

African Natural/Cultural Communication Media: A Survey of Meanings and Usage at Traditional Ceremonies

Victoria O. Ajala

*Mass Communication Department, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo Ogun State
Telephone: 0803-515-3953; E-mail: funmilayo44@yahoo.com*

KEYWORDS Culture. Society. African Media. Natural Communication. Diaspora

ABSTRACT Culture has a very broad meaning. Culture has been defined as the total way of life commonly followed by the members of a society; culture is also a social legacy, a tradition, which an individual acquires from his group. The study attempts to examine the universal meanings of eight selected African natural communication media: missing beads, cockcrow, female hairstyles, kolanuts, masquerades, moon, talking drum/trumpet, and tribal marks, exploring through survey method, the meaning of these African media items; their cultural significance and usage at ceremonies in Africa. The universal meanings of the words support the fact that each word has both biblical and cultural origins particularly in Africa. Data collected from Babcock University academic and non-academic staff from the three Nigerian major cultural groups, within the age range of 36 and 50 years and above reveal that items have significance and are "a must have" for African ceremonies ranging from chieftaincy, naming, marriage and cultural festivals such as *Egungun* and New Yam festivals. Ultimately this study would contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for re-awakening the significance of these and many more natural African communication media among the youths at home and in the Diaspora.

INTRODUCTION

In Africa, there are many natural communication media, some of which have been neglected but which still have cultural relevance. When these natural African media are examined, it becomes clear that they exist in our minds, feelings and attitudes which no cultural imperialism can delete from our way of life. Young Nigerians should know about these natural media.

Man is said to be a gregarious animal, hence the need for humans to communicate among themselves using symbols which in most times, can be easily understood by people of same culture. Ordinarily, clouds and rainfall, signs and seasons, moon and stars, the wind and even different colours do communicate symbolic meanings to people in Africa and around the world. For example, different cultures have different interpretations of rain. Rain, in the Judeo-Christian cultural tradition, serves as a tool of God's anger or wrath. In *Genesis 6*, angered by the behaviour of His people, God sent forty days and forty nights of rain; the only survivors were the favored family of Noah and the pairs of animals which found refuge in the ark.

On the other side, rain functions as blessing. In the eastern part of Nigeria, rain symbolizes fertility of the land and good production of crops most especially yam as seen during the yam festival celebration. In some cultures, light rain during wedding ceremony is interpreted that God is happy with the marriage and that the marriage is blessed.

Rain is very significant and important to humans because it reduces heat radiation directly on us and it also brings about bountiful harvest. Rain is also believed to be a neutralizer of poisons caused by pollution that depletes the ozone. But, when it rains during burial ceremony in the eastern part of Nigeria, that rain is seen as a bad omen. It is believed that the person being buried is an evil person or witchcraft and that the gods are not happy with the person because of the evils committed and so the ceremony would not go uninterrupted (http://www.unclesirbobby.org.uk/dreamdiction_arryrain.php).

The scriptures also confirm the significance of signs, seasons and wind as recorded in *Luke 12: 54 & 55* 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, "a shower is coming", and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "there will be scorching heat", and it happens.

Colours do communicate and they mean many things to different cultures. Colours are rich in hidden meanings and symbolism. The phrases: *feeling blue; seeing red; green with envy*; are associated with emotions, while *blue blood; red carpet; Purple Heart; black market; and the orange bowl* communicate specific meanings across different cultures. While red is the colour of fire and blood, a colour of joy, gladness, delight and the promise of a new beginning, orange represents enthusiasm, attraction, success as well as being the colour of fall and harvest. While yellow is the colour of sunshine, very effective for attracting attention, green is the colour

of nature, symbolizing freshness and fertility also green is normally associated with a great healing power. Blue is the colour of the sky and sea, often associated with tranquility and calmness. Purple is associated with royalty, while white is associated with purity and cleanliness. Black is generally associated with power and elegance, but often linked with death, evil and mystery. (Wikipedia free encyclopedia)

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Culture and Cultural Imperialism Theory

A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behaviour, language, rituals, art, and technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion and political economic systems. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. All of us are directly influenced by our culture; each society has its own culture which has a deep impact on the thinking and behaviour of its members

According to World Book Encyclopedia (2003), culture is based on symbols; culture is learned and shared; culture is adaptive and culture does not perish with the death of an individual or group of individuals but then, culture is dynamic and changes with time. Through communication, cultural exchange can provide many benefits for all societies, even though such exchanges can also have drawbacks.

