

Assessing the Importance of Globalization and Multimedia Productions in the 21ST C

Musiliat Ozavize Usman

Federal University of Lafia

Department of Theatre and Media Arts

ize4eva@gmail.com; musiliat.usman@arts.fulafia.edu.ng

Abstract

Globalisation has played a key role in shaping the contemporary global media environment where one is inevitably exposed to foreign media content. Multimedia and globalization are shaping societies differently and giving more inter-societal connectivity. This has resulted in new phenomenon of cultural convergence. While this has reduced barriers in the flow of information and has led to greater exposure to the world beyond one's own country, it has also introduced threats and challenges for media industries. This study critically analyses the impact of globalization and multimedia productions in the 21st century. This paper also explored the positive and negative impacts of multimedia and globalization.

Keywords: Globalization, Multimedia, Productions, Impacts, Challenges.

Introduction

Globalization and multimedia have played a key role in shaping the contemporary cultural environment. It has revolutionized the traditional model of not only the flow of information and ideas but also cultural flows. However, the nature of this flow has only been in the limelight ever since the beginning of media globalization. Western domination in the flow of ideas and information is a crucial element of this global culture. Lule affirmed this, when he said that “globalization and media act in concert and cohort, and the two have partnered throughout the whole of human history” (cited in Dal Yon Jing, 1). This interdependent nature keeps increasing with time. The majority of the media that people consume today are forms of global media that expose them to content such as news, information, ideas, movies, shows and so on from all over

the world.

No matter where people go, they are constantly surrounded by things that are either a result of globalization or are at least influenced by the phenomenon. Products of globalization have become highly present and are deeply embedded in one's daily lives. The extent to which globalization has flourished can be credited to advancing technologies that have led to the development of the sophisticated multimedia tools that exist today. These tools have allowed people to communicate globally regardless of barriers related to distance or time. To understand the impact of globalization and multimedia, this paper will explore the contemporary context of globalization and multimedia, in the flow of information and ideas.

Concept of Globalization and Multimedia Globalization

The concept of globalization has been undecided. The term is broad and a complex phenomenon that comprises various concepts and aspects which makes it even more challenging to define. Scholars like Nayyar affirmed this notion by stating that “globalization means different things to different people”(137), which are evident when one starts exploring the definitions of globalization. Murillo, believes that “it is highly difficult to reach a single definition of globalization that would satisfy or do justice to the different academics and ideological biases of thousands of authors that have written books on globalization” (9).

However, there are several definitions that provide an apt overview of the phenomenon. Murillo views globalization as a set of changes which can transform the relationships between individuals in a society and even countries (10). While Tanushev defines globalization as “the free flow of people (migration), goods and services, capital, technologies (transfer), and information and ideas (media, internet)” (380). These examples prove that globalization as a phenomenon is too complex and broad. However, for the context of this study, it adopts Jin's definition of globalization as “a process that includes borderless flow of information, interconnectivity, integration, interdependence, convergence, global village, and global economy” (14).

Globalization led to the emergence of multimedia structures of ownership and control. Giddens observes that “globalization is a continuation of modernity rather than a break from it” (78). He says that modern societies and industrialization have led to globalization. While for Bauman the global age is the period that comes after modernity (Bauman,12). Robertson contradicts and argues that globalization has been there before modernity and capitalism. However, he supports the fact that modernization gives pace to globalization (Robertson, 8). The emergence of globalization can be credited to the rapid development of information and communication technologies that enabled the globalization of multimedia (Jin, 13). Hence, multimedia globalization is one of the major forms of globalization that has led to the creation of a global audience who are now constantly absorbing information and ideas from all over the world.

