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**The Implications of Mass Media in Language
Education in Emerging Africa****Lovelyn Chika Olisaeke,**chikafes@gmail.com; festoliks@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The inventors of mass media gadgets have initiated means of communication that would widen man's knowledge. Through the media the world has become a global village, in the sense that one in a part of the world easily has knowledge of what is happening in the other parts of the world. However good the media might be it is very important to be wary of its negative implications on language education of the growing African youths which include their inability to acquire fitting vocabularies and proper grammatical constructions among others. The major purpose of this study is therefore to evolve the negative impacts of the media towards language education of the African child. What type of English are the youths speaking and writing nowadays. The researcher using discussion method has been able to discover that our youths today are averse to reading serious literary materials like novels, textbooks or even consult dictionaries when reading or writing. The kids are equally antipathetic to reading short stories, poems or riddles. Rather, they all seek after different types of technological gadgets like phones, computer games etc. All these technological gadgets are good because they are there to enhance knowledge when used correctly and wisely. But it is very unfortunate that the extent of hazard they create in the lives of the youths can be very disastrous in the future, if not corrected. The researcher therefore recommends among others that the parents-teacher association (PTA) should come together and look into the matter critically, because both are partners in progress as far as a child's training is concerned. The schools should also reawaken the habit of going to the mass media for quiz and debates in language subjects for our school children.

Introduction

This era is an information age that is marked by the use of diverse electronic media. In the past years we talked about radio, television, telegram and letters, but today the newer electronic media gadgets are in vogue and they are in different sizes and categories that every Dick and Harry can afford and handle with ease. We have broadcast media, print media, outdoor media, and digital media. Broadcast media comprises radio, television, recorded music and films that transmit information in electronic forms. Print media as the name suggests, is a

form of printed physical materials which include newspapers, books, magazines, pamphlets and comics. The third one – outdoor media – consists of signs, billboards and placards used in several places to spread a common message. Digital media (computers) includes internet services like blogs, emails, websites, etc. It also includes mobile phone technology. And it is pertinent to point out that mobile phone is the most popular, versatile, handy, potable and easily affordable to every person irrespective of age and educational background. With mobile phone a person stays at the comfort of his bedroom and accesses the whole world of information whether negative or positive. As it is, our youths today are misusing this opportunity and missing out the right knowledge they are supposed to get through the media such as having access to books, journals, essay writing, quiz and debates, etc. in order to broaden their horizon and enrich their vocabularies in language education. (Mass Media By: Dcirovic WIKIPEDIA ® Mobile).

The mass media is a diversified collection of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication. The technology through which this communication takes place includes a variety of outlets:

Broadcast media transmit information electronically, via such means as film, radio, recorded music or television. Digital media comprises both internet and mobile mass communication, while internet media comprise such services as email, social media sites, websites and internet-based radio and television. Understanding these helps one assimilate the place and import of mass media to the society. It is a welcome development that engenders human wellbeing. The benefit of its usage is quite enormous, but one should not overlook the negative implication of its usage to our teeming youths who are the leaders of tomorrow. Who really are the youths, who are the target of this discuss?

Youth development: who are the youths?

As explained by ECOWAS (2009) youthful stage is a transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a developmental journey during which one gains independence and begins to participate fully in the society. This period is usually fraught with challenges for the youths themselves and for the rest of society. It is imperative for a nation to invest in her youths as they are more vulnerable to the increasing complex problems facing the world as a whole in the 21st century.

Onyekpe (2007) in Abolarin (2016) believes that the significance of youth to a nation is evident. Youth occupy a prominent place in any society. They outnumber the middle-aged and the aged. They have the strength, power of innovation and invention, aspiration as well as the resilience which can detail the pace of development for a nation. Conversely, the degree of the disorderliness and instability of a society is equally determined majorly by its youths.

In a nutshell, youth is a stage in which a person integrates from childhood to manhood. At this stage, the young person is very inquisitive to acquire knowledge, and with much enthusiasm practices what he learnt. Also with technological devises and mass media gadgets, the information, whether good or bad are at his finger tips. Any attitude the person gets accustomed to, he

progresses in life with it. So, youthful age is very crucial in a child's developmental stage. It is a period which will determine the outcome of the person's future. Positive Youth Development (PYD) leads to positive experiences + positive relationship + positive environments= positive youth development. For this illustration to take place, intentional efforts of other youths, adults, communities, government agencies, and schools must create good opportunities for the youth to enhance their skills, interests, and other practitioners who work with the youth to refer them to programs designed to optimize developmental progress but for this to happen we must have an intelligible and well educated youths that can stand these challenges.

