Tuning In: Drama and Development at the BBC World Service

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Aims of the research

• To examine processes of cross-cultural communication and the translation of development themes via BBC Trust dramas for development (D4D)

• To understand the relationship between donors, dramatists, broadcasters and audiences

• To bring into close dialogue academic and practitioners perspectives on dramas for development

• To apply anthropological theory and tools to enhance communication for development, and engage with development from critical perspective
Research Questions

(1) How is drama for development produced and what creative, evaluation and technical inputs are required to make it locally relevant? (dearth of study on production)

(2) How are complex dramatic narratives concerning development and social change translated, understood, interpreted and/or acted upon by audiences?

(3) What dialogues are forged between audiences and producers? (influences upon producers/consumers, politics of development, funding pressures, inequalities, gender, etc)
Methodology

Theoretical Perspectives

• Drama: Sabido (character, plot evolutions), MARCH (alternative narratives, reinforcement from environment)
• Change: Communications for social change, and for behaviour change (BCC)
• Media Ethnography: mediation, translations

Methodological approach

• Collaborative media ethnography - institutional, textual analysis, audience research connected
• Research involves translation, communication interaction connections
  • with in-country researchers, BBC staff, audiences (in person and via online tools, i.e. blog, buzzword)
• Field visits
  • interviewing, observations
Activities Update

- Five dramas
  - Taste of Life (Cambodia)
  - ‘?????’ (Nepal)
  - New Home, New Life (Afghanistan)
  - Wetin Dey (Nigeria)
  - Piyar ka Passport (Pakistan, then UK)

Working on developing and refining new model of collaborative media ethnography for researching dramas for development that can be applied to other dramas

- Inventory of primary data sources from making the dramas and key informants being compiled
The Process: making a drama

Require dynamic model of transnational production circuits

Commission: vis a vis Status Quo

Create: Imagination, Research, Production

Interpret: Reflection, Change ‘Impact’

Encounter: Exposure Engagement

Deliver: Broadcast

Culture
Communications
Project/Drama
1. The Context:
Matrices of Commonalities/Comparison

Strategic issues:
- media – radio, TV, online, etc
- contexts – closed, conflict, transitional/recovery, stable
- themes – health, governance/human rights, humanitarian, learning/education topics within themes
- foundations, theory, models of change
- level and types of change

Operational, ‘creative’ issues:
- target audience
- attributes of drama – format, premise, setting, characters, style, tone, etc
- language(s) – script, production, broadcast
- sites – where written, recorded, edited, broadcast
- broadcasters
- episodes
2. The Players: Cross-Cultural Arenas in Drama Making

- Between crafts and industries/sectors

- Bouman’s research on collaborative relationships: ‘Turtles and Peacocks’
3. The Tensions:

Cross-Cultural Issues in Drama Making

Language, translation, vocabularies of drama and development practices:

Theoretical:
- Sectoral, disciplinary foundations and assumptions
  - What is drama?
  - What is development?

Mission:
- Is it legitimate to promote behaviour and/or social change? to use drama as a tool of persuasion?

Markers:
- What kinds of change?
- How does change happen?

Negotiations:
- Who decides?
  - Eg, when definitions and markers of success differ
4. Drama for Development as ‘Cultural Citizenship’?

D4D as ‘cultural citizenship’ aims to:

Engage
• stimulate strong emotional engagement, audience involvement

Portray
• break public silence on taboo or sensitive issues
• provides alternative narratives on behaviour and social change

Facilitate, Foster
• increase public dialogue and debate
• enable positive and negative behaviours to be compared by audiences (Bandura/Sabido)
• provide forum, facilitation for creation, elaboration of alternatives

Change
• socialize viewers/listeners to new lifestyles, development issues and modes of citizenship

Does this happen? How or how not? When and Why?
**NB: The State of the Art**

**Day of the Soap/Masterclass, 12/13th June, Netherlands**

**New Opportunities for E-E**  
(Bill Brown)  
Evolving interactions and expectations of entertainment industries, celebrities, consumers/audiences

**New Orientations, ‘Mindsets’ for E-E**  
(Arvind Singhal)  
1 – non-linear thinking  
2 – modelling new collective norms  
3 – listener as producer

**Establishing Collaborative Relationships**  
(Martine Bouman)  
- Priorities  - Decision-Making  - Dynamics of Interaction

- Question of genre beyond nomenclature:  
*Is there something better to call this than ‘Entertainment-Education’?*

- Missing (Frost Yocum): audience research, collective values, methodologies for creative collaborations
Outputs: Collaborative ethnography - 
5 Case Studies

FIVE papers from the BBC World Service Trust

1. Framework – Zone of Practice
   Project Cycle, Circuits of Culture
   Cross-Cultural Arenas
   Cross-Cultural Issues
   
   Case Studies – highlighting key moments

2. Cambodia – audience research programme

3. Nigeria –

4. Nepal - new concepts of citizenship

5. Comparative, Synthesis
   examples of points in the process, moments in the circuit
   evidence of dynamics, change

Expanding the Model to Diaspora Dramas
4 dramas of focus – made and set within fixed cultural contexts
1 drama – made and set across cultural contexts
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