Cultural Imperialism Theory, propounded by Herb Schiller in 1973 (Anaeto et al. 2008) assumes that western nations dominate the media around the world, which in turn has a powerful effect on Third World cultures by imposing on them western values and thereby destroying their native cultures. "This means that the programmes from the developed countries which portray their culture will be imbibed by the developing nations". It is further assumed that western culture now dominates our local cultures because we are consuming their mass media messages. However, Anaeto et al. (2008) inform that UNESCO has been championing a "New Information Order" to correct cultural imperialism.

This study is another attempt to showcase the native African natural communication media items so that the growing young African population will appreciate much more what these items

mean to Africans, whether they are at home or in the Diaspora.

The following African cultural communication media are reviewed: beads, cockcrow, female hairstyles, kolanuts, masquerades, moon, talking-drum/trumpet, and tribal-marks.

Beads

According to <http://www.hubpages.com/beads>, beads have different meaning to different tribes around Africa. Beads have been used in Africa for thousands of years. Beads tell the story of many lives, communicating values and expressing rank. The Zulu created a symbolic language with their beads and beadworks using bone stones, wood, seed, horn, metals, shells and nuts and European glass beads.

The size, shape, arrangement and colour of the beads indicate social status and personal achievements. The design and colours indicate a male or female, beads distinguish the young from the elders, the married from the unmarried, beads separated members of the community from the royalty; the diviners, and the healers were recognized by their beads.

In Yoruba land, beads are associated with royalty. The beaded crowns are the major component of the regalia. In the 18th century, crowns were simple in design, embellished with cowries' shell, jasper stone or coral beads made locally.

In Ghana, pregnant women wear colourful beads until the baby is born. Mothers tie beads at the major joints of the child, their waist, wrist, leg and neck, particularly when the child is a girl, the beads at the waist is to enable the mother to monitor the growth rate of the child. If the string of the beads is loose, the mother will know that all is not well with the child. This technique was practiced throughout Africa (<http://www.hubpages.com/beads>). Today, however, beads are used across African countries as fashion items, necklace, earrings, wrist bands and most recently beads are used to make flower vases, trays and other household items (Fig. 1).

Cockcrow

A cock is a male chicken also called a rooster or chanticleer (<http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Rooster>). The rooster is often portrayed as crowing at the break of dawn and will almost always start



Fig. 1a. Traditional beads

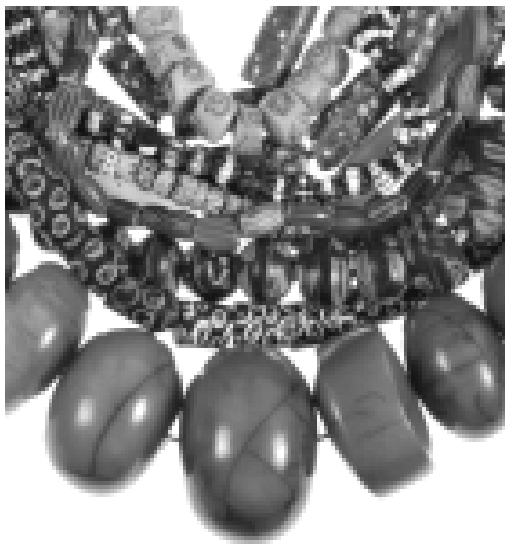


Fig. 1b. Modern beads

crowling before four months of age. He can often be seen sitting on fence posts or other objects, where he crows to proclaim his territory. Cock crow sometimes serve as a lookout call for his flock and he will sound a distinctive alarm call if predators are nearby (Fig. 2a, b).