The influence and effects of mass media on the youth:

Mass media is a vast means of communication that permeates nearly every aspect of modern life. Youths are exposed to all sorts of media gadgets outlets, from television, to movies, social media sites such as facebook , instagram and whatsapp applications. It's quite obvious that all these media applications are having great influence in the life of youths in our societies today; the effect may be positive or negative be it morally, educationally and character wise. However good the effect of the mass media may be to the youths, this piece is considering the negative effects and its implication to the development of the youths and Nigeria nation at large.

Negative effects of mass media on youths

The average percentage of our youths spend a good percentage of the day's hours on media gadgets, such as television, computer games, internet sites (facebook, whatsapp) and so on to the detriment of their physical health and educational performance.

Moral implication

It has been observed that sixty percent of our youth imitate some of the glamour industry presenters as their role model without giving it a thought whether they are right or wrong. It is often seen that young girls and boys imitate celebrities blindly. They want to imitate an action sequence just because his favourite action hero looks 'cool' doing it. For instance, a boy wants to wear Hans Anuku's hairstyle just because he is a fan of his. A girl wants to wear a particular shade of nail polish Lady Gaga wears just to show she is her fan and must look 'gaga'....and so on. They virtually do everything that people from the glamour world do without considering their implications. Their role models are people that the media exposes them to. They want to be someone, but not themselves. What about the nude dresses of some girl-dancers of musicians, the low-waist, half-cut, mini-skirts and gowns, show-back, etc? All these are copied from the social media.

Unhealthy Lifestyle

There are millions of youth fighting obesity in our society today but at the same time they are exposed to thousands of advertisement of junk food, with images of successful and slim people in the media. Media is exposing the masses to fast food products, canned food, fed diets, and energy drinks. There is no one advertising the benefits of eating fresh food every-day, or promoting drinking eight (8) glasses of water every day. The youths are not exposed to the benefits of following a balanced diet anywhere on the media.

Media affect physical and psychological well-being of our youths. Many of our youths spend hours in front of television or surfing the internet exposing themselves to possible eye problems due to the constantly gazing into the rays of the screen of these gadgets especially when used in the dark. More so, the media is so over-whelming that people especially the youths, believe whatever they see or hear in media without distinguishing between the right and the wrong ones.

The conceptual definition of pornographic materials are the representation of erotic behaviours in books, pictures, status, motion pictures, etc. that are intended to cause sexual excitement. It informs the unhealthy lifestyle of the youths towards pornography, homosexual practices and lesbianism which are alarming and could be traced to the activities they see or watch on Media. This is what is driving our youths crazy nowadays to the extent that they do not have shame again. They carry out sexual activities with every Dick and Harry that comes their ways, anytime anywhere, without minding who the person is or their health condition. Why is it so? Because that is what they see in the media everyday and have freedom and access to them any moment they wish.

UNICEF also estimated that one million youths are forced into prostitution or used to produce pornography each year. Many are handed over or sold by their family driven by extreme poverty ...The internet also has given dealers in child pornography a far bigger audience, this effects of pornography films, which is very evident on the youth and to proffer solution. (Charles Leka, effects of pornographic films on Nigerian youths. [www.doublegist.com/effects - pornography](http://www.doublegist.com/effects-pornography)).

The range of the problem of pornography is wider than it seems, everything pertaining to the behaviours or attitudes, which the youths exhibit today, can directly or indirectly be attributed to their constant viewing or exposure to pornographic films bearing in mind the unseen power of motion pictures.

Today we are fighting corruption, stealing or fraud. How did it all start in our country Nigeria? It can be directly or indirectly traced back to social media. Sometimes we see our young children in schools suddenly park out of hostels, start using expensive items and clothing and living in big houses and spending money that you know you cannot afford as parents let alone giving them. When we ask they will tell us that they are into network business and we keep quiet without knowing that they may well be into stealing and robbery.

Social Media Glamorize Drug and Alcohol Use

A study that explored the relationship between teenagers, social media, and drug usage has found that 70% of teenagers aged 12 – 17 use social media and those who interact with it on a daily basis are five times more likely to use tobacco, three times more likely to use alcohol, and twice likely to use marijuana. In addition, 40% admitted they have been exposed to pictures of people under the influence of alcohol via social media, suggesting correlation between the two factors. Although a correlation is all it is, it makes sense that social media account up to the amount of peer pressure to which teenagers are exposed.

Social media gives rise to cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is a bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes device and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat and websites. Cyber bullying is also the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target another person. M.kidshealth.org/.../cyberbullying.html.

