

THE IMPACT OF DELTA BROADCASTING SERVICE MUSIC PROGRAMMES ON THE SPEECH OF YOUTHS IN ABRAKA

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ABSTRACT

There are many programmes often planned by government and its agencies to enhance the development of individuals and the larger Nigerian society. The execution of such programmes often depends largely on how well people are carried along. The paper focuses on the insensibility of music and the impact of Delta Broadcasting Service music programmes on the speech of youths in Abraka in Delta State. The paper also discusses music as an art, and its importance on the speech of the youths in Delta State. In gathering information, the writer conducted oral interviews, participated in observations, and there was a search of library materials. Findings reveal that the youths have been greatly influenced by some of the popular music types that gained prominence since the early 1990s. It was observed that some of the jargons and nonsense syllables that are often used in pop music aired on DBS have impacted negatively on youths, cutting across their education, social, political and religious endeavours.

INTRODUCTION

Most young persons growing up in Delta State are subjected to numerous encounters with the music programmes of the State owned Broadcasting Service, Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS). The television is located in Warri and Asaba while the radio receives signal on the frequency of 88.6. Interview carried out on young people, especially youths in the community revealed that young people watch television for at least two hours or more every day and listen to music for approximately four hours. Seventy percent of CD sales are made to television and radio producers who use them to advertise, support aired musical programmes and events. Such music programmes and events have adverse effects on the youths of Abraka community, and have brought tremendous impact on the speech of youths in Delta State. The Longman dictionary of contemporary English describes speech as “the particular way in which someone speaks”. The language used in the Broadcasting Service has influenced the way Abraka youths speak today. According to Okpeki (2010: 19), “Man as an

imitative creature who adjusts his existence especially his speech patterns to suit the speech pattern and behaviour of those with whom he has had encounter.”

It is obvious that some music programmes have some negative effects on the speech of youths of Abraka community . Although the task of this paper is not to condemn all music programmes that are aired in DBS, the negative impacts could be seen to outweigh the positive impacts from the way they act or behave towards themselves and others, by their dressing, and way of life. Olomu (2005) concluded that the inevitability of change has buffeted and affected all aspects of African tradition. Rapid urbanization, technological progress, and the spread of the mass media are some of the factors responsible for the changes.

The paper focused more on the effect of the speech of the youths of Delta State community from the programmes they watch or listen to. So many television stations in Nigeria and beyond organize music programmes. The influences of these musical programmes especially their lyrics have always been interesting parts of debate the world over. This study is limited to the Hip Hop and rap programmes held in DBS. Most of these rap artistes portray the intake of alcohol as normal, acceptable, and glorifying.

The Effects of Hip-Hop on Abraka Youths

The lyrics of music are so powerful that they affect listeners either negatively or positively. What one listens to can go a long way in making or marring a person judging from recent experiment carried out by Akpomndjere Moses and Udom Glory. 7% of many fifteen year old persons are exposed to rap and Hip Hop music. One-third listened to degrading lyrics about sex. After the experiment, each fifteen year old were asked about their sexual thoughts and almost all the results of the experiment were very alarming because much rap and Hip Hop music have affected the youths.

Youths are the target towards the marketing of rap and Hip Hop, they are always influenced by the media, and even the master mind behind the urge for fashion and indecent dressing are some of rap and Hip Hop artists. Some males who listen to rap and Hip Hop tend to imitate their stars by wearing baggy jeans, over-sized T-shirts and the caps worn upside down. Similarly, Okotete Johnbull and Ogbekor Christiana also discovered that Slangs, speeches and ungrammatical sentences were also used. For example, words like “Omo free Style, What’s up, I pray, make we dey shine” etc. Some youths also tend to use some of these slangs during examination situations, seminar papers, assignments and projects. To some extent, it has also affected their mode of communication in English language. Youths often listen to slangs and ungrammatical sentences used in various musical programmes aired in Delta State Broadcasting Service, these have greatly affected students’ mode of speech and performance. In line with this, Okpeki (2010: 53) opined that:

The songs rendered by the youths portray or show a kind of youthful exuberance probably because most youths in Abraka community are of the habit of seeking for guidance and mentoring from celebrities they see on television (TV) and Pop stars on radio programmes they view and listen to every day. (p. 53)

Music is undoubtedly a known and acceptable medium of providing information, education and entertainment for the society. This is the utilitarian value of music. This being the role of

music in society, it is however important to investigate the source of music. Music is itself a product of society, as it is the behaviour, activities and speeches of people that inform music. This accounts for why it is deemed that music stems from the society and it is a veritable tool of social change and integration. Mbiti (1975: 137) comments that “Artistic talents are utilized to the full in the form of art, music drama and oral communications.” The relationships between the broadcasting stations enhance that change in the language of the youth (Merriam 1964: 27) noted that “Music exists only in terms of social interaction and it is a learned behaviour. It involves the behaviour of learned individual and group of individuals.” It is therefore important to examine those types of music prevalent in our society which are relayed during the DBS programmes. Music as played by DBS during its music programmes could be comfortably grouped into the following categories: Highlife; Continental; Oriental; Blues; Disco; Juju; Fuji; Jazz; Funk; Afro beat; Gospel and Rhythm ‘n’ Blues. Music played in DBS has a lot of impact on the speech of youths in Abraka of which Asaba is an integral part. Asaba, as a capital of Delta State Region, which is noted for the use of the language code named Pidgin English, is equally adversely affected by the type of music which is played by DBS during its music programmes as most of the music played during the programmes are those patterned after the Pidgin English.