According to <http://thefreedictionary.com/>

cockcrow, the crow of a cock signifies the start of a new dawn; around 5:30a.m. The cockcrow is a time piece used all over the world especially in Africa, where life centers around livestock and farming. For example, in Ghana, there are three stages of time: The first cockcrow is soon after midnight, the second cockcrow is at 2a.m and the third is at 5:30a.m. Which cockcrow you wake up to depends on the type of job that your family does.

The cock also serves the needs of the community by telling the time. A popular adage says the “the cock that crows in the morning belongs to one household, but his voice is the property of the whole neighbourhood”. Those who lived in the rural areas appreciate and understand the importance of the cock, especially the one which crows at appropriate times to wake up people to begin their daily economic activities. It is only the lazy who ignores the cock crow.

Today, city dwellers cannot appreciate the value of cockcrow because of availability of communication technology tools such as radio, television and even wall clocks and watches. Even though the actual significance of the cockcrow which is to notify people of the time is becoming extinct, especially in urban communities, the initial significance of the cockcrow still remains relevant to communication (<http://www.nouedu.ng/noun/NOUNOCL/pdf/pdf2/MAM116.pdf> retrieved on 15/11/09; [http://www.primrose-education.co.uk/adobe samples/africa%20MIG %intro.pdf](http://www.primrose-education.co.uk/adobe%20samples/africa%20MIG%20intro.pdf) retrieved on 15/11/09).

Biblical Significance of the Cock Crow: The cock was highly significant in the days of the Bible. According to several biblical accounts, the cock crowed at specific times during significant events and communicated different meanings at different times. Some of the accounts of the bible concerning cock crow are found in *Matthew 26:34*; *Luke 22:34* and *John 13:38*. One of these is “Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shall deny me thrice.”

Female Hairstyles

In the Benin kingdom of the Old Midwestern state of Nigeria (Now Edo State) Queen mother heads are distinguished by a special type of coral-bead crown with a high, forward-pointing peak, an elongated version of an elaborate coiffure known as “chicken’s beak,” worn by high-rank-



Fig. 2a. Cock crow



Fig. 2b. Cock crow

ing Edo women. The right to wear a coral-bead crown is limited to the Oba, the queen mother, and the *Ezomo*, the Oba's principal war chief, and thus conveys the queen mother's importance in the Benin political hierarchy.

In other parts of the Yoruba speaking western Nigeria, the Oba's wives also have their peculiar hairstyle. Some part of the hair is clean-shaven and the hair at the central portion is made into *suku* (pronounced Shookoo). Only Oba's wives can have this hairstyle. Today, however, other women can choose to wear various styles of *suku* hairstyle.

Not too long ago in the south west, south-south and south eastern part of Nigeria, threading the hair with black cotton thread was in vogue. The hair is parted into small portions and threaded all the way to form a beautiful pattern. Today, woolen threads of various colours are now used by young women (Fig. 3a, b, c).



