

# THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON INDIGENOUS NIGERIA LANGUAGES AND PATTERNS OF DRESSING

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## Abstract

Tune to any radio or television station in Nigeria, you will imagine you are in western country because of the type of music and the manner it is aired., Globalisation has opened up international trade, which has helped many countries grow far more quickly than they would otherwise have done, and has assisted to stem the tide of poverty and hunger, reverse the spread of AIDS. But many see globalisation as a problem due to cultural diffusion of literature, music, clothing, food and traditional values and this has led some to conclude that Africa is losing its cultural identity. Six hundred and fifty-three respondents were interviewed using structured questionnaires to ascertain the social impact of globalisation, the data indicated that sixty-seven per cent of the survey group would prefer western type of dresses to African dresses, while sixty per cent of the group could not speak their mother tongue fluently. This shows the extend globalisation has impacted on our languages and dressing patterns.

**Keywords:** Globalisation; Culture; Language; Dressing; Indigenous Language

## Introduction

Globalisation, is a comprehensive term for the emergence of a global society in which economic, political, environmental, and cultural events in one part of the world quickly come to have significance for people in other parts of the world. Globalisation is the result of advances in communication, transportation, and information technologies. It describes the growing economic, political, technological, and cultural linkages that connect individuals, communities, businesses, and governments around the world. Globalisation also involves the growth of multinational corporations (businesses that have operations or investments in many countries) and transnational corporations (businesses that see

themselves functioning in a global marketplace). The international institutions that oversee world trade and finance play an increasingly important role in this era of globalisation.

To understand how globalisation first took root between 1000 and 1500, one must focus on contact between distant peoples in Asia, especially contact carried on through long-distance trade. Inter-regional trade has been a major force throughout world history because it fosters other forms of exchange, including the spread of religions, cultures, and technologies. For many centuries, the most outstanding example of overland interaction was the Silk Road, a trade route through Central Asia. Maritime trade flourished as well; the Indian Ocean became the heart of the most extensive sea-going trade network in the pre-modern world. Islamic merchants dominated this network, spreading their religion far and wide. Islamic expansion established a huge cultural region that stretched across the entire eastern hemisphere. Trading ports such as Melaka in Malaya became vibrant, globalised centres of international commerce and culture. Chinese ships would later follow this trading network in undertaking the greatest oceanic explorations in world history to that point. This exploration confirmed the crucial role played by this Afro-Eurasian maritime commerce and the dynamism of some Asian civilisations. The exchanges across Asia, at this time, including the spread of Islam, were significant enough that we can speak of a globalised economy and culture.

### **The Globalisation of Islam and the Indian Ocean Maritime Trade System**

Between the 8th and 15th centuries, Islam ventured out of its Arabian heartland in the Middle East to become the dominant religion in many parts of Africa and Asia and in Iberia. Muslim groups emerged in such different and geographically distant locations as China and the Balkans. In the process, an interlinked Islamic world called *dar al-Islam* (the Abode of Islam) emerged, a world that was joined by both a common faith and trade connections. The *dar al-Islam* stretched from Morocco to Indonesia.

This global Islamisation spread Arab names, words, alphabet, architecture, social attitudes, and cultural values to peoples around the world. The great 14th-century Moroccan traveller Ibn Battûtah spent decades touring the extensive *dar al-Islam*. He travelled from Mali in Africa and Spain in the west to Southeast Asia and the coastal ports of China in the east. Whereas the Christian Marco Polo was always a stranger in his travels, everywhere Ibn Battûtah went, he encountered people who shared his general worldview and social values.

Muslim-dominated trade routes, which ultimately reached from the Sahara to Spain to the South China Sea, fostered travel. The key to their success was a more complex and increasingly integrated maritime trade throughout the Indian Ocean. This trade network linked China, Japan, Vietnam, and Cambodia in the east through Malaya and the Indonesian archipelago. From there, it crossed into India and Sri Lanka, and then moved westward to Persia, Arabia, the East African coast as far south as Mozambique, and the eastern Mediterranean, finally connecting to Venice and Genoa.