Multimedia globalization is the expansion and availability of media and media platforms which have facilitated the flow of information, ideas, technologies and cultures across national borders. Griffiths and Keirns define multimedia globalization as the “worldwide integration of media through the cross-cultural exchange of ideas” (3). While Lyons, on the other hand, provides a more elaborate definition of multimedia globalization by defining it as:

The phenomenon of expanding multinational corporate media investment, resulting in the emergence of a global oligarchy of first tier corporations, which own and operate a variety of mass media content and distribution technologies including: television, radio, film, music, broadcasting, satellite, telecommunication, cable, newspapers, magazines, publishing companies, Internet content providers, and other forms of converged digital media
(1)

The two definitions highlight two different important aspects of multimedia globalization. The first definition focuses on the cross-cultural exchange of ideas through international integration of media whereas the second definition focuses on media investments

internationally leading to media convergence, and integration of media. Therefore this study will focus on understanding the importance of globalization and the role of multimedia in facilitating globalization.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts globalization theory as a theoretical framework to assess the importance of globalization and multimedia productions. Globalization theory has to do with communications and international ties, which is directed at cultural and economic factors in communication systems. Globalization theory explains inequality by identifying cultural and economic factors in global connection. According to Reyes, “Globalization theory considers it as a theory of economic development with the supposition of widespread unification among different countries” (8).

This integration is believed to have an effective influence on the development of economies and on the improvement in social indicators. As far as the Globalization theory is concerned, it includes degrees of change. For example, as Zineldinstated that, “Globalization theory has transformed development effort and its different definitions, which is specific to every developing country” (37). It can therefore be considered a theory of development which provides constructive suggestions about the ways in which developing countries can achieve the positive, beneficial effects of developed countries.

Globalization and Multimedia in 21ST Century

The rapid expansion of global communications in the 21st century can be traced back to the mechanical advancements of technologies during the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, which started mainly with the invention of the telegraph in 1837, and included the growth in postal services, cross-border telephone and radio communications and the creation of a modern mass circulation press in Europe. It was however the evolution of technologies capable of transmitting messages via electromagnetic waves that marked a turning point in advancing the globalization of communications. The emergence of international news agencies in the 19th century, such as Reuters, paved the way for the beginnings of a global system of codification. Nonetheless, it was not

until the 1960's, with the launch of the first geo-stationary communication satellites, that communication by electromagnetic transmission became fully global, thus making the globalization of communications a distinctive phenomenon of the 20th century (Thompson, 159).

The availability of new and sophisticated information and communication technologies have resulted in the emergence of a global media industry comprising of media that no longer have limitations related to time and space thereby enabling messages, information, ideas and cultures to be easily transmitted beyond national borders at an unimaginable speed. Thus elucidates the role of technology by highlighting the development of new information technologies that “ensure the production, consumption and distribution of information in a highly individualized manner, unbounded by temporal and spatial constraints” (1). These technological advancements along with the existing technologies have led to the creation of a global media industry.

While new and advancing technologies were crucial to media globalization, it cannot be denied that the convergence of old and existing media technologies was the key to successful multimedia globalization. According to Devereux “multimedia globalization has come into existence through “the convergence of old and new media technologies as well as the convergence of old and new media organizations to form immensely powerful transnational media conglomerates” (3). Hence, the right balance between old and new technologies and organizations have aided in making the most of the available resources.

The media has been one of the key players in contributing to the process of globalization. According to Siochru “the media and communication sector occupies a special and unique place in the processes of globalization which sets them apart from other sectors” (4). The impact of multimedia on globalization is two-dimensional. Firstly, they act as an “enabler of globalization” by providing sophisticated telecommunications technologies without which the pace and depth at which globalization has flourished would not have been possible.

Moreover, the content providing multimedia industries such as television, film, video, music, internet have led to the possibility of promoting, either directly through advertising. Secondly, the media and communications sector is a powerful agent in the circulation and dissemination of social, political and cultural structures which often influences society in significant social ways (Siochru, 5).

Multimedia are seen today as playing a key role in enhancing globalization, facilitating culture exchange and multiple flows of information and image between countries through international news broadcasts, television programming, new technologies, film, theatre and music.