Social media gives rise to cyber bullying which is an enormous concern, especially for youths. An organization that aims for internet safety, called “enough is enough” conducted a survey and found out that out of 95% of teenagers who use social media for cyber bullying, 33% of them have been victims themselves.

On-line initiation

Through the social media, one can easily be initiated into occult groups like illuminati’, etc. or get membership by simply logging onto their websites and follow the instruction. Many children also get initiated unknowingly by watching some television programmes (like cartoons which were designed with intension of achieving that purpose), games, websites, etc. Knowing that the devil has devised a lot of means of getting people to himself, the researcher recently witnessed evil forces around a particular children television programme called “Grachi” and had to stop her children from watching it and other programmes that are suspicious.

Socially

It has been recorded that growing children who started to have access to media gadget are likely to shape their personality values and beliefs wrongly, becoming aggressive or they can lose their sense of differentiating reality from fiction of what they see in the media.

Youths and even adults seeing these violent acts may be convinced to some point that it is okay to be violent especially when the ending of the programme does not justify any moral teaching to the violence perpetrated.

Over the course of time, media have developed into a major domain and culture. We are exposed to different kinds of media every day no matter where we are, and being exposed to media gadgets so much has its effect both good and bad in someone’s life especially the youths because they do not have the will power to

resist what they have seen or heard. Rather they are very anxious to learn more and practice what they see as long as doing so gladdens their heart whether good or bad.

The persistent and incessant crimes and violence in our society today can be traced to media. Good examples of these can be seen in the attacks of 9/11 in the USA. The media gave a huge coverage of the attack and exposed Osama Bin Laden as being guilty for the attack. The same happened with the Iraqi war. These shaped the public opinion to support the war on terrorism. The youths found out that it is possible to organize and execute attacks and get away with it easily which they hitherto thought not possible.

Causing distraction and harming productivity

The negative effects of mass media in lives of people especially the youths are immeasurable. They are so much distracted and carried away with activities on the media to the extent that they are no longer productive. It affects their thinking, believes, education and so on. They do not think of reasonable things they can use their time to do and make living out of it and with that the society is crumbling.

Impact of media on language education

The type of English the youths are speaking and writing nowadays is a thing of concern. The magnitude of their spelling errors and wrong use of tenses cannot be measured. English language is an official language in Nigeria spoken in many other countries and used as a language of international communication throughout the whole world. It is the language of the academia. The proficiency in English language has enhanced learning in every other aspect of studies in education. A person without enough knowledge of English language would not be able to do well in other fields of study such as arithmetic and so on, but it is very unfortunate that youths nowadays are getting acclimatised with the language of social media and their abbreviations to the extent that they use them in the classroom and examinations situations.

Common social media parlance and abbreviations

Abbreviations	Meaning
It's nufin	It is nothing
Cos	Because
Wah abt u	What about you?
K dear am hapi 2 av u as a frnd	ok dear am happy to have you as a friend.
D 1 st	The first
D amnt f mony I paid hm ws 2 much	The amount of money I paid him was too much
Cheater	Cheat
Gossip	Gossip
Hw fan w?	How are you?

I met dem dis mrnng	I met them this morning
Das gr8	That is great
Gud 9t	Good night
I dear, hw r u?	Hi dear, how are you?
Hold ur bag on ur laps bcos f safty	Hold your bag on your laps because of safety
Al d acnt is valid	All the accounts are valid
Hws wok n od stuf?	How is work and other things?
Il try n c u b4 I go bck	I will try and see you before I go back
Weda its ryt or nt	Whether it is right or not
Il eat nw	I will eat now
I wntd 2 c u xday	I wanted to see you yesterday
2day is nt 2 gud 4 me	Today is not too good for me
Hws my ppl ova dia?	How are my people over there
U r lukin gud	You are looking good
Das gud	That is good
AFAIK	As far as I know
<3	Love
@	At
C u	See you
SWYP	So what's your problem?
TIME	Tears in my eyes
ATM	At the moment
WAY	Where are you?
WYD	What are you doing?
OMG	Oh my God!
ASAP	As soon as possible
OYO	You are on your own
CUL8R	See you latter
HAND	Have a nice day
+U	Adieu
2moro,2mo,tmr	Tomorrow
Ez	Easy
B4	Before
1drfl	Wonderful
SWYD	Stop what you are doing
BTW	By the way
Lol	Laughing out loud
WDYMBT	What do you mean by that?
Msa	Message
Plz	Please
TTLY	Talk to you later
Bc	Because

THX or Tu	Thanks or thank you
BF	Best friend/boy friend
BFN	Bye for now
LDK	I don't know
YW	You are welcome
WTH	What the hell
JK	Just kidding
SO	Significant other
Ur	Your and you're

There are also single letters or digits that replace a word, syllable or phoneme. They often use entire sounds within words which will often be replaced by a letter or digit that will produce a similar sound when read by itself.