The Strait of Hormuz on the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Melaka in Southeast Asia were the major pillars of what became the most important mercantile system of the premodern world. It was through this mercantile system that the spices of Indonesia and East Africa; the gold and tin of Malaya; the batik and carpets of Java; the textiles of India; the gold of Zimbabwe; and the silks, porcelain, and tea of China made their way to distant markets.

When many of these products reached Europe, people there yearned to find their sources in the East, sparking the European age of exploration. Maritime trade flourished, especially in the 14th century after the Mongol empire ended and the spread of the Black Death, the bubonic plague, throughout Eurasia disrupted overland trade. The maritime network reached its height in the 1400s and 1500s, when Muslim political power was reduced but its economic and cultural power remained strong.

### **Islam and the Rise of Melaka**

Various states around the Indian Ocean and South China Sea were closely linked to maritime trade. For example, East African city-states such as Mombasa and Kilwa, with their mixed African-Arab Swahili culture, thrived for many centuries. Merchants in India, including many Jews and Arabs, maintained close ties to Western Asia, North and East Africa, Southeast Asia and China. No political power was dominant along the maritime trading route. Its vigour depended on cosmopolitan port cities such as Hormuz on the Persian coast, Cambay in northwest India, Calicut on India's southwest coast, and Melaka near the southern tip of Malaya. Of all the cities, historians probably know the most about Melaka, and this city well illustrates pre-modern patterns of globalisation. Southeast Asia had long been a cosmopolitan region where peoples, ideas, and products met. Some rulers of coastal states in the Malaya Peninsula and Indonesian archipelago, anxious to attract the Muslim traders who dominated interregional maritime commerce and attracted by the universality of Islam, adopted the faith.

The arrival of Islam in Southeast Asia coincided with the rise of Melaka, which became the region's political and economic power. Melaka became the main base for the expansion of Islam in the archipelago, as well as the last stop on the eastern end of the Indian Ocean trading network. Melaka's pivotal role in world trade was confirmed by an early 16th-century Portuguese visitor, who wrote that it had 'no equal in the world' and proclaimed its importance to peoples and trade patterns as far away as Western Europe. 'Melaka is a city that was made for merchandise, fitter than any other in the world...' he wrote. "Commerce between different nations for a thousand leagues on every hand must come to Melaka.... Whoever is lord of Melaka has his hands on the throat of Venice."

During the 1400s, Melaka was a flourishing trading port attracting merchants from many lands in Asia and Africa. More ships dropped anchor in Melaka's harbor than in any other port in the world; seagoing merchants were attracted by its stable government and free trade policy. Among Melaka's population of 100,000 to 200,000 people were about 15,000 foreign traders, among them Arabs, Egyptians, Persians, Turks, Jews, Armenians, Ethiopians, East Africans, Burmese, Vietnamese, Javanese, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, and Indians from all over the subcontinent. On the city's streets, some 84 languages were spoken.

Melaka had a special connection to the Gujerati port of Cambay, which was nearly 3,000 miles away, because merchants from Gujerat in northwest India were Melaka's most influential foreign community. Every year, trading ships from around the Middle East and South Asia, would gather at Cambay and Calicut to make the long voyage to Melaka. The ships carried grain, woolens, arms, copperware, textiles, and opium for exchange. Melaka had become one of the major trading cities in the world, a multi-ethnic centre of globalised culture and commerce, much like New York, Los Angeles, or Hong Kong, are today.

## **Ming China and the World**

The extent of globalisation by the early 15th century is suggested by the great Chinese voyages of discovery. The emperor of the Ming dynasty, Yonglo (or Yung-lo), dispatched a series of grand maritime expeditions to southern Asia and beyond, expeditions that were the greatest the world had ever seen. Admiral Zheng He (or Cheng Ho), a Muslim whose father had visited Arabia, commanded seven voyages between 1405 and 1433. These voyages were huge undertakings, with the largest fleet including 62 vessels carrying nearly 28,000 men. (By contrast, a few decades later, Christopher Columbus would sail forth from Spain in three small vessels crewed by a hundred men.) The massive Chinese junks were far superior to any other ships of the time. In fact, the world had never before seen such a large-scale feat of seamanship.

