellectual as well as moral equivocation because African continent has 70% of her inhabitants in the rural areas who are mostly illiterate and may not have direct if at all they have indirect benefits of globalization. Toyo (2004) vexes out that globalizers through propaganda set up a demand for what they have and that Africans like others (developing world) lived without computers. How many Nigerians for now have access to Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) even with its enormous advantages?

Globalization is said to further the spread of democracy in the world. It is the

believe of the west that democracy is the best system of governance/government and should be imposed on other countries whether they like it or not. Today, we know that it is not Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that took America to Iraq but an attempt to institutionalize the western ideology of governance. What this fallacy entails is that while democracy is encouraged other systems are eroded. But, when you look at the African continent critically, the coups and the counter coups do not seem to support that fallacy.

How then in the face of these looming but already conceivable and consuming fallacies should we look at globalization so as to reposition our communication education in Nigeria and reap from its vast advantages? First, we should look at the level of operation and comparative advantage.

Level of Operation

Ajayi (2002) explains the four levels as follows:

1. A world wide phenomenon: Globalization at a world wide level refers to the growing economic interdependence amongst countries as reflected in increasing cross-border flow of goods, services, financial, human capital and technical know-how.
2. A concept of interdependence among countries: Globalization refers to the extent of the inter linkages between a country's economy and the rest of the world. It determines the extent to which a particular country depends on the other for its operational survival and business success. It has also to do with the extent to which business events, production activities, technological innovation and processes in one country positively or negatively impact on the other.
3. It is an industry phenomenon: Globalized companies tend to dominate other industries because of the advantage of bigger size, better technology, good pricing policy, quality products and extensive marketing and promotion. A key indicator as stated by Ajayi is a global company's extent of cross border investment in the industry as well as the proportion of industry revenue accounted for by each company that competes in major world regions.
4. It is a company phenomenon: This refers to the extent to which a company has expanded its revenue and asserts base across countries. The key factors of globalization of any company are: international dispersion of manufacturing processes, sales revenue, assert base, intra-firm trade in intermediate and finished goods and intra-firm flow of disparate modern technologies. These four levels are not self accommodating as far as globalization is concerned. From observation, other levels are:
5. Globalization is a communication phenomenon: Without development in communication and information technologies (ICTs) which make instant communication among nations possible there would be no economic advantage of globalization.
6. Globalization is technology driven: advances in technology call for greater manpower development and acquisition of the technical skills to handle digital data and only countries with such tissues can drive the belt of globalization.

Comparative Advantages

Despite the short comings of globalization, its comparative advantages are tremendous and a desideratum for every country and everyone. The vehicles of globalization include the discoveries and advancement/evolution of technologies in Aviation, Broadcasting, Telephone, Facsimile Machine, Cable Network, Satellite Services and the Internet. These have contributed to the enhancement of civilization in different ways.

Interaction socially, economically, politically educationally and culturally among nations and peoples of the world. What took decades to accomplish yesterday, takes a split second today and we now have neighbours not in our residential neighbourhood but at the remotest part of the world. The availability of non-linear media such as the Website and CD-ROMS for information experiences in print, sound and highly interactive moving images. Marketing research, global promotion of goods, ideas and services and market expansions are at the reach of the participants. New product development and standardization. Globalization's dynamics call for constant change in national scenes, politically, economically, socially, technically and ethically, demographically and psychologically. Thus, products, services and their promotions must be constantly improved. Broadening of the news services and digital convergence of once separate media. Unprecedented level of user control and interactivity and self publishing. Access to diverse data and analysis. Better and competitive technology. (Smith 2000).

In fact the advantages are innumerable from the infinitesimal to the looming. But, its challenges are the requisites for growth not for fear. Our concern therefore is how to maximize its comparative advantages by repositioning communication education in Nigeria.