Fig. 3 a. Female hairstyle



Fig. 3 b. Female hairstyle

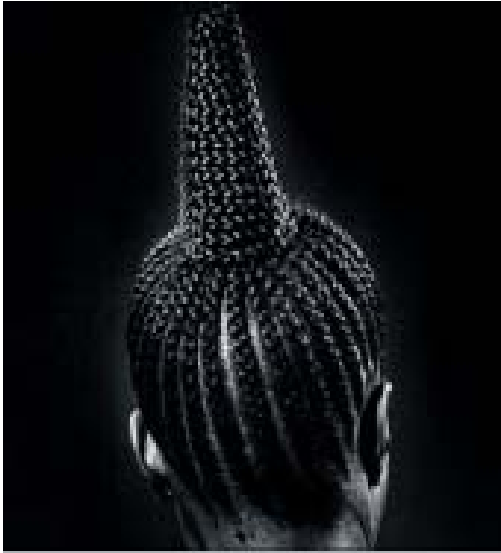


Fig. 3 c. Female hairstyle

Kolanut

In Nigeria, Kolanut is called “*Oji*” in Igbo land, *Gworo* in Hausa and *Obi* in Yoruba land. It is both important for customary celebrations as well as helping physical body in combating sleep in a very natural way. Traditionally, kolanut is regarded as a sacred nut which is used to communicate with the gods being that was chosen by the elders as the head or king of all seeds. As a sacred nut it is used in so many ways as mediating factor whereby it becomes necessary to present it first in every occasion. There is no important gathering in Igbo land that can take place without the breaking of kolanut. It is used in traditional marriages, peacemaking mission, meetings of the elders, and even when a visitor comes to someone’s home, the guest will not say his mission until after the kolanut has been presented to him. At any village function, the titled man or a village head is presented with kolanuts, which play a very important social and ritual role in the Igbo culture. The kolanuts are the highest symbol of Igbo hospitality. This symbol of Igbo hospitality has three steps: (1) presentation of the kolanuts, (2) breaking of the kolanuts and (3) distribution of the kolanuts. Anyone who fails to follow these steps is penalized by the village elders (Fig. 4 a, b).

The presentation of kolanuts is a privilege



Fig. 4 a. Kolanuts



Fig. 4 b. Kolanuts

reserved for the men; this privilege is denied to women for cultural reasons. Kolanut is held by majority of Igbo people to be sacred. Hence women who because of their monthly period are regarded as impure are barred from breaking kolanut in order to avoid its defilement. It is even held that women should not climb a kolanut tree as this could result in the tree going barren. However, women can break kolanut when it is an all women gathering (<http://www.mysticwicks.com/kolanut> <http://www.kwenu.com/kolanut>, www.abibitumikasa.com/kolanut).

Masquerades

(A) *Igbo Masquerades*

According to Reed (2005) ([http://findarticles.com/p/search/?qa=Bess Reed](http://findarticles.com/p/search/?qa=Bess+Reed)), under the cloudy skies that marked the declining days of the rainy

season, the 1993 Enugu State Mmanwu Festival helped to modernize Igbo masking. Maskers and musicians, dancers and titled men paraded in the afternoon heat and helped shape traditional customs for use in contemporary Nigeria. Since its beginning in 1986, this ongoing urban masquerade festival has expressed both nostalgia for the past and anxiety about the future, and reflected ongoing political, technological, cultural, and economic change. The festival organizers attempted to create a tourist attraction to improve economic conditions by celebrating Igbo masquerade traditions that reflect social and political values. By altering and simulating these traditions, festival organizers worked to present a powerful art that they hoped would bring both moral virtue as well as economic benefits to the state (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Masquerades

(B) Eyo Masquerade of Lagos

The Eyo festival, otherwise known as Adamu-Orisha play, is, by tradition, staged only in memory of a deceased person, and it is always a grand event.

The Eyo masquerade festival could be traced to two areas in the South-West. While the people of Iperu, Ogun State, claimed that Eyo masquerade originated from their town, the people of Badagry also claimed that it originated from

Badagry where Eyo festival used to take place on market days. Further research into the origin of Adamun-Orisha plays revealed that about the middle of the 19th Century, the then British Governor could not tolerate the long absence of officials of Lagos colony from their seats as they were fond of going to watch Eyo parade in Ikoyi. The journey from Lagos Island to the venue of the parade could take about three days. The British Governor complained that the absence of the officials was serious enough to disrupt the running of the affairs of Lagos colony. Thus, he ordered a stop to the trips to Ikoyi.

The British authorities' directive prompted the elders, chiefs and prominent indigenes of Lagos to invite the maskers of Adamun-Orisha from Ikoyi to relocate to Lagos Island. The maskers agreed to the suggestion, and thereafter settled on Lagos Island to become a part of the people till today. Hence, the first performance of Adamun-Orisha on Lagos Island took place on February 20th, 1854 and it was staged in memory of the late Oba Akitoye of Lagos.

