

Types of Sex Programmes Aired on Vernacular Radio

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ABSTRACT: Vernacular FM radio is a fairly new mass medium in Kenya. This paper explains the types of sex programmes aired by vernacular radio in the country. It focuses on two radio stations broadcasting in Gikuyu language, a native language with the highest number of speakers in Kenya. The two radio stations in this study are Kameme FM and Inooro FM. The researcher listened to sex talk aired by the radio stations and transcribed the broadcasts. From the transcripts, it was possible to categorise the types of content broadcast. The study also gave questionnaires to 384 listeners to know what sex talk programmes they listened to. Sex talk in this study refers to radio broadcasts that address romantic love and sexual intercourse topics.

Key words: Gikuyu language, Romantic Love, Sex talk, Sexual intercourse, Sponsorship, Vernacular radio

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sex talk programmes have addressed various matters regarding sex. These include topics such as sexual dysfunctions, homosexuality and extramarital affairs (Omoera, 2010; Schroeder & Kuriansky, 2009). Radio programmes have also aired content that helps potential lovers to meet (Griffen-Foley, 2004; Manger, 2015). In Australia, a radio programme called "Midnight Matchmaker" helped to bring together potential lovers (Griffen-Foley, 2004). In this programme a male or female would call and describe the qualities of a lover he/she desired. Whoever thought he/she had the needed qualities would call and the radio presenter would help to exchange telephone numbers of the potential lovers. In the United Kingdom, Birmingham radio station BRMB organized a competition where single people would meet and the best match would win cash prizes, a house and a car (Manger, 2015). In Kenya a programme that helps unmarried people to meet and establish romantic relationship has also been organized by Radio Jambo. Single people call and say the qualities they would like in a potential lover they want to get married to. They then give their telephone numbers to the radio presenter who will give it to whoever is interested in establishing romantic relationship with the caller.

Radio has also been used to teach how sex can be controlled to achieve desired family sizes (Kabir, M & Islam, M., 2000; Omoera, 2010; United Nations Population Fund, 2015). In Chad, radio has played an important role in teaching citizens about this topic using a local language called 'Kera' (United Nations Population Fund, 2015). Radio discusses this subject that is considered a taboo as a result of cultural restrictions. These programmes have resulted in people talking openly about this subject. In Nigeria radio has been used for the same purpose (Omoera, 2010).

Radio has been used to discuss dangers of promiscuity and risky behaviour as well as related topics (Njogu, 2005; Obregon & Waisbord, 2012). In Tanzania, a radio soap opera called *Twende na Wakati* (Let us move with times) addressed promiscuity. The intention of this programme was to encourage responsible sexual behaviour (Obregon & Waisbord, 2012). Voice of Kenya (VOK) radio broadcast a soap opera called *Ushikwapo Shikamana* (If assisted, assist yourself) in the 1980s that addressed dangers of irresponsible sexual intercourse (Njogu, 2005).

Homosexuality has been discussed on radio although it has been controversial (Ndungu, 2015; Rice, 2015; Tomiuc, 2016). For example, Tyson Fury, a boxer who appeared to compare homosexuals to paedophiles, had to defend his views on BBC Radio 2. His comments had triggered condemnation from some people calling them hate crime (Rice, 2015). Radio RFE /RL Uzbek service aired a programme on condemnation of homosexuality by the country's leader in year 2016 when he condemned homosexuality as vulgar western culture (Tomiuc, 2016). Radio Jambo in Kenya has also addressed homosexuality (Ndungu, 2015).

The literature reviewed in this section revealed a range of topics on sex that have been covered by radio.

However, after emergence of vernacular radio in Kenya, studies on the types of sex talk on vernacular radio had not been given adequate attention. This left a gap that this study sought to close.

II. DISCUSSION

This section explains the types of sex talk programmes aired on vernacular radio. The researcher listened to a radio programmes, recorded them and transcribed them. From the transcripts he came up with the categories explained below. The transcripts included here are just excerpts of much longer transcripts.