Advantages of Globalization and Multimedia

Globalization and multimedia has made it easier for people across the world to connect with each other, they can now generate their own content on internet, which has provided impetus to alternative media. Multimedia converge the forms and functions of information, media, electronic communication, and electronic computing. The convergence power of multimedia can be easily demonstrated by the emergence of the internet in terms of its powerful function embedded in computer information technologies and broadband communication networks. Internet has drastically changed the global media scenario, not only everyone is connected across globe but also people are producing and owning content like never before. Earlier internet was used to be websites and E-mail only but with the advent of social media like blogs, video sharing, content sharing, and curatorsites; audience across the world are reading, sharing and liking the content being generated by amateurs also. Anyone with minimal investment can run mediablogs and websites successfully to reach out to a wider audience, like never before.

Globalization and multimedia also makes it possible fora large amount of information to be retrieved, manipulated, and stored in a very limited space. Multimedia has also helped independent filmmakers a great deal. They can now easily shoot films with less expensive camera edit them with numerous open source software and distribute them online to large heterogeneous audience.

The interactive function of multimedia, i.e., between users and the system regarding the use of information resources, provides users a great freedom in producing and reproducing the content and form of the information during the interaction. In addition, the interactivity of multimedia makes the interaction among different networks and the retrieving of information through different operational systems, both available and convenient. The cyberspace formed by multimedia also allows people to generate virtual experience and reality. For instance, stage performances can now be streamed live through zoom cloud, Facebook live, Instagram live and YouTube. The invisible cyberspace induces a gap between reality and virtuality.

Globalization allows cultural transmission via multimedia to take place at a very rapid rate by permeating and dissolving human boundaries. These also push the trend of Multiculturalism and Diversity in which Globalization acts as a catalyst. The interconnected, culturally hybridized, and individually powerful characteristics of globalization and the emergence of multimedia has led to revolutionary changes in people's thinking and behaviours, redefined the sense of community, and restructured human society.

Disadvantages of Globalization and Multimedia

Despite the significant influence of globalization and multimedia, the print media business has been affected negatively. For instance, in USA and in many European countries, the readership of print media has declined tremendously during the past decade. Many leading print dailies had to shut because of diminishing demand and high internet penetration. People now prefer to read e-paper, follow news websites, and subscribe.

Multimedia houses work on the principle of profit building, even the news now comes in a standard platform set by the advertisers leading to lowering of journalism standards. Earlier the aim of journalism was to create awareness, undertake social reforms, build national integration but now public service journalism has been replaced by hard core commercialization. Advertisers influence the editorial and decide what the audience will consume. The undue thrust on commercial gains has

led to various unethical trends as well. The alternative voices get muted in front of capitalist. There could be fear of job security, which can bring industrial conflicts if any attempt is made to disengage employee.

Globalization tends to transmit the cultural pattern of developed countries to the rest of the world. In Nigeria today, our youths imitate the European and American consumption patterns, modes of transport, modes of dressing, method of communication including their music. They are at the verge of neglecting our cultural heritage. Pornography, money laundering, cultism, international terrorism, child abuse and Yahoo. comboys (419) is now a norm in the society. And it is extremely difficult for people with strong religious beliefs to tolerate the level of pornographic activities that go on in the Internet. Moreover the abuse of drugs, uses of arms and ammunitions. Promiscuity, exposure to pornography and various other negative life styles are often a fall out of accessibility to the Internet and cable channels. In many Nigerian Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and urban centres, nudity has become a rich and elegant dressing style. Mode of dressing expressed through the exposure of various parts of the body is now a common occurrence among the Youth.

Conclusion

The advancement in technology has brought about major transformation in world of communication. Based on this study and analysis, it can be concluded that multimedia and globalization has both positive and negative impacts. Globalization and multimedia have led to cultural hybridization in which some aspects of cultures become increasingly similar, as a consequence of local cultures adopting various aspects of the popular global culture, while also retaining their own cultures creating a blend of the two.

Recommendation

The global and multimedia industries should be regulated and should not be dominated by organizations that recognize money as the only way to life. Government should find the best method to counter the harmful effects of globalization. The nation should not rely solely on what the developed foreign countries are handling down to us, but should

consider and encourage local media industries. The country should be proud of her heritage and way of life, instead of accepting all aspects of western way of life.

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