Eyo masquerade speaks in ventriloquial voice, suggesting that he is not human and also that he represents the spirit of departed persons. The Eyo is believed to symbolize the arrival on earth of the spirit. When one meets an Eyo and greets him with the words 'Agogoro Eyo (meaning, that a tall and an imposing Eyo), he is expected to respond thus: '*Mo yo fun e, mo yo funra mi*' (meaning, I rejoice with you for seeing this day and rejoice with myself).

Moon

The Moon is Earth's only natural satellite and is the fifth largest satellite in the Solar System. Despite being the brightest object in the sky after the Sun, its surface is actually very dark, with a similar reflectance to coal. Its prominence in the sky and its regular cycle of phases have since ancient times made the Moon an important cultural influence on language, the calendar, art and mythology.

American lunar exploration began with robotic missions aimed at developing understanding of the lunar surface for an eventual manned landing. The subsequent landing of the first humans on the Moon in 1969 is seen by many as the culmination of the space race. Neil Armstrong became the first person to walk on the Moon as the commander of the American mission Apollo 11 by first setting foot on the Moon

at 02:56 UTC on 21 July 1969 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon#cite_note-127).

The Moon has a long association with insanity and irrationality; the words *lunacy* and *loony* are derived from the Latin name for the Moon, *Luna*. Philosophers such as Aristotle and Pliny the Elder (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon#cite_note-sciam-163) argued but admitted that there is no scientific evidence to support such claims, that the full Moon induced insanity in susceptible individuals, believing that the brain, which is mostly water, must be affected by the Moon and its power over the tides, but the Moon's gravity is too slight to affect any single person. Even today, people insist that admissions to psychiatric hospitals, traffic accidents, homicides or suicides increase during a full Moon; again, these philosophers admit that there is no scientific evidence to support such claims (Fig. 6 a, b, c).



Fig. 6 a. Full moon

Talking Drum/Trumpet

According to Wikipedia (Talking drum in the African context, Nov. 9, 2009) talking drums are developed and used by cultures living in forested areas. Drums served as an early form of long distance communication, and were used during ceremonial and religious functions. There are two types of talking drums: pressure drum and slit gongs. The pressure drum can be modulated quite closely, its range is limited to a gathering or market-place, and it is primarily used in ceremonial settings. Ceremonial functions could include



Fig. 6 b. Half moon



Fig. 6 c. Quarter moon

dance, rituals, story-telling and communication of points of order. In the 20th century the talking drums have become a part of popular music in West Africa, especially in the music genres of Jùjú (Nigeria) and Mbalax (Senegal) (Fig. 7 a, b).

Slit gongs were made out of hollowed logs. The bigger the log, the louder sound would be made and thus the farther it could be heard. A drum could be tuned to produce a lower note and a higher note. Under ideal conditions, the sound can be understood at 8 km (5 miles), but interesting messages usually get relayed on by the next village. “The talking drums” or “jungle drums” is also a euphemism for gossip - similar to “the grapevine”.

Among the famous communication drums are the drums of West Africa. From regions known today as Nigeria and Ghana they spread across West Africa and to America and the Caribbean



Fig. 7 a. Talking drum



Fig. 7 b. Talking drum

during the slave trade. There they were banned because they were being used by the slaves to communicate over long distances in a code unknown to their enslavers.

Tribal Marks

According to <http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/yl/y104.htm>, the story of how tribal marks came to be used started when a certain King



Fig. 7 c. Traditional trumpet



Fig. 7 d. Modern trumpet

named “Sango” sent two slaves to a distant country on an important mission. In due course they returned, and he found that one slave had achieved successfully what he had been sent to do, while the other had accomplished nothing. The King, therefore, rewarded the first with high honors, and commanded the second to receive a hundred and twenty-two (122) razor cuts all over his body (Fig. 8).