1.1 Types of sex talk programmes aired on Vernacular Radio

The types of programmes are discussed below. The excerpts from the transcripts of the programmes are given in the native Gikuyu language and translated into English.

1. Homosexuality

This same sex relationship was aired by Inooro FM. In an Transcript 1 below, a young man called Michael explained how he was recruited into homosexuality in a programme called *Hutia Mundu* (Touch somebody). The presenter presented this programme as an evil practice to be condemned and avoided. The young man explained how three men hijacked and sodomised him. The presenter's hostility towards homosexuality was supported by the listeners' negative reaction towards same sex relationship.

Transcript 1

Presenter: *Thengiu ni gukinya na muno ni gwitikira gushare rugano rwaku nanii. No twende utwire maundu maria ugereirire.*

Michael: Mimi *niliingia nikiwa form three. Kuja holiday ndio nilipatana na hiyo incidence jioni. Nilihijakiwa nikawekwa kwa gari na wanaume watatu wakanipeleka mahali. Wakanifunga kwa four hours wakanisodomise then nikatupwa though nilipiigia brother yangu simu akanipick.*

English

Presenter: *Thank you for coming and accepting to share your story. We would like you to tell us what you have gone through.*

Michael: *I got into homosexuality when I was in form three. The incidence happened when I was on holiday. I was kidnapped by three men who put me in a car and drove to a place. They tied me up and sodomised me for 4 hours. They then dropped me at a highway.*

The young man explained that when since he was sodomised, he is unable to resist advances from other men.

2. Sponsorship

This refers to sexual relations between a young people, mainly a female with an older, richer person mostly a man. The young person gets money in exchange for sex. In Transcript 2 of programmes on Inooro FM's *Hagara* (Sharpen) programme aired on a Saturday morning a counsellor started her programme by criticizing a song that praised a sponsor. She criticised the older people who take advantage of young people sexually in exchange of money. The counsellor went on to explain the causes of sponsorship like poverty among young people. She called on the society to promote sex education among young people.

Transcript 2

Presenter: *Uria uretia rwimbo ruu onake arakiigua rwi rwega. By the way rwititio muno.*

Counsellor: *Uru wa andu nimendete waganu, na ni mendete mitugo miuru. No korwo twona the bigger picture ya sponsor uyu. Ni mundurume mukuru aroya ciana cia tuiritu agatuthukiria ruciu rwao. Na mutumia o taguo.*

English version

Presenter: *Whoever has requested that song enjoys it. By the way the song has been requested by many people.*

Counsellor: *What is annoying in people is that they love naughty behaviour. Let us look at the bigger picture of this sponsor. It is an old man taking advantage of our children and destroying their future. Or an old woman.*

In Transcript 3 the two presenters criticized old men who seek sexual relationship with young women.

Transcript 3

Saimo: *Reke ngwire he, wuui, ona hena billboard ii haha barabaraini irauga ati kana no wende muthuri ucio akorwo na your teenage daughter.*

Kata: *Ii.*

Saimo: *Ikauga wokorwo ndugienda akorwo na your daughter onawe tiga gukorwo na wake.*

English

Saimo: *Let me tell you, there is a billboard by the roadside having a picture of an old man asking if you would like him to have a romantic relationship with your teenage daughter.*

Kata: *Yes.*

Saimo: *It says that if you wouldn't, then leave his daughter too.*

In these two cases, vernacular radio condemns sponsorship.

3. Courtship

The programmes also discussed how lovers should conduct themselves during and before they marry. It is divided into traditional courtship and modern courtship. These were aired on Inooro FM. In Transcript 4 an old man explained how traditional courtship among the Gikuyu community took place up to marriage. In the programme, he criticised the young generation for not following the set down rules on courtship. At one point he argued that the Bible agrees with Gikuyu traditions when he said that as the Bible says in the Old Testament, when a married man dies his brother should inherit his wife. The presenter a much younger lady disagreed which revealed a rift between traditional courtship and the modern one.