Repositioning Communication Education In Nigeria

In repositioning media education in Nigeria in the face of globalization, it is imperative to look at the factors that inhibit Nigeria's attempt at globalization. These are huge foreign indebtedness. Most people will say that we have achieved a cancellation of \$18 billion debts. ut what about the remaining ones and the interest? As long as we owe, we cannot think of proper industrialization and ICTs development. High cost of production and communication adaptation. The cost of production in Nigeria is very high. The unsteady power supply results to the search for alternative power with increase in production cost. Even the cost of adaptation to ICTs in Nigeria is very high. Technological deficiency. The low technology efficiency in Nigeria does not encourage mass production as globalization and mass communication are technologically driven. The technical know how in terms of manpower is also low.

Political upheaval, corruption, poor infrastructure and poor policies and policy implementation etc are other factors that affect our attempt at globalization. The truth is that communication and information technologies are the bed rock of globalization. Information is the raw material of communication and communication gives energy to human survival.

Why Reposition

The current structure and content of communication education in Nigeria does not encourage globalization and in a fast growing world of opportunities and survival of the fittest Nigeria may tend to lose. We all know that ICTs and other forms of globalization need technical competence. Almost 70% of our journalists and communication practitioners in all the fields of human communication: print journalism, advertising, public relations, broadcasting etc are not adaptable fully to ICTs. In most of our universities, the curricular are concerned with the training of mass communicators even without equipment for practicals. It must be stated here that the world had since moved away from mass communication to human communication in terms of mass customization, mass selection and mass aggregation. Technologies developed in communication are done to support new concepts. In fact, according to Baran (2002:28). The audience is becoming more fragmented, its segments more narrowly defined. It is becoming less of a mass audience.

The communication courses and contents taught in our Universities and polytechnics as approved by the NUC and other bodies, need to be revisited because some of them by virtue of globalization and ICTs are not only obsolete but almost useless. There is therefore the need to revisit courses and their content to equip both the teachers and the students to be able to produce the type of manpower needed in the global arena not local champions who cannot be exported. The content of our media seem difficult to export our content.

Our media houses especially most broadcast stations are not even digitalized. The communication institutions laboratories except for few ones (Uyo is partially digitalized) are still using analogue systems. Students on industrial attachment are not even challenged with this sought of system and the result is the status quo. The internet and other facilities have created opportunities for media convergence; print and electronic media mix or synergy should be tapped.

Our secondary schools lack the incentives for ICTs. In other developing and advanced societies; it has become part of the fundamental human rights to be literate in this area. In fact, communication studies with bias in ICT s should be introduced in our secondary schools systems preparatory to the tertiary education. The structure of communication education programmes should be tailored after new technologies and artistry and should be production driven to encourage employment, efficiency and marketability. Tools for communication education and practice have changed with new technologies. This puts pressure on the existing training tools and modes of operation with ethical orientation: what Ajayi (2003) calls “digital divide” seem to separate our communication environment from other nations of the world.

Consequently, if we reposition our own rhetoric of globalization in terms of policy trust and implementation, especially in our communication education, we should be able to tap from the advantage of globalization to launch ourselves into the global arena with the current vision 2020 of the federal government.

Conclusion

The collapsing of the frontiers boundaries has created a lot of opportunities and limitations. While the opportunities yield great advantages for the prepared few, the developing countries instead of preparing seems to sit down to lick the wounds of its

limitations. Shifts in paradigm usually happen over a period of time and this is true of the move away from mass society concept.

As more and more national media boundaries open up throughout the world, news, information and entertainment will be able to move instantly from each home country to become part of the global media dialogue. This means that countries who do not prepare to join the club would end up with a collapse system. We have the potential but seem to lack focus. Repositioning will therefore give us market value. For Nigeria, therefore to join the club, the base line is to restructure and reposition our communication education to create the necessary manpower to cope with the new global realities. It is not “mere rhetorics”. It is not just fallacies or the logics or the propaganda. It is rhetoric founded on the truth of the discourse of comparative advantage.

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