This was a severe punishment, but when the scars healed, they gave to the slave a very remarkable appearance, which greatly took the fancy of the King’s wives. Sango, therefore, decided that cuts should in future be given, not as punishment, but as a sign of royalty, and he pla-



Fig. 8. Tribal marks

ced himself at once in the hands of the markers. However, he could only bear two cuts, and so from that day two cuts on the arm have been the sign of royalty, and various other cuts came to be the marks of different tribes.

METHODOLOGY

The survey method was adopted for this study. A 25-item questionnaire was designed to solicit responses from Nigerians considered to be knowledgeable about, and conversant with the culture and tradition of the people in the major tribes in Nigeria. From a study population of three hundred (300) adult academic and non-academic staff of Babcock University, a sample size of seventy-five (75) male and female was selected across the five schools of the University.

FINDINGS FROM RESPONDENTS

Research Question 1: What is the demographic information of respondents?

1. Tribal Affiliation and Fluency in Written and Spoken African Language

Majority of respondents were of the Yoruba tribe. This was not surprising as Babcock Uni-

versity, from where the sample was drawn, is located in Ogun State, one of the Yoruba speaking states of Western part of Nigeria.

Table 1: Tribal affiliation and fluency in written and spoken African language

Yoruba	Igbo	Hausa	Others	Total
55.5%	22.2%	3.7%	11.1%	92.5%

2. Age Group of Respondents

Interestingly, majority of respondents (60 percent) were of the 36-49 age group, while 24 percent were 50 years and above and 16 percent were within the age group of 25-35 years.

Research Question 2: What do these selected items communicate to Africans?

The following words were used by respondents to indicate the meanings attached to the items in their native African cultures (Table 2).

Table 2: The meanings attached to items in native African cultures

Items	Meanings
1. <i>Beads</i>	Royalty and ornamental, Wealth and Beauty Chieftaincy Associated with honor and respect within the society To identify traditional rulers Blessing
2. <i>Cockcrow</i>	Industry Punctuality Announcing dawn of the day Daybreak Wake up call Communicating time
3. <i>Kolanuts</i>	Friendship Goodwill/long life Used for traditional prayers Sign of Hospitality Greetings Peace and fruitfulness Welcome & acceptance
4. <i>Masquerades</i>	Moral and societal stability Ghost/spirit of ancestors, Return of the dead Entertainment Burial Gods of the land Custom (cultural practices) Festivals
5. <i>Moon</i>	A new beginning Time to enjoy and tell children stories Pregnancy New happenings Natural light

Table 2: Contd.....

<i>Items</i>	<i>Meanings</i>
6. <i>Female Hairstyles</i>	Beauty Festivity Royalty For identification Peace of mind Royal tribes
7. <i>Talking Drum/Trumpet</i>	Entertainment Communication For appellation and praises Convey message For calling people together Trumpet To deliver king's message/for errand calls To praise the king To signify arrival of an important personality To call people for war or for special gatherings Communication of war
8. <i>Tribal marks</i>	Identification by kings for identification Heritage To identify people of ethnic group/tribe Mark of origin/custom Sign of ownership

It is interesting to note that the meanings which Africans attach to the selected words conform in some ways with the universal meanings. However, these words have peculiar and significant communicative meanings to Africans.

Research Question 3: During which cultural ceremonies/functions are the natural communication items used? (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that majority of the respondents (because of their age) understand the meanings and usage of the selected natural cultural communication media in their various tribal settings. It also implies that they grew up in the rural-urban settings and must have witnessed the use of these items during cultural events or festivals, or in fact used them during their own marriage ceremonies and during naming ceremonies of their children. What this study could not find out was whether or not these respondents have made efforts at explaining the meanings and usage of the items to their own children.

It is generally believed that young Nigerians are losing the use of their mother tongues; they

hardly understand the African culture and are fast becoming strangers/aliens even in their own lands. This generation of Africans are either ignorant of, or who have adopted western cultures to the detriment of their native cultural practices and beliefs. It is rather unfortunate that an average African child born outside Africa has, through the negligence of his parents, lost his parents' mother tongue. Such a child may never know cultural items like kolanut, talking drum, or African woman's hairstyle.