Transcript 4

In the following dialogue the old man warned young women to avoid spending too much money that men interested in them offer. The dialogue starts when the old man asks the female presenter why a man would spend so much money on a potential lover.

Presenter : *Mundurume arenda o njaga.*

Guka : *Ugacoka ukorio uguikurukia na kii? Ukauga black current. Uthoni wathira werira ruracio. Ugacoka ugakumbwo ngiri cigana una. Muiritu mwerira ruracio. Andu a muhiriga makanengerwo kii? Muiritu nderiragira nawe niwerira. Njohi ya muhiriga tondu niwanyuira warara kirabu ukinyua ri, muhiriga ukunywa ki? Thoguo agacama kii? Nyumba igacama kii? We tondu niwerira ii, nginya choma.*

English

Wagithongo : *No he only needs you in bed.*

Grandfather: *He later asks you what drink you take and the lady responds, "black current." After that she is given a few thousand shillings notes. Through this the lady has already taken her dowry to herself. What will your clansmen take? A lady should not consume her bride price yet this has taken hers. Which beer shall your father taste? Which beer will your extended family taste? This is because you have eaten everything including roast meat.*

Transcript 5 is an excerpt of content on modern courtship. The female counsellor in this programme explained what a young man and a young lady who want to get married should do. She encouraged a young man to work hard financially to be in a position to feed his family. She added that a man should be ready emotionally to marry and not marry to please the society that puts pressure on him to marry. Turning to young women, the counsellor said they should marry a man if they love him not because he has a lot of money and she should also be emotionally ready to marry the man she chooses.

Transcript 5

Cousellor: *Mundu Kuga ati Nairobi tena anake aingi na airitu aingi nimagukienda guthii kunywa tucai na kahua tuchocolate na kii. Wi mwanake ugakorwo mundu wiiguite kaundu, ta riu njiguite airitu aingi magiteta ati marathii mikawa na anake na gutiri hindi akariha cai. Gutiri hindi akaruta shiringi yake arihe cai. Riu ugakora muiritu uyu arathi akaga trust na confidence na mwanake uyu, akona ta wii mundu utagihota kuirugamirira. Riu niurabatara gwithikiriria wi mundu na to o muhaka o hikanie tondu andu ni marauga, no nginya mwiri waku ukorwo ugikwira ati riu ihinda ni ikinyu nani urabatara mundu.*

Nindiraencourage airitu ati ona kungikinya gutuike ati mwanake ndari na uhoti ucio munene na niuraigwa niumwendete, money is not everything. Kwi na andu manjiririe muturire wao makautwara magiethaga mbeba na ukamakora andu acio ni maikarire wega na muturirre wao ni wakinyaniire na makigia kiria meriragiria thi ino tondu manjiririe mucii ucio me positive.

English

Cousellor: *It's a common scenario in Nairobi to see ladies and gentlemen going out for coffee or tea. As a young man it is necessary to be economically stable. I have heard many ladies complain that men haven't been paying for the bills instead leaving it to them. This leads the lady to lack trust and confidence in you as a man. She feels you can't sustain stand on your feet economically. As men when you start dating at least have some money you must be yourself and you should not marry because people push you to do it. I encourage ladies that even if a man isn't rich and you love him, money is not everything. Many people have started humble beginnings and at the end they got riches because they started their marriage on a positive note.*

4. Sexual intercourse as a weapon

In Transcript 6 the two presenters discussed proposal by a female member of parliament that wives should deny their husbands conjugal rights if the husbands had not registered as voters. This programme was aired during a period when Kenya's electoral body was registering new voters. It showed the use of sex as political weapon to force men to act in a desired way.