Arising from the above, it is a common sight and experience to note that youths in Delta State (including undergraduates of the University) are in the habit of speaking Pidgin English which unarguably is a reflection of both what they hear from the radio and television and the society where they live. On a more critical note, is it really true that the speech patterns of youths in Delta State is a reflection of the type of music showcased by DBS during its music programmes? At first thought it may seem that the observation is not true as the music they play during such programme is a mixgril of songs in pidgin and Standard English lyrics. If this is true, why then have the youths taken after the Pidgin English and not the Standard English? In responding to the question above, one needs to examine the situation in the society beyond music, as music is just an aspect responsible for the speech pattern of an individual; its primary aim is for entertainment. It is on the above premise that one can safely conclude that while music can be seen to be slightly responsible for the speech pattern of an individual, his conversation, (dialogue) is also one of the major factors that influence speech patterns of an individual. That is why music played during such programmes are in most cases those in Pidgin English, as the musicians are but a product of the society and must use the speech medium or pattern that is not only prevalent in the society but also acceptable by the people in order for them (musicians) to effectively reach out to their intended audience.

From the foregoing, while it is true that music played by DBS during its music programmes has some negative impacts on the speech patterns of youths in Abraka, the major source of such influence is the general Pidgin English which is the prevalent medium of conversation and interaction in Abraka.

Music being one of the indices of popular culture is undeniable that the major participants in popular culture either as producers or consumers are the youths. It is therefore plausible to detect influences of music programmes on radio and television on the speech of youths who also constitute the dominant percentage of radio listeners and television viewers. Music as carrier of culture in vogue usually evolves terminologies every now and then, which the

youths adopt in their daily conversations. Music also reflects the philosophy and the socio-economic temper of every period or epoch and thus provides an appropriate means of expression to the youth. Music as a creative art also invents neologism which youths use in their interactions. The desire to be current is another factor why music influences the speech of youths. This is so because any youth who is not abreast with musical trends is considered not to be vogue conscious. Music also increases social vocabulary by inventing slangs, jargons and interesting phrases which the youths love to use. Music is a very important aspect of the life of the social in which we live. Therefore, youths are bound to adopt its means and style of expression. Successful musicians are seen as idols and models by youths who imitate them especially their mode of expression.

A Survey of the Music Programmes in DBS, Warri

In DBS, some of the music programmes are “hour with the masters” which is usually on air between 6 o’clock to 6:30pm in the evenings on Thursdays. “Reggae time” is usually on Wednesdays between 1pm to 1:30pm. Another music programme which catches the fancy of the youths in Delta State is the hip hop hour, which is usually aired on Saturdays between 4 to 4:30pm on Fridays; it features artistes like D’banj, 2 face Idibia, African China and a host of others. Some of the lyrics or texts of their music which are commonly used are as follows; The music of D’banj titled Mr. endowed with such lyrics as “gbadun my steez” meaning “they like my style”, “no long thing” meaning there is no problem “koko master” meaning “an hero” while the music of African China with lyrics such as “no look face” meaning “do not mind him”. While such lyrics “nothing de happen” by 2face Idibia is commonly used among Abraka youths, meaning no problem, “Omo you are my African queen” means “you are my lovely girl”. Words like “10 over 10” by Naeto C, which means I’m an excellent guy is equally commonly used among youth in Abraka community. Another music performed by Dr. Sid titled over the moon with lyrics such as “Baby, Baby come and roll, I know you gbadun my patrol” meaning “Come let’s dance, I know you like my style. Music like Chop my money performed by P-square with the lyrics you will never run down meaning “you will never lack anything.” She dey feels my swag, meaning “she like my pattern or style of life. Another one produced by Style Plus titled “Four years” with the lyrics “four years don waka we still day carry go, nobody waka, nobody go solo” meaning “We are still together, nobody broke out of the group”.

Conclusion

The paper has drawn insights into the music programmes aired on Delta Broadcasting Service (DBS) and how it has influenced the speech patterns of the youths in Abraka community and her environment. Although the use of pidgin in popular music is a way of reaching out to a majority of the masses, it was discovered that the effects on the speech of youths in Abraka has cut across educational and social barriers.

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