It is true that advanced technology seems to erode our reliance on these natural media. For example, cockcrow has been rendered unheard with television, radio, alarm clocks as well as the fact that environmentalists have regulated that poultry farms should be removed far from immediate communities; and keeping of local chickens in urban areas are no longer tolerated by residents. At best today, the youths may be tempted to download cock crowing ring-tone for their cell phones just for sometime.

Moreover, tribal marks are no longer in vogue; tattoos now reign supreme among the youths; beads are worn by kings and chiefs, princes and princesses, every one adorns herself/himself with colourful and designer beads. However, we still live with, and we use, eat, and experience these items in our day to day live even though their meanings appear remote but are very important and prominent in communicating a message to us in our day to us in our day to day life. Also these items do not only reflect our unique way of life to the outside world, but adequately communicate our unique African culture especially those of the black race.

CONCLUSION

These items bring to memory our rich historical heritage that need to be preserved, treasured, and promoted.

This generation needs to be reawakened before the richness of African culture perishes with today's senior citizens who are knowledgeable and are willing to pass down information to supposedly westernized children. It is, therefore, greatly appreciated that Babcock University and the *Alaafin* of Oyo have agreed to construct a heritage centre at the University. At a recently-held ground-breaking ceremony, Ayandare (2010) reports that the Vice-Chancellor of the University said: "A people without a valuable past is equivalent to a people without credible

Table 3: Cultural ceremonies and items used

<i>Cultural ceremonies/ Functions</i>	<i>Natural cultural items commonly used or found around ceremonial venues</i>	<i>Percentage of respondents indicating item use</i>
<i>Chieftaincy</i>	Beads Kolanuts Talking drums Masquerades Trumpets Hair styles (Benin male and female—Edo State of Nigeria tradition)	95%
<i>Traditional Marriage/ Engagement Ceremony</i>	Beads Kolanuts	98%
<i>Wedding Ceremony</i>	Beads Kolanuts Talking drums Trumpets (in the Northern Nigeria)	99%
<i>Traditional Festivals/ Turbaning Ceremony</i>	Beads (worn by traditional chiefs) Igbo Masquerades Eyo masquerades Kolanuts Talking Drums Trumpets Hair styles (Benin male & female—Edo State of Nigeria tradition)	98%
<i>Kingship Installation/ Coronation Ceremony</i>	Beads Masquerades (Igbo and Eyo) Trumpet Kolanuts Traditional coronation leaves (*)	96%
<i>Naming Ceremony</i>	Water Kolanuts Honey (*) Sugar and salt (*) Bitter cola (*)	99%
<i>Societal Cleansing</i>	Masquerades (Igbo and Eyo) Water Kolanuts Talking drums	55%
<i>Burial Ceremony</i>	Masquerades (Igbo and Eyo) Trumpets Talking drums	70%

Notes: (1) Items marked (*) were named by respondents, they were not included as part of cultural items under study.

(2) Items under study but not listed for use during ceremonies are: Cock crow, Moon, Tribal marks. These are unique African communication media as identified earlier: cock crow is time keeper, moonlight facilitates story telling at African village setting, while tribal marks (which is running out of style and being replaced by tattoos) is to identify the tribe to which an African belongs.

future.” He stresses further that “The idea of an African Heritage Center is a timely answer to the groaning of mortals. This is a bold step into pioneering the effort to recover the lost African heritage. This center is neither a shrine nor a temple, where a god will reside. It is an instructional, inter-actional and recreational cultural centre, designed to advance research and historical knowledge of culture and values about students, faculty, local and international communities, as it will foster the teaching of our customs and values”.