Transcript 6

Saimo: *Ta riu ukinye mucii ,nyina wa Koru agakwira ,rehe kura ati hindi iyo niurite mboga cia maringo .(Mitheko) Rehe kura. Bururi ukwenda urorwo wega.*

Kata: *Ukwihariirie kuma ruciini. Wanjiriirie mehariria o tene.*

Saimo: *Ugoka ukihuhagia uguo ta ndegwa cia kamundu karia getwago Khalwalwe. Ukihihagia ta munyi.*

Kata: *Angiugire mugiuka umuthi ti kawaida. Umuthi ti uria gukoragwo.*

English

Saimo: *At times you go home and the wife tells you to first show your voters card for her to satisfy your sexual desires. At that time you had already taken some concoction as sexual enhancers. (Laughter) and she tells you to show the card. This country should be taken care of.*

Kata: *Yet you had even started to prepare yourself since morning.*

Saimo: *Then you come home, breathing and panting heavily like Khalwale's bulls.(Khalwale is a Kenyan politician who supports bull fighting).*

Kata: *And she tells you that today it is not like the other days.*

5. Romantic love conflict

This programme discusses situation where more than one person is in love with one person. In the incidence aired by Inooro FM, Transcript 7, three men were invited to a date to meet one young woman on the same day at the same time. It was in the early days when there were no phones. The three men come and waited in the same place. When the three men realized they are waiting for the same lover they fought.

Transcript 7

Saimo: *Riu ugithiathia kindu thaa imwe na na dagika irii ukona mundurume ungi nioka arugama hau.*

Kata : *Ooo hau,*

Saimo: *Oo karugirini, guikaranga thaa imwe na bote ungi agoka akehera ,akagwatia thigara, muthia akarugama,ohandu hau ukambia kuurania nikii nawe wagira. Nyanake ici igucoka inyitane ciambe cikweherie we tondu wi wa murimo uria ungi.*

Kata : *Iii.*

Saimo: *Reke ngwire gutwaro kuria ugutwarwo nikuria utari wona.*

English

Saimo : *Yes , that is the ideal meeting place . You get there earlier and you see another man waiting at the same place.*

Kata : *At the same place.*

Saimo: *Exactly at the fence, just after a forty past seven in the evening, another man appears, lights a cigar and stands at the same place and you start asking each other what you came for. The other three men join hands since they come from the same area and beat you up to eliminate you because you came from a different ridge.*

Kata: *Yes.*

Saimo: *Those men will chase you away aggressively.*

In the second incidence aired by Kameme FM a young man spent half a year trying hard to woo a girl. The reaction of this girl gave him hope but never gave him a solid promise. Eventually, the young woman revealed that he had a boyfriend to the shock of the young man. The young man had called the station seeking advice on how to go about his disappointment. Listeners advised him to look for another girl.

In the third example a woman had communicated with the radio station saying that she has realised her husband has a secret lover and wanted listeners to advice her. She was torn between leaving this man or staying because the man was too charming. On confronting her husband, he told her that polygamy runs in his blood as it is inherited saying his brothers, father and grandfather are all polygamous and he was the best behaved. One listener told her to decide to go or stay, others told her to leave.

6. Sexual abuse

This refers to situations where an individual takes advantage of other weaker people to satisfy themselves sexually. Inooro FM aired the first incidence .This was based on a news report of a promiscuous man who has allegedly had sexual relationship with many women and his own daughters in Murang'a County. In part one of the discussion, an audio of residents complaining was played. In the second part, Bishop JJ, a counsellor, and Wanjiku, a presenter, discussed the incidence. They condemned the alleged behaviour as extremely immoral.

In another incident it is a news item on Kememe FM. It reports a court case where teacher aged 23 years was jailed for ninety years for fondling the private parts of young boys.

7. Seduction

This is an attempt to persuade a person of the opposite sex to have sex with someone. The counsellor, who is a preacher, advised men how to avoid falling into the trap of a seductress. He based his teachings on the Bible. Kameme FM aired this programme.

8. Rape

Rape is forced sex. In the first case aired by Inooro FM, appendix A, the station reported that a married man had allegedly raped a standard seven girl. In the report, the parents of the girl demanded justice.

In the second incident the station reported that a pastor allegedly raped a form one girl who had gone to look for a job in his home. Her mother, a widow demanded justice.