During these extraordinary voyages, ships carrying the Chinese flag followed the maritime trade routes through Southeast Asia to India, the Persian Gulf and Red Sea, Arabia, and down the East African coast as far as Kilwa in Tanzania. Melaka became their southern base, and Melaka's rulers made occasional trips to China to cement the alliance. Had the Chinese ships continued, they would have had the capability of sailing around Africa to Europe; however, Europe offered few products the Chinese valued. The Chinese expeditions expressed the exuberance of an era of great vitality. Although the Chinese travelled mostly in peace and fought only a few military actions, some 36 countries, including a few in western Asia, acknowledged allegiance to China. In this period, China was the greatest power in a globalising hemisphere.

Historians still debate the reasons for Zheng He's great voyages. Some see diplomacy as the primary goal, with the recognition by so many foreign countries reaffirming the emperor's position. Others point to commercial motives, since the voyages came at the time Chinese merchants were becoming more active in Southeast Asia. In the early Ming period, China remained the most advanced civilisation in the world. Commercially vibrant and outward-looking, Ming China could have opened greater communication between the continents and become the dominant world power well beyond eastern Asia. However, it never did. The grand voyages to the west and the commercial thrust in Southeast Asia came to a sudden halt when the Ming emperor ordered a return to isolationism and recalled all Chinese people living outside the empire.

How can we account for this stunning reversal that, in the perspective of later history, seemed so counterproductive? Perhaps the voyages were too expensive even for the wealthy Ming government. The voyages were not cost-effective because the ships returned chiefly with exotic goods, such as African giraffes for the imperial zoo, rather than mineral resources and other valuable items. It seems that the full possibilities of globalisation were not apparent to Chinese leaders. Furthermore, in the Chinese social system, merchants lacked status. And unlike Christian Europe, China had little interest in spreading its religion and culture. The Mongols were regrouping in Central Asia, and the Ming court was forced to shift its resources to defend the northern borders. As a result, the oceans were left open to the Western Europeans, who improved upon Chinese and Arab naval and military technology and soon challenged Arabs, Indians, and Southeast Asians for supremacy in the Indian Ocean trading system.

### **The End of the First Globalised System**

By the end of the 1400s, the reputation of such cities as Melaka, Canton, Calicut, and Hormuz as treasure troves of Asian luxuries had reached Europe. Anxious to gain direct access to Asian trade, the Portuguese finally made their way to India in 1498 and Melaka in 1509, inaugurating a new era of European activity in Asian history. Indeed, the Portuguese seized Melaka in 1511. Despite Portugal's superiority in ships and weaponry, its standard of living was probably inferior to that of people in the more developed societies of Asia. This, no doubt, contributed to the tendency of Europeans to use armed force to obtain their commercial and political goals. This tendency ensured that the globalisation of the world over the next five centuries would be under the auspices of Western Christians rather than the Muslims, Indians, and Chinese who established the basic framework between 1000 and 1500.

Globalisation also has its positive impact, which has made many nations interdependent. It has also opens up international trade, which has helped many countries grow far more quickly than they would otherwise have done. Long-distance communication and cheaper than ever, which has also led to cooperation between world leaders on issues such as stem the tide of poverty and hunger, reverse the spread of AIDS, and halve the proportion of those without access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Many have concluded that despite these far reaching benefits of globalisation, it has had much more damage on our indigenous cultural values. The cry today is that in the next few years some indigenous languages will become extinct, as there will be nobody to speak them. The same anxiety is been held for our traditional dressing patterns.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Culture:** is the patterns of behaviour and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. It also distinguishes humans from other animals. A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behaviour, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems.