At the international level, the Centre for Black

and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) and the Brazilian Government recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This collaboration’s mission is to promote public interest in, understanding and appreciation of black and African Arts and Culture with a view to emphasizing the contributions of black and African peoples to world civilization. At the forum in Abuja, it was resolved that the Brazilian government should set in motion the machinery to facilitate the establishment of the Brazilian Cultural House in Nigeria as it had been done in Brazil by Nigeria.

Another step in the direction of preserving the Nigerian culture through teaching of indigenous language has been reported. According to Yerima (2010), The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) runs a four-week NICO's Indigenous Language Programme (NILP), during which different Nigerian languages are taught, not academic in outlook, but with emphasis on conversational and spoken aspects of the languages. It is interesting to note that NICO has opened the programme up to foreigners who live and work in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that in addition to what Babcock University, and CBAAC and NICO have taken up as their responsibilities, further research studies be carried out to find out what African children of today know about these (and many more) African cultural and natural communication media items. A solid conclusion would then be made about the real or imagined fears of neglect of African heritage items, and perhaps, cultural imperialism which this study might have raised.

REFERENCES

- African Arts http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0438/ (Retrieved 17 November 2009). From http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0438/is_i_38, (Retrieved 17 November 2009).
- African Communication Systems <http://www.nouedu.ng/noun/NOUNOCL/pdf/pdf2/MAM116.pdf> (Retrieved 15 November 2009).
- African Religion and Spirituality. From <http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/y1/y104.htm> (Retrieved 17 November 2009).
- Anaeto SG, Onabajo OS, Osifeso JB 2008. *Models and Theories of Communication*. Maryland: African Renaissance Books Incorporation,
- Ayandare I 2010. Babcock Varsity, Alaafin of Oyo to Construct Heritage Centre. *The Guardian*, Thursday, June 17, P. 46.
- Beads and Beadwork. From <http://www.hubpages.com/beads> (Retrieved 24 November 2009).
- Cockcrow. From <http://freedictionary.com/cockcrow> (Retrieved 17 November 2009).
- Kolanut Communion. From <http://www.kwenu.com/kolanut> (Retrieved 15 November 2009). <http://www.Google.com> (Retrieved 16 June 2010).
- Mbalax. From <http://wapedia.mobi/en/Mbalax> (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Myths of Ifè. From <http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/y1/y104.htm>. (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Moon. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon#cite_note-CNN-126 (Retrieved 6 August 2010).
- Moon. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon#cite_note-Sciam-163 (Retrieved 6 August 2010). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon#cite_note-127 (Retrieved 06 August 2010).
- Music (disambiguation). From <http://wapedia.mobi/en/Music> (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Primary Dance Teaching and Teaching Through Dance From <http://www.primrose-education.co.uk/adobe/samples/africa%20MIG%intro.pdf> (Retrieved on 15 November 2009).
- Rooster. From <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Rooster> (Retrieved 24 November 2009).
- Spirits Incarnate: Cultural Revitalization in a Nigerian Masquerade Festival. From [http://findarticles.com/p/search/?qa=Bess Reed](http://findarticles.com/p/search/?qa=Bess+Reed) (Retrieved 15 November 2009).
- The Guardian newspaper 2010. Nigerian-Brazilian Cultural Ties take Root in Abuja. *The Guardian*, June 11, P. 26
- The World Book Encyclopedia* 2003, Michigan, World Book Corporation
- Wiki: West Africa. From http://wapedia.mobi/en/West_Africa (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Wiki: History of Nigeria (1/6). From <http://wapedia.mobi/en/Nigeria> (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Wiki: History of Ghana (1/3). From <http://wapedia.mobi/en/Ghana> (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Wiki: United States (1/6) Indigenous Peoples of Asian Origin. From http://wapedia.mobi/en/United_States (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Wiki: Caribbean (1/3). From <http://wapedia.mobi/en/Caribbean> (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Wiki: Atlantic Slave Trade (1/6). From http://wapedia.mobi/en/Slave_trade (Retrieved 9 November 2009).
- Yerima Brigitte 2010. Indigenous Language as a unifying force. *The Guardian*, Wednesday July 21, P. 54.