9. Sexual intercourse in marriage

The counselor, who is a bishop explained the importance of sexual intercourse in marriage. He based his teachings on the Bible by explaining that God made man and woman as sexual beings. He explained only married people should engage in sex and anything contrary to this is sinful. Inooro FM aired this programme.

10. Insincere romantic love

A programme aired by Inooro FM. It addressed romantic relationships in which partners do not really love each other but are interested in gaining something else from the other party for example sex or money. The counsellor, a bishop, explained and condemned this dishonest relationship.

11. Underage romantic relationships

This is a news item on a romantic relationship between an underage girl, who was a fourteen years old, and an adult male which raised anger in Nyandarua County in central Kenya where it occurred. It was aired by Kameme FM.

12. Romantic relationships advice

This is from a programme in which counsellors, who are pastors, gave advice on various types of romantic relationships with the main emphasis on marriage. Listeners sent their questions to the radio stations and the counsellors answered them. The programme was aired by Kameme. The presenter, Njogu wa Njoroge, moderated the discussion. Two pastors, Pastor Jane and Pastor Julius answered the questions. Concerns raised included infidelity, denial of conjugal rights and emotional abuse. Kameme FM aired this programme.

1.2 Sex Talk Programmes heard by listeners

The study went further to give questionnaires to listeners of Kameme FM and Inooro FM radio stations to find out what types of sex programmes they had heard on radio. Table 1 summarizes the findings.

Table 1: Sex talk programmes heard by listeners

Types of sex talk programmes	Yes		No	
	Frequency	(Percentage %)	Frequency	(Percentage %)
Teenage pregnancy	348	90.6	36	9.4
Adultery	327	85.2	57	14.8
Homosexuality	275	71.6	109	28.4
Fornication	283	73.7	101	26.3
Sexual intercourse	311	81.0	73	19.0
Courtship	340	88.5	44	11.5
Matching of potential lovers	280	72.9	104	27.1

Total number of listeners = 384

As Table 1 shows, three hundred and forty eight listeners 348 listeners (90.6%) had listened to programmes on teenage pregnancy on radio while thirty six 36 (9.4%) had not. This type of programme was the most listened to on radio as the table clearly shows. 327 listeners (or 85.2%) had heard adultery being discussed on radio compared to 57 (14.8%) who had not heard it. Two hundred and seventy five listeners (275) had listened to programmes on homosexuality representing 71.6% of listeners. 283 listeners (73.7%) had listened to sex talk on fornication on radio whereas 101 (26.3%) had not. A total of 311 listeners (81.0%) had listened to broadcasts on sexual intercourse on radio compared to 73 (19.0%) who had not. 340 listeners (88.5%) had heard courtship content on radio while 44 (11.4%) had never heard this topic. A total of 280 listeners (72.9%) recalled having listened to discussion on matching of potential lovers on radio while 104 (27.1%) had not heard it.

The study also sought to find out other sex talk programmes heard by listeners not included in the questionnaire by asking them what more they listened. Their answers included divorce, sponsorship, rape, bestiality, incest, pornography, lust, cohabitation, promiscuity, prostitution and bisexuality.

III. CONCLUSION

The paper shows that vernacular radio addresses a broad range of sex programmes that arouse considerable interest among its audiences. This is seen by the large number of telephone calls and text messages from listeners. When conducting this study, the number of text messages was high and radio presenters in these broadcasts kept on appealing to listeners to bear with the station because they could not manage to address all matters raised. In programmes that involved experts who were preachers who or just professionals, these experts gave their telephone numbers to listeners who so that they could reach them when the programme was over. The experts reported, when they came back on air that they had helped marriages that were on the verge of collapse. It shows that these programmes have an important role to play in the society in educating listeners on acceptable social behaviour and how to solve conflicts in romantic relationships. It seems the anonymity provided by radio is very helpful because it allows listeners to speak about sexual intercourse matters without fear. The new vernacular radio broadcasts have a role to play among native people of Kenya.

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