**Globalisation:** It is a comprehensive term used to describe the close integration of countries and peoples of the world which has been brought about by communication and the breakdown of barriers of borders (Stiglite, 2003).

**Language:** Any verbal or non-verbal communication engaged in by humans, animals or even machines. All humans beings posses the ability to learn and communicate in one or more languages (Marshall, 1994). the principal means used by human beings to communicate with one another. Language is primarily spoken, although it can be transferred to other media, such as writing. If the spoken means of communication is unavailable, as may be the case among the deaf, visual means such as sign language can be used. A prominent characteristic of language is that the relation between a linguistic sign and its meaning is arbitrary.

***Mother Tongue:*** The language in which a child first learns to express his ideas about himself and about the world in which he lives.

***Clothing,*** coverings and garments intended to be worn on the human body. The words cloth and clothing are related, the first meaning fabric or textile, and the second meaning fabrics used to cover the body. The earliest garments were made of leather and other non-fabrics, rather than of cloth, but these non-abric garments are included in the category of clothing.

### **Theoretical Framework**

What could led to cultural change? The possible explanation is the theory of Diffusion. According to Hogan (2006) diffusion is the process by which culture traits or complexes spread from one society to another. In explaining this theory, Kottak (2004) stresses that exchange of information and products which has always existed in human history, since no human society can truly be said to be isolated. Contact between cultures through inter-marriage, trade agreements and communication has led to one culture copying the other and that major agent of the present day diffusion has been the mass media and advanced information technology. Wissler (1938) defined diffusion as the transfer of elements from one culture to another through interaction.

### **Why Globalisation**

Most experts attribute globalisation to improvements in communication, transportation, and information technologies. For example, not only currencies, but also stocks, bonds, and other financial assets can be traded around the clock and around the world due to innovations in communication and information processing. A three-minute telephone call from New York City to London in 1930 cost more than \$300 (in year 2000 prices), making instant communication very expensive. Today the cost is insignificant.

Advances in communication and information technologies have helped slash the cost of processing business orders by well over 90 per cent. Using a computer to do banking on the Internet, for example, costs the banking industry pennies per transaction instead of dollars by traditional methods. Over the last third of the 20th century, the real cost of computer processing power fell by 35 per cent on average each year. Vast amounts of information can be processed, shared, and stored on a disk or a computer chip, and the cost is continually declining. People can be almost anywhere and remain in instant communication with their employers, customers, or families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or 24/7 as it has come to be known. When people in the United States call a helpline or make an airline reservation, they may be connected to someone in Mumbai (Bombay), India, who has been trained to speak English with an American accent. Other English speakers around the world prepare tax returns for U.S. companies, evaluate insurance claims, and attempt to collect overdue bills by telephone from thousands of kilometres and a number of time zones away.

Advances in communications instantly unite people around the globe. For example, communications satellites allow global television broadcasts to bring news of faraway events, such as wars and national disasters as well as sports and other forms of entertainment. The Internet, the cell phone, and the fax machine permit instantaneous communication. The World Wide Web and computers that store vast amounts of data allow instant access to information exceeding that of any library.

Improvements in transportation are also part of globalisation. The world becomes smaller due to next-day delivery by jet airplane. Even slow, ocean-going vessels have streamlined transportation and lowered costs due to innovations such as containerised shipping (Craig Lockard 2009)

### **The Institutions of Globalisation**

Three key institutions helped shape the current era of globalisation: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). All three institutions trace their origins to the end of World War II (1939-1945) when the United States and the United Kingdom decided to set up new institutions and rules for the global economy. At the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire in 1944, they and other countries created the IMF to help stabilise currency markets. They also established what was then called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to help finance the rebuilding of Europe after the war (William K. Tabb, 2009)

### **The Development of Global Culture**

According to Bodley (2009), the first and perhaps most crucial globalising process was the migration of human beings from the birthplace of the species to other continents. For several million years, humans stayed in Africa, their original homeland. About 1.5 million years ago, *Homo erectus*, an ancestor of modern human beings, walked out of Africa and established communities throughout much of the Eastern Hemisphere. About 100,000 years ago, *Homo sapiens*, our own species, also left Africa. By about 10,000 BC *Homo sapiens* were present throughout virtually the entire habitable world.