Letter/digits	Words/syllable	Phoneme	Example of usage as part of word
N	and or en		Enjoy becomes njoy and 'and' becomes nd
R	Are		
U	You		
O	Oh		
Y	Why		
K	Okay		
B	Be		
C	See or sea		
8	Ate		Great becomes gr8 hate becomes h8
1	Won or one		Anyone becomes any1 or ne1 and no one becomes no1
4	For or fore		Forget becomes 4get and afford becomes a4d
2	To, too, or two		Today becomes 2day and tune becomes 2ne
Kk			Also signals the end of a conversation
121	One to one		
24/7			Twenty four hours in a week, as in all the time
2b	To be		
10q	Thank you		
BBL	Be back latter		
BOCTAAE	But of cause there are always		

	exceptions		
BOD	Benefits of doubt or board of directors		
CNP	Continued in the next page		
CMIW	Correct me if am wrong		
FLLF	If I know		
FIFF	I'm funny		
F2T	Free to talk		
FOAFF	Friend of a friend		
FOMOR	Fear of missing out		
FOUO	For use only		
GT	Good try		
GTK	Good to know you		
HB	Hurry back		
HIG	How's it going		
IME	In my experience		
J4F	Just for fun		
J5M	Just five minutes		
JAM	Just a minute		
JDI	Just do it, etc.		

Linguistic properties and style

The primary motive for the creation and use of SMS language was to convey a comprehensible message using the fewest number of characters possible. This was for two reasons; first, telecommunication companies limited the number of characters per SMS sent. To minimize, users had to find a way of being concise while still communicating the desired message. Secondly, typing on a phone is always slower than with a keyboard, and capitalization is even slower. As a result, punctuation, grammar and capitalization are largely ignored, and here lies the problems of our youths nowadays. They are no longer writing correct and well constructed English as it should be, forgetting that SMS language is still wildly used for brevity.

Conclusion and recommendations

Although media language is very easy and faster to write, it is virtually eradicating language education to dust, because the youths nowadays do not really know the actual spelling of those words they are abbreviating as they also use them in the classroom and even in examination situations. According to the research done by Dr. Nenagh Kemp of the University of Tasmania, the evolution

of “texts” is inherently coupled to a strong grasp of grammar and phonetics. (Retrieved on the 10th August, 2016, <https://wikimediafoundation.org>)

In as much as media is very easy and interesting and fast in communication, the facts still remains that it is virtually damaging the linguistic development of youths, and it is also viewed as corrupting standard of language education. Welsh Journalist and television reporter, John Humphrys has criticized media language as “wrecking our language”. The author cites ambiguity as one of the problems opposed, illustrating with examples such as “LOL” which may either be translated to mean “laughing out loud”, “lots of love” and “little old lady” depending on the context in which it is being used. In a situation where the recipient was not able to disambiguate the context, the message becomes invalid.

The youths are so conversant with media language to the extent that they do not read text books and novels in order to learn English vocabularies and their correct spellings. They use spellings that reflect their illocutionary force and intention rather than using the standard spellings. For example, the use of “haha” to signify “standard laughter” and “muahaha” to encode perhaps more raucous or evil sounds of laughter. All these are what the youths have internalized into their head and use them in the classroom situation as a style of writing and also consciously or unconsciously use them in their examination scripts. This is seriously affecting the educational developments of the nation.

In order to address the problem of wrong use of the media and its implication on the youths, the following are recommended:

- Television stations should increase air-time allocation to school quiz, debates and children educational programmes and also reduce the airing of programmes that promote moral decadence in the society.
- Parents, schools, churches and all relevant stakeholders in children education and training should rise up to the challenges posed by the negative implication of the media on the youths.
- Parents should encourage their children to do much of reading of novel and literatures that would promote their education.
- Parents should also desist from buying expensive phones, ipads and other gadgets for their children. Through these phones, they have easy access to pornographic materials that negatively affect their moral upbringing.
- Youth parleys and seminars should be organized for our growing children and educate them on the dangers of wrong use of media as well as on the proper use of internet and other social media. Various forums can be used for this including local governments, churches, various towns and communities, schools, academic associations, state organized youth forum and even the media itself.

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