Rapid changes in technology in the last several decades have changed the nature of culture and cultural exchange. People around the world can make economic transactions and transmit information to each other almost instantaneously through the use of computers and satellite communications. Governments and corporations have gained vast amounts of political power through military might and economic influence. Corporations have also created a form of global culture based on worldwide commercial markets.

Local culture and social structure are now shaped by large and powerful commercial interests in ways that earlier anthropologists could not have imagined. Early anthropologists thought of societies and their cultures as fully independent systems. But today, many nations are multicultural societies, composed of numerous smaller subcultures. Cultures also cross national boundaries. For instance, people around the world now know a variety of English words and have contact with American cultural exports such as brand-name clothing and technological products, films and music, and mass-produced foods.

There is widespread disagreement over what, if any, regulation is appropriate in the realm of culture. Some people fear a loss of cultural diversity as U.S. media companies become dominant. Such companies tend to “bundle” their products so that a blockbuster movie is promoted by selling soundtracks, books, video games, and other products. These cultural wares are distributed worldwide, and along with reruns of U.S. television shows, tend to replace local alternatives. The question is whether responses by other nations, such as prohibitions against the English language and government subsidies of national cultural productions, are legitimate restraints of trade or represent an unfair trade practice?

Another possible factor that helped influenced the rise of global culture is the availability of television sets, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2009), there were 28,841,000 television sets in Nigeria in 2008, for example, today, there are 235 television set to every 1000 persons in the world. According to Omoyibo and Okaka (2008) about sixty per cent of programmes broadcasted in Nigeria television stations are foreign. In other words, only forty per cent of television programmes aired in Nigeria have local content.

### **Decline Usage of Indigenous Languages**

For any language to continue in existence, such a language must have numbers of individuals that speak and use such a language for communication. Negative attitudes towards a language creates room for its decline or death, with so many people abandoning the use of indigenous may eventually lead to the death of these languages (Ikhimwin 2011). That is a situation we all want to avoid.

In explaining the reason for the decline in the usage of local languages, Ikhimwin (2011) in her work “Linguistic Attitude of Edo People Towards Edo Language” stressed that most people feel inferior when using local languages and some have even discouraged their children from using them, even at home. while, Kulich (1992), stated that children are rather encouraged to learn a language of wider communication in order to participate fully in society, Uwajeh (2003) explains that unwillingness to even attempt speaking a language could lead to the death of such a language.

### **Why Indigenous Language**

According to Chumbow (1990), a child learns better and develops faster cognitively if he is taught in his mother tongue continuously over a period of time in infancy. The argument here is that local languages can assist the learning processes of a child’s development. Chumber (1982) stressed that apart from personal development, indigenous languages can also assist in national development, as it can help prepare the human resources of the nation to better utilise the national resources.

Another argument put forward is that mother tongue is one means by which orientation in the cultural environment is made. That when it is considered that language is closely related to culture in that it is an expression of the common cultural experience of the members of the linguistics community who speak it, this point underscores the socio-cultural value of language to man. Given the psychological and socio-cultural importance of language to man, it follows that the mother tongue, as the first language learned by the child to express his ideas, about himself and about the world in which he lives, will tend to have a certain psychological and socio-cultural effect on the child (Chumbow, 1990).

### **Methodology**

For the purpose of ascertaining the impact of globalisation on indigenous languages and pattern of dressing, a total of six hundred and fifty-three respondents were selected from among university students, and workers using the random probability sampling technique, to find the extent, they have been influenced by globalisation in their way of dressing and the use of indigenous languages for communication. The technique determines the chances or likelihood of drawing each member of the selected university and establishment. Two universities were selected, one located in Oghara, Delta State, south-south Nigeria, the second located in Port-Harcourt, south-south Nigeria. Two establishments were selected, one located at Jos, North-central Nigeria, and the other located in Lagos, south-west Nigeria.



## Findings

The respondents were asked what types of cloth they would prefer. The responses of the survey group is illustrated in table 1 below.

**Table 1 Preference of Cloths of Respondents**

S/N	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Western Cloths	451	69.07 %
2	Nigerian Dresses	144	22.05 %
3	Mixed Dresses	58	8.88 %
4	Total	653	100 %

**Source of data:** Survey by Okaka and Omoyibo, 2011

The data illustrated in table 1 clearly indicates that most of the respondents would prefer western type of clothes to traditional African dresses, this position is held by four hundred and fifty-one respondents representing sixty-nine per cent of the group. They also agree that the influence may have come from the impression created in the media, that all things western are not only beautiful but ideal. Only one hundred and forty-four respondents representing twenty-two per cent would prefer indigenous dresses. While nine per cent of the respondents do appreciate both types of dresses.

The respondents were further asked why they would prefer western or Nigerian styles of clothes. The respondents gave the following reasons for choosing a particular style of cloth. The data derived from the survey is displayed in table 2.

**Table 2: Reasons for Choosing A Particular Style of Dress**

S/N	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Western Style of Cloths are More widely accepted	397	60.80%
2	Wearing western types of cloths keeps align with Modernity.	235	35.99%
3	Not Sure	21	3.21%
4	Total	653	100%

**Source of data:** survey by Okaka and Omoyibo, 2011

Table 3 is a clear perception of most young individual who feel that western dresses make them more accepted. This position was held by three hundred and ninety-seven respondents representing sixty per cent of the respondents, while thirty-six per cent of the respondents believe that western dresses make them more modern than traditional Nigerian clothes. This data only goes a long way to expose the perception of most young persons with regards to traditional Nigerian styles of clothing, which is one not generally accepted by them.

The respondents were also asked if they could speak their mother tongue that is the indigenous language of either the mother or father. The responses of the group is shown on table 3.

**Table 3 Ability to Understand and Speak Mother Tongue (Indigenous Language)**

S/N	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Understands and speak not fluently	61	9.34%
2	Understand and speak Fluently	69	10.57%
3	Can Understand but cannot Speak	134	20.52%
4	Does not Understand and speak	389	59.57%
5	Total	653	100%

**Source of data:** survey by Okaka and Omoyibo, 2011

The data in table 3 shows that majority of the respondents do not understand and speak their mother tongue; this is seen from the table as three hundred and eighty-nine respondents representing sixty per cent of the survey group falls within this category. While one hundred and thirty-four others could understand their mother tongue but cannot speak, the situation is not too different for sixty-nine others representing eleven per cent understand but cannot speak mother tongue fluently. The most astonishing of these data is that only sixty-one of the six hundred and fifty-three respondents, could understand and speak their mother tongue fluently. That is how much globalisation has impacted indigenous language.

### Conclusion

Globalisation has been praised for the advantages that has come with it, which include converting the world into one global village, as information spread with a click of the button, yet globalisation has also come with its side effect and one of such is the decline in the use of indigenous Nigerian languages and the abandoning of once rich dressing patterns known to Nigerians for decades, this situation can lead to the death of some of these rich cultures and languages, hence we are recommending the following:

- (i) awareness should be created in the minds of all especially the young that all languages are important and deserve to be preserved by usage of such languages;
- (ii) the government should make the reading and speaking of indigenous languages compulsory during the first nine years of learning in schools;
- (iii) parents should endeavour to help their children by teaching them their mother tongue through constant usage at home;
- (iv) children should also be taught to wear traditional cloths in everyday life; and
- (v) the National Broadcasting Corporation should monitor television stations to ensure the strictly follow the policy of sixty per cent local